



# **MARXIST-LENINIST JOURNAL**

**THEORETICAL JOURNAL OF THE REVOLUTIONARY  
COMMUNIST PARTY OF BRITAIN (MARXIST-LENINIST)**

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## **THE BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT**

- \* A Racist, Chauvinist and Colonialist Measure**
  - \* Racist Laws of the British State**
  - \* Chauvinist Logic Underlying the New Law**
  - \* Racism of the Labour Party**
  - \* Racism — A Preferred Policy of the British Bourgeoisie**
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## **THE BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT**

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## Introduction

The so-called British Nationality Act was passed by Parliament on October 30, 1981.

This Act is a racist and chauvinist measure which further reduces the citizenship rights of nationalities. On the basis of this legislation the British state is already carrying its attack on these rights still further, implementing for example "nationality checks" at unemployment benefit offices, in the National Health Service, in schools, and so on. Further all-round attacks on the rights of national minorities and immigrants will certainly follow. The measure must be vigorously opposed by all progressive and democratic people of all nationalities.

The present issue of "Marxist-Leninist Journal" is devoted to an analysis of the Act and the aims of the British state in introducing it.

Section 1 deals with the provisions of the Act and exposes its racist, chauvinist and colonialist character.

In Section 2 the history of the racist legislation of the British state, and in particular of the Immigration Acts, is considered.

Section 3 exposes and refutes the chauvinist logic according to which the British bourgeoisie equates the notion of citizenship with that of nationality, with the aim of denying full citizenship rights to those not of British nationality.

In Section 4 the racist record of the British Labour Party is outlined, showing that all the bourgeois parties support and administer the racist policies of the British state.

Section 5 shows, with a brief analysis of history, that racism is a preferred policy of the British bourgeoisie and its state, that it is this bourgeoisie and its state, not the people, that is the source of racism. The people cannot rely on the bourgeoisie, its state, its institutions, its political parties in the struggle against racism. They must rely on their own strength, unity and organisation to combat racism and racist attacks, in opposition to the British state, which stands behind these attacks.

As an attack on the rights of nationalities, the British Nationality Act is an attack on the entire working class and all democratic forces. It is part of the increasing fascisation of the

state and of the life of the country, part of the increasing trend away from democracy and towards fascism, which is so much a feature of present-day Britain. The policy of the state towards nationalities reflects its attitude to all sections of the people, and the status and rights enjoyed by national minorities are a measure of democratic rights generally. Increase in national oppression signifies a decrease in democracy generally. Hand in hand with the attacks on national minorities, increasingly the rights of the entire working class and people, including also, for example, the right to strike, to organise at the place of work, to demonstrate, etc., are under attack, along with the rapid increase in the repressive powers of the state, as the ruling bourgeoisie seeks to force the burden of the crisis onto the backs of the people. The danger to the freedom, wellbeing and lives of the people is real and serious. It is a serious responsibility of the working class and democratic people to oppose and organise against the increasing danger of fascism, against racism, chauvinism and national oppression, against the British Nationality Act, which incorporates the principles on which these attacks on the people are based and is at the same time a very central part of these attacks.

## Section 1

# The British Nationality Act is Racist, Chauvinist and Colonialist

The British Nationality Act carries out the plans of the British state foreshadowed in the government's White Paper of July 1980 on British Nationality and the previous Labour government's Green Paper of April 1977.

The British government, in introducing the British Nationality Act, tried to justify it by reference to the anomalous character of the existing citizenship law (the British Nationality Act 1948). Under this law, Britain claimed the peoples of countries of the whole of the non-independent Commonwealth as British citizens (citizens of the UK and Colonies). Clearly it is necessary to replace such a colonial citizenship law with a new citizenship law. But what is needed is a citizenship law which removes the colonialist, racist, chauvinist and undemocratic features of the 1948 British Nationality Act. Instead the British state has introduced a citizenship law which preserves, consolidates and carries even further just these colonialist, racist, chauvinist and undemocratic features.

Thus it is not a question of whether or not there is a need for change in the citizenship law but in the character of the change, whether it be in the direction of racism or anti-racism, chauvinism or anti-chauvinism, colonialism or anti-colonialism, etc. All states have citizenship laws, just as all states have immigration laws. What must be opposed are reactionary, racist, chauvinist and anti-democratic citizenship and immigration laws, of the type enacted and enforced by the British state.

What then are the principle features of the new Act?

Under the previous law British citizens have been, as mentioned above, those who are "citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies". Apart from the "United Kingdom", this includes all Commonwealth citizens not having citizenship of any independent Commonwealth country. The British Nationality Act provides that those citizens of the UK and Colonies without right of abode in Britain under the existing immigration laws are to

lose British citizenship also and become either Citizens of the British Dependent Territories or Overseas Citizens.

Citizenship of the British Dependent Territories is a form of colonial "citizenship" carrying with it no right of entry except into a particular British colony. British Overseas Citizenship carries with it no rights of entry into Britain or elsewhere and no other rights at all, so that it is in essence a form of statelessness, in all but name.

By this manoeuvre of dividing citizenship of the UK and Colonies into three categories with different rights for each, the British state seeks to deprive a section of its citizens of their citizenship whilst at the same time trying to avoid condemnation for violating international norms and agreements concerning citizenship and the reduction of statelessness. Thus the "British Overseas citizens" are allegedly to be citizens of Britain still, and not strictly stateless, even if they have no rights. However Britain will remain, as it is now, the only country in the world whose citizens do not automatically have the right of abode in the country of their citizenship.

The different categories of citizens are defined on the basis of national origin, which is used to distinguish "patrials" and "non-patrials".

#### **LOSS OF CITIZENSHIP WHEN THE ACT COMES INTO EFFECT**

Of the present citizens of the UK and Colonies, those who are "patrials", and therefore have the right of abode in Britain under the 1971 Immigration Act, will become British Citizens proper when the new measure comes into operation.

With some slight exceptions, a citizen of the UK and Colonies is "patrial" if (a) he/she is a citizen of the UK and Colonies by virtue of birth, adoption, naturalisation or registration in the UK itself, or through having a parent or a grandparent who fulfilled this requirement, or if (b) he/she has been ordinarily resident in the UK for five years without conditions at the end of the five years, or (c) if she is the wife of a person who fulfils (a) or (b).

This choice of definition of "patriality" is explained by the fact that its purpose is, without of course saying so openly and explicitly, nevertheless so far as possible to include those citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies who are "white", "Europeans", etc., or more precisely those from the imperialist

countries, whilst excluding those who are "coloured", "non-European", etc., i.e., those from the oppressed nations.

According to government figures, the present citizens of the UK and Colonies include, in addition to 57 million who are so "by reason of their close connection with the United Kingdom itself", some 3 million people in the colonies (2.6 million in Hong Kong), as well as some quarter of a million people in Malaysia, India and East Africa (Kenya and Uganda especially) who opted for citizenship of the UK and Colonies at independence, and also some 4.3 million people with dual nationality (1 million in the UK, 1 million in Malaysia). Successive British governments have developed the above "patriality" formula in order to exclude, first from right of abode and now from citizenship: those from the colonies (who are now to become citizens of the British Dependent Territories); those from Malaysia, India, East Africa, etc., who opted for citizenship of the UK and Colonies at independence (who are now to become British overseas citizens); and those with dual nationality (who will simply lose all forms of British citizenship). Many Commonwealth citizens opted for citizenship of the UK and Colonies at the time their countries of residence became independent, when Britain held out this option as an expedient to gain acceptance for its independence proposals. Their fate has been to be deprived first of the right of abode in Britain at the time when they were forced to leave these countries, and now, also of the only citizenship they have, leaving them effectively stateless.

As we have seen, the citizens of the UK and Colonies who are "patrial" will become British citizens when the new British Nationality Act comes into force.

Those citizens of the UK and Colonies who are from the "British Dependent Territories" will become citizens of the Dependent Territories, with right of entry and abode only in the respective "British dependent territory". The British Dependent Territories are, at the time of writing:- 1. the colonies of Bermuda; British Antarctic Territory; British Indian Ocean Territory; Cayman Islands; Falkland Islands and Dependencies; Gibraltar; Hong Kong; Montserrat; Pitcairn, Henderson, Ducie and Oeno Islands; St Helena and Dependencies; Akrotiri and Dhekelia Bases (Cyprus); Turks and Caicos Islands; Virgin Islands;

2. the "associated state" of St Christopher-Nevis-Anguilla.  
All the remaining citizens of the UK and Colonies will become British Overseas citizens.

### **OPERATION OF CITIZENSHIP LAW AFTER THE MEASURE COMES INTO EFFECT**

The British Nationality Act also specifies how the three categories of citizenship are to be acquired in future, after the measure comes into force.

Birth in the UK will not necessarily and automatically confer British citizenship, and the exclusions are discriminatory against national minority people. For children born in the UK citizenship is only to be automatic if one of the parents is a British citizen or is "settled in the UK" (i.e. ordinarily resident and without restriction on length of stay under the immigration laws). If the state permits one of the parents subsequently to become settled then the child may be registered as a British citizen on application. If the parents cannot prove they are not "illegal immigrants" then the child would only be eligible to register after showing 10 years continuous residence in Britain. This racist provision will make Britain one of the very few countries in the world in which birth in that country does not confer automatic citizenship irrespective of the status of the parents.

A person born outside the UK to a parent who is a British citizen will automatically be a British citizen only if the parent is a British citizen by birth (or is in Crown service); in certain other cases registration as a British citizen is possible but subject to the Home Secretary's discretion. This provision too is racist in character and discriminates against national minority people.

Apart from certain cases in which the possibility of registration as a British citizen will exist for a limited number of years after the Act comes into force, the only way of obtaining British citizenship after the measure comes into force will be by naturalisation.

Formerly, Commonwealth citizens (and citizens of the Irish Republic) had in the main an automatic right to register as UK citizens after a period of residence. Under the 1971 Immigration Act this right ceased except for people settled here before 1973. Now, under the new law, it will, after two years, be eliminated

for all. Commonwealth citizens seeking British citizenship will have to apply – as "foreigners" or "aliens" have always had to – for naturalisation.

In order to be naturalised a person has to show himself or herself to be "of good character", to have "a sufficient knowledge of the English or Welsh language", to "intend" to remain in Britain (or in Crown service), to have been resident without restriction as to stay under the immigration laws for a period of five years, to pay £150. If the person fulfils these requirements the Home Secretary "may, if he thinks fit", grant a certificate of naturalisation as a British citizen. Thus naturalisation is subject to arbitrary refusal by the Home Secretary, who need not even give a reason, and there is no appeal against refusal. According to Whitelaw, "the arguments against an appeal system remain compelling. Such a system would certainly be expensive in terms of public service manpower". In this way basic rights are torn up under the cynical pretext of "expense" (while of course "expense" is no object when it comes to enforcing the denial of these rights).

Until now a woman married to a citizen of the UK and Colonies has been entitled on application to become a citizen of the UK and Colonies by registration. Now, under a fraudulent pretence of "sex equality", this right is to be removed and both women and men will have to apply for naturalisation. The spouse however first has to obtain settlement: under the Immigration Rules which came into force on March 1, 1980, the husband of a woman born in Britain or with a British-born parent can be excluded if an entry clearance officer decides he thinks the marriage was entered into "for the purpose of evading immigration control"; if a woman is not British-born or with a British-born parent, her husband will not be admitted anyway, even if she is a British citizen.

The above are some of the principal immediate effects of the British Nationality Act.

### **A VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONALLY ESTABLISHED NORMS AND PRINCIPLES**

As we have pointed out above, the British Nationality Act violates not only basic democratic rights and principles but also established international norms and agreements accepted and

agreed by the overwhelming majority of states including Britain.

According to Article 15 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, of which Britain is a signatory, "No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality (i.e. citizenship)". But this is precisely what the government aims to do in the case of the "overseas citizens" and "citizens of the British Dependent Territories", who are at present citizens of the UK and Colonies.

The proposal is likewise in violation of Article 2(1) of the said Declaration. This declares: "Everyone is entitled to all rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status". The new law deprives citizens of citizenship rights on the basis of a racially discriminatory criterion, just as the immigration laws deprive citizens of the right of entry and abode in a racially discriminatory fashion.

Successive Conservative and Labour governments have endeavoured to maintain the contrary. Thus Callaghan in 1968 absurdly tried to prove that the criterion was "geographical, not racial", while Whitelaw today pretends to "fail to understand" this criticism. However according even to the British state's own Race Relations Act 1976 "a person discriminates against another if... he applies to that other a requirement or condition which... is such that the proportion of persons of the same racial group as that other who can comply with it is considerably smaller than the proportion of persons not of that racial group who can comply with it; and (ii) which he cannot show to be justifiable irrespective of the colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins of the person to whom it is applied...". The same Act also defines "racial grounds" as "any of the following grounds, namely colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins", whereas it is precisely on the basis of nationality or national origins that the immigration laws and the new citizenship measures apply.

The provision of the British Nationality Act concerning citizenship of the British Dependent Territories is in violation of Article 2(2) of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, according to which, in regard to rights and freedoms, "no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person

belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty".

Finally Article 7 of this Declaration which Britain has signed states that "all are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law". Under the rule of the bourgeoisie this provision is not fully realisable, since only the bourgeoisie has the possibility of giving real substance to the rights which formally exist for all, and since these rights are removed when the rule of the bourgeoisie is threatened. However under the British Nationality Act there is no longer even formal equality of rights; instead there is formal inequality of rights, as well as actual inequality, for the British Overseas citizens and the citizens of the British Dependent Territories.

\* \* \* \* \*

The British Nationality Act opens the way for further restrictions on the rights of those who do not have full British citizenship, including exclusion from health service, social security and other benefits. It paves the way for stepping up the deportation of national minorities. It also paves the way for further state harassment of national minorities generally, for measures requiring the carrying of documentary proof of citizenship and so on. It paves the way for further increased discrimination against all those who are not British citizens. The intentions of the government in this respect were foreshadowed in its statement that "the Bill, by establishing a British citizenship, will make available a ready definition by which these duties or entitlements may be redefined in the future". (1980 White Paper, para. 110).

## Section 2

# History of the Racist Legislation of the British State

The British Nationality Act is the latest in the series of successively more repressive laws of the British state which have been directed at national minorities and immigrants.

The various citizenship and immigration laws have been introduced at each stage in accordance with the interests of the British monopoly capitalist ruling class. As British capitalism developed from the phase of laissez-faire capitalism to imperialism, as the colonial Empire gave way to the neo-colonial Commonwealth, as the Commonwealth connection was overtaken in importance by British membership in the EEC, so too have corresponding changes been introduced in the citizenship law. As the exploitation and oppression of national minority workers and immigrants has become more pronounced, so too have the immigration laws been strengthened in accordance with and to further this process.

### IMPERIALISM AND THE INTRODUCTION OF REACTIONARY CHAUVINIST LAWS

At one time Britain had no repressive immigration laws of the type that are in force today. In the nineteenth century the British bourgeoisie reigned supreme at the head of a vast multinational empire which stretched to all parts of the globe. Britain was the champion of "free trade" and "laissez-faire". Accordingly it freely exported its goods and freely imported its raw materials; it "freely" subjugated the peoples of the colonies, and "freely" shipped them half way across the globe as indentured labourers to build its railways, work its plantations and so forth. At that time the vast majority of the colonial peoples of the British empire had so few rights and so little possibility of seeking a livelihood in Britain that the right of immigration into Britain and their rights once here scarcely existed much less needed to be taken away by any special laws.

The place for the oppressive racist colonial laws, and for the

most barbaric, ruthless and draconian suppression, was in the colonies, in India, Africa, in Ireland, in Australia (the White Australia policy), etc.

Nevertheless, in Britain, too, specific chauvinist and racist measures against immigrants made their appearance as early as the turn of the century (the Aliens Act 1905), in the period which saw the maturing of the imperialist stage of capitalism on the world scale. While there existed laws for registering the arrival and departure of "aliens" previously, the 1905 Aliens Act prevented the landing of "undesirable immigrants". It permitted the expulsion of aliens convicted by the courts; it also permitted expulsion for "vagrancy" or for having been on parochial relief in the last three months. This Act, introduced at a time of crisis in the capitalist economy, was directed especially at immigrants from Eastern Europe, many of whom were employed in the textile and other trades in the East End of London. The agitation to create public opinion for this measure had a pronounced chauvinist and anti-semitic character and bore many similarities to the later "anti-immigrant" campaigns launched by fascists in the thirties and after the second world war. These events show incidentally that the racist laws and racist attacks by the bourgeoisie are not a question of "colour", etc.

Thus the onset of the imperialist phase of capitalism saw also the introduction of the first immigration laws, directed then, as now, against the most exploited immigrant workers, with the aim both of intensifying exploitation of these workers and of diverting attention from the real cause of the crisis by setting workers of different nationalities at loggerheads.

From 1914 onward Aliens Restriction Acts (1914 and 1919) were in force (also an Aliens Order 1920); these limited immigration and restricted the rights of "aliens" (i.e. those not "British subjects"), for example preventing their employment in the civil service. The introduction of these measures (which coincided with the outbreak of the first world war) was a manifestation of the increased chauvinism which accompanied the great sharpening of the contradictions between the imperialist powers and the upsurge of the national struggle on the world scale. Among the racist and anti-working-class measures of the 1919 Act were for example the imposition of penalties for aliens "promoting industrial unrest" and the provision that: "No alien

shall be employed in any capacity on a British ship registered in the UK at a rate of pay less than the standard rate of pay for the time being current on British ships for his rating. Provided that where the Board of Trade is satisfied that aliens of any particular race . . . are habitually employed afloat in any capacity or in any climate, for which they are especially fitted, nothing in this section shall prejudice the right of such aliens to be employed upon British ships at rates of pay which are not below those for the time being fixed as standard rates for British subjects of that race." (In this connection it is to be noted that a "Special Restrictions (Coloured Alien Seamen) Order" was introduced in 1925, requiring British protected persons to register as aliens. Specific racist laws in relation to seamen exist to this day; thus the Race Relations Act 1976 contains provisions specifically permitting racial discrimination in wages paid to seamen.)

The 1914 British Nationality and Status of Aliens Act defined a British subject, essentially, as a person or descendant in the male line of a person "born within His Majesty's Dominions and Allegiance". Britain did not have any other concept of British citizenship. (However "British protected persons" in the dependent territories were regarded as "aliens", not British subjects.)

### THE 1948 BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT

By bringing the colonies into the net of the capitalist world system, and subjecting the peoples to the most monstrous oppression the gigantic British Empire sowed the seeds of its own disintegration. The national liberation movement sprang up powerfully from one end of this vast multinational empire to the other.

By 1947 not only had the "white dominions" achieved self-government, but the pride of the empire, India, had had to be granted a form of "independence". The demand for decolonisation was irresistible. The British government was obliged to modify the notion of British citizenship, whilst retaining the concept of the "British Commonwealth" as the form appropriate to the system of neo-colonialism to which the system of open colonialism was rapidly to give way in the following period.

The 1948 British Nationality Act provided that each of the

self-governing Commonwealth countries would define its citizens, while each would recognise as "British subjects" or "Commonwealth citizens" the citizens of all the others; people in Britain and people of the non-self-governing colonies became "citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies". As the number of self-governing countries increased, especially in the 'fifties and 'sixties, so the category of citizens of the UK and Colonies contracted.

In introducing the 1948 British Nationality Act the British government of the day deemed it impracticable to insist on the term "British subject" and allowed instead the use of "Commonwealth citizen". As Chuter Ede, the responsible Minister of the then Labour government, said, referring to the people of India, Pakistan and Ceylon: "it can be well understood that these people who are not of British descent find it ('British subject') a rather difficult term to reconcile with the granting to them of nationhood and their recognition as an independent sovereign power, within this great Commonwealth". "To them also the word 'subject' unfortunately has the significance of being a member of a subject race"(!). Having made this concession (which all but Australia took up) the British imperialists could be well-satisfied with the maintenance of the reality of this neo-colonial entity subservient to the "mother country", Britain, in the face of the great national liberation struggles which threatened their domination. As the Act itself specifies, "the expression 'British subject' and the expression 'Commonwealth citizen' shall have the same meaning"!

Chuter Ede declared: "The maintenance of the British Commonwealth of Nations as a great, loyal confederation of people, enjoying in each individual part self-government and liberty unexampled in the history of the Empires of the world (!), is one of the duties that this generation owes to the world and to the generations to come."

Such were the context and aims of the 1948 British Nationality Act, the legislation which the 1981 British Nationality Act replaces.

It was introduced at a time when, following the Second World War, the imperialist powers were no longer able to maintain the colonial system in its old form, when the anti-imperialist struggles of the peoples were irresistibly developing. The

collapse of the colonial system necessitated changes to the citizenship law, and if these had been carried out in an anti-colonialist, non-chauvinist, non-racist and democratic direction no further problems would have arisen. But, needless to say, British imperialism had no intention of giving up its imperialist domination and instead sought to continue it in the form of neo-colonialism; it aimed also to intensify the exploitation of immigrant workers deprived of rights. Hence the changes to the citizenship law were not such as to remove the reactionary, imperialist features but to continue and intensify them.

The 1948 British Nationality Act paved the way for the passage of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act and subsequent racist immigration laws.

### RACIST IMMIGRATION LAWS

On an increasing scale the British bourgeoisie employed immigrants from Europe and from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean in Britain itself during the post-war boom. From 1948 there was an overall inflow of immigration, reversing the previously existing trend. Immigration of Polish and other East European workers in the period 1946-50 was on a bigger scale than previous immigration – or that of Commonwealth immigrants later. Whereas prior to 1940 the number of Irish workers entering Britain was around 9,500 p.a., this figure almost doubled between 1945-49 to 17,000. The immigration from the "new Commonwealth" began seriously in the fifties and the capitalists conducted recruitment campaigns in various countries for this purpose. By this means the British monopoly capitalists sought to avoid paying higher wages despite the relative shortage of labour in this short-lived boom. The British bourgeoisie drained off large numbers of skilled and professional workers from the neo-colonial countries.

The London Transport Executive, for example, began recruiting staff in Barbados in 1956 and extended the scheme to Trinidad and Jamaica in 1966. Between 1956 and 1969 some 4,320 workers were recruited in this way by London Transport. The firm of J Lyons also recruited many workers from the West Indies. Another example was the recruitment of hospital workers in the West Indies (under the direction of the fascist politician Enoch Powell, who was at that time the Minister of Health). It is

calculated that by the end of 1959 there were 126,000 West Indians living in Britain. Many doctors from Asia, Africa and elsewhere were recruited to fill junior positions in the health service. (A similar trend existed in all the imperialist countries. It is estimated that there are today some 12 million immigrants in the US, 24 million in Western Europe.)

The deliberate organisation of immigration by the capitalists and their state to solve their own labour needs refutes the lies about "floods of immigrants" seeking to "better their lot" in Britain – lies which were later spread to justify the passage of harsh immigration laws in order to remove the rights of immigrants and national minority workers. It has been shown that prior to the introduction of the immigration laws there existed a close correlation between the demand for labour and the scale of immigration. See Fig.1 below.

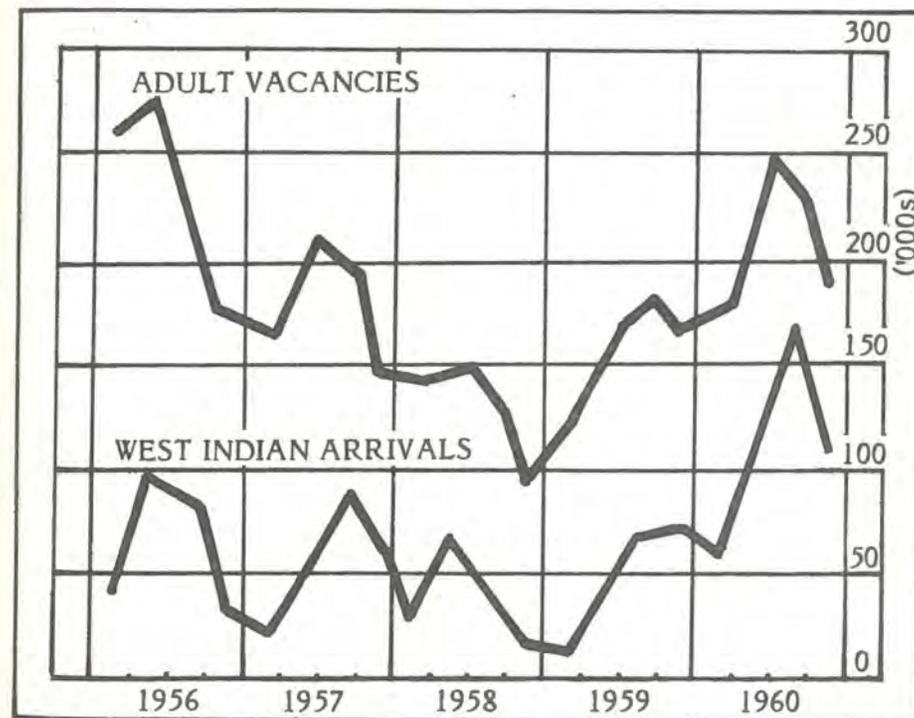


Figure 1 – Quarterly figures of employment vacancies and West Indian arrivals, 1956-1960

It may be mentioned here that similarly today, at a time when the Prime Minister, Thatcher, has tried to justify the introduction of the British Nationality Act with racist talk of Britain being "swamped" by immigrants, the government's own statistics show the opposite of what is being asserted. Thus Table 1 shows that for years on end there has been a net outflow of immigration from Britain.

Midyear to Midyear	Aliens excl. Pakistan	Old C'wealth	New C'wealth & Pakistan	UK Passport Holders		Total Inflow	Total Outflow	Net
				Controlled	Other			
64-65	+22	+1	+55	.	-136	223	281	-58
65-66	24	-2	+42	.	-141	210	286	-77
66-67	30	+5	+45	.	-175	232	326	-94
67-68	23	-10	+55	+15	-128	241	286	-45
68-69	21	-2	+48	8	-144	227	296	-68
69-70	24	-3	+37	6	-146	224	306	-82
70-71	21	-5	+33	9	-98	227	266	-39
71-72	15	+6	+16	16	-97	196	240	-44
72-73	22	+3	+13	34	-76	225	230	-5
73-74	21	+6	+14	10	-122	183	255	-72
74-75	18	.	+20	13	-116	194	261	-67
75-76	12	+3	+29	12	-79	197	220	-23
76-77	2	.	+24	9	-63	181	209	-28
77-78	3	+1	+25	6	-71	162	198	-36
78-79	9	+4	+38	4	-49	194	187	+6

**Table 1. MIGRANTS BEYOND THE "BRITISH ISLES" : NET INFLOW**

The immigrant workers were given the most difficult jobs and the lowest pay and were the first to be dismissed from their jobs, and this remains the case with the national minority workers today. Furthermore the "righteous horror" of the bourgeoisie concerning "illegal immigrants" has been and is a fraudulent cover for the fact that the most massive profits are made precisely from the exploitation of "illegal immigrants", who are without any rights or protection. A whole barbarous trade in human merchandise has existed for this purpose. The clamour against illegal immigrants is designed to reinforce the lack of

rights of such immigrants as well as of all national minority people.

The collapse of the postwar boom in Britain and the growing stagnation of British capitalist industry saw increased unemployment (reaching a postwar record of nearly 700,000 in 1962, the year of the passing of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act) and increased attack on the rights of all workers. In this context the demands for "an end to immigration" and the attack on the rights of immigrant and national minority workers were escalated by the bourgeoisie. The policy of restricting immigration and carrying out deportations (and later "repatriations") was implemented with constant clamour for stepping up of this policy. This took place alongside the implementation of "pay freeze", wage restraint, etc., against the working class as a whole. The immigrant and national minority workers are subject to super-exploitation, an exploitation over and above that suffered by the working class as a whole, as a result of their lack of rights. Through the competition produced in the labour market by the existence of a source of cheap labour, the bourgeoisie forces down the level of wages of the entire class (the same is done with youth, women, the unemployed, etc.). It is not accidental that the attack on the rights of immigrant and national minority workers has coincided and coincides today with the attacks on the wages and conditions and rights of the entire class. It is essential from all points of view that the entire class take up and wage resolute struggle against the attacks on the rights of the national minority and immigrant workers.

The 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act provided that a Commonwealth citizen who was neither born in the UK nor a citizen of the UK and Colonies could be refused admission into the UK or admitted for a limited period, and with restrictions on his employment; a voucher system was set up to govern the supply of labour in the various categories. It provided for deportations of those convicted of imprisonable offences. The Act also increased from one to five years the period of residence laid down in the 1948 British Nationality Act as necessary for registration as a UK citizen.

The following Labour government strengthened the immigration laws with the 1965 White Paper and the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act. These are discussed in more detail later,

in Section 4. We note here however that Labour's White Paper "Immigration from the Commonwealth" reduced the number of vouchers issued under the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, tightened the qualifications necessary for obtaining a voucher and withdrew the free admission of children between 16 and 18 coming to join one or both parents. The Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968 was an out and out racist measure removing the right of entry of Kenyan and Ugandan Indians and others, despite the fact they held citizenship of the UK and Colonies. Further controls on immigrants after entry were introduced and extended, while the right of a Commonwealth citizen to join his wife in Britain was withdrawn.

The 1970-74 Conservative government strengthened the immigration law with the 1971 Immigration Act. In the period between the passing of the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act and the 1971 Immigration Act total immigration into Britain remained around an average of 73,000 per annum, declining slightly; but within this figure the proportion of Commonwealth immigrants declined from 80% in 1963 to 66% in 1970, while the proportion of "aliens" increased from 20% to 66%. (At the same time as a result of the emigration from Britain there was net emigration of population, rather than net immigration, throughout this period and since.)

With the further development of the stagnation and crisis of British capitalism both the unemployment and the attack on the rights of all the workers were increased; unemployment topped 1 million by 1972 while the Industrial Relations Act was introduced in 1971. At the same time the British monopoly capitalists increasingly took the path of "going into Europe" in their efforts to find a way out of the crisis. By 1971 they were successful in joining the European Economic Community: the union of big European monopolies designed to strengthen the interests of the latter in competition with the other imperialist powers and at the expense of the workers and labouring masses of Europe and of the former colonial countries.

The same Heath who launched Britain into the EEC was the one who led the change in immigration legislation so that the same criteria would be applied both to "aliens" and Commonwealth immigrants. This had the effect of applying the methods developed for restricting the rights of Commonwealth immi-

grants to all, including the increasing proportion of non-Commonwealth workers. At the same time the new law, with its elimination of special treatment of Commonwealth citizens, was designed as the immigration legislation appropriate to the membership of the EEC, just as the former legislation, beginning with the 1948 British Nationality Act was designed as the legislation appropriate to the development of the neo-colonial Commonwealth.

### THE 1971 IMMIGRATION ACT

The immigration law at present in force, the 1971 Immigration Act, further deprived national minority people and immigrants in Britain of many of their basic rights. Its opening paragraph defines the measure as "An Act to amend and replace the present immigration laws, to make certain related changes in the citizenship laws and enable help to be given to those wishing to return abroad". By holding over them the threat of arbitrary deportation, arrest and harassment – both of themselves and of their families – the British monopoly capitalist state enforces the situation of the national minority workers subject to the harshest exploitation at the hands of the capitalists, and also attempts to hold down the growing struggles of this section of the people.

As pointed out previously, the Act divides people into two categories, "patrial" and "non-patrial"; the former have "right of abode", the latter do not. The "non-patrials" "shall not enter the United Kingdom unless given leave to do so" and may only "live, work and settle" in the UK "by permission" and subject to "regulation and control" of their "entry into, stay in and departure" from the UK, including restrictions on "employment and occupation" in the UK or "requiring (them) to register with the police", "or both".

The distinction between "patrial" and "non-patrial", between those with rights and those without, is made, as we have seen (Section 1), according to a transparently racist formula. The patrials are those who will have British citizenship under the new British Nationality Act 1981 (as explained in Section 1), together with those Commonwealth citizens born to or adopted by a parent who is a British citizen through birth in the UK. (This latter provision too is designed to discriminate against those

from the "New Commonwealth".)

"Non-patrials" have no statutory rights of entry or stay in the UK. Instead the Act provides for there to be "rules laid down by the Secretary of State as to the practice to be followed in the administration of this Act for regulating the entry into and stay in the United Kingdom of persons not having the right of abode". These rules "shall include provision for admitting (in such cases and subject to such restrictions as may be provided by the rules, and subject or not to conditions as to length of stay or otherwise) persons coming for the purpose of taking employment, or for purposes of study, or as visitors, or as dependants of persons lawfully in or entering the United Kingdom". Thus any rights extended to national minority people who are "non-patrial" are entirely temporary and at the "discretion" of the Secretary of State. There is for example absolutely no statutory right for a person's wife or husband and children to join them. Even if a "non-patrial" is admitted on "limited leave", the "leave may be varied, whether by restricting, enlarging or removing the time limit on its duration, or by adding, varying or revoking conditions."

The rules laid down by the Home Secretary upon the coming into effect of the Act provided for Commonwealth "non-patrials" coming for employment as follows: "A person coming here to work, and having a work permit issued by the Department of Employment, will normally have been admitted for . . . up to a maximum of 12 months. At the end of that period an extension of stay may be granted if the applicant is still engaged in the employment specified in the permit, or other employment approved by the Department of Employment, and the employer confirms that he wishes to continue to employ him."

The effect of this is to legally validate racial discrimination by the state and employers against national minority workers. Thus a national minority employee is first of all practically bound to a given employer and secondly is under direct pressure not to stand up against low wages and bad conditions for fear that his employer will not "confirm that he wishes to continue to employ him", so that he will be deported.

The Act provides extensive powers of deportation to the state thus putting pressure on national minority people in an attempt to force them to submit to the monopoly capitalists' exploitation

and oppression and limit their opposition to it.

"The Secretary of State may, if he thinks fit, make a deportation order requiring a person who is not patrial to leave and to remain thereafter out of the United Kingdom:

- (i) if the person has failed to comply with a condition attached to his leave to enter or remains beyond the authorised time;
- (ii) if the Secretary of State deems the person's deportation to be conducive to the public good;
- (iii) if the person is the wife or child under 18 of a person ordered to be deported;
- (iv) if the person, after reaching the age of 17, is convicted of an offence for which he is punishable with imprisonment and the court recommends deportation."

The second of these provisions in reality gives the Secretary of State power to deport any "non-patrial" person.

The "rights of appeal" against this in fact underline the blatant denial of rights involved in the provision. A person is entitled to appeal if the Secretary of State claims his deportation would be "conducive to the public good" but not if he claims that it would be "conducive to the public good, as being in the interests of national security or of the relations between the United Kingdom and any other country, or for other reasons of a political nature" (our emphasis).

A person cannot appeal against a "refusal of leave to enter, or a refusal of an entry clearance" by the Secretary of State nor against a refusal to revoke a deportation order, if the Secretary of State claims the exclusion is "conducive to the public good"; nor can a person appeal against "any variation of his leave which reduces its duration, or against any refusal to enlarge or remove the limit of its duration (nor, as mentioned above, against a deportation order) if the Secretary of State claims that exclusion is "conducive to the public good, as being in the interests of national security or of the relations between the United Kingdom and any other country or for other reasons of a political nature".

In addition there is the threat of deportation if a person is convicted of an imprisonable offence. This is designed to deter national minority people from taking a stand against exploitation and oppression for fear of being arrested, with the consequence of deportation. It operates too in the context of the fact that the police frequently arrest the victims of racist attack and not the

perpetrators of such attacks.

In regard to the so-called rights of "appeal" which the Act provides, even when such rights exist the appeal is to an adjudicator or to a Tribunal, the former directly appointed by the Secretary of State, the latter by the Lord Chancellor. The Secretary of State pays these people and he formulates the "rules of procedure" under which they operate "prescribing the practice and procedure to be followed on or in connection with appeals thereunder, including the mode and burden of proof and admissibility of evidence on such an appeal".

According to the Act the Secretary of State may make regulation providing for the police to keep registers, for persons to register and provide information, and for the issue of "certificates of registration". These regulations "may require anyone who is for the time being subject to such a condition to produce a certificate of registration to such persons and in such circumstances as may be prescribed by the regulations". This provision gives extremely wide powers to the state machine to "regulate" and suppress the national minority community.

Breach of time limit on stay, of conditions of admittance, of requirement to register with police, etc., are summarily punishable by a fine of up to £200 or imprisonment for 6 months (and hence deportation) or both. Under this provision the Act also states: "a constable or immigration officer may arrest without warrant anyone who has, or whom he, with reasonable cause, suspects to have, committed or attempted to commit" one of these (or other) offences. This in practice gives police and the immigration department very wide powers of arbitrary arrest against national minority people on the pretext that they are "suspected illegal immigrants".

The Act deceptively states that: "The rules shall be so framed that Commonwealth citizens settled in the United Kingdom at the coming into force of this Act and their wives and children are not, by virtue of anything in the rules, any less free to come into and go from the United Kingdom than if this Act had not been passed". In practice however everyone seeking entry into Britain is subject to examination by immigration officers, who have very wide powers of detention, and as the Act states: "When any question arises under this Act whether or not a person is patrial, or is entitled to any exemption under this Act, it shall lie

on the person asserting it to prove that he is" (emphasis ours). On numerous occasions national minority people who have been resident in Britain for 10 or 20 years have, on returning to Britain from abroad, been refused entry and deported.

The target of attack of the 1971 Immigration Act is not only immigrants per se but the entire national minority people. The ruling class deliberately employs the question of "immigration" as a pretext under which to introduce legislation for legalising increased racist attacks by the state on all national minority people.

The 1971 Immigration Act includes the notorious "repatriation" clause: "The Secretary of State may . . . make payments . . . to meet or provide for expenses of persons who are not patrial in leaving the United Kingdom for a country or territory where they intend to reside permanently, including travelling expenses for members of their families or households". Thus the demand made by the open fascists, Powell, the National Front, etc., and by the Monday Club is already, in a restricted form, on the statute book. It is cynically stated that this "repatriation" is to be carried out ". . . so far as practicable . . . not . . . unless it is shown that it is in that person's interest to leave the United Kingdom and that he wishes to do so". (Just as Hitler in the '30s argued that it was in the interests of the Jewish people to emigrate; nor would it be denied that in many cases they "wished to do so" - precisely in view of the savage racist attacks and pogroms against them.)

As has been mentioned earlier, the 1971 Act also further restricts the rights of Commonwealth citizens to register as citizens of the UK and Colonies. The Immigration Act gives wide powers for the executive to introduce reactionary measures over the head even of the parliament. An example is the inclusion in the immigration rules approved on February 21, 1973, of a provision giving the right of abode to those Commonwealth citizens with a grandparent born in the UK - a racially discriminatory measure aimed at giving the right of entry to those from the "white" Commonwealth - in the face of parliament's rejection of this provision from the original Act.

The provisions of the Act are thus such as to deprive immigrants of a great proportion of their rights as far as entry and stay in Britain are concerned, and to subject all national

minority people to a further increase in the power of the state to launch racist harassment and persecution against them.

It is an essential democratic demand that the 1971 Immigration Act and other racist immigration laws be repealed.

The 1981 British Nationality Act seeks to "complete" the process carried out by the successive immigration laws by taking away the citizenship of those whose right of abode has already been taken away, and to make them second class citizens in law as well as in fact. But in doing so it paves the way for still further restrictions on the rights of national minority people. Already during the passage of the British Nationality Act through Parliament, the government declared its intention of strengthening the immigration rules when the Act comes into effect. And the period since the law has been passed has seen an evident increase in the number of arbitrary deportations, in "passport checks" launched by police, health and educational authorities. The British Nationality Act spells a direct intensification of the attacks by the British state on the rights of national minority people.

### Section 3

## The Chauvinist Logic of Equating Citizenship with Nationality

The British Nationality Act is directed against the rights of nationalities.

The Act concerns the law of citizenship. It is presented under the fraudulent pretext that there is a "need to clarify" this law, which has allegedly got "out of step" with immigration law and needs to be brought back into line with it. The reason it has "got out of step" is that as we have seen successive immigration acts have taken away more and more rights of immigrants and national minorities, in particular of those who are British citizens (citizens of the UK and Colonies). The government seeks to "remedy" this, not by restoring these rights, but by withdrawing the citizenship rights of those whose other rights have been abolished!

#### CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS

A genuine attempt to clarify citizenship law would involve defining the citizens of the state in question (Britain in this instance) and specifying their rights as well as their obligations. The government declares that it is "not possible to do everything in one Bill", but the direction of the Bill is entirely opposite, and shows that the government is only concerned with removing existing citizenship rights of people and with paving the way for further restrictions in the future.

To facilitate its aims of attacking the citizenship rights of nationalities, the British ruling class pretends that citizenship and nationality are the same thing (thus the name, British Nationality Act). This in itself is a reflection of the chauvinist, racist stand of the British state in opposition to the rights of nationalities.

In fact citizenship and nationality are quite different concepts. The concept of citizenship relates to a given state. The specification of citizenship defines who are the citizens of the given state. Thus the citizens of the British state are British

citizens, irrespective of their nationality – English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, Indian, Pakistani, Jamaican, Barbadian, Polish, etc., etc. When British citizens emigrate from Britain to other countries such as Australia, they commonly become citizens of the state of their residence, for example Australian citizens, even though they retain their former nationality (English, Scottish, Welsh, etc.). The same is the case with other countries. Those who are not citizens of any state are known as "stateless". It is a basic democratic demand that all who live and work in a given state such as Britain should have the right to be citizens and have full and undiminished citizenship rights (without the necessity to prove "good character", pass language tests, etc., and without the state being empowered to arbitrarily refuse citizenship). Citizenship should be uniform with no division of the people of a given state into several classes of citizenship with different rights and obligations for each (as there is under the provisions of the government's "nationality" Act).

#### NATION AND NATIONALITY

The concept of nationality on the other hand is not a question of the state. In particular, as we have seen, a given state may comprise many nationalities. As well as many national minorities, (Irish, Indian, etc.), Britain has English, Scottish and Welsh nationalities; also, by colonial annexation the British state subjugates under its state power other nationalities, including the people in the north of Ireland, of Hong Kong, etc.

What is nation, nationality? It is not a racial or tribal concept. It is an historical, not an ethnographical category.

A nation is in the first instance a historically constituted, stable community of people. It is not tribal or racial, since in general many different races and tribes went to make up any of the existing nations. Nor can a casual, loosely-connected and unstable community of people such as the great empires of ancient times be called a nation, even though historically constituted from different races and tribes, because of the lack of stability.

To be a nation it is necessary for there to be a common language and common territory. The British Empire was a historically constituted and stable community of people, but it was not a nation, since it lacked these essential ingredients, a

common language shared by the people and common territory. A common language is essential (and for this reason English and Welsh are different nationalities), but a common language alone is not enough, since Britain and the U.S.A. for example share a common language, though they do not make up a single nation; common territory is essential for that lengthy and systematic intercourse from generation to generation necessary to constitute a nation (for this reason alone it follows that England and Ireland cannot but be separate nations).

To be a nation it is necessary for there to be in addition to the bond of common language and territory, a community of economic life, economic cohesion, marked by the division of labour and exchange between the different areas of the national territory, for only this gives rise to a nation as such, instead of the still relatively accidental community of territory and language. For this reason the category of nation arises strictly speaking only with the rise of capitalism, which for the first time was capable of putting an end to the feudal disunity and amalgamating the people into a thoroughgoing economic community. Finally a nation is distinguished by the specific spiritual complexion and characteristic culture of the people who constitute it, a specific "national character", which is not something innate and fixed for all time of course, and is modified by changes in the conditions of life of the people, but nevertheless is perfectly definite and tangible – and indispensable to the complete characterisation of the given nation.

This common character and culture is not sufficient to define a nation by itself. The Jews for example might perhaps be said to have such a common culture etc., but since American Jews, Russian Jews, Spanish Jews do not have common territory, language, economic life, etc., they do not constitute a single nation (contrary to the theory of Zionism).

To sum up, a nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.

In order to have a nation it is necessary for all these features to be present. There is no single distinguishing characteristic of a nation. There is only a sum total of characteristics, of which, when nations are compared, one characteristic, such as national character, or language, or territory, or economic conditions,

stands out in sharper relief. A nation constitutes the combination of all these characteristics taken together.

It can be seen that the concept of nation is not an idealistic concoction based for example on some innate quality of "Britishness"; nor is it, as the fascist doctrines pretend, a product of "common genes"; nor again is it some philistine notion which is "geographical, not racial". It is a historical phenomenon, rooted in the material life of the people, with its economic and material basis, its reflection in political and spiritual life, and so on. Like every other historical phenomenon too, it is subject to the law of change, has its history, its beginning and end, coming into being with the decay of feudalism and the rise of capitalism, persisting and in fact receiving its full development under socialism, and again passing away under communism.

Within a given state there are nations which inhabit specific national territories; in Britain there are for example the English, Scottish and Welsh (in addition to which there are the Irish people in the north of Ireland, which has been annexed to the British state). In addition to these nationalities there are national minorities, interspersed among compact majorities of other nations and usually without definite territory within the given state. In Britain there are for example the Irish (within Britain itself), West Indians, Indians, Pakistanis, Ukrainians, Poles, and many others.

The British Nationality Act takes no account of any such questions. For it, citizenship and nationality are the same thing. It is profoundly imbued with the chauvinist and racist prejudice that British citizenship is or should be coextensive with British nationality. According to this idea the only ones who ought to have full citizenship and national rights are the "Britons"; other nationalities only exist within Britain "on sufferance" and ought, if they want to be counted as true citizens, "integrate" and be assimilated to "the British way of life", etc. In line with this thinking the British Nationality Act reduces the "non-patrial" citizens, who, Whitelaw (as well as the Labour Party) says, do not "belong" to this country, to the status of "overseas citizens", or "citizens of the British dependent territories"; others are not citizens at all but are categorised as "Commonwealth citizens" or "aliens".

But as we have pointed out, it is a basic democratic principle

that all who live and work in Britain should be citizens and enjoy full citizenship rights. All nationalities should have full national and other rights, and should not be the victim of national suppression, assimilation, and other attacks on the basis of their nationality.

Those nations which occupy definite territory within the confines of a given state must have the full right of self-determination up to and including the right of secession. Those nations which elect to remain within the given state must have full regional autonomy within the given state. Finally the national minorities who do not occupy compact territory must be guaranteed full language, educational, cultural and other rights, freedom from all forms of discrimination and attack on the basis of nationality, etc.

#### A STATE FOUNDED ON NATIONAL OPPRESSION

The British state was founded on the basis of the suppression of nationalities, the Welsh and Scottish people first of all. It was based on the colonial suppression of the people of Ireland, India, Africa, etc. The maturing of imperialism saw the further development of chauvinism, jingoism and attacks on the rights of nationalities, beginning with the passage of "Aliens" Acts against "undesirable immigrants", etc. (See Section 2).

Prior to the second world war the British state had dominated all the peoples of its colonial Empire under the common heading of "British subjects". The 1948 British "Nationality" Act represented, as we have seen, not a cessation of the national oppression by the British state, but the codification of a new citizenship law appropriate to the system of neo-colonial domination of Britain over the nations of the Commonwealth. It also paved the way for such measures as the immigration laws which have successively eliminated more and more of the national rights of immigrants and national minorities, including that most basic of rights, the right of abode. The 1948 Act thus provided the framework for a further intensification of the oppression of nationalities by the British state.

The deepening crisis of British monopoly capitalism has seen the further intensification of the attack by the British state on national rights. National oppression is one of the most characteristic features of the British imperialist state today.

The national oppression of the Scottish and Welsh people continues; the Scottish and Welsh people are denied the right of self-determination, up to and including secession should they so wish or the granting of regional autonomy to deal with the specific problems, conditions and questions which face them. They are denied their rights, including educational rights and the rights to the full development of their language and culture.

The people of the colonies are subjugated and made to bear the burden of the crisis of British imperialism. In particular the people in the north of Ireland are subject to the barbaric military occupation which seeks to eliminate their rights for national liberation and independence by military and police methods.

The Irish people resident in Britain, in addition to other discrimination and attacks on their rights, are subject to arbitrary arrest and detention without trial, to deportation etc. under the "Prevention of Terrorism" Act.

The national minorities from Asia, Africa and Latin America are viciously harassed by police and are attacked under the immigration laws under the pretext of "controlling illegal immigrants"; they are subjected to murderous pogroms by the nazi gangs which enjoy protection and backing by the British state; they are subject to all-round discrimination in economic, social, political, educational and other spheres.

The British "Nationality" Act represents and paves the way for further heightening of the policy of national oppression.

The British state is striving to bring up the British workers as slaves to these chauvinist, jingoistic, xenophobic and racist notions, consoling themselves that they, as "Britons", can enjoy "full privileges". But this national oppression is a weapon against the workers of all nationalities without exception. By attacking one section the state paves the way for attacks on other sections. By the policy of national oppression and national chauvinism, the British ruling class wants as well as imposing double exploitation on the oppressed nationalities to set the workers of different nationalities at loggerheads, and short-circuit the growing class struggle. Every effort is made by the bourgeoisie to incite national animosities, to set English against Scottish and Welsh, and vice versa, to incite all these against the Irish people, to foment racist antagonism against minority nationalities, and to inculcate chauvinist sentiments among the

national minorities too.

Although it is nowhere mentioned in the bourgeois propaganda concerning the British Nationality Act, it is nevertheless, as we have mentioned, one of the features of the latter that it is designed to bring British citizenship law further into line with the requirements of the European Economic Community. Thus while the previous law retained various aspects corresponding to the days of Britain as the metropolis of a vast multi-national empire, the new law conforms more closely to the role of Britain as part of the EEC, this union of imperialist states who have established a common market and mobility of labour between the member states and set up tariff and immigration barriers against outside states. It is to be noted that whereas for the British imperialists the immigration of people from the "New Commonwealth" presents such profound "difficulties", the change of the law to conform with the EEC requirement of free mobility of labour between member countries took place without a murmur – even if according to the British chauvinist doctrines the European peoples are regarded as "aliens". The British Nationality Act is directed against the rights of the peoples of the British Commonwealth and national minorities in Britain but does not affect the EEC.

It is noteworthy that while the British state and the big bourgeoisie promote the ideology of extreme British chauvinism and jingoism, British "supremacy", etc., they at the same time are the force taking Britain into the EEC, this reactionary union of big European monopolies, subjugating the people of all nationalities in Britain to the British, European and American big bourgeoisie. This reactionary union seeks to eliminate the notion of nationality in the various European countries and liquidate their individuality and identity under the domination of the cosmopolitan reactionary bourgeoisie of Europe as well as the United States, a domination backed by the military arm of the EEC, NATO. They sing "Rule Britannia", but they are, as they have always been, the ones who make the mass of "Britons" into "slaves"! As Marx said, "the chauvinism of the bourgeoisie is only a vanity, giving a national cloak to all their own pretensions" ("The Civil War in France", Peking 1966, p.185). The "patriotic" and "nationalist" demagoguery are the expression not of the interests of the people of Britain, but solely of the class interests

of the British big bourgeoisie, i.e. to subjugate the workers of all nationalities within Britain, to dominate the nations subject to British colonial and neo-colonial domination, to tie Britain to the chariot of US imperialism and its bloc, for the sake of the profits of the billionaire financial oligarchy.

Tsarist Russia, with its extreme oppression of nationalities, its racist pogroms, was denounced by Lenin as a "prison of nations". The description is becoming more and more apt for Britain, which has with its deepening crisis embarked on a further intensification of national oppression, not excluding barbaric pogroms against national minorities.

It is interesting to note that in his "Report on the National Question" in 1917, Stalin commented: "How are we to explain the difference in attitude towards nationalities existing in different states? The difference depends on the degree of democracy in these states. When in former years the old landed aristocracy controlled the state power in Russia, national oppression could assume, and actually did assume, the monstrous form of massacres and pogroms. In Great Britain, where there is a definite degree of democracy and political freedom, national oppression bears a less brutal character."

Today when racist murders are prevalent in Britain one can see the truth of the thesis that "imperialism strives towards violations of democracy, towards reaction" (Lenin), and that British imperialism has taken great strides along this path.

The British proletariat, the workers and progressive people of all nationalities, must fight resolutely against the British monopoly capitalists and their state, in opposition to the policy of national suppression and for full national rights, full citizenship rights for all irrespective of nationality, race, etc.

The struggle against racism, chauvinism and national oppression is a crucial part of the democratic struggle of the people with the working class led by its Marxist-Leninist Communist Party at their head. This struggle both facilitates and is indispensable for the success of the proletarian socialist revolution which alone will secure lasting elimination of racism and chauvinism, the full flowering of the national rights of the peoples.

## Section 4

# The Racist Record of the British Labour Party

The Labour Party made a show of "opposing" the racist and chauvinist British Nationality Bill in its passage through parliament. Hattersley, the Labour Party spokesman, described it as "a racist bill" and "squalid", and contrived a display of "righteous indignation" at his opposite number, Whitelaw.

In order to add conviction to this "anti-racist" role of Labour and in particular of himself, Hattersley was obliged to declare his "regret" for having voted for the Labour Party's racist 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act. This measure radically escalated the process of stripping national minority UK citizens of their citizenship rights, denying the right of entry and abode to UK citizens from East Africa (on the grounds that Britain could not sustain such an "invasion").

Hattersley now says: "I have no doubt at all that the decision we took in 1968 was wrong". During the Committee stage of the British Nationality Bill this year he called for granting of British citizenship to the citizens of the UK and Colonies in East Africa, India and Pakistan, saying also that "they should be granted the rights of entry and abode in the United Kingdom" (which were removed by the 1968 Act).

Hattersley cannot explain how it took him 13 years to make this discovery. But then this is not the first time Hattersley has made a diametric about-face on these issues. Whilst the Labour Party "opposed" the Conservatives' 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, two years later Hattersley was saying: "Looking back on the original Act, which limited the entry of Commonwealth citizens into this country, I feel that the Labour Party of that time should have supported it. I make that point with no great joy for I was myself a passionate opponent of the Act." On this basis he supported the continuation of the Act.

Hattersley, typical of bourgeois politicians, displays all the consistency of a weather-cock. But such "transformations" are customary between Labour in office and Labour out of office.

Here we shall trace the course of the Labour Party's stands, showing that whilst a pretence of "opposition" to the racist measures is given out of office, the Labour Party has in office alternated with the Conservative governments to steadily escalate the attacks on the rights of immigrants and national minorities through the immigration laws etc.

### LABOUR'S RACIST RECORD

The Commonwealth Immigrants Act was passed by the Conservative government in 1962. At that time the Labour Party, in opposition, opposed the legislation. Gaitskell, leader of the Labour Party, replying to the Queen's Speech, stated that the proposed Conservative legislation "will be regarded very largely throughout the world as the imposition of a colour bar over here". (Hansard 31.10.61)

He denounced as "an utter and complete myth" the racist theories about "millions and millions ... coming into this country", saying: "The rate of immigrants is closely related, and in my view will always be closely related, to the rate of economic absorption. There has been over the years an almost precise correlation between the movement in the number of unfilled vacancies, that is to say employers wanting labour, and the immigration figures. As the number of unfilled vacancies goes down, the immigration figures go up."

Patrick Gordon-Walker, replying to the Bill for the opposition, described it as "bare-faced, open race discrimination" and as "a Bill into which race discrimination is now written – not only into its spirit, but into its very letter".

He said: "It sounds as if there will be no racial discrimination, but everyone knows that the overwhelming majority of those trying to get in on the open quota will be coloured people. The net effect of the Bill is that a negligible number of white people will be kept out and almost all those kept out by the Bill will be coloured people. That is why this is a hypocritical Bill, because that is the intention of it." (Hansard 16.11.61)

In the 1964 election the Smethwick Conservatives campaigned on an openly racist basis. Harold Wilson, the new Labour Prime Minister, demagogically urged in the debate on the opening of Parliament that the MP for Smethwick, Peter Griffiths, should be shunned throughout his term as a "Parlia-

mentary leper".

But in the first session the Labour government voted for the continuation of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962. (This law was first introduced as a "temporary" measure and then continued each year by means of an "Expiring Laws Continuance Act".) Hattersley, the Labour Shadow Home Secretary, prominent for his "opposition" to the Conservatives' British Nationality Bill, devoted his "maiden speech" to supporting this "worthy" object, "in the hope", as he said, "that it will be regarded as an interim measure" (702 H.C. Deb. 317-322).

This speech well illustrates the reactionary ideology of the bourgeoisie under which it upholds racism, carries out racist attacks and racial discrimination under the pretence of "anti-racism".

Speaking in 1965, Hattersley numbers himself among "those ... who regard ourselves as being in the progressive group", giving a good deal of cant about how "we have believed with great liberal optimism ... that if men of good will went on repeating the right things (i.e. opposition to racism), eventually they would be believed and eventually they would be accepted". However, he says, this has not been the case and now he finds it necessary to support the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, which he and the Labour Party as a whole had formerly opposed. Stating the bourgeois standpoint, he says: "We are all in favour of some sort of limitation. We all wholeheartedly oppose any sort of discrimination. We are all wholeheartedly agreed that there should be assimilation or adjustment. ... Those three points of view characterise the view and principles of both major parties". He also said: "Without integration, limitation is inexcusable; without limitation, integration is impossible."

These phrases – limitation, anti-discrimination, assimilation – succinctly express the essence of the bourgeois policy. Under the pretext of "opposing" discrimination and "opposing" racism, the rights of the national minority people – from the right of entry and abode through to the right to freely walk the streets without arbitrary police harassment – are systematically subject to "limitation" by the passage of "immigration acts", while the identity and culture of nationalities is viciously attacked under the slogan of "assimilation" and "integration".

According to Hattersley, "unrestricted immigration can only

produce additional problems, additional suffering and additional hardship unless some kind of limitation is imposed and continued." Thus "immigrants" are identified as the cause of "problems" – even if the "progressive" Hattersley would grant that this is "through no fault of their own". By saying this Hattersley concedes in fact all that is needed by the nazis to "justify" their Hitlerite "solutions".

"We must impose a test which tries to analyse which immigrants, as well as having jobs and special skills, are most likely to be assimilated into our national life", says Hattersley. Here too we have thinly disguised chauvinism. The demand that national minority people "integrate", "be assimilated into our national life", is a demand that they give up their nationality, their language, customs, traditions, etc. It is an expression of the barbarous bourgeois policy of liquidation of nationalities. According to Hattersley and Co. the "problem" is the "difficulty of assimilating", the "unwillingness to integrate", of the national minority people. This is a standpoint of British chauvinism, where only one nationality should have national rights, while it is to be regarded as a provocation for other nationalities to demand national rights, give expression to their culture, language, traditions, etc. Contrary to this chauvinism, all nationalities must have full national rights.

Hattersley, as if to chart in advance the path to be followed later by the fascists, singled out Pakistani immigrants, "whose willingness and ability to be integrated is a good deal less than those from other parts of the Commonwealth, since they have not the advantage . . . of speaking English from birth and who create in our major towns problems a good deal more severe than the West Indian immigrants". Thus the "man of good will" is in reality a straightforward British chauvinist, who thinks that everyone ought to "speak English" and that their not doing so is the source of "severe problems".

Hattersley's conclusions were summed up by him in the statement that "there is an economic necessity to have a certain amount of immigration, but a social reason for control". The immigration policy of the bourgeoisie is based on the exploitation of immigrants and national minority people as cheap labour, matching the rate and variety of immigration to the particular needs of monopoly capitalism at a given time. That is the

"economic necessity". The rights of the national minority people are subject to "limitation", their language, culture and traditions to "assimilation", under the pretext of "avoiding suffering". That is the "social reason for control".

Hattersley's speech illustrates both the reactionary British state ideology of racism under the guise of "non-racism" and the typical alternation of the Labour Party between "left" phrases out of office and reactionary measures on return to office.

Wilson announced in March 1965 that a high-level mission would be sent to Commonwealth countries to discuss means of "regulating the flow" of immigrants, while shortly before that the Labour Home Secretary instructed immigration officers to tighten up control to prevent alleged "evasions".

The measures passed by the Conservatives were strengthened by the Labour government's White Paper of 1965. Under the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962 the rate of issue of vouchers had been 900 per week initially, dropping to 400 per week by November 1963, at which level it remained until August 1965. The 1965 White Paper cut the rate of issue of vouchers from 20,800 p.a. (400 per week) to 8,500 per annum. It also introduced the racist notion that "...about one third of immigrant children is the maximum that is normally acceptable in a school if social strains are to be avoided and educational standards maintained", and on this basis began implementing the policy of "dispersal" of "excessive concentrations" of national minority pupils, in some cases resorting to "bussing" of national minority children to schools in other areas. The White Paper spoke of slum clearance as a method "to break up excessive and undesirable concentrations" of national minority people. Thus, for all its pious words in "opposition", the Labour government rapidly began to outstrip the previous records for racism set by the Conservatives.

## 1968 COMMONWEALTH IMMIGRANTS ACT

By 1968 the Labour Government was rushing through Parliament in two or three days a strengthening of the Commonwealth Immigrants Act which even "The Times" in an editorial described as "probably the most shameful measure that Labour members

have ever been asked by their whips to support". It commented: "The Labour Party now has a new ideology. It does not any longer profess to believe in the equality of man. It does not even believe in the equality of British citizens. It believes in the equality of white British citizens."

The Bill was introduced allegedly to deal with the situation arising from the fact that UK citizens of Asian descent were being expelled from Kenya. Whereas the 1962 Act prevented the entry of citizens of Commonwealth countries, the new Act prevented the entry of citizens of the United Kingdom itself! This Bill was introduced by James Callaghan, the then Home Secretary.

The 1963 Kenya Independence Act had, as was mentioned in passing in Section 1, guaranteed those Asians in Kenya who had not taken Kenyan citizenship the right to retain citizenship of the United Kingdom and Colonies. They therefore had the right to enter the United Kingdom despite the 1962 Act (which applied to Commonwealth citizens who were not U.K. citizens). As some MPs pointed out in the debate, the purpose of this provision in the 1963 Act was to provide those of European descent the possibility of returning to Britain whilst at the same time attempting to do this with a provision which would not appear overtly racist. Following the passing by the Kenyan government of the Immigration Act and Trade Licensing Act many Kenyan Asians exercised their right to move to the United Kingdom. They were encouraged to do so as speedily as possible by widespread talk of legislation to "control", i.e. deny the right of, immigration of Kenyan Asians. The Labour Government liked to excuse itself by blaming the "problem" on the Conservative Government of 1963, but the inclusion of such rights was a feature of Independence Acts passed by Conservative and Labour alike.

The main provision of the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act was the limitation of the right of entry to the UK to those who had been – or at least one of whose parents or grandparents had been – born, naturalised, adopted or registered in the UK.

In 1963 the British government had signed the fourth protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 3(2) of which provides that "no one shall be deprived of the right to enter the territory of the State of which he is a national". In

1968 the Labour Government did just that.

Whilst denying the right of entry of UK citizens by means of the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, the Labour Government introduced the "Special Voucher" system, which as a matter of "ministerial discretion" allowed a certain quota of Kenyan Asians to enter Britain each year.

In opposing the 1962 Act the Labour Front Bench ridiculed the Conservative Home Secretary Butler's assertion that the fact that "one quarter of the earth's population" had the right to come to the UK necessitated limiting immigration. But Callaghan as Home Secretary in 1968 blandly repeated the same argument: "There are at least one million persons . . . who are able, or potentially able, to come to these islands free of control", he said. "I believe that it would be irresponsible not to legislate on this vast issue of whether this country could afford in any circumstances to envisage the prospect of an invasion of a size which I have indicated, even though it is not likely. I believe that we must face facts." (the use of this "facing facts" argument did not prevent him from having recourse, in answering another question, to the opposite argument: "It is not helpful to try to anticipate a situation which has not arisen, and which I trust, with the co-operation of others, will not arise in this matter.")

At that time Callaghan, whilst giving the above "one million" argument, also suggested that the Bill was merely addressed to the "problem" of East Africa Asians and that "what we are asking them to do is to form a queue . . . we are not saying to them 'You shall never come here'" (despite the fact that according to his own figures this "queue" would take more than 30 years to pass!)

At the same time Callaghan utterly refused to allow any statutory rights, castigating his critics with: "On an issue like this, instead of assuming, as some hon. Members did, that the purpose is to make life difficult for everybody, they should assume that what the Government have in mind is at least as humanitarian as some of the conditions they themselves are advancing".

The "humanitarian" Callaghan asserted: "I have given assurances on the quota. What I am trying to understand, is why my hon. Friend cannot have confidence that a quota will be operated flexibly unless rigid conditions are written into the Bill." ("Rigid conditions" meaning statutory rights!) In opposition

three years later, the same Callaghan, debating the Conservatives' "streamlining" of his own measure, said: "It is not sufficient to say 'It is in the rules and I intend to act in this way'. The present Home Secretary may intend to do so, but a successor can alter them."

These blatant reversals of position reveal both the great shamelessness and hypocrisy of the Labour Party and its leaders and their anti-democratic, racist stand. The 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act also made entry certificates obligatory for immigrants prior to departure from their home country. This was done to lessen the opposition met with throughout the world by the racist British state for its turning away of people refused admission on landing. From now on people would simply be refused admission at home.

The Act also greatly increased the powers of the police to "control" so-called "illegal immigration".

The 1968 Act made no provision for appeal against the Minister's "discretion". As a result of widespread outcry against the massive powers given to the executive under this legislation, certain rights of appeal were introduced by the Labour government in the Immigration Appeals Act 1969. This however now extended powers of deportation to the Home Secretary, powers which had formerly rested with the courts.

At the same time as strengthening the racist immigration laws against national minority people, with the 1965 White Paper and the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1968, the Labour government made a pretence of "taking action" against racism and racial discrimination, in the light of the widescale opposition which grew up in the sixties. It passed the Race Relations Acts of 1965 and 1968. These contained ineffectual provisions against racial discrimination in employment, housing and services, etc., and against "incitement to race hatred". No proceedings could be brought for infringement of what minor provisions the Acts contained against racial discrimination – except by the state, (the Attorney-General in the case of the 1965 Act and the Race Relations Board in the case of that of 1968).

The same was true for "incitement to race hatred" – no prosecution could be brought except by the Attorney-General. This remained true of the further Act brought in during its last term of office, the Race Relations Act 1976. All this is of course

no accident, since the leaders of the Labour Party have expressly defended the "right" of fascists and racists to "free speech".

The result of these restrictions is that there have been scarcely any prosecutions – much less convictions – under these Acts since 1965, despite the widespread prevalence of openly Hitlerite racist utterances by the nazis and despite the large-scale racist discrimination in all fields. On the contrary it is the anti-fascists and anti-racists who are charged in large numbers under the Race Relations Act, since this Act contains the amendments to the Public Order Act 1936 under which demonstrators are prosecuted for "breaches of public order"!

As well as proving to be worthless scraps of paper as far as "opposing" racism and racial discrimination is concerned, the Race Relations Acts' provision for the setting up of state bodies (first the Race Relations Board, then the Community Relations Commission and currently the Commission for Racial Equality) is also deliberately aimed at channelling the widespread opposition to racism under the wing of the state, as well as making the state – the source of racist attacks – the arbiter and regulator of questions of "relations between people of different racial groups".

These Acts also themselves contain specific racist provisions, such as against Asian seamen, the waiving of provisions against racial discrimination in the case of the government, and so forth. Furthermore, they are calculated to further promote the reactionary communal concept, according to which different nationalities supposedly cannot coexist without the intervention of the state to moderate national and racist strife. They are thus an addition to the arsenal by which in Britain national antagonism is, as Marx said, "artificially kept alive and intensified . . . by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes".

The Conservatives' 1971 Immigration Act, which we have considered in some detail earlier (Section 2), was designed to "streamline" and make permanent previous immigration legislation, including that for "aliens". Restrictions on "aliens" had been introduced as we have seen, as an "emergency measure" on the outbreak of the first imperialist war in 1914; they had been kept in force as a "temporary" measure by the Aliens Restriction (Amendment) Act 1919, and renewed annually ever since.

The arbitrary and racist nature of the exclusions in Labour's

1968 Act were only underlined by the attempt to formalise them under the title of "patriality" in the 1971 Act. This Conservative Act further undermined the rights of immigration; for example, the previously existing statutory right for entry for wives and children under 16 was removed and replaced by an administrative "discretion". The Conservatives had undertaken in the election campaign of 1970 "that there will be no further large-scale permanent immigration". Also they had undertaken to introduce "repatriation" of immigrants. Accordingly the 1971 Act contained the provisions for "help to be given to those wishing to return abroad", to which we referred in Section 2.

As mentioned previously, the Labour Party voted against the 1971 Immigration Act. Callaghan described it as "a shabby Bill" and declared: "one merely gives a badge of respectability to prejudice by a Bill of this nature". Shirley Williams described the Immigration Rules under the Act as "offensive to natural justice, to decent human treatment, and to the long tradition of links between this country and the Commonwealth".

### RACIST POLICY OF 1974-79 LABOUR GOVERNMENT

When it came to power again in 1974 Labour faithfully implemented the 1971 Act and strengthened its operation.

It extended the definition of "illegal entrant", making greatly increased use of the power to arrest alleged "illegal entrants" without warrant, detain them without time limit or bail procedure and remove them without prior right of appeal. It substantially increased the number of people imprisoned under the Immigration Act powers, to an average daily prison population of 220 in 1978. The number of persons sent to prison under the Immigration Act increased from 715 in 1975, to 1037 in 1976, to 1396 in 1977 and 1305 in 1978.

In March 1977, the Labour Government introduced the infamous "trial marriage rule", strengthening the Immigration Rules under the 1971 Act by imposing a 12-month "probation period" on marriages of immigrant husbands (under the pretext that "bogus marriages" were being entered into to "evade immigration controls"). It was under the Labour government too that the scandals concerning the carrying out of "virginity tests" on immigrant women and "X-ray age tests" on children came to

light. The Labour government presided over the introduction of discriminatory fees increases for overseas students. Shirley Williams, as the responsible minister, made an order under the provisions of Labour's Race Relations Act 1976 to permit this racial discrimination (the Act permits actions of the government to be exempted from the provisions against racial discrimination).

As noted earlier, in April 1977 the Labour government published its Green Paper "British Nationality Law: Discussion of possible Changes" which put forward proposals for what are essentially the measures contained in the Conservatives' British Nationality Act of 1981.

The Green Paper proposed to replace citizenship of the UK and Colonies by two citizenships – British citizenship "for those who have close ties with this country" (i.e. "patrials") and British Overseas citizenship for the remainder.

This was done under the same pretext as that given by the Conservative government today. Thus the Green Paper complains that the citizenship law is "in some respects complicated and obscure" and "difficult to follow", and that "it does not identify those who belong to this country and have the right to enter and live here freely; in consequence it prevents the United Kingdom from basing its immigration policies on citizenship". "There must", it says, "be a more meaningful citizenship for those who have close links with the United Kingdom . . . and who can be expected to identify themselves with British society". This latter statement clearly reveals the chauvinist basis of the proposals, belying the pretexts about removing complexity and obscurity. The Labour Party also elects to defend the reactionary, racist and chauvinist proposition that if people could gain British citizenship "simply through marriage to a British Citizen, there could be an encouragement to bogus marriages".

Both in their details and in the "rationale" presented for them, the Labour Party proposals were substantially identical to those now enacted by the Conservative government, down to restrictions on the rights of spouses to register as British citizens (under the pretext of "sex equality"); defence of the requirement of "language tests" for naturalisation; the proposal that there be no right of appeal against refusal of citizenship; etc. This emphasises the hypocrisy of the Hattersleys and the entire

Labour Party, which last year found it opportune to raise a hue and cry as to how it "opposes" the measure.

The record shows that, in relation to the racist and chauvinist measures against immigrants and national minorities, the Labour Party in office plays its role just like the Conservatives. Namely, as the government of the day it carries out the existing measures as well as passing new and more vicious measures as these become "necessary" to the interests of British monopoly capitalism. In "opposition" the Labour Party carries out some verbal opposition to certain aspects of the measures, with the aim of liquidating the opposition by the popular masses. By raising its voice against the Conservatives' measures the Labour Party wants to persuade the people that they should not come out on the streets against the racist and fascist attacks, against the racist and chauvinist legislation, that they should put their efforts into getting the Labour Party into office and it will, allegedly, act against these evils.

The working class and labouring masses must reject the deceptions and delusions put forward by this party of big capital and resolutely carry forward the struggle against the racist and chauvinist measures of the British state and all the bourgeois parties, relying on their own strength and organisation.

## Section 5

# Racism – A Preferred Policy of the British Bourgeoisie

Imperialism is marked, Lenin said, by "political reaction all along the line". Both in foreign and domestic policy imperialism strives towards violation of democracy, toward reaction. The heightening of national oppression, the development of racism, the fascisation of the state and the life of the country which are evident today are an expression of the striving of monopoly capital, capital in its imperialist stage, for domination, not freedom.

### IMPERIALISM AND THE EXACERBATION OF NATIONAL OPPRESSION

The racist laws, the all-round development of racist attacks and racial discrimination are an aspect of the intensification of national oppression which accompanies the development of imperialism and the dominance of finance capital.

Already in the nineteenth century the development of capitalism necessarily tended to internationalise the means of production and exchange, to break down national aloofness, to bring nations into closer economic relations and gradually merge vast territories into a connected whole. This developed further with the development of imperialism, the export of capital, division of labour on the international scale, the growing interdependence of nations.

But while this process brought about a gigantic development of productive forces, broke down national isolation, and so forth, the growing interdependence of people and economic amalgamation arose not as a result of the collaboration of nations enjoying equal status, but by means of the subjugation of some nations by others, by means of oppression and exploitation of the less developed by the more developed. It was marked by colonial plunder and annexations, national oppression and inequality, imperialist violence and arbitrary rule, colonial slavery and subjection – as well as wars between "civilised" nations for

mastery over "uncivilised" nations. It necessarily gave rise, alongside the amalgamation, to the revolt against the violent forms of the amalgamation, to the struggle for the emancipation of the oppressed colonies and dependent nationalities from the imperialist yoke. The struggle of the oppressed nations to free themselves from the domination of the oppressor nations became a powerful force directed at the imperialist system.

As well as the heightened national oppression in general (both in Europe and the U.S. and in the colonies), Lenin, in his work "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism", drew attention to the forced emigration of workers from the colonies and neo-colonies, from the oppressed nations, and their brutal exploitation and national oppression in the metropolitan countries by the big bourgeoisie of the oppressor nations.

He pointed out: "One of the special features of imperialism connected with the facts we are describing, is the decline in emigration from imperialist countries and the increase in immigration into these countries from the more backward countries where lower wages are paid."

Elsewhere, he says: "The exploitation of worse paid labour from backward countries is particularly characteristic of imperialism. On this exploitation rests, to a certain degree, the parasitism of rich imperialist countries which bribe a part of their workers with high wages while shamelessly and unrestrainedly exploiting the labour of 'cheap' foreign workers. The words 'worse paid' should be added and also the words 'and frequently deprived of rights'; for the exploiters in 'civilised' countries always take advantage of the fact that the imported foreign workers have no rights."

The existence of a privileged stratum, a labour aristocracy, is closely related to and dependent on the existence of oppression and super-exploitation of nationalities, both in the colonial and dependent countries, but also – in the person of the immigrant and national minority workers – in the imperialist countries themselves.

Since the labour aristocracy is dependent on and benefits from this oppression and super-exploitation, it supports and does not raise its voice or hand against it, and the same is the case for its political representatives, the social democrats, revisionists and opportunists of all hues.

The tendency to national oppression, and with it racism, chauvinism, etc., is a consequence in the political sphere of the fundamental economic traits of imperialism, monopoly and the dominance of the financial oligarchy.

The various forms of national oppression are a violation of democracy and democratic rights, which are not inevitable in themselves (as shown by the fact that various of these rights are actually implemented in various capitalist countries); hence it is both possible and necessary to fight against these forms, these violations, and possible to succeed in certain instances whilst at the same time understanding that in order to remove the basis for national oppression, and succeed in removing all national oppression and violations of democracy, it is necessary to overthrow the economic system which gives rise to it, imperialism, monopoly capitalism. It is necessary to fight for democracy in order to prepare for the socialist revolution, not to turn one's back on the questions of democratic rights, including the struggle against national oppression, against racism and fascism under the plea that all this will be eliminated "with the victory of socialism".

Britain, which earlier than other capitalist powers developed two major distinguishing features of imperialism, namely the possession of a vast colonial empire and monopoly profits due to her monopoly position in the world market, likewise displayed from an early date maximum striving toward national oppression, towards racism and chauvinism. British capitalism, indeed, was founded on the basis of the subjugation and enslavement of peoples.

The super-exploitation of immigrants and national minority workers today is the sequel of the subjection and enslavement of peoples which played an indispensable role in the rise of capitalism and of the British empire in particular.

The straightforward slavery in the New World formed the basis for the veiled enslavement, wage slavery, of the workers in Britain. Speaking of the primitive accumulation on which the capitalist system grew, Marx said: "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signalled

the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production". ("Capital", vol. I)

At the beginning of the 17th century Virginia tobacco plantations were worked by indentured labour, partly convict, partly unemployed people, from England and in far larger numbers from Ireland – Irish peasants evicted by the Irish plantation (colonisation). Bermuda and Barbados were occupied and used for sugar growing with labour similarly obtained. Following the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland in 1649-50 – which immediately followed the triumph of the bourgeois revolution in England – large numbers of Irish people were shipped to slavery in the American plantations. Twenty thousand were shipped in the year 1653 alone.

Hawkins had carried his first cargo of African slaves to San Domingo in 1562, but this trade remained on a small scale till after the middle of the seventeenth century, when negro labour began to provide the basis for the vast fortunes made from sugar and tobacco plantations. After 1660 all the colonies began to replace their white indentured labour with negro slaves. It is estimated that between 1680 and 1786 an average of 20,000 slaves were shipped from Africa each year. In 1790 there were in the British West Indies ten slaves for every free man. The Treaty of Utrecht, 1712, gave Britain the monopoly of the supply of slaves to the Spanish colonies as well, acquiring the right of supplying Spanish America with 4,800 yearly until 1743. As Marx pointed out "Liverpool waxed fat on the slave-trade. This was its method of primitive accumulation" (ibid.)

The system of transportation provided convict labour for America until American Independence in 1776 and for Australia well into the nineteenth century.

The British government prohibited the slave trade in 1807 but slavery was not abolished in the empire until 1834. Whilst there was democratic opposition to slavery from the people, the enactments against it by the bourgeoisie are to be attributed to the emerging supremacy of the industrial bourgeoisie, rather than to a new-found "humanitarianism" on the part of British capitalism. And, as A. L. Morton points out, "profitable as the slave trade proved during the 18th century, its suppression in the 19th century was even more profitable". ("A People's History of England", London, 1938). Thus for example the foundations of

British power in West Africa were laid during the course of decades of the suppression of the slave trade carried on by weaker nations. Similarly in the 1880s the British used the pretext of suppression of the Arab slave trade to conquer East Africa. Britain used its pre-eminence as the leading capitalist power – whose strength rested on the system of wage slavery – to strengthen its colonial domination.

But if Britain ceased the open and direct form of slavery it of course did not cease the use of indentured labour on a wide scale throughout the empire. From the abolition of slavery up to 1850 more than 20,000 workers from the East Indies were brought to the West Indies to work the sugar plantations. In the nineteenth century the railways, roads, etc., in Canada, Australia, East Africa, etc., were built using large numbers of Chinese, Indian and other indentured labourers, in addition to the armies of "free" emigrants from Ireland, Britain, and Europe.

In countries such as South Africa the British herded the indigenous people into reserves and compounds and kept them in a state not far removed from actual slavery. This situation continued with little change to the present day under the South African apartheid regime, and British capitalism continues to make enormous profits from this virtual slavery (as was again reflected in recent disclosures that the big British multinationals pay less than even the EEC agreed minimum wages in South Africa).

The postwar period has seen the growth of the form of super-exploitation where workers are compelled to emigrate from the colonies and neo-colonies in order to earn a livelihood, as a result of the dislocation, plunder and ruin of these countries by imperialist domination. Then in the metropolis they are legally deprived of many basic rights and obliged to work at lower wages than the indigenous workers, thus forming a reserve of cheap labour for the capitalists. As well as emigration to the metropolis there is also emigration to other capitalistically developed areas such as Australia, Canada, etc.

The foundations of British capital therefore have rested from the beginning up until the present on the brutal subjugation, enslavement and expropriation of the peoples of the empire or "commonwealth".

## RACISM AND CHAUVINISM, THE IDEOLOGY OF ENSLAVEMENT

The ideological accompaniment of this economic phenomenon, to justify and validate it, has always been the ideology of racism, chauvinism, of the "inferiority" of subject peoples.

The brutal misanthropic theories concerning the negroes which "justified" the slave trade were, the historical evidence shows, not the precursor to, but the product of, that trade. Since human beings were bought and sold and employed like beasts of burden, the theory prevailed that they were beasts of burden and not human. The Cromwell who massacred the Irish at Drogheda, shipped them to Barbados as slaves and stole their lands described the Irish as "barbarous wretches", while Queen Victoria, who reigned over the depopulation of Ireland in the 19th century, described the Irish people as "a really shocking abominable people - not like any other nation". As can be seen these expressions of racism have nothing to do with "skin colour", or "innate feelings", but are an expression of the relation between exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed.

The British rule in India was justified by the doctrine of the inferiority of the people, as illustrated by the statement of the first Earl of Hastings in 1813 that "The Hindu appears a being nearly limited to mere animal functions and even in them indifferent. . . . It is enough to see this in order to have full conviction that such a people can at no period have been more advanced in civil policy".

The incapability of self-government attributed to the Indians was attributed similarly to all the subject peoples. On this foundation rested what the imperialist poet Kipling described as "the white man's burden" - the "burden" of having to colonise and civilise these "barbarians" incapable of self-government.

In fact, however, if we take the case of India as an example, at the time the British colonised India, capitalist elements were developing in India. It was the British colonialists who destroyed the Indian civilization. "They destroyed it," Marx said, "by breaking up the native communities, by uprooting the native industry and by levelling all that was great and elevated in the native society." Similarly it was the British colonialists who systematically smashed the industry of Ireland. The demagogy

about "civilised the uncivilised" is false and hypocritical in the extreme, a figleaf for the barbarous extortion and destruction by the colonialists and imperialists. And the same is true today with the demagogy concerning "aid to under-developed countries", an "aid" which is geared to preserving and increasing the enslavement to imperialist finance capital, to further undermining the development of the oppressed nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

If the official image of the subject peoples developed in the main from that of a subhuman, a mere beast of burden at the beginning of the nineteenth century to that of someone "half devil and half child" by the time of Kipling, this was merely in consequence of the change in the form of exploitation from open slavery to imperialist colonial domination. The fanning of hatred against the peoples of the colonies was on the contrary increased to justify the barbarous wars of colonial suppression and to counter the growing democratic opposition of the working class and people. The racist theories of Chamberlain and Gobineau, and the "social-Darwinists" were widely propagated. Today these theories remain the commonplaces of all the avowed racists even if in the wake of the struggle of the world's people to defeat Hitlerite fascism the representatives of official Britain profess their opposition to such theories.

The doctrine of uncivilised peoples requiring the far-sighted and humane tutelage of the European settlers was used to justify the barbaric exercises in "civilised" massacre when these peoples in their "benighted" state failed to acquiesce in the philanthropic, civilising attentions of those who were their superiors, if not in moral stature or candour, at least in economic advancement and especially in military science.

This imperialist doctrine continued to be presented openly by the imperialist statesmen of all parties until well after the second world war. Thus for example Labour Home Secretary Chuter Ede, introducing the 1948 British Nationality Bill, declared: ". . . we cannot admit all these backward peoples immediately into the full rights that British subjects in this country enjoy. . . . Our object, as far as they are concerned, is to hope to raise them to such a position of education, of training and of experience that they shall be able to share in the grant of full self-government which this House has so generously given

during the last few years to other places."

### "DIVIDE AND RULE" POLICY OF THE BRITISH BOURGEOISIE

British colonialism always sought to set the subjugated peoples against one another, turning the ancient maxim "divide and rule" into a complete system of government for its vast empire.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century the "plantation" (colonisation) of Ulster was carried out. The native Irish were driven out and their land was given to English and Scottish settlers, who, dependent on the Crown for their relatively better position, were obliged to support the Crown against the Irish. Again, just prior to the Rising of 1798, as an expression of the deliberate policy of the British rule we have General Knox reporting to his superior: "I have arranged . . . to increase the animosity between Orangemen and the United Irish. Upon that animosity depends the safety of the centre counties of the North". This policy has been used in Ireland right down to the present day.

The same approach was employed during the slave trade. The coastal tribes were armed and encouraged to raid inland and bring their captives to trading ports for sale and shipment. "The result" A.L. Morton (ibid.) points out, "was a never-ending series of tribal wars and the devastation of immense areas. While some eight million Africans were sold into America during the period of the slave trade, it has been estimated that at least forty million more were killed in the wars and raids or died on the voyage."

Similarly in India, Britain divided the country into British India and native India, giving one group of the more than 800 nationalities certain privileges and through them ruling the rest. In this way the discontent of the other nations would be directed at the privileged nations, while the British need only concern themselves with governing two or three nations rather than 800. In Palestine the Zionist settlements were used for the same ends. The early Jewish colonists had lived for years on friendly terms with the Arabs, but the expropriation of the Arabs in favour of new settlers led to bitter resentment, to religious and racial conflicts, which were fomented by the British imperialists in order to direct this resentment against the settlers and prevent

it from developing into a direct struggle against the British ruling class.

In fact, whether it is Ireland, India or Palestine, Cyprus, Uganda, or Guyana, South Africa, Malaya or Canada, it is difficult to find an area where British imperialism has not followed this method of setting people against people within the confines of a given state in order to diffuse the opposition to their rule, in order in short to "divide and rule" the peoples.

The method of partition employed in Ireland and India is a particular form of this method, which has been applied just as much in the period of "decolonisation" as in the period of colonisation.

Throughout the centuries of its rule British imperialism has cultivated to a high degree of perfection the sinister art of inciting nationalities against one another, while posing as the "civilised" peacekeeper between "barbarians" who would otherwise slaughter one another. In India, prior to independence, between 500,000 and a million people were killed in the Hindu-Muslim communal riots, the direct product of the British rule and British incitement. Yet with unparalleled effrontery the British imperialists passed themselves off as the "saviours" of the people of India and Pakistan. Similarly today the British governments contrive to present themselves as the acme of refined statesmanship making heroic efforts to resolve the crisis in the north of Ireland, to "keep the warring factions apart" and prevent a bloody civil war, whereas historically and contemporarily it is the British rulers who are responsible for the divisions, through all kinds of sinister intrigues, including the setting into motion of secret assassination squads of the Special Air Services (SAS) to commit "sectarian murders". These methods have even been expounded openly by Brig. Kitson in his book "Low Intensity Operations", as a kind of "scientific" summing up of the experience of the British army in Malaya, Kenya and elsewhere. The method of "divide and rule" was not only applied in other countries but has also long been applied in Britain itself.

## MARX ON THE IRISH IMMIGRANTS IN BRITAIN

As we have mentioned, Britain, which had vast colonial possessions and a monopolistic position in the world market, developed many of the features of imperialism already in the middle of the nineteenth century. One of these is the phenomenon of the labour aristocracy, but in this category also is the phenomenon of immigration of worse paid workers from the colonies. Marx gives an account of the position of the Irish workers in Britain in the nineteenth century which is instructive from the point of view of the significance of the question of immigrant and national minority workers today, showing among other things that the conscious and deliberate stirring up of chauvinist antagonism against immigrants was an already established method of the British bourgeoisie last century, in relation to immigrants from Ireland (something which incidentally proves once again that the hysteria against immigrants has nothing to do with "colour").

Marx pointed out in 1870: "The English bourgeoisie has not only exploited the Irish poverty to keep down the working class in England by forced immigration of poor Irishmen, but it has also divided the proletariat into two hostile camps". ("Marx and Engels on Ireland", Moscow, 1971, pp. 160-163)

"Every industrial and commercial centre in England now possesses a working class divided into two hostile camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the ruling nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself. He cherishes religious, social and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude towards him is much the same as that of the 'poor whites' to the 'niggers' in the former slave states of the USA. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker at once the accomplice and the stupid tool of the English rule in Ireland.

"This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. This antagonism is the

secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organisation. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And that class is fully aware of it." (ibid., pp. 292-295.)

## RACISM UNDER THE GUISE OF "NON-RACISM"

The British and other imperialists adopted the hypocritical demagogy of "aid" and "humanitarian assistance", "North-South dialogue", etc., as the most suitable cover for the continuation of colonialism as neo-colonialism in the conditions prevailing in the post war period, with the rising anti-colonial, national upsurge of the people. Similarly the demagogy of "abhorrence for racism and fascism" is adopted so that the British monopoly capitalists, posing as the greatest "democrats", can pursue the racist and chauvinist policies against national minorities in the face of the rising anti-racist, anti-fascist struggle and sentiments of the people. All this is a feature of the entire ruling class, common to all its political parties, Conservative, Liberal-SDP and Labour.

In the course of its long history as a colonial and imperialist power, Britain has carried the practice of racism to a high degree of sophistication, not only refining the methods for inciting racism and launching racist attacks, but also refining the demagogy with which it strives to disguise the reality of this oppression from the working class and democratic forces.

British imperialism practises racism almost as a "conditioned reflex" which governs its approach to any problem. This can be seen on the one hand in the "British heritage" of national strife in its colonies and neo-colonies, from India-Pakistan to Malaya, from Guyana to Uganda, from Cyprus to the north of Ireland, and on the other hand in the truly Machiavellian way in which the British bourgeois politicians within Britain contrive to affect an "abhorrence" for racism and fascism while simultaneously carrying out draconian measures against national minority people and putting great resources into fostering, popularising, and promoting the nazi movement.

In Britain today the monopoly capitalists and their state apply the same policy applied in the colonies, and applied within Britain historically (as we have seen in the case of the Irish immigrants), with the aim of setting the workers of different nationalities at loggerheads, in order that they will exhaust their

energies in fighting each other and so be unable to unite in a common struggle against the bourgeoisie and its state. Just as in the colonies and neo-colonies, the British bourgeoisie and its state present themselves as the "civilised" force arbitrating and "keeping the peace" between the factions, using this disguise to incite and foment internecine strife.

According to the bourgeoisie racism is a product of "prejudice" and "ignorance" among the working people; this inherent "racial prejudice" wells up spontaneously in times of crisis, as a response to deteriorating economic conditions; it is urged on by "extremist" individuals and groupings and may reach the proportions of a "holocaust" as was seen in Nazi Germany, unless the state intervenes. As for the bourgeoisie, it presents itself as an opponent of racism, which it professes to find "abhorrent". It adopts the role of an agency which, whilst finding racism "understandable", at the same time "condemns" it, which while recognising the "need" to make concessions to racist "public opinion", is nevertheless taking measures to "oppose" and "curb the growth" of racism.

The main legislation which the British governments, Labour and Conservative, have passed in the last two decades in relation to these questions, the immigration and nationality laws, were introduced under such a guise. In 1958 "race riots" took place in Notting Hill and Nottingham. These were incited by the Mosleyites and the forerunners of the National Front and British Movement. Mosley stood in the Kensington by-election on an openly racist platform. Reactionary MPs such as Sir Cyril Osborne raised a clamour for "immigration control". This was given massive press publicity. The Conservative government responded to "public opinion" by introducing the Commonwealth Immigrants Act 1962. In 1968 the expulsion of Kenya Asians was made the occasion of another massive campaign to generate racist hysteria, with Enoch Powell making his notorious "rivers of blood" speech. The Labour government responded by passing the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act. On the other occasions too, the government of the day has justified the passing of increased racist measures on the basis of "overcoming justifiable fears", "relieving pressure on employment, housing and services" so as to "decrease racial tension" etc., etc.

We considered earlier (Section 4) the thoroughly racist

doctrines of the British ruling circles which justify their repressive policies under the banner of the so-called need for "integration", "assimilation" and "limitation". These concepts are the common property of all the bourgeois political parties, Conservative, Liberal-SDP and Labour alike.

At the same time the bourgeoisie, chiefly in the form of the Labour Party, has passed various Race Relations Acts, which while making some minor and for the most part illusory concessions to the increasing democratic opposition to racism and racial discrimination, include racist measures and seek to establish as the prerogative of the state the regulation of "relations between people of different racial groups".

Thus the bourgeoisie and its state pose as the "opponents" of racism, taking "necessary measures" allegedly to "preserve harmony" between "people of different racial groups", in order to impose vicious and increasing racist measures against the people.

It is under this banner that the Conservative and Labour governments introduced successively the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, the 1965 White Paper, the 1968 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, the 1971 Immigration Act, the 1977 Green Paper on Nationality, the 1981 British Nationality Act.

The aim of the bourgeois parties (as well as the trade union chieftains) is to leave the British workers, who oppose racism and national oppression, with the residual conviction that in the face of the growing racism and the deepening crisis, after all it would perhaps be better "from a purely practical point of view" to limit immigration to avoid "unnecessary pressure" on employment, housing, and so on. With the aid of these bourgeois doctrines they aim to seduce the mass of workers, with seeming "reasonableness" and "lack of prejudice", into the positions of national egoism, into standing by while measures are passed to limit the rights of their class brothers, the national minority workers, and into remaining passive while chauvinist hysteria is created against them. They want the workers to enter into the consideration of whether it would be to their advantage to abandon their class brothers, although this "advantage" is of the type which ends in the ruin of the one gaining it as well as the one at whose expense it is gained.

## "ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL!"

The workers must resolutely reject and fight against these attempts. Just as in battle the enemy strives as a basic principle to drive a breach in the ranks of an army in order to rout it, so the bourgeoisie in the class battle of the two antagonistic classes puts massive efforts precisely into splitting the unity of the workers – on the grounds of trade, skill, sex, etc. and in this case nationality. The unity of the workers is vital to their cause; without it they will inevitably be defeated. They must resolutely uphold the principle of ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL!, in opposition to the bourgeoisie and the labour aristocrats who serve them.

In effect the modern imperialist racist ideology is the domestic counterpart to the doctrines of neo-colonialism, which seek to maintain the reality of the former colonialism, while making some reforms and affecting a verbal stance in favour of equality of peoples, non-racism, etc. Just as the opposition of the people to colonialism has brought about a situation where the bourgeoisie cannot openly admit to its aims of imperialist domination, so too the bourgeoisie must affect a pretence of "opposition" to racism. But behind the false and demagogical disguises, neo-colonial domination and racism and national oppression are not being diminished by British imperialism but on the contrary it is all the time striving towards their increase.

The increasing racism and national oppression are part of the overall attack on the democratic rights of the working class and people. They are part of the overall trend of British society away from democracy and towards fascism. The working class must fight these attacks as an essential part of its overall struggle against capitalist exploitation and for the end of the system of wage slavery.



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