

WAR *For Anarchism* COMMENTARY

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MID-SEPTEMBER 1943.

TWOPENCE

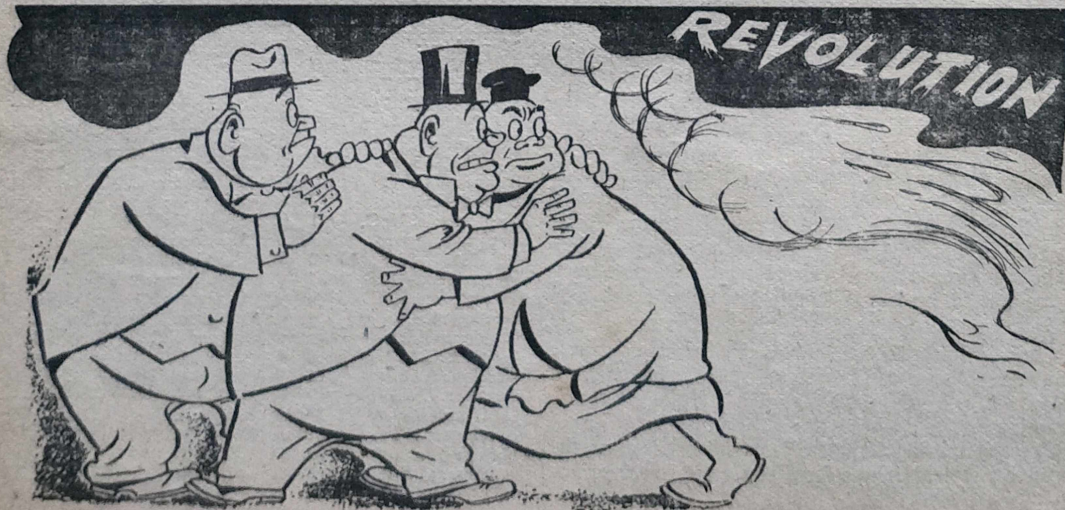
‘LIBERATORS’ AT WORK

THE REACTIONARY POLICY of the Allies has led Italy to a catastrophic situation. Her towns are shattered, her population starves. While in the North and Centre the Germans are trying to establish their rule and to put Mussolini on his feet again, the “liberated” Italy is expected to accept the King and Badoglio as her saviours.

Ruins, starvation, Quisling generals and AMGOT politicians, this is what the Allies have brought to the Italian people. The Italians’ efforts to destroy Fascism have been frustrated. They had, by their refusal to fight, by their strikes and demonstrations brought about Mussolini’s fall. They were not going to stop there. The King-Emperor and his Addis-Ababa Duke were just as hated as the

Duce himself and the Italian people intended to get rid of them as well. But the revolutionary movement which would have cleansed Italy of all vestiges of Fascism was immediately crushed by the Allies. They started negotiations with Badoglio thereby recognizing his authority. They carried out the systematic bombing of all the big towns thereby making it impossible for the Italian workers to organise their own resistance. How could the Italian workers organise strikes, occupation of the factories, the taking over of transport and industry under a rain of bombs, in cities filled with ruins and the stench of corpses, devastated by epidemics, with people crushed by fear and sufferings?

It is clear that British and American imperialists did not want the Italian people to raise their heads and to take their lives into their own hands. As soon as Mussolini fell they found a man as corrupt and brutal as him to hold a whip over the Italian masses. General Badoglio, the man who



conquered the Abyssinians with mustard gas, is acclaimed by Roosevelt and Churchill as the St. George who slew the Fascist dragon. In a message to the Italian Premier on the 11th of September they gave their blessing to the worthy successor of Mussolini:

"Marshal Badoglio, it has fallen to you in the hour of your country's agony to take the first decisive steps to win peace and freedom for the Italian people, and to win back for Italy an honourable place in the civilisation of Europe.

"You have already freed your country from Fascist servitude. There remains the evermore important task of cleansing the Italian soil from the German invaders."

Churchill and Roosevelt are trying to rob the Italian people of the merit of having overthrown Fascism in order to inflate their own puppet: Badoglio. The people in this country are not duped and even the daily Press, always docile in parroting Churchill, is unable to conceal the rôle played by the Italian people. *Reynolds News* 12/9/43 declared in its editorial:

"Mussolini fell when on a bare count of numbers and war material the Italian army could have gone on fighting. He fell because the Italian people rose against him.

"Hitler dreads a similar fate. With military defeat facing him on every front, he fears a rising of his dupes. So he blames the defection of allies for the disasters he has brought on the German people."

Why do the Allies prefer to see Italy occupied by the Germans rather than to let the Italians conquer their own freedom?

There is no doubt that, if, after the fall of Mussolini, the Italian people had been allowed to carry out the revolution the Germans would have found it difficult to occupy the country. As *Reynolds* points out, Hitler might have met with Mussolini's fate. But the British and Americans would have found it equally difficult to hold the country in subjection. A free people would not be prepared to accept AMGOT rule. They would not be prepared to accept Armistice terms which are described as similar to those Germany imposed on France. To be able to rule Italy the Allies needed a defeated, weakened, demoralised nation. The bombing they carried out, the support they gave to the Italian Quislings is having its desired effect.

Italy has also been made the battlefield where the Allies hope to destroy a considerable part of Germany's Armies and material. While the communists go on shouting for a Second Front Eisenhower is opening it in Italy at the expense of the Italian people. It was for that reason that the sign-

ing of the Armistice was kept secret and that British, American and Italian soldiers went on killing one another while their Governments had already made peace behind their backs.

This Armistice should remain the symbol of the imperialist war which is being fought now. While workers died on the beaches of Southern Italy, while British, Canadian, American workers killed Italian and German workers with whom they had no quarrel, Badoglio's representatives had made peace with the Allied governments.

Workers in uniform were exterminating one another on land and sea while diplomats and politicians were shaking hands over green tables.

Towards that £500

With the July contributions, for which we thank those comrades and friends whose initials appear below, our total reaches £265. That means another £235 during the next five months, or £47 a month. Surely this is not a difficult task if we all do our share.

Reader, don't forget to send something for the Press Fund when you renew your subscription!

Hyde Park and Glasgow readers don't forget to give our street sellers something for the Fund when you buy your copy of War Commentary!

And London readers don't forget the Social at the Conway Hall on September 25th (advertised elsewhere in this issue). A successful Social will mean more funds for Freedom Press.

PRESS FUND

JULY 1943.

	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
Kingston: T.W.B.	10	0		Hadleigh: J.Mc.C.		1	0
B'ham: B.C.L.	2	0		London: G.W.	5	0	0
Mundeley:				London: Proceeds			
S.V.P.	2	0	0	Spanish Commemoration Meeting			
Blackburn: C.W.	2	0		July 17th	5	0	0
Breaston: P.E. 5/-				Bedford: J.T.		1	6
J.E. 5/-, A.W. 5/-	15	0		Ascot: M.W.		6	0
Hawthorne, N.J.:				Bromley: F.J.R.	10	0	
C.F. \$5	1	4	8	Enfield: S.R.R.		2	6
Stroud: L.G.W.	1	0	0	Towcester: C.W.		1	3
Stroud: P.P.		2	6	Breaston: A.W.		5	0
Hadleigh: T.McC.	1	0		Sheffield: H.B.		2	0
Fordingbridge:				London: P. & P.S.	10	0	
A.J.	10	0	0	Sunningdale: W.M.		4	9
Felixtowe: W.K.S.	1	1	0	London: V.R.		5	0
Wimbledon: E.M.	5	0	0	Glasgow: F.L.		3	0
London: J.F.		4	0	Blantyre: Comrade			
London: G.S.				(per F.L.)		8	0
(per L.G.W.)	2	0	0				
London: A.W.		1	0	Total	£47	10	1
Leyton: N.W.W.		7	0				
London: G.S.	1	14	0	Prev. Total	£217	19	10
Accrington: A.E.		2	4	Total to end			
Hayes: J.P.		1	0	of July	£264	9	11
Leicester: J.E.P.	9	6					

SOLIDARITY WITH NOTTS MINERS

AS WE GO to Press, 14,000 Nottinghamshire miners are out on strike as a protest against 18 year old surface worker, Sidney Page being sent to prison for a month for refusing to work underground. The action of the Nottinghamshire miners is both a gesture of solidarity with a young comrade and a protest against the spirit of compulsion which leaves nothing to choose between the so called democratic and totalitarian systems.

As usual the strike is declared unofficial and newspapers report that "trade union officials told the men that the stoppage is unofficial and they must return to work". So much for the idle talk that the leaders "represent" the workers. Here we have "a complete stoppage at 14 pits" and at "5 others production fell considerably because a number of men failed to report for duty", and yet the leaders refuse to recognise the strike!

The statement issued by the North Midland Regional Controller of Fuel, Mr. Raymond Evershed, K.C. is of particular interest and worth quoting.

"It seems to be the view of the men that it is wrong to compel men to go underground against their wishes, and this view seems to me wholly untenable.

"Without the power of compulsion the Government could not conduct the war at all. Further, the order under which the directions were given has been made by the Minister of Labour with the authority of Parliament.

"It follows that the strike must be regarded as one aimed against the authority of the State. Whatever the

motive may be, its effect must be to substitute something like mob rule for properly constituted Government".

The final paragraph of the statement is of the greatest interest to all workers and not only to the Notts miners. Workers in all countries know to their detriment that without the power of compulsion no government in peace time as in war time can govern. But militant workers do not willingly accept the authority of Government and are therefore prepared to challenge this authority with the weapons at their disposal, which at the present time are only their labour power. The 14,000 Notts miners have used this weapon not for an increase in wages but as a counter measure to the authority of the State. For that very reason they deserve the support and solidarity of the entire working class.

The reference to 'mob rule' is also an interesting one. Apparently the North Midland Regional Controller considers that 'mob rule' exists when mass decisions are taken and the authority of the State is challenged. We declare ourselves unconditionally in favour of "mob rule" because we consider that the miners are better able to run the mines and decide what is good for themselves than the top-hatted Whitehall bureaucrats who are always dishing out orders they don't have to carry out themselves. Let all these Controllers, Fuel Ministers and colliery owners go down the mines themselves for a change and live a miner's life and after a few weeks they may change their tune.

To the 14,000 Notts miners, and all workers who challenge the authority of the State, they will find in the Anarchists unflinching allies and comrades.

ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

MINERS' UNREST

THE Independent National Tribunal has rejected the minimum wage for young pit workers put forward by the Miners' Federation. It declared that it was unable "to alter the whole wage-earning capacity of juvenile workers, and to change the relationship between it and that enjoyed by men. The tribunal do not see their way to accede to the argument that the elder juvenile workers should be treated as nearly as possible to adults".

This decision does not leave much hope as to the chances of an increase in Miners' wages, but it does not prevent the Ministries of Labour and Fuel and Power to publish adverts promising that the Government will make the pits attractive and that young men will find in coal mining a career.

Bob Condon, Secretary of a South Wales Miners' Federation Lodge, in an article in *Reynolds News*, 5/9/43, explains what mechanisation, that magic word the Government uses as a carrot in front of the people's noses, means to the miners.

"Mechanisation employed from a profit viewpoint, has made mining into an inferno of dust—the horror of dust seeping into your lungs until they are solid lumps and you die slowly and painfully."

THE REMEDY

THE only remedy to the miners' terrible conditions put forward in the Left-wing press is *nationalisation of the mines*. Nobody explains how the workers would get better conditions, higher wages and better food once the State owned the mines. In Russia the mines are State property but British and French miners who have visited them agree that mines run by capitalist enterprises are much better! In Britain the Post Office workers are employed by the State but it does not make their lot any better.

If the miners want better conditions they must impose them on the coal owners and the Government who now need coal more than ever. It is up to the miners to use their bargaining power in spite of their leaders who are working hand in glove with the ruling class, in trying to stifle any direct action.

DUCE'S SUCCESSORS

JOURNALISTS and politicians both in this country and in America are making arrangements to sell the fur of the Italian bear before they have killed it. Since King Victor of Italy appears, to some, rather discredited his son Umberto is put up as a suitable successor. Says the *Star*: "Umberto is not regarded as a strong man, but he is popular with his countrymen, and may be able to rally them where his father would have failed".

In case it occurred to the British people that the Italians may be sick with the whole of the House of Savoy and with anything which smacks of royalty, strong arguments are put up in support of Umberto as a suitable candidate. His wife, Princess Marie Jose, we are informed, speaks perfect English; she came to this country with her brother who went to Eton and "you would have said she was an English woman". Furthermore she had an English governess for fourteen years.

While Umberto seems a suitable candidate for Italy because of his English speaking wife, the Mayor of New York, Fiorello La Guardia, (little flower, or stink weed as our American contemporary the *Industrial Worker* uncharitably calls him) seems to be suitable because of his Italian extraction! He is reported to be pressing Washington to send him to Italy in an administrative post and he recently had a talk with Sir Donald Somervell, British Attorney-General.

The Allies will not be left empty-handed in case Badoglio meets with Darlan's fate.

HOLY JOE and the RUSSIAN CHURCH



AFTER 26 YEARS the Holy Synod is rising from its underground existence to a new life. The Metropolitan of Moscow and the Bishops of Leningrad and Kiev have been told by Stalin that the Soviet Government has no objection to the restoration of the Holy Synod and the election of an All Russian Patriarch.

Faithful Communists and bewildered workers who have so far accepted the various political somersaults, may swallow the *Daily Worker's* comment that the Russian churches have helped the war effort in every way and that the re-establishment of the Holy Synod demonstrates the religious freedom in the Soviet Union. The "Christian" bourgeoisie of the Western Powers will certainly appreciate Stalin's tolerance and the liquidation of Anti-Clericalism. As for the workers who still remember Lenin's attacks on religion, and have not forgotten the long struggle against the ruthless reaction of the Russian Church, they will have to accept the declaration that the functions of the Holy Synod will be of a purely ecclesiastical nature, with no political influence whatever.

What is Stalin's real aim?

He knows there are powerful circles in the Western democracies interested in the prolongation of this war for profit and power, that there are diplomatic moves on foot to create an East-European Federation against Russian. He is informed of the Anti-Soviet activities of the Vatican.

Stalin has made no secret of his desires of annexation "for security only". He wants part of Finland, Lithuania, Poland—and has also interests in the Balkans.

To further his ends, he has formed a Free Polish Movement. His opponents are the Polish politicians in London and the Vatican, which wants a Catholic bloc in East-Europe. The Polish Government in London has instructed the Poles who remain in Poland to keep passive under the Nazi oppression and to wait for the opportune time to strike a successful blow.

The Nazis are eager to find reasons for killing off the rest of the population, having transferred to Poland German peasants and wounded and being now engaged in fortifying Poland as a defence region. Stalin again plays into Hitler's hands by inciting the Poles to revolt. He does not care how many Poles fall victims, as the more they weaken themselves in this unequal struggle, the less strong will be their opposition after the war when they fall

under Russian domination. It is not the Poles he wants, but their country.

The influence of the Vatican is growing, not only in Germany and Austria, but especially in Poland and among the Slav peoples. This fact has forced Stalin into his latest step. Having liquidated the revolutionary spirit of the power feared most by Rome and world reaction, he has to oppose Catholicism with a religious force. The Holy Synod still has its attraction for the orthodox churches outside Russia. In his defence against the growing power of world reaction, Stalin has to ally himself with arch-reactionary forces, which in the end will destroy him.

Discontent Amongst C.D. Workers

SOME MONTHS AGO London Civil Defence workers were informed that there were to be large-scale transfers to Mobile Reserve Columns intended to guard coastal towns and ports. Volunteers were asked for who would be willing to leave London, and the conditions of work in the Reserve Columns was made to sound quite attractive. Men with their homes in London were not keen on being sent fifty or a hundred miles away however, and the response was poor. A system of compulsion was then introduced whereby men were issued with direction orders by the Regional Commissioners, together with threats of fines or imprisonment for non-compliance.

One of my former fellow-workers in a Light Rescue Depot in London, who was among those drafted to a Mobile Unit in Sussex, has given me details of the conditions under which the conscripts are living and other reports suggest that these conditions are typical of those obtaining in other columns.

The men are quartered in Nissen huts in the grounds of a country house. For six days out of seven they are not allowed out of the grounds—on the seventh day they are allowed nine hours leave. As the nearest town of any size is nine miles away—and London over fifty—this has not very much value. Furthermore this leave can be stopped at any time by the Commanding Officer of the camp—before the last contingent arrived the men were only getting five hours a week! Once a month 48-hours leave is allowed. These leaves can be stopped by the C.O. for misconduct by the men—for instance if they decide to get out of the camp for an hour or so, on their own account.

Between thirty and forty men sleep in each hut—"sleep" is an exaggeration—my correspondent hadn't had a good night's rest since he got to the camp. Sanitary arrangements are almost non-existent—over thirty men are expected to wash in a couple of washbasins before seven and seven-thirty in the morning. The men share two lavatories—without doors; the eight officers have six bathrooms between them. After breakfast and parade—where the men are expected to stand to attention before their "officers"—they are sent out to do heavy manual work—labouring for the most part. After tea at five-thirty no food is obtainable until breakfast the next morning. There is a wet canteen open in the evening, but this does not serve food. Many of the men, confined to the camp, naturally drink excessively, but that doesn't tend to make them very acceptable company in the dormitories! Re-

creational facilities are confined to the usual billiard and ping-pong tables and a dart board.

These men are expected to be needed for blitz work on the South Coast—their living conditions are presumably an encouragement to good work. Feeling is naturally running high in the camp, although there seems, at the moment, to be a tendency to rely on the union—the N.U.P.E.—for action, but the men will learn that if they want conditions changed they must rely on their own united direct action and use whatever means they can to enforce changes. The camps appear to be modelled closely on those which were instituted in Germany for slave-labour—but then the rulers of Britain haven't got anything to learn from the Nazis!

K. H.

MEET THE U.S. ARMY

THE AMERICAN ARMY of Occupation in Britain has certainly done less than nothing to eliminate the distrust felt by the English for America—or rather the America represented by such an Army, the America of big business, imperial, class and racial persecution. In order to keep in with their doubtful and shifty Allies, the British ruling class are, just for so long as it suits them, trying to sell "America" to the British people.

One of the manifestations of this effort is a widely circulated and elaborately prepared pamphlet by the poet Louis Macneice, called "Meet the U.S. Army", H.M.S.O., 4d.

Macneice sets out deliberately to smooth over the resentment caused in this country by the arrogance of the white American soldier towards both English white and American black soldiers, and also to paint an enticing picture of an America in which we come across no mention of gangster capitalism, capitalist gangsterism, lynch law or Ku Klux Klan.

On the question of the Colour Bar he is particularly smug and exasperating. He remarks, for instance, that the U.S. War Department has "rightly declined to differentiate them (negroes) from other American citizens". In fact, however, it is obvious from the incidents that reach the press and from what one observes in the streets of London that discrimination of the most blatant kind exists in the American Army. On this question, let us quote Dwight Macdonald, one of America's most honest white journalists, writing in a pamphlet entitled "The War's Greatest Scandal" he says:

"Every one of the half million Negroes now serving in the armed forces is doing so on a jim crow basis. Every regiment, every ship, every battery, every flying squadron and medical staff and jeep company is either all white or all coloured. The most ingenious planning, the most

complicated and voluminous quantities of paperwork, the tireless efforts of thousands of officers are devoted to the great task of keeping apart the two races. The instant he puts on the uniform of his country, the Negro becomes a deadly plague-carrier, to be quarantined, isolated at all costs from his white comrades in arms."

Later, discussing the colour question at large, Macneice remarks:

"As regards the South in general, we should acquaint ourselves with the historical and economic facts which explain the persistence of the Colour Question and of other problems still unsolved in the South while they largely exonerate the South itself from charges which might be preferred by superficial philanthropists."

Anyone with a knowledge of the actual conditions under which negroes live in the South will know that they represent a brutality on the part of the ruling race which can be "exonerated" by no extenuating circumstances. That Macneice should refer to those who condemn such evils as "superficial philanthropists" shows the complete lack of conviction in what he writes. It is also reminiscent of certain Fascist attitudes.

Before the war, Louis Macneice would have been the last man we should have suspected of being able to write this kind of journalese. But we live and learn.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

Our SYNDICALIST PROGRAMME discussing the immediate issues in factories, yards and mines has been reproduced as a leaflet and is obtainable from Freedom Press, 27 Belsize Road, London, N.W.6. Enclose 1d. postage for one copy; 50 copies for 1/-; 100 copies for 1/6 (post free). Special terms for large quantities.

A RED AND BLACK NOTE BOOK

DISCONTENT IN THE N.F.S.

DEEP DISCONTENT OF wages and general conditions exists in the National Fire Service. One of the greatest grievances was caused by the scheme to engage firemen on productive engineering work while standing-by for possible fires. In many stations benches and machines were set up and light engineering work engaged in. The sponsors of the scheme had promised the firemen the regular rate for the job. Many men welcomed the innovation as a chance to increase their low wages.

Much to their disappointment the regular rate was paid, but not to them! Five per cent, was deducted for light, heat, etc. and fifty per cent. of the remainder was paid into the exchequer. The remaining fifty per cent. was paid to "the collective benefit of the N.F.S. personnel."

Rather naturally, the men would have preferred the cash direct. A bird in hand is worth two in the bush—especially a charity bush.

N.F.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.

Discontent extends to the administration of the N.F.S. Benevolent Trust Fund. Firemen question the handling of the fund and the composition of the councils responsible for it. Says *Reveille*:—

"Election at Divisional level is democratic, but the ballot is not secret. Men have to tell an officer for whom they are voting, and he marks the cross for them.

"Above Area level, Councils contain more nominated than elected members; and the National Council is to include twelve co-opted men. These Councils are formed under Draft Constitution provisions.

"The Divisional Council elections were pushed through hurriedly after more than a year's stagnation."

Southampton firemen held back from the fund more than £600 and demanded a balance sheet.

FIREWOMEN TOO.

Firewomen delegates at the recent annual conference of the Fire Brigades Union joined the chorus of indignation of wages and conditions. Women in the N.F.S. are paid less than men, even for similar jobs. An ordinary firewoman receives £2 15s. od. a week with no allowance, a fireman receives £3 18s. 6d. Girls sent away from home must pay for billets. According to the *Daily Herald*,

One girl, transferred from Torquay to Exeter, works out her £2 15s. budget like this:—

	£	s.	d.
Board and lodging	1	10	0
Meals at H.Q. (lunch and teas for six days) ...	6	0	
Fares to work daily	2	6	
Insurance	1	9	
Income tax (some arrears)	5	0	
Laundry (shirts)	2	0	

"This leaves her 3s. 3d. for amusements, cigarettes, stamps, sweets and all other personal spending."

The Fire Brigades Union does little about these things, while the union officials hob-nob with Morrison and make speeches, saying how the firemen love to be forcibly transferred from their homes and put under military discipline.

THE T.U.C.

There is little of the recent congress worth reporting. The many industrial problems of the workers were carefully shelved. Instead the T.U.C. indulged itself in such military and political problems as, "What to do with the Germans", and the Second Front. The T.U.C. having lost interest in industrial matters turns itself into a sort of shadow government.

THE SILENT SERVICE.



"In this triumphant hour we say to the world: Russia does not talk; Russia fights!"

Ilya Ehrenburg in

Pravda, August 24, 1943.

"The speech of the spokesman of the Russian Delegation to the British T.U.C. lasted two hours."

Daily Press.

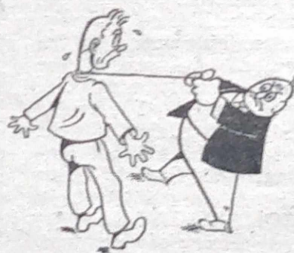
Now seventeenthly, as the Scotch Preacher said.

PLEASE REDUCE OUR WAGES!

The tenth report of the Select Committee on National Expenditure relating to Aircraft Production has a good deal to say about piece work and bonus earnings. The most startling being that in some cases "rates have been reduced at the request of the workers with resulting increases in output."

Naturally, if the rates are reduced the workers must work harder and increase production in order to maintain their wages. The lunacy of workers asking for a reduction of wages would have seemed impossible a few years ago, but such is the degeneracy of the trade unions, especially the Communist shop steward movement, that such things now excite no surprise to those familiar with war time factory conditions.

COMPULSORY TRADE UNIONISM.



The Amalgamated Engineering Union having declared itself in favour of the legal compulsion of employers to recognize trade unions, Communist and other reactionary shop stewards are campaigning for the adoption of this by the Government.

What possible benefit can come to the workers from this elementary Nazi principle? Trade Unions which so lack the support of the workers that they need the force of a capitalist government behind them can be of little use to their members. They are becoming so discredited that their only hope of a post-war existence is by favour of the law.

CANTEENS AGAIN.

The terrible conditions in the canteens of the many new small factories which have increased since the war began, were revealed in the case of Mrs. Dorothy Jones of Ealing when summoned for leaving her job without permission.

Mrs. Jones complained that the canteen measured 6ft. by 5ft. and mice ran boldly about the place. She had to boil potatoes in the washing-up pan.

The National Service Officer, Wilfrid Davies and her former employers Aldrew Fraser (Ealing) Ltd. failed in their case.

BRICKLAYERS BEWARE.

The Government has decided to turn its utility craze onto the most utilitarian of commodities—the ladder. According to the daily press, extension ladders are to be made under utility specifications to save wood.

We hope they leave the rungs.

SYNDICALIST.

"MINERS' CAREER"



More than 60% of the coal-mines are mechanised. This gives scope for volunteers with a knowledge of engineering, electricity or mechanics. Men of the right type will find opportunity for building a career for themselves in the industry.

Ministry of Labour Advt.

Just what kind of career miners are able to build themselves is described by the *South Wales Echo*, 7/9/43.

Visitors to the Welsh valleys are often puzzled by the apparent anomaly of a considerable number of men attending employment exchanges and the present urgent need for workers of all types.

A colleague who investigated the position discovered that almost always these men are ex-miners, victims of silicosis, nystagmus and disabilities resulting from mining accidents.

As no suitable employment can be found in the mines for these men, they are registered at the exchanges. In centres employing thousands of miners, it is inevitable that there should always be a floating reserve of such men.

Of course miners who contract silicosis or lose a leg in an accident would not be considered "men of the right type" by the Ministry of Labour.

B.B.C. TALKS HUN

Why must the composers of the news keep on using the ugly word "strafe," taken from the hideous language of our enemy? The other day, describing action by the R.A.F., it was stated "we bombed and strafed the Italians." Will the B.B.C. explain exactly what that means? Having used the word "bombed" I presume "strafed" can only mean "gunned," and if that is what happened, then why not say so! If the English language fails us and we can no longer talk English, let us talk American and not Hun.

LEONARD LYLE.

House of Commons.

Letter to the "Sunday Times", 12/9/43

THEY ALSO SERVE

Chairman of Romford (Essex) magistrates (Mr. R. W. Beard): "I do not think it excessive for a man of 23 to work 72 hours a week."

News-Chronicle, 3/9/43.

Needless to say, Mr. Beard is not 23, so it doesn't apply to him.

DANGER OF PEACE

Wall Street was happy again to-day for almost the first time since Pearl Harbour. Shares rose again.

When Mussolini fell, the stock market fell too. This curious reaction apparently was due to fears of speculators that the end of the war would bring a collapse in the war-time's unnatural boom.

Daily Express, 12/8/43.

NO STOCKING PROBLEM

In a round of 20 shops only one admitted to the possession of real silk stockings for sale. Fully-fashioned, exquisitely fine, delicately tinted, they were made of spun silk and they cost—55s. 10d. a pair.

Sunday Times, 12/9/43.

RUSSIAN WORKERS MILITARIZED

Russia's railway officials are to have military ranks and in future will be known as general-directors, director-colonels, engineer-majors, engineer-captains and so on.

The non-commissioned ranks will be known as "workers of railway transport."

All personnel are to wear a light green uniform with shoulder straps of the same style as worn in the Army.

This further step in the militarisation of the Soviet railways was the subject of a special decree announced on Moscow radio yesterday.

Daily Mirror, 6/9/43.

Through

WOPS NO LONGER

It is not our intention, at this moment, to pay trite compliments to the Italian genius, to recall Italy's great men from Dante (if not Virgil) to Toscanini, and the many glorious achievements of the Italian race. These things go without saying; and they were no less true or less abiding at the time when Italy, led into shame and ruin by Mussolini, was our enemy. But we think it well at this moment to remember that every European war is a tragic struggle between brothers. How futile to use it to foster enduring national hatred! How bitterly are rash insults against temporarily hostile nations regretted soon afterwards by those who uttered them in the heat of battle! Who would now, when the unarmed citizens of the Northern Italian cities risk their lives to delay the Panzer divisions, like to remember the days when every Italian was a "wop"? Italy is the best example to underline the Prime Minister's noble words in his great Harvard speech on Tuesday: "We do not war primarily with races as such. Tyranny is our foe!"

The Observer, 12/9/43.

When shall we be allowed to remember that the dirty Huns belong to the race which produced Goethe, Heine and Beethoven?

WELSH ASPIRATIONS

"Wales for the Welsh" and "the Welsh for Wales" should be our mottoes, and not a minute should be lost in asserting ourselves.

A Royal Welsh Constabulary would attract the best and brightest young men, and there is no reason why a women's section could not be inaugurated.

The "Cardiff and Suburban News" was the first to suggest the creation of a Princess of Wales, and this should also be asked for, with a Welsh Secretary and other equipment to secure something like Home Rule for our country.

Cardiff and Suburban News, 4/9/43.

It's up to England to make a gesture . . . Why not also hand over the Duke and Duchess of Windsor to the Welsh?

MOTHERS' PROBLEMS

I am a working man's wife. On July 9 I paid 13s. 11d. for a pair of school boots for my little boy age seven years this month. He did not wear them until August 23 to go to school, and on August 28 I found the sole gone almost to a hole. Anyone can see these boots have not had rough wear.

ONLY ONE OF MANY MOTHERS.

Letter to the "Manchester Evening News", 3/9/43. The dictionary meaning "utility"—"usefulness"—is out of date.

the Press

BLACK POST-WAR PROSPECTS

To-day 12,500,000 people pay income tax, as compared with 3,800,000 before the war. Most of the new taxpayers are earners of weekly wages and, to meet their circumstances, income-tax is now deducted from weekly earnings. But the tax deducted at any given moment is still calculated on the income received six or more months earlier. In war-time, with more than full employment and an upward trend of wages, this system can be made to work. But when industries return to peace-time activities, shorter hours will reduce total earnings, wage rates may fall, many married women will return to home life, and many men will meet with at least temporary unemployment. Difficulties will hardly be avoided unless provision has by that time been made that the tax payable on a given income shall be deducted from that income when it is earned, and not from the potentially smaller income which may accrue six to twelve months later.

The Times, 2/9/43.

We thought that everything would be all right after the war: we would have better conditions, no unemployment . . . It's very unpatriotic of *The Times* to spread such defeatist propaganda.

SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 25th

is the date of

FRIENDS OF FREEDOM PRESS
SOCIAL

being held in the large Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, near Holborn Tube.

Doors open 7 p.m.

Entertainment, Good Company,
Refreshments.

Tickets 1/- from FREEDOM PRESS or at the door.

Friends who have received tickets can settle for these on the evening of the Social or by post to Freedom Press. Remember, every ticket sold represents a contribution of 1/- to our Press Fund. So, if you cannot attend, you can still express your solidarity by buying one or more tickets!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH FRANCO?

Few things impressed me more during my travels than the profitable field offered by Spain as a future tourist resort, affording as it does a range of colourful variety difficult to parallel elsewhere. Roads have been greatly improved, and the Government are setting about the establishment of model inns, suited to the Spanish countryside, in the remoter touring-centres. The courteous hospitality I received everywhere is a favourable omen for the success of these efforts.

Sir Charles Bressey on "Re-building Spain" in *"The Spectator"*, 3/9/43.

The tourist ghouls originally praised Mussolini for making the trains run to time. Now they turn their attention to Franco.

No War Profiteering



THE RISE of FASCISM IN ITALY

THE ITALIAN WORKERS could during the occupation of the factories in August-September 1920 have seized the opportunity to deal a final blow to the bourgeoisie. They failed to do so and from that moment they fought a retreating battle against the ruling class and the rapidly growing fascist danger. The Government began to imprison working class militants while fascist hooligans could act with complete impunity. Mussolini began an organized struggle against working class organizations, their offices were burned, their centres destroyed, their members murdered.

The measure of the Government arbitrary power was given when Giolitti, then Prime Minister, ordered Armando Borghi the Anarchist secretary of the Syndicalist Union and Errico Malatesta, the old anarchist militant, to be arrested. The workers had been too demoralised by the defeat which followed the occupation of the factories, to put up any serious opposition. The situation was different in February 1920; then the Government had tried to arrest Malatesta at Tombolo, a little town near Leghorn. Immediately all the major towns of Tuscany declared a general strike and the railwaymen decided to stop the trains in the whole of central Italy. Before they could do so Malatesta was released.

Anarchists and Syndicalists all over Italy organised demonstrations and strikes in order to obtain the liberation of their comrades but they received no solidarity from the socialist organizations. The organ of the Socialist Party *L'Avanti!* published in large type, the following appeal: "We beg our working comrades most earnestly to pay no attention to any appeals for action until such appeals shall have been duly passed by the Party's central organs and by the economic organisations competent to deal with them". All the Party leaders did in order to show their solidarity towards Malatesta and Borghi was to decide that a one hour strike in protest should be called!

Thanks to the complicity of the Socialist Reformist organizations the Government was able to keep Malatesta and Borghi in prison for nine months. When they were released the reactionary movement had gained such tremendous ground that the working class was unable to react.

On the 15th of May 1921, the Government decided to dissolve Parliament and to call new elections. Elections in such a period of unrest spelt civil war and the Government was well aware of it. It used them in order to precipitate the crushing of the left wing movements. All over Italy acts of violence took place; the Fascists took this opportunity to intensify their attacks. The Socialist Party retained however the same number of votes as it had received at the previous elections, while Mussolini, together with 30 Nationalist and Fascist deputies, entered Parliament. The *Avanti!* declared that fascist reaction had been buried under an avalanche of red votes but in reality the initiative already belonged to the bourgeoisie.

The Socialist Party and the National Confederation of Labour refused to take action against the fascists and the Socialist Parliamentary group adopted a policy of wait and see. They refused to join the government, but they equally refused to act against it. While their leaders sat tight in their comfortable armchairs the workers were

faced by unemployment, rising prices, government repression and fascist provocations.

On the 6th of July, 1921, an attempt was made to unify the working class forces and to meet the fascists with more than words. A pact of Proletarian Alliance was signed in Rome by working class organizations and a workers' militia the *Arditi rossi* was formed. The Socialists only gave it lukewarm support; they declared in their paper *L'Avanti!* that it was no use trying to use force against the overwhelming forces of the Government.

SOCIALIST-FASCIST PACT

Unwilling to use force the Socialist Party preferred to resort to intrigue and compromise. On the 3rd of August 1921, in the office of the President of Parliament the Socialist leaders signed a Peace treaty with the Fascists. They promised to co-operate to prevent any acts of violence and reprisals and to respect each other's right to propaganda and organization. Socialist and Fascist leaders shook hands across the bodies of the peasants and workers assassinated by Mussolini's henchmen.

This pact was a clever move on the part of Mussolini to gain time and to increase and organise his forces. For a few months Fascist violence decreased but this did not last long. While Socialist leaders severely reminded the rank and file to respect the pact, Mussolini renewed his attacks. At the Socialist Congress of Rome in January 1922 the peasants' and workers' delegates from the regions invaded by the Fascists brought hundreds of proofs of the fact that the Fascist Party had not respected the pact. They talked of their burned buildings, of the co-operatives destroyed, of their murdered comrades, and they asked for action, but the Socialist leadership remained unmoved and declared its unshakeable faith in Parliamentary tactics.

LAST ATTEMPT TO RESIST

Another attempt was made to co-ordinate the working class forces. A Workers' Alliance between the General Confederation of Labour, the Syndicalist Union and the Railway Union was formed. Its aim was "to oppose the alliance of workers' forces to the coalition of the reaction". This alliance might have been able to stop the rise of fascism but it came too late, when the working class was demoralised, weakened and divided.

The Workers' Alliance made, however, a last attempt to oppose Fascism. On the 31st of July, 1922, it declared a general strike. The strike was successful and complete but the streets belonged to the Fascists. After 3 days of strike they started to attack; they were defeated in the revolutionary towns of Parma and Forli but they were victorious in Milan and the strike finished with a defeat of the proletariat.

The fascist onslaught continued. From the Po valley the attack spread to Tuscany and to the Puglie. The Socialists went on advocating a return to legal means, to fair competition between parties. The climax of naïveté was reached when the socialist deputy Filippo Turati called on the King to bring him the wish of the proletariat for liberty and to remind him that his duty

was to defend the constitution to which he had taken the oath. The King's answer was a few days afterwards to call Mussolini to power!

THE MARCH ON ROME

Mussolini, once having helped to defeat the workers, set himself to conquer power. He had to win the support of the big capitalists and the royalty, who, once the revolutionary danger passed, might have wished to thank him and dismiss him. By a series of intrigues and by declaring himself prepared to accept and defend the King (whom he had always attacked) Mussolini managed to get the support of the capitalists, who gave him 20 millions to prepare the March on Rome, and of the royal family. Sure of his ground, Mussolini declared from Naples on the 24th October 1922: "If they do not give us power we shall take it by marching on Rome."

The Government by that time had resigned but on learning of Mussolini's declaration of war it published a decree putting the country in a state of siege. All civil authority had to be surrendered to the Army which took steps to prevent any armed putch on the part of the Fascists. Mussolini had only limited forces at his disposal and if the Army had opposed him he would have been lost. But the King came to his rescue. He refused to sign the decree putting the country under state of siege. Instead he called Mussolini to Rome to form a new Government. Mussolini "marched on Rome" comfortably installed in a sleeping car.

By the 30th October he had formed his government. In Rome his troops marched before the King and the Royal family; all over Italy his followers celebrated with new violences. Parliament did not put up any opposition; it had been taken by surprise and once again it decided to wait for events.

Mussolini immediately took measures in favour of the bourgeoisie. All legislation favourable to the workers was repealed. Meanwhile Fascist terrorism increased.

On the 18th of December 1922, 12 workers were massacred in Turin. The organiser of the engineering workers, Pietro Ferrero, an anarchist, was killed. Everywhere socialists, anarchists, syndicalists were murdered under the very eyes of the police who never took any steps against the Fascists.

From the March on Rome to Matteotti's murder in June 1924, Mussolini consolidated his forces. He managed to confuse and fool Parliament with clever speeches which kept everybody guessing as to what his intentions were. Meanwhile his hands carried on a merciless struggle against the last working class bastions. The election which took place in April 1924 only gave the Fascists another excuse for violence. In Parma the Socialist candidate Piccinini was assassinated.

MATTEOTTI'S MURDER

On the 10th June 1924, Giacomo Matteotti, a socialist deputy, was kidnapped in full daylight in Rome. This murder could have been just another anonymous fascist crime if a man had not taken the number of the car where Matteotti had disappeared and reported to the police. Matteotti's body was not found until after three months of searches but the inquest led the police to the Government's doorstep. Mussolini in order to clear himself accused all his collaborators, one after the other: Rossi, Finzi, General de Bono and Dumini. They defended themselves by accusing him. No doubt could be left as to Mussolini's having ordered the murder. Public opinion was aroused. Fascist methods were well known and Matteotti's name was just one more in a long list of fascist crimes but this was an unique case where the police had by accident found the murderers and where

Mussolini's hand was clearly shown. It might have been possible to start a movement at that time which would have overthrown Mussolini's government. Workers' organisations proposed to declare a general strike but the socialist parliamentary group thought such action unwise. Instead it issued a declaration condemning the murder.

Again in January 1925 Mussolini's government seemed on the point of collapse. Rossi, who was implicated in Matteotti's murder, wrote a memorandum on the methods used by Mussolini to crush his political opponents. After such revelations two cabinet ministers felt compelled to resign. Instead of allowing a governmental crisis to take place and a new cabinet to be formed the King hastened to accept two fascist ministers whom Mussolini proposed to replace the others. In October 1925 Mussolini published his version of the murder, the kidnapping was merely a joke, the murder, an accident.

The popular reaction to Matteotti's murder which put Mussolini's position in peril made him realise how quickly he had to act to prevent public opinion from expressing itself. All through 1925, particularly after Zaniboni's attempt on Mussolini's life, measures were taken to suppress the right of association and the liberty of the Press.

The only expressions of revolt took from now on the form of individual actions against Mussolini and his acolytes and of underground propaganda. In both fields the Anarchists showed courage and initiative. Out of seven attempts against Mussolini's life, four were carried out by Anarchists.

LESSONS TO BE DRAWN

The events which led to Mussolini's conquest of power clearly show that reformist and legal methods are of no avail in the fight against reaction and Fascism. The ruling class is only prepared to adhere to legality, to respect their own rules of the game as long as it suits them. When their situation is in danger they use violence, corruption and assassination. The Socialist Party in Italy made the mistake of thinking that the capitalists and the Fascist leaders would be prepared to accept fair competition between parties, that they would respect peace treaties, that they would be moved by appeals to decency and honesty. All through those seven years of conflict they played into the hands of the ruling class. They continued to rely on election results when the Fascists had brutally declared that if they were not given power they would conquer it, revolver in hand. While Socialists scrupulously respected a Government sold to the capitalist class, the Fascists did not hesitate to assassinate the Socialist candidates whom they could not silence, as for example during the April 1924 elections when the Socialist candidate Piccinini was killed by the Fascists. They kept relying on the number of seats they had in Parliament as the surest guarantee against Fascism, when it was obvious that Mussolini relied more on political intrigues and armed force than on democratic methods. After the 15th May 1921 elections the Nationalists and Fascists had 30 deputies while the Socialists had 138 members and the Communists fifteen, but this did not correspond to the real balance of forces. The Fascists had the Government, the police and in some cases the Army on their side; they could upset any majority the Socialists had in Parliament. If the Italian workers had relied more on their class weapons, strikes and insurrection, rather than on the voting paper, they would not have been defeated. If, when they occupied the factories, they had taken control of the industries rather than relying on the Government to give them control, then the rise of Fascism would have been impossible.

The Anarchists advocated all through the strikes an expansion of the movement and Malatesta's speech to Milan factory workers after they had returned to work shows that he fully grasped the tragic consequences this compromise with the bourgeoisie would have for the Italian workers. This is how he described the pact between the General Confederation of Labour and the Employers Association:—

"You who are celebrating as a great victory the signature in Rome of this agreement are deceiving yourselves. In reality the victory belongs to Giolitti, to the Government, and to the bourgeoisie, who find themselves saved from the precipice over which they had been hanging . . . To speak of victory while the Rome agreement puts you back once more under the exploitation of the bourgeoisie, is a lie. If you give up possession of the factories, do so with the conviction that you have lost a great battle, and with the firm intention of resuming the struggle at the first opportunity and pursuing it to the end. You will then drive the employers from the factories and you will not allow them to re-enter until they come in as workmen on an equality with yourselves, content to live by working for themselves and others. Nothing is lost provided you do not delude yourselves with the fallacy that you have gained a victory. The famous decree as to the control of the factories is to dupe you, for it will tend to the creation of a new class of employees, who, though sprung from your bosom, will not defend your interests but the new situation created for them and it will tend also to harmonise your interests with those of the bourgeoisie—the interests of the wolf with those of the lamb. Do not believe those of your leaders who mock you by putting off the revolution from day to day. The Revolution! You yourselves have to make it whenever the opportunity presents itself, without waiting for orders that never come, or, if they do come, only instruct you to give up the fight. Have confidence in yourselves, have faith in your future, and you will conquer."

The Socialists displayed the same lack of revolutionary realism when the working class came to be attacked by the Fascist hooligans. They relied on the police which would never defend them nor prosecute the attackers. An attempt in the right direction was made when a kind of workers' defence corps was formed but it never reached the power and efficiency of, say, the Irish Citizen Army. No serious efforts were made to defend workers' organizations, buildings or Left-wing newspaper presses. When the *Avanti!* building was burnt in Milan by the Fascists, no attempt was made to defend it in spite of the fact that such an attack had to be expected at any moment. It is almost incredible to think that an organization with two million members should have its property destroyed without any defence being put up. The Fascists were a very small minority; their strength lay in the fact that they knew the police would not molest them. If the workers had resisted in an organised way they would have been able to crush the Fascist revolt in the bud.

The organization of workers' defence would have been equally useful when strikes took place. The workers were able to stage general strikes which covered the whole country and lasted several days. But they left the streets to the Fascists, who, while they could not break the strike, were able to burn Trade Union buildings, attack and murder Socialist and Anarchist militants. Unlike them, the Dublin workers understood that danger and that is why they formed their own defences during the 1913 Transport Workers' strike.

The lack of workers' defences was partly due to the lack of unity amongst the Italian workers. While the bourgeoisie presented a united front against the working class the workers' parties lost themselves in endless squabbles.

The Italian Anarchist Movement understood the danger of disunity and always advocated joint action against Government repression and Fascism. At the Congress of the Anarchist Union held at Bologna, July 1-4th, 1920, a union of rank and file members belonging to all parties was advocated. *Freedom*, Sept. 1929, gives the following report of the discussion which took place and of the resolution which was adopted.

"A discussion took place on the problem of the limited front of the Italian proletariat, which is divided on the industrial field into the reformist Confederation, the Syndicalist Union, and the very class-conscious Catholic Trade Unions. Politically, the workers belong either to the Socialist Party with its different wings, from the reformists to the Communist Parliamentarians, or to the extremely revolutionary Republicans and the Anarchists. The Catholic People's Party is also very strong. Besides these there exist innumerable autonomous groups of all tendencies. Dissensions have hitherto stood in the way of united action. Malatesta has repeatedly pointed out the great need for united action among all parties. In several localities there is to-day already a common united front, whilst in others the attainment of this object is difficult and even impossible. The following resolution was passed: 'The Congress authorises and advises the formation of small local Groups of Action, outside the parties and existing organisations in the different localities, consisting of all those elements which will declare themselves ready to go into action at the first decided opportunity, and to fight with all their means against the existing institutions.'"

When one studies the history of Hitler's rise to power one is struck by the fact that the German workers learnt nothing from the experiences of the Italian proletariat. How long are workers all over the world going to commit the same mistakes, making the sacrifices of their comrades useless and bringing terrible sufferings upon themselves?

M. L. B.

The first part of this article was published in the September issue of "War Commentary". Obtainable from Freedom Press, 3d. (post free).

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the case for Anarchism should
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GIPSIES and the WAR

By Clifford Holden

EVERY POLITICAL FACTION in this country, with the notable exception of the Communist party, consistently ignores that small, but very important group of people, the Gipsies. They are considered to be anti-social elements in a society that considers war to be a noble cause and a social function. But the Communists have realised the menace of the Gipsy, just as they realised the menace of the peasant in Russia and elsewhere. In this country the Gipsy is almost the only representative counterpart of the peasant. The Stalinist sees in his individualism a very potential danger to the bureaucracy of the proletariat.

Let us consider the Gipsy. But do not let us confuse the Romany with the half-bred 'didcot', or the innumerable 'hedge-crawlers' who originated in some city slum as 'by-products' of industrialism. The Romanies' place of origin is obscure and still the subject of debate. It is established, however, that they came from Roumania. But some say that they came to Europe from Egypt and others that they came to Egypt from India. It is interesting and perhaps significant to note the reply of a drunken Romany when asked casually whether he was a Gipsy. "No," he replied. "I bain't no 'Gyptian. 'Gyptians comes from Egypt. I be just one o' these yer traveller chaps."

The Gipsies were metal workers and wood carvers and they have retained that facility even though many are only able to express their aptitude by dealing in logs, pea-sticks, walking sticks, clothes-pegs, or by doing a little tinkering or knife-grinding. Some make artificial flowers from wood. Others have been forced to prostitute their talent by making stools from soap boxes to be hired out at race meetings, etc. The gipsy is a 'fast worker in every sphere without the incentive of a bullying foreman, comradely shop-steward or the conveyor belt system—he can produce eight gross of clothes-pegs with ease while sitting in comfort before the 'yag', the eternal gipsy fire. They are horsemen—what Romany chad does not love a horse? What race-meeting or horse-fair does not attract its gipsy following? Who would 'break-in' the Dartmoor and Welsh mountain ponies but for the Gipsies? They were excellent musicians, but to-day most caravans are fitted with the radio.

With the advent of the petrol engine, and up to the time of the present war, many gipsies could be seen travelling the country in gaily painted cars, rather in the manner of the American mobile seasonal agricultural workers. Modern industrialism has forced the Gipsy to undertake farm work. But he has no interest in agriculture, he shows no aptitude for that; they do not want to own farms and be forced to settle on them. Although many Gipsies to-day do own farms and small holdings they rarely live or work on them, preferring to wander the country and leave the farm in charge of a bailiff. In this way their income is assured during winter months. Others, less fortunate in a monetary sense, spend their winters near the Forest of Dean, where wood and coal is available to keep the fires burning and odd jobs are to be found. Others settle for the winter in such places as Bank in the industrial Midlands. They pitch camp in a disused quarry, by some slag heap or coal dump and make a meagre living by 'totting' (rag and bone dealing) or the more profitable scrap metal business.

But their phenomenal quickness with their hands makes them the most skilled of all workers in such labour

as fruit-picking, hop-picking, and beet-pulling. It is in this sphere that their real value as revolutionaries in the labour market becomes evident. While the British agricultural labourer is duped by industrialism and phoney trade unions, the Gipsy applies the principle of direct action to suit the rapidly changing environment and cash values. While the agricultural labourer stands aloof in his own stupidity, the Gipsy is conducting strike after strike in every orchard and hop-yard to raise the 'piece-work' rates. If his demands are not met he just doesn't work. The agricultural labourer refuses to collaborate for a common purpose and acquiesces to the demands of his employer on the plea of economic distress. Not so the Gipsy; rather than perform hard, futile work for nothing he will withdraw his labour from the farm and eke out an existence with a diet of hedgehogs, rabbits, rooks, pheasants, fresh-water fish and even sparrows which are regarded as a delicacy. He has an expert knowledge of wild herbs and I have drunk tea made from stinging nettles and enjoyed a meal of tender boiled nettles, hop-leaves and potatoes from the next field. Yes, they can live a long time 'on strike' until such time as the farm workers arouse from their apathy to collaborate with them.

To the Gipsies war is an affliction, a terrible catastrophe which they cannot understand. They are not patriotic, they are not politically conscious. As Richard Jeffries said of them, they are "so old, they went through civilization ten thousand years since; they have worn it all out, even hope in the future; they merely live asquiescent to fate, like the red deer." But they *live*, they are intensely alive and aware of themselves and their fellow men—they are socially conscious beings. They are mostly illiterate and unable to write and the innumerable restrictions and regulations of the totalitarian state are beyond their comprehension. Communication is done as if by telepathy and families meet periodically at certain stopping places—messages are often sent by word of mouth and in this way news travels several hundred miles. They avoid registration as much as possible. Whenever they are forced to register they receive even less 'justice' than the agricultural worker. Although a Gipsy might work a whole year on a farm he is categorized as a 'traveller' and is 'called-up' without ceremony and unable to claim exemption. His illiteracy makes it impossible for him to hide behind a legalised conscience. I know of only one or two cases of young Gipsies who have given up the liberty and freedom of their normal lives to resign themselves to face the ordeal of sleeping under roofs, living under discipline, and being separated from their own people. But many stories could be told of the cunning and tremendous courage of the Gipsies to evade wearing the uniform they loathe. Against the police and other coercive forces they are often compelled to resist by the only method that they know, that of forceful direct action. They are condemned for these actions by patriots and pacifists alike; by people who will condone one violence and yet condemn another violence as immoral and unethical. The Gipsies avoid violence as much as possible by moving rapidly from place to place, repainting caravans to deceive the police as to their identity, and as a last resort hiding in the woods. But when violence is inevitable they come out to fight to retain that liberty and freedom which to them is a concrete reality as distinct from the legalised, mythical abstractions which are bawled from the radio mouthpieces of the democracies.

Infantry Officer

Book Review

"INFANTRY OFFICER"

(Batsford Books, 7s. 6d.)

IT IS UNUSUAL these days to come across a book in which the word "Nazi" does not occur once—something surprising, however, when it is a book about the war, especially the campaign in France. The writer of this personal record of the campaign is untroubled by considerations of the reason why: he does say once of "his men" that they came from "every type and breed, and all instilled with the will to fight and a damn' clear idea of what they are fighting for", but what it is they are fighting for he never refers to, and it seems most unlikely that men from "every type and breed" would have one aim in common. As a matter of fact, he confesses that he himself had three reasons for joining the Army—one, his father was an Army officer; two, he wanted to see the world; three, and what an insight into the mentality of the "pukka sahib"!—he "loved the idea of dealing with men rather than with machines".

The gratification of leadership desires is not difficult in this England for the class to which he belonged. He passed through Sandhurst straight to an Army unit as a subaltern, and after spending the summer of 1939 happily, went straight to France. The men he commanded were nearly all Regulars, with some reservists, and used to army anomalies—they apparently all, like all "old sweats", treated the young officer with a tolerant paternalism. A sergeant informed him that "my job ended as soon as I had blown my whistle and waved my arm; from that moment I must remain in the background—in fact, if I tried to lead the men over the top I would receive a clout on the head to keep me in the trench, 'begging your pardon, sir'. This used rather to annoy me, as in one of my most frequent boyhood dreams I had pictured myself standing on a parapet, sword in hand, bullets flying past my ears as I encouraged my men into battle . . ." The new men, the conscripts and war-time soldiers disliked the young officers, with Sandhurst training and Oxford accents, who jumped straight to leadership with no more experience of battle than they. Those from the working-class despised them, and those from

the lower middle-class resented their opportunities. When the retreat came they were the ones to oppose their officers whom they were convinced were cowards.

How far were the stories we all heard in 1940 about these young officers breaking down under the stress of battle true? The writer of this book, although he puts on a little bravado and pseudo-"toughness" now and again, is an honest man—he admits that when the moment came in Brussels he felt scared, which is natural, but he does not seem in any way a coward, and certainly plenty of these young officers are scattered over the fields of France and Flanders and the beaches of Dunkirk. How the belief arose is simply explained:

"The C.O. cleared his throat and looking down at his desk, said: 'Four days ago the first of the B.E.F. were evacuated from Dunkirk. Since then there has been a steady flow of ships taking our Army home. Last night we received news that the Germans have cut the road to the sea, so that we are completely surrounded. The Belgians, as some of you know, have packed in, and that means that the only port left to this Army is Dunkirk. The Brigadier has just given me orders to send six officers and six of the best N.C.O.s to Dunkirk to get home as best they can, so that there will be at least a few men who can take over commands in the battalions at home which in the near future will be landing in Southern France to get us out of this mess.'"

The men, seeing them depart, must have thought, "We are betrayed!" Not all regiments returned afterwards safely, as his apparently did. Seeing the selected few leave for safety while the mass were expected to trudge back, how natural was that great fight for transport, the civil war for exodus . . .

Many soldiers previously felt bitter at the fact that the Belgians left *en masse*. His sergeant remarked: "Look at 'em, kids of twenty, in civvies, running like bloody hell, and here am I, thirty-seven years old, an Englishman, going into their country to defend their — homes while they scam out". The same lack of understanding as the infantry officer himself, who could not

understand why, though the people of Northern France hated "the Boche" the reception of the British was not, on the whole, cordial and his contacts with Frenchmen and Frenchwomen ranged from an occasional hospitable welcome to a pewter-mug hurled at his head. Who could blame the Belgians and French for not thinking they were being saved by the British, any more than by the Germans, when German and British Imperialism (with the connivance of their own governments though it might be) resumed the bloody struggle on their barely rebuilt hearths? Those soldiers did not come to rescue them, they well knew—they came because their government made them, not because they had been asked by the local population. The light way in which the officer refers to French and Belgian womanhood (which is not because of a natural levity towards sex—he would resent any such approach to his "own countrywomen") is not unusual with German or British officers; it must have been resented.

His political values, if any, are upside down. Granted that he saw little of France (and that only through the eyes of a British officer) and has since had little time to reflect on the cause of the fall, it is interesting to note his views on the fall of France, expressed only offhandedly:

"The next morning a squadron of French Cuirassiers arrived to support us. They were good as only good French troops can be. They had fought back from Sedan, losing over sixty per cent. *en route*, and yet they were still of good heart and excellent discipline . . . the officer commanding asked if he could be of any assistance. We had seen so much of the rottenness of France, the selfishness and gutlessness of it all, that it came as a great joy to us to meet the real France again, the France that we had loved, and the France that had not—and to this day has not—let herself or her allies down."

The only "gutlessness" he has described is the exodus of refugees, the escape from death, surely a natural enough thing, and one that he himself took part in. No doubt he had seen the lack of discipline, the anti-war feeling of the average French poilu. But that was an explicable thing if he had known anything of the class divisions in France, the political wangles of which the average Frenchman was well enough aware, and the realisation of the ordinary soldier and worker that he was ruled by fascists, masquerading under the name of democratic politicians. The officer commanding the French Cuirassiers was no doubt an excellent man in his

A MANIFESTO ON ITALY

By the Glasgow Anarchist Federation

Mussolini is gone! Badoglio will go! The workers of Italy have struck the first real blow against Fascism since this war started—A blow for social Revolution,

AND ANARCHY

Mussolini—the first line of Fascist Defence in Italy has been destroyed, not by allied bayonets,—Bombs, Badoglio, or the House of Savoy, but the heroic action of the Italian working class in their struggle for peace and liberty, refusing to submit any longer to the tyranny and despotism of Capitalist imperialist masters, refusing any longer to be conscripted, and used as cannon fodder in the interests of the Italian Ruling Class, refusing any longer to listen to the hatred propaganda of the press, Radio, etc—urging them to have vengeance, and reprisals on the conscripted workers of other nations, who like themselves have been dragged into the abyss of imperialist war. Thus throwing into Bold Relief, the Question—

WORLD WIDE SLAVERY OR WORLD ANARCHY?

Do the workers of the world, especially the allied nations, recognise the full significance of the tremendous events taking place in Italy? Will they declare their class solidarity with their Italian brothers? Will they translate the theory of class war into practice? Will they, taking as a glorious example the action of the Italian people, fight not to win a war, but a world—a world freed for ever from economic dependence, the cause of enslavement. Upon the answer to these questions depends whether or not

Badoglio—the second defence line of Fascism in Italy—and all the other defences in depth of Fascism, will crumble, clearing the way to the broad highway of real freedom, a classless form of society, a free association of free men.

The Italian worker points the way, but without your supporting action will stumble and fall. Caught between his disintegrating ruling class, and German soldiers on the one hand, and Anglo-American on the other, he sounds the call to action to the workers of the world—unite and destroy your ruling class; the parasitic germ of Fascism.

Fellow workers, we stand at the cross-roads of history! The choice is yours; the spark of the gathering revolutionary forces in Italy can be fanned into a white heat, a resplendent flame, illuminating the path to freedom, and reaching every corner of the earth. Let us make

LIBERTY, EQUALITY, FRATERNITY

a reality, instead of a dictator's nightmare.

Forward, toilers of the world, delegating no power to leaders, politicians, or parties, organise for direct action in the Factories, Fields, Mines, or wherever you work. Forward to the Call of the Italian workers, beckoning you to a new world, free for ever from war, poverty, and enslavement.

Prepare for action,

HANDS OFF THE ITALIAN WORKERS

No Arms, Men or ammunition to crush the revolutionary Italian Workers.

lights; no doubt rigidly disciplined to meet the commands of his superiors—but what happened to him when the Vichy Government took control? The poilus who had resented rule and discipline, the rebellious working men, the discontented peasantry; they fought and are still fighting Vichyism and Hitlerism by guerilla action, by strikes and sabotage—a logical conclusion of their anti-war stand, though the British officer conditioned to patriotism and not to class warfare could not understand this. But the disciplined officer, under Vichy and Hitler, obeyed orders, surrendered his sword when told to, and spoke of a soldier's peace, the satisfaction of honour, "family, fatherland and work". The personal record of our officer takes us to Dunkirk, but does not take us beyond it, and so a one-sided picture is

drawn. The professional soldier, the infantry officer, can only see what he is told to see. Regrettably we must confess that it appears to us that the writer of this book would have fallen into the same category as the Pétainist officers of France had capitulation been a military necessity here. But instead he came home, went to Africa, and then returned home to join a Commando unit. He is now training as a glider pilot—perhaps, like so many intelligent upper middle class youngsters he will die in this war for what he believes in, although he does not know what it is, or why he should do so. Perhaps he will survive the war to become an officer suppressing the masses in India—and later on, who knows? England—acting under instructions from the War Office, and naïvely asking his colleagues at the

mess, "But why should they hate us?" like the young Nazi officers in occupied Europe.

He never refers to the Nazis—self-consciously, he calls the enemy "the Hun", but the word to him is meaningless—he doesn't even use it as abuse. He is the typical product of the public schools and Sandhurst; the thick wood of the upper middle class, the English Prussians* who give themselves freely without even stopping to stipulate.

A. M.

*For those who ask "What is an English Prussian?" we reply—"A landowning Protestant Irishman, from the officer class that garrisoned first Ireland, then India". Our Junkers always remain.

ANARCHIST FEDERATION

Aims and Principles

AIM

The establishment of an anarchist society which will render impossible the growth of a privileged class and the exploitation and oppression of man by man. The Anarchist Federation therefore advocates free access to the land, industry and all means of production and distribution, on the basis of voluntary co-operation.

CLASS STRUGGLE

Class struggle is necessarily inherent in governmental society, and therefore the exploiting class and the working class have no interests in common. For the workers', solidarity with their own class both at home and abroad is the fundamental consideration, which must take precedence over all others.

THE STATE

We are therefore opposed to all monopolies of power whereby the division of society into a ruled and ruling class are maintained. Similarly, we oppose all the means of maintaining the class-divided society—parliament, the legal system, the police, the armed forces, the Church, etc. All such means are the expressions of the State, which always exists to protect the interests of a privileged majority, e.g., capitalists, landlords, bureaucrats, etc. We are therefore unalterably opposed to the State.

MILITARISM, NATIONALISM, IMPERIALISM AND WAR

We oppose militarism because the armed forces are used by the ruling class to maintain their class rule.

National frontiers being the lines of demarcation between ruling class spheres of interest, they can only be a check to the natural aspirations of the workers. Therefore, against nationalism and its colonial expression, imperialism, we call upon the workers to demonstrate their solidarity with each other by destroying the artificial barriers which enable the ruling classes to exploit their traditional method of divide-and-rule.

We oppose the war as the outcome of the clashing interests of rival imperialism. Since empires exist only to serve the interests of the ruling classes, wars undertaken for their extension or defence have nothing in common with the interests of the workers. The rivalries between the national sections of the ruling class should be utilised by the workers to their own advantage, by prosecuting the class struggle more vigorously at a time when the masses of the people are being forced to shed their blood in the interests of their masters. Nationalist sentiment aroused by war is the most effective means employed by the ruling class to deceive the workers and conceal the underlying class struggle.

We expose and reject the facile slogan "Democracy versus Fascism." Under capitalist "democracy," the ruling class has everywhere shown itself ready to compromise with Fascism rather than make concessions to the workers. In Spain the forces of bourgeois "democracy," aided by Stalinists and socialists, wrangled the social revolution under cover of this treacherous slogan, and thereby drained the life blood from the only effective resistance to Fascism—the spontaneous direct action of the armed workers. Rather than face revolution, "democracy" will join hands with Fascism; but at home and abroad, social revolution alone can defeat Fascism.

DIRECT ACTION

Victory in the fight against class domination can only be achieved by the direct action of the workers themselves. We reject all parliamentary and similar activity as deflecting the workers from the class struggle into paths of class collaboration.

ORGANIZATION OF THE WORKERS

Since direct action on the part of the individual produces only partial and inadequate results, it is necessary for the working class to organize collectively. Anarchists advocate the organization of the workers into syndicalist unions free from the craft divisions and bureaucracy of trade unions. While trade unions seek to be permanent wage-bargaining institutions, syndicalism fights for the abolition of the wage system, and the destruction of the property-relations of existing society. To do this the workers must organize at the places of work.

SYNDICATES AND RECONSTRUCTION

The workshop committees will be federated into industrial syndicates. These industrial syndicates will be able to control each industry when the workers have locked out the employing class and administer production and distribution on behalf of the community. All industries will then co-operate in a Federation of Labour, controlling and co-ordinating the whole economy of society. Production will be freed from wage slavery and profit-seeking, and the whole energies of labour will be directed towards the satisfaction of human needs. There will be no capitalism and no State.

SOCIAL REVOLUTION

As the imperialist war drags on it is time for the scattered forces of the world revolution to redouble their efforts for the task of preparing to meet social collapse with the revolutionary message to the workers: No compromise with the forces of reformism or reaction. Organisation for the social revolution ANARCHISM.

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War Commentary

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