

WAR *For Anarchism* COMMENTARY

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TWOPENCE

DOWN WITH FRANCO!

SPAIN HAS RECEIVED a great deal of attention from our journalists and politicians recently. During the past four years of war a discreet silence was kept about Franco and his régime. The daily shooting

of anti-fascists, the prisons filled with revolutionaries, with women and children guilty only of having family connections with suspected elements, the suppression of every elementary liberty, were covered with an hypocritical veil.

The Press shed tears on Nazi atrocities, on imprisoned Frenchmen and starving Greek children, but not a word of sympathy has been found for the exhausted, starving, suppressed Spanish people. The



Spanish underground movement, probably the most active and best organized in Europe did not receive the slightest mention. It was thanks to Spanish anti-fascists that many Frenchmen, Poles, Belgians managed to escape from Europe and reach this country, but the help they were given has been carefully concealed.

It is obvious that the Spanish people are regarded with the greatest suspicion by the British and American governments who have not forgotten July 1936. Then these gentlemen of the City and Foreign Office regarded the masses who so energetically resisted Franco's attempt to establish a Fascist dictatorship, as blood-thirsty reds, vandals, hunks, rapers of nuns. Franco was at the time their beloved friend whom they supported as openly and as violently as was in their power.

Now he proves a bit embarrassing because of his friendship with Hitler which he does not make any attempt to hide. The British Government would probably prefer a monarchy which would be more easy to handle and more respectable in its origin and form. The trouble is, however, that the monarchy, which has many adherents in Spain among the aristocracy and the Army, has no popular support. It could only gain some by a general amnesty and by allowing the Trade Unions to function again. But the liberation of hundreds of thousands of prisoners who are eager to start the revolutionary struggle again would give rise to so much unrest that it would soon imperil the throne.

This is the reason for the Allies' support of Franco's régime. They realize that as soon as the dictatorship relaxes a little the Spanish will start their struggle against capitalism, and this is much worse than Fascism, from Churchill's and Roosevelt's point of view. Reports from Spain are unanimous in stating that the will to fight for freedom is stronger than ever. Men who have spent five years in prison, expecting to be shot every day, have only one thought: to take up again the fight against oppression and this time for the last time.

It is impossible to think that a compromise would be reached in Spain between the ruling class and the people. Any programme putting forward reforms, such as the one the *Tribune* published a few weeks ago, are completely unrealistic. These British leftists asked, among other things, for:

"A complete amnesty for all political prisoners and the cessation of all forms of discrimination against supporters of the Republic.

Removal of censorship from the Spanish Press, free guarantees for all political exiles and restoration of their property, and the fixing of a date for a free election in Spain according to the general precepts laid down in Mr. Churchill's Atlantic Charter."

Anybody in Spain would laugh at such a programme. How can the Spanish ruling class agree to hold elections when they know perfectly well that

they are hated by the people? How can they allow freedom of association when, without any legal permission, hundreds of thousands of Spaniards are allying themselves to fight against the régime. The removal of censorship would mean that hundreds of papers would spring up to oppose the régime and call to revolt. The Anarchist movement, always powerful in Spain, and whose press had millions of readers, would not accept any compromise with Franco and would start a struggle to death against him.

If the restoration of the monarchy is impossible as well as an orientation of Franco towards democracy, what is the alternative? The *Tribune* says: "We have powerful weapons—the Radio, leaflets, and an alternative Spanish Government if we wish it". After the Spanish people have had to endure Hitler's puppet Government for five years, British leftists believe that they would be prepared to accept a British controlled régime! That is all a "Free Spanish Government" would be. The politicians in exile who would form it have long given proofs of their political ambition, their corruption and servility to foreign masters. During the Spanish war, Negrin, Prieto, Miaja, etc., indulged in luxuries while the people starved. When Franco won those same people went to exile, their pockets filled with Spanish gold, they feasted and plotted, this time in Paris and Mexico City while, ex-militiamen and old militants lay in French concentration camps covered with vermin, stricken by dysentery and malaria, hungry and humiliated.

The Spanish people have not forgotten the corruption and treachery of the politicians who called themselves their leaders. When they rise again they will do away with all the institutions of State power, they will destroy the Church now spreading its tentacles over the whole life of the country, they will break up the parasitic Army and the arrogant, mad-for-power nobility. They will not accept any foreign dictation whether it comes from Washington or Moscow.

During the revolution the Spanish masses were greatly disappointed when they put their trust in political parties and leaders who deceived them. But when they acted by themselves, when they organized their factories and farms, their militia and food committees, they were completely successful. They had the satisfaction of organising their lives without capitalists or bureaucrats to rule over them. As soon as Franco's grip relaxes, because of the catastrophic policy he is carrying out, the Spanish masses will turn to the methods of struggle and organization which brought them liberty and happiness during the revolution when for a brief spell they had liberated themselves from the oppression of capitalists and of the State.

ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

AMGOT'S RECORD

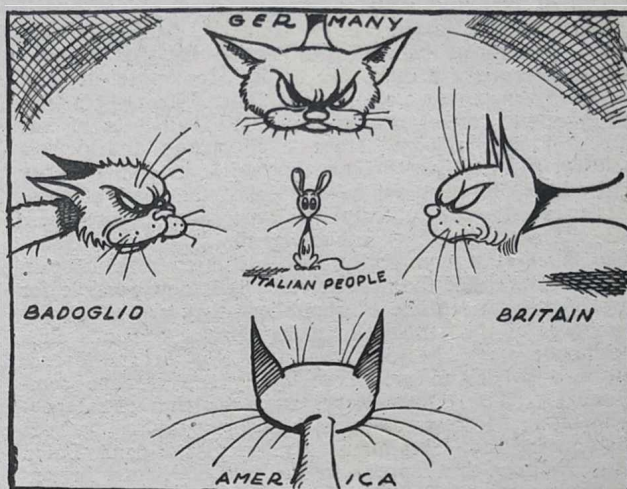
Few people can have been optimistic enough to believe that the Allied occupiers intended to establish freedom and plenty for the Italian people, and it was obvious that the smiling faces of the press photographs, even if they were not faked at the time, would not long represent the feelings of the Italian people. Amgot never pretended to be other than an instrument for maintaining order and safeguarding the interests of property and the ruling class, as it showed in its aggressive attitude towards any revolutionary tendency among the workers, and its suppression of such organs of mild Liberalism as Croce's paper, which even Mussolini had left. Some aspects of the way in which Amgot has freed the Sicilians from Fascism and want are given in an article in the *New Statesman and Nation* by a British soldier who was in Sicily from the time of the first landing. On the way in which Amgot fed the starving Sicilians he makes the following revelations:

"When Amgot issued the first ration of white American flour, via the small shopkeeper in the village of Galati St. Anna, the proprietor kept the white flour, and issued to the unsuspecting villagers a very inferior coarse brown German substitute. And there was no power to prevent it, nor to punish. So operated Amgot. The right hand provided and the left deprived. The official price of flour is a few lira a kilo, and the ration is 100 grammes a day per head. When Amgot issued flour at 8 lira a kilo, the black marketeers re-issued it at 15. The people bought at this price, and nothing was done about it. A week later the price went up to 30 lira a kilo, and still no steps were taken on a large scale. Later the price became 60-70 lira.

"In the summer—until about September in Sicily—it is difficult to starve. There is an abundance of fruit and a fair amount of vegetable. Near the coast there is fish. By October all food is scarce. You could buy ice-cream and pastries at 6d. each (a Sicilian must work a whole day to buy three pastries). But there was no fruit apart from lemons, no vegetables, no canned fruit, no fish in the interior, little meat and little flour. Nobody is starving in Sicily, but serious malnutrition is the rule. Above all, the people have stopped asking troops when we are going to bring food. Instead there have been food demonstrations in towns like Messina. The cruellest indictment of our failure to foresee and prepare for the food shortage is the startling appearance of casual prostitution by women whose husbands are in the Italian army. 'Liberated' women have offered their bodies for a tin of bully beef."

Further on, the article describes the way in which the Allied authorities have retained Fascist sympathisers in key positions of public administration.

"It may be coincidence, but the highest native civil authority in Messina is the mayor, Micali, well known to the people of his city for his Fascist activities. Micali is recognised by one and all as the arch-villain in the administrative plot, but up to a few weeks ago was, and I suppose still is, Amgot's chief adviser on local affairs. In the same town it is accepted as unchangeable that the majority of the interpreters employed by Amgot are not only just ex-Fascist Party members, but are ardent Fascist sympathisers."



These statements confirm our opinion that the Allies have no concern whatever for the well-being of the Italian people, whom they will readily allow to starve rather than interfere with the activities of the sharks who prey on their misery. Amgot has proved a worthy successor of the Fascists from whom it took over the machinery of government, and will be a good predecessor of the Victor-Badoglio clique to whom the Allies seem intent on handing back the power.

★

THIS YEAR, NEXT YEAR...

FOR some time now the authorities have fostered the idea that the war will be over in a comparatively short time, by the end of 1944 if not before. Although many people allowed their wishful thinking to dominate them, and accepted this as a reliable prophesy, it was not difficult to see that the hope was invented by the government as part of a manoeuvre to divert the minds of the people from their present causes of discontent. That the British ruling class have no desire for a quick victory was shown by their lack of military initiative in the Mediterranean. Events, in fact, tend to prove our contention that the Allies will end the war only when they think the people will stand no more. In the last few days, in fact, Churchill and other members of the government have made statements which show that they are preparing the people for an extension of the war into 1945 or beyond. In answer to a question in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister gave the intentionally vague statement, "No doubt at some date hostilities will cease in the different theatres of war." The next day, in a letter to the Tory candidate at Brighton, he said, "At the same time an altogether unwarranted optimism has taken possession of large numbers of our people. There is a vain and foolish belief that the war will soon be over, that it is now as good as won..." And two days after that, when Bevin was asked if volunteers would be called for the campaign against Japan, he replied, "There would be no volunteers called for the fight against Japan; it was one war and the National Service Acts would continue to operate until the whole thing was finished." In fact, it looks as though the men who went away as office boys will be getting near their old age pensions when they return.

"INDEPENDENT" SOVIET REPUBLICS

MOLOTOV's announcement to the Supreme Soviet that the USSR is now a "Commonwealth of Nations" with 16 "independent" republics has received various interpretations from the Left and Right press. But all of them seem to assume that the "change" will in fact make a difference to the Moscow set-up, and most are very anxious to applaud. The *Tribune* (5/2/44), for example, after making some mild analysis of the effect of the "change" from a diplomatic and power-political point of view, seems shocked at its own temerity and adds: "It must not be overlooked that part of these measures are undoubtedly domestic and progressive." The *Observer* (6/2/44) (echoed by the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*) is more realistic when it stresses the bargain counter aspects of the new decree. It is now possible for one of the "independent" republics—they are all border provinces of the USSR—to make extreme demands on a neighbour state; Moscow can then step in and induce the two parties to accept a slightly less extreme compromise. "The reform leaves room for the central government in Moscow to act as 'benevolent arbiter' between the quarrelling Ukrainians, Byelo-Russians and Poles. Moscow may thus appear in the role of 'honest broker' in its own dispute."

What interests us however is not whether the new arrangement provides fresh political opportunities for ruling class groups in Moscow or the Russian provinces, but whether it affects the workers in these republics. The Russian workers in general have no say whatever in directing the material affairs on which their lives depend. Soviet national policy in the past is not much encouragement to those who think the new move "progressive".

One of the first planks of Lenin's propaganda when he arrived in Russia from Switzerland in the spring of 1917 was "rational independence"—not a socialist slogan at all. The various racial groups which had been oppressed by Tsarism were to be allowed full "national freedom" by the Bolsheviks.

In 1918 the Georgians were able to form an autonomous State outside the Soviet Union. By a treaty concluded in 1920 the state of Georgia was formally recognized by Lenin's government, and the Bolsheviks signed a treaty whereby they undertook not to interfere in Georgian affairs. In 1921, however, less than a year later Soviet troops occupied Georgia and forcibly incorporated it in the Soviet Union. The suppression of Georgian institutions and revolutionary leaders, a task entrusted to Stalin, Lenin's "wonderful Georgian", was carried out with the utmost ruthlessness and ferocity.

All this did not prevent the Soviet constitution, in Lenin's time, from laying it down that the constituent republics had complete autonomy—including the right of secession from the Union!

Since then, national minorities have been treated with the utmost brutality. In the present war for example the Germans of the Volga whom even the Tsars shrank from deporting *en bloc*, have been transported by Stalin to Siberia.

The *Daily Worker* itself is at pains to deny that Molotov's announcement is something new. Says Walter Holmes (3/2/44): "I notice that several newspapers . . . suggest that the right of Republics to secede from the Union is something new. It is not. Article 17 of the Stalin Constitution adopted in 1936 reads: 'To every Union Republic is reserved the right freely to secede from the USSR'."

During the collectivization of Agriculture, however, Moscow took every opportunity of smoking out and persecuting "separatist tendencies". The destruction of national institutions served as a cover for the attack on the peasants. This campaign served as a cover for the forcible collection of the grain harvests. In the Ukraine the peasants resisted bitterly because the government took so much of the harvest that there was none left for the local population which died in millions from famine during the years 1933 and 1934. The peasants' resistance was denounced as "separatist intrigues", "counter-revolutionary nationalism", "sabotage by Petlura elements", etc . . .

There was no talk then of secession from the Union, or of "complete local autonomy". It is a bitter irony that the peasants who survived the famines, and have come through the German occupation, should now have been "granted independence". There is no difference for them, but the Soviet stooges abroad have been supplied with a piece of democratic propaganda and will not fail to use it to secure the maintenance of Stalin's tyranny.

FAMINE IN CHINA

MORE than a million people have just died of famine in India, and the deaths still go on in the remoter areas of Bengal. Many thousands more have died of starvation in occupied Europe. And now a report comes from China that in Kwangtung more than a million of the inhabitants have died of famine and cholera. The report can be accepted as reliable, as it comes from the American Relief Committee, who, if anything, would be inclined to minimise the distress in a part of the country under the Chungking Government.

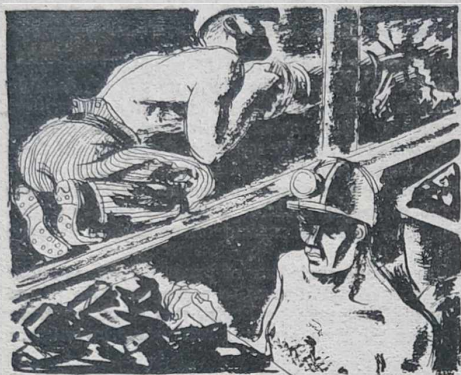
"Eighty per cent. of the population of some villages has been wiped out by famine and the disease which has followed. Thousands of children have been orphaned; whole families have been destroyed and the entire social and economic structure of a hard-working progressive people has crumbled . . ."

The diminution of imports through the war and a plague of bugs and locusts are partly to blame, but among the causes cited by the committee are also speculation in rice prices and hoarding. These factors, it will be remembered, played a great part in the Indian famine.

It also appears that the bureaucratic machinery of 'democratic' China forbids the transfer of rice from other parts of China without permits, and, moreover, that far from the Chungking Government having made any attempt to help the sufferers, the American Committee have had to go cap in hand to ask for the necessary permits—which have not yet been granted.

Here again we see the grasping hand of the food profiteer strangling his fellows for profit, and the callous indifference of the bureaucratic administrators until publicity forces them at least to make a show of doing something. In India a million died before governmental inertia stirred to alleviate the distress. In China it looks as though the eventual figure will be even higher. Yet at the same time in Canada and America the stores of wheat are piling up—ostensibly for relieving post-war distress. It is difficult to see why they are not used for alleviating wartime distress.

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The Human Cost of Coal

By "Pitman"

the number of cases of Silicosis, the dread miner's disease that claims its victims often after many years of suffering. Silicosis, or Stone Lung, is on the increase. In the Rhondda Valley alone there were over 400 fresh cases between January and June of 1943, and in the Anthracite district of West Wales, 489 fresh cases. It is stated that in South Wales, one in ten men employed in the pits is waiting for a Medical Board for Silicosis.

Now what compensation does the State pay to these men who have spent their lives producing coal for the nation and dividends for the coal owners? His compensation, if he is a married man without children, is as low as 35/-. That is, if he is lucky enough to get any compensation... Silicosis is practically confined to miners and sandstone masons—men whose work leads them to inhale silica dust. One would think therefore that if a man had stone lung, and had worked in one of these trades, he would be eligible for compensation. But the Government think otherwise. Here is what a specialist on Workmen's Compensation has written about it:

"Before he can get any money he has to be able to prove that he worked in the right sort of stone and has done the prescribed operation on that stone, and he may be called upon to show that the bricks on which he worked contained not less than 80 per cent. of free silica, and that he was crushing and not merely breaking them. He may also have to prove that he has been employed in the appropriate processes within a particular time and that the disease was due to his employment in the particular scheme under which he is claiming. He may be asked to prove a lot of other matters which ordinary people would consider irrelevant, and this sometimes takes so many experts such a long time that the man has died of silicosis before his case is settled." (W. H. Thompson, "The Trickery of Workmen's Compensation", *Tribune*, 12/11/43).

But of the 489 cases in the Anthracite district of West Wales mentioned above, 268 claims have been rejected. The conditions have disturbed even the conscience of the Government. Some time ago they ordered an enquiry by the Medical Research Council. Appalled by their findings, the specialists recommend improvements. Payment of compensation at the onset stage of the disease, the use of sprays when drilling siliceous rock, initial and periodical medical examinations. In themselves, these recommendations are an admission of a scandalous state of affairs. Yet when questioned about the matter, all Mr. Osmond Peake, Under Secretary of State to the Home Office, could say was "Nothing

COAL USED TO COST 3/6d. a hundredweight; recently it has gone up. But the true cost of coal is to be measured in the loss of life and limb and the slow deaths from silicosis which the industry entails for the miners. Truly coal is obtained with the blood of many thousands of miners killed, maimed, and disabled through disease in this most dangerous of all industrial undertakings. Glance at this table showing the mining accident rate—the highest of any trade. It represents something of the cost of coal to the miners:

NUMBER OF PERSONS KILLED AND SERIOUSLY INJURED DURING 1943 IN AND ABOUT MINES UNDER THE COAL MINES ACT, 1911.

Place and cause of Accident	Number of persons	
	Killed	Seriously injured
UNDERGROUND:		
By Explosion of firedamp or coal dust	292	29
By Falls of Ground	441	1,404
Shaft Accidents	17	65
Haulage Accidents	154	756
Miscellaneous	91	573
TOTAL UNDERGROUND ...	995	2,890
SURFACE:		
On Railways and Sidings	33	92
Other Surface Accidents	40	193
TOTAL UNDERGROUND & SURFACE ...	1,068	3,175

And the following figures show that the toll is still being exacted:

PERSONS KILLED IN COAL MINES		INJURED	
1935	...	849	—
1936	...	784	135,968
1937	...	851	140,645
1938	...	851	131,776
1939	...	783	134,072
1940	...	923	146,388
1941	...	925	—

This means that in the six years prior to 1942, no less than 5,000 men have been killed in the coal mines, while in the same period more than 700,000 have been injured.

But the foregoing figures take no account of

can be done until after the Beveridge report”!

The application of safeguards costs money and slows down the rate of production; therefore coal owners are indifferent to the dangers which the miners undergo. At the inquest on the gas explosion at the Barnsley Main Colliery on February 17th, 1942, in which thirteen men were killed, it was shown that the explosion was caused by a flash from a trailing electric cable. But the Deputy Coroner refused the request of the miners' representatives that he recommend the exclusion of electricity from mines on the grounds that “that was a highly technical matter which he proposed to leave in the hands of the Deputy Chief Inspector of Mines”. Coal has to be sold in a competitive market in order to maintain coal owners' profits, so costs have to be kept down to a minimum. And measures for safety, measures for reducing the arduousness of the miners' toil, to say nothing of miners' wages, are all included in costs, which means that they, too, have to be kept at the lowest possible figures. These are the practical considerations of capitalism. It is therefore scarcely surprising that the coal kings and the Government turn a deaf ear to the miners' demands, and are indifferent to the toll of miners' blood.

But the miners are in an angry mood, openly demonstrating their dissatisfaction with the conditions they are expected to endure. Conditions that no amount of official whitewashing can hide. Strikes break out at many points, up and down the country. To-day it is the colliers of Varteg, Cardiff; yesterday, the pitboys of Doncaster. To-morrow maybe Lanarkshire, Kent, or perhaps Somerset, the poorest paid of all mining areas?

Miners are growing impatient with the long drawn out methods of Government Arbitration and are coming to draw the logical deduction of life under capitalism—that Direct Action is the only method of forcing the hand of the owners and the Government and achieving improvements in their truly miserable lot. They are beginning to see that mining will only become a safe and tolerable occupation when the miners themselves control and administer the mines in the interests of the working class instead of merely the rich.

KINGSTON SUNDAY LECTURES KINGSTON TRADES & LABOUR CLUB GRANGE ROAD (back of the G.P.O.) at 7 p.m. sharp.

20th FEBRUARY Mat Kavanagh
United Socialist States of Europe
27th FEBRUARY Ken Hawkes
The Kronstadt Revolt

DESOUTTERS AGAIN

In the February issue of *War Commentary* we spoke of the six months old case of the Desoutters firm's defiance of the Essential Works Order. At that time of writing, Bevin, in reply to questions in Parliament, said that his reply to this defiance was to report the case to the Law Officers. Desoutters appeared at Hendon Police Court on the 14th February to answer a charge. The firm was fined £10 and managing director Desoutter was fined £5. This on a second appearance and on continued defiance of the law.

To a firm making their rate of profit the fine is about equal to a packet of Woodbines to a worker. As to the de-scheduling of Desoutters by Bevin, this seems to mean just nothing, for the firm are still receiving Government orders.

That the case should have been heard at Hendon is ironic, for this court is notorious for its harsh treatment of workers violating the E.W.O. The same magistrates think lightly of sending a worker to gaol for three months as a punishment for being late at work.

It is well to recall the letter of William Rust, editor of the *Daily Worker*, to Ernest Bevin:

“The Daily Worker”, Mr. Bevin, has given you hearty and consistent support when other organs of the Press have been loud in denunciation. We stood with you on the Catering Bill and the registration of the older women. We like your working-class ways, we like your blunt stand for the workers and how you hand it out to the employers.”

As well, too, to recall that, while over one thousand men and women workers have gone to gaol under the E.W.O., no employer has been imprisoned for violation of this law.

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A Red and Black Notebook

THE PORTER AWARD has done nothing to calm discontent among miners. Indeed, the announcement of the award led to an outbreak of strikes in several coalfields, particularly Lancashire and Staffordshire. In the Cannock Chase district of Staffordshire out of 31 pits 16 closed and 14 were partly idle. Although the strikes are dying down because of the lack of national co-ordination and the grip of the trade unions, yet the discontent is fermenting as ever. Tens of thousands of miners receive no advance under this award.

Another Bevin Failure

The Government's decision to release some miners from the Army is an indication of their growing disillusionment with the "Bevin Boys" scheme. After all the hullabaloo, the newsreel happy shots, the newspaper interviews which recorded the boys' alleged, "The mines are not so bad," before they got there and the press photos of "happy, smiling" conscripts, the scheme looks like being a failure even before it is tried. The chief factor of failure is the quiet passive resistance of the boys. It seems that Bevin realises this.

However, even the decision to release miners from the Armed Forces is unlikely to solve the problem for it has been made too late. It is so long ago that the mines were denuded of miners that most of them are now abroad with the Army. The Government just rambles from one muddle to another.

Apprentices Protest

Nevertheless, even when Authority recognises a mistake it is always slow to admit it by completely dropping the old policy, and in the case of the "Bevin Boys" it is still causing the maximum of unrest. Engineering and shipbuilding apprentices in Newcastle and district are, through the Tyne Apprentices' Guild, protesting against conscription for the coal pits. The Guild claims that apprentices who have spent several years working for very low wages and their evenings at night schools are now, after attaining a high degree of skill, being sent to the mines at unskilled work.

Splitting The Ranks

The reply of the unions on Tyneside to this is a proposal even more reactionary and anti-working class. The Communist Party of the N.E. district claims that Communist shop stewards have been able to have passed by the Quarterly Meeting of stewards and the Tyne District Committee of the A.E.U. resolutions which have caused the District Committee to draw up a list of ex-miners working in shipyards and factories for submission to the Ministry of Labour. The purpose being, of course, to kick out the miners and drive them back to the mines.

Now hundreds of thousands of miners were driven from the mines, and even from the coalfields, and forced to seek employment elsewhere. Finding their new work less hard and in more pleasant (shall we indulge by saying less unpleasant?) conditions and at higher wages, these ex-miners are most reluctant to re-enter the mines. But for one section of the working class to attempt to victimise another section would lead to a most disastrous splitting of the working class and make easier the class war purpose of the employing class.

However we do not believe that this selfish and splitting policy of the unions and the C.P. represents the real feeling of the workers, especially on Tyneside, for the working class generally has always supported the miners and deeply sympathised with them in their struggle. One

has only to consider the General Strike of 1926 to realise how deep is that sympathy. Surely the task of the A.E.U. and the other unions should be to support the miners in their fight for higher wages until these are equal to other industries and thus allow the mining industry to attract the ex-miners back to the pits.

Production Committees

Election of Production Committees are now taking place in many factories. Asked for our policy in such cases we can only repeat what we said at the beginning of this business, "Do not nominate candidates for these Committees, boycott the elections!" Production Committees are a danger to workers because of their police court and informer's methods, especially regarding "absenteeism". If such committees are brought into disrepute so much the better, and there is no better way of bringing them into disrepute than by allowing them to be manned by Communist wind-bags.

The Cabinet Makers' Corporate State

Several trade unions have now drawn their plans for post-war industry. All are the same in principle. All follow the Fascist principles outlined by Mussolini in his *Corporate State*. Some time ago we reported the plan of the bootmakers' union; we shall now examine that of the cabinet makers' union, the National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association, usually considered a "left" union.

N.A.F.T.A.'s plan proposes setting up a Control Commission to direct the industry. It is proposed that the Commission shall be composed of equal numbers of trade union and employer's representatives. It is also suggested that representatives of the public sit with the Commission, but the "representatives of the public" are not to be elected by the public, they are to be "nominated by the Board of Trade or any other Government Department specially interested in the industry's affairs". Quite democratic!

Private ownership is to remain. Social ownership, or even nationalisation, is ignored; the plan looks to the continuance of capitalism with the additional State support given it by the Italian type of Fascism.

A licence system is projected. No firm or craftsman is to be allowed to produce furniture if they are unfortunate enough to arouse the dislike of the all-powerful Control Commission. In other words, in an industry which, due to the comparatively small scale ownership, is yet unripe for ordinary economic monopoly, a monopoly shall be brought about by political methods.

N.A.F.T.A. anticipates some craftsman or firm outside of the projected employers' federation making furniture from "bootleg" timber and seeks to back up its proposed monopoly of the trade by seeking extraordinary legal powers. It suggests that "this Control Commission shall be responsible to the President of the Board of Trade or other Minister for the preparation and application of reconstruction plans." Further—"What the union proposes is that Parliament should give to the Control Commission statutory powers enabling it to make regulations for safeguarding its declared objects and carrying out its proposed functions."

The plan goes on to suggest the establishment of industrial courts to deal with disputes within the industry, the court to be presided over by a special magistrate assisted by two assessors from the industry.

If this isn't Fascism, then Mussolini is a blue eyed, flaxen haired little Democrat.

SYNDICALIST.

SUCCESSFUL CO-OP STRIKE

The dispute involving about 180 employees of the Abersychan and Pontypool Co-operative Society was settled yesterday.

Alternative employment is being found for the four displaced club collectors at their former rates of pay, with back wages to two who were discharged.

Daily Herald, 10/2/44.

A.I FOR THE ARMY

Sir Owen Beasley, chairman of a pensions appeal tribunal in London to-day, said: "We had a man before us who was passed A.I for the Army, but had no teeth at all.

"When you have a case like that what are you going to do about it? The man broke down 17 days after he went into the Army. He had not had any teeth since 1936."

A Ministry of Pensions Official.—He would have been supplied with teeth if he had remained a week or two longer, sir.

Sir Owen.—It strikes me as extraordinary that the man was taken into the Army at all with no teeth—he was not a young man.

Evening Standard, 7/2/44.

STRIKES INCREASE In England:

The number of disputes involving stoppages of work in the United Kingdom during December was 144, affecting about 39,500 workpeople, states the Ministry of Labour Gazette.

The aggregate number of working days lost is estimated at approximately 131,000.

The total number of disputes involving stoppages of work reported as having begun in 1943 was 1775, compared with 1303 in 1942. The number of workpeople involved in all disputes (including disputes which began in 1942 and extended into 1943) was about 560,000.

Evening Standard, 2/2/44.

In America:

Despite Labour's "No Strike" pledge, America had 3750 strikes in 1943, which was a considerable increase compared with 1942, when walkouts totalled 2968.

The 1943 strikes resulted in the loss of 13,500,000 man days.

Evening Standard, 10/2/44.

PUBLIC LECTURE-DISCUSSIONS EVERY FRIDAY EVENING 7.30 p.m.

18th FEBRUARY	John Hewetson
The Ralahine Community	
25th FEBRUARY	Philip Sansom
Atrocities in War and Peace	
3rd MARCH	Don Coventry
The Colour Bar	

FREEDOM PRESS ROOMS

27, BELSIZE ROAD, LONDON, N.W.6.

NO COAL IN WALES

The recent note in this column on the serious position locally owing to the coal shortage has been intensified by the present prolonged wet spell. Outside workers are coming home day after day with their clothes dripping wet, and as only one fire per household is generally possible, and with only the coal fire for cooking, all domestic duties have to be carried out in the living room. Furniture and other effects are going to ruin, especially in the older milestone houses, which absorb moisture like a sponge.

Cardiff and Suburban News, 5/2/44.

Through

IS IT REALLY NECESSARY?

Twelve months ago this week Stalingrad was finally cleared of the Germans. Now comes this report from Moscow showing what the people have achieved.

As part of the new Stalingrad a great "victory monument," a column 200ft. high topped by the figure of a Red Army man and bearing the names of heroic divisions which defended the city, is being built.

It will serve as a lighthouse to the ships that sail the Volga. An Arc de Triomphe will bridge the Road of Heroes where individual monuments stand to the heroes who fell in the battle of Stalingrad.

Evening Standard, 3/2/44.

People in this country have been asked to contribute money towards building a hospital in Stalingrad. Now it appears that the Russian Government is able to afford statues and an Arc de Triomphe. Wouldn't the Russian people prefer plain houses?

WHEAT FOR FUEL

While the "Battle of Food" means so much, there is the paradox that wheat is now being turned into power alcohol. But Australia has plenty of wheat, and is anxious to become less dependent on supplies of imported liquid fuels. The first of four new distilleries was opened in New South Wales this week. Government officials believe that it is the first chemical plant in the world to extract fuel from wheat on a commercial basis. More than 3,000,000 gallons of power alcohol will be produced each year from about 1,250,000 bushels of wheat.

The Chamber of Commerce Journal, February, 1944.

While wheat is used for fuel Indians and Chinese starve. Nobody would make us believe that it is not possible to transport wheat from Australia to India and China.

TREAT FOR MINERS

The King and Queen lunched in a colliery canteen yesterday with 70 sturdy Yorkshire miners, some of whom had worked through the night at the coal face. Others went down the pit ten minutes after.

When told at Hickleton Main Colliery that the pits there once held the national output record the King remarked, "I hope you win it back," and the Queen added: "Send us a wire when you do."

Daily Mail, 10/2/44.

OFFICERS EAT WELL

An American officer invited me to lunch at the new mess for U.S. officers in London. The ice-rink at the Grosvenor House has been taken over for the purpose.

The food is excellent. Steak, chicken, salmon and a variety of fruits and fruit juice are frequent items. And there is excellent coffee (served in the American way, during the meal).

There is a small room for officers of the rank of colonel and all points beyond. There the generals get together, in a more leisurely atmosphere, presided over by Celestin Dertu, formerly a Paris restaurateur.

Evening Standard, 5/2/44.

the Press

SHAW & FOOT

Mr. Michael Foot, Socialist candidate in the Devonport Parliamentary division, answers the article which appeared there last Tuesday by George Bernard Shaw. Mr. Foot refuses to recognise Shaw's abuse of the tax-collector, or even Stalin's re-establishment of the Church, as a sign of any world-wide retreat from Socialism. He stands where Shaw stood 40 years ago, champion of the disinherited son of Adam. Forty years on, when he is as rich as Shaw, I am sure he will refuse to champion the despoiled children of Croesus. For Foot is one of the fiercest living advocates of meek submission to the State.

Evening Standard, 7/2/44.

HOW TO FIGHT HITLER

German troops, armed with machine-guns and escorted by armoured cars, rounded up all miners between the ages of 16 and 60 when over 75,000 pit workers in the Pas de Calais and the Nord Department went on strike, says reports reaching Reuter to-day.

The men were marched off to the pits in groups of 60. Once down the pits they staged a sit-down strike.

The entire coal region was paralysed for over a month. At the end of four weeks, the Germans were forced to give the men a 25 per cent. wage increase.

Evening Standard, 5/2/44.

If this news is true it proves that syndicalist methods of fighting against Fascism meet with great success.

BEVIN ON IDLENESS

Mr. Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour, said at an Ex-Services Welfare Society conference on rehabilitation in London yesterday:

"The thing we have to face at the end of the war is that we cannot afford to tolerate any kind of economic loss. The idea of maintaining people in idleness is a thing that has to go. I am not very much concerned on a strictly accurate economic basis whether a handicapped person produces the total value of a fit person. What I am concerned about is that he produces what he consumes; if he produces only 75 per cent. of what he consumes there is only 25 per cent. cost to the community."

Manchester Guardian, 12/2/44.

The idle people Mr. Bevin referred to are not, as one might presume, the parasites to be found among capitalists, nobility and clergy, but the disabled men and women who will come back without health, arms or legs after the war.

POST-WAR PROSPECTS

WHEN THE WAR IS OVER

You may require a Factory

at

SLOUGH

or

BIRMINGHAM

If so, write to us NOW

SLOUGH ESTATES LTD.

Advt. in *The Chamber of Commerce Journal*,
February 44.

Why worry about Mr. Bevin's Reinstatement Bill? Have a factory of your own and be sure of having a job.

HUMANIZING WAR

No Turkish Drugs for Germany.—The Turkish Government has acted on Allied advice in ordering that no pharmaceutical products shall be sold in Turkey unless the buyer is personally known to the supplier. The object is to prevent German agents from buying up products in short supply in Germany following the bombing of pharmaceutical works there.

The Chemist and Druggist, 29/1/44.

We are very indignant when German planes bomb hospitals, but we apparently bomb pharmaceutical works and prevent pharmaceutical products reaching Germany. What's the difference?

WAR MARTYR

The Dowager Viscountess Ashbrook must call for her milk every day—or send someone for it—because her milk retailer has been told by the County Food Office that he is under no obligation to deliver in war-time.

Sunday Dispatch, 13/2/44.

AND IN INDIA?

If a proper standard of health nutrition were adopted, the expectation of life in England would be increased by about five years; in Scotland—where housing and feeding conditions were dreadful—by about ten years. These were the forthright assertions made yesterday by Sir John Orr, the world's No. 1 nutrition expert.

Reynolds News, 12/2/44.

WHERE T.U. OFFICIALS END

Lord Westwood, the first trade union official to be raised to the House of Lords, puts on his scarlet and ermine robe and his cocked hat this week to take his place among his peers. I understand he has hired the robe, and by doing so has saved himself both coupons and cash.

Evening Standard, 1/2/44.

GLASGOW MEETINGS
ANARCHIST FEDERATION HALL
23 WILSON STREET, C.I. (2nd Floor)
Sunday, 7 p.m.

20th FEBRUARY Eddie Fenwick
Economic Trends To-day
27th FEBRUARY J. Carracher
Paris Commune and Anarchists
5th MARCH C. Baird
Philosophy of Anarchism

From the Ranks

TEN YEARS

A SOLDIER

TEN YEARS IN the Army has changed me from a patriot, and a firm believer in God, King and Country, (all of which things are drummed into the ordinary working class person from the early age of five or so), into a believer in a society where the powers of the money trusts and governments are abolished; where the products of the earth are applied for the well-being of the entire human family instead of being used as a means of juggling for power by the select few, the ruling class.

I joined the Army in 1934 and immediately ceased to be a human being and an individual, and became something that had to be pushed, jostled, cursed, chased and scared into becoming an automaton, or cog in the machine known as the British Army, by people of my own class known as N.C.O.'s, who had been vested with the powers of tin gods, and given authority and power beneath the officers to enable them to turn me into something comparable to the ordinary British workman, who is in his or her turn a cog in the Capitalist machine.

With this difference:— Whereas the working class sell their labour, or part of their lives, which, unlike the Capitalists, is the only thing they have to sell, I sold my individuality, part of my life, my skill with arms; and also was expected to commit murder if asked to do so (Palestine Rebellion, 1936).

By the last item, I mean that when searching Arab villages, if perhaps some Arab became scared and ran, I was expected to shoot . . .

These ten years have taught me, and also my travels among ten or so different races, that only one course can ensure the future happiness not of one country, but every country, and that is the complete reorganisation of the entire social system of the world, entailing the elimination of Capitalism, with all its attendant evils such as Governments, Nobility, etc., and the formation of a society where man is no longer a wage slave, but a free individual who would be allowed to do the work he was best fitted for, and have as his recompense a fair proportion of the world's produce, without having to sell part of his life for the absurdity of our complex civilisation, money, to enable him to buy what he is entitled to by the laws of nature though denied by the laws of the Capitalist régime.

I am only an uneducated man but I think my sentiments coincide with the subconscious ones of the masses, of which I am a part.

The difficulty is not to educate them or us to act to bring about a new world society, but to bring them to

think; and it will come about by the universal will of the masses of the workers throughout the world.

To close, if the masses of the world could be brought together and taught each other's way of living, Capitalism and Governments, and also the misdistribution of the earth's goodness would be things of the past, evil memories in the minds of men.

TWO MUTINIES

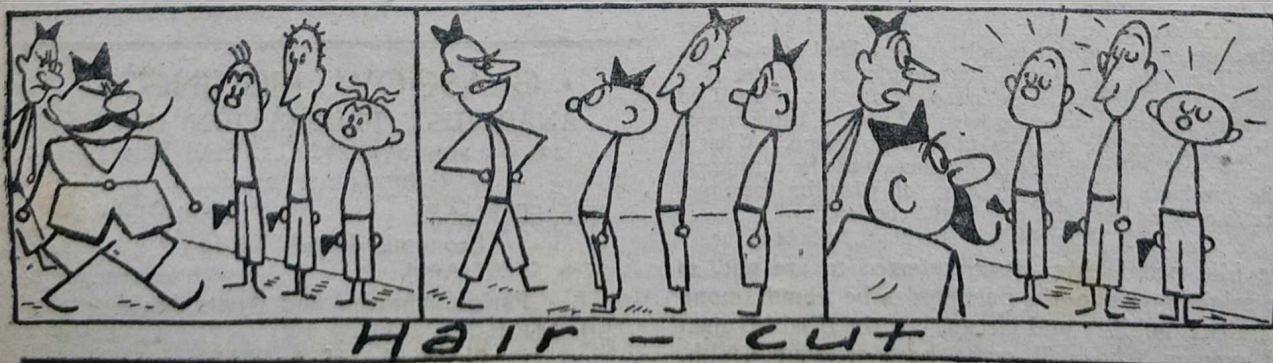
on the 'KERLOGUE'

RECENTLY THE 'SMALL' Irish ship *Kerlogue*, with a crew of 15 men, picked up off the coast of Spain 164 German sailors and a number of officers. The German officers demanded that the captain should take them to a Nazi-controlled port instead of, as he proposed, taking them to Eire to be interned. When he refused, they made secret plans for mutiny, detailing their trusted men to overpower the small crew and take possession of the ship.

Already in this war similar attempts have been planned on board British ships carrying large numbers of German prisoners, and the preparations have been discovered only by accident. These plans have obviously been made by officers who have been trained systematically in case of such eventualities. Ever since, in the time of Bismarck, the German ruling class came to the conclusion that before the enemy abroad could be fought, the enemy at home, the militant working class, must be forced into submission, the German General Staff has devoted special care to the study of revolutions, and has spent much more time and energy on the problem of counter-revolutionary strategy than is generally realised. If the working class had taken as much effort to understand the counter revolution as the counter-revolutionaries have to study and prepare for the defeat of the working class, this war could hardly have been possible.

Until recently the men involved in these mutiny plots were completely under the influence of their superiors and would have obeyed orders willingly, or did not dare to disobey. For the German soldiers and sailors know that even in British prison camps the lot of the marked man can be made very unpleasant by the Nazi section among the prisoners, and there is also the possibility of being sent back to Germany in exchange, with eventual penalties for 'UnGerman conduct'. The men prefer to avoid the trouble involved in disagreement with their officers. Certain sections of the press declare that most Italian and German prisoners are still Fascists and Nazis at heart, but the fact is that with Fascism and Nazism still ruling at home and the British and American authorities showing no intention of giving real support to German and Italian anti-Fascists, it would be unwise for them to make any public show of a changed attitude.

(continued on p. 12)



Objections to Anarchism

WHAT'S THE INCENTIVE?

OF THE MANY "objections" levelled at Anarchism by its more cynical critics perhaps the most common is the one which expresses doubts in man's ability to do anything or show any initiative without material reward. In their opinion money is the only incentive for man's activity. "Why should a worker shoulder more responsibility if he gets the same reward as the worker who shoulders none?" they ask. Others point to the fact that under Anarchism when the wage system will have disappeared life will be dull, uniform and individual initiative will be abolished.

Like all armchair critics, these people as a rule have neither studied Anarchism nor have they bothered to look around them to see what life means for millions of other human beings. In fact they are so short-sighted that they fail to notice that they themselves are living in a street in which all the houses are of similar design and in which all the occupants wear similar clothes! And these are the people who stand aghast when someone decides to change his style of dressing or grows a beard. And as for admitting that his neighbour has a right to refuse to be conscripted, he would be the first to cut him dead in the street if he dared to express his individuality in that way! However, let us face his objections as if they came from someone more sincere and intelligent in his criticism.

Anarchists advocate that in the anarchist society we shall give to society according to our abilities and take according to our needs. There is no suggestion that our needs are equal. What is equal for all men is their right to the necessities of life, and whilst to those few individuals left in society, who believe that they alone have the right to the good things of life, this may be considered one of the dull aspects of Anarchism, the majority who have been used to the miseries and humiliations of poverty and unemployment will consider it as one of the strong points of the Anarchist philosophy.

Now, to come to the main question, that of incentive. Our critics believe that without the money motive society will fall into decay and the human race will probably die out! In the first place these critics seem to presuppose that money has always existed, whereas in actual fact this is far from being exact and they must therefore explain how primitive man developed without money. We believe that man is a gregarious animal and that for his well-being he needs the company and assistance of other men in the same way as they need his. And it follows that our incentive for doing things which will benefit others is to be found in the pleasure that such acts give the doer and the knowledge that others are themselves striving to do the same. What is the position in present society? First of all one must bear in mind that Mr. X when at business is not the same person as Mr. X after business hours. Hence that most English of expressions, "never mix business with pleasure". From this valuable piece of advice you have the key to the whole problem of the money motive in society: work is *not* pleasant, consequently some incentive must be created to make people work. And the incentive takes the form of money; and for the majority that money has the function of keeping the body alive so that it can walk to work the next day! Clearly it is of little value to tell a clerk that all the columns of figures he is adding is a job in which he is doing a service to mankind, and the ticket-collector who

clips your railway ticket knows that humanity will not miss him when he retires since the work he does has no direct connection with the well-being of society as a whole. The way people can be induced to undertake such work is by their very existences being dependent on it. In many cases a man may justify long hours of dull uninteresting work on the grounds that he would hate to see his family in want. There we have another important aspect of a man's sense of responsibility to others who constitute his family circle. It is not difficult nor indeed Utopian to suppose that the "family circle" could be extended to include the village, the community or even the street one lives in. To-day that wider and more social conception of the family is made more difficult by reason of the competitive basis of society: a man can only improve his economic condition at the expense of another. In big concerns for instance, you may have the position whereby ten men are all waiting for Mr. X to retire in order to take his job. Here we have the conditions where (a) ten men are all hoping that Mr. X will hurry up and retire before he is 65 through illness or death (b) ten men will be manoeuvring to catch the manager's eye, (c) when one out of the ten has got the job, the other nine will try and make his life so difficult that he will have a nervous breakdown and ask to be relieved of his post!

The position has been exaggerated since few men are quite so anti-social as to wish the death of another, yet the petty jealousies, spitefulness and pettiness which go to make up the daily working lives of men and women (amongst the working men as much as amongst the black-coated workers) have to be experienced to be believed. They are the inevitable consequences of capitalism and would not exist in an anarchist society. "But it's part of human nature" chimes in our pessimist hopefully! Our pessimist has forgotten however that once he has finished his day's work our man is a different being altogether; he has finished being a competitive animal for the day and he now relaxes. He may go into his garden. Then his greatest pleasure is to be told by his family and friends how well kept his garden is, or to receive the smiling thanks of a neighbour to whom he has made a gift of flowers or surplus vegetables. There we have the real incentive coming again to the fore: the pleasure we derive from giving happiness to others. Unfortunately these social feelings do not exist to a larger degree because of the strain imposed by the constant fear of insecurity: the need to save up for the day when one will no longer be fit for work. Once this feeling of insecurity is removed man's social feelings will know no bounds. There seems to be a tendency to forget the tremendous amount of voluntary work that has been done during the past four years. Without supporting the war and therefore without supporting the nature of the voluntary work performed it must be recognised that the bulk of the work in connection with salvage drives, Red Cross collections, local war savings groups, Youth clubs, Service canteens, to mention a few, is done by voluntary workers, the majority of whom rightly or wrongly consider it to be their contribution to the successful outcome of the war. And if one supports the war this is the correct social attitude to adopt. The lesson to be learned from the experience of this war is that there is no reason to suppose that if these same people held Anarchist ideas their willingness to do their share to bring about the new society would be any less than it is to-day for another cause. In fact, in view

of the positive approach of Anarchism as compared with the negative one of war, even greater examples of solidarity and service should reasonably be expected under Anarchism.

And recently we have been provided with an outstanding example of the rightness of the Anarchist case in regard to this question of incentive. Sir Ernest Barker, distinguished osteopath, was interviewed by a *Sunday Express* reporter who states that (16/1/44) "in two and a half years . . . (Sir Ernest Barker) . . . has carried out between 500 and 600 operations without fees and demonstrated his technique time without number to the local doctors. An official of the hospital to which he is attached as an honorary surgeon estimates that his services have been worth £50,000". In Sir Ernest Barker's own words "the joy of being able to work without consideration of money is delightful". He then went on to refer to the cures he effected in the case of three patients and concluded "if I never did anything else in my life these three cures would make me happy. What makes me unhappy is that others don't know the methods." Presumably our critic will interrupt to say that "Sir Ernest has made his pile and can afford to do it". Quite so. But what our pessimist has not explained in view of his original thesis concerning incentive is why Sir Ernest Barker should treat people at all. He is 75 years old, has probably plenty of money for the rest of his days yet he treats patients gratis, free of charge, for nothing! And in his own words "the joy of being able to work without consideration of money is delightful". How many millions of people there are eager to do things which are beneficial to their fellow beings, and which will help to build up a better world. But they are to-day fettered. And they will remain so, so long as we live in and tolerate a society based on competition instead of co-operation, jealousy and envy instead of brotherhood. Anarchism means equal rights for all to live their own lives and freedom from want. It also means freedom to create for and contribute to the happiness of mankind. And the incentive? Mankind!

LIBERTARIAN

PRESS FUND

JANUARY

£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Bristol: M.H.	5	0	Newcastle: H.H.	2	0
Roxbury, U.S.A.: J.P.	9	8	London: E.G.	10	0
Bristol: J.S.R.	6	0	Leyton: per L.W.		
Manchester: J.E.B.	2	6	and D.B.	2	0
Sheffield: H.W.	1	6	Accrington: A.E.	2	0
Liverpool: F.S.	4	0	Swindon: D.T.	5	6
London: B.T.	2	6	London: F.W.G.	2	6
London: R.G.	11	0	London: G.S.	1	0
London: F.C.D.	2	0	Matlock: N.F.E.	14	0
Hadleigh: T.McC.	1	0	Leicester: H.C.	4	0
London: T.A.Y.	1	0	Eden Bridge: E.E.B.	4	0
Newcastle: G.W.T.	2	6	Coatbridge: J.C.	2	0
Newcastle: J.E.S.	2	6	Argyll: J.M.B.	3	0
Newcastle: E.M.	2	6	Co. Durham: A.E.C.	4	0
Breaston: A.W.	5	0	Ilford: C.W.	1	6
Belfast: J.B.	8	6	Edinburgh: I.F.	10	0
Victoria, Aust.: J.W.F.	5	0	Breaston: P. & J.E.	10	0
London: M.S.	9		Selsdon: H.A.H.	1	0
London: E.D.	7	0	Selsdon: W.M.S.	1	0
Coventry: J.B.	1	0	H. Wycombe: J.E.R.	1	0

(Continued from p. 10)

In view of these circumstances, the *Kerlogue* incident is highly significant. Two of the German sailors, Scher and Klaar, organised a counter mutiny against their officers. They held a ballot in which 153 out of 164 men voted against obeying their own superiors. They then took direct action by informing the Irish captain of the mutiny plot and imprisoning their officers.

This means that not only can the Nazis no longer rely on their ordinary troops, whom they have always watched and handled with great circumspection, but also that now the German navy, consisting of hand-picked and well treated troops presumed to be of extraordinary reliability, have begun to rebel. The warlike attitude induced by a masterly psychological technique has at last begun to dwindle and to pass into its natural reaction of revolt.

In the last war also it was the German navy that first voiced the long suppressed discontent of the people and their will to revolt. The first Wilhelmshaven mutiny was crushed by the Imperial government and the ring-leaders shot. But the mutiny became the signal for revolt. The news, in spite of a strict censorship, spread through the Empire of the Kaiser almost as quickly as if it had been broadcast. The names of the executed leaders were whispered among the troops at the front, among the sailors, soldiers and the starving people at home. New hope arose among the downtrodden masses. The suppressed and imprisoned revolutionaries gained new inspiration and courage.

Ludendorff's attempt to check the development of events was in vain. The foundations of German Imperialism began to crumble. Persecutions merely fanned the growing fires of revolt.

Mutinies open the gates for the revolution, for they spread like an epidemic. In the last war it started with Kronstadt. Then came Wilhelmshaven, Kiel, Hamburg. Inspired by these examples, the proletariat of the world began to regain its class-consciousness.

This war too will be ended by the powers of revolution, no matter what precautions the Imperialist war lords of all countries may take to prevent it. The mutiny of the men on board the *Kerlogue* is more than a symptom of the cracking of the German war machine.

Just as the German counter-revolutionaries and militarists thought they had learnt enough to prostitute the tactics and weapons of the revolutionary tradition to their own purposes, and failed in this particular instance, so the counter-revolutionaries in other countries who, under the cover of waging war on Fascism, try to weaken and exhaust the resistance of the working class, will find that in the long run their efforts will turn back upon themselves.

Glasgow: F.M.	4	0	Bournemouth: G.L.	5	0
London: K.H.	1	0	London: J.M.	10	0
London: D.H.	1	0	Leeds: M.F.	14	0
Ashwater: E.R.	2		Leeds: R.C.J.	2	0
Long Eaton: C.W.R.	5	0	Richmond: W.L.G.G.	5	0
Cranbrook: A.S.	4	0	Derby: W.G.F.P.		
York: F.A.A.	6	0	London: J.T.	2	0
Bowdon: V.T.E.	6		London: Collection	1	6
Hornchurch: J.G.	1	0	Molsey: J.B.	3	0
Blackpool: N.W.R.	4	0	London: N.T.	10	0
Blackpool: P/O. F.	2	0	London: V.R.	5	0
Argyll: H.T.D.	1	0	London: Park		
London: C.			Sympathisers	6	7
(per V.R.)	3	0			
Bristol: H.J.B.	2	6			
London: E.K.M.	6				
London: F.C.D.	2	0			
TOTAL				£29	2 11

Land Workers must Organise for Action



DURING THE PAST two years there has been a rapid increase in the membership of the National Union of Agricultural Workers which might be interpreted as an interesting sign of the times when coupled with the industrial unrest that is at present sweeping the country.

There are approximately 22,000 new members, and 354 new branches. But these are mere figures and can no doubt be accounted for by the rapid influx of conscientious objectors to the industry, and may not necessarily represent a new state of mind throughout the industry. The fact that the increased strength is not regarded amongst the farmers and Government circles as a potential danger is reflected in a friendly note in the National Farmers' Union News Sheets congratulating the workers' Union on a good year. One wonders why it is possible that the bosses can afford to congratulate the workers on this increased strength. Constitutional numerical strength without militancy can never be dangerous, and the flatulence of the workers is reflected within the ranks of the N.F.U. which is not representatively strong except for occasional crisis disputes on the wages issue, or a serious reduction in prices by the Government. The N.F.U. has actually, on several occasions in the past, agitated to the Wage Board for extra pay for the workers in order to attract an influx of men during labour scarcity. The N.F.U. as such, in its organisational capacity is almost wholly apathetic. This is aptly illustrated by an amusing incident in the West country. An N.F.U. secretary, in despair of getting a decent turn-out at an important meeting put down as item 7 on the agenda—"To discuss the conduct of a member." There was an excellent meeting. At the end of item 6 the Secretary said that that concluded the business. Immediately several members called out "What about Sebastian?" The Secretary retreated tactfully by saying that the matter had been concluded privately.

These psychological tricks should not be necessary, but some dynamic leadership is essential on the farms to oust the pseudo-leaders within the N.F.U. and N.U.A.W. so that some action may result against the common enemy and the common boss, the Government. The N.F.U. is weak because it merely represents a minority of the farming community, i.e., the farmers. Only 20% of the farmers are land owners and the majority of these are retired industrialists taking a holiday and evading E.P.T. and are merely playing a new game of farming. These are the men who are the controlling elements of the N.F.U. using the principle that money is power. More than 80% of the farmers are tenant farmers with holdings of less than 150 acres each. Such an outlay merely provides an average income which approximates to that of the industrial worker. The farm workers are weak in union membership as the numerical strength is split between the N.U.A.W. and the T. & G.W.U. The very nature of farm work prevents the building up of a militant movement within the structure of the union. Many left wing writers with their usual depths of dialectic vision see in the

W.A.E.C. an attempt at agrarian planning, and rejoice because the consequent concentration of machinery and gang labour provides the necessary conditions for the building up of the N.U.A.W. This is a political expediency and not necessarily a political advance. Opportunism at the expense of the added discomfort of the worker, e.g., gang labour on the threshing machines—when employed on the farms a worker will participate in such work for perhaps three weeks in the year, whereas if employed by a Committee he may do six months continuous threshing. With a greater output of machines and a more even distribution of labour this state of affairs would cease to exist. The fact that it does exist is a direct result of the stupidity of bureaucrats and the lack of awareness amongst the workers. To counteract the bureaucratic careerist elements within the ranks of the unions and the Government controlled War Agricultural Executive Committees, workers administrative committees must be set up on the farms or over a group of farms.

Apart from the very effective strike weapon used by the industrial workers the farm workers have unlimited advantages. During strikes the workers need never go hungry—there is food in the fields and the barns. Have farm workers never seen a bunch of heifers or sheep in a field of sparse grass in winter? No fence will hold them: "and 'Yon rick 'o barley looks like one o' these yer bloody mushroom in no time at all." Animals know what they require and go ahead to get it, but farm workers merely grumble and work. Their natural pride in their work is perverted and used against them by their employers. Pride in one's creative abilities and initiative is good and satisfying, but it becomes perverted into a wrangling antagonism for monetary gain between different kinds of workers. Here lies the weakness of the workers and the foundation of a sort of technocracy is laid, which is ideal for the establishment of a powerful bureaucratic control by the government. Under the camouflage of so-called "planning" and "control" new workers are drafted into the industry from the towns. They are the pot-bellied careerist vampires such as constitute the majority of the W.A.E.C.'s. They handle wage packets several times larger than those of the authentic farm workers who resent being overseered and pushed around in this manner.

All these bureaucrats, right up to the Minister of Agriculture—the soap-merchant Hudson—are protected by the law. The laws are framed to meet the needs of the ruling class. If a pheasant strays into a worker's garden and fails to return, the law acts, but if the government forces the worker to work in the rain without adequate clothes and sufficient of the food he produces, the law is non-existent. The law protects property but not the lives of men.

There must be less talk and more action. If the farmers fail to act then the workers must act alone. When strike action fails, copy the gipsy methods of "Pull and Kivver." If you are sent to thistle a field of wheat,

(Continued on p. 16)

Books

The Sanctification of Old Nick

THE MACHIAVELLIANS

By JAMES BURNHAM. Putnam, 7/6.

James Burnham, the ex-Trotskyist who wrote that brilliantly misleading book, *The Managerial Revolution*, has now written a sequel in which he deals, rather more dully but equally misleadingly, with what he calls 'the science of politics'.

Apart from its more stilted style, and slightly less plausible presentation, this new book, *The Machiavellians*, suffers from the same major defect as did *The Managerial Revolution*. Burnham makes a relatively sound analysis of the fundamental basis underlying political activity up to our own day, but, not content with this, he goes on to assert that in the nature of things the social life of man must always run according to these same rules of the game of politics.

Politics he describes as fundamentally a struggle for power, in which any benefits gained by mankind in general are likely to be quite incidental to the main aim of the politicians, and he discounts the ethical theories and Utopian aims which accompany most political activity as being mere myths to gull the people and mask the fight for power and privilege.

So far his thesis is in general acceptable to the anarchist, though the latter might be inclined to temper these assertions by pointing out that many men do in fact begin political activity from ethical or Utopian motives, and become corrupted only because of the power and privilege they attain during their political careers. However, up to this point there is little to choose between Burnham's ideas and those of the social revolutionaries.

But Burnham now goes on to assert that ethical or Utopian efforts are in fact pointless, because Utopias will never be gained. Like any old Tory defending the *status quo*, he talks about the unchangeability of human nature, and, without troubling to find out why men now live in conflict, asserts, with no attempt at any serious proof of his statements, that it is ridiculous to think that men can ever live in peace. Because the game of power has always governed social relationships, it is 'scientific' to suppose, Burnham contends, that the same condition will always afflict human society,

In fact, his reason leads him to claim that, because men have rarely enjoyed freedom in the past, it is 'human nature' not to desire freedom. "If we review the history of humanity, so far as we know it, it is apparent that despotic régimes are far more frequent than free régimes, and it would therefore seem that despotism is more nearly than freedom in accord with human nature".

Such an assertion as the last shows that, far from being scientific, Burnham's ideas and statements on politics are, in fact, entirely superficial and ill-considered. If despotic régimes have been more frequent in the history of humanity than free régimes, this proves not that men do not like freedom, but merely that they have usually been either weak or credulous enough to allow the ruling class to establish despotic power over them.

Similar objections apply to most of his other statements. The 'ideals' towards which 'Utopians' endeavour to advance mankind are, in fact, based on a scientific study of human action and thought, particularly in societies which are not governed by the law of struggle for power. The researches of anthropologists and social scientists, such as Kropotkin, Reclus and many others, whose work Burnham chooses to ignore, have proved that the basic law underlying society is not that of the 'struggle for existence', but that of mutual aid and co-operation. In primitive societies power is often unknown, and in other societies, such as the free cities of the Middle Ages and large portions of China during quite considerable periods of history, the power that may have existed was almost completely nominal and the important affairs of complex communities were administered by co-operation. Even in authoritarian societies, the ruling clique may use its power in many respects to inhibit the freedom of men, but the vital economic and personal relationships of society exist in spite of power and through mutual aid, without which instinct of human solidarity the most ferocious of dictatorships could not maintain the functioning of society for a single day.

Having brushed aside contemptuously and even without rational argument the moral bases and 'idealistic' objectives of social endeavour, having asserted that men will never be able to live

freely and must always be subjected to power, that expediency and the interest of the rulers rather than a social morality must govern society, Burnham might be expected to lapse into melancholic silence and have no hope to offer for the future of mankind. Instead, however, he goes on to assert that, although human nature is base and always will be, although all politicians aim at their personal advantage, and although men will never be free from the yokes of politics and power, yet it may still be hoped that these élites of rulers in their pursuit of advantage will realise that the happiness of the masses is expedient to them, and that thus the workers may yet attain contentment as a by-product of the power-games of the governors. In other words, the final result of all this pother is a re-statement of the Victorian slogan of 'Enlightened Self-Interest'.

Burnham's own ideas are contained in a relatively small part of the book. The majority of the text is devoted to dull synoptic studies—in the manner of Dr. Joad—of the theories of a number of cynical political theorists whose main common characteristic was the advocacy of expediency. The father of the group was Machiavelli, the sons are Mosca, Michels and Pareto—all of whom in their turn become founding fathers of Italian Fascist theory. Burnham portrays them as misunderstood men who were really trying benevolently to rescue a pitiful humanity from the toils of wicked idealists.

There is no space to discuss all these figures, but it will at least be valuable to unmask the major hero. Nicholas Machiavelli was a Florentine politician of the Sixteenth century who wrote a book, *The Prince*, in which he gave the first frank study of methods of government. What Machiavelli said so shocked his contemporaries, particularly in Protestant countries, that he became regarded as a direct agent of the devil, and his identification with the Prince of Darkness was finally consummated when the name of 'Old Nick', first applied to Machiavelli, became transferred to Lucifer himself.

Machiavelli based his theories largely on a study of the career of Cesar Borgia, whose methods of boundless duplicity and calculated ruthlessness he regarded as the ideal to be followed by every ruler. He asserted that the man who wished to hold power must be dominated only by expediency and self-interest, and that the ruler must follow morals only insofar as an affectation of morality might assist his manoeuvres. As he himself put it.

... a Prince, and especially a new Prince, cannot observe all those things, for which men are held good; he being forced, for the maintenance

of his State, to do contrary to his faith, charity, humanity, and religion: and therefore it behoves him to have a mind so disposed, as to turn and take the advantage of all winds and fortunes; and as formerly I said, not forsake the good, while he can; but to know how to make use of the evil upon necessity."

In all this, of course, Machiavelli was merely setting down what he had observed from the practice of rulers, and in the game of politics there are few (none among the successful) who have not been governed by Machiavelian principles. Most of them, of course, will deny him, but, as his seventeenth century English translator put it,

"if thou consider well the actions of the world, thou shalt find him much practiced by those that condemn him."

Machiavelli was the politician who revealed too much, and who has consequently been condemned ever since for saying openly those things which other politicians do under a cloak of sanctity. The fact remains, that his successors have all learnt from him, and that to enshrine as a benefactor of humanity this father of ruling-class tyranny is so ridiculous a fantasy that one would hardly have expected it even from a late Marxist.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

Letter to the Editors

The renewal of my subscription to *War Commentary* having become due, I take this opportunity of congratulating you upon your work. I have found the paper of great value as a stimulant to further effort in encounters I have been having with Authority in the Forces. The adherence to unpopular and "illegal" opinions is not always an easy task, and to be able to turn to *War Commentary* in time of doubt is to have one's faith re-invigorated and, more important, supported by facts.

The service you perform in publishing details of harsh and unfair treatment of the "underdog" both in the Forces and in industry, is very great. Nowhere else have I seen such cases publicised in a sympathetic manner. Your insistence upon the fraudulent nature of the claims of the Trades Unions and their multitudinous officials for support are outstanding for their trenchancy and far-sightedness. If I have any criticism to offer of *War Commentary* it is that on occasion writers become rather heavy-handed with abuse. Indignation is justified but refutations and castigations gain from moderation in language.

H.B., Bristol.

Do we want Work ?

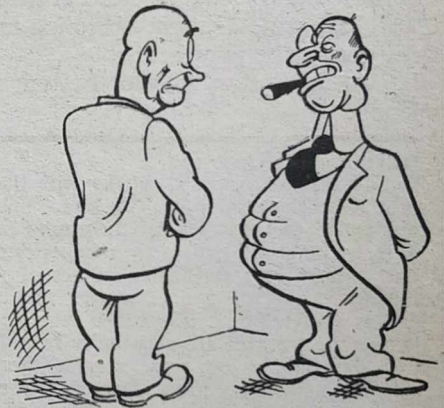
As Proudhon states, the call of the slaves in Rome was for bread and circuses, but now in this enlightened era all the slave demands is work, and when his master hears him shout for work he knows that his own dominion is assured.

Prior to 1939 the Communist renegades had the workers begging their masters for work—hunger marches, heavy drawers in the winter, etc.—and now they have got it. The only work the capitalists will ever be able to find them—work for the mutual destruction of themselves. From day to day, week to week, year to year, giving all their ability, energy, life, they are on a merry-go-round. When unemployment was two-and-a-half millions, slave camps were started where men dug holes and filled them in again. Now they build bombs and blow them up—work for everybody is the order of the day.

We are living in a fool's paradise, where one is only supposed to talk of inanities, rather than insanities. In the looney hatch there is told the story of the lad who filled the pail with no bottom in it, and that is what we are doing to-day, but never mind—it is work! In Scotland there are buildings that have taken thousands of man hours to build, with toil and sweat, and they are not to be opened. The greatest insult a slave gives a slave is to accuse him of not looking for work. Yet when he sees his boss all dressed up and going to play he thinks nothing of it. The nation has never worked harder in its whole history as in the last 4½ years, yet it has only worked itself into debt. The interest on that debt will have to be paid to the lenders, the lenders being the bosses. So the government will tax the workers to pay the non-workers—then you say we want work. To-day all work emanates from the government, who place the orders to the best known firms. Then the firms look for workers, who work at least a week without payment (even a horse won't work if he doesn't get his oats, but we are clever), when they get their bits of paper. The government takes some back and calls it taxes (when the boss does it it's a reduction in wages). Then when the government gets it back they give it to the boss, who gives it to the workers, after he deducts 10% of the whole—the more workers the more per cent. Then you say we want work! Unfortunately in a class-ridden society the propertyless class must always beg of the propertied or owning

class, and yours truly is not of the latter. So by necessity he too has to exercise the strong back, and the weak mind, but in his saner moments he asks, "What's it all about?"

Once having mooted the question, we find that the persons who own and don't work, in peace-time they follow the sun, go to garden parties, own race-horses, get divorces, drink cocktails, drive motor cars, write books, sponsor



boxing tournaments, and they are so ignorant they have to stay at school till they are about 24. The persons who don't own and do work, rarely see the sun, get skinned backing horses, can't get a divorce, drink beer, repair and build autos, haven't time to read a book, and get knocked punch drunk in their spare time, but are so intelligent they leave school when they are 14. The persons who don't own and don't work ain't quoted.

In wartime the first named change their routine. They follow the safe areas, go to hotels, become generals, give each other medals, make speeches, and accuse the workers of slacking. While the non-owners become military objectives, are bombed, bayoneted, bludgeoned, rationed, robbed, again divided into workers and soldiers, and the latter (who don't own and don't work) just ain't quoted, and you say we want work.

The answer I find is that we shall all have to own—to do this the means of production will have to be socially owned, by the producers—then the produce will have to be divided among the consumers, who of course will be the producers, but maybe this is too sensible. However, I'll be back again. I want my bed. In the meantime read the *A.B.C. of Anarchism*.

EDDIE SHAW.

Glasgow Anarchist's Hunger Strike against Conscription

On Monday, 31st January, our comrade, Frank Leech, an active member of the Glasgow Anarchist Federation, was imprisoned in Barlinnie Prison to serve a sentence of sixty days. He was condemned to a twenty-five pounds fine or sixty days imprisonment for refusal to register for firewatching. Frank Leech, when he appeared before the Sheriff's Court at Glasgow, pointed out that the Orders and Regulations under which he was charged had been arbitrarily foisted upon the common people of this country and that the principles behind them were the same as those operating in Nazi Germany, i.e. obey or be punished.

Before going to gaol he sent us the following letter:

(Continued from p. 13)

work hard but cover the thistles with the earth so that they grow with the next rain. There are many ways of picking apples: if the pay is good the apples are good, if the pay is poor the apples rot in their boxes during storage. This does not merely constitute an act of retribution. Often during a glut of fruit, farmers are unmoved by strike action preferring to allow the fruit to rot on the trees. When the workers are eventually forced to return to work they are paid a low price at piece-work rates. Thus, it must be made clear to the farmers that such acts are in the nature of preventative measures and warnings. Cows must be milked but it is not necessary to send away the milk through the Milk-Marketing Board. Work such as hedging, ploughing, building renovation can be done carefully and thoroughly so that actual mass production is delayed but the value of the workers' labour is retained in the land. These are the preliminary skirmishes from which valuable lessons can be drawn before finally the workers take control of the whole industry. Ploughing orders need not be carried out, or any other orders of the Committees. A month ago the farmers of the Craven district of Yorkshire did a lot of talking about using this method of strike action against the Ministry of Food. But they only talked, and at a mass meeting at Skipton Mr. W. Corbett, Chairman of the N.F.U. (West Riding Branch) talked much louder and faster and finally persuaded the farmers to call off the strike. The farmers made the mistake of acting alone without enlisting the support of all the farm staffs. Thus the farmers and the workers are betrayed to the Government by their leaders. Except during times of crisis the ruling powers have ceased to take an interest in the land mainly because more profit with less discomfort and a more efficient control of labour can be derived from other industries. The whole system enables the bosses to live in comfort without coming into contact with the sweating bodies of the workers. With the relatively subservient position of agriculture it is obvious that the interests of the workers almost invariably coincide with the interests of the farmers. Just as it is a complete waste of time for a labourer to argue with a farmer, so it is a complete waste of time for a farmer to argue with the Government. All argument is futile and a waste of time and energy. A co-ordinated action of workers and farmers is desirable and is the only effective weapon against the Government, a weapon which will be readily understood and which will defeat any counter constitutional action, and any combat with mass armed force would be impossible.

Dear Comrades,

At any moment now I expect to be yanked away to Barlinnie Prison, to serve my sentence of 60 days for refusing to firewatch.

I do not intend to eat any food whilst inside the prison walls. In other words I will go on "Hunger-Strike" as a protest against this conscription.

Fraternally yours,

FRANK LEECH.

Frank Leech has been on hunger strike since the 31st of January. His act of protest has aroused a great deal of sympathy among Glasgow workers. The girls at Barr & Stroud's factory have shown how much they appreciate the help he gave them during their recent strike; it was suggested to the chairman during a meeting that a collection be taken inside the works to pay the fine.

Anarchists have everywhere fought against the tyranny of authority, and during the present war our movement has fought unremittingly against the Emergency Powers Act, the Essential Works Order, compulsory fire watching, and conscription in every form. Frank Leech has refused to submit himself to the dictation of the government. He has denounced it as essentially fascist in character, and has challenged it by declaring a hunger strike. Frank Leech's stand is another blow in the worker's struggle against the master class.

*

As we go to press, we have heard from Glasgow that Frank Leech has been released after some friends had paid the fine. His hunger strike had lasted for seventeen days.

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