

WAR COMMENTARY

For Anarchism

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THE CHIEF AIM OF ANARCHISM IS TO AWAKEN THOSE CONSTRUCTIVE POWERS OF THE LABOURING MASSES OF THE PEOPLE WHICH AT ALL GREAT MOMENTS OF HISTORY CAME FORWARD TO ACCOMPLISH THE NECESSARY CHANGES, AND WHICH, AIDED BY THE NOW ACCUMULATED KNOWLEDGE, WILL ACCOMPLISH THE CHANGE THAT IS CALLED FORTH BY ALL THE BEST MEN OF OUR OWN TIME.

KROPOTKIN,
(Modern Science & Anarchism)

Background to the Big Three Meeting

Citrine Sits on the Fence

AS we foresaw, Sir Walter Citrine's delegation to Greece has acted as a time-gaining device for the Government, and has been fully used by the reactionary press. Thus full reports appeared with flaring headlines of Citrine's examination of mass exhumations described as "ELAS victims". These were exhibited by the Government, and one may reasonably doubt any evidence brought forward as to who were the perpetrators. After several weeks of bitter street fighting it is not difficult to find corpses. It only remains for the government to affix the trade-mark "guaranteed killed by ELAS".

Citrine was cautious enough to state only that the large number of corpses exhumed was irrefutable evidence of "cold-blooded murder". As we all know that a civil war had just been carried out by interventionists no one will quarrel with him. He did not however state that ELAS were the murderers. It was left for the press reports to do that for him in their headlines. Incidentally all this "evidence" was seen by Citrine before he had interviewed the EAM representatives. When he did see them, the press gave such headlines as "Why EAM refuse to Sign Citrine Plan for Vote". Below this—and coming after all the "cold-blooded murder" stuff had well sunk in—they report Citrine as regretting "the references which have been made in the House of Commons to the original members of EAM. We are satisfied that many of these people were people of high integrity. In seems the same was true of ELAS and that many were men of military competence, integrity and high purpose."

Unfortunately, even when Citrine does make his final report, it will carry no great conviction. Sir Walter's previous chameleon work in this direction, his *Russian Diary*, his *Finnish Diary*, and his *American Diary*, have all shown only too well how easily his legal mind adapts itself to the propaganda needs of the time.

AMNESTY PROMISES TORN UP

War Commentary pointed out in its last issue that the government's purpose was to secure time, to delay and allay popular reaction here by devices like the T.U. delegation. Under cover of this, reactionary forces in Athens would institute a White Terror. This view turns out to be only too correct. Reuter's diplomatic correspondent in Athens stated that:

"In Athens it is not uncommon to find one-

self at a disadvantage in casual conversation with more or less educated Greeks, because the British are automatically taken as opponents of all Left Wing ideas and as prepared to encourage their suppression by every means. Attempts to correct (sic) this assumption or explain the social and political structure and trends of wartime Britain are met with either scepticism or alarm, according to the listener's political attitude."

The Greeks are not altogether fools. On January 19th, Eden "emphasized that the only people liable to prosecution in Greece would be those guilty of crimes against the penal code or the laws of war, and that no political arrests would be made." To underline this promise of amnesty, the headlines (*News Chronicle*, 20/1/45) read: "Eden Reaffirms Pledges on Greek Amnesty—Plastiras Makes a Promise—No Punishment for Bearing Arms".

In Athens since then several people have been sentenced to death for taking part in the recent fighting, "for carrying arms against the State". (*Reynolds News*, 4/2/45). Reynolds adds, "These are the first trials by a military court since Greece was liberated. No quislings or pro-Nazi traitors have been tried."

A FAVOURABLE SIGN

There is one hopeful sign. The Greek government have thought it wise to start some trials of collaborators. It doesn't look too well to be trying those who fought the German occupation, while those who collaborated with it still remain untied. So there will be some collaborationist trials soon in Athens, probably beginning with the quisling Prime Minister (German quisling, we mean) John Rallis. It is very distasteful to see one set of quislings denouncing and executing another for the greater glory of their imperialist masters. Moreover the present situation shows the function of these trial-shows. They serve to give an appearance of impartiality, of striking the right as well as the left. Under cover of such "justice" the work of liquidating the leaders of popular resistance goes on ruthlessly and efficiently.

EAM supporters continue to be sacked from their employment—that is, handed over to starvation, and the prisons are filled to capacity. Meanwhile, as a safeguard for the future, a new

law has been introduced providing for the investigation of the past history of every Greek officer. This will ensure that only diehard reactionaries get into the officer class, that the army will be a thoroughly reliable weapon for the Greek ruling class.

But the collaborator trials show that the government is having to take some stock of public feeling. An even more favourable sign is that none of the ELAS men sentenced to death (in the teeth of the amnesty) has yet been executed.

JAILED FOR SOLIDARITY

A soldier recently was sentenced to 16 months detention for being absent without leave for... only 30 days. There must be a reason for so savage a sentence, but it is not that the victim had behaved in a specially despicable manner. On the contrary he had acted in accordance with high ethical principles; but they were working class principles, and as such received the venom of the ruling class.

The soldier, Private A. Lambert, a middle-aged man of 44, who doubtless remembered the General Strike of seventeen years ago, had taken part in the recent Manchester Gas Strike—for which some of his comrades were fined, and then gaoled for refusing to pay up. He was absent without leave from November 18th to December 18th of last year, and told the court martial that his conscience would not allow him to help break a strike in the Cardiff Dockyard last November. Rather than do anything against his fellow workers in the docks he went to stay with friends until the strike was over.

The court must have realized that a spirit of solidarity like that, and a refusal to break the working class code of ethics, if allowed to spread, would constitute a deadly blow to the upholders of class injustice. How bitterly they felt about it is reflected in the vindictive sentence of sixteen months detention. But honest men and workers will feel their hearts warmed by Lambert's spirited action.

THE much heralded meeting between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin is not taking place under very auspicious circumstances. The military victories in the West, in the East and in the Pacific put the Allied Powers, it is true, in a stronger position than ever before but the problems created by the process of "liberation" and the prospects of peace are likely to cast a shadow on the victories.

The people, will, of course, be left guessing as to the nature of the discussions and the decisions reached by the Big Three during their conference.

Even if we are not told what is going on at the conference we can nevertheless have a good guess. The fact that no smaller nation has been invited clearly indicates that they will have to accept the decisions of the Big Three, whether they like it or not. Many small nations will not, of course accept this without putting up a fight for what they consider their rights and one can foresee endless conflicts. Already General de Gaulle, who feels sore at not having been invited to the conference, has declared: "We have let our Allies know that France will not regard itself as bound by any arrangement which she has not discussed and approved on equal terms with the other Powers".

The growing power of Russia cannot be regarded as exerting a progressive influence and as she is the strongest power as far as Europe is concerned one is forced to watch her policy with particular care and anxiety. Up to now the Union of Socialist Republics has been carrying on a policy of territorial annexations together with the setting up of right wing quisling governments in those countries which she has been unable to annex. The case of Poland does not need to be mentioned again. In

Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania, Right wing elements are given full support while genuine working class movements are suppressed.

Czechoslovakia is the latest country to have been told, in no uncertain terms, that she must toe the line or else lose some of her territory. The Ukrainian Government at Kiev had carried out some agitation for the annexation of Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia which had apparently "demanded" to be incorporated in the U.S.S.R. As one knows the autonomous republics of the Soviet Union have now the right to carry on an independent foreign policy. When the alarmed Dr. Benes approached Moscow on this matter the Soviet Government denied any responsibility for the demands put forward by the Kiev Government and declared that it felt itself bound to its pledge to restore Czechoslovakia to her pre-Munich frontiers. The Observer furthermore reported that "The Russian Government is believed to have assured President Benes that the campaign will be stopped immediately."

This incident is interesting because it shows that the autonomous republics can be used to put forward claims which the Soviet Government cannot decently sponsor. Their independence is a myth since a call to order from Moscow is sufficient to make them alter their policy.

It is probable that the Kiev demands were put forward to blackmail the Czech Government into accepting the Russian controlled Lublin committee. A few days after an assurance had been given to Dr. Benes that no Czech territory would be touched it was announced that the Czechoslovak Government would recognise the Lublin Provisional Government of Poland.

Through force and intrigue Russia

More about the Warsaw Rising

Eye Witness Account

STALIN's government and its stooges at Lublin are already trying to besmirch the rising in September in Warsaw by means of "new investigations". No new investigation however will alter the fact that Moscow urged the necessity of the rising right up to August, promised aid, and then diverted the Red Army's advance to Warsaw, sent no useful arms and even denied landing grounds for British and American supply planes. They dubbed the rising "criminal".

Now they are on a new tack. General Bor, says Moscow, is being well treated by the Germans, lives comfortably. This proves—according to these scribes—that Bor was a Hitler agent. We do not know what Bor's politics are. But we do know that the Stalinists are using a filthy device here. Do not they treat Von Seydlitz and Von Paulus well—however much they reviled them in the past? Did not General Montgomery breakfast with Von Thoma, the butcher of Guernica?

A young Polish officer, Lt. Jan Novak, who is said to have conveyed the signal for the rising from London to Warsaw, has told the other side of the story in the *News Chronicle* (27/1/45).

"My wife and I were once gathered with 300 Polish patriots in a building overlooked by Germans, but they did not interfere with us. Posters were openly displayed in the city declaring that 'the day is coming'."

"We knew the Red Army was near. I had seen their tanks and their soldiers and we thought liberty was very near. We believed that our rising would last only three or four days and we heard incessantly the roar of Russian guns. Russian patriots were in Praga. Then Russian fighters and bombers came over the city and only the Herman Goering divisions remained east of the Vistula. At 5 p.m. on August 1st the rising began. By ten o'clock 18 German tanks had been knocked out and most of the city, except for Praga and Lubeski and the German strongpoints within it, was in our hands."

"Not only the Underground army but the whole civilian population had risen. There was a terrible battle on the banks of the Vistula, but help did not come, and at length a deadly silence fell—we heard no longer the sound of Russian guns and planes."

"On August 10th the German offensive began: their planes flew over and machine-gunned and bombed the city, and guns which they had used at Sebastopol began its destruction. We were afraid of using our dwindling munitions."

The *News Chronicle* report continues: "Lt. Novak said they had heard Russian wireless

messages asking the Poles to rise, and stated that a Russian Intelligence officer, Capt. Kalugan, of the Czerny Group, was in Warsaw in contact with General Bor. On August 5th, this Russian officer sent a wireless message for transmission, through London, to Moscow. The message—the text of which he gave—asked for automatic guns, arms, ammunition, grenades and anti-tank weapons, and added: 'The heroic population of Warsaw trust that in a few hours' time you will give them armed support. Help me to get in touch with Gen. Rokossovsky.'

"This telegram reached Gen. Sonkowski on August 6th, and was handed to Gen. Sir Alan Brooke, from who Gen. Bor learned, on August 9th, Lt. Novak said there was no reply, although Kalugan remained in Warsaw for six weeks."

'After a while,' he added, 'we began to lose hope'." Lt. Novak continued his narrative:

"We heard nothing from the Russians until September 10th, when their fighters came over, and at night their bombers dropped supplies. But the ammunition they gave us was of no use, because it was Russian, and we were using German weapons. The supplies which we received from Allied aircraft from Italy fell for the most part into German hands."

"Six times the Germans called on us to surrender. On September 30th Gen. Bor sent a telegram to Gen. Rokossovsky saying that our situation was hopeless and that he could hold out only another 24 hours. But there was no answer."

Bevin Boys Line Up!

A considerable period has now elapsed since the beginning of the so-called 'Bevin boys' scheme, heralded by the yellow press as the one and only solution to the ills which beset the mining industry. So it is perhaps appropriate to review the situation from the point of view of the Bevin boys themselves.

Lately, Fleet Street in general and the *News Chronicle* in particular, remembering that most of their readers (luckily for them!) have short memories, have been discovering that like their brothers in other industries—only more so—many of the Bevin boys are not at all patriotic, and that some—well, some are downright rebellious! At Durham, for instance, fifty Bevin boys have 'disappeared', while 1,100 summonses are to be issued against those who have dared to take (like Parliament, only they took a month) ten days off at Christmas. We can imagine how busy the Labour Exchange bureaucrats must be, particularly the gallant 'Major' who seems to be a well known (and well hated) figure at most Bevin boy establishments!

Worse even than their general unkindness towards Capital on the part of the Bevin boys is the fact that their arrival at certain collieries has destroyed the 'one big happy family' feeling which, the capitalist press would have us believe, hitherto existed be-

tween masters and slaves. Division of Labour! Anarchists, however, should thank Gauleiter Ernest for the one piece of good he has ever done, albeit unintentionally! His slavish scheme has made thousands of youths reach several important conclusions—reached by the hard way of personal experience—conclusions concerning conditions of which they had previously heard the vaguest rumour only.

Firstly, the Bevin boys are beginning to realize that they are living under a system akin to that in Germany and that England, the "land of the free" is rapidly becoming a policeman's paradise. The difference between British and German Fascism being that over here they sugar the pill a little more with the aid of 'socialists' and 'communists'!

Secondly, that the miners far from being cowards and rotters as the Bourgeois press would have people believe, are brave workers and good comrades.

Thirdly, and most important of all, it has led many of them to consider means for changing the present system and of elaborating new methods of struggle against it. As a result, Bevin will yet have cause to regret adopting the scheme, if he does not do so already.

VIVIAN BIRD.

Palace Colliery Dispute

An Example of Working Class Solidarity

A splendid example of working class solidarity is being given in the Palace Colliery strike. This pit, as its name suggests, is on the Duke of Hamilton's grounds. The men have been on strike since January 5th., and have only worked two shifts since the New Year holidays. Their struggle has been very difficult because they have received only meagre assistance from other pits. This is due to the fact that they have not set up any form of propaganda committee to state their case to the public and to other miners in the district. If they made such an appeal they would receive many willing workers in their cause. Another reason for the small support is the interference of union officials and some managements when honest workers attempt to collect money at the pit gates.

Many miners at other pits want to help, but are prevented because of various reasons. The old cry of "war effort" though wearing thin, is very discouraging still in this respect. There is also the threat of victimization which is still a reality despite what the authorities may say to the contrary. Nevertheless, support is rallying and this fight may become a broad issue.

The strike began when a coal-cutting machineman was sent to other work on another shift. A newcomer to the pit had been put on his job. To thoughtless people this might seem a very simple thing, not worth striking about. But to miners who are compelled by the circumstances surrounding their job to watch out for incidents like this one, there is a very deep principle involved. Furthermore, there is no telling when or where

the management would stop if they were allowed to get away with things like this.

One other important issue in this dispute is the demand of the miners for the removal of the manager and some of his lackeys. Manager Davies is a rigid disciplinarian. His deputies and firemen were in fear of him, and it was not a very unfamiliar piece of news to find in the paper that a miner was charged with striking one of this manager's subordinates. There was definitely bad feeling between the men and his underlings, simply because of the way—at his instructions—they goaded the men on. On one occasion he threatened the men by saying that he wished the war was over as he could then bring in more discipline and thereby get his revenge on miners who were "giving him trouble".

It should be noted here that such a state of affairs existed at this colliery that during one dispute even the union leaders threatened action against this man. In one statement issued from Miners' headquarters they said that they demanded his dismissal. But they did nothing about it, and he still remains. The men are now taking action at last for themselves, and are determined to displace him—more power to their arms.

The newspapers carefully refrain from mentioning anything about this man, and content themselves with saying that "there are other issues involved besides the one concerning the machineman." Of course, the newspapers cannot be expected to say anything on behalf of the men. It is well known that they play on one side only. Their part in reporting this strike is a truly despicable one. They keep strictly to the line of sabotaging the miners' case. Yesterday, Sunday, January 28th, they reported that the men were deciding to go back to work. This is an old trick—there is not the slightest evidence that their report is true. The *Hamilton Advertiser* stated that a majority of the branch committee recommended a return to work. But they failed to gain anything from this low manoeuvre. In January 28th, at a meeting the "Palace" miners voted solidly to continue the strike. And they are still on strike.

J. CARRACHER.

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