

# BLACK REBELLION

PEOPLE who read the posh papers (daily and Sunday) may have noticed that they have been paying attention to the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination. You had headlines like 'How Mr. James Played His Card' (*Sunday Times*), 'Battle For Power Among Colour Bar Campaigners' (*Observer*), 'Racial Group In Crisis Talks' (*Times*), and so on. I hope to deal with some of the stuff that did not make the headlines.

CARD was formed three years ago to combat racial discrimination in Britain. Prominent founders included Mr. David Pitt, Miss Julia Gaitskell, Mr. Anthony Lester. A friend of mine described the constitution they drew up as 'a Labour Party front' (he should know—he helped to draft it!). Personally I don't doubt the sincerity of those who go in for parliamentary lobbying—just their wisdom. Many people in CARD felt what was needed was more emphasis on the struggle in the community, in the ghetto. At this year's convention a take-over bid was made, amid charges and counter-charges of cheating. The new (but disputed) leadership issued a statement:

'An alliance was built up of all militant coloured organisations and all militant native organisations of our blood brothers—a fusion of workers, students, and intellectuals on all sides.

'We decided (1) that CARD must become and remain a broad mass of grass roots organisations in which there will be all races; (2) that it must be militant and it must be officered by the coloured sufferers of racial discrimination who know the problems and know the way to struggle against it; (3) that without attacking the root cause, imperialist oppression, our struggle will not win support among coloured people and/or natives of Britain.'

### ACTIVITY IN ISLINGTON

What all this will mean in practice remains to be seen—however, that's enough about ye convention. Let's look at a Local Branch, the Islington one because it is the only one I know anything about. It has a membership consisting of West Indians, Pakistanis and 'natives'. Some good work has been done on the housing issue. A demonstration was held supported by tenants of a slum landlord. Reaction of a local Councillor: 'These people live in overcrowded conditions because they want

to!' Of an Alderman: 'They're a lot of hooligans.'

Another issue with which Islington CARD is much concerned is police brutality. A march to Islington and Caledonian Road Police Stations was supported by over a hundred people.

At a Branch Meeting held shortly before the yearly convention, relations with Central CARD were discussed. It was decided (not unanimously) to have relations with Central CARD.

A lot of black (West Indian) teenagers have come into Islington CARD and want action. These kids, descended from slaves and 'Uncle Toms', are naturally attracted to Black Power. Some of their ideas are sensible, some are not. 'We must be disciplined,' said one. What for? That's slave talk. Only slaves need discipline. However, as regards militancy, these kids will be setting the pace in future.

### COULD IT HAPPEN HERE?

The October issue of Islington CARD's Newsletter contained, besides an excellent article on the police, a report on the Detroit insurrection. It's worth quoting part of it:

'They asked for no aid, they expected none. They, the most exploited, demonstrated, as Stokeley Carmichael insisted when in London, that no man can die for another. And when white youth and white Southern workers who are heavily exploited in Detroit created integrated looting when they joined in the destruction of the shops which exploited them, and joined in the sniping against the police who are also their enemies, no one said "Whitey go home". Black Power had expressed itself fully when white men joined in the struggle that black men started and which they led.'

Now this is not America. The proportion of 'coloured' people is smaller. Black Americans are many generations in the land, whereas black and brown people in this country do not necessarily even speak the same language. Indians do not always love Pakistanis and vice versa. The West Indian, more sure of himself, tends to be impatient with both. The shops in the Detroit ghetto were run by whites, in British ghettos this is less common. But mass communications mean that events in America do influence events here. Insurrection is a serious business, but there is one reason why it could happen—in a deaf society, it may be the only way to make yourself heard.

J. McLEAN.

## CONSULATE RAIDED

The Editors. In response to the *Guardian's* call for further demonstrations against the Greek fascist regime, the Greek Consulate in Glasgow was broken into and the plaque taken; a swastika was applied and the result photographed (enclosed).

The plaque is now in London to be used for propaganda purposes.

SAVE GREECE NOW  
(Glasgow Group)



# DURHAM BUILDINGS—some success

THE STRUGGLE of the homeless people of Wandsworth against the Labour-controlled Council continues. As I wrote in FREEDOM two weeks ago, the demands are:—

1. Withdrawal of the nine-month eviction threat;
2. Assurance that no family will be evicted onto the streets;
3. Assurance that no children will be taken into care, and all families given a decent place to live.

A deputation of tenants has visited the home of Mr. Kenneth Robinson, Minister of Health, and handed in a letter pointing out that the Wandsworth Council eviction threat is contrary to Labour's election pledge of no evictions, and asking him to see that the Council withdraw it.

The march on November 12 to the home of the Chairman of the Welfare Committee, Alderman Jack Parker, went very well. About 120 people took part. A meeting was held outside Parker's house and a letter handed in, demanding that the assurances be given at the Council meeting the following Wednesday.

THE STUPIDITY of the British Government is almost beyond belief. After having spent three years bolstering up the external value of the pound with every device in the book in order to avoid devaluation, which should have taken place years ago, it has allowed itself to be forced into a devaluation which not only takes place at the worst possible time, when Britain has made huge borrowings from the International Monetary Fund and from the Americans and Continentals which must be paid back at the old exchange rate, but also is too small to be of any real use.

So we can look forward to a continuation of the speculation by international bankers against the pound, even while the authorities, with Bank Rate at 8 per cent, do their best to produce the highest level of unemployment since the War.

In 1949 when the pound was devalued, it went from \$4.03 to the pound to \$2.80—about a third. Now its dollar value has been cut by only about 14 per cent, to \$2.40. The reason for the smallness of the cut this time is the pressure exerted by the other major countries of the world, particularly the United States, who were afraid of the threat to their own currencies which would come from the creation of such a large differential in favour of British exports. If Britain had devalued by a sufficient margin to obviate the danger of a further devaluation, other countries, including perhaps even America, could have been forced to devalue also. The net effect then would be a collapse of the world monetary system like that of 1931, the competitive advantage deriving from devaluation would be lost, and nations would resort to restrictions on international trade and resulting mass unemployment.

A similar outcome may yet be the result of the British action. Despite the promise by the other major countries of a \$3,000 million loan to support sterling at the new rate, there is going to be continued doubt that the devaluation was sufficient to produce the substantial balance of trade surplus which Britain needs to pay off its present debts, as well as to bear the estimated £500 million a year additional burden which, it was officially estimated last year, entry into the Common Market would involve. In other words, the sterling crisis is not yet finished.

### LOWERING OF LIVING STANDARDS

What the practical outcome, as far as we here are concerned is going to be, is very briefly said. Within two years the British people are going to be on an average living standard lower than that of the French and the Germans, and perhaps even lower than most Italians. This is going to be brought about by sharp rises in the cost of living in the next year or so. Depending upon which of the Sterling Area countries follow Britain in devaluing their currencies in terms of the dollar and the major European currencies, the cost of living should rise by three or four per cent. Entry into the EEC, which is now almost certain, should add another three or four per cent to this. To translate this into practical terms, the food bill of an average family of four would, under the combined impact of the present devaluation and entry into the Common Market, increase by something like fifty shillings a week. And on top of this we are going to have an increase in unemployment and measures to prevent any increase in wage rates.

It would be a mistake to blame all this simply on the sub-Churchillian posturings of Harold Wilson. Although the economists have been advocating devaluation for years, they have done so with very little understanding of the real problems involved: devaluation has been a panacea which has enabled them to avoid any serious analysis of the causes of Britain's payments difficulties. On the other hand, there have been the Bank of England and the financial interests of the City who, with the support of the Treasury, have been chiefly concerned with the defence of their own interests.

There is in fact no simple explanation of what has gone wrong with Britain's balance of payments. Certain elements can be immediately distinguished, like the huge one-way expenditure overseas by the Government for military and associated purposes, and the rise in the prices of British exports on overseas markets relative to other countries' products, but to tie all the elements together into a coherent and convincing explanation is something that no one has yet achieved. But it seems likely that at the root of Britain's troubles is the long-term structural adjustment that has been

taking place since the First World War, as Britain declines in relative importance. Her head start in industrialisation and economic development, and her acquisition and maintenance, even during the Second World War, of large overseas capital investments, and the income deriving from them, enabled Britain for many years to enjoy a national income much greater on a per capita basis than that of most other major countries.

### HISTORICAL CHANGE

Now the process of historical change has reduced Britain to a relatively insignificant country. But she has nevertheless endeavoured with the help of, and perhaps for the preservation of, her income from overseas investments, to maintain an important role in the structure of international power-politics, while at the same time not possessing the domestic economic strength to justify such a role. The reason for the inadequate domestic economic strength in turn is partly simply one of size and natural resources, and partly explicable in terms of the 'maturity' of the economy relative to that of the other major industrial powers: Britain no longer has a numerically large but relatively declining agricultural sector from which to draw the supplies of labour which are necessary to rapid industrial expansion. Nor has she been able (partly because of stupid xenophobia) to draw upon the labour force of countries or areas with a large agricultural labour surplus.

Thus a devaluation of some kind was inevitable. But the activities of the British authorities have had the effect of making a bad situation worse; and there is no important difference between the Labour Party and the Conservatives in this.

As a result, all we have to look forward to for the next few years is hardship and insecurity. Whether the electorate in 1970 votes for Wilson or Heath will of course make not a jot of difference to Britain's place in the world, and her necessary further decline.

BRON SHATOV.

### EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. FREEDOM will be published without a break until Christmas. We shall have an eight-page issue next week and also on December 23 and that will be the last issue of the year.

2. We need help in folding FREEDOM on November 28 and 30, at Express Printers, 84 Whitechapel High Street, E.1. from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m.

## Social Evening

in aid of

# Anarchist Black X

Monday, December 11, 7.30 p.m.

at the

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happens to those families who have been unable to find accommodation in nine months? We know they will not be evicted but will they go to 'problem family units' as is rumoured, with 24-hour supervision?

3. The reletting of empty Council-owned houses in Battersea, which were going to be left vacant for two-three years. Why should not the homeless be housed in them—with or without Council permission?

In furtherance of the first two points a letter was sent to every Councillor asking them to bring up the subject at the Council meeting on November 15. Not one Councillor saw fit to do so, but about 20 homeless people and supporters were in the public gallery, and we did. The Mayor and Alderman Parker went berserk and we were ejected. But we had made our point, and we all enjoyed it immensely.

We thank those who have supported us.

The campaign continues.

RON BAILEY.





