

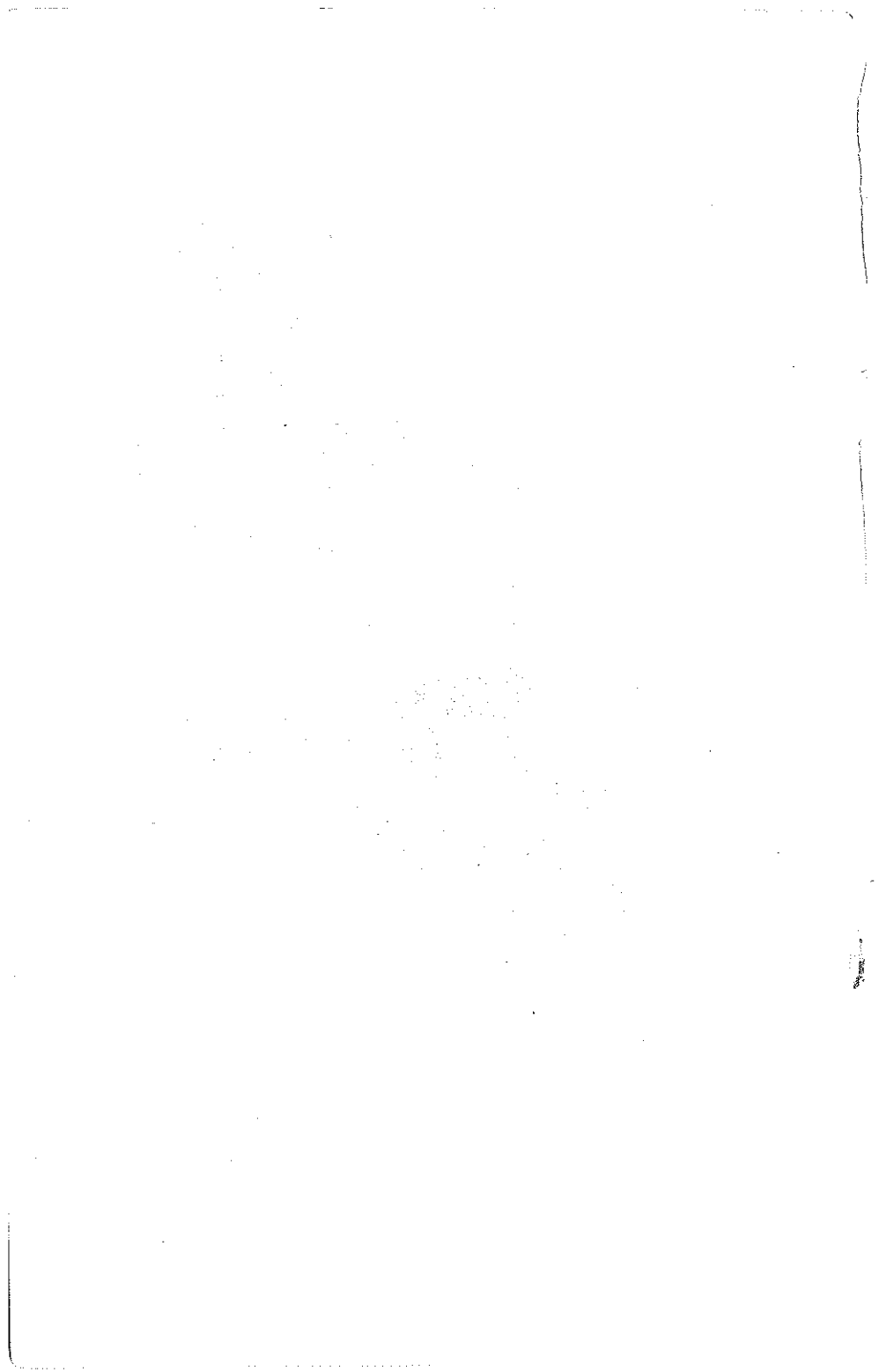
MENACE OF FASCISM

By Ted Grant

**what it is
and how to fight it**

A MILITANT PAMPHLET

40p



***THE
MENACE
OF
FASCISM***

***what it is and
how to fight it***

By Ted Grant

**WITH NEW
INTRODUCTION**

By Roger Silverman

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Introduction

BY ROGER
SILVERMAN

The republication of Ted Grant's classic pamphlet **The Menace of Fascism** comes at a timely moment. Written in 1948 when the relics of Sir Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts were attempting to regroup their battered forces in the grim "austerity" days of the postwar Labour Government, its republication today coincides with the re-emergence of Fascism as an issue for the British Labour Movement. The National Front and other Fascist splinter-groups like the National Party and the British Movement have reared their snouts with greater assurance than at any time since Mosley's days. In the 1977 municipal elections, the NF won 120,000 votes in the Greater London area alone. Nor have Fascist activities been confined to the electoral plane. They have swaggered arrogantly through immigrant areas in a deliberate attempt to provoke violent clashes. Every day come new cases of Fascist brutalities up and down the country. Immigrants have been punched, kicked, knifed, lubbed, and thrown through plate-glass windows. Acid and nerve-gas canisters have been thrown in their faces, and their homes and clubs have been petrol-bombed. In isolated cases trade union militants too have been viciously attacked.

These ugly throwbacks to earlier expressions of reaction are paralleled by the murderous activities of the MSI in Italy and the first stirrings of Fascist thuggery in other countries, notably in France where violent attacks on North African workers have taken place. The scale of these attacks should not be exaggerated, but nevertheless they represent a sinister threat for the future which will be ignored by the Labour Movement at its peril.

At the same time, politically conscious activists within the workers' organisations have reflected on the lessons of the horrific defeat suffered by the Chilean workers in 1973, the most bloody in

the chain of defeats in Latin America, stretching from Brazil in 1964 to Argentina in 1976.

The struggle of the working class to overthrow capitalist rule and clear the way to the creation of a classless society demands the utmost theoretical clarity, in understanding the obstacles placed in its path. Its political awareness can only be blunted by the self-indulgent ravings of petit-bourgeois rebels, like the member of the Baader-Meinhof gang who bade his mother farewell because "he felt stifled by Fascist society" and was off to "join the revolutionaries". Any West German worker would correctly regard as madmen those who are unable to differentiate between Hitler and Schmidt, between life under Nazi tyranny and life under the Social Democratic-Liberal coalition.

Marxists do not loosely bandy words about, or use "Fascism" as an indiscriminate term of abuse, not because they are pedantic but because a successful cure depends on a precise diagnosis.

No ruling class in history has ever been unduly squeamish in defence of its power. But as Ted Grant shows in this pamphlet, Fascism is more than mere repression. It is a specific tool of capitalism in the age of its decline. This terrible epoch of war and revolution, holocausts and genocide, spawned the first regimes in history to depend on mass movements of the petit-bourgeoisie. Capitalism in its death agonies tried to counter the growth of the Labour Movement by creating hoodlum gangs mobilised to kill shop stewards, break up picket lines and workers' meetings, and blow up trade union headquarters. The Black Hundreds in Russia and the Freikorps in Germany were thus used as auxiliaries to the official organs of state repression. But even these were not strong enough to smash the trade unions and stamp out every manifestation of independent activity by the working class. It took the mobilisation of a mass movement to achieve even temporarily the real goal of Fascism: the destruction of the embryo within capitalism of the future socialist society, as embodied in the traditions of the Labour Movement.

Ted Grant explains graphically how Fascism triumphed in Italy and Germany. Mussolini's cut-throats were armed by the capitalists in response to the wave of strikes and occupations. Under police protection, the Fascisti methodically smashed the Labour Movement. After the betrayal of the 1918 German revolution, Hitler's desperadoes also helped the state terrorise the workers. At the head of growing paramilitary movements, and equipped with limitless military and propaganda resources, Hitler and Mussolini became indispensable to the ruling class. Both wielded such power that they eventually took over the state and dismantled even the

traditional bourgeois parties without meeting any serious resistance. Every element of democracy was surgically cut out. Finance capital was freed at last of the nuisance of a Labour Movement, but at the cost of relinquishing direct control of the state to arbitrary dictators.

THE CAPITALIST STATE

Every state machine can be reduced to "armed bodies of men." Even the most democratic state is a machine consisting of police, army, judges, warders, tax collectors, a permanent bureaucracy dedicated to preserving the social status quo. But the ruling class is jealous of its rights. The capitalists grudgingly accept the state as a necessary evil. But they stringently check its powers. It must not over-reach itself and encroach on their rule. They want cheap government. Red tape, extravagance, corruption, wastage, nepotism and other inevitable consequences of bureaucratism combine to rob them of "their" profits. That is why they have evolved a complex system of checks and balances, public accountability, separation of powers, etc. which together make up Parliamentary democracy.

In the modern epoch capitalism, groaning and creaking, can survive only by leaning more and more heavily on the state, to defend its property against enemies at home and abroad and also to invest capital, bail out moribund companies, finance research, provide services, etc. But still the capitalists are alarmed at the growth of this monster the state, and howl for the pruning of the bureaucracy.

But they do not always have the power to call their political and administrative servants to account. In periods of emergency, or especially of revolution, when the contending classes can be poised so near to equilibrium, the state rises above the constraints of its masters. Where a decadent ruling class presides over a declining social system it suffers crises in which its authority is discredited. It is decrepit, corrupt, split into wrangling factions. In those situations a disciplined party of the rising class can lead the way to a new society. But if it cannot rise to its task, the warring classes are locked in deadlock. The "armed bodies of men" can act as independent arbiters, playing off the mutually antagonistic factions and classes, and balancing between them, while ultimately defending the existing property relations. This is Bonapartism—a military-police dictatorship.

A narrowly-based military dictatorship cannot for long dam up

the tide of history in the advanced capitalist countries, with their powerful Labour Movement. De Gaulle's mild Bonapartism was impotent when it came to the revolutionary events of May 1968, and even the Greek Junta was pitifully incapable of stabilising society. The paradox of the situation is that capitalism can only survive by turning the workers into slaves, and that cannot be done by decrees from on top. But in present conditions it has no hope of resorting to a new mass movement, crazed with mystical fanaticism and thirsting for revenge on the workers, which alone could dismantle the organisations built over years of sacrifice.

Hitler, Mussolini and other Fascists had money from Big Business, and the complicity of the police. But they also had resources more difficult to obtain: great private armies, recruited from those strata of the population standing midway between the two decisive social classes. Never has Fascism succeeded in obtaining a foothold in the trade unions. On the other hand, the monopoly capitalists despise them as ranting loud-mouths. They hire them much as dance-hall managers hire bouncers or protection gangs, soon to be trapped in their clutches themselves.

Fascism feeds on the prejudices of small businessmen, squeezed by the monopolies; peasants bled by the banks; intellectuals tired of Parliamentary hypocrisy; unemployed youth seeking an outlet for their energies; paupers, spivs and racketeers... Out of this raw material, seducing it with radical demagoguery against the trusts, magical incantations about national glory, racialist poison, etc. it fashions a human battering-ram.

These strata are mostly the natural allies of the workers. They are doomed under capitalism. In their hopeless predicament, they instinctively look first to the Labour Movement as the natural force for change. If a conservative labour leadership fails to offer them action, they subside into despair and are prey to the demagoguery of any adventurers. They have not the workers' ingrained loyalty to the Labour Movement, and thus their very discontent can be exploited by the ruling class. But first the workers' parties have the chance to win them. In Russia, a small working class with a revolutionary leadership was able to draw behind it millions of small peasants. In contrast, the German Revolution brought to power a 'responsible' Labour Leadership which used as its alibi the need to appease the middle class by pandering to its prejudices. The result was that the middle class in frenzy eventually rallied around the Nazi stormtroopers who at least looked as if they meant business, and the strongest working class in Europe was enslaved, without Hitler even needing to fire a shot.

The Nazis were the direct descendants of the volunteer

counter-revolutionary mercenaries, the "Freikorps", which bore the swastika as their emblem and which were actually organised, armed and financed by the Social-Democratic leaders in 1918-23 to disarm and massacre workers and thus "restore order".

Fascism cannot be switched on and off like a tap. As Trotsky explained, one of the necessary conditions for its existence is "the despair of the petit-bourgeoisie, its yearning for change, the mass neurosis of the petit-bourgeoisie, its readiness to believe in miracles, its readiness for violent measures; and the growth of its hostility towards the proletariat, which has deceived its expectations."

After Fascism is victorious it loses its mass base. In Germany for instance, the SA which was the Nazi's army of murderers and thugs but which consisted of perverted "idealists" who seriously wanted to break up the monopolies and depose the "Establishment" were disarmed and liquidated in the furious 'Night of the Long Knives' in 1934, one year after Hitler's putsch. This was the price for the support of the generals. The mercenaries were thus ditched as soon as their dirty work was done. The middle class sees the monopolies prospering as never before. But by then it is too late.

The fascist apparatus of police tortures and concentration camps is intact. All resistance is broken. But its mass network of spies and informers has vanished. The regime degenerates into a Bonapartist police state, surviving through the inertia following a catastrophic defeat.

It is characteristic of Fascism that the historical memory of the class is almost blotted out. It takes a generation or more for the workers to renew the class struggle, build underground trade unions, learn Socialism afresh. Hence the longevity of Fascism in Spain and Portugal, where its collapse was not hastened by military defeat as in Germany and Italy.

The capitalists are assured of cheap labour, but they pay a heavy price in surrendering control to a greedy and demented clique. Alarmed at Fascism's irresponsibility they are powerless to intervene. The capitalists prefer to entrust the power, when they cannot wield it through their traditional channels, to the Generals, who have a thousand and one links to the capitalists through family relationships, intermarriage, a common education, investments in industry and the banks, common clubs and restaurants, etc.; but by the same token these cannot inspire the same devotion as the mob demagogues of Fascism. In extremity, the capitalists try to use the Generals to reassert control. They succeeded in replacing Mussolini with Marshal Badoglio in 1943, with a mandate to capitulate to the Allies. The 1944 "Generals' plot" against Hitler was also the produce of nothing more noble than the naked cash calculation of the

⁴² German capitalists that Hitler was imperilling their wealth.

Spain also degenerated into a ramshackle corrupt police-state. Under Juan Carlos it has become the most precarious and impotent of bonapartist regimes.

MILITARY DICTATORSHIP

Even a military dictatorship needs at least passive support. The issue was explained in "The Times" in early 1974. Faced with the miners' strike, the Tory election defeat, the minority government, and the troubles in Northern Ireland, and with the Chilean coup fresh in their minds, the ruling class seriously debated the feasibility of a British coup. First a strategic expert argued that the army had the resources to take over easily. In reply, a professor from Sussex University—and such people are paid to curb and moderate the policies of the more hot headed elements within the ruling class—reminded them that logistic considerations are not enough, that Kornilov's putsch provoked the Bolshevik insurrection, that the German Kapp marched into Berlin to be greeted by a general strike and could not find even a stenographer to take down his 'decrees'. The discussion was concluded with an article explaining that a coup in Britain would be preceded by a long period of strife, in which the Army would be called upon to aid the police in coping with mass pickets, food riots, etc. The General Staff in time would have to be represented at Cabinet meetings to offer opinions on policy, and eventually the military would lose patience with the politicians', Parliamentary niceties and would sweep them aside. This is in fact the origin of most military regimes.

GREECE

What happens when the military take power without first securing for themselves a certain social foundation, was eloquently demonstrated in Greece. The King, the royalist Generals, Karamanlis and other serious representatives of the ruling class were justifiably angry, when their own carefully prepared strategic plans to ride out the first stages of a Popular Front regime and only later set in motion a contingency NATO mechanism for a coup, were rashly pre-empted by the colonels in liaison with the CIA. Why was

this ? They had not become democrats overnight. But as strategists of capitalism they had broader historical horizons. They were furious at the indecent haste of those Colonel Blimps, who vented all their prejudices by such absurd acts as the banning of long hair and miniskirts. They realised that society is too complex to be run by screaming sergeant-majors stamping their feet and commanding the people to 'stand to attention'. The very brutality of the dictatorship, while temporarily stunning the workers, would only tilt all Greece to the left.

The seven unstable years of the junta proved how right they were. Greece lurched from one crisis to the next. It changed in turn from a monarchy to a Regency to a Republic. Far from taming the workers, the junta feverishly rolled banknotes off the printing press to appease them. 1973 saw student riots, then a naval mutiny, then a virtual uprising at the Polytechnic, and finally a new coup! The hated police chief Ioannidis shouldered Papadopoulos aside and cancelled the promised elections. Like the Spanish police in 1975-6 he acted not out of devotion to an ideal, but out of sheer rat panic. Then came the desperate adventure of the coup in Cyprus. The regime found itself embroiled in a war with the Turks. The ignominious end of the junta underlined its instability. Not even waiting to submit their resignations, Ioannidis' puppet Ministers simply packed their bags and fled, muttering: "We are a ridiculous Government". All that the junta achieved in the long run was to usher in a prolonged period of pre-revolutionary crisis lasting from 1974 to the present day.

CHILE

In contrast, the Chilean generals, in consultation with the capitalists of Chile and the USA, carefully prepared the ground for their coup. When General Vaux, shortly before the 1970 elections, tried to stage a coup, the US State Department advised him to wait. Allende presided over Chile for three years, nationalising substantial sectors of the economy and doling out reforms, eating deep into the vitals of capitalism. The capitalists bit their lips and plotted their revenge. They had extracted from Allende a solemn promise not to tamper with their State—the armed forces and the judiciary—or their press. So they could afford to bide their time while the CIA "destabilised" and the Patria y Libertad sabotaged the economy. Allende dared not take socialist measures in reply.

Reaction rubbed the noses of the middle class into the resulting chaos. When the Generals took over, they had the tolerance if not sympathy of broad strata of society. This gave them greater confidence and freedom of action than their Greek counterparts, who in fear of the workers had to keep looking over their shoulders. The very fact that the revolution had gone so far in 1970-3 forced the Generals to inflict all the more ferocious measures of repression.

Is Chile then a Fascist state? Pinochet and his henchmen are Fascist scum, vowing to "cut out the cancer of Marxism". But so was Papadopoulos, who also swore to "cure Greece of communism". He failed abjectly! To destroy the only productive class cannot be done simply at the dictate of a few Fascist officers. With inflation up to 700% the middle class feel cheated. They detest the junta. Even the Christian Democratic leadership, which invited the coup has denounced the regime. Meanwhile, Chile today, only four years after the coup, has been rocked by its first strike wave. What eloquent testimony to the power and heroism of the working class!

Pinochet and his gang have Fascist ambitions, but not the mass instrument required to carry them out. The Labour Movement has not been destroyed, but merely clubbed on the head. It can recover far quicker from such blows. The counter-revolution has been savage, but it has rained down from on top. Its indiscriminate ferocity reveals its underlying weakness. Without a network of informers, penetrating every block and every factory, even the most blood thirsty of regimes cannot turn the clock back a generation as did those of Mussolini, Salazar, Hitler or Franco.

MILITANT predicted in 1967 that the Greek junta would not last more than 5-7 years. The same is true of the Chilean regime. It has killed without distinction, and burned books at random—consigning to the bonfires books on Cubism, for fear that they would spread Castro's pernicious influence! It has had to appeal to factory managers to act as spies, and school principals to inform on pupils, teachers and parents. Such a regime lacks the human resources to shape a whole epoch.

On the other hand it is more repressive than a classic Bonapartist regime. The slaughter expresses the desperate position of capitalism. This regime cannot afford to balance judiciously between the classes. It is a protection gang acting on behalf of the monopolies.

Fascist regimes have come to power in all kinds of ways. In Germany it took power without firing a shot, and then proceeded systematically to exterminate the active strata of the working class. In Spain it began with a military revolt, followed by a civil war and an aftermath of executions which together led to the slaughter of a

million workers. In Portugal, it was a relatively bloodless coup, which then ruled by a policy of indiscriminate torture. What they had in common was that they threw history back for decades.

By contrast, even the most bloodthirsty regimes today, such as Chile or Indonesia, cannot count on more than a temporary breathing-space of stability. The balance of forces internationally is tipped so heavily towards revolution, that no stable Fascist tyranny anywhere in the world can be consolidated. And this is the ultimate purpose of political classification. The contradiction between Fascism and Bonapartism reduces itself to the burning questions—how strong are our enemies? What are the prospects for their overthrow?

What will be the effects of the Chilean junta? Like the Greek dictatorship, it will disintegrate. But the masses will not just start again where they left off in the days of the Popular Unity. Then the activists were alert to the threatening catastrophe, questioning their parties' programme, building the "cordones" (workers' councils), stockpiling arms in the factories. Soldiers, sailors and even junior officers were trying to organise. But the workers' political level has been lowered by the slaughter of so many militants, and their grinding poverty will make them remember the Popular Unity with nostalgia as a Golden Age.

Its failings will be forgiven by the mass of workers, even though the most politically conscious will have learned the lessons of 1970-3.

Fascism is a brake on history, and even in trying to implement a Fascist programme the junta has temporarily destroyed the workers' cohesion. Only when the economy revives will the workers again feel themselves as a class, rising above their misery to a revolutionary perspective.

CHANGED BALANCE OF FORCES

Reaction today can go no further than it has in Chile. Bloody as it is, no military regime could last long today—although for that very reason it would use the opportunity to massacre millions of worker militants. The postwar boom in the advanced capitalist countries has whittled away the traditional reserves of capitalism. Before the war the European ruling class could enlist innumerable blacklegs from among the middle class. But now peasants and small businessmen have been largely wiped out; the white collar workers are organised; the students are looking to the left. The working class in Germany has grown from 40% in 1933 to about 75% today. The peasantry has shrunk to 8%. After three decades without a serious

defeat, the workers are immeasurably strengthened. The social reserves of capitalism have been fatally eroded by the very process of the postwar economic upswing. Society is polarised so grotesquely into the camps of Wage Labour and Capital that it looks like the prototype blueprint of the general social trends mapped out in the "Communist Manifesto."

IMMIGRANTS

At the same time, one of the most important social effects of the boom, besides drawing into industrial activity millions of people at home from the intermediate strata of society, was to suck into booming Britain and Europe millions of immigrants from the Caribbean, the Indian Subcontinent, Southern and Eastern Europe, North Africa, etc. Capitalism not only distorted the economies of entire countries by making them dependent on single crops; it regimented whole populations as fodder for specialised labour in the advanced capitalist countries, eg. Mauritians and Fillipinos recruited into the British hospitals.

This ensured the ruling class a constant supply of cheap labour. But it also gave it the chance to recruit an army of super-oppressed workers who could be denied many of those rights conceded to the indigenous workers with their long traditions of trade union organisation. Thus we have the Immigration Act (1971) and even the repatriation of surplus manpower at times of recession. For instance during the slump of 1974-76, 870,000 migrant workers from Southern Europe went back home from the Common Market countries.

RACIALISM

A necessary auxiliary weapon to help entrench this policy of discrimination, and where necessary "Help them on their way" back home, is the whipping up of racist and chauvinist prejudice. The capitalists could thus import back to their own countries their favoured device of "divide and rule", so successfully employed to maintain their rule in the colonies, above all in the British Empire, in India, Cyprus, Palestine, the African colonies, Ireland, etc.

In any case, the existence of social strata owing no national allegiance to their own states, with a cosmopolitan and "rootless" outlook, has always been considered by the ruling class to be a threat

to social cohesion.

The Monday Club, for instance, published an article praising “an ideology which would unite all classes of the nation, rich and poor, in defence of its traditions and culture” and warning of the “harmful effect on traditional culture and society of an important politically-motivated alien community in the heart of the nation...An alien community owing no allegiance and having no ties to its host country does in fact constitute an ‘anti-nation’ within its borders.” [*Monday World*].

There have been many earlier waves of immigration of labour in capitalist society during previous boom periods—e.g. Irish peasants fleeing from famine, or Jews fleeing from pogroms in Eastern Europe (who played a similar economic role to the migrant East African Asians today.)

These sections too were subject to attack. The anti-Irish riots in the 19th Century, the anti-Semitic campaigns in the first decades of this century (in which leading Tories like Winston Churchill eagerly participated, even to the extent of praising the exposure of a “worldwide Jewish conspiracy” in the forged “Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion”) culminated in the Mosleyite pogroms of the 1930s.

However, it would be false to accuse capitalism of inherent racialism. The capitalists are endemically no more racist than they are patriotic, Christian or monogamous. Capitalism has only one prejudice—for profit. Hence, whatever the personal peccadillos of Enoch Powell, he as Minister of Health in the Tory Government of the 1950s and early 60s, was the most enthusiastic recruiting sergeant for the importation of cheap labour from the West Indies for exploitation in the hospitals of Britain.

During periods of labour shortage and of booming order books, racialism recedes into the background and remains on the level of patronising chauvinism, inherited from the old days of imperial grandeur. During the period of the post-war boom Fascism did not exist as a serious force. Sir Oswald Mosley lived in splendid isolation in Paris, occasionally attending nostalgic reunion dinners with his old friend, the Duke of Windsor, both of them no doubt dreaming of the day when they would be recalled to England. On the lunatic fringe of the Tory Party, there was the League of Empire Loyalists, its executive committee glittering with Dowager Duchesses and Major Generals. The openly Nazi outfits were nothing more than cliques of perverts and psychotics who indulged their fantasies by parading in front of mirrors in swastikas and jackboots and listening to Hitler’s speeches on records. This was, for instance, one of the more innocent pastimes of the Moors murderers. It is from

this cesspool that the present leaders of the National Front, Tyndall and Webster have crawled. Their mentor, Colin Jordan's credentials as a Fuhrer were tarnished when he was caught shoplifting three pairs of red knickers from a supermarket. It is revealing episodes like this which give an insight into the diseased nature of those groups that openly espoused the cause of Nazism.

In the last 10 years the racial issue has been systematically cultivated by the ruling class, casting a cold eye on the dangers posed by the gradual leftward move of the activists in the Labour Movement over that period. However, it is a device which it has learned to use with extreme caution and regard for the circumstances of the moment. It has cleverly exploited every retreat, every disappointment, every pause in the class struggle. And it has learned to put the issue back into cold storage whenever the movement experiences a new upsurge.

Racialism is, after all, only a particularly vile and virulent refinement of nationalism. Wherever the Labour Movement is inert, passive, dormant, at a moment of stress and insecurity, inevitably bourgeois nationalist prejudices will come to the fore. Nationalism advances and retreats in inverse ratio to the activities of the Labour Movement. In no country was racialism more rife than Imperial Russia, land of the pogrom. And yet in October 1917, the hundred nationalities of the Tsarist Empire united under the banner of the Hammer and Sickle to form the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Today, after half a century of Stalinist, bureaucratic rule, separatist tendencies are stronger than ever among every one of these nationalities. In Spain, forty years of Fascism has reinforced Basque and Catalan nationalism. The collapse of the Popular Front in Sri Lanka has paved the way for an unprecedented rise in communalistic violence. In Northern Ireland, sectarianism has waxed and waned in inverse proportion to the vicissitudes of the class struggle. Scottish nationalism has become a force for the first time in decades due to the failure of the Labour leadership to solve any of the problems facing Scotland. Racial prejudice, too, can spread only to the extent that the traditions of the Labour Movement are muted or muzzled.

POWELLISM

It was in 1968, at a time of disappointment, after the heady successes in the elections of '64 and '66, when the Labour vote in

by-elections and opinion polls had slumped to 25-28%, and the ranks of Labour's activists were gripped in a mood of despair, that Powell's first bombshell exploded. As the Trade Unions edged into opposition to the Labour leadership, and while the opportunity was there to exploit the atmosphere of disillusionment, the capitalist class made a conscious decision to inject a dose of racialist poison into the social bloodstream. For the next four years, Powell was elevated into a popular folk hero, his every utterance blared forth from the headlines. This only stopped once that erratic and unstable demagogue had committed the cardinal sin of voting Labour in 1974.

On a minor scale, Powell's outburst touched an echo among the more backward strata of the working class, although this was grossly exaggerated by the media. Meat porters and other street traders have always been vulnerable to the whipping up of reactionary prejudices. But even those few dockers who marched in support of Powell could not have been won away from his cause simply by the crescendo of pious hypocrisy with which his words had been greeted by everybody from the Times to the B.B.C., to the Archbishop of Canterbury, to the Tory and Labour Front benches. They wanted answers to their absolutely justified fears for their jobs.

The rise of racialism was checked when the Trade Unions moved into action on class issues, mobilising their forces against the anti-Trade Union Government White Paper 'In Place of Strife', and in several major strikes. Even the surprise victory of the Tory Party in the 1970 General Election far from demoralised the Labour Movement, but spurred it into the biggest mobilisation of the class for half a century.

But at the first brief pause in the class struggle, as the Labour Movement drew breath after the exertions of the 1972 miners' strike in which the whole Labour Movement had displayed the most sustained solidarity, the ruling class lost no time in making another ugly trial run around the issue of the Ugandan Asians, who were allegedly about to "engulf the country". This immediately produced its due crop of beatings and petrol bomb attacks on immigrants.

Within months, however, a new upsurge of the class struggle cut across this process. One mass strike after another unrelentingly hammered down on the Tory Government, until the second miners' strike led to its overthrow in February 1974.

For three and a half years following that victory the Labour Movement has suffered the shock of the world slump, of mass unemployment, of savage cuts in real wages and in the social wage. The previous mood of confidence, almost amounting among certain sections to a syndicalist euphoria, soon gave way to a sudden lull. It

was not that the movement did not have the resources to fight. It was a question of loyalty to the Labour Government and a willingness to "give it time", and also of utter bewilderment within its ranks as to where to look for a lead. The leaders of the Labour Party had abandoned their radical postures adopted in the tail-end of the period of the Tory Government, and could offer nothing but attacks on the workers' living standards and a flagrant abuse of their supporters' loyalty. But the unkindest cut of all came from the "Left" leaders whose authority had been reinforced in the struggle against the Tory Government—Tribune MPs like Michael Foot who became the main henchman of the government in its dealings with the Trade Unions, and even more so trade union leaders who had earned enormous authority in the struggles with the Tory government, figures like Hugh Scanlon, Lawrence Daly and especially Jack Jones who was the principle architect of the so-called "social contract."

Although for three years strike figures were reduced to a minimal level and the Labour Movement was acquiescing in wage cuts, the ruling class understood that, once the dam broke, a huge tidal wave of strikes would begin. At the same time it monitored the conclusions being reached by the activists of the workers' organisations with alarm. The vanguard of the movement was rapidly absorbing the political lessons of these events. Marxism was gaining ground in the constituencies. Up and down the country, the question of the right of recall over Labour MPs was being raised consistently for the first time, an issue symbolised above all at Newham North East. That is why the ruling class launched a campaign of interference in the internal affairs of the Labour Party and Trade Unions unprecedented since the beginning of the century. Again and again High Court Injunctions were invoked dictating how Trade Union votes should be cast at conferences, how their officials should be appointed, the method of election, the rules of GMC representation, etc. At the same time the Press has weighed in with hysterical campaigns in an attempt to determine who should be Labour candidates in elections, who should be appointed as officers at Transport House, and even who should be allowed to make up the rank and file of the Party. It is not only the particular activities of so-called "Trotskyist infiltrators" that they fear, but the general threat that the movement would take adequate measures to safeguard itself against misrepresentation by Tory infiltrators like Reg Prentice who have dominated the Parliamentary Labour Party for so long.

The ruling class eagerly cashed in on the lull in the class struggle to divert attention to the obvious scapegoats and provide a focus for

reaction. Suddenly in the Spring of 1976, as if at a pre-arranged signal, a vicious press campaign designed to stir up racial prejudice was launched. This time it was not hordes of Ugandan Asians but perhaps a few hundred Malawi Asians who were, allegedly about to "flood the country", apparently all living in "five-star luxury hotels at taxpayers' expense". Simultaneously the scurrilous "Hawley Report" was published, painting lurid pictures of floods of illegal immigrants pouring into every port. A liberal seasoning of these reports with spicy stories of "black muggers" and "social security scroungers" produced the perfect recipe.

Immediately it had its effect in the murder of Asian youths in East London and Southall, and vicious attacks all over the country. Electorally the success of this campaign was reflected in the increased votes in municipal and by-elections for the National Front and other Fascist parties.

IMMIGRANT YOUTH

But one thing that the capitalists had not reckoned on was the fighting capacity of the new generation of immigrant youth who were not prepared to touch their forelocks in gratitude to the "Mother Country" as their parents had done. Fresh to the realities of the class struggle, immigrant workers have learned all the better the need to organise. While trade union membership among the working class as a whole is about 50%, among immigrant workers the figure is about 60%. They have shown themselves to be the best fighters on the picket lines. A whole rash of heroic sweatshop strikes has demonstrated this, at Mansfield Hosiery, STC, Imperial Typewriters and many more. More significant still is the fighting spirit shown by black workers side by side with white workers in national strikes like those of the building workers and hospital workers in 1973. But the spirit of formerly backward immigrant workers has been symbolised best of all on the picket lines at Grunwicks. Mostly Asian women, the Grunwick workers had hardly heard of Trade Unions before they went on strike. Today, having learned the hard way the real role and function of the police, the courts, the press, the Tory Party, and the Trade Union bureaucracy, and recognising where to find inexhaustible reserves of support and solidarity from their natural allies, the Grunwick strikers have set a shining example to the whole Trade Union movement.

Especially in the last couple of years, the younger generation of

immigrants has become increasingly politicised. Political realities have obliged them to open their eyes. They are forced to think out in whose interests it is that the Press pours out racist lies, that the police persecute and harass them, that the whole state machine is mobilised to shield the National Front from the anger of the immigrant community. And they are forced to seek out their most trustworthy allies in the fight for their sheer survival. The rise of the Indian Youth Association and the PNP Youth Movement (UK) indicate the high political level of immigrant youth today.

The Southall murder marked a turning point in this process. It provoked a virtual uprising of these youth. For days, Southall became a 'no-go' area. "Vigilante" groups sprang up in many immigrant areas. From that time onwards, immigrant youth were prepared to meet the provocations of the Fascists in head-on clashes.

At Wood Green, Lewisham, Brick Lane,...young immigrants were in the front line of the counter-demonstrations which at least partially put the Fascists to flight. These confrontations were entirely unlike previous skirmishes like that at Red Lion Square in 1974. At that demonstration, as Militant said, at the time, Kevin Gately died a martyr to fascist thuggery and police violence, but a martyr also to the light-minded adventurism of romantic student sects who imagined that Fascism could be stopped in single combat with bands of "avenging angels", instead of through the mobilisation of the Labour Movement. We always insisted that the Fascist menace could only be stamped out by mass action in the traditions of Cable Street, where half a million workers blocked Mosley's path in October 1936.

Capitalism creates a trail of human wrecks, pauperising and bankrupting small businessmen everyday. We cannot cure all of them of their xenophobic neuroses and delusions. Only the creation of a new society based on harmonious and rational human relations can make such perversions extinct. All that we can do is to stop capitalism organising them into a fighting force, prevent them from setting up a frenzy among the petit-bourgeoisie, reinforcing their prejudices, mobilising and arming these sadists. We can keep them off the streets. In the privacy of their own homes, they are rendered relatively harmless.

The petit-bourgeoisie is volatile by its very nature. Easily exhilarated, they are equally easily discouraged. As Ted Grant demonstrates, Hitler and Goebbels themselves admitted that the Nazis could easily have been crushed at the beginning. A petit-bourgeois movement needs to keep the momentum going of constant successes or it quickly evaporates. By its nature it has not the stamina and endurance to brave the pressure of mass hostility.

One sharp lesson is enough to plunge it into rapid decline, and disintegration. Mosley's Blackshirts never recovered from the shock of Cable Street which began its plunge into obscurity. The neo-Nazi German NPD likewise was dealt a death-blow in the late 1960s, when 20,000 trade unionists converged on their conference and put their delegates to flight. The neo-fascist CDS in Portugal suffered the same fate in 1974-5 and the process of reaction was delayed.

THE NATIONAL FRONT

For all its vulgar boasts that it is "Britain's fastest growing party", and its decision to field over 300 candidates at the next election, it remains a fact that the NF has never succeeded even at a national mobilisation, with free coach trips for participants, in turning out more than 1,000 supporters on the streets. This is the clearest possible indication that it represents merely a garbage can for the protest votes of frustrated deserters from the camps of the two major parties, who keep their prejudices secret within their polling booths. The NF can never live up to its leaders' aspirations and become a mass paramilitary fighting force capable of taking on the Trade Union movement.

Why have the NF's loudmouthed supporters proved so nervous about showing their real strength on the streets? Not because of the activities of the ultra-left groups on the fringes of the Labour Movement, nor because of the protests of gaggles of vicars and do-gooders wringing their hands on the sidelines, nor even because of the mobilisation of massive sections at this stage of the Labour Movement. First and foremost has been the mobilisation of local immigrant youth alongside the most politically aware militants of the Labour Movement who have taken the lead and shown the way to the organised working class.

We completely reject the pious protests of Liberals and right wing Labour leaders, like Merlyn Rees, at this absolutely justified attempt by immigrants, alongside Labour activists, to defend their communities against these swaggering bullies. It is no better for Marxists to hold up their hands in horror lamenting that they "should have waited for the Labour Movement". That would be to utterly misunderstand the real lessons of the 1930s. Cable Street was not a magical event, dropping out of the sky, but the outcome of a series of smaller incidents in which the vanguard of the working class were prepared to risk life and limb in the struggle to expose the

nature of fascism. Even at Cable Street the local Jewish population played a major role in turning on to the streets. They were supported by hundreds of thousands of trade unionists. But at that time the ponderous official bodies of the Labour Party and the TUC stood aside. Despite Morrison's appeals to stay away, large strata of Labour workers turned out at Cable Street. The smaller workers' parties on the periphery of the Labour Movement also threw their energies into that great expression of proletarian solidarity—the Independent Labour Party, and the Communist Party (which in those days recognised the necessity of physically blocking the path to the Fascists and did not like today, make moralistic appeals to them.) It goes without saying that no comparison can be made between these parties, which had the support of tens of thousands of industrial workers, and the petit-bourgeois sects of today. Cable Street was among the biggest demonstrations ever held in Britain and the local incidents at Lewisham and elsewhere are in no way comparable.

HOW TO FIGHT THE NATIONAL FRONT

The LPYS and the supporters of Militant played a vital role at Lewisham and other demonstrations. As in the LPYS anti-racialism campaign of 1973-4, which culminated in the demonstration of about 3000 trade unionists, black and white, in Bradford,—which, though on a smaller scale, was a model of how to fight racialism most effectively—and as at Walthamstow in January 1974 when the LPYS successfully mobilised to fight the threat of Labour Party meetings being broken up by Fascists, so too at Lewisham and elsewhere during 1977, the LPYS were able to give leadership to the energies of the unorganised black youth, where the sects were in confusion and disarray.

The sects have tried to jump on the bandwagon of immigrants' reaction against Fascist provocation, and the capitalist Press has been only too eager to focus attention on their activities and present these clashes as private gang wars between rival Tweedledum-and-Tweedledee "extremists", the political equivalent of football hooligans. In reality the activities of the sects have been entirely peripheral. For these interlopers, it is a desperate struggle to *isolate* the blacks from their natural allies, the Labour Movement. That is why they insist on usurping the organised workers' role and portraying their own puny forces as the only protection of the

immigrants against Fascism. After all, the only protection of the for the existence of these fringe groups comes from monitoring the first primitive stirrings of hitherto unorganised strata coming fresh into the class struggle—women, blacks, students, etc.—and try to poison them against the Labour Movement by playing on the conservative role of the bureaucracy which had previously done so little to win them into its ranks. These strata are vital auxiliaries to the embattled heavy battalions of the Labour Movement, capable at a time of revolution of the greatest heroism and self-sacrifice, and at particular junctures even far in advance of the traditional organised workers. Only by convincing them that they can never move the ponderous machine of the Labour Movement into action, can the sects have any hope of scraping together a social base for their own organisations.

In vain! For the immigrants themselves the issue is too serious to be resolved by frivolous prattle about “incident centres” “vigilantes” and “black self-defence”. Nothing could be more contemptuous of the immigrants than to make arrogant concessions to them of their ‘right’ to defend themselves. Socialists are naturally in favour of the right of any individual or any community to defend itself against the attacks of the bigots. But the problem does not end there. In Northern Ireland we have a crushing refutation of this idea. Entire paramilitary *armies* stocked with the most sophisticated firearms have proved incapable of offering real protection to either community. It is not for us merely to concede the blacks their “rights”, we must offer a *lead* based on the concentrated historical experience of the working class. Marxists must hammer home the theme that there is only one force in society strong enough to defend the livelihoods and indeed the lives of workers, strong enough ultimately to sweep away the social system which spawns racialism and Fascism—the Trade Union and Labour Movement, with more than 11 million “soldiers” in its ranks.

The working class, it is true, is not composed of saints. Born amid the filth and slime of capitalism, workers are prey to the daily brainwashing of the media which reinforce every backward prejudice, in relation to race, women, gambling, swearing, etc. But the Labour Movement is the embodiment of all that is most progressive in society, the embryo of socialism within the womb of the old barbarism, a living monument to the fact that workers have no alternative but to rise above divisions of craft, nationality, sex or race, and give organisational permanence to the lessons learned on the picket line.

Marxists cannot determine the extent of racial prejudice within the working class, by consulting snap opinion polls, or election

results. They look at the question dialectically, with relation to the ebb and flow of the class struggle.

The recent racist attacks have sent a shudder of revulsion down the spine of the Labour Movement. After the catastrophe of the 1930s, organised workers understand instinctively in the marrow of their bones that Fascism must never again be allowed to conquer. These ugly attacks have acted like the vaccine of a deadly bacillus, building up the resistance of anti-bodies and immunising the Movement against the danger of future and far more formidable attacks from a *mass* Fascist movement.

That is why the ideas of Marxists within the Labour Movement on how to fight Fascism have earned tremendous respect and authority over the last year or two. The resolution passed at the 1976 LP Conference on Racism, was moved and seconded by LPYS members and overwhelmingly carried. It was on the initiative of the LPYS that the NEC of the Labour Party called a mass demonstration of 30,000 workers, in conjunction with the TUC, against racism. This is more than the Labour Party at national level was ever prepared to do against Mosley in the 1930s. The stupid tactics of the ostrich, of "burying your head in the sand" and hoping that the Fascists would just go away if we didn't give them "publicity"—an attitude that proved suicidal for the workers' parties in Italy and Germany—that attitude, though still expressed by right-wing Labour leaders like Merlyn Rees, no longer prevails within the Party. In most Trade Unions, too, the initiative has been taken for a leafletting and educational campaign on these issues. At this early stage in the fight to defend the Labour Movement from Fascism, these signs bode well.

However, it is not what we mean by a real campaign. The weed of racism has to be torn up before it grows. The only way to destroy it is by using the full force of authority of the trade union movement, to hold factory meetings in working time, organise token strikes and even if necessary at a later stage a token general strike, to hammer home to the whole working class how deadly serious the issue is. The Fascists are a fifth column of bosses' men. They must not be allowed a foothold in the factories where their only effect will be to turn worker against worker. They must be cleared out of the unions, and out of the factories, to neutralise them. Moreover, nobody even slightly tainted with racial prejudice must be allowed any responsible office within the Labour Movement, whether as MPs, councillors, or Trades Council officials, or as shop stewards or humble ward collectors. Otherwise the task of integrating workers of all races into the Movement will be hampered.

Even the limited response of the Movement up to now, together

with the resistance of immigrants, has thrown the ruling class into panic. It is noticeable that the previously friendly propaganda of the Press towards the NF, presenting it as a party of "patriots" and for "law and order", suddenly stopped after the Southall events, and even more clearly after the Lewisham confrontation. The Nazi pedigree of Tyndall and Webster only came out into the light of day after that. Similarly, all the pious cant about 'Freedom of speech' up to 13th August 1977 changed overnight into appeals for a ban on "provocative marches".

It was the warning by the secretary of the North-West Region of the TUC that anything up to 20-30,000 trade unionists would attend the counter-demonstration to the NF's march in Hyde, that led the authorities to "ban" that march. But what happened on the day was a complete vindication of the position put alone by the Marxists against the effectiveness of "bans" proclaimed by the State. In the event, the NF used the "ban" to play hide and seek with the Labour Movement, in shameless collusion with the police. The Chief Constable admitted that he kept the eventual route of their march secret so that the counter-demonstrators were kept guessing and their forces were dispersed. What an irony for "Britain's fastest-growing party"! It can only venture on to the streets by keeping its route a secret. One man, the NF's corpulent organiser Martin Webster, had to shelter behind 4,000 police to exercise his "democratic right" to walk along the advertised route! No, to expect the police and the courts to crack down on the NF is naive. As with the Public Order Act of 1936, any law ostensibly aimed at the Fascists would only boomerang on the democratic rights of the Labour Movement. Only one force can "ban" Fascism—the Labour Movement, by physically denying to them the use of the streets.

After the clash in Red Lion Square in 1974, the NF leaders were crowing and bragging: "Let the police clear out of our way so that we can deal with the Red scum!" Today, they have to go whining and snivelling for police protection. That is the measure of how far the balance of forces has changed.

NATIONAL FRONT IN CRISIS

When we look at the little embittered Fascist groups of human trash scattered across Europe today, we see another clear case of Marx's famous aphorism: "History repeats itself, the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce". After the collapse of the dictatorships in Portugal, Greece and Spain, what chance do they

have? Forces that a generation ago, could sound the fanfare for a "thousand-year Reich" have now abandoned even the ambition of taking power in their own right. The MSI in Italy, which enjoyed the patronage and subsidies of Big Business and the Christian Democratic functionaries, and assembled a vast armoury of weapons to intimidate the working class, has abandoned its forlorn dreams of resurrecting the glories of Mussolini's Empire. It acts merely to sow panic and confusion through its bombings, assassinations and beatings, in exactly the same way as the Chilean Patria y Libertad, to intensify the atmosphere of insecurity gripping the middle class and stampede them into support for an authoritarian military dictatorship which could offer "Law and Order". They are maintained merely as an auxiliary and a reserve weapon. But the Italian ruling class has many times in the last 17 years moved right to the brink of a military coup, with every detail organised down to time, date, place and personel, only to recoil with dread at the last possible moment. Italy 1977 is not even comparable to Greece 1967. With up to twenty million workers on token general strikes, any move in this direction would mean a declaration of civil war—and the capitalists nowadays don't feel sure that they could win.

The National Front was formed ten years ago as a fusion of various fringe sects, from the ex-Nazi Greater Britain Movement and British National Party, to the blimps and boneheads of the League of Empire Loyalists. Since there was only room for one Fuhrer per party, every paranoid had to set up his own party in order adequately to indulge his delusions. But Tyndall and Webster were the only Fascists with a certain nose for political perspectives. They saw that to build even a serious fringe party, it was necessary to throw off the trappings of swastikas, jackboots and the Hitler cult, and make a turn towards the Tory Right. By swallowing the LEL, and later by a clever infiltration of the Tory Monday Club which was moving clearly towards classic Fascist ideas, they made great gains and managed temporarily to cloak themselves in respectable garb. But recent events have blown their cover. Tyndall and Webster are personally too tainted with the smear of Nazism for the NF to transform itself into a mass party.

Already one split has shaken the NF. The former Tory councillor John Kingsley Read, who privately boasted that he was "a bigger Nazi than any of the others", formed the rival "National Party" in the attempt to exploit Tyndall's fatal weakness. That party has now split four ways. These splinterings are only the first of many, a foreshadowing of the disintegration of the NF that is coming. The same process has led to a crippling split in the Italian MSI.

Caught between the need to whip up the thugs and offer them the

excitement of a fight, and the need to reassure the petit-bourgeoisie of their respectability, the NF will be driven in opposite directions. This will be all the more intense a contradiction as the class struggle revives. Under the Tory Government of 1970-74, the NF was torn in confusion as to what position it should take towards the strike wave. At one moment it would accuse the Tories of "fermenting class war and dividing the nation" and talk of opposing the wage freeze, in the effort to curry favour inside the trade unions, in the next breath it would demand the imposition of the "Industrial Relations Act" laws to "discipline" the unions as they courted the bankrupted petit-bourgeoisie. In the last three years of relative industrial peace they have sat astride two horses—but at least so far they have not been galloping in opposite directions. But it is amusing to see the NF's utter confusion on Grunwicks—against the black workers, and against the NAFU, against Ward and against the "mob" picketing the gates.... A Fascist party can only be built on the basis of appeasing the prejudices of the ruined small businessmen who have traditionally supported the Tory Party, and that means it will have to settle on a crude anti-union crusade. And this will cut off its last tenuous bases of support in the trade unions.

The handfuls of bullies will be increasingly impatient with the NF's public claims that it is not Nazi. They will be attracted to the open Nazi gangs like the British Movement, Column 88 and the League of St George (of which there is an overlapping membership with the NF in any case). The example of Derek Day and his Hoxton barrow-boys shows this trend. On the other hand, the bulk of the petit-bourgeois rabble will find plenty of room for them in a Thatcher/Joseph Tory Party over the next period. It is groups like the National Association for Freedom, no doubt, financed from very dubious sources, the "Anti-Communism Movement" of the notorious strike breaker the Dowager Lady Birdwood, and other new groupings like the Middle Class Association (led by a Tory MP) and the National Federation of the Self-Employed, that show the outline under relatively innocuous titles today of what could become a mass Fascist movement later.

The Monday Club, which is firmly based within the Tory Party, has called for "the rejection of liberal democracy as electoral bribery with the wealth of the nation as the plunder" since "Government is too important to be left to democracy." It has praised Salazar as a statesman who promoted "the higher values of the human personality and the Christian destiny of Man". The NF brazenly announced that "the Monday Club has a useful purpose as a rallying point and recruiting ground", and the Monday Club returned the compliment in publicly welcoming the "notable contributions" of

"extraparliamentary forces on the Right." (Monday World.)

Up until 1964 the monopolies were well represented in the leadership of the Tory Party, by far-sighted strategists like Churchill, Eden and Macmillan. After a frivolous interlude under Sir Alec Douglas-Home, came the Heath era, under which City whizz-kids and tycoons took over, direct and pliable puppets of the monopolies who no longer had the same room for manoeuvre after Britain's long historic decline. Now, the pressures of the reactionary rabble in the Associations forced the MPs to vote for the utterly brainless leadership of Thatcher, beside whom Heath looks like a statesman. After all, he was "moderated" by the miners and the working class in general lessons that Thatcher has yet to benefit from.

The ruling class in any case has grave reservations about whipping up the racial issue too much. They want to avoid at this stage any suggestion of developing a Northern Ireland-type situation, with black "no-go areas", etc. Apart from other considerations, they have to take into consideration the changed role of British Imperialism, which depends nowadays on trade and investment links with nominally independent colonial regimes, whose position would be untenable if they maintained links with a Britain in which their *own* "kith and kin" were the victims of a "race war". Foreign Secretary David Owen, writing in the "Observer" (9.10.77) that the Labour Government "as a matter of conviction and policy is implacably opposed to racialism in all its forms", had the frankness also to point out that "this is not only our moral obligation: it is the assertion of our long-term national interest. Last year, trade in each direction with South Africa was worth more than £600 million. Black Africa took more than £1.3 billion of British exports, twice as much as South Africa. Nigeria has now replaced South Africa as our largest single trading partner on that continent."

British capitalism therefore has a big stake to lose if it tolerates widespread racial violence at home. It is significant that Tyndall admitted that he had been offered money from one big-business consortium if he was prepared to let the racial issue lapse and concentrate on union bashing and the need for "discipline" and "law and order". That is the pointer to the kind of mass Fascist movement that could develop later, draped in the Union Jack, and appealing to nostalgia for the "Empire", with the racial issue taking second place.

Such a Party could still have no hope of taking power by itself. It could however play a vital role as the auxiliary to the official organs of the state, paving the way for a military takeover like that of Chile.

Never again will the capitalists entrust power to unpredictable

maniacs like Hitler and Mussolini, inebriated with their own rantings and blinded to reality. Last time they ended up losing half of Europe from the realm of landlordism and capitalism. It was never their original intention even then to hand over the power to them. At the crucial moment they found themselves manoeuvred into relinquishing day-to-day control of their own state, as a lesser evil than revolution. They will be determined now to ensure that the Fascist gangs are kept firmly in their place, within the limits of their classic function as unofficial volunteer auxiliaries, as thugs, provocateurs and assassins.

If a military dictatorship were ever allowed to take power in Britain, it would make the Chilean junta look liberal. It would take the opportunity immediately, precisely because it was aware of its own insecure base, to liquidate hundreds of thousands of trade union militants and Labour activists. But even then it could never succeed in modern conditions in stabilising itself. If in backward Portugal, parties based on the working class, which was only one third of the population, rose like a phoenix from the ashes to win two-thirds of the votes in 1975, if Spain and Italy today are the most "ungovernable" countries in Europe after 22 years of Mussolini and nearly 40 years of Franco, then the lesson is clear. While capitalism survives, so will the class struggle, and the political ideas which express the straining of all society towards the resolution of the conflict in a socialist organisation of society.

Only after a series of crushing defeats could the workers in any advanced capitalist country fall victim to counter-revolution. That is proved by the vacillations of the Italian ruling class in carrying through a military coup, the only policy that could even temporarily assure it of stability. The balance of forces between the two antagonistic giants, of Labour with its teeming millions of workers, increasingly skilled and educated, and with boundless resourcefulness, ingenuity and endurance, and Capital which has concentrated the industrial wealth of society into the hands of a few monopolies, has swung irretrievably to the side of the workers.

The last tattered remains of pre-war European fascism on the Iberian peninsula have been destroyed. But this does not mean that Fascism is nothing but an exhibit in a museum of political antiquities, like slavery or the divine right of Kings. To shrug aside the activities of Fascism in its new guise would be just as irresponsible as to react hysterically. Capitalism is being dragged reluctantly to a showdown with the Labour Movement. In the approaching class battles in Europe all the latent industrial power of the Labour Movement will be converted into revolutionary energy. The workers will have many opportunities to change society, to learn

from setbacks inevitable along the way, to test out alternative programmes and build a party capable of harnessing their energies, before the possibility will crystallise that it could once again fall victim to counter-revolution. But the Chilean defeat remains a sombre warning of the horrors that could befall us if we fail to act decisively.

We are republishing this pamphlet which gives a brilliant insight into the historical record of Fascism, and into the attitude taken to it by the British ruling class, confident that it will make an important contribution to the vital discussion now gathering momentum, that it will help to rearm the Labour Movement politically for the great struggles lying ahead.

Roger Silverman

December 1977

The Menace of Fascism

**what it is
and
how to fight it**

MOSLEY'S EARLY SUPPORTERS

Only two years after the war allegedly fought to destroy fascism the British fascists have commenced to regroup their forces. Throughout the country cautiously and unobtrusively at first, but more and more boldly, the fascists have come into the open.

At first they emerged as local and separate organisations and adopted a host of names for reasons of expediency. The aim was clearly to prepare for unification at a later stage. Among the most important of these organisations were the British League of Ex-Servicemen and Women, Mosley's Book Club and Discussion Group, the Union of British Freedom, the Sons of St. George (Derby), the Imperial Defence League (Manchester), the British Workers' Party of National Unity (Bristol), the Corporate Club (a student group at Oxford University).

These organisations are not short of money. Before the war, the British Union of Fascists (BUF) had extensive funds at its disposal. The fascists had intimate links with Big Business. Mosley boasted that he had spent £96,000 of his own personal fortune "in support of my beliefs during my political life." On two occasions, Mosley married into millionaire families. In 1920 he married Lady Cynthia Curzon, a daughter of the late Marquis Curzon of Kedleston and a

grand daughter of Levi Zeigler Leiter a Jewish Chicago millionaire. Lady Cynthia inherited £28,000 a year from her own family (there are two children of this marriage). After the death of his first wife, a few years prior to the war, Mosley married again. This time, into the Guinness millions. His wife is the sister of the notorious Unity Mitford friend of Hitler.

In the early days of the fascist movement, Mosley was enthusiastically backed by a number of prominent capitalist and military figures. True, later when Mosley became discredited and it was clear that the movement was not timely, many of them dropped away or fell into the background. Apart from the open members of the Fascist Party, a powerful club composed of members of the ruling class was formed to back the blackshirts. In a pamphlet entitled "Who Backs Mosley" published by Labour Research, some enlightening facts were revealed:

"On New Years day 1934, was formed the January Club whose object is to form a solid Blackshirt front. The chairman Sir John Squire, editor of the London Mercury said that it was not a fascist organisation but admitted that "the members, who belonged to all political parties, were for the most part in sympathy with the fascist movement." [The Times 22.3.34]."

The January Club held its dinners at the Savoy and the Hotel Splendide. The Tatler shows pictures of the club assemblies, distinguished by evening dress, wines, flowers and a general air of luxury. The leader is enjoying himself among his own class..."

Among the members of the Club were:

Colonel Lord Middleton a director of the Yorkshire Insurance Co., Malton Investment Trust, British Coal Refining Processes Ltd., and three other companies. He owns about 15,000 acres of land and minerals in Nottinghamshire.

General Sir Hubert de la Poer Gough, GCMG, KCB, KCVO, Commander of the Fifth Army 1916-18 and Chief of the Allied Mission to the Baltic 1919 (Russian intervention), now director of Siemens Bros., Caxton Electric Development Ltd., Enfield Rolling Mills and two other companies.

Air Commodore Chamier, CB, CMG, OBE, DSO, late Indian Army. Now aviation consultant and agent to and lately director of Vickers Aviation Ltd.

Vincent C. Vickers, director of the London Assurance Corporation and a large shareholder in Vickers Ltd.

Lord Lloyd, former Governor of Bombay...

The Earl of Glasgow, Privy Councillor, brother in law to Sir Thomas Inskip, the Attorney General, who was responsible for the Sedition Bill in the House of Commons. The Earl owns Kelburn Castle Ayrshire and about 2,500 acres.

Major Nathan, Liberal MP for NE Bethnal Green...a member of the Jewish Agency under the mandate for Palestine...Chairman of the Anglo-Chinese Finance and Trade Corporation.

Ward Price, special correspondent to the Daily Mail and director of Associated Newspapers and British Movietone News.

Wing Commander Sir Louis Greig, KBE, CBO, RAF, partner in J and H Scrimageour, stockbrokers, director of Handley Page Ltd., and an insurance company and Gentleman Usher in Ordinary to the King.

Lady Ravendale, Baroness, sister-in-law to Mosley and grand daughter of Levi Leiter.

Count and Countess Paul Munster.

Major Metcalfe, MVO, MC, brother-in-law of Lady Cynthia Mosley and Lady Ravendale, late aide-de-camp to the Prince of Wales and the Commander in Chief in India.

Sir Philip Magnus, Bart, a leading Conservative.

Sir Charles Petrie...

Hon J F Rennel Rodd, heir to Baron Rennell and a partner in Morgan Grenfell & Co.

Ralph D Blumenfeld, Chairman of the Daily Express, formerly editor. He was once editor of the Daily Mail. He is the founder of the Anti-Socialist Union and a member of its Executive Committee.

It is significant that among the early supporters of Mosley are named a number of wealthy Jews. This was before Mosley adopted anti-semitism as an indispensable means of rallying ignorant and backward supporters.

Mosley had the financial backing of fascists abroad. He received a subsidy of £60,000 a year from Mussolini. This has been confirmed by the discovery of documents in the archives in Rome dated 1935 and was revealed by Chuter Ede, the Home Secretary in the House of Commons.

Mosley paid visits to Hitler and Mussolini and was in close touch with the Nazi leaders.

With the outbreak of war, the Mosley movement declined. Like other fascist movements in Europe, the BUF became an agent of German imperialism on whose victory they banked to assure their future. The British capitalists at war with German imperialism had no use for the fascists and were compelled to illegalise them as part of the ideological 'war against fascism'. But Mosley was well protected in prison and pampered with many of the comforts to which he was accustomed, including the best food, furniture and servants. As one of their class who had perhaps ventured too early, the British capitalists treated him solicitously with an eye to the future.

ARE THE BRITISH CAPITALISTS ANTI-FASCIST?

The British capitalist class fought the war, not because they opposed fascism and what it represents, but in a desperate struggle

against rival imperialisms for world markets, for sources of raw material—for profit. Their victory has not brought and will not bring the end of fascism.

Throughout the world, the British ruling class has supported fascism and reaction against the progressive movements of the working class. Let us take a few examples.

When Mussolini was subjecting the Italian working class to his castor oil 'treatments' and other bestial tortures, Churchill became deeply impressed with his "gentle and simple bearing." Speaking in Rome on January 20th 1927, Churchill found only praise for the fascists:

"I could not help being charmed, like so many other people have been, by Signor Mussolini's gentle and simple bearing and by his calm detached poise in spite of so many burdens and dangers. Secondly, anyone could see that he thought of nothing but the lasting good as he understood it, of the Italian people, and that no lesser interest was of the slightest consequence to him. If I had been an Italian I am sure that I should have been whole heartedly with you from the start to finish in your triumphant struggle against the bestial appetites and passions of Leninism. I will however, say a word on an international aspect of Fascism. Externally, your movement has rendered service to the whole world. The great fear which has always beset every democratic leader or a working class leader has been that of being undermined by someone more extreme than he. Italy has shown that there is a way of fighting the subversive forces which can rally the masses of the people, properly led, to value and wish to defend the honour and stability of civilised society. She has provided the necessary antidote to the Russian poison. Hereafter no great nation will be unprovided with an ultimate means of protection against the cancerous growth of Bolshevism."

Here the outspoken mouthpiece of British capitalism clearly indicates that in the last resort, faced with the revolutionary working class, the 'nation' (the capitalists) will not be 'unprovided'; it will always be able to imitate Mussolini and adopt the fascist method of rule over the workers.

In the struggle of China against Japanese imperialism, the British backed Japan because they saw in her victory a bulwark against the rising struggles of the masses of Asia. Mr. L S Amery, then Secretary of State for India, a position which he held right up till 1945—said on February 27th 1933 in the House of Commons:

"I confess that I see no reason whatever why, either in act or in word, or in sympathy, we should go individually or intentionally against Japan in this matter. Japan has got a very powerful case based upon fundamental realities...Who is there among us to cast the first stone and to say Japan ought not to have acted with the object of creating peace and order in Manchuria and defending herself against the continual aggression of vigorous Chinese nationalism? Our whole policy in India, our whole policy in Egypt,

stand condemned if we condemn Japan."

The Nazis were aided and financed by the British ruling class. Hitler received the unqualified approval and support of British Big Business. Lloyd George the 'Liberal' described Hitler as a 'bulwark' against Bolshevism. As early as February 1934 the British Government published a memorandum which allowed for an immediate increase in all German arms. "The German claim to equality of rights in the matter of arms cannot be resisted and ought not to be resisted. You will have to face rearmament of Germany," declared the British Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon, on February 6th 1934. Export to Germany of unwrought nickel, cotton waste, the basis for gun cotton, aircraft and tanks rose tremendously. When asked in March 1934 if Vickers Ltd., were engaged in rearming of Hitler's Germany, its chairman replied:

"I cannot give an assurance in definite terms, but I can tell you nothing is being done without the complete sanction of our own Government." (Henry Owen in 'War is Terribly Profitable').

The big financiers and bankers openly advocated a policy of support and assistance for Hitler. A short time after he came to power the Governor of the Bank of England declared that loans to Hitler were justified as "an investment against Bolshevism."

Large loans were given to Hitler. His occupation of the Rhineland, the rearmament of Germany, the 'Anschluss' with Austria, the seizure of Czechoslovakia—all were supported by British capitalism. The reason; they feared a Nazi collapse and what might replace it. Just before the war, the British, through R S Hudson, then Secretary of the Department of Overseas Trade, made an offer of a loan of a thousand million pounds to conciliate the Nazis and prevent them from expanding at the expense of British imperialism while remaining a bastion against the German workers and against the working class throughout Europe.

Churchill looked upon the Nazis with unbounded approval in the 1939 edition 'Great Contemporaries', Winston Churchill wrote about Hitler's rise to power:

"The story of that struggle cannot be read without admiration for the courage, the perseverance, the vital force which enabled him to challenge, defy, conciliate, or overcome all authorities or resistance which barred his path...I have always said that if Great Britain were defeated in war, I hoped that we should find a Hitler to lead us back to our rightful position among the nations."*

Lord Beaverbrook, writing in the Daily Express on October 31st 1938 said:

"We certainly credit Hitler with honesty and sincerity. We believe in his purpose stated over and over again to seek an accommodation with us, and we accept to the full the implications of the Munich

*The same book by Churchill contains a venomous attack on Trotsky, who earns his bitter hatred, as builder of the Red Army and one of the leaders of the October revolution.

document.”

This, of course, did not prevent him from holding ministerial office in the Coalition Government in the ‘war against fascism.’

In the Spanish civil war, the British capitalists were in sympathy with Franco. Under the cover of so-called ‘non-intervention’ they assisted him to crush the Republic.

No reactionary anti-working class movement went unsupported and unaided by British capitalism. Only when the Nazis encroached on their preserves they declared war in the name of ‘anti-fascism’. But when the needs of their class are such that fascism becomes necessary, they will as readily turn to Mosley or some other fascist adventurer, just as the German capitalists turned to Hitler and the Italians to Mussolini. Today, the fascists are not necessary for the defence of their profits. But tomorrow...

WHAT IS FASCISM AND HOW DOES IT ARISE

Most important for anti-fascists and working people is an understanding of fascism and why it arises. Without such an understanding of fascism it is not possible to effectively combat and destroy it. And unless it is viewed from the angle of the class structure of capitalist society and the class forces at work, the workers cannot prepare themselves for the future struggle against any rising fascist movement.

Capitalism, as a system of society, developed out of the decay of feudalism. In the period of its rise, up to the outbreak of the first world war, it was a progressive system because it resulted in the development of the forces of production i.e. the power of man over nature, and consequently raised the level of culture of mankind. Despite crises, wealth increased and in the main capitalist countries, the standards and the culture of the masses rose. With the development of technique the increased productivity of labour resulted in a further expansion of industry at the expense of the older methods of production and with this a numerical increase of the working class.

During the past 100 years, in their fight against capitalism, the working class organised their own class organisations, the trade unions and labour parties. It must always be remembered that the rights of today—the right to withhold labour—to strike, to organise, the right of free speech and press, and even the right to vote, were not handed down benevolently by the capitalist class. **These were won only after a bitter and ceaseless class struggle on the part of the workers.** Before the first world war, the capitalists could still afford to give concessions from the enormous profits which the expansion of capitalism and imperialism brought them.

But capitalism inevitably brings in its train the concentration of capital and the growth of monopoly and of the combines. Because of the development of the world market, which is the historical function of the capitalist system, at a certain stage the capitalist nations inevitably and necessarily come into conflict with each other in the frantic endeavour to find and expand markets. The development of the productive forces expands more rapidly than the markets, outstrips the boundaries of the national state and private ownership of the means of production. It is this contradiction that led to the first world war, as it led to the second.

Capitalism in its last stages, not only reduces the working class, which it cannot provide with any security in either employment or sustenance, to the state of pauperism. It ruins also the middle class—small shopkeepers and business men, professional people, white collar workers, small traders and all that strata of the population whose social position is lodged between the industrial working class and the capitalist class.

To combat the working class it is not possible for the capitalists to rely on the old forces of repression embodied in the state machine. In modern conditions no state can last very long which does not, at least in its initial stages, possess a mass basis. A military police dictatorship does not serve the purpose. The capitalists find a way out in fascism which finds its mass support in the middle class on the basis of anti-capitalist demagogy. It is important to understand that fascism represents a mass movement, that of the disillusioned middle class.

The working class, in times of crisis, seek to express their aspirations and struggle through their existing organisations. Joined together by production, organised as a class in large factories and plants, the workers think in terms of a socialist solution to their problems. Their social position gives rise to social consciousness.

The middle class, because of their position in society, wedged half way between the capitalists and the workers, sway between these classes. If the working class cannot show a revolutionary way out for the middle class, the latter turns to the capitalist class, and becomes the main pillar of support for the fascist movement.

With the increasing rivalry on the world market, unable to secure their position while the organisations of the working class exist, the capitalists seek a way out of the crisis by the destruction of these organisations, thereby depriving the workers of the weapons through which they defend their rights and conditions. As the crisis affects one country after another, the capitalists look to fascist movements to smash the working class organisations and parties. Herein lies the function of fascism.

The difference between capitalist democracy and fascism is explained thus by Leon Trotsky:

“After fascism is victorious, finance capital gathers into its hands, as in a vice of steel, directly and immediately, all the organs and

institutions of sovereignty, the executive, administrative and educational powers of the state: the entire state apparatus together with the army, the municipalities, the universities, the schools, the press, the trade unions and the co-operatives. When a state turns Fascist it does not only mean that the forms and methods of government are changed in accordance with the patterns set by Mussolini—the changes in this sphere ultimately play a minor role—but it means, first of all for the most part, that the workers' organisations are annihilated, that the proletariat is reduced to an amorphous state, and that a system of administration is created which penetrates deeply into the masses and which serves to frustrate the independent crystallisation of the proletariat. Therein precisely is the gist of Fascism."

MUSSOLINI'S RISE TO POWER

Fascism first appeared in Italy. At the end of the great world war of 1914-1918, the Italian ruling class became terrified at the revolutionary upsurges of the masses. The capitalist newspapers wrote that the workers and peasants in Italy were behaving as if Lenin and Trotsky were masters of Italy. A whole series of strike struggles took place—1,663 in 1919, 1,881 in 1920. The workers forced concessions and reforms, better wages, the 8 hour day, general recognition of the trade unions, and a voice in production through factory committees. In September 1920, when the industrialists resorted to lock-out as a reply to the demand for increased wages, 600,000 Italian metal workers occupied the mills and carried on production themselves, through their own elected shop committees.

The peasantry too were affected by the general revolutionary post war wave. They began the seizure of the land. The Liberal Government was forced to give them the right to remain on the land they had spontaneously seized, on condition that they organised themselves into co-operatives. The agricultural labourers formed strong unions known as the 'Red Leagues.'

The capitalists and landowners were paralysed. Power was in the grasp of the working class. The ruling class manoeuvred in face of the onslaught of the masses, and began to seek a way out, planning a counter offensive.

At the beginning of April 1919, in Genoa the big industrialists and landowners formed an alliance for the fight against 'Bolshevism'. "This gathering", wrote Rossi (the anti-fascist later murdered by Mussolini's agents) in his book *La Naissance du Fascisme*, "is the first step towards the reorganisation of capitalist forces to meet the threatening situation." After the formation of a

national General Federation of Industry and a General Federation of Agriculture, the capitalists commenced to subsidise the armed hooligan bands of Benito Mussolini.

This band was a specially trained anti-labour militia whose object was to terrorise the workers and at that stage, to disrupt their organisations. Those anti-labour leagues began, openly, to attack meetings of workers. In Milan, stronghold of the Socialists, as early as April 15th 1919, a demonstration and march of Socialists including women and children was attacked by the Fasci who were armed with daggers and hand grenades. In groups of two or three dozens, they attacked peaceful demonstrations of workers all over Italy. On the same day as the Milan episode, the offices of the official Italian Socialist paper *Avanti* were sacked by the fascists. On December 1st 1919, the Socialist deputies were attacked and beaten as they left the House of Parliament.

But the failure of the working class to take power enabled the capitalists to undermine the gains the workers had made, and the aggravated crisis in Italy made the ruined middle class easy victims of fascist demagogy. Because of the smallness and unimportance of the Jewish population in Italy, anti-semitism was not part of the arsenal of Italian fascism.* Their demagogy centred on opposition to the trusts and support for the little man. To the thugs and adventurers in Mussolini's militia, were added desperate students, unemployed, professional people and middle class recruits generally.

The revolutionary energies of the masses ebbed. The fascists lavishly financed by the big industrialists and landowners, began a real offensive against the workers. In Bologna, centre of Emilia's 'Red Leagues', the municipal elections in November 1920, brought a victory for the Socialist Party. On November 21st the Blackshirts attacked the Town Hall and in the struggle a reactionary councillor was killed. (It appeared as if he had been killed by a fascist gunman). This was the signal which the fascists had been awaiting. 'According to Gorgolini one of Mussolini's supporters, this "opened the great fascist era...the law of brutal retaliation, atavistic and savage, reigned in the Peninsula. It was the will of the fascists,"

In the villages, armed by the landowners and supplied with small cars, the Blackshirts began punitive expeditions. Having wrecked the organisations of the workers in the villages, they now began to attack the workers in the towns. In 1921, in Trieste, Medina, Florence, and elsewhere, the Blackshirts wrecked the Labour Exchange and the offices of the Co-operative and Labour newspapers.

*Mainly because of foreign policy considerations in 1938 the Italian fascists adopted anti-semitism. Until then, the Italian Jewish capitalists supported Mussolini in common with the rest of the capitalist class.

BACKING OF THE CAPITALIST STATE— POLICE, LAW COURTS AND ARMY

In their offensive against the working class the Blackshirt thugs had the full backing of the forces of the capitalist state machine. The police recruited for the fascists, urging the criminal elements to join them, on the promise of all sorts of benefits and immunities. While the police placed their cars at the disposal of the fascists and while giving permits to them to bear arms, they persistently refused applications for arms by workers and peasants. A fascist student sent a jeering letter to a Communist paper, in which he wrote:

“We have the police disarm you, before we advance against you, not out of fear of you whom we despise, but because our blood is precious and should not be wasted against vile and base plebians.” (Rossi—*ibid*).

Meanwhile, the ‘impartial’ courts of law handed out “centuries in prison sentences to the anti-fascists and centuries of absolution for the guilty fascists.” (Gobetti—*La Revolution Liberale*). In 1921 the Minister of Justice, Fera, “sent a communication to the magistrates asking them to forget about the cases involving fascist criminal acts.” (Rosenburg—*Der Weltkampf des Fascismus*).

The army, through its officer caste, backed the fascists to the hilt. “General Badoglio, Chief of Staff of the Italian Army sent a confidential circular to all commandants of military districts stating that the officers then being demobilised (there were about 60,000 of them) would be sent to the most important centres and required to join the fascists, which they would staff and direct. They would continue to receive four-fifths of their pay. Munitions from the State Arsenals came into the hands of the fascist bands, which were trained by officers on leave, or even on active service. Many officers, knowing the sympathies of their superiors, had been won over to fascism, openly adhered to the movement. Cases of collusion between the army and the Blackshirts grew more and more frequent. For instance, the Fascio of Trent broke a strike with the help of an infantry company and the Bolzan Fascio was founded by officers of the 232nd Infantry.” (Daniel Guerin *Fascism and Big Business*)

Within a short space of time, becoming bolder and bolder, the Blackshirts started a campaign to annihilate the workers’ organisations. Malaparte—a fascist ‘theoretician’—related in his ‘*Technique du Coup-d’Etat*, 1931’ that; “Thousands of armed men, sometimes fifteen or twenty thousand, poured into a city or villages borne rapidly on trucks from one province to another.” Daniel Guerin comments; “Every day they attacked the Labour Exchanges and the headquarters of co-operatives and working class publications. In the beginning of August 1922 they seized the City

Halls of Milan and Leghorn which had Socialist administrations, they burned the offices of the newspaper *Avanti* in Milan and *Lavoro* in Genoa; they occupied the port of Genoa, stronghold of the dock workers' labour co-operatives. Such tactics gradually wore out and weakened the organised proletariat, depriving it of its means of action and support. The fascists only waited for the conquest of power to crush it once and for all."

How did the workers' organisations face up to this mortal threat to their very existence? Instead of explaining the nature of fascism to the workers and what it would mean to them if Mussolini came to power, the leaders persisted in deluding themselves and their followers **that the capitalist state would protect them from the menace of these lawless bands.** Guerin relates how "the Socialist and union leaders obstinately refused to reply to fascism blow for blow, to arm and organise themselves in a military fashion." 'Fascism cannot in any case be conquered by an armed struggle, but only in a legal struggle', insisted Battaglia Syndicale for January 29th 1921. As they possessed contacts in the state apparatus, the socialists on several occasions were offered arms to protect themselves from the fascists. But they rejected these offers, saying that it was the duty of the state to protect the citizen against the armed attacks of other citizens.'" (Reference Kurella, *Mussolini ohne Maske* 1931).

The socialists even went to the extent of signing a peace pact with Mussolini on August 3rd 1921. This, on the initiative of the Liberal Prime Minister and his statement that he desired to 'reconcile' the socialists and the fascists. Turati, leader of the socialists in Italy appealed to Mussolini:

"I shall say to you only this: Let us really disarm!"

The Blackshirts must have laughed to themselves. They utilised this position to better prepare. They denounced the pact and redoubled their offensive against the workers' organisations.

The socialists pleaded to the state to take action against the fascists. And the state took action. **Raids were undertaken, not against the fascists, but against the workers and their organisations.**

Because of the failure of the socialists and trade union leaders, left wing militants of various tendencies—revolutionary trade unionists, left wing socialists, young communists, socialists and republicans, with a few ex-army officers organised armed anti-fascist militias in 1921 on the initiative of Mingrino. They called themselves the '**Ardit del Popolo**'. They undertook this in the teeth of the opposition of the Labour and trade union leaders. Unfortunately, the young and weak Communist Party adopted an ultra left attitude towards the problem. They split away and organised their own 'Squadrons of Action'.

"The result was." writes Guerin, "that when the Black Shirts undertook a 'punitive expedition' against a locality and attacked headquarters of labour organisations or the 'red' municipalities the

militant workers were either incapable of resisting or offered an improvised anarchic resistance that was generally ineffective. For the most part, the aggressor remained the master of the field..."

Guerin writes further:

"After a 'punitive expedition', the anti-fascists abstained from reprisals, respected the 'fascists' residences and launched no counter attacks. They were satisfied with proclaiming 'general protest strikes'. But these strikes, intended to force the authorities to protect labour organisations against the fascist terror, resulted only in ridiculous parleys with the authorities who were in reality the accomplices of fascism. (Silone 'Der Fascismus' 1934). As these strikes were unaccompanied by direct action, they left the enemy's force intact. On the other hand, the fascists profited by the strikes to redouble their violence. They protected scabs, served as strike breakers themselves and 'in that threatening vacuum a strike creates around itself, dealt swift and violent blows at the heart of the enemy organisations.' (Malparte, Technique du Coup d'Etat 1931). **However on the rare occasions when the anti-fascists offered an organised resistance to fascism, they temporarily got the upper hand.** For instance in Parma in August 1922, the working class population successfully checked a fascist attack in spite of the concentration of several thousand militiamen 'because the defence was organised in accordance with Military methods' under the direction of Arditi del Popolo." (A. Rossi La Naissance du Fascisme 1938).

As the intention of the fascists to seize power became more and more obvious, Turati, the socialist spokesman, appealed to the King in July 1922 to "remind him that he is the supreme defender of the Constitution." Meanwhile the capitalists had come to their own conclusions. Rossi writes of "some very lively conferences that took place between Mussolini... and the heads of the General Federation of Industry, Sig. Benni and Olivetti. The chiefs of the Banking Association, who had paid out 20 millions to finance the march on Rome, the leaders of the Federation of Industry and the Federation of Agriculture, telegraphed Rome that, in their opinion, the only possible solution was a Mussolini government." Senator Ettore Conti, a big power magnate, sent a similar telegram. "Mussolini was the candidate of the plutocracy and the trade associations."

Despite the fact that the fascists only had 35 deputies in the Italian Parliament out of about 600 or so, the King obedient to the demands of the ruling class, handed power to Mussolini.

Even after the coup of Mussolini in 1922, the reformist leaders were incapable of drawing the lessons from their bitter experiences. "The Italian Socialists, blind as ever, continued to cling to legality and the Constitution. In December 1923 the Federation of Labour sent Mussolini a report of the atrocities committed by fascist bands and asked him to break with his own troops. (Reference: Buozzi and Nitti, Fascisme et Syndicalisme 1930). The Socialist Party took the

electoral campaign of April 1924, very seriously; Turati even had a debate at Turin with a fascist in a hall where Black Shirts guarded the entrance. And when, after Matteotti's assassination a wave of revolt swept over the peninsula, the socialists did not know how to exploit it. 'At the unique moment', Nenni writes, 'for calling the workers into the streets for insurrection, the tactic prevailed of a legal struggle on the judicial and parliamentary plane.' As a gesture of protest, the opposition was satisfied not to appear in parliament, and like ancient plebians they retired to the Aventine. 'WHAT ARE OUR OPPONENTS DOING?' Mussolini mocked in the Chamber. 'ARE THEY CALLING A GENERAL STRIKE OR EVEN PARTIAL STRIKES? ARE THEY TRYING TO PROVOKE REVOLTS IN THE ARMY? NOTHING OF THE SORT. THEY RESTRICT THEMSELVES TO PRESS CAMPAIGNS.' (speech, July 1924), The socialists launched a triple slogan: **Resignation of the Government, dissolution of the militia, new elections.** They continued to display confidence in the King, whom they begged to break with Mussolini, they published, for his enlightenment, petition after petition. But the king disappointed them a second time" (D. Guerin, *Ibid*).

CONDITIONS OF LIFE UNDER MUSSOLINI

Once in power, Mussolini, established the model totalitarian state. Having smashed the organisations of the workers, the way was prepared for a savage attack on the standards of the masses in the interests of Big Business. The main brunt of fascism was borne by the working class, against whom it is aimed above all. With their weapons of struggle broken, with the establishment of scab company unions, the conditions were created to drive down the wages and lower the standards of living of the workers. The Labour unions were crushed. Shop stewards representation in the factories was abolished. The right to strike ended. All union contracts were rendered void. The employer reigned supreme in the factories once again. He became at the same time the 'leader' of his employees. Any attempt to strike was punished with ferocious penalties by the State. To challenge the employer was to challenge the full force of the State. In the words of the fascists: strikes are crimes "against the social community..."

The anti-fascist liberal, Gaetano Salvemini, an authority on Italy, who made a conscientious research into all aspects of life under fascism basing himself on official fascist Government sources, was enabled to show what fascism meant to the Italian people. In his book, **Under the Axe of Fascism**, he revealed that from the very beginning of the Mussolini regime the conditions of the people deteriorated, especially of the unfortunate workers and small peasants. In times of

prosperity as well as during the depths of the slump of 1929-33, there were steady cuts in wages. The hours of work were steadily lengthened without any increase in overtime pay, while the cost of living increased. Giving extensive details of cuts in wages from 1922 right up till 1935, despite all efforts of the regime to conceal this from the outside world, he shows how consumption of the necessities of life steadily decreased.

In the year 1922, with a population of 38,800,000 the consumption of tobacco was 279,000 quintals; by 1932, it had fallen to 245,000 quintals. The consumption of coffee was 472,000 quintals in 1922 and fell in 1932 to 407,000 quintals. These are 'luxuries' for the workers. But in the barest necessities of life, the fall was correspondingly great. Consumption of maize dropped from 27,213,000 quintals to 26,739,000 quintals in 1932. Consumption of wheat fell—and this with the increase in population to 41,400,000 in 1932—from 72,237,000 quintals to 69,204,000 quintals. These figures are taken from official Italian statistics. (The *Annuario Statistico Italiano* for 1922-1925 page 198, and for 1933 page 119). The *Tribuna* of May 1st 1935, revealed a terrible fall in consumption of meat. "The annual consumption of meat, which in 1928 was 22 Kilograms (48.4) per each members of the population (annually) had by 1932 declined to 18 Kilograms (39.6 pounds). The consumption of sugar which rose to 7.5 Kilograms in 1922 dropped to 6.9 in 1932. In England the annual consumption was 40 Kilograms, in France 25, Germany 23 and in even in backward Spain 13 Kilos.

The official unemployment figures in Italy in February of 1933 were 1,229,000. On July 2nd 1934, an official communique of the Italian Government informed us that "in winter of that year 'national solidarity' in Italy gave help 'almost every day to 1,750,000 families!'" In February 1922 there were only 602,000 unemployed and the fascists centred a great deal of their demagogy on the horrors of unemployment.

Thus, the myth that fascism can avoid the crises of capitalism is shown to be a fraud.

Once in power, fascism retains its grip for a long period because of the shattering of the working class organisations. With all the best fighters, the most advanced proletarians in jail or murdered, the working class undergoes a period of demoralisation and apathy. Under the regime of repression and terror, the workers suffer under the greatest disadvantage for a unified struggle against the employers. The inglorious end of Mussolini was a demonstration to the world of the real hatred of the Italian people for the Duce and an exposure of the lie that the Italian masses supported the Black Shirts.

ITALIAN WORKERS AND FASCISM TODAY

It is striking to note the difference between events in Italy after the

second world war and the first.

Mussolini's fall was the signal for a deepseated upsurge of the workers and peasants. Once again a tremendous wave of strikes and demonstrations followed the coup of Badoglio. And after the defeat of the Nazis the workers and peasants armed in their partisan detachments, repeated the process of taking over the factories and the control of the country. One thing stood in the path of workers taking power: the leaders of their own organisations.

This failure has meant for the Italian workers a deterioration of their conditions to a level even lower than existed under Mussolini. The workers have been able to defend themselves to a certain extent because of the unions they have constructed, far more powerful than in the past. But the middle class, ground down to standards even below that of the workers, has provided a favourable basis for the revival of fascist demagogy. They contrasted the promises of the capitalist demerats with their lot. The neo-fascists began to emerge. Armed with the experience of Mussolini's rise to power, the industrialists and land owners proceeded on familiar lines. A May Day meeting in 1947 in Sicily was fired on despite the fact that women and children were participating. In Naples some months before, bands of Monarchists and fascists demonstrated against the Communist Party and other workers' organisations. In the last few months of 1947 workers' meetings were fired on and bombs thrown at premises of workers' organisations. The terror of the fascists was greater in the countryside of the backward South, where the landowners organised the murder of trade union organisers and attempted to terrorise the agricultural workers and peasants against joining the unions.

Within a few months 19 trade union organisers were assassinated in the agricultural districts of the South.

In the North, even in such working class strongholds as Milan, bombs have been placed in the headquarters of the Communist Party. The workers swiftly replied by a general strike in Milan, and immediately took reprisal action against the headquarters of the neo-fascist organisations, l'Uomo Qualunque and Movimento Socialé Italiene, which were set on fire and sacked.

Having had experience of fascism, the Italian workers have not been content to remain on the defensive. In nearly all the big cities, and the small, they have gone on the offensive against the fascists. Demonstrations of over a hundred thousand in Milan, tens of thousands in other cities—Turin, Genoa, Florence, Verona, Bari, Cremona, Rome, Bologna and even in Naples and Palermo (former strongholds of reaction) the workers have made militant attacks on the headquarters of the fascist organisations. The backward South has followed the lead of the North.

Naturally, the police, always conveniently absent or inactive when the fascists have attacked the workers, have been called out to protect the fascists. Troops have been called out in many towns to

assist the police. Tear gas and fire arms have been used against the workers.

In this situation the de Gasperi Government, like its Liberal predecessor of 1920-22 has surreptitiously given assistance and encouragement to the fascists. History repeats itself, but not exactly in the same way. The offensive of the workers led to the defeat of the fascists, who for the time being have been forced to lie low. The workers of Britain can learn a valuable lesson from the recent offensive movement of the Italian workers.

But this lesson has been a purely negative one: if having learned the negative lessons of preventing the fascists from rearing their heads, the workers fail to apply a **positive solution**, the menace of fascism even in Italy will not have been exorcised.

The chronic decay of capitalism in Italy continues. Already there is the mass unemployment of one and a half million workers. The first winds of the new world crisis will send unemployment soaring to record levels. Wracked by crises, the Italian capitalists will turn again to brutal suppression as the only means of stabilising their regime. The lesson of Italy must be learned above all by the vanguard of the working class movement. If they fail to show the alternative of the complete overthrow of the capitalist system and the establishment of workers power and communism, the great offensive spirit of the masses will wane, and demoralisation and indifference will set in. Capitalism breeds fascism; the workers can guarantee the end of fascism only by overthrowing the capitalist system of society.

GERMANY—HOW THE NAZIS CAME TO POWER

The defeat of the German working class, on the coming to power of Hitler, set the world workers' movement back for many years. In tracing the background to the events in Germany, we can see clearly the class forces at work, the role of the German Social Democrats and Stalinists which led to the terrible defeat of one of the most powerfully organised Labour movements in the world.

In the wake of the Russian revolution, the German working class overthrew the Kaiser and attempted a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism in 1918.

But it was German Social Democrats who came to power though they had actually opposed the insurrection and the revolution. They had no intention of consummating the revolution. Their programme was based on the 'inevitability of gradualism'. Having raised themselves above the level of the workers, they had abandoned the Marxist programme on which their party had been based for decades. Noske, Ebert, Schiedemann, the leaders of the Social Democracy conspired

with the German General Staff to destroy the revolution and restore 'law and order'. The Berlin workers were shot down in January 1919 and the revolutionary leaders—Luxembourg and Liebknecht were murdered by reactionary officers on the direct instigation of the Social Democratic leaders. The Soviets established in the revolution were eliminated and Germany became a democratic capitalist state—the most democratic in the world, according to the boast of the Social Democrats.

At this stage the capitalist were compelled to lean on the Labour and trade union leaders in order to save their system from complete collapse. Grinding their teeth, they were forced to make tremendous concessions to the working class. The workers won the 8 hour day, trade union recognition, unemployment insurance, the right to elect shop committees and universal suffrage for men and women. The agricultural labourers who lived under semi-feudal conditions in East Prussia under the Junkers, won the right to organise and similar rights to those of the industrial workers.

Recovering from the first shock, the big industrialists and landowners began to prepare for the offensive against the working class. Their attitude was exemplified by that of Krupp, the armaments magnate who arrogantly informed his workers: **"We want only loyal workers who are grateful from the bottom of their hearts for the bread which we let them earn."** By February 1919, Stinnes, another of the iron and steel magnates of the Ruhr was declaiming openly: **"Big Business and all those who rule over industry will some day recover their influence and power. They will be called back by a disillusioned people, half dead with hunger, who will need bread and phrases."** The former minister, Dernberg, representative of big industry, declared openly: **"Every eight hour day is a nail in Germany's coffin."**

Already in these early days the capitalists began to finance anti-Labour leagues composed of ex-army officers, criminals, adventurers and other social riff-raff. The Nazis were at this time, one small anti-Labour grouping among others.

They commenced a campaign of terror, which included assassinations of left wing, and even capitalist democratic politicians. They commenced a campaign of breaking up working class meetings. **"The National Socialist movement will in the future prevent, if need be by force, all meetings or lectures that are likely to exercise a depressing influence..."** declared Hitler on January 4th 1921.

As in Italy, so in Germany, the courts, the army authorities, the civil service, the heads of the police, gave every support to these reactionary groups. The state acted in complicity and in collusion with them. When the Munich Chief of Police, Pohner, was warned of the existence of **"veritable organisations of political assassination,"** he replied: **"Yes, yes, but too few!"***

But at this stage these fascist groups had no mass base. They comprised an insignificant social force, composed only of the dregs of

*Konrad Heiden's 'History of National Socialism'.

society. The middle class looked to the workers' organisations to show a way out. The capitalists used the fascist organisations to show a way out. The capitalists used the fascist organisations only as anti-Labour auxiliaries, and a reserve for the future. Dealing with the development of the Nazi movement, Hitler admitted: **"Only one thing could have broken our movement—if our adversary had understood its principle and from the first day had smashed, with the most extreme brutality, the nucleus of our new movement."** Goebbels remarked: **"If the enemy had known how weak we were it would probably have reduced us to jelly...It would have crushed in blood the very beginning of our work."**

In the revolutionary crisis of 1923, caused by the inflation and the occupation of the Ruhr by France, the middle class looked towards the Communist Party which had succeeded in gaining the support of the majority of the workers. But the revolutionary situation was bungled by the then leaders of the German Communist Party, Brandler and Thalheimer, and by the wrong advice given by Stalin in Moscow to the leadership of the Communist Party.

Brandler admitted subsequently at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Communist International:

"There were signs of a rising revolutionary movement. We had temporarily the majority of the workers behind us, and in the situation believed that under favourable circumstances we could have proceeded immediately to the attack..."

After the possibility of seizing power had been lost, the leadership of the International tried to put all the responsibility on the shoulders of the German Party. But the German leaders had looked for advice to the leadership of the Communist International in Moscow. Stalin's advice was catastrophic. He wrote to Zinoviev and Bukharin at that time: **"Should the Communists strive to seize the power without the Social Democrats, are they mature enough for that? That, in my opinion is the question...Of course, the fascists are not asleep, but it is to our interest that they attack first; that will rally the whole working class around the Communists [Germany is not Bulgaria]. Besides, according to all information the fascists are weak in Germany. In my opinion the Germans must be curbed and not spurred on."**

This, when they had the majority of the workers behind them! Thus tragically the German revolution was ruined and the basis laid for a subsequent increase in fascist influence.

BIG BUSINESS AND THE NAZIS

Scared by the perspective of 'Bolshevism' in Germany, the American, British and French capitalists poured in loans to prop up German capitalism. These loans resulted in a capitalist boom on a world scale, which particularly affected Germany. The boom in Germany lasted from 1925 to 1929. The capitalists of Germany coining enormous profits out of the rationalisation of German

industry, did not need the fascists and the support for the Nazis declined. They received only sufficient funds to keep them in existence as a reserve weapon and to prevent their disappearance from the scene altogether.

Then came the world slump of 1929-33. The workers' standards of living dropped. Unemployment rose to seven millions and more. The middle class were ruined in the economic crisis, and they found their standards dropping lower than the levels of the working class. The industrial workers had the protection of their union contracts and unemployment allowances within limits, and could thus resist the worst impositions of the combines and monopolies. But the middle class was helpless.

The industrialists were alarmed at the prospect of proletarian revolution. They now began to pour fabulous sums into the coffers of the Nazi Party. Krupp, Thyssen, Kirdoff, Borsig, the heads of the coal, steel, chemical and other industrial empires in Germany, supplied Hitler lavishly with the means of propoganda. The final decision to hand power over to Hitler was taken at the home of the Cologne banker, Schroder, (who according to the Nazi racial laws was a Jew! Enormous subsidies such as no other political party in Germany had ever received, were rained upon the Nazis by the capitalists. They considered the time had come to destroy the organisations and rights of the working class.

Explaining what the subsidies meant, Hitler pointed out that **"Without automobiles, airplanes and loud speakers, we could not have conquered Germany. These three technical means enabled National Socialism to carry out an amazing campaign..."**

In confidential documents published by the British Government in 1943, for the use of officials and civil servants who were to be sent to Germany the following irrefutable facts are given:

"Fritz Thyssen and Kirdoff in the Ruhr and Ernst von Borsig in Berlin, chairman of the German Employers' Federation (Vereinigung Deutscher Arbeitgeberverbände) were the extreme supporters of Hitler...among other financial supporters of earlier Hitler days were the famous piano manufacturers, Karl Bechstein, Berlin, the printer Bruckmann (Munich) the well known art dealer and publisher, Hanfstaengl (Munich) and the Reetsma Cigarette combine in Hamburg which, after Hitler came to power was granted an exclusive monopoly.

"But it was not only during the big crisis preceding the Nazi government that financial support by great industrial corporations began on a larger scale. Most of these did not give their contributions to the Nazi Party direct, but to Alfred Hugenberg, the former director of Krupps and leader of the 'Deutschnationale Volkspartei' (German National Peoples Party). Hugenberg placed one fifth of the amount given at the disposal of the NSDAP..."

"Fritz Thyssen, since his break with Hitler, has stated that his personal contribution amounted to one million Rm., and he

estimated the amount the NSDAP received from heavy industry via Hugenberg at about two million Rm. annually.

'At the meeting of the Dusseldorf Club of industrialists on January 27th, 1932, after Hitler had enlightened them about his programme, the pact between heavy industry and the Nazi Party was sealed. Here Hitler convinced his audience that they had nothing to fear from his 'socialism', and then he commended himself with his semi-military organisation as the bulwark against any kind of 'Bolshevism'."

"The economic policy carried on by the 'National Socialists' nevertheless, completely justified the confidence which the big industrialists had placed in Hitler. Hitler has in every other respect carried out their policy. He has destroyed the workers' organisations. He has introduced the 'leadership principle' in the factories. He has brought about an expansion of heavy industry in Western Germany by means of an immense re-armament programme and has brought the firms enormous profits. The profits which the manufacturers of the Ruhr and Rhineland were able to make are clearly shown in the so-called 'Decree' regarding the surrender of 'dividend' of 1941. (Dividend en abgabeverordnung). This Decree, which like so many Nazi Decrees, means the opposite of what its name indicates, enabled the joint stock companies to realise profits which they had accumulated during 1933-38 and which had not been paid out in dividends by way of so-called 'rectification'. About 5,000,000,000 Rms. of accumulated profits, which has been made in the pre-war years were distributed to the shareholders in the form of bonus shares."

TROTSKY CALLS FOR THE UNITED FRONT

In the General Election of May 1924, the Nazis received 1,920,000 votes with 33 deputies. But in December of the same year, after the Dawes Plan had restored some stability to the German economy, they received 840,000 and the decline of the Nazis went even further. In the elections for the German President in 1925, General Ludendorff, the candidate of the Nazis received only 720,000 votes, losing 120,000 votes and two seats.

Then came the world slump and the frightful crisis of German capitalism. Within two years at the General Election of September 14th 1930, the Nazi vote rose to 6,000,000. The fascists had drawn to their banner large sections of the despairing middle class. The failure of the Socialists in 1918 and of the Communists in 1923 had driven a formidable proportion of the middle class from neutrality or even support of the workers, to the side of the counter-revolution

with its denunciation of 'Marxism' i.e. socialism.

Immediately the election results were known, Trotsky and the Left Opposition—who considered themselves part of the Communist International although they had been expelled—issued an appeal to the German Communist Party to immediately organise a united front with the Social Democrats to prevent the coming to power of Hitler. Only thus could they hope to protect the rights of the working class from the threat of the Nazis. The Trotskyists warned of the tragic consequences which the coming to power of the Nazis would mean, not only to the German, but to the whole international working class movement. They warned that it would make war against the Soviet Union inevitable.

But the Stalinists took no heed. Their policy in Germany was that fascism or 'social fascism' was already in power; that the **main danger** to the working class was **Social Democracy**, who were also fascists—"social fascists."

The British Trotskyists were expelled from the Communist Party in 1932 for advocating the united front between Social Democrats and Communists in Germany as well as in Britain.

"It is significant," wrote the British Stalinists in the Daily Worker of May 26th 1932, "that Trotsky has come out in defence of a united front between the Communist and Social Democratic Parties against Fascism. No more disruptive and counter revolutionary class lead could possibly have been given at a time like the present."

Ernst Thaelmann, in his closing speech at the 13th Plenum of Communist International in September 1932 (see **Communist International** No. 17/18, p. 1.329) said:

"In his pamphlet on the question, **How Will National Socialism be Defeated?** Trotsky gives always one reply: 'The German CP must make a bloc with the Social Democracy...' In framing this bloc. Trotsky sees the only way for completely saving the German working class against fascism. **EITHER THE CP WILL MAKE A BLOC WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRACY OR THE GERMAN WORKING CLASS IS LOST FOR 10 TO 20 YEARS:**

"This is the theory of a completely ruined fascist and counter-revolutionary. This theory is the worst theory, the most dangerous theory and the most criminal that Trotsky has constructed in the last years of his counter-revolutionary propaganda."

The fountainhead of this policy of the German CP, Stalin, gave the line to the German Party. "These two organisations (Social Democracy and National Socialism) are not mutually exclusive, but on the contrary are mutually complementary. They are not antipodes but twins. Fascism is a shapeless bloc of these two organisations. Without this bloc the bourgeoisie could not remain at the helm."

[Communist International No. 6 1929].

The Stalinists even went to the extent of inciting Communist workers to beat up Socialist workers, break up their meetings, etc. Thaelmann openly puts forward the slogan: "Chase the social fascists from their jobs in the plants and the trade unions." Following on the line, the organ of the Young Communists The Young Guard propounded the slogan: "Chase the social fascists from the plants, the employment exchanges and the apprentice schools." Even the organ of the Young Pioneers, catering for the children of the communists, the Drum called upon communists' children to "Strike the little Zoergiebels in the Schools and Playgrounds." (Zoregiebal was the Social Democratic chief of police.)*

They did not stop there. The leaders of the Communist International went to the extent of advocating that the German CP unite with the Fascists against the Social Democrats. The Social Democratic Party was in power in Prussia which consisted of two-thirds, and the most important part of Germany. There was a traditional saying in Germany: "He who has Prussia has the Reich." The Nazis organised a plebiscite on August 9th, 1931, in an endeavour to throw the Social Democratic government out of office. Had they succeeded in this, they would have come to power in 1931 instead of 1933. The Germany CP leadership decided to oppose the referendum and support the Social Democrats. But the leadership of the Comintern, under the direct influence of Stalin, demanded that the CP participate in this referendum and called it a "Red Referendum". At the Executive Committee of the Communist International Piatnitzky even boasted: "You know, for example, that the leadership of the Party opposed taking part in the referendum on the dissolution of the Prussian Landtag. A number of Party newspapers published leading articles opposing participation in that referendum. But when the Central Committee of the Party jointly with the Comintern arrived at the conclusion that it was necessary to take an active part in the referendum the German comrades in the course of a few days roused the whole Party. Not a single party, except the CPSU, could do that."

It was a mad adventure of this character which disoriented the workers and facilitated the success of the Nazis. The refusal of the leaders of the mass workers' organisations to carry out a revolutionary policy against the fascists, resulted in this mighty working class movement, with a Marxist tradition of 75 years, being

*This line was not confined to Germany. The tiny Communist Party of Britain advocated the break up of Labour Party meetings. Pollitt wrote in the Daily Worker on January 29th 1930:

"There should not be a Labour meeting held anywhere, but what the revolutionary workers in that district attend such meetings and fight against the speakers, whoever they are, so-called 'left', 'right' or 'centre'.

They should never be allowed to address meetings. This will bring us into conflict with the authorities but this must be done. The fight can no longer be conducted in a passive manner."

smashed and rendered impotent before the Nazi thugs.

It is important to bear in mind that the Nazis won only a small percentage of the German workers: the overwhelming majority were opposed to them. In 1931, the Nazis obtained only 5% of the votes for the shop committees in the factories. This was after a terrific campaign to penetrate the working class. And in March 1933, after the fascists were placed in power, despite the fact that the terror had already begun, they got only 3% of the votes in the elections for the shop committees! Despite the false policies of the leaderships, which led to a certain demoralisation within the ranks of the workers and helped the fascists' attempts to penetrate their ranks, the overwhelming majority of the workers remained faithful to the ideas of socialism and communism.

HOW SOCIALISTS AND COMMUNISTS FACED HITLER'S THREAT.

The workers were anxious and willing to fight the Nazis to prevent them coming to power. Millions were armed and trained in the Socialist and Communist Defence organisations. This was a legacy of the German revolutions. The organised working class constituted the mightiest power in Germany. . . . had they only had the necessary policy to fight for the defence of their organisations and pass to the counter-offensive to take power. But the leaders betrayed the workers in Germany as they did in Italy.

As the danger of a Hitler Coup grew closer, these misleaders declared that the Nazis were on the decline. The Socialist leaders declared, as if plagiarising their Italian counter-parts: "**Courage under unpopularity**". They urged the necessity to support the decree laws of the Brüning Government, and to support Hindenburg as against the danger from Hitler. They scoffed at the idea that a highly civilised country like Germany could fall under the domination of fascist barbarism. Fascism could come to power in a backward country like Italy, but not Germany with its highly industrialised economy! At first, they scoffed at the crudities and insane ideas put forward by the Nazis. They urged the workers to laugh at them and disregard their provocations. It only gives them publicity, they said. It can't happen here. We know the familiar arguments of middle class intellectuals such as Rebecca West in Britain and elsewhere.

Constantly they underestimated the danger from the fascists and appealed to the very same state machine which was protecting and shielding the fascists.

But as the fascist menace loomed nearer, sections of the Socialist workers and the trade unions began to form defence groups in the factories and among the unemployed. But the German TUC, the Labour Federation, refused to support this: ". . . the situation (was) not sufficiently grave to justify the workers preparing for a struggle to defend their rights". It was opposed to "centralising and

generalising these preventive measures" on the grounds that they were "superfluous"! On November 6th 1932, **Vorwärts**, the central organ of the Social Democracy wrote of the fall in the poll for the Nazis from 13,700,000 to 11,795,357 and the refusal of Hindenburg to hand power to Hitler "Ten years ago we predicted the bankruptcy of National Socialism, it is written in black and white in our paper!"

On the eve of the Nazi's accession to power, Schiffrin, one of the leaders of the Social Democrats wrote: **"We no longer perceive anything but the odour of a rotting corpse. Fascism is definitely dead; it will never rise again."**

The line of the leaders of the CP was, if anything, even worse. They declared that fascism was already in power in Germany and that the coming to power of Hitler would not make any difference. In the Reichstag, Remmele, one of their leaders, declared, on October 14th 1931: "Herr Bruning has put it very plainly once they (the Fascists) are in power, then the united front of the proletariat will be established and it will make a clean sweep of everything." (Violent applause from the communists). "We are not afraid of the Fascist gentlemen. They will shoot their bolt quicker than any other government.") Right you are! From the Communists.

In 1932, Thaelmann, in a speech to the Central Committee, condemned "the opportunistic over-estimation of Hitler fascism." As early as the first victory of the Hitler movement at the polls in the September 14th, 1930 elections the central organ of the German CP **Rote Fahne** declared: "September 14 was the culminating point of the National Socialist movement in Germany. It will be followed only by weakening and decline." Within three years, the Nazis had succeeded in winning the bulk of the middle class and obtaining over 13 million votes.

Just at the time when the Nazis received their first check at the polls and lost two million votes, and the signs of the disintegration of the Nazi movement appeared, President Hindenburg, the army leaders, the bureaucracy and the great industrialists and landowners handed power over to Hitler.

Even at the thirteenth hour, the Socialist and Stalinist leaders gave no fighting lead. On February 7th, 1933, Kunstler, head of the Berlin Federation of the Social Democratic Party, gave this instruction to the labour workers:

"Above all do not let yourselves be provoked. The life and health of the Berlin workers are too dear to be jeopardised lightly; they must be preserved for the day of struggle".

This, when Hitler had already come to power in January 1933.

The Communist Party leaders cried: "Let the workers beware of giving the Government any pretext for new measures against the Communist Party!" (Wilhelm Pieck, February 26th, 1933).

The leaders of these parties did nothing even after Hitler came to power. And the German workers wanted to fight. On March 5th, the night of the elections, the heads of the Reichsbanner, the military

organisation of the Social Democracy, asked for the signal for insurrection. They received the reply from the leaders of the Social Democratic Party: "Be calm! Above all no bloodshed." The mighty German labour movement was surrendered to Hitler without a shot being fired.

The struggle for a united front by the Communist Party; the formation of such a united front of struggle in 1930, would have transformed the whole future course of events. The middle class would have followed the lead of the workers' organisations. Had the fascists been confronted with the organised might of the workers, they would have been smashed. Cravenly capitulating to the "authorities", the leadership allowed Hitler to score a very cheap victory.

The reformists and Stalinists are the same in all countries. In later years the responsibility was shouldered onto the German workers. But at the Brighton Congress of the TUC the Chairman, Citrine, defended the trade union leaders in Germany for their failure to call a general strike in 1933. He said:

"Shortly after the elections the campaign of terror developed. The Socialist movement and the trade union movement were virtually suppressed on May 2nd. There had been a great deal of concern about the apparent absence of resistance to the advent of the Nazi dictatorship. German trade union leaders and German Socialist leaders were openly attacked and criticised on platforms because of the absence of effective resistance. All he could say was that he knew from first-hand knowledge that very adequate means of resistance were prepared"

. . . All he could say was that a general strike was definitely planned and projected, but the German leaders had to give consideration to the fact that a general strike, after the atmosphere created by the Reichstag fire, and with six and a quarter million people unemployed at the least, was an act fraught with the gravest consequences, consequences which might be described as nothing less than civil war. He hoped they would never be put into a similar position in this country. He hoped they would never have to face that position." [The Menace of Dictatorship, page 8]

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE MIDDLE CLASS

The Nazis demagogically attacked the Jews, the Trusts and the Combines. They even proposed the break-up of big industry and its division among small business men and the break-up of the big departmental stores and their division among the shopkeepers. Of course, they had no intention of carrying out these demagogic proposals, which in any case it would have been impossible to do. Thus they gathered support among the middle class masses. This was the social base of the fascists.

Yet it was ironic that the middle class dupes of the Nazis were the strata of the population who suffered the worst once the Nazis had come to power. The Nazis had bewailed the dying out of the middle class, the most important strata of the nation, the backbone of the race. The statistics tell their own story of the crushing of small capital by the giant monopolies and combines. The tendency for the concentration of capital, far from being slowed down, was speeded up because there was no means of resistance by the small man. And this process was consciously aided by the Nazis. In his book **The Coming Crisis**, Sternberg points out that in 1925 the number of proprietors in Germany, together with their dependants amounted to 12,027,000 persons or 20.9% of the total population. Owing to the havoc of the crisis by the time the Nazis came to power in 1933 the total **dropped** to 11,247,000 or 19.8% of the total population. In the first 6 years of Nazi rule, in the period of "Wehrwirtschaft" (war economy) the number had declined still further to 9,612,000 or 16.2% of the population.

The German economic publication *Wirtschaft und Statistik* of 1940 (page 336) brutally comments as follows on the phenomenon: "The decline in the number of proprietors together with their dependants — their total was reduced to 1.7 millions or approximately 15% from 1933 — is in accordance with a long and steady trend of development. From 1895 onwards their numbers have decreased from census to census, though the decline since 1933 is, of course, a record one".

Further evidence of this process is given in *Germany, A Basic Handbook*, which points out:

"The concentration of capital in fewer and fewer hands has proceeded rapidly. Many small and medium-sized firms have been absorbed by the big concerns. From 1937 to the end of 1942, the capital invested in joint stock companies increased by over 10 per cent. At the same time the total number of these companies decreased. Thus at the end of 1942, one per cent of the companies owned 60 per cent of the capital invested in joint stock companies. As the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* January 6th, 1944, points out: 'Of the total number of German joint stock companies with a capital of 30 milliard Rms, approximately three quarters to four fifths are owned by large shareholders or combines'."

Representatives of Big Business were given all the key positions in the economy. At the same time there was "mutual interpenetration; on the one hand the leading industrialists, bankers, as leaders of the war economy, leaders of Gau (regions) Economic Chambers of Trade Groups... of Reich Associations, etc., became servants of the state, and were appointed to high administrative positions; on the other hand, high ranking officials, the Nazified bureaucracy of the state departments endeavoured to obtain highly paid positions in the sphere of private enterprise. In the end, there were a number of semi-state,

semi-private, companies which may be described as public utilities in the industrial sphere. The best known of this kind is the **Hermann-Göring-Concern.**"

"...It is quite obvious that this development gave ample opportunity to the Nazi elite to become the new Nazi industrialists and profiteers, and thus we see these new names, together with the old and well known names of the various branches of German and Austrian industry, in the leading positions of the management and boards of the various branches of the Goring-Combine..."

"In this connection, a few words may be added about a typical party enterprise, **Gustloff Foundation**, which was founded on 'aryanised' property, the Suhl gun factory in Thuringia, in honour of Wilhelm Gustloff, a Nazi agent in Switzerland, who was shot in 1934, and which soon turned into a not unimportant machine tool and armament combine, consisting of six companies, among them the famous Austrian Hirtenberg munitions factory. This combine is run solely by the party, that is, by the Thuringen **Gauleiter Sauckel**...Nothing is known of the finances of the Foundation since, like the Herman Göring Werke, it does not publish balance sheets or profit and loss accounts.

"The development of this party sector of Big Business does not constitute nationalisation, nor is it a negation of capitalism or plutocracy. On the contrary, it is the retention of all that enables party members to build up for themselves industrial empires and to tap a new source of income.

"Thus, the ranks of the old rulers of industry and commerce lent themselves to a compromise so long as the benefits accruing from the alliance with the party elite and bureaucracy, e.g., the joint spoliation of small enterprises and all strata of the 'little man'—outweigh all sacrifices by the group."

In the June 30th 1934 purge, Hitler struck against those elements in the ranks of the fascists who were demagogically playing on the aspirations of the middle class, as well as against those who had genuinely been deluded by the propaganda lies of the Nazis. Having accomplished this, Hitler transformed his dictatorship into a military police state, representing the interests of the industrialists and landlords. Instead of the Junker estates being broken up and given to the peasants as promised, the power of the former was strengthened. Instead of breaking up the big department stores and dividing them among the small shopkeepers, instead of the abolition of the combines and monopolies, the small shops were closed down in thousands, and a further concentration of the economy into the hands of the trusts took place.

From this we see that the only promise which was kept was the persecution of the unfortunate Jews. The middle class was despoiled, the workers organisations crushed, and only the high

Nazi functionaries and Big Business benefited from Hitler's rule. All the worst excesses of the capitalist system found expression because no opposition or the check of public opinion was allowed.

REIGN OF TERROR

Once in power, the Nazis went ahead speedily, and accomplished in months what had taken the Italian fascists years. The political parties were illegalised; the trade unions were destroyed; the funds of the workers' organisations were confiscated for the benefit of the Nazis. The concentration camps were opened, and a reign of terror commenced against the working class Socialist and Communists, and Jews, such as had never been seen in modern history.

The fascists made a great play of the fact that there was no unemployment under Hitler Germany. It is true that as a result of Hitler's immense rearmament plans, the forced labour on German arms and fortifications, there was no unemployment. Of course had the war not intervened there would have been in Germany a disastrous economic slump as in other capitalist countries. Hitler spent fabulous sums in preparing for war which he saw as the only road for German imperialism and his own regime. He staked everything on armaments production on a scale never before reached in any state in peace time.

The German workers had to work long hours for low wages in order to prepare the instruments of destruction which would be no benefit to them or to workers of other lands. They were employed...to produce the terrible catastrophe that overtook Germany in the war. Hitler regarded them as pigs to be fattened for the slaughter.

In 1935, an employers' report enthusiastically hailed the new labour laws "at the present time, precisely, which requires increased intensification of production..." (that is, speed up). Goering openly declared in a speech, "We must work doubly hard today to lead the Reich out of a decadence, impotence, shame and poverty. Eight hours a day is not enough. We Must work!" On May 22nd 1933, Hitler said in the Reichstag: "In Germany private property is sacred."

Of all the 25 points of the Nazi 'Programme' only the persecution of the Jews, a scape goat for the crimes of capitalism, was carried out. The disillusionment was given an outlet in Jew-baiting. Even after they had been rendered helpless, deprived of all rights, thrown into concentration camps, the myth of the Jews being responsible for all the ills of society was fostered. As Hitler pointed out: **if he had not had the Jews, he would have had to invent them.** No wonder Goebbels regretted publicly that the Nazis had ever published a programme.

After the war and the defeat of German imperialism, the Allies have not brought about the destruction of fascism. The middle class the potential mass base for fascism is today supporting the Christian Democrats of Germany. The Stalinist policy of reparations revenge could not rally the support of the German masses. As a result of the policy of the Allies, the German masses are nearing literal starvation. When the slump hits Germany, the collapse of the 'democratic' capitalist parties is inevitable. There is no middle road. The alternatives will be posed in Germany again: either the victory of the working class or a new fascist dictatorship.

MOSLEY BEFORE THE WAR AND THE ANTI-FASCIST STRUGGLES OF THE WORKERS

The laws of the decline of the capitalist system are the same in Britain as in other capitalist countries. The legend, assiduously cultivated, in particular by the leaders of the Labour movement, that Britain is 'different', has no basis in fact. This has been demonstrated on many occasions in the history of capitalist Britain. Fascism, as an expression of the decline of capitalist society, can become under certain conditions, as real a menace in Britain as it became in capitalist Germany and Italy.

The world slump of 1929-33 saw the emergence of the Mosley fascist movement as a serious force for the first time in this country. The capitalist class of Britain recognised in the Mosley movement a militant and extra-Parliamentary weapon which they could utilise against the working class in a period of social upheaval, in times of crisis and slump. Only the fact that the British capitalists succeeded in emerging from these critical years without the need for direct action against the workers determined their limited use of fascists at that time. Nevertheless, they kept the fascist movement in being as an 'insurance' against the future.

The myth propogated by the capitalist class, that all issues can and will be settled through Parliament is exploded by the very preparations undertaken by the capitalists themselves when it seemed possible that the working class would take to the road of struggle. With the threat of an economic slump looming before the war, the British capitalists were preparing extra-Parliamentary steps against the working class.

In the few year before the war of 1939-45, army manouevres in Britain were conducted on the basis of civil war tactics. strategic Government buildings were prepared for defence. The Civil Guard

was created as a special strike breaking force, composed of recruits from the ranks of the ruling and upper middle class and trained in the use of machine guns, rifles and tanks. They were taught to drive locomotives, heavy transport lorries and to do ground staff work at aerodromes. The Civil Guard was to constitute the backbone of any strike breaking force in the event of serious trouble with the workers. A significant portent was the fact that, the big insurance companies which together with the big banks are the decisive rulers of Britain, refused to insure against the risk of civil disturbances and civil war. The capitalists understood that Britain, no more than Italy, France, Germany or Spain, could escape the social upheavals of the sick and decaying capitalist system. If the second world war had not intervened, the impending economic slump would have struck the country with far greater effect than even in 1929.

At this time, the fascists were receiving support from numerous influential British industrialists. Towards the end of 1936, Mosley boasted in an interview with the Italian fascist paper *Giornale d'Italia*, that he was "receiving support from British industrialists." and that, "a number of industrialists in the North who hitherto had given his movement secret support, fearing commercial boycott, are now stating openly that they are on the fascist side." (*News Chronicle* October 19th 1936). Mosley received the backing of the powerful newspapers, the *Daily Mail*, *Evening News* and the *Sunday Dispatch*.

Then, as now the Black Shirt movement carried out its anti-working class and anti-semitic provocations under the protection of the state. The British fascists were soon to prove that in brutality and method there was little to choose between them and Hitler's Storm Troops or Mussolini's Squadri. At a mass rally of British fascists at Olympia on June 7th 1934, the British working class were given an idea of what to expect if fascism triumphed. The savage and calculated brutalities inflicted by the specially trained fascist thugs, upon any of the audience who dared to voice even the mildest opposition to Mosley's speech by interjections, outraged all sections of the population. Organised bands of fascists set upon hecklers, men and women alike, beating them unconscious, kicking them while on the ground.

Nurtured and aided by the authorities and the police, the fascists insolently organised provocative marches in working class and Jewish districts, imitating the tactics of the Nazis at the dawn of their movement in Germany. The British working class gave the Blackshirts their answer. Every demonstration called by the fascists was answered by a great counter-demonstration of workers and anti-fascists. At Trafalgar Square, Hyde Park, in Liverpool, Merthyr, Newcastle—all over the country—the workers rallied against the fascists. In red Glasgow the fascist were unable to hold meetings. In the working class district of Bermondsey, London barricades put up and maintained by tens of thousands of workers

successfully prevented the Mosley fascists from marching through Long Lane.

Outstanding in these struggles of the workers against the fascists was the defeat of Mosley's projected march through the East End of London in 1936. Despite appeals from all sections of the working class movement including the Labour leaders, the then Home Secretary, Sir John Simon refused to ban the march. On the contrary, he sought to facilitate it in every way. 10,000 foot and mounted police drawn from all over London and the provinces were mobilised to protect Mosley and his 2,500 fascists to ensure their march through the East End. This police protection was thoroughly organised even to the extent of wireless equipment and an autogiro hovering overhead. The weight of the state was brought to bear to protect the Blackshirts in the teeth of the opposition of the London working class. The police authorities planned for Mosley's protection as though it were a military project. Despite these measures of the state, the fascist march was defeated. Half a million workers turned out on the streets, rallying around the slogan, "They shall not pass." The workers formed a wall of bodies on the route through which Mosley was to march. From early morning, baton charges were made by the mounted police against the workers to clear a path for the fascists. But the determined opposition of the workers made it impossible. The police tried to create a diversion by clearing Cable Street. But here again, the workers of London, threw up fresh barricades of furniture, timber, railings, doors torn from nearby houses, and anything that would help to bar the path of the hated fascists. This magnificent mass action, including and representing all shades of working class opinion and organisations, Labour, Communist Party, ILP, Trotskyist, League of Youth and YCL—forced the then Commissioner of Police, Sir Philip Game, to order Mosley and his thugs to abandon the route. United action of the workers had defeated Mosley!

The defeat at Cable Street in 1936 dealt a severe blow to Mosley. Afraid of the organised might of the working class so militantly demonstrated, the East End fascist movement declined. The spectacle of the workers in action gave the fascists reason to pause. It induced widespread despondency and demoralisation in their ranks; their victory over the fascists imbued the working class with confidence. This united action of the workers at Cable Street, demonstrated anew the lesson: only vigorous counter-action hinders the growth of the menace of fascism.

At that time, the Communist Party was mainly responsible for calling militant workers to counter-demonstrations against the fascists. The YCL played a magnificent role. But after 1936 this militant policy of the Communist Party changed and they now avoided any counter-action against the fascists on the wide and militant scale witnessed before. With the coming of Hitler to power

the Communist Parties throughout the world had degenerated into nothing but instruments of Russian foreign policy, and its activities reflected this. When Stalin found it impossible to arrive at an agreement with Hitler at that time, there was a right about turn on the part of the then Communist International.

From a refusal to offer a united front with the Social Democratic workers against fascism, the Communist International now embarked on a policy of Popular Frontism. In line with Stalin's efforts to make agreements and gain alliances with the 'democratic' capitalist classes, they advocated class collaboration between the workers and the 'good' capitalists. This foreign policy of the Stalinists was reflected in the British Communist Party which even went to the extent of advocating a 'National Government' of Churchill, Attlee and Sinclair. Having branded the united front of workers' parties against fascism as 'counter-revolutionary', the Stalinists now rejected the Marxist class analysis of capitalist society and advocated a united front with Tories and Liberals.

In their efforts to placate those Tories and Liberals who favoured an alliance with Stalin, the Communist Party made every endeavour to paint itself as just another party of respectable and law-abiding citizens. To that end the hammer and sickle emblem of working class unity was withdrawn from the masthead of the Daily Worker; the language of Marxism was replaced by that of middle class suburbia. More important, the policy of militant class struggle went by the board, and this was reflected in the new 'ostrich' attitude towards the fascist movement. To take militant action against the fascists would offend the new found Tory and Liberal 'friends' of the Stalinist Party. The activities and provocations of the fascists now went unheeded; counter-demonstrations and actions of the workers against fascism were no longer organised. The former policy of militant action was replaced by appeals and pleadings to the state to take measures against the fascists. From a reliance upon the working class to deal with fascism, the Stalinists turned towards the policy of relying on the very state apparatus which had in the so-recent past demonstrated its partiality towards the **blackshirts!**

How this new policy of the Stalinist leaders worked in practice was indicated by one instance of many similar examples that could be given. Just prior to the war, a monster rally of Blackshirts, imported from all over the country in to London for the purpose, gathered at Earl's Court to hear Mosley. On that day, the Young Communist League of London organised a ramble in the countryside demonstrating against the Blackshirt rally outside were only the Trotskyists and a small number of anti-fascist militants. Of the Communist Party there was no sign. This new policy of the Stalinist Party served to foster apathy in the ranks of the working class in the struggle against the fascists and emboldened and encouraged the Blackshirts. It seemed that the fascist movement would gain new strength in face of the lack of organised and militant action on the

part of the workers' organisations. But the war cut across these developments and gave them a new direction.

MOSLEY'S 'PROGRAMME'

Today, in Britain, the signs of a fascist revival are unmistakable. Having tested the reaction of public opinion to the emergence of the various fascist groups, aided and encouraged by police protection, Mosley has launched his new party, the 'Union Movement'. This 'Union Movement' is no different to the infamous BUF of pre-war days. Mosley himself declares that. "my opinions are those that I held before the war," and "have been confirmed even stronger." The new party is no different from the former BUF, the same Jew-baiting, the same promises of the destruction of the trade unions and Labour organisations, the same demagogy to attract the disillusioned and despairing middle classes and backward elements.

All Mosley's publications uphold the principle of private enterprise. In one of the recent Mosley 'News Letters', he demagogically champions the 'small' man, not against the capitalist monopolies, but against the nationalisation measures of the Labour Government. Mosley boasts that his "opinions remained unchanged." In his Greater Britain (published before the war) he wrote that: **"the making of profit will not only be permitted but encouraged."** In an **"Open letter to Business Men,"** published in the Fascist Week, in 1934, Mosley reassured the industrialists that: **"In the corporate state you will be left in possession of your businesses."** To the coupon-clipping parasites who live on their dividends, Mosley promised: **"Hitherto, the holder of ordinary shares, who is the true risk bearer in industrial enterprise, has been treated for taxation purposes as the holder of 'unearned income'...The whole procedure is illogical, and calculated to discourage the enterprise upon which our industrial future depends."**

Whereas before, Mosley emphasised the idea that Britain and the Empire must isolate itself for economic 'autarchy', today he advocates the 'Union of Western Europe'. Recognising the weakness of British capitalism and the danger of economic collapse on the Continent of Europe, Mosley proposes the idea of a union of capitalist Europe based upon the enslavement and exploitation of the African peoples. In the Mosley 'plan', **"there will be no nonsense about 'trusteeship for the natives',"** and **"negroes are to have no parity with their white superiors."**

One of Mosley's main planks is for war on Russia. If he were in power, he would "send to Russia for an ultimatum that she must

accept the American offer to scrap atomic weapons and submit to inspection," which, if unaccepted, would be followed by a 'preventative' war.

In the press interview which Mosley gave on November 28th 1947, to announce the imminent launching of his new party, he further elaborated on his 'programme'. The present Parliament would be replaced by the corporate state modelled on Mussolini's two chambers. Instead of elections there would be plebiscites where the voters would have the privilege of recording 'yes' or 'no' to whatever Mosley's Government did. His Government would 'resign' if defeated, but this, of course, was "most unlikely." Mosley promises to suppress communism. By this, Mosley means that his Government would suppress all working class parties and organisations. The trade unions would be 'obsolete' if they did not 'co-operate' with the fascists.

The new party of Mosley is thus openly modelled on the fascist totalitarian regimes of Hitler and Mussolini.

Mosley has clearly revealed his calculations. He anticipates being called to power at a time of crisis in the same way as Mussolini was called to power by the Italian Monarchy and the Italian capitalists. In his Greater Britain, Mosley wrote:

"If the situation develops rapidly, then the public mind develops slowly, something like collapse may come before any new movement has captured parliamentary power."

"In that case, other and sterner measures must be adopted for the saving of the State in a situation approaching anarchy. Such a situation will be none of our seeking. In no case shall we resort to violence against the Crown; but only against the forces of anarchy if and when, the machinery of state has been allowed to drift into powerlessness."

"...Anyone who argues that in such a situation the normal instruments of Government, such as police and army, can be used effectively, has studied neither the European history of his own time nor the realities of the present situation. In the highly technical struggle for the modern state in crisis, only the technical organisations of Fascism and Communism have ever prevailed, or in the nature of the case, can prevail. Governments and Parties which have relied on the normal instruments of Government [which are not constituted for such purposes] have fallen easy and ignoble victims to the forces of anarchy. If, therefore, such a situation arises in Britain, we shall prepare to meet the anarchy of Communism with the organised force of Fascism; but we do not seek that struggle and for the sake of the nation, we desire to avert it. Only when we see the feeble surrender to menacing problems, the fatuous optimism which again and again has been disproved, the spineless drift towards disaster, do we feel it necessary to organise for such a contingency..."

Thus the fascists viewed the coming struggle with the forces of

'anarchy' i.e., the working class, as an extra-parliamentary one. In the second edition of *Greater Britain*, Mosley deleted the chapters dealing with this problem, for they were too outspoken. Nevertheless this remains the basis of Mosley's ideas today. Not accidentally did he declare at the meeting launching the new Party on February 7th 1948 that he and his followers were "prepared to meet force with force."

The anti-semitic and anti-working class activities of the fascists are on the increase and although small at present they constitute a challenge to the working class. Fascism must be defeated in its beginnings. The death camps of the Nazis, in which hundreds of thousands of German workers were tortured and murdered, should act as a permanent reminder to the working class never to allow themselves to be lulled into a false sense of security. The British fascist movement will not differ from the German or Italian fascists, either in social composition, objectives or methods.

THE LABOUR GOVERNMENT AND THE FASCIST REVIVAL

The re-emergence of Mosley and his new 'Union Movement' in Britain today, is regarded with complacency on the part of the Labour leaders. The bitter lessons of Germany and Italy have passed these Labour leaders by. They translate into English the same false words and ideas of the German and Italian Social Democratic leaders: "It can't happen here." The British, they claim, are 'different', a 'tolerant' people with a democratic tradition. Fascism is 'alien' to the British, and so on. **FAMOUS LAST WORDS!** The crime of the Labour leaders is not that they lull themselves with the pretence that "it can't happen here," but that they disarm the working class by sowing illusions and objectively aid the growth of the reviving fascist movement by affording them police protection.

The working class who voted Labour into power may well stand bewildered and indignant as they witness Mosley and the fascists holding provocative meetings under the protection of large numbers of police specially detailed for the job. When they witness the Labour controlled London County Council affording facilities for Mosley and his movement to meet in schools and halls under their control, at a time when the fascists have the utmost difficulty in booking public halls because of the pressure of public opinion. Arising out of the protests, Chuter Ede replied that he is "considering" banning loud speaker equipment at public meetings. But this would apply to "all" parties who use loud speakers at meetings. This instead of striking a blow at the fascist movement, in practice, would

be a blow against working class organisations who use such equipment for propaganda. This is the result of the 'impartiality' of the reformists. Their 'impartiality' consists of hamstringing the anti-fascists and allowing the fascists to carry on.

Despite the past six years of terrible war, allegedly to destroy fascism, at the present time, as if nothing had taken place, the fascists have taken up from where they left off at the outbreak of the war. The familiar picture of police and courts taking strong action against anti-fascists while the fascists are treated lightly and even protected, is once again presented.

All this, in the name of the liberal idea of 'democracy' of 'impartiality' and 'freedom for all'. In reality, this is the opposite of freedom as taught by the great socialist teachers. Under this guise of 'freedom' and 'impartiality' of the state the Labour leaders use the police to baton pickets striking for their elementary democratic rights of trade union organisation. No socialist worker who is not a traitor to his class, will put on the same plane the freedom of a scab to break a strike and the freedom of the strikers to prevent him doing so. Yet, this force of most despicable scabs, the fascist movement is given every facility to flourish and prepare to destroy the very right to strike and every other freedom dearly won by the working class. This is neither freedom nor democracy. It is a violation of workers' democracy and the very negation of freedom.

As a crowning piece of folly the Labour leaders have given facilities to Mosley to publish his propaganda.

Instead of welcoming the instinctive protests on the part of the workers against any attempted revival of fascist activity, the Labour Government organises the police force to protect the fascists against the workers. Labour leaders worthy of the name would welcome workers' action against the reaction and would back it by legislative enactments. This would be a warning to the capitalists that any attempt on their part to establish a fascist dictatorship would be ruthlessly acted upon by the Labour movement as a whole. In the name of "free speech" the fascists are given every facility to put forward their propaganda, this to the very people who stand for the destruction of free speech and every vestige of democracy won by the working class. In time of war - and the class struggle is a war between the classes - the enemy is not given points of vantage by means of which he can better attack and massacre your own ranks at a later stage.

The election of the majority Labour Government after the second world war expressed the aspirations of the British workers to establish a new social system. The masses swung left, and in this swing drew behind them large sections of the middle class, whose position had been undermined during the war. The war had placed heavy burdens upon the backs of sections of the middle class, the rise in the cost of living having affected those with fixed incomes most severely. Large numbers of small shopkeepers have been driven out of

A Gallup Poll revealed that in the first months of the rule of the

business by the competition of the big capitalist combines and the measures of concentration encouraged by the state in the interests of "more efficient" big business. Of a total number of 10,000 firms in certain trades in London alone during the war, including furriers, dry cleaners, repairers, etc., there was a cut of about 40%. As a consequence, the middle class looked to the Labour Party for a solution.

A Gallup Poll revealed that in the first months of the rule of the Labour Government, their popularity increased enormously as a result of the social reforms they introduced. Had the Labour leaders introduced wide measures aimed at destroying the privileges and vested interests of the capitalist class, had they taken over all large scale industrial and financial enterprises without compensation, and operated the economic life of Britain on the basis of an over-all economic plan under the democratic control of the working class, there could have been little effective resistance from the capitalist class. This would have been the socialist solution to the ills which capitalism inflicts not only upon the working class but the middle class as well.

But what is the reality today? Under the Labour Government capitalism remains intact. Lavish compensation is given to the nationalised industries which continue to be run on purely "business lines", and largely by the same capitalist managers who were in control before. The overwhelming sector of the economy remains under the control of private enterprise and the nationalised sectors are geared to serve the interests of private ownership.

Even in the nationalised industries there is not a trace of genuine democratic control by the workers. While the Labour leaders talk a great deal about the sacredness of democracy, there is no democratic control extended to the miners or the workers in the industries which are supposedly owned by "the people".

In Britain the elements of workers' democracy exist in the form of trade unions, the workers' parties, factory organisations and the rights which they have won. But the effective control is in the hands of the capitalist class. They control the economic life of the country through their ownership of the means of production, they have the decisive means of influencing public opinion through the control of the press, radio, cinema, schools, and church, and all other instruments necessary for the purpose. This is the reality of capitalist democracy. Bourgeois democracy said Trotsky, means that everyone has the right to say what he likes so long as finance capital decides what is done. But once the workers reach out to take real democratic control, then the capitalists decide that the time has come to abolish democracy altogether. If the Labour leaders' chief concern was democracy they would have introduced real workers' control and democracy. The elements of democracy which are already there, would have been brought to full fruition.

Real democracy for the majority and not for the capitalist few, that is, workers' democracy, would mean not only the complete des-

truction of the economic stranglehold of big business, but the ending of their control of the means of influencing public opinion through their economic control. The Labour Government should have immediately taken the press, cinema and radio out of the hands of monopoly capital and placed them at the disposal of the people. Every workers' tendency would be given the fullest free access to the means of propaganda to advocate their point of view. All political parties, including even the Tories and Liberals, who are willing to accept the democratic will of the majority, would have freedom of speech and press. But the fascists would be suppressed outright.

Having organised soviets or workers' committees in the plants and districts and established for the first time a democratic participation of all strata of the population in governing and running the country the superiority of such a workers' state, would be so obvious that any counter-revolution on the part of the capitalist class would be rendered impotent.

Instead of a revolutionary socialist solution, the Labour leaders are tinkering with capitalism.

The half-and-half measures of the Labour Government, has resulted in a swing away from Labour, particularly among the middle class and more backward sections of the workers. In the municipal elections of 1947, and in the Parliamentary elections of the same year, there was a marked increase in the Tory vote.

And as a symptom of the rightward trend, the fascists re-entered the political arena.

This has taken place in the period of full employment and capitalist boom. British capitalism has lost the advantages she possessed in the past. Despite the efforts of the working class which have resulted in a 20% increase in production over pre-war, there has not been a proportionate increase in the standard of living. Britain is far more dependent on the world market than in the past. With increasing competition the standards of life will not be raised but on the contrary, the capitalist class will be forced to cut wages.

Already, the Labour Government is waging an offensive to persuade the workers to accept a freezing of wages as the exhaustion of the sellers' market looms in sight. With the vociferous applause of the capitalist class and its press, the Labour leaders are exhorting the workers to make more sacrifices in the frenzied drive to increase production and accept a wage freeze and speed-up in the interests of reducing costs in the competitive struggle for world trade.

Cripps explains to the workers that if they do not voluntarily accept the yoke of capital, the British workers will be faced with the iron yoke of totalitarian dictatorship. In his own words:

"It is, therefore, essential that we should get a general agreement amongst our people to act upon sound economic lines: the alternative is likely to prove to be some form of totalitarian Government."

The proposals on "sound economic" lines advocated by the Lab-

our leaders are, of course, sound capitalist lines.

Here are the symptoms of decline, of impending economic slump of over-production. Even if the Labour leaders should succeed in their objective of increasing production to further record heights, this cannot solve the problem. On the contrary, it can only prepare catastrophe for the Labour Government and the British working class.

Under the impact of the radicalisation in 1945 the capitalists were compelled to retreat. But they have not been overthrown by the Labour Government. Today they are biding their time. But they are systematically whipping up the discontent of the middle class and backward sections of the workers in preparation for an offensive in the future.

Under the capitalist system, with crisis of over-production, slump will follow boom as night follows day. And if already the middle class are discontented, how will they react when the slump comes? The workers will be impelled in a revolutionary direction but unless they show the Marxist road, the middle class will be drawn into the orbit of the fascist movement. The capitalists will declare the 'Marxists' and the Labour movement responsible for the crisis of their system and gain the support of the middle class for action against the workers.

In the grip of economic crisis, the capitalist class will be forced to launch savage attacks on the standards of the workers. They will find the pressure of the workers' organisations irksome, especially the trade unions. Mosley's programme of annihilation of the trade union and workers' organisations, his defence of private property is designed to appeal to Big Business precisely in such a crisis. To eliminate the unions and terrorise the workers into submission, the capitalists will need fascist bands and will look towards a totalitarian state as the means of their salvation. Then they will really commence to subsidise Mosley or some other fascist less discredited among the population.

There could be no greater danger today than to sit back and content ourselves with the idea that the fascists have little political weight in Britain. While capitalist society exists, the weapon of fascism also exists as a potential menace to the working class. Events may prove that Mosley's 'Union Movement' will not be the leading fascist movement in this country. Mosley and his followers were greatly discredited during the war. Nevertheless, some new form of fascist organisation can well arise, an organisation not overtly fascist, but of a similar character to De Gaulle's 'Rally of the French People' movement which, while it disavows fascism, is in fundamental policies and aims designed to serve the same purpose.

As germs of the disease already present even today in Britain, W. J. Brown, Independent MP for Rugby, formerly a leader of Mosley's 'New Party' in 1931, has tentatively advocated a 'Rally of the British People'. Even more indicative is the fact that the Statist, in an article

"Can Our System be Modified" on November 29th 1947, writes approvingly on General De Gaulle and says:

"General De Gaulle, naturally alarmed by the chaotic state of politics and economics as exemplified in France at present has asked the people to give him power to form what he calls a national rally. At the same time warns us that our system is so unstable that it may lead us at a date not indefinitely remote to serious trouble. It would not be wise to ignore such a warning."

Unless the working class can offer some alternative in the form of a bold programme, and above all daring action, the misguided middle class youth who today support Toryism, will be drawn into a fascist movement, whether it be a 'Union Movement' or some sort of 'Rally of the British People' or 'British Royalist Empire Saviours Society'.

THE POLICY OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The revival of fascist activity caused militant workers to look to the Communist Party for a lead. They have been bitterly disappointed. With the exception of a few opposition meetings at Ridley Road in the early days, the Communist Party leadership has undertaken nothing more militant than the organising of Towns meetings under the auspices of the National Council for Civil Liberties, and the passing of resolutions at Trades Councils and union branches calling upon the Government to take action against the fascists. These joint Towns' meetings include the representatives of the local Labour organisations plus vociferous representatives of local business men, Tories and Liberals. Only the Revolutionary Communist Party has been excluded from the platforms. This 'popular front' with Tories and Liberals is a deception of militant workers who seek a fighting policy to defeat the menace of fascism. To have a united front with Tories and Liberals against fascism is to mis-educate the working class. Instead of teaching them the class nature of fascism, that the capitalists parties represent the very class which will lean on the fascists against the workers, and that only the organised strength of the working class can defeat fascism, they sow illusions and discourage militant action.

The Communist Party recently published an anti-fascist pamphlet entitled **Fascist Threat to Britain**. We advise all workers to read this pamphlet and compare the analysis and the policy with that of the Revolutionary Communist Party. The keynote of the policy of the CP is provided by their description of the war aims of the imperialists. This is what they write:

"Many people took part in this fight. It's no use pretending that

the war aims of all the national leaders were exactly the same, or that everyone in the British Army for instance, agreed perfectly. But on one thing every nation and every individual was in complete unity. And that was—that the war was being fought to end this thing, fascism, for all time, to crush it without a trace.”

History has shown how the ‘democratic’ capitalist class, how the Tory and Liberal spokesmen supported the reaction and fascism abroad. Recent history has shown in World War II that far from being interested in ending this thing fascism, the ruling class merely used the anti-fascist sentiments of the workers for their own imperialist ends. Their attempted deals with Darlan and Badoglio bear witness to the fact that in the very midst of the war their main concern was to establish regimes capable of dealing with the working class. And in Britain, throughout the so-called war against fascism, the Government refused to publish the ‘Red Book’ of fascist supporters in this country.

Yet the Communist Party persists in mis-educating the workers that all nations, all classes were in complete unity during the war in seeking to destroy fascism. Thus the appeal to all sides of political opinion:

“You who are reading this may be a Labour, Liberal, Conservative, or Communist supporter. You may be a trade unionist or co-operator. Whatever your political beliefs we ask you in your own interest, to stand together on this. For if we do not act very soon, democratic discussion and decent living may become impossible.”

If we do not act! What action does the Communist Party propose?

“If the fascists come into your locality, get all the inhabitants to sign a petition or protest to the Home Secretary.”

But signatures will not frighten the fascists.

Following in the footsteps of the ill-fated reformists, the CP confines itself to appeals to the capitalist state machine:

“Demand that existing laws regarding ‘incitement to violence’ and behaviour ‘calculated to cause a breach of peace’ should be strictly enforced, that police should be sent to fascist meetings to make arrests and not to afford protection.”

While the CP calls for ‘vigilance’, they urged their members and supporters to stay away from fascist meetings.

Of course it is necessary to conduct a campaign through the unions and Labour organisations by means of resolutions and in order to bring pressure on the Labour Government which claims to speak in the name of the British working class. But what is more essential is that the pressure on the Labour leaders is supplemented by counter-action, by the **participation of the workers** in combatting the fascists. Can anyone deny that the lack of organised counter-action on the part of the workers’ organisations has emboldened and encouraged the fascists? Can anyone doubt that had the Communist Party and the YCL in London rallied its

powerful organisation and apparatus to counter-demonstrate against the fascists and against Mosley when he first emerged, that they would have thought again before launching their new movement?

The Revolutionary Communist Party has been active in demonstrating and attempting to combat the fascists wherever they have appeared. We wrote to Harry Pollit appealing for a united front against the fascists. The London District Committee of the RCP sent a similar appeal to the London CP and YCL leaderships. The essence of our position can be summed up in the following extract from the letter sent by the London District Committee to the London District Committee of the Communist Party:

"Despite the very deep and fundamental differences that separate the Trotskyist and the Stalinist Parties at the present time, the London District Committee of the RCP is of the strong conviction that not only is it possible for joint anti-fascist activity between the London members of our respective parties, along practical and specific lines, but that such a united front would meet with enthusiastic support from the rank and file members of our respective organisations. Recent experiences in London have demonstrated that where our comrades have been engaged in anti-fascist activity, a spontaneous united front has been established between members of our organisations with evident success against the fascists."

Our appeals went unheeded at a time when the battles of Ridley Road were at their height and it was imperative that the workers have a united front against the fascists, who were boasting that they had driven the Communist Party from Ridley Road. Instead of rallying to Ridley Road, as the Trotskyists did, the leaders of the Communist Party discouraged their members from gathering there and thus fell into the camp of the petty bourgeois moralists and reformists who said "ignore them". Despite the cowardly policy of the leadership, many rank and file members of the CP and YCL continued to rally at Ridley Road together with members of the Revolutionary Communist Party and other organisations in a united front of protest. The official line of the CP was far from welcomed by many rank and file militants whose class instincts correctly led them to participation in the struggle against the fascists.

A revolutionary working class policy must of necessity draw the masses into real participation in the struggle. No amount of appeals for 'vigilance' or petitions, resolutions, or appeals to the capitalist state can substitute for the real mass activity of the working class in combatting its most dangerous enemies.

HOW TO FIGHT FASCISM— THE POLICY OF THE RCP

With the re-emergence of the fascists, the main task of the Labour movement is to educate and explain to the workers the class nature of fascism and its function as a combat force against the working class organisations. But explaining the class roots and function of fascism is not enough. The working class must participate in actively combatting the fascists wherever they raise their heads. For this it is necessary that the organisations of the working class rally the militants around a militant programme of struggle against the anti-semitic, anti-labour propaganda meetings, against the press and other menacing activities of the fascists.

Trade unionists must refuse to print, handle or transport fascist propaganda of any description and demand that their Executives make this a rule. All who violate such a rule must be black-listed.

The first step in mobilising the workers is to unite all sections of the movement, Labour, trade union, Communist Party, Trotskyist, Co-operatives, in a common working class united front. This is the key to a successful struggle against the menace of fascism. Fundamental differences separate these organisations from each other, but on this question of Fascism, it is, must be possible to have common agreement in forms of struggle. Retaining the right to criticise each other, it is a necessary task to organise joint counter-demonstrations, joint meetings, and joint anti-fascist propaganda campaigns. Fascism is no respecter of working class opinions and democracy. It seeks to destroy all opposition workers' parties whether they be Labour, Communist or Revolutionary Communist. To defend and protect working class meetings and premises, Jewish and other minorities against fascist provocations and attacks, a Workers' Defence Corp must be established based on the trade union, cultural and political organisations of the working class.

Mosley once boasted that he had a detachment which is joined by "nearly every man who is physically strong." "They are highly disciplined in a semi-militaristic manner." Organised detachments of Blackshirts can only be combatted by organised detachments of militant proletarians.

In campaigning for the Labour movement to "ban the fascists" the workers must bear in mind that history has taught that the enforcement of laws by a capitalist state inevitably acts to the disadvantage of the working class. The state rests upon the army,

the police and the courts. And these are riddled from top to bottom with elements sympathetic to the aims of fascism, especially at the top. Even if the pressure of the workers succeeded in enforcing the passage of anti-fascist legislation, clearly it could only be put into effect by the enforcement of the workers. This means that the demands on the Labour Government can only be effective when backed by the activities of the organised workers.

This does not mean that we do not strive to bring pressure on the Labour Government to take action against the fascists. But it does mean that our demands can only be effective if backed by determined organised activity on the part of the workers.

We must demand of the Labour Government that it immediately:

Publish the names of all known pro-Fascists contained in the 'Red Book' of Captain Ramsey.

Publish all evidence and information in the hands of the British Intelligence which reveals the connections between the Nazis and the British Fascists and representatives of the British ruling class.

Introduces legislation illegalising the propagation of anti-semitism and race hatred of any form.

Introduces legislation to make fascist propaganda and organisation illegal, and the same time to protect any section of the population which enforces this law, or is engaged in any activity against the fascists.

Today, it is true that the Fascist movement is only a small factor in British political life. But from a scratch comes the danger of gangrene! We must not repeat the same mistakes as the German working class.

Historical experience has shown that it is not possible to legislate fascism out of existence. The very nature of the capitalist state precludes that, for, fascism in the nature of things is the naked weapon of capitalist state rule. Only the mass of the organised working class, understanding the nature of fascism and with a militant policy of struggle against it, will be capable of dealing effectively with the menace of fascism. In the final analysis the destruction of the capitalist system which needs and breeds fascism with all its attendant horrors and repressions against the working class and racial and religious minorities, is the only means of ensuring the decisive defeat of fascism.

APPENDIX

JEWS IN BRITISH SOCIETY—SOME FACTS

In its attempt to find a scapegoat for the ills of a disintegrating system, fascism adopts the technique of 'Jew baiting' familiar in the period of feudal decay. All the crimes of monopoly capitalism are blamed on Jewish finance capital. All the discontent of the small shop keepers and professional men is turned into anti-semitic channels. Mosley considered this too useful a weapon in the arsenal of his 'programme' to let go by.

The fascists attempt to arouse the basest prejudices of the small business men and shopkeepers and of backward workers against the Jews. They utilise a deep rooted superstition dating back to the middle ages that the Jews own, control and manipulate the finances of the country, indeed of the world! Around this banner they do gain support amongst ignorant people—shopkeepers who meet the competition of Jewish shopkeepers in the same street, or workers who happen to live with Jewish landlords.

Even if it were true that most of the country was owned by Jewish capitalists, this would make little difference to the tasks confronting the working class. **It makes little difference to the system whether the capitalists are Jews or Gentiles.** Both are subject to the laws of capitalist economy and act accordingly. In a country like Spain where there were **no Jewish capitalists** (the Jews had been expelled in 1492) poverty, hunger and exploitation of the workers was among the worst in Europe because of the economic circumstances of the country. As is known, the class struggle in Spain culminated in civil war between the workers and fascists. The Spanish fascists had to find other demagogic slogans. It is interesting to note that De Gaulle is not resorting to anti-semitism at present.

However, many people, even in the workers' movement give credence to the myth that the Jews control the country. It is necessary for every class conscious worker to know the facts regarding the real position of the Jews in British society, in order to combat the disease of anti-semitism.

There are in Great Britain and Northern Ireland only 370,000 Jews out of a population of 48,000,000. That is, there are 7 Jews to every 1,000 non-Jews, or less than one per cent of the population.

The big banks, together with the insurance companies control the country's economy. Yet there is not a single Jew on the Bank of England, either among the Directors or its Executive officials. The Big Five have in all, 150 Directors, of these only 4 are Jews.

In international finance, the greatest banking company in the world is J. P. Morgan & Co. In this company too, there are no Jewish partners and not a single Jew in a leading position.

The Stock Exchange, which dominates the dealings in stocks and shares, and is regarded as a mysterious influence by many small businessmen, is according to the fascists dominated by Jews. But in fact, on the Stock Exchange Committee there is only one Jew.

Before the nationalisation of the Railways, the number of Directors on the LMS was 18, on the LNER 22, GWR 20, Southern 16, and the LPTB 7. Of these only one was a Jew and one was of Jewish extraction, though his family had been of the Christian faith for several generations.

There are in all 116 daily newspapers and 17 Sunday papers in Britain. Despite the myth that the Jews control the press, there was only one Jew who was director of a newspaper combine; he was the Chairman of the Daily Herald but is now dead.

Gaumont British and Odeon companies were at one time controlled by Jews. They have now passed into the hands of J. A. Rank, the most powerful figure in the film world, who is in control of some 600 cinemas and practically all the important studios. The third large corporation, the ABC was never owned by Jews.

Another fascist lie which has gained an ear among some backward sections of the population is that the Jews control the Government and Parliament. In fact there is not a single Jew in the Cabinet. There are only 28 Jewish MPs out of 640. The four Jewish members of the Government are Shinwell, Silkin, George Strauss and Lord Nathan. None is at present in the Cabinet. (A. J. Cummings, News Chronicle 11/11/47).

It is popularly believed that the Jews dominate all black market activities. The facts are that the overwhelming majority of prosecutions both of big and small businessmen for black market offences are not against Jews or people connected with Jewish enterprise. The capitalist press focus attention on those cases involving Jewish offenders precisely to give the impression that they dominate the black market. Profiteers, whether they be Jews, Gentiles Irish or Scotch, do not overlook the possibility of extra profit, whether their transactions are legal or not. The whole history of capitalism proves this. The plunder of India, China and Africa was not carried out by Jews. The slave trade was carried out by religious gentlemen, one of the most notorious of whom named his ship 'The Jesus'.

Of course, Jews do play a role in business. But in Britain in the decisive industries there is hardly any Jewish capital at all. In iron and steel, engineering, chemicals, automobiles, shipping and

rubber, and before nationalisation coal and railways, Jewish capital is negligible. In the great armaments concerns such as Vickers there is no Jewish capital. However, in certain secondary industries where the Jews have been traditionally concentrated in different countries, Jewish capital plays an important role. Even here, it is not dominant.

Some facts: In the tailoring trade one quarter of the total trade is in the hands of the Jews, in the furniture trade one seventh, in jewellery one fifth, in the boot and shoe trade one eighth, two thirds of the fur trade, but only eleven percent of the electrical and radio trade, less than seven per cent in cosmetics. In food shops one sixth of the trade in London is owned by Jews, but only one sixteenth in the provinces.

In tailoring, Montague Burton's is a Jewish firm. The 50/- Tailors are Gentile. In the bazaar trade, Woolworths, which owns 762 branches with a capital of £12,000,000 is non-Jewish. Marks and Spencer is a Jewish firm owning 236 branches with a capital of £3,950,000.

Insofar as chain stores are concerned, the Co-operatives, part of the working class movement, is owned by the workers. This is the largest chain store in the country. There are 92 chain store groups with a capital of £150,000,000. The drapery and allied trades constitute about a third of the capital invested. Half is controlled by non-Jewish firms (Harrods, Selfridges, John Lewis and Barkers). The Unilever Combine which dominates the groceries and provisions trade is not, as commonly thought, composed entirely of Jewish capital. The only Jewish capital in this concern is that owned by the Dutch Jews, the Van den Berghs.

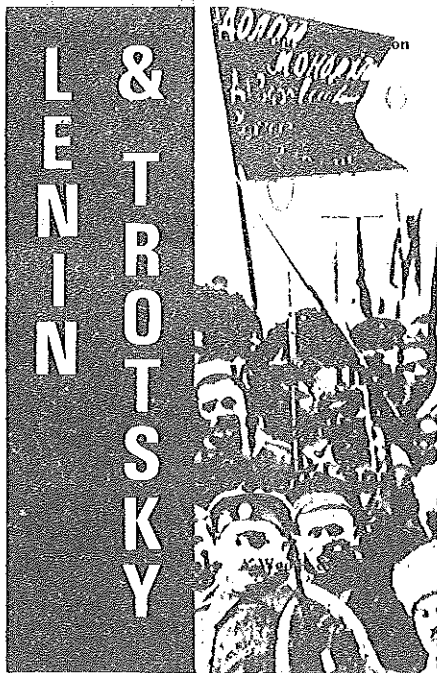
On the retail side in the grocery and provision trade, Home and Colonial stores, Maypole Dairies and even Liptons are not controlled by Jews. The biggest meat combine in the country is the Union Cold storage which controls 5,000 branches. This is a purely non-Jewish firm. The Jews are totally absent from the dairy combines: Southern Dairies, United Dairies and Express Dairies are Gentile firms. In the drug trade, the monopoly stores—Boots, Taylors, Timothy White's, Savory & Moore's, and Hodders are all owned by non-Jews.

The decisive section of all industry is controlled by Gentile capital. The number of small Jewish shopkeepers, retailers, and middlemen, gives a false impression of the role of the Jews in business. In the decisive section of finance the role of Jewish capital is small. Thus, the elimination of the Jews would eliminate none of the injustices of the capitalist system.

The great majority of Jews in Britain, contrary to popular belief, are workers, employed mainly in tailoring, furniture trade, and a fairly high proportion of shop assistants. About 15 per cent of the Jews gainfully occupied are in trades and industry on their own account. Of the total population, seven and a half per cent are occupied in trade.

The struggle for the emancipation of the working class is not between races or religions. It is one of class against class. Every trace of anti-semitism, or any form of race hatred cannot assist the oppressed, it can on the contrary only aid the exploiters. Workers of all nationality, religion or creed must stand together against the common enemy: capitalism.

The facts about the Jews have been collated from 'The Jews in Work and Trade' by N. Baron and published by the Trades Advisory Council and 'Questions and Answers—Facts and Figures of Jewish Economic Life and History'. Publishers as above.



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