

WAR For Anarchism COMMENTARY

Vol. 5. No. 7.

FEBRUARY, 1944

TWOPENCE

Bevin's Servile State

WHEN HILAIRE BELLOC wrote his warning *The Servile State* many years ago he must have had a prophetic vision of Ernest Bevin as Minister of Labour. It is true that the Labour Party and the smaller parties which are self-styled Socialist carried the threat of taking from us the few liberties the workers had wrenched from the old go-as-you-please capitalism, but on the other hand we were promised higher wages and economic security in return. Now with Labour ministers sharing power with the Tories we have from the swift and heavy blows of Bevin lost most of those liberties without receiving any security in return and instead of the higher wages and succulent reforms the effect of Bevin's decrees is to reduce wages.

Of the two most important of these measures, the Essential Works Order and conscription, the friends and admirers of Bevin claim the former as a direct and substantial gain of the workers. Even the brassy faced Communists hesitate to claim the latter as such.

As for ourselves we have from the beginning denounced the Essential Works Order as the most vicious anti-working class legislation. That it rested lightly on the shoulders of the workers during its early days and that it contained a couple of syrup portions of workers "rights and privileges" did not deceive us or soften our opposition. Our opposition to the E.W.O. from the date of its introduction to the present moment and our determination to continue



that resistance is justified by the history of that reactionary measure. Almost any edition of any newspaper will testify to the class-war character of Bevin's favourite work. We might fill our paper with examples such as the two, both taken from the same page of the one newspaper, displayed below.

SACKED MEN WERE NOT TAKEN BACK.

"For refusing when directed to reinstate two welders who had been dismissed for alleged misconduct, Plant, Machinery and Accessories, Ltd., were fined £20 and ordered to pay £21 costs at West London yesterday.

It was said that the two men had been without work for 26 weeks, and the company had not paid them a penny in wages."

Daily Express, page 3, 13/1/44.

GIRL SENT TO JAIL FOR LEAVING JOB.

"For leaving her employment without permission, Elsie Howard, aged 19, was sent to jail for a month at Nottingham yesterday."

Daily Express, page 3, 13/1/44.

As with other such examples we have quoted in *War Commentary* a girl who stays away from work for a month or so is sent to jail, while an employer may prevent two or more men from working for six months and the firm is fined, usually a maximum, £20. While more than 1,000 workers have gone to jail because of this measure, no employer has suffered that penalty.

The Case Of Desoutters

Great publicity is being given the small firm of Desoutters. This London firm, engaged on highly valuable tool work, has for years refused to recognise trade unions. Indeed, the workers there had been unorganised until about a year ago when a majority joined the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the National Union of Municipal and General Workers and the National Amalgamated Furnishing Trades Association. Being dissatisfied with workshop conditions, the workers hoped to secure some improvement by trade union action, but the firm still refused to recognise the unions. The workers then gave twenty-one days notice of strike action to enforce recognition of the trade unions concerned.

The three unions then appealed to their members not to enforce the demand for recognition and the Shop Convener, V. G. Jackson of the A.E.U. pinned to the notice board an appeal to the workers not to strike. Desoutters, showing their deep contempt of this trade union cowardice, dismissed Jackson for displaying a notice without permission.

Taking Jackson's case to the Appeal Board the A.E.U. secured an instruction for his reinstatement. Like many employers, Desoutters defied the law and refused to employ Jackson or to admit him to the factory, although they continued to pay him his wages.

This happened about six months ago and all that has happened is that the firm has been de-

scheduled under the E.W.O., though exactly what the result of this is is not quite clear, though it is claimed that it will prevent the firm continuing its important war work. One thing is certain, Desoutters management are not in jail, as Elsie Howard and other girls and women are, nor do they seem to expect it.

If the workers of Desoutters are to enforce recognition of their delegates and secure improved working conditions they must resort, not to Appeal Boards or pleas to the Ministry of Labour, not to futile trade union procedure, but to the strike action they at first threatened.

The Syrup And The Medicine

We are told that the E.W.O. contains clauses "protecting" the workers. Bevin and the trade union movement of which he is a leader having, from within, disarmed the workers, give in return a small promise of government protection. Let us see what this protection is worth.

First, a worker cannot be dismissed, except for serious misconduct, without permission of the National Service Officer. But what is serious misconduct? The Order does not tell us. It is largely left to the employer to decide what is serious misconduct and who has committed it. If he has sufficient faith the dismissed worker may appeal to a ministry board. However, if the Appeal Board upholds the worker the National Service Officer may cancel the board's decision and no court of law in the country may upset his decision—he is a local dictator. Further, in the few cases in which the worker's cause has been upheld it remains for the employer to defy the decision and risk prosecution. If prosecuted and found guilty the firm will probably be fined £20, a fleabite on a capital of £200,000, £300,000 or £500,000.

The second "safeguard" is the guaranteed week, an employer coming within the Order must pay his workers a full week's wages, guaranteeing them a full week's work. But, in wartime such anticipated cases rarely arise, because of the shortage of labour. If they did, without the Order to regulate them, workers would, obviously, refuse to continue in the employ of a firm which put them on short time in a time of labour famine. The measure is meant to prevent strikes and disturbances rather than to protect the worker. In any case, the workers can well protect themselves on this issue without the help of Mr. Bevin.

Bevin's measures—the Essential Works Order, industrial conscription, forced transfer of labour, imprisonment of workers, protection of employers, strike-breaking, wage reductions and the press gang recruitment of lads for the coal mines are so obviously anti-working-class as to need no pointing. Yet the Labour and Communist Parties look forward to

the E.W.O. being retained after the war as a permanent institution and express their warm approval of it. A Communist leaflet on the Desoutter case says:

"The Essential Works Order is a very necessary measure to control the man-power of the country and direct it to the best use in the interests of the war effort. Under it workers may be directed to places where their skill and labour can be put to the best use."

The Revolt Of The "Bevin Boys"

It was expected by the Government that the brilliant plan of putting miners in the Army and making synthetic miners of shop assistants, clerks and college boys would leaven the mining areas with a less rebellious element. The reverse has been the case. The "Bevin boys" have shown a splendid example to their fellow workers. They have shown that modern youth is beginning to resent being pushed about. The slight gain they have won has been

grudgingly forced from the Government because of the Direct Action taken by the boys.

Without relying on trade unions or "procedure", they tackled their problem in a Syndicalist fashion. We congratulate them, but warn them not to disband their committees, relax their efforts or allow the stealthy victimisation of their delegates. Their full demands are far from being met.

To them and the miners who have just been "awarded" twenty shilling less than their moderate wage demand, to all labour conscripts, to the Tyneside "clippies" and all deportees, to all victims of Bevin's slave decrees we say:

"Build your committees on the job. Resist slavery. Establish contact with other resisting workers. You are learning the first principle of Syndicalism. As you learn others you will find your strength increase until you are bold enough to take and hold that which you produce without paying tribute to a master class or submitting your necks to the yokes of their Labour lackeys."

ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

COMMUNISTS AND U.S. CAPITALISM

COMMUNIST strike-breaking and belly-crawling to Churchill and Roosevelt has brought them with apparent logic to the point where Earl Browder, American Communist leader, has become an avowed apologist for capitalism. It is needless to point out however that any outcome of this move as regards C.P. policy in the future should not be looked for on the basis of any trend in immediate party moves. There is only one logic inherent and constant throughout the comrats somersaults: Devotion to Joe Stalin.

None the less Browder's recent pronouncements are interesting as showing the lengths to which their devotion will drive them. As long ago as March 1943 he declared that "We are perfectly willing to support a Capitalism in the United States after the war which is compatible with the interests of the people and which takes into account the necessary problems of the people". One wonders where this remarkable type of capitalism is to be found—In Utopia, perhaps? But Browder has gone a good deal further in his recent speech on January 10th (printed in the English *Daily Worker* on 21/1/44). Although Marx and Engels declared in the Communist Manifesto of 97 years ago ("But times have changed, comrade!) that "Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat." Browder says that "Capitalism and Socialism have begun to find the way to peaceful co-existence and collaboration in the same world . . . We are ready to co-operate in making this capitalism work effectively in the post-war period with the least possible burdens on the people".

That this represents merely an extension of their policy of class-collaboration, *union sacrée*, national unity, (or whatever other pleasant-sounding name is employed to cover a policy of strike-breaking and providing industrial narks for the boss-class), is shown by the following passages from Browder's confession. "If national unity of

the war period is to be extended and even strengthened in the post-war period, then we must recognize that in the United States this requires from Marxists the re-affirmation of our wartime policy that will not raise the issue of Socialism in such a form and manner as to endanger or weaken that unity . . . That is already our practical situation; and we are now extending the perspective of national unity for many years into the future. It is no longer an 'emergency situation' but is merging into a 'normal situation.'" American workers suffering under wage reducing devices like the "Little Steel Formula", rising food prices, and other features of this benign capitalism which Browder has pledged the comrats to "co-operate in making . . . work effectively", will be encouraged to learn that all this is to continue "for many years into the future"!

At the same time Browder announced that the party will no longer function as a party—"that is, with their own separate candidates in elections except under special circumstances when they may be forced to act through 'independent candidates'." Instead it will be called the "Communist Educational Political Association". It seems likely that Stalin recognizes that in America, where there is no Labour Party even, let alone any prospect of Social Democrats winning any General Election, the C.P. have less than no chance at all of victory at the polls. It is better for him therefore if his American Fifth Column devote their "considerable gifts for permeation and organization" (as the *New Statesman* euphemistically terms the C.P. talents for intrigue) to the purpose of bolstering up pro-Russian elements in the American ruling class.

The American C.P. have usually swung into the new Party Line some time before English Stalinists. It will be interesting to see if Pollitt gets all matey with the F.B.I.! Palme Dutt has already (*Daily Worker*, 21/1/44) applauded Browder's speech as an example of the "extreme suppleness and flexibility" of Leninism. But having justified Stalin's pact with Hitler, they should not find it too hard to justify the ways of British Imperialist Capitalism!

THE NEW POLAND

ON the entry of Russia into the war a widely publicised accord was reached between Stalin and the Polish government in London. By anyone who bore in mind the imperialist ambitions of both sides—each of which had shown a marked desire to expand at the expense of the other—this demonstration was received with scepticism. As early as the beginning of 1943 a more true picture of the relationship between the two sides was given when Russia demanded that the future Polish frontier should approximate to the Curzon Line, while the Poles, no doubt tacitly supported by the British and American governments, who wish to see the post-war Russian frontier as far as possible from Western Europe, demanded a restoration of the Poland of August, 1939. The dispute died down, but the ill feeling between the two ruling classes came to the surface again later in the year, when the Germans reported finding a mass grave of Polish officers murdered by the Russians. The Poles, knowing the Bolsheviks, tended to give credence to the story, the indignation of the Russians, at the mere suggestion of an enquiry, was suspiciously violent, and showed, at the least, a desire to co-operate as little as possible with their nominal "Allies".

Events have now brought the frontier dispute to a decisive phase. The Russians have driven the German army over the 1939 frontier, and now occupy a fair piece of former Polish territory. With such a *fait accompli* in their hands, they approached the Polish Government in London once again and suggested that the Curzon Line should be the frontier. The Polish politicians tried to temporise and suggested negotiations, no doubt in the hope that the British and American governments would give them some kind of support. The Russian government turned down their offer and immediately declared an unilateral decision in its own favour. Moreover, it produced its own shadow Polish government, consisting, like its German Committee, of officers and reactionaries. It is an interesting fact that, while the Polish Government in London contained among its officials representatives of the Socialists and the Bund (Jewish Social Democrats), the Committee in Moscow contains no members of these parties. (Ehrlich and Alter were their leading representatives in Russia).

One of the most significant facets of this involved situation of power politics is the offer by the Russian government to give East Prussia to the new Poland, coupled with claims emanating from the Polish Committee in Moscow for Silesia and other territories on the Polish-German border. The offer of East Prussia runs counter to all the declared policy of the Allies for the self-determination of peoples. Its population is more than 90% German, and would never settle down under a Polish imperialism. The same applies to Silesia. In these two territories there are more than seven million Germans—who, it is blandly suggested, should be returned to the restricted circle of the new Germany, while their vacant land will be filled with Polish settlers.

No-one imagines politics to be anything other than a game of power, but in recent years power has rarely been exhibited so openly and crudely as it is now shown by Stalin over the Polish question—that veteran problem of European intrigue. In our generation only the Nazis have been so ruthless.

This, of course, does not mean that any government is more or less liable than another to use power for its own ends. It is merely that old ruling classes like the British are able to use their power in a more covert manner. But the important feature of the present situation is not that power has been used crudely, but that it has

been so used by a government which at its very beginning condemned power politics and which has always paid at least lip service to the self-determination of peoples. Even the Communist Party will be hard put to it to find the right text of Lenin to cover this situation.

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BEVIN'S BLUFF

The Reinstatement in Civil Employment Bill aims at giving a feeling of security to men and women in the forces who might not unnaturally be haunted by the fear of unemployment after the war. It is difficult to believe however that anyone will be much comforted by Bevin's bill. It applies to men and women who after May 25, (Continued on p. 5)

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1939, entered on whole-time service in the armed forces and to those who after April 10, 1941 entered on whole-time service in a Civil Defence force. The employer is obliged to reinstate an applicant at the first opportunity, if any, at which it is *reasonable and practicable* to do so. Who is to decide what *reasonable and practicable* means? The Ministry of Labour of course, who will, at the time, make regulations to define the meaning of *reasonable and practicable*. The interpretation given to the E.W.O. does not lead one to believe that the Ministry of Labour will give a definition which is likely to cause embarrassment to the employers.

Workers will be reinstated in their jobs for 26 weeks at least or (a loophole is opened here again) for so much of the period as is *reasonable and practicable*.

The question of wages is left equally vague. The person is to be re-employed in the job he had before the beginning of his war service *on terms and conditions not less favourable* than those which would have been his had he not joined up. If, however, it is not *reasonable and practicable* that the re-employment should be in that occupation and on such terms and conditions, then there is the obligation to re-instate him "in the most favourable terms and conditions which are *reasonable and practicable* in his case". If work is not available nothing seems to prevent the employer from giving a skilled worker an office boy's job "on the most favourable terms".

Not surprisingly the Minister of Labour foresees disputes arising from the application of the bill. These will be deferred to Reinstatement Committees, consisting of an employer, an employer's representative, and an employee's representative, *all to be chosen by the Minister*.

The Minister will decide what is *reasonable and practicable* and will also nominate the people who will see that the terms of the bill are carried out fairly. The workers representatives play no part in all this, they are entirely at the mercy of the Ministry of Labour, which, as has been amply demonstrated in this war is under the thumb of Big Business. Of all post-war carrots Bevin's certainly takes some beating for its improbability.

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BOMBS AND DOCKERS

THE time bombs in the orange cases arriving from Spain have received a great deal of publicity in the Press. They are apparently going to decide if Franco is to be considered a friend or a foe, if he is on the side of fascism or of democracy. But the fact that the oranges are unloaded by troops acting as unwilling blacklegs on their fellow workers has passed unnoticed. This represents however a greater danger to the working class than a few time bombs!

Dockers refused to unload 60,000 cases of oranges and 20,000 cases of lemons and onions because the Ministry of Transport refused to pay the 6/- an hour danger money the dockers asked for. Troops were drafted in so that the Government got the job done on 3/6 a day. Not only the dockers but the public will suffer from this policy. It is reported that 50 per cent. of the cargo and 70 per cent of the oranges have gone bad. This is probably not only due to the delay caused by time spent detecting time bombs, but also to the fact that the troops had to be called in and that they cannot expect to do the work as quickly or as efficiently as skilled dockers. We shall go without oranges but the Ministry of Transport has not moved an inch.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

London FRIENDS OF FREEDOM PRESS, calling all comrades and friends and all who enjoy reading "War Commentary"!

As our share of the special effort which will be required to raise £1,000 for the Press Fund during the year, we are organising a Solidarity Drive which we hope everyone interested in the future of Freedom Press will wholeheartedly support.

During the next few days we shall be issuing books of Solidarity tickets which will sell at 6d. per ticket. Our objective is to sell 15,000 of these tickets between now and June 10th and thus raise £375 which will be handed over to the Press Fund. All expenses will be met by the London F.F.P. so that every ticket sold will be 6d. for the Press Fund.

We appeal to all SUBSCRIBERS to "War Commentary" to support our initiative in the following way: we want them to buy one ticket every time they receive their copy of "War Commentary" for the duration of the drive. That means to say they will be paying 8d. for each copy of "War Commentary" for the next 8 issues. We are arranging for a 5/- book of tickets to be included with the mid-February issue of "War Commentary": 8 tickets for you and the other two for the person who reads your "War Commentary" when you have finished with it!

TO THOSE COMRADES AND FRIENDS who buy "War Commentary" from their regular sellers whether at open air pitches or at group meetings don't wait to be asked, but give him 8d. for your copy and he will give you a solidarity ticket with your "War Commentary".

TO THOSE COMRADES AND FRIENDS who buy their Freedom Press literature in shops which are not willing to sell the solidarity tickets send up for a book of tickets and do the same as the subscribers will be doing.

TO THOSE COMRADES AND FRIENDS who can still go on contributing to the Press Fund as in the past year let not this initiative of ours prevent you from continuing to show your solidarity. We want our Solidarity Ticket campaign to be an EXTRA to what is being done and only in as much as it is over and above the steady flow of contributions to the Press Fund will it be effective in helping Freedom Press to reach the £1,000 they require this year in order to carry on.

LONDON F.F.P.

LESSONS from GLASGOW STRIKE

THE SPATE OF RECENT strikes has demonstrated the awakening of the workers to a consciousness of their true interests—the recognition of the unavoidable antagonism between Masters and Wage-Slaves. Lined up on one side:— Management, Directors, Shareholders, Bureaucrats, T.U. Slave-Traders, Position hunting Communists, Politicians (of various hues), the Legal fraternity and the “moral” justifiers of the “rights of property”. On the other side:— The Worker—male and female—the Wage-Slave—the Striker, badgered, maligned, threatened and driven by their so-called superiors or benefactors.. There can be no peace between Tyrants and Slaves. The workers must open their eyes, and carry this antagonism to its logical conclusion—the destruction of Class-Society.

The recent strike at Barr & Strouds, at Glasgow, where 2,000 women and 900 men came out, showed very clearly who are the enemies of the Workers, and whom they have to overcome.

The Women came out on the 11th December and remained solid until the 11th January. 900 men who had voted for the strike joined them at 3 p.m. on the 6th January. Here we must give credit to these 900 who came out in opposition to the whole gamut of reaction:— yellow-bellies, Garvie's men, the Comrats, Trade-unionists, the press, etc. These 900 were real heroes. 1,800 men had remained in, some dreading the lash of the master's whip, men who for more than 20 years between the Wars grovelled to keep away from the Bureau queue. Others, influenced by the Stalinists, were confused because they had allowed “Leaders” to do their thinking for them. Others again still thought they had something to gain in retaining the Trade-Union Bureaucracy. These 1,800 became black-legs on their fellow workers, the 2,900 men and women who were out. Fellow-Worker Chapman, a delegate from Barrow, pointed out to them. “If you don't support the Women now, you'll reap the whirlwind after the War.”

On the 11th January, after the magnificent demonstration of Solidarity by the women, the Shop Stewards and the Strike Committee, recommended that “they go back to work pending negotiations”. Twice a show of hands was taken. The voting each time appeared to be 50/50. Stewards officiating at the meeting decided to call off the strike.

Charlie Menzies the A.E.U. Shop Steward Convenor addressing the meeting said:—

“This is one of the rottenest jobs I have ever had to do, to recommend you to return to work on the basis of negotiations. I cannot promise you anything but negotiations. Our T.U. officials had given them the assurance that the minimum offer they would get from the management would be the last offer before the strike . . . The Shop Stewards had recommended the Strike Committee to accept this . . . We took into consideration the fact that we have not had the support of the male-workers in this factory *in toto*, nor have we had the support of the workers on the Clyde . . . The combination of forces against us are formidable, and we feel that this is the moment to break off the battle, retreat and regroup. Many girls feel that we have fought for four weeks and gained nothing. But this is not the case . . . The offer was forced by the threat of action . . . They were keeping the Strike Committee in being in the meantime . . . You must eliminate from leading positions the rats who run to the bosses.”

However, it remains to be seen whether they were wise in calling off the strike. Certainly the management

will give some form of concession to appease the women at least. They are in an angry mood and for two pins would come out again.

Next time they must act with speed, benefiting from the knowledge gained from this strike. First make it known to other factories, yards, and depôts. Don't leave it to circulars to Shop-Stewards and Branch Secretaries. Many of these officials sabotage your efforts by keeping back or delaying the letters or circulars you send. You must send your speakers to the gates in the meal-hours. Make known where the strike is taking place. Don't wait two or three weeks to get your collectors out.

The Shop Stewards had appealed to several Members of Parliament to intervene in the dispute, but after two or three meetings with them they received the notification that they would not interfere with the work of the Trade Union Officials. If they would give any decision at all, it would be to recommend the Strikers to return to work. The M.P.s interviewed were Neil Maclean, Adam McKinley, Wm. Leonard, J. J. Davidson, George Buchanan, James Maxton and John McGovern. Why the Shop Stewards should have appealed to the M.P.s I don't know. What can you get from them but further obstacles and intrigues. Leave the politicians out of your struggles and rely on your own strength.

One interesting feature of the strike was that 75% of the girls were not organised in any Trade Union. If they had been action would probably never have taken place, and discontent would have been frittered away in resolutions and procedure. I hear there is to be a drive for 100% membership of the T.U.s. I ask you fellow-workers: What do you gain from Reformist Trade-Unionism? The Leaders are always against you. Their funds are closed to you. What is the use of paying dues for strike benefit if you never get it when you need it?

The argument is sometimes used, “If you have no Trade Union the employers will not negotiate with you”. Our answer is: Let him negotiate with an empty factory. Or better still take over the factory yourselves. Those who at present own them have no right to them. Workers built them, Workers put the machinery into them. Workers made the machinery. You use the machinery. You alone have the right to the factories and their produce.

Anarchist-Syndicates are the form of organisation you need to carry on your struggles. With these Syndicates you decide how you will act and when you will act. You keep your own funds in each factory. Salaried officials have no place in Syndicates. All workers in each factory irrespective of their trade are in the one Syndicate. Each Syndicate has a fraternal relationship with the Syndicates in other factories. Is this not a better form of organisation than the Trades Unions? If you are interested obtain literature on the subject from The Anarchist Bookshop, 127, George Street, Glasgow, C.1., or from Freedom Press, 27, Belsize Road, London, N.W.6.

The literature will be most helpful, but the lessons of your four weeks struggle will have proved to you the necessity of discarding the outworn and reactionary Trade-Union machine, and the forging instead a new form of organisation which you can control and use to destroy not only Fascism in all its forms, but also this vicious system of Wage-Slavery.

It has been announced that the women are going to receive an increase of 2d. an hour.

FRANK LEECH.



WHO'S NEXT ?

MUCH HAS BEEN said, written and spoken during the past few weeks about the release of the wealthy fuhrer

Sir Oswald Mosley. But this is not, of course, an isolated case—the majority of the fascists who were detained in 1940 are leaving their houses of detention. It is very plain that the fundamental reason that Mr. Morrison, on the authority of the Cabinet, is releasing these gentry is because of the ever-diminishing scare of invasion. It has been seen in 1940 that the active supporters of invading Hitler fascism were the native fascists, most of whom secured themselves firmly in the ruling faction to which they, by birth, belonged. Had the invasion taken place here, there is no reason to suppose that the aristocrats and high-ranking members of the Army and Navy detained reluctantly by the Government, would have acted any different from their prototypes abroad. But the invasion did not take place, and the Government no longer feels inclined to continue the period of detention. Hence, one by one so as not to excite undue alarm and fears of espionage, the extreme right wing goes free.

But we note that while the Government no longer fears foreign invasion, and hence is easy about the pro-Nazis, it has shown quite clearly its belief in its relationships with the leaders of "liberated territory" abroad, that it does fear international revolution, and consequently its uneasiness will pass from reactionaries to revolutionaries.

We have witnessed police persecution of militant left movements before. It was particularly acute in France, where the class-consciousness of the workers was a constant source of irritation to the rulers. In peace and war, the police persecution went to the limit of its powers in a country still nominally democratic; when France was given over to the fascist dictatorship of Pétain and Laval by the invading German armies, the police records and dossiers were more valuable aid to the new rulers than several Panzer divisions. The spearhead of the Nazi attack on the workers of France has not been the German police, easily recognisable, but the French police, long adept in the job for which they are wanted. Whole concentration camps full of anti-Nazi refugees were handed over *en bloc* to the Nazi jackals, and the arrest of hostages proceeded according to the plan not of those far-off in Berlin, but of the men on the spot who knew exactly who were "dangerous". When property was confiscated, it was the policemen on the spot again who knew where the valuable war materials they had guarded were. They prevented its being sabotaged—and handed over everything intact to the Germans. Murder and theft—the prevention of which is the excuse for having a police force at all. But, pleads the inevitable man who remains unconvinced, surely you don't mean that the village bobby whom I treated to half-a-pint the other night, is prepared to denounce me to a fascist dictatorship? If he intended to keep his job if such a government was established, that is just what he would have to do. Let it never be forgotten that Scotland Yard is perfectly prepared to collaborate with fascism, since it enjoys the unenviable distinction of being one of the public bodies in this country which have already actively collaborated with Nazism and Fascism—with Gestapo and Ova, from the first day of these régimes to the day war was declared.

Those who genuinely believe that a police force is a stabilising factor in a community, to prevent chaos, would

be well advised to study the reports put out by such bodies as the Polish Government (themselves no opponents of the system) on the conduct of the Gestapo in establishing order in Warsaw. Do they suppose the Gestapo officials are merely recruited from the Nazi Party? Certainly the Party may seize the best jobs, but the real work of terrorism is done by the rank-and-file—many of whom learnt their routine under the Weimar Republic, but were prevented by scruples then prevailing of carrying out their work to its logical conclusion. Who dares say there must be a Gestapo, to preserve the order that now reigns in Warsaw?

If the Government ordains police persecution of left movements, we shall find the police exactly in a position to follow the line of the French, German, Dutch, Norwegian police. For an attack on any section of working-class opinion is inevitably a prelude to an attack on the working-class itself. Just as the dissolution of the fascist parties led to suspicion inevitably falling on those around and near to them, in anti-semitic, super-patriotic or pro-German-Nazi organisations, so will the dissolution of any revolutionary body inevitably lead to the same measures being dealt to those near or with some similar views to them (and the police can seldom distinguish between colours). But no restraints of wealth and position will hold them back in this case, as it did when an attack on the right wing led them to the fringes of the Conservative Party. An attack on the left will direct itself into an attack on all bodies existing on the revolutionary sympathies of the working-class, and on the manifestations of those sympathies such as strike and industrial bodies. We do not suppose the trade unions will be directly attacked, but by force of totalitarian measures in industry and repressive measures on opinion, they will be forced into the lines of the French unions under Daladier—which have met their eventual fate in puppet corporations led by ex-Socialists at Vichy.

Let us remember that for this to happen does not necessarily mean a foreign invasion. It happened in Germany, and Portugal without a foreign invasion. It is happening at the moment in South America: we learn that the Argentine is endeavouring to force these measures of suppressing free labour movements and forming one "official" corporative labour body, which, coupled with repression of opinion, is fascism. What can happen in the Argentine without even war-time emergency providing the opportunity, can certainly happen here, the headquarters of a major imperialism, in a major war. What has prevented it up to now has been the fact that the masses have always been quick to resent dictatorial measures, no other issue rousing indignation so easily as repression. Once this can be glossed over by talk of unity, good-bye to even the limited freedom we now have!

Straws in the wind, isolated cases, tiny pin-pricks that may become dagger-thrusts, are already to be discerned. Talk of measures that must be taken, excessive official curiosity and zeal. And of course the weapon always hanging in the official armoury, that if they can't grab you on one charge they can always pass another regulation and grab you on another. The symptoms that the next offensive will be against the supporters of international freedom, are already to be seen. Just as in 1940 the supporters of international fascism had to be momentarily disposed of, so in a coming "1918" the supporters of international freedom will be stifled. The only thing that can prevent it is for those who believe in freedom to be ready to carry on as their comrades abroad have carried on, come whatever tyranny.

A.M.

"FRUITS OF VICTORY"

Many crates, baskets, and hampers containing oranges, lemons, and bananas were among the luggage which arrived at a London station with that of Mr. & Mrs. Churchill to-day.

They bore labels addressed to members of the party who came home with the Prime Minister.

Evening Standard, 18/1/44.

We are told that there is no shipping space available for oranges and bananas to be imported for British children but there seem to be planes big enough to transport ample supplies of fruit for Churchill's family. Obviously our Prime Minister does not believe in waiting for the "fruits of victory".

★

DUSTMEN STRIKE

Sixty corporation dustmen at Workington, who stopped work on Friday claiming a war bonus of 2s. per week, decided yesterday to continue the strike indefinitely. They rejected the advice of Alderman J. M. Cusack, the agent of the Transport Workers' Union, to resume their employment.

Manchester Guardian, 17/1/44.

★

ATROCITIES FILMED

The film of the Kharkov trial and executions, entitled "The Court is Coming," has been shown in Moscow before its release to the public, says Reuter's correspondent.

The court scenes are interwoven with shots of German atrocities, and the complete film runs for nearly an hour.

It is expected that the film will be made available in Britain, America and other Allied countries.

Evening Standard, 15/1/44.

The war will probably last long enough for us to see a film of the Germans playing football with that famous baby.

★

THOSE POOR RICH

I have been looking at a sale catalogue that would excite the envy of every woman I know. It is a sale of furs, one of the biggest collections ever owned by one woman.

Some 83 items are listed. They include a Manchurian sable cloak, a Russian sable cape, a chinchilla cloak and a mink coat. Each of these will probably fetch hundreds of pounds.

Owner of this collection was Mrs. Sarah Harris-Lebus, whose will was published in September. She left £583,924. Early in December her porcelain, pottery, ivory, furniture and glass fetched nearly £16,000 at Christies. Her jewels were sold for £36,000.

Mrs. Harris-Lebus lived in Belgrave-square. She was the widow of Harris-Lebus, the cabinet maker, whose business has grown into one of the biggest furniture manufacturing concerns in the country.

Evening Standard, 30/12/43.

It will come as a shock to our readers to learn that Mrs. Harris-Lebus was not a miner's wife.

RICH "SOCIALISTS"

The will of Mrs. Bernard Shaw will be published in a few days. I learn she has left more than £150,000.

Mrs. Shaw is not the only Socialist who in recent years has left a comfortable estate.

Mr. Arthur Henderson left £23,000, Mr. John Burns £15,137. Mr. John Wheatley, the Clydesider, left £16,795.

Evening Standard, 24/1/44.

Through

MINERS' INGRATITUDE

Haulage hands employed at Mosley Common Colliery, owned by Manchester Collieries, Ltd., came out on strike to-day as a protest against the award of the National Wages Tribunal.

Colliers who went down the mines had to be brought back to the surface, and over 1400 men are idle.

It is understood that in Lancashire, where the rates of pay are higher than in other areas, the award represents a very small increase on the wages now being received, and to the higher paid underground workers it is declared to be of no benefit at all.

Evening Standard, 24/1/44.

★

CRUELTY TO CHILDREN

All New York has been shocked, says a B.U.P. message, by the revelation that at a home in the city children have been given as much as 50 hours' solitary confinement in an underground cell for trivial offences.

The local society for the prevention of cruelty to children, which runs the home, is denounced by an official investigation committee for having "wrought incalculable harm to thousands of children."

The committee says the children were underfed, often given corporal punishment for minor infringements of rules which had not been changed since 1874.

The staff, said the committee's report, were overworked and lacked educational background and training.

News Chronicle, 24/1/44.

Newspapers recently announced that Americans were being trained for the job of re-educating the Germans.

★

WELSH COMMON SENSE

When a Parliamentary candidate wants your vote he is ready to kiss your baby and do anything you like. But when he is an M.P. you may be looked upon as an infernal nuisance.

In the same way, every soldier is a cherished hero while we want him to fight for us.

But, when the war is over, who cares two hoots about him?

Of course, that was what happened in the last war, when old soldiers had to be assisted to be able to join in the annual regimental re-union.

Cardiff and Suburban News, 15/1/44.

REFORMS FAIL AGAIN

Dr. Edith Summerskill, drawing attention in the House of Commons yesterday to the increase in venereal disease in this country, said that after Regulation 33B had been in force six months two men and 64 women had been treated as a result of the regulation. "I am told that the number of fresh cases in 1942 was 120,000. Think of 120,000 people transmitting the disease to hundreds of men and women and unborn children."

Manchester Guardian, 21/1/44.

the Press

BELATED ADMISSION

That there is an irreconcilable breach between the mass of the French people and big business in France is not a new revelation. It has been known for some long time now that before, during and after the military collapse of France in this war, the majority of big capitalists, known in France as the "200 families", were and still are in spirit and in deeds on the side of the enemy of their country, while the mass of the population, including the overwhelming majority of the working people, peasants, the middle classes and the great part of small and medium employers are fighting and resisting for all they're worth the invader of their country. From the beginning of the occupation, the big capitalists have made a deal with the Nazis and put all their resources and their industrial productive power in their service.

I.F.T.U. Bulletin, 1/1/44.

This is not only true of France but of all capitalist countries. American and British capitalists would have acted like the French in similar circumstances. When France was Britain's ally we were attacked for stating the above truth just as we are attacked now for maintaining that there is an "irreconcilable breach" between the mass of the people and big business in "democratic" countries.

★

COST OF LIBEL

Awarding £655 libel damages to Mr. Willie Howard, formerly employed as machine-room overseer by Keable (Press), Limited, proprietors of the *Daily Worker*, Mr. Justice Croom-Johnson, in the High Court yesterday, regretted that "a body of working people should have put forward against a brother workman accusations of dishonesty which are completely unfounded."

Mr. Howard complained that memoranda published to "Natsopa," of which he was a member, and to the Ministry of Labour after the *Daily Worker* resumed publication in September, 1942, imputed that he had had dishonest dealings in paper belonging to the *Daily Worker*.

The Judge awarded £500 damages against all the defendants, with an additional £55 against Mr. Lawson for the publication to "Natsopa," and £100 against all the defendants except Mr. Lawson, for the publication to the Ministry of Labour.

Manchester Guardian, 22/1/44.

THERE IS NO WAR ON

A woman can go shopping anywhere in the United States without worrying about such trifles as coupons and ration cards.

The "Woman's Home Companion," gave reporter Patricia Lockridge plenty of money, but no ration coupons, and sent her on a 11,000-mile tour of the country, arguing that if a stranger could buy anything the natives obviously could—and did.

Patricia reports that she had no trouble at all. She bought food, shoes, stockings, and could have bought a refrigerator, also controlled, had she wanted one.

Daily Mirror, 19/1/44.

Black marketeering flourishes all over the world. From Athens to New York, from Calcutta to Moscow the poor starve while the rich lack nothing.

★

DOING HER BIT

The latest American austerity note comes from Constance Bennett, the film actress, who called a Press conference in a luxury suite of New York's most luxurious hotel yesterday.

"I'm going without fancy jewels, lavish parties and evening clothes for the duration," she said.

"By saving materials, by wearing short evening dresses, I feel that I'm doing my bit towards the war effort. I shall confine myself to simple pleasures."

Daily Mirror, 19/1/44.

★

INFLATION IN S. AFRICA

As compared with pre-war times, the index figure for food in the territory of the Union has risen by some 52% for clothing by some 98%. After lengthy fluctuations, it seems that prices will be stabilised at this level. On an average 30-40% of income from labour is spent on food.

The Cape Federation is justified in referring to this untenable social position. Not including the considerably increased expenditure for clothing, housing, etc., the workers have to spend nearly half their income merely to maintain life. The worst paid among them, and in particular the great mass of natives, do not earn enough even for a bare subsistence.

International Federation of Trade Unions Bulletin, 1/1/44.

★

NO PLACE FOR OPTIMISM

The war next year will cost the United States about £63,000,000 a day. This is the summary of the vast Budget presented to Congress to-day by President Roosevelt.

The total estimated expenditure is put at \$100,000,000,000 (£25,000,000,000), which is over four times as much as Britain's last Budget, which forecast expenditure of £5,756,000,000. Of this huge total £22,500,000,000 is earmarked for the war—a daily war expenditure of about £63,000,000.

The estimate for war spending, the President stated, "is based on the assumption that the war will continue throughout the fiscal year 1945"—that is, the year ending June 30, 1945.

Manchester Guardian, 14/1/44.

EUROPE'S NEXT ENEMIES

By Colin Ward

"It is not safe to take it for granted that because all the people in Europe want to get rid of the Nazi tyranny, they will join our side immediately and unconditionally . . . some will ask whether the United States, Great Britain, and Russia, with their large-scale economies do not offer just another type of forced salvation."

—Dr. Karl Brandt (*Foreign Affairs*, July 1943).

(1) The Politicians

The revolution in Hungary after the last war was partially defeated by the refusal of food and relief supplies by the Supreme Economic Council of the Allies. So the rack-renting medieval landlords regained their strangle-hold on the peasantry whose condition is described by Prof. John Marrack: "... the average consumption of animal protein was only 25 gm. per day, but Hungary exported milk products and meat; 15 per cent. never ate eggs, but Hungarian eggs were on sale in England." Will we help them free themselves this time? The answer is given by Prof. Laski in the *New Statesman*. He says: "It is even said that the British Foreign Office prohibits wireless criticism of the Hungarian rulers; they hunt and shoot in the manner that is typical of the gentlemen of England."

Several of the exiled "governments" are accumulating good stocks. We are not yet cynical enough to suspect their motives, but it can be seen what a powerful weapon they thus have to ensure their acceptance. Even our lack of cynicism gets a jolt when we read the accounts of the Yugo-Slav Relief Society (West of Scotland) Committee. The expenditure side amounts to £1,554 8s. 7d. Of this £554 8s. 7d. covers the usual expenses and the other £1,000 is simply described as a "Special Payment to King Peter of Yugoslavia!"

Further grim prospects face the anti-Nazis in enemy countries. The *New Statesman* of 30/10/43 says:

"The peace terms can be stiffened against a government of the Left and relaxed in favour of a government of the Right. Mr. Churchill, who eulogised Fascism a few years ago as warmly as ever Mr. Chamberlain did, may be bent on using the power of 'traditional England' to preserve 'traditional Europe'."

The real nature of Britain and America as "international policemen" is indicated by the Tory M.P., Maj. E. G. R. Lloyd when he says:

"Only a strong Britain and a strong America can maintain the peace of the world and keep down, not only the danger of aggression, but the smouldering fires of revolution, which may yet set Europe aflame, and from which even our own country may not remain immune."

—*Sunday Times*, 30/11/41.

(2) The Financiers

The greater part of Europe's population consists of peasant farm workers and it is natural that "The Land for the People" is their revolutionary aim. Theirs is the "Green International" of village communes on the basis of functional mutual aid. What prospects do the Allies offer them?

The International Wheat Agreement between the American and Empire wheat producers, threatens them with ruin by cornering their markets. Goebbels lost no time in telling them this. The danger is emphasised again by Yates and Warriner in *Food and Farming in Post-War Europe*:

"With the peasant's delight at being able to get things denied him for so long, there is likely to be mingled a fear lest the overseas countries exploit the occasion of relief to snatch from him markets he had counted on keeping as his own. To have access to articles from abroad will be very welcome, says he, but may not the flow become a flood? Will not the overseas exporters attempt to go on sending their food-stuffs to Europe after the immediate relief period has ended, at prices with which the high-cost European producer cannot possibly compete?" "... to him it will seem anomalous that on the one hand the United Nations profess such solicitude for his welfare, whilst on the other they appear to insist on trading agreements between Europe and overseas countries which threaten rapidly to ruin him."

That this "possible danger" is an openly intended policy is shown by Gov. Lehman's speech quoted in the January *War Commentary*.

The struggle of the industrial workers, now slave-driven by the Nazis and bombed by the Allies, will also be in the economic, rather than the political field: "Workers' Control" is their slogan. But we learn from *Reynolds News* of 5/9/43 that:

"Backed by General Motors and other big combines, an association has been formed to protect U.S. property abroad. Its object is to prevent any of the liberated countries from nationalizing their industries."

The grim picture of financial subjection is completed by the Banks. When the Italians had been beaten in Abyssinia, Messrs. Barclay (Dominion, Colonial and Overseas) opened up in that land, previously the preserve of the Italian bankers. Since then they have opened branches in Tripoli and Benghazi and we may expect to see them in Sicily soon. As a result of this strategic policy, their figures for the year ending March 31, 1943 show an increase of £56 millions, or almost 30% in their total assets, and still rising!

Dr. Alleck Bourne, M.C., M.B., F.R.C.S. sums up the position in *When Hostilities Cease*.

"The temptation to use the vast power of compulsion on exhausted and broken peoples, crying out for help from the squalor of disease and starvation, may be difficult to resist by those huge financial interests who already own governments. Knowing their ruthless disregard for any human distress should it not be compatible with their own interests, it is clear that the power derived from handling and distributing relief will be used unless there is the strongest control of their influence."

Dr. Bourne does not go far enough. The only way to save both Europe and ourselves from a further repetition of the calamity to which they have brought us is for the workers in all lands to destroy these financial monsters and their political hangers-on.

Indians Still Starve

ATTEMPTS ARE BEING MADE to make us forget the fact of the Indian famine, and at the same time to diminish the effect of such reports as are still coming through, by pretending that the crisis is now over and famine is being defeated. What truth there is in this official propaganda line is shown by the following communication from an Indian correspondent:

Colonel Amery is trying to make out that the famine in India is over. The British Indian Government and the Dominions have done their best to hide the crisis and imply that there is no need for anxiety. 'Forty food ships have arrived in India', Amery declared at York on January 9th, 1944, 'So far as the actual supply is available in the province concerned (Bengal), the chapter of actual famine may be regarded as closed . . . Given reasonable management, good distribution of the crop, and effective prevention against hoarding and profiteering, there should be no recurrence of the tragedy'. He further stated in the House of Commons on December 2nd, 1943, 'There is sufficient food in Bengal to meet all requirements'.

A week after Amery's speech at York, Stuart Emery cables from New Delhi (*News Chronicle*, 16/1/44): 'Despite a record rice harvest, a second famine bringing even worse suffering threatens Bengal's undernourished and disease-ridden millions. Hopes of a few weeks ago that the corner has been turned have faded. The Bengal Government's scheme for the collection and distribution of a bumper crop is not working because of local muddle and inefficiency. Rice prices, which fell from Rupees 40/- a *maund* (*maund*=82 lbs. Usual price Rs. 4/- a *maund*. One Rupee=1/6d.) to Rs. 11/- or Rs. 12/- a *maund* as the new grain began to come on the market a few weeks ago, are now rising again. Already the black market is selling at Rs. 22/- a *maund* which is five rupees above the controlled price . . . Destitutes from the countryside are now drifting back to the city (Calcutta) . . . Millions of lives are at stake.'

So far famine. Now for the ravages of pestilence. Graham Stamford cables (Dec. 12th, 1943): 'Thousands of peasants are collapsing in the rice fields as they work to harvest what is hoped will be a bumper crop. If the wave of disease is not checked there is grave danger that the full crop will not be gathered'.

But ten days earlier Amery gravely assured the House of Commons (Dec. 2nd, 1943): 'The position gave no cause for anxiety.' Even the *Sunday Statesman* of Calcutta, a British paper, was forced to comment (December 13th, 1943): 'Mr. Amery continues to be ill-informed. Unless he was misrepresented, his reply was plainly ridiculous.' It seems that Amery is playing the role of a mountebank, or he is thoroughly unethical.

PLAYING WITH STATISTICS

At times when it doesn't suit him to misrepresent the gravity of the Indian situation, Amery falls back on juggling with statistics. It is suggested that even at the best of times India is bound to be pretty near the famine line, because the population is increasing faster than the ability of Indian soil to supply the necessary food. The shade of the old capitalist theoretician, Malthus, is called up once more to justify British Imperialism in India. At the present time, (before the famine) the agricultural output per head of population produces a diet which is less

than what is regarded as an "emergency restricted diet" in America or Western Europe. This is only to say in a statistical way, that there isn't enough food in India in ordinary times. It confirms what we have always said about British rule in India subjecting the Indian workers and peasants to chronic famine all the time. That is why the average expectation of life for an Indian is only 26 years, why it is possible for a famine like the present one to take such a ghastly toll of lives. Here is what a nutrition authority has written on Indian agriculture. "The total land area of British India amounts to 667 million acres; of this total, in 1933, only 232 million acres were cultivated and sown. There were 47 million acres lying fallow, 154 million culturable but not cultivated, 145 million not available for cultivation (desert, etc.), and 85 million consisting of forest. Acreage *per capita* would work out as follows:

	Acres per head.
Total Area	2.44
Cultivated area, current fallows, culturable area	1.75
Area actually sown	0.72"

It follows from the last two figures in the table that more than twice the present area could be cultivated. Regarding Bengal, where the present famine is most intense (though it is by no means, as the capitalist press try to suggest, the *only* famine area in India), another authority has written: ". . . Of the total area cultivable only 67 per cent. is now actually under cultivation. If the total cultivable area were brought under cultivation, and if improved methods of cultivation yielding an increase of 30 per cent. over the present yield were adopted, it is clear from a simple rule-of-three calculation that Bengal could support at its present standard of living a population very nearly twice as large as that recorded in 1931."

Even on the question of the increasing Indian population official propaganda contrives to distort the truth. It is represented that Indian population figures are increasing at an impossibly high rate. Compared with other countries, however, the India rate of increase is very low. Thus in the last 50 years population in various countries has increased as follows: Russia—73.9 per cent., Germany—59.0 per cent., England—58.0 per cent., India—18.9 per cent.

To what extent the capitalist-imperialist régime is responsible for the present conditions in India is shown by the fact that 75 per cent. of the land in India is owned by the landlords, whilst 370,000,000 peasants own

(Continued on p. 12)

KINGSTON SUNDAY LECTURES KINGSTON TRADES & LABOUR CLUB

GRANGE ROAD (back of the G.P.O.)

at 7 p.m. sharp.

FEBRUARY 6th. Robert V. Harvey
A Wage Slave Utopia

FEBRUARY 13th. Tony Turner, S.P.G.B.
Violence and the Socialist Movement

the remaining 25 per cent. These peasants are then compelled to give up the greater part of their produce in order to pay the taxes. According to the Bengal Provincial Trade Union Congress, meeting in Calcutta recently, a survey of 20 farms in the Punjab showed that less than 18 per cent. of the produce was used by the actual cultivator, 82 per cent. being seized by the landlord.

Under this evil system, moreover, the Indian peasant has to grow crops which show the greatest profit—frequently industrial crops rather than food. In this way the volume of food crops grown is not dictated by the nutritional needs of the Indian people, but by the profit requirements of the Imperialist and Indian capitalists.

"WHY DON'T THE INDIANS REVOLT?"

It may be asked: "Why do not the Indians revolt against this system? Why do they pay taxes which result in the starvation of their children?" The answer is because they have good cause to fear the punitive expeditions which the British Army carry out. If the Government increases the taxes, and so goads the half-starved inhabitants beyond endurance so that they refuse to pay the excess, troops are sent to the village, and every hut is systematically destroyed. Similar punitive expeditions are familiar to the Arabs in Palestine. Sometimes these punitive expeditions are carried out by the R.A.F. in India. Here is the *News Chronicle* for 15th April 1936, quoting from the *Aeroplane*: "Each little village has a dammed reservoir, which in dry weather supplies water to the village and irrigates the exiguous crops which are grown on little terraces. Instead of bombing the village itself, where anything other than bombs of the largest size would do little harm against solid stone walls, the R.A.F. goes for the reservoir. Ultimately, by the law of averages one or two bombs break the dam and away goes all the water down the valley. It washes all the soil off those terraces which happen to be in its way, it removes the tribe's water supply completely and the rest of the crops die for lack of water." This is how Imperialism compels the Indian people to accept the starvation which Capitalist economics produces.

J. H.

"... railwaymen should certainly provide themselves with a copy. It is lucidly written and contains some valuable information for all who are playing, and aspiring to play a part in making the organization of railway workers both stronger for the struggle of to-day, and better equipped for the controlling functions and responsibilities of to-morrow." This is the concluding sentence from a leading article in the 24th December issue of "THE RAILWAY REVIEW" on the recent Freedom Press pamphlet

RAILWAYS AND SOCIETY

DON'T MISS THIS IMPORTANT PAMPHLET
32 packed pages Threepence, (postage 1d.)

FREEDOM PRESS

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

(Continued from p. 16)

The strikers demand the following concessions:

1. Removal of Harry Rubery, shop superintendent.
2. Removal of the rate-fixer.
3. A minimum 50% bonus.
4. Segregation of setting times and bonus times.

The first shift resumed work on the 24th January on being assured of the removal of the posted notice on the question of the hours and the calling of a works conference.

This short strike has been useful in drawing the attention of the workers to the fact that apart from Sibley, the Labour Manager, and Grant of the Employers' Federation, they have to contend with the double-crossing by the secretary of the T. & G.W.U., Bill Sheppard.

The initial move towards an united organisation of all shop-stewards from every B.A.C. factory and dispersal point, is a good move, but it must be extended and imbued with a greater sense of discipline before its effect as a weapon against the bosses will be felt.

At the present stage of development the strikers should have elected delegates to travel to other shops and dispersal points to explain the position to other workers. The shop stewards could have arranged the printing and distribution of a pamphlet for the same purpose.



NO RED CROSS PARCELS

Dr. H. G. Steel one of the British prisoners repatriated from Germany made the following statement to a *News Chronicle* correspondent:

"As a medical orderly I was able to see something of the Russians who were brought into camps nearby. Most of them were civilians, and they died off like flies.

"Typhus swept right through their camps, and they did not have a dog's chance because they had no Red Cross parcels to supplement the German starvation diet. It was not possible to live on that diet. You saw Russian men fading away till they were skeletons, and what typhus didn't do tuberculosis did.

"We tried to help them as well as we could by smuggling food and cigarettes. But if the Germans caught us it meant the prison cell for all of us."

News Chronicle, 26/10/43.

LECTURES

EVERY FRIDAY EVENING

7.30 p.m.

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| JANUARY 29th. | Ken Hawkes |
| The Kronstadt Revolt | |
| FEBRUARY 4th. | Jack Wade |
| Nechayeff and Nihilism | |
| FEBRUARY 12th. | A. A. Vickey |
| Man Through Medicine | |

QUESTIONS — DISCUSSION

FREEDOM PRESS ROOMS

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

A few minutes from Swiss Cottage tube—31 'bus route

Principles of Syndicalism IX

TOM BROWN

First Fruits of the Revolution

IN THIS SERIES of articles we have outlined the aim and method of the Syndicalist Revolution. The aim—the abolition of privilege, private property, class society and the State and the establishment of the common ownership of the means of production. The method—the taking and running of industry by workers' Syndicates, the abolition of the standing Army and other armed forces, police, judiciary, etc., and the creation of Workers' Militia and other necessary working class organisation for the administration of society.

But what do we immediately expect from the Revolution? Let us be clear. This is not a plan for a society of a few hundred years hence. We are not making blue prints for our descendants to work to long after we are dead. What we here outline is possible immediately the workers desire it and throw off their chains of illusion. It is the aim of that Revolution which already is stirring in war ridden Europe.

Let us first consider the possibility of man's labour if fruitfully employed. Even in peace time only a small minority of the population is engaged in useful work and even they waste much of their time because of out-of-date machinery and obsolete labour methods. If each did his share of work and took only what he could really enjoy (for who can enjoy an one hundred room mansion or half-a-dozen motor cars?) it would be necessary to work only a few hours a week for all to enjoy good housing, clothing, food and all the good things of life.

The Revolution would at once set about releasing this unmeasured human labour power. Every fit person would find a socially necessary job. Think of the millions now wasting their time! Capitalists, landowners, parsons, politicians. The domestic, club and restaurant servants of the rich. (Even in wartime one may see two able bodied men opening the double door of a Piccadilly club to allow another able bodied man to pass). The millions of clerks, bankers and inspectors who count, check and re-check the business of the capitalists. The enormous tax eating Civil Service. The half dozen milkmen in each small street, the vast number of unnecessary shopkeepers and assistants. The collectors and canvassers, the advertising men. All could do useful work and at once make a big stride towards plenty and leisure for all. Here we describe what we consider must be the immediate economic aims of the Revolution.

WAGES. The abolition of wages and the

establishment of the principle of equal income for all. What that income would be cannot be expressed in money terms, the only terms known to capitalist society, but it should certainly be more than double the present average wage.

WORK TIME. A six hour working day, a five day week and a month of holidays annually.

OLD AGE, SICKNESS AND BEREAVEMENT. The most generous of proposals and "demands" for old age pensioners stop well below even the low wages of the workers. Aged workers should receive the same income and services as the younger population. The same is true of the sick and of widows and orphans.

UNEMPLOYMENT. It may be that in the busy, early days of reorganising industry some workers may find themselves temporarily out of work. Unemployment is society's responsibility and the unemployed man should not be punished for it. The equal income of other members of society should be the right of the temporary out-of-work while immediate effort is made to find him a job. We do not believe that any worker will want to shirk his part of the stirring movement of social reconstruction unless he is psychologically or physiologically ill. In any case a job will soon be found and personal adjustment made. It is the capitalist system, alone of social systems, which creates unemployment. Men are unemployed, not because there is no useful work to do, but because a profit cannot at the moment be made from that work. There is always a job to do in a community just as there is always a job to do in the home.

FOOD. The production of a plentiful supply of the best food from our own land. This would need to be of such a character as to radically change the diet of the large majority of the population who eat too much bread and too little eggs, fruit and milk. This production would greatly increase the supply of poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, butter, fruit, fresh salads and vegetables and fish.

We should seek to do this by producing the vastly greater part of our food at home, enjoying it fresh and not robbing the peoples of other lands by the forced imports of finance capital.

To accomplish this we could recruit for the land an extra million workers from the useless jobs they now occupy. We would need to plough up the estates and pleasure grounds of the rich, to reclaim moors and hillsides and other lost land and increase the fertility of most of the present farm land. We

would need to fertilise the land by the collection of that valuable "waste" we now throw away and turn the automobile factories to the production of tractors and other farm machinery. Private landlordism and rent being abolished no obstacle would stand in the path of this newly released social energy.

MANUFACTURES. The Syndicates would be concerned with the immediate production of sufficient shoes and clothes to meet the reasonable needs of all, with enough house furniture for all and the multiplication of those thousands of goods, wireless sets, books, articles of toilet, sweets, etc., which make life more pleasant. As these flower from the factories in ever-increasing volume the standard of living of all would rise until human saturation point had been reached.

But we are concerned not only with the quantity, but, also, with the quality of goods. Capitalism is the age of shoddy, and shoddy goods are waste. The poor are robbed twice; first from the wage packet, next over the counter by cotton and jute suits, starchy food, gimcrack furniture and leaky shoes. For the first time all workers will enjoy what is now the privilege of the well-to-do, the feel of good cloth, the firm tread of a well made shoe and the pleasure of well designed goods.

HOUSING. The mainly empty houses of the wealthy must be requisitioned for the housing of the overcrowded. Those houses too big, or otherwise unsuitable, for conversion to flats would be used as museums, hospitals, rest-homes and colleges.

It will be urgently necessary to start the immediate building of several millions of houses to meet the shortage and to clear out the slums and semi-slums. This is much easier than might be supposed for there would be no houses of the wealthy or palatial banks, brewers or insurance offices to build and cinemas would take second place. Consider the huge munition factories, the military camps and colossal aerodromes which have been built during the past four years and weigh them against three million houses.

EDUCATION. Education will be free to all able to benefit from it and wishing to enjoy it, free from kindergarten to university. Classes would be smaller, equipment improved and new schools built. The recent trend of education from coercion and terrorism to freedom and co-operation of teacher and scholar would be accelerated.

MEDICINE. Medical treatment would be free—medicine, attendance, clinics and hospitals. But the new society would increase the health of all, not by a new flood of physic, but, in the main, by a better diet, right working and living conditions and the end of industrial fatigue.

RECREATION. The new society would end the petty restrictions which curtail the enjoyment of

our few free hours. Moral bigots and publicans close the theatres and cinemas on Sunday, the workers' one free day. Thousands of restrictions prevent him fully enjoying his too short leisure. All these would be swept away. Let each find his pleasure as he will so long as he does not interfere with the freedom and pleasure of others.

HOW SOON?

These are main tasks of our Revolution, tasks which can be accomplished within two or three years of the triumph of the workers' forces. If you, clouded by the pessimism and disappointment of life under capitalism, doubt that statement, then take each item singly and consider, from your own observation and your experience of your job, "If the waste and profit are cut out, is this thing possible?" We have no doubt of your answer. And this will be but the beginning, but the foundation stone of a free and co-operative society!

Do not ask of us, "How long will it take to persuade the workers that all this is possible and desirable." Stop thinking so much of the apathy of the other fellow. When each worker asks the question of himself the Day has dawned.

THE END.

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WORKERS IN UNIFORM

The threatened strike of the "Pit Ballot" boys, and Mr. Bevin's hint that they are virtually in the armed forces, prompts me to recount our own experience. It is another example of how, having got men into uniform, the Government uses them on civilian tasks under conditions no civilian would tolerate.

We were sent out recently—a party of about 60 men—to do an erection job in the open. Although we had enjoyed a year's course in a technical trade—for which we, generally as taxpayers, etc., had paid—the tools we use range from half inch spanners, *via* sledge-hammers, to picks and shovels. However, it happened that the season of the year was that most usual for rain, and the site was a ploughed field. Our normal equipment includes rubber boots to which, in our section, are added overalls. But these are but poor protection against continuous rain, and our agitation for the provision of raincoats elicited only the answer that as our parent station had none to spare it was just a "bad job", and we would have to make the best of it. I may add in passing that when our clothes were wet we had to wear them until the end of the day, and our billets had virtually no facilities for drying them.

At one point, when the resentment of the men against these conditions became really obvious, a shift system was introduced for half day whereby the few available raincoats were worn by successive parties, each working out in the rain for about 45 minutes. This only after some men had refused point-blank to work without protection, pointing out that the guard room was at least dry, and that the risk of death in Italy had points over the certainty of a lifetime of rheumatism here!

We are employed officially ten hours per day, although it is often twelve hours between leaving the billet and returning to it, and too often seven days a week. It is only after what amounts to organised protest that a day off is granted. There is, of course, no overtime pay, or corresponding concessions.

I cannot give details of the actual conditions under which we work without divulging the nature of the job but I will say that it is an urgent

"Priority 1" task. Everything is rushed down except comforts for the men or machines to ease the work. Heavy lifting, for example, is left to the men unaided, although a small crane (two are idle in the camp) would save both time and labour. The work involves a lot of digging, which was only slightly lessened when an American army detachment of Negroes with a mechanical drill arrived to erect telegraph poles. This example of relative efficiency made no impression on our bosses.

This may give some idea of the conditions under which we work, which would not be allowed in civilian employment (even only with the protection of a Trade Union), but of course we are in uniform and so have no rights and cannot protest. If it has not actually (yet) led to spontaneous organisation on the part of the men, it has at least opened the eyes of some of them to the kind of society they are pledged to defend.

L.A.C. C.A.

OLD AUSTRALIAN ANARCHIST

I am 80 years and keep the Anarchist Flag flying. Last May Day I led the May procession with a banner on which was written "Long Live Anarchy". I had proceeded a short distance when the police put me out of the procession. I ran down two more streets and got again in the march to the Yarra bank. I have been circulating *War Commentary* among the University students, with success. They invited me to lecture on Anarchism and were pleased with the lecture. You will see by the enclosed clipping that I carry on with the propaganda. Australia is not England. The Roman Catholics are strong so I continually attack their superstition. The war has caused a boom, wages are high and the workers cling to their chains. Best wishes. Fraternally,

J. W. FLEMING,

Victoria, Australia.

Here are some extracts from the cutting enclosed in J. W. Fleming's letter: "Chummy Fleming, well-known anarchist and agitator, celebrated his 80th birthday yesterday

As head of the unemployed and one of the first Labour leaders of Australia, 'Chummy' was the first man to carry the Red Flag in Melbourne and was organiser of the first May Day procession."

SPIT AND POLISH

In another few days I shall be going back from leave to — where the only consolation for existence is the regular arrival of *War Commentary* which continues to improve. I need hardly say that such letters as you have had from members of the forces have been particularly interesting; even the most blindly patriotic find it hard to stomach the continual polishing and similar foolishness.

My own experience has been no different, I imagine, from that of many others. I have known a stationary Diesel engine, sheltered from the weather in a hut, painted three times in four days because of arguments about the best colour for it; the same engine, having finished up green, will be painted black by the time I return from leave. I have known a whole barracks painted in two colours for the inspection of a visiting official and the two colours changed because he preferred some other colour scheme. Even the military authorities have aesthetic preferences it would seem.

The letter in your mid-December issue from R.C. of Cheltenham contained much good sense. Human society cannot produce benevolent autocrats—at the moment, even the so-called progressive countries openly admit that they do not propose to be benevolent. The intolerable Vansittart continues on his old way, and recently issued the statement that the peace must be controlled by power, as the war has been decided by power. "Power" . . . the word is dangerous. Russell chose a very good time to issue his book on the subject.

It would be a good idea to include more reviews of books, as in the January issue. A good reviewer can provide stimulating points for discussion, as Hewetson has done. Perhaps many of the reviewers could go back some years: it is surprising how many older writers express anarchistic opinions. William Hazlitt, for instance, has made many pronouncements that belong to our way of thinking, particularly in his essay on Civil and Criminal Legislation.

Whatever happens, I am sure *War Commentary* will maintain its high standard.

Private J.F.B.

Bristol Workers on the Move

Dockers' Strike

ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 13th, about 3,000 dockers from three docks in the Bristol area formed a strike committee in defiance of their Union leaders and the National Dock Labour Corporation and came out on strike in sympathy with 18 fellow workers who had been suspended for 14 days after refusing a re-direction order.

The suspended men formerly earned approximately £1 a day at piece-work rates at the Avonmouth Dock. At the conclusion of a job they were formerly able to withdraw their cards and take on work at any other job where the pay was highest. But the National Dock Labour Corporation, without any consultation with the men or even with the unions, directed them to work at Portishead on a day-work basis. This involved a loss of 5/- a day, and an additional loss because no travelling time or expenses were paid. Most of the men had a considerable way to walk or a journey by train to a ferry across to Pill, and then five or six miles by bus to Portishead. It is not surprising that they refused the direction order.

Threatened with a seven-day suspension order, they still refused, and were consequently suspended for 14 days. All the dockers were indignant at the injustice of this treatment, and strike action was taken.

Only 17 blacklegs volunteered to work alongside the American soldiers who unloaded the military mail. They paid their day's wages to the local Red Cross Fund—presumably as conscience money. The dockers were furious when the rumour spread that American troops from the nearby camp were to be used as blacklegs. These rumours were denied by the Port Emergency Committee, the Port of Bristol Authority, the Port of Bristol Employers' Association, and the National Dock Labour Corporation; but it was reported that these local bodies had applied to the Ministry of War Transport for troops to unload essential cargoes.

At the meetings which they arranged, the union official's blusterings were met with a storm of protests, but at the last one (addressed by Mr. Dan Hillman, an old Bristol employee and now a national official of the T. &

G. W. U.) it was decided by a small majority vote to return to work after a guarantee had been given that the cases of the 18 suspended men should be re-heard and any fresh evidence taken into consideration.

This last meeting was exclusively for dockers, and was held in one of the Transit sheds while policemen guarded the gates and military police patrolled the area. Other workers from other factories who were waiting outside the gates were ignorant of the proceedings. Had the Strike Committee made the facts of the case more public, and insisted on public meetings, it is possible that these fellow workers would have joined the strike. Failure to do so encourages misrepresentation in the capitalist press, and enables the master-class to stir up antagonism among the strikers' fellow workers. On the whole, most of the dockers are dissatisfied at their partial victory.

B.A.C. stay-in-strike

(From a correspondent)

EVIDENCE OF THE gathering impetus of the workers' struggle against the bosses, and the betrayal of the Union leaders, is seen quite clearly in the continued unrest culminating in the lightning strikes throughout Bristol Aircraft factories. These strikes are a direct result of the provocation of the management who repeatedly and deliberately decrease the workers' earning power by the introduction of new rates and longer hours without consultation with the workers or their representatives. Most of the strikes are of short duration but the workers are fighting the management on every point. Although a high degree of militancy is shown there is as yet little co-ordination on the various disputes, the issues of which are almost invariably of a similar nature.

This applies to the four strikes which have taken place last week at Filton, Flight Shed, Rodney and Weston-super-Mare. In each case little effort was made to publicise the issues and gain sympathy and support from the adjoining shops in the same factory. Few of the workers were aware that the strikes were taking place.

Fortunately the more militant shop stewards are realizing the fallacies of the Union organization in its present form. On January 8th the workers in the A.E.U. and the T. & G.W.U. from Filton and Upton Road machine shops met at a mass meeting and decided to take common action on the bonus issue. A committee of shop-stewards from each shop was formed and met on January 20th and drew up the following resolution:

"This committee representing Filton and Upton Road machine shops, wish to inform the management that they regret the action of the company in posting a notice on the question of the hours, and not conforming with the arbitration award N.484, and hereby give notice that these hours are unacceptable to the work-people and will not be operated on the 31st January or until such time as we have obtained an interpretation from the National Arbitration Tribunal".

However, the workers grew impatient and as other issues ripened they precipitated matters on January 23rd. At midday the Filton Road machine shop unanimously laid down tools in a stay-in strike. To prevent any possibility of scabbing, Phyllis Cox, Inspection shop steward, resorted to direct action by switching off the power. At 2 p.m. a deputation met the incoming shift and informed them of the position. They immediately joined forces.

(continued on p. 12)

WAR COMMENTARY

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