

WAR COMMENTARY

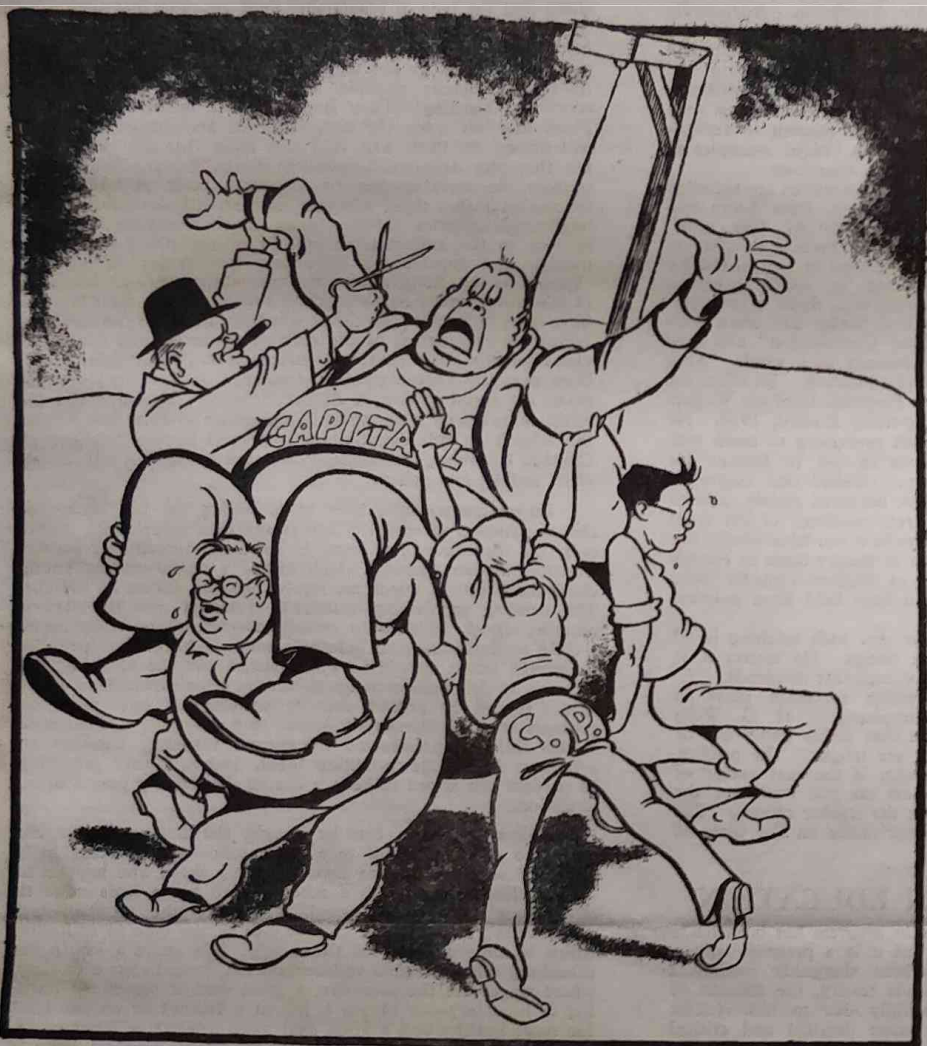
For Anarchism

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Fortnightly, 2d.

A YEAR of COURAGE and of BETRAYALS



1944 - A Year of Betrayals

POLICE STILL HOLDING FREEDOM PRESS FILES!

Though four weeks have passed since Freedom Press offices were raided none of the goods seized have at the time of writing been returned by Scotland Yard. In fact, so far, not even an inventory of the items seized has been sent to our solicitors. We mention this not so much to explain any delays and errors in dispatching *War Commentary* and our publications to readers who sent orders at the time of the raid, but to show how it is possible under the pretext of obtaining information for one suspected offence to deal a blow which has no relation to the suspected offence and which can cause considerable inconvenience to the persons concerned.

Paragraph 2 of Defence Regulation 88A (the regulation under which the search warrants were issued states that "A person authorised by such warrant . . . may seize any article found in the premises . . . which he has reasonable ground for believing to be evidence of the commission of any such offence . . ."). Now the suspected offence is covered by Defence Regulation 39A the gist of which is that no person shall endeavour to seduce from their duties persons in His Majesty's service, etc. . . . The method used by Inspector Whitehead and his men to find the evidence was to empty the contents from the different letter trays straight into sacks, seize invoices and account books which dealt entirely with transactions with bookshops and bundle them into sacks as well, seize the office typewriter and boxes containing stencils of addresses, letter books and other material without which it is virtually impossible to run a concern like Freedom Press.

During the search at the homes of two comrades professional notes which had not the remotest connection with politics and accounts from business firms for goods supplied as well as the account books and publishers invoices for Freedom Bookshop Bristol were removed, such seizure presumably being classified as "reasonable ground for believing it to be evidence"! It could be argued that it would have taken more than the five hours to sort out all the

material on the spot, but the fact remains that over four weeks have passed and the material seized is still in the hands of Scotland Yard. By retaining these documents they are making it extremely difficult for Freedom Press to carry on its "lawful business". Many subscribers will be without their copies of *War Commentary*; we have no means of sending out renewal notices. We are also in the unenviable position of not being able to send out accounts for money owing to Freedom Press which now runs into several hundred pounds sterling, nor have we details of payments made and to be made for goods received thereby jeopardising our credit with suppliers.

What means are there for redress? Our solicitors have written two letters to the Commissioner of Police explaining the position outlined above. As we expected, they have obtained no satisfaction; only a vague promise of an inventory of the material seized.

Meanwhile the note which appeared in the last issue of *War Commentary* on the raid and of our having to move from Belsize Road has resulted in a very large number of letters from readers expressing their solidarity with us in this difficult period and their whole-hearted support for the work Freedom Press has been doing during these past years (see also Letters column on page 4). These expressions of solidarity give us that added amount of determination required to carry on when so many obstacles are being put in our way.

To our readers in the Services who have been subjected to the indignities of being searched and their reading matter confiscated we have little to say. Their letters to us, in which the outstanding feature is their determination to maintain their opinions in spite of threats and searches, show a spirit which is a source of inspiration and of hope for the future. And they can be sure that Freedom Press will not waver in its fight for the rights of Free Expression in the cause of that future society we all desire in which man will be really free.

Fascists replace Fascists in "Liberated" Europe

WARS SELDOM END in a way which is expected by the powers which initiate them. One has only to glance back at the great wars of the last century to notice how popular feeling intervenes towards the close and introduces a new factor into the interplay of ruling class interests which had governed the main outlines of the earlier stages. The Napoleonic wars drew to their close with the determined attempts of the machine-breaking Luddites to stem the increasing unemployment and fall in wages. They were followed by many years of active and bitter struggle on the part of the English workers. The Franco-Prussian war of 1870 ended in the class war—with Thiers and the French ruling class joining hands with Bismarck and the Prussian armies to stamp out the Paris Commune of 1871. The Russo-Japanese war of 1904 brought on the first Russian Revolution of 1905, and the last war (1914-18) saw the imperialist rivalries of the Allies and the Central powers seriously modified by a whole series of working class uprisings. In 1916 the Irish Rebellion; in 1917, the February and October Revolutions in Russia, and in 1918, the German and Hungarian Revolutions, and serious unrest in France and Britain.

The present war has dragged on for five and a half years without such dramatic intervention, and a pessimist might conclude that the ruling classes of to-day, fortified by the counter-revolutionary technique of the past twenty-five years, are able to do what even they like with a docile working class. 1944, however, gave certain indications that made such defeatism in the camp of those who struggle for freedom and justice seem unjustified. It will perhaps be as well to consider the last twelve months from this standpoint, for the pace of history is now so rapid that events of the greatest importance to the workers are easily forgotten.

MUTINY IN THE GREEK NAVY

The present struggles in Greece give added significance to the mutiny in the Greek Forces at Cairo last spring. Already then the émigré Greek Government sponsored by the British Cabinet was looked upon with so much suspicion that the Greek armed forces outside Greece mutinied as a protest against them, acting in solidarity with the indignation of the partisans on the mainland of Greece. The British Government foreshadowed its contempt for the voice of the Greeks who were resisting the German occupation by employing the British Navy to crush their fellows in the Greek Navy. This event showed on the one hand the feelings of justice and the ideal of freedom which animated the Greek people both in and outside Greece; and on the other, the hostility of the British Government of Churchill and Bevin for any manifestation of popular feeling which does not chime in with the imperialist aims of the Allies. (Did not Bevin justify British intervention on the grounds

that the Government could not permit the Greek events to throw the British Empire in jeopardy?)

Already therefore the suppression of the Greek mutiny and its implied disregard of the opinion of the Greek working class resistance movement shows the class war between the rulers and the ruled breaking through the thin ideological veil of the "war for freedom". As the year developed the rift between class forces came more and more to the front to culminate in the naked interventionist war at present raging against the Greek resistance movement.

INDIA: FAMINE SMOTHERS UNREST

In the background must not be forgotten the smouldering continent of India. The unrest felt by the Indians and their indignation at the savage irony of their being conscripted into the "war for freedom" waged by their imperialist gaoles has been checked in the most gruesome way. The horrors of the still continuing Indian famine paralyses for the moment the struggle for Indian freedom. But it also underlines the rift between the population of India and their British rulers, and tears to shreds the myth of the "benefits" which British rule brings to the stricken country. 1944 brought no dramatic events in India, perhaps, but India remains the corner stone of the British Empire, a corner stone composed of four hundred millions whose hatred of Imperialism has been seared into their starved bodies by the past two years.

THE DEADLY FARCE IN ITALY

Italy, too, provides a deadly indictment of the war aims of the Allies. While the Italian working class in the North conducted the most militant struggle against the occupying German armies—they forced the Nazis to negotiate with a strike committee for the

WE DESIRE THE MORAL AND MATERIAL ELEVATION OF ALL MEN; WE WISH TO ACHIEVE A REVOLUTION WHICH WILL GIVE TO ALL LIBERTY AND WELL-BEING, AND WE ARE CONVINCED THAT THIS CANNOT BE DONE FROM ABOVE BY FORCE OF LAW AND DECREES, BUT MUST BE DONE BY THE CONSCIOUS WILL AND THE DIRECT ACTION OF THOSE WHO DESIRE IT.

ERRICO MALATESTA.

first time since their access to power twelve years ago—their fellows in the South were enduring the "liberation" brought by British and American bayonets. Famine, with its attendants, epidemic disease and massive prostitution, have followed the footsteps of the liberators. And, despite the opposition of the entire Italian people, the Allies have everywhere kept in office the Fascist Prefects who thereby dominate every aspect of local affairs.

SUCCESS OF THE MAQUIS

The early summer saw working class forces everywhere gathering to oust the German occupation forces. In Denmark and Norway tremendous strikes taxed to the utmost the Nazi and Quisling ruling powers. But the most dramatic developments came in France where the Maquis everywhere deposed the German and Vichy authorities, and cleared the road before the invasion forces of D-day in June. The continuity of working class struggle was provided by the thousands of Spanish militants in the South of France who wholeheartedly joined the liberating movement of the Maquis. What a contrast to the early rapprochement with General Franco established by the Government of General de Gaulle—established moreover at a time when reports were rife of unrest, even insurrection, in Spain itself! The spirit of the workers who freely and spontaneously entered the Maquis, and without regard for self, waged the bitter and, in supply of arms, unequal fight against the armies of Hitler and Vichy—their spirit typifies the free initiative of insurrectionary movements against tyranny. It is the generous spirit of the revolution.

WARSAW: THE BETRAYAL

Before calling to mind the miserable manoeuvrings of the émigré politicians to disarm these popular militias it is necessary to turn to one of the most

Boilermakers Lose Case but not their determination

In the last issue of *War Commentary* the issues involved in the Walker Naval Yard dispute were discussed at some length. Since then summonses were served on 127 boilermakers who had been locked out for no less than ten weeks. On the day of the hearing several hundred boilermakers from Tyne and Blyth areas did not attend work in order to be able to express their solidarity with their fellow workers by demonstrating outside the City Police Court. The men were represented in court by Smithdale, Rutledge & Co., who, in spite of opposition from Dr. Charlesworth, prosecuting, succeeded in obtaining an adjournment of the case until January 5th.

On January 5th the men again appeared in Court and were found guilty of "unlawfully taking part in a strike" and sentence was deferred until the following day at the suggestion of Mr. Rutledge, defending, so as to enable all the 505 men involved in the dispute to hold a meeting.

MEN REFUSE TO PAY FINES

What happened the next day is reported in *Reynolds News* (7/1/45) which we quote below:

"What the defendants have done they maintain was right and in their interests as Trade Unionists. Whatever fine or costs are imposed will not be paid. Beyond that, I have nothing to say."

"This dramatic statement was made yesterday on behalf of 125 Walker-on-Tyne shipyard boilermakers found 'Guilty,' at Newcastle, of taking part in an illegal strike. The men were each fined £10. The alternative in each case was 31 days' imprisonment.

In making the statement, Mr. Gerald Rutledge, solicitor for the men, said he had

attended a meeting of all the workers involved in the strike.

By a substantial majority, added Mr. Rutledge, the men decided—and this had nothing to do with the particular cases before the court—that the present position must continue.

He had been instructed to put nothing forward in mitigation of the facts.

The chairman (Mr. Joseph Robinson) said it was almost impossible to exaggerate the seriousness of the offence.

The penalties having been announced, Mr. Rutledge said that in the case of James Heywood Peterson, of Jarrow, he gave notice of appeal against conviction and sentence."

It was announced in the Press (11/1/45) that he was appealing against the conviction.

The Newcastle boilermakers have certainly made a stand for a principle and deserve the support of all sections of the working class.

Important Notice

All Correspondence should be addressed to:—

FREEDOM PRESS,
c/o Express Printers,
84a Whitechapel High Street,
London, E.1.

Our printers have kindly extended these postal facilities to us but we must make it quite clear to readers that this is only an address for correspondence and that there will be no one from Freedom Press on the premises to deal with callers.

FREEDOM PRESS LECTURES

SUNDAY MEETINGS

Commencing at 6.45 p.m.

to be held at the

HOLBORN HALL

(Second floor, Room 4)

Grays Inn Road, London

(Buses 38, 19; Trolley 555, 581, 613, 621.

Tubes: Holborn, Chancery Lane)

14th January
ANARCHIST "QUIZ"
Conducted by Ch. Harding
21st Jan. Preston Clements
ANARCHISM & NON-VIOLENCE
28th Jan. J. Hewetson
THE SITUATION IN GREECE
4th Feb. Jack Wade
THE FUTURE OF CITIES

R. FULTON,
Secretary

LETTERS

BUREAUCRACY AT WORK

Dear Comrades,
A typical example of local Government offices and their "efficiency" was displayed to me at the beginning of this week in a mining village in Somerset. I moved into a house (after long waiting and looking for somewhere better) where the only form of heating was the fire—there is no electricity or gas laid on. A lamp replaced the light but as yet I have no primus or stove for cooking, so I was relying completely on the fire. However, the nearest Fuel Office is five miles away, so there I must trudge before I can get coal. I have two small babies, which makes it difficult to say the least, for me to go to the necessary offices which one must visit when one moves. But it was also essential that they should be kept warm and fed, apart from their washing every day and since one is only five months old this was considerable.

All I had so far was a Valor oil stove to keep the place warm, this had been loaned to me until I got coal. Since the living room has a stone floor this needed some warming up.

On arriving at the Fuel Office I was confronted by a young girl, who, looking very officious asked me what I wanted. I said "coal" and after explaining that I had just moved into the area, she whisked out two forms and told me I must fill them in. However, she made a concession and said I could do them there which I didn't mind at all because there was a huge fire in the office. It seemed little use to protest about forms, since everywhere I looked there were notices saying that it was "illegal" for the coal man to deliver coal until he had permission to do so. This I know was adhered to because I paid two visits to the man and he said he could not supply me because he would "get into trouble".

I went away from the fuel office confident that by the next day I would have a fire but such was not the speed of Local Government affairs. I waited one, two, three days and by that time I was quite angry and very cold. The coal man came on his usual round at the end of the week and informed me that he had heard nothing at all from the Fuel Office regarding my registration and was sorry but he had to hear from them first.

I think this is a disgusting state of affairs when two little children must be in a house with no heating while the Fuel Office have a roaring fire. It is evident that something is wrong somewhere if it is "illegal" to keep defenceless babies warm.

M.C.

CONGRATULATIONS TO C.P.

Dear Comrades, Just to show the scrupulous fairness of *War Commentary* in paying compliments to its political opponents, might it not be in place to offer a word of congratulations to the C.P. editors of *Irish Freedom* in deciding to change its name to *Irish Democrat* in response to the demand of many of its readers.

The fact that the Stalinists of all people have used the name of *Freedom* in one of their papers has been most bewildering to most of its readers. In fact it has led some to wonder whether *Irish Freedom* wasn't something like French cricket or a Dutchman's rise. Now the situation is perfectly clear, unless the Irish Democrats issue a paper called the *Irish Communist*.

Yours fraternally,
S.L.

THIS WAR FOR FREEDOM

Dear Friends,
I would like to bring to your attention a matter which may at first sight appear to be purely a personal issue between myself and the Army authorities; mature consideration, however, leads me to believe that it may well become a threat to the interests of *Freedom Press* and its well-wishers in general.

Nearly three weeks ago a junior Officer entered by billet in the course of an inspection and removed from the table a number of booklets which I had ordered from you only a few (Continued at foot of col. 2)

FREEDOM PRESS PUBLICATIONS

POLICY

TRADE UNIONISM OR SYNDICALISM? Tom Brown 24 pages 10/-
NEW LIFE TO THE LAND George Woodcock 22 pages 10/-
RAILWAYS AND SOCIETY George Woodcock 22 pages 10/-
VOTE—WHAT FOR? E. M. Hales 14 pages 10/-

THEORY

A.B.E. OF ANARCHISM A. Berkman 108 pages 10/-
ANARCHY OR CHAOS George Woodcock 22 pages 10/-
ANARCHY E. M. Hales 14 pages 10/-
KROBOTEK—Selections from his Writings 120 pages 10/-
THE WAGE SYSTEM P. Kropotkin 18 pages 10/-
REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT P. Kropotkin 18 pages 10/-
THE STATE—ITS HISTORIC ROLE P. Kropotkin 44 pages 10/-
THE PHILOSOPHY OF ANARCHISM Herbert Read 22 pages 10/-

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THE BRITISH GENERAL STRIKE Tom Brown 10 pages 10/-
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THE ISSUES IN THE PRESENT WAR Herbert Read 22 pages 10/-
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WORKERS IN STALIN'S RUSSIA M. L. Berger 10 pages 10/-
THE EDUCATION OF FREE MEN Herbert Read 22 pages 10/-
HOMES OR HOVELS—The Housing Problem and its Solution George Woodcock 22 pages 10/-

FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

132 Cheltenham Rd., Bristol

WHERE IS TRUTH?

THOSE who search the Press for honest reporting will have had a field-day on January 3rd, 1945. On that date the London papers reported a speech by Dr. Barbara Simonds to 15 to 19 year olds at the Council for Education in World Citizenship. Dr. Simonds' speech was reported in the (Labour) *Daily Herald* and (Conservative) *Daily Express*.

The *Express* headed the column: "YOU MUST LEARN TO HATE" and plunged in by reporting Dr. Simonds' remarks that "without hate I do not think we will be able to bring this war to a final and irrevocable end". The first half of the *Express* report concluded by explaining that Dr. Simonds had been widowed twice, mentioning "the Germans shot her first husband" and "the Germans killed her second husband at Arrhen".

Anarchist Commentary

The *Herald* on the other hand headed the column: "LEARN TO HATE THE WAR MAKERS". It started immediately by quoting, "You must learn to hate the people who obstruct our path to permanent peace and a brave new world". It started straight away with what was tucked away in the second half of the *Express* report, namely Dr. Simonds' remarks:

"Examine your history," she said. "Leave out the kings and try to find out how the ordinary people live; why wars occurred. In finding these answers you will discover why, before the war, they burned oranges in California and threw herring back into the sea while children were deformed by rickets."

"Franco in Spain and all other people who fear youth thinking for itself, who try to make it into a puppet, fit only to fight, would fear you to-day as you sit here ready and eager to learn more about your fellow-beings."

The *Herald* reported that her first husband was "shot down" and her second husband was "killed at Arrhen". From the *Express* the casual reader would have gathered that Dr. Simonds was a "Vansittarte": from the *Herald* you will have gathered she was a Social-Democrat. In other words, her speech became infused with the complexion of the paper concerned simply by the manner in which it was reported. (In this instance the *Herald* was more likely the correct version, since Dr. Simonds

does appear to be more or less of the same political complexion as the *Daily Herald*).

THE ARGENTINE.

THE military dictatorship in the Argentine more and more closely resembles that exercised by the Nazis. There is not the least liberty of press or assembly. All anti-Government workers' organisations are prohibited, and the most active militants jailed or under police supervision. The Anarchist organisations and periodicals have been suppressed. Nevertheless illegal manifestoes and journals continue to appear. In spite of the fascist nature of the government, the trade union leaders give it their support, and Col. Peron, in accordance with European precedent, mouths "socialist phrases" to rally a mass following.

Although the Argentine Government is not at the moment in the good books of the "Democracies", it is very likely that the differences will be made up as and when it is financially profitable to do so. When Britain and America resume their mutually-hostile trade friendships with the Argentine, the workers in these countries should remember how their Latin-American brothers are faring.

INTERNATIONAL NOTES.

IN Uruguay a new anarchist journal appears, called *Inquietud*, edited by comrades well-known for their past activity, including Cesar N. Paganelli, Corret Luna and others. Another journal from that country is *Voluntad*, while *Solidaridad*, organ of the anarcho-syndicalist union (F.O.R.U.) also appears. From Mexico we receive the well produced *Tierra y Libertad*, which is now issuing a theoretical supplement *Inquietudes*. From the centre of Mexico—San Luis Potosi—comes *Libertad* irregularly, while other papers we have received from Anarchist groups and organisations in South America include *Solidaridad* (Cuba), *Solidaridad Obrera* (organ of the C.N.T. Spanish refugees in Mexico) and even illegal Argentine papers such as *Accion Libertaria*, *Organizacion Obrera*, etc. From New York comes *Cultura Proletaria*.

Should we Oppose the Unions Trotsky and the Labour State

AS the Trotskyists are now posing as one hundred per cent. trade unionists, and are doing their best to unseat the "old gang" of corrupt trade union official bureaucracy, it is as well to consider their claims—as followers of Trotsky—to do so.

Trotsky is the author of a pamphlet, *Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay*, published by the Fourth International. He declares: "Anarchism is only liberalism drawn to its extremes, was in practice peaceful propaganda within the democratic republic, the protection of which it required." This is an obvious lie, for the history of the syndicalist unions in Sweden, Italy, Germany and Spain proves by deeds the untruth of his statement. One has only to look to the records of the International Working Men's Association (I.W.M.A.): in every country in which there is a syndicalist movement affiliated to it, they have conducted splendid fights on the industrial field. Their strikes are fought from the bottom upwards—not at the dictates of purse and position-conscious Trade Union bosses—from the workers themselves, inspired by the idea of the ultimate expropriation of the master class.

The C.N.T. (National Confederation of Labour) in Spain sent out questionnaires to all their locals in the various industries asking them beforehand how they would function in times of crisis, when they should have taken over the means of production and distribution. How thorough and efficient their preparation was, was shown when the Fascists struck in Spain in 1936. All impartial observers and critics have admitted the extraordinary organ-

izing efficiency of the anarchists. "I witnessed," says H. N. Brailsford, "their (the Anarchists) astonishing success during the civil war in running factories with high principles as their chief equipment, and I was deeply moved by the schools they established for the sorely tried children of Madrid."

The success of the syndicalist unions is not limited solely to Spain, but is seen in every country where the unions are organized under the principles of the I.W.M.A.

Workers' Control as a Slogan Only

Trotsky's followers in this country have stolen the syndicalist slogan of "Workers' Control" because it is becoming popular. As politicians they must swim with the tide. But Trotsky was too logical a Bolshevik to act on the lines of workers' control, except as a means of gaining power. Having gained it, he showed himself the bitterest opponent of workers' control. In his book *Dictatorship versus Democracy (Terrorism and Communism)*, written in 1920, Trotsky wrote: "The principle of compulsory labour service has just a radically and permanently replaced the principle of free hiring as the socialization of the means of production has replaced capitalist property." (p.137).

Bevin, Citrine and Co., as junior partners in the firm of British Imperialism, propose to solve the unemployment problem by making labour "mobile" and drafting a worker away from his home to suit the needs of capitalist economy. The Trotskyists appeal to the workers to resist this invasion of their liberties at the dictates of the State and its hireling labour leaders. They conveniently forget that these same labour leaders are following the precedent laid down by Trotsky in the *Workers' State*, for it was none other than Trotsky who led the way soon to be followed by Mussolini and Dr. Ley. Says Trotsky, "The Labour State considers itself empowered to send every worker to the place where his work is necessary. And not one serious Socialist will begin to deny to the Labour State the right to lay its hand upon the worker who refuses to execute his labour duty." (p.142).

He goes on to make the State Socialist position quite clear:

"We can have no way to Socialism except by the authoritarian regulation of the economic forces and resources of the country, and the centralized distribution of labour power in harmony with the general State plan."

Trotsky then proceeds to outline the functions of unions:

"The young Socialist State requires trades unions, not for the struggle for better conditions of labour—that is the task of the social and State organization as a whole—but to organize the working class for the needs of production, to educate, discipline—in a word, hand in hand with the State

A BOUQUET FOR FREEDOM PRESS.

THE January issue of *Vanguard* contains an item referring to the *Freedom Press* which runs as follows:

"When we are on *War Commentary*, let us say that we have heard that the reason why the proprietors of the journal refuse to allow their paper to be sold at the B.P.L. Bookshop in Glasgow is because we are anti-Semitic. But if it is anti-Semitic to state Gospel Truth, that the Jews are not God's Chosen People, then we are anti-Semitic. By the way, how many Jews are financially interested contributors? And how many Jews are authors of the books published and sold in *War Commentary* interests?"

It was hardly unreasonable of us to assume that the B.P.L. ("British Protestant League") was anti-Semitic, since the *Vanguard*, published by Alexander Ratcliffe on its behalf, devotes half its space to statements to the effect that "the Jew So-and-So" has been appointed to this or that. While *War Commentary* and *Freedom Press* pamphlets go to the commercial bookshops we have taken as much care as possible to see that our literature does not go to any specifically anti-Semitic or pro-fascist bookseller. Such a doubt reasonably exists in this case: beneath lurid headlines, all of which seem to necessitate an exclamation mark, the *Vanguard* declares that this war is fought against Hitler "the sanest statesman in Europe" on behalf of Roman Catholicism, while the Jews are (inevitably) behind it all.

We are faintly amused at the suggestions that we care which people God chose—it doesn't seem to have made much difference to the workers to whom he seems to have given a raw deal all round. Since to a religious racketeer like Mr. Ratcliffe it will seem quite incomprehensible that *Freedom Press* should have been created out of nothing solely by voluntary endeavour, we assure him that we are financially subsidised by Rothschilds in order to publicise the Elders of Zion—and as his apparent wish to handle our "Jewish propaganda" seems to indicate, he must be in on the payroll too.

An Apology for Bevin

One is not surprised to find him add: "We still retain, and for a long time will retain, the system of wages." Indeed the above extracts might have formed an apology for the work of Bevin and the reactionary trade union bosses during the present war. It was Trotsky who, on his own admission, introduced the militarization of the trade unions which led logically and inevitably to the conscription of the workers, from which it followed that if workers went on strike they would be guilty of mutiny and would be shot. Bevin and Co. must be envious of such power, but they cannot hope to have it just yet for there has not yet been sufficient Bolshevik propaganda.

There is ample evidence from the works of Trotsky to show that if Stalin had not ousted him, and he himself had gained State power instead, things would have gone on the same lines as under Stalin. In his pamphlet *Stalin and Bolshevism*, Trotsky expresses the fear that the workers will identify Stalinism with Bolshevism and so come to reject both, a fear which time has probably justified. The Trotskyists say that we must not judge the "Workers' State" as it exists as it is only "a degenerate Socialist state": why then call upon the workers everywhere to defend it!

Decrees Against Expropriation

When the Bolshevik seized power under Lenin and Trotsky, the free soviets were functioning, organizing industries by methods founded by men who had not practical shop experience. Lenin and Trotsky proceeded to pass a series of decrees which did not so much advance the backward soviets but devitalized the advanced ones. The first decrees were directed against the expropriation of the factories by the workers, for the Bolsheviks were prepared to co-operate with the bosses in order to build up socialism. The Bolsheviks went no further than the nationalization of the banks and key industries until further expropriations were forced on them by the workers. Just as in Spain, the workers expropriated the robbers, and then, when the fact was accomplished, the Government legalized it by passing a law and claimed the credit.

It was not under Stalin, but under Lenin and Trotsky, that a group of delegates representing more than 25 important industries issued on March 20th, 1918, the following protest published in *Novaya Zhina*:

"The workers have supported the new Government which calls itself the Government of the workers and peasants, and promises to do our will and work for our welfare. All our organizations stood back of it and our sons and brothers shed their blood for it. We bear patiently both want and famine. Four months have passed and we find ourselves without faith and without hope. The Government which calls itself a Soviet of Workers and Peasants has done everything to oppose the will of the workers. It has blocked every attempt to hold elections to the new soviets. It has threatened to use machine-guns against the workers, and it has broken up meetings and demonstrations."

Of the slaughter of the Kronstadt sailors, Trotsky has only a few words to say. "The Revolutionary Government naturally could not fortress which protected the capital, only because the reactionary peasant soldier was as leader of the counter-revolution, dare not tell the truth—that Kronstadt was the voice of the workers all over Russia."

The lesson is clear for all who wish to see the revolution that fails to eliminate all organized authority has dug its own grave.

MAT KAVANAGH.

REVIEWS

ENGLAND HAS RISEN WILL MORRIS

This pamphlet, published by the Red Flag Fellowship, sets out to indicate that revolutionary movements are not the monopoly of doubtful foreigners, nor are tyranny and oppression things which have never been known in England. Starting with the fourteenth century it outlines the popular revolutionary movements that have occurred in this country. Firstly we hear about the Peasants Revolt in 1381, which was a country-wide uprising aiming at "the reconstruction of English society", but which was brutally suppressed by the ruling class. And similarly the author tells of Winstanley and the Digger movement in the 17th century, the misery and oppression of the industrialisation during the early part of the nineteenth century. He shows how the present-day labour movement has become entirely corrupted by reformism. Although the pamphlet does not set out to give a comprehensive history of the working class in this country, yet it does point out the main lines along which popular movements have developed, and can thus provide an introduction to the study of the English revolutionaries. The pamphlet can be got from the R.E.F. at 5 Ranelagh Gardens Mansions, S.W.6. for 5d. post free.

IN TYRANNOS. Fifteen Essays on Freedom Struggle in Germany. (Lindsey Drummond, 364 pp. 16s.)

Titles are significant. This book takes its name from the motto, which a young German poet, imprisoned and exiled, gave to his first work, one Hundred and sixty years ago. It was the play "The Robbers", a genial manifesto for Anarchy and Solidarity, only afterwards belated in order to become a classic. Schiller died, a tired renegade, but the tyrants remain to this very day.

Fifteen German exiled writers choose some frustrated colleagues of the past, to demonstrate the thesis, that Germany also was and is a freedom loving nation. Among those selected are Hutten, Leibnitz, Lessing, Buchner, Grimm, Hegel, Marx, Heine, Boerne, Lassalle, Nietzsche, Bebel, Liebknecht, Kraus and others. This is a very representative list for a progressive gathering, even under the motto: "need creates strange bedfellows". But from a libertarian point of view the list is incomplete. One misses in a book *In Tyrannos* Karstadt and Joss Fritz of the peasant war, Jan Bockelson of Munster, Stortebeker of the Hansa, Schubert of Stuttgart, Quirinus Kuhlmann of Silesia. One could ask for Weiting, the first proletarian anarchist, for Max Stirner, Johann Most, Wilhelm Humboldt, Georg Forster, Eugen Duhring, Gustav Landauer, John Henry Mackay, Erich Muhsam, Pierre Ramus and more. Certainly they have done more against the tyrants than Leibnitz, Hegel, Nietzsche and Co. One has still to wait for a true portrait of the Other Germany. PETER MICHAEL.

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Those Selfish Workers

At Brixham Hospital, South Devon, the management refused to pay the domestic staff the Hetherington scale of wages. The Ministry of Labour refuses to supply domestic staff unless this scale of wages is paid. Hence the hospital is short of staff.

What does the management do? It demands that the nurses should do the kitchen work as well as their nursing duties. Apart from the extra work, this is tantamount to asking the nurses to blackleg on the domestic labour available. They very properly refused to do it, whereupon the management threaten the entire nursing staff with dismissal.

Workers in essential services are always being reminded of the "harm they do society by striking." Such considerations evidently carry little weight with the management of Brixham Hospital, even though it is well known that there is a shortage of nurses, so that replacement in the event of dismissals would be very difficult.

NORTH LONDON FREEDOM DISCUSSION GROUP

23rd January, 7.30 p.m.

at
ADULT SCHOOL, Palmers Road,
(opp. Arnos Grove Tube Station).

FREDRICK LOHR will speak on
"HUMAN NATURE"

"War Commentary" readers and friends are cordially invited.