

WAR *For Anarchism* COMMENTARY

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TWOPENCE

UNDER THE AXE OF BEVIN

IF DR. LEY and Herr Himmler came down by parachute to-day upon Whitehall, they would find very little unfamiliar except the architecture and the uniforms, and we can be sure they would be full of congratulations for the way in which their 'opposites', Messrs. Bevin and Morrison, are transforming Britain into a National Socialist State, and bringing the New Order here into line in every respect with that which exists on the continent.

For this May Day, when we celebrate the struggle of the workers throughout the world not only for the social revolution but also for the scanty benefits which

they gained after bitter fights within the existing system, the workers find themselves subjected to an attack on the part of the Government which aims at the very foundations of their liberties, in that it attempts, by threatening the most barbarous penalties, to prevent the workers from making use of the sole weapon with which they can fight effectively either for better conditions under the present system or for the ending of that system and its replacement by a society which will not admit exploitation and authority.

This is the new Order under which it is laid down that 'No person shall declare, instigate or incite any



other person to take part in, or shall otherwise act in furtherance of any strike among persons engaged in the performance of essential services, or any lockout of persons so engaged.' The penalty under this order is five years' penal servitude, or a fine of five hundred pounds or both together.

The order, it is stated in newspaper puffs, is aimed at agitators from outside who attempt to foment strikes. Those who have any knowledge of industrial matters will, however, know how ridiculous it is to imagine that any agitator can cause a strike. Strikes arise out of concrete causes for discontent, out of real grievances which make the worker sufficiently resentful to risk starvation and imprisonment in order to attempt to remove them and create better conditions for himself.

If the Order is aimed only at agitators, then we can be certain that the Government is wasting its time, for the imprisonment or intimidation of agitators will make no difference at all to the incidence of strikes. But we cannot imagine that the Government is as dumb as this, and it seems obvious to us that the Order is aimed primarily at the workers, to terrorise those among them who might wish to take militant action, and secondly at any persons or organisations who may show sympathy for strikers or attempt to put their case forward in such a way that it gets a fair hearing.

The implications of the order are sinister and far-reaching. Any advocacy of a strike, unless it is made in a meeting called officially by the executive body of a trade union, will be an offence, and the order is purposely worded so vaguely that this can be taken to apply not only to a speech or a suggestion that ends in a strike, but even to a remark that a strike is desirable or to an expression of sympathy, however private in its nature, with the aims of a strike. In fact, the order represents an attack not only on action but also on opinion, and strikes more violently than any previous action of the government at the very freedom of speech and of the press.

The way in which the order was promulgated was pleasantly reminiscent of the methods of the Corporate State. One would have imagined that in a parliamentary democracy parliament would have been consulted before a law was brought in imposing such severe penalties as five years' imprisonment. Instead, however, it was brought forward by the Ministry of Labour as an accomplished fact after consultations, not with the constitutional legislative body of the country, nor with the workers who are the people most intimately concerned, but with the Employers' Confederation and the General Council of the T.U.C. Parliamentary democracy, which was little good when it was alive, can be taken now as being dead as mutton, and the kind of consultative bodies being used by the Government seem to anticipate a future of legislation on the orthodox fascist model.

The workers' liberties have once again been signed

away by the men who claimed, and possibly still claim, to be their leaders, Bevin and Morrison, and the fat bureaucrats of the T.U.C., and in no issue has it been more obvious that the interests of the workers and their 'leaders' are far apart. For, while the new Order will be a direct blow at the liberties and conditions of the workers, it helps to bolster up the power of the trade union executives and to support that power by the will of the state. The provision that a strike may still be advocated in a meeting called by a trade union executive gives an illusion that the trade unions are channels through which the workers can still gain their rights, while the penalisation of any kind of action outside 'official' trade union organisation gives the leaders an advantage over any body of workers who attempt to challenge their power.

Not long ago the T.U.C. were trying to gain popularity among the workers by shouting loudly and making mock threats for the withdrawal of the Trades Disputes Acts. Now they have conspired with the worst enemies of the workers in furthering legislation which represents a far more serious attack on the effectiveness of workers' organisations than did the Trades Disputes Act itself. Their action is hypocritical, but consistent. Their aim is power, for themselves, and they are willing to do anything to increase it. A nominal attack on the Trades Disputes Act created the illusion that they were still protecting the interests of the workers, which gave them a certain bargaining power with the government. Now they have been accepted as full partners in the state machine they can naturally dispense with any flirtation with the workers.

The most blatant piece of hypocrisy in the order is the statement that it applies to lockouts, with the implication that the legislation is scrupulously fair because it is directed against employers as well as against workers. In fact, with everything in the employer's favour, there is no need for him to declare a lockout. If he wants to change conditions, he does so, and if the workers object and go home, then they are on strike.

Bevin was compelled to admit in Parliament last week that whereas 1,807 workers have been sent to prison out of 23,517 prosecuted under the Essential Works Order, only 127 employers have been prosecuted and none sent to prison.

This action of the Government and the Trades Unions will show the workers even more clearly than before the extent to which their enemies and their so-called friends are willing to go in order to curtail freedom of action and even opinion. But it will also show them the extent of the fear which these people now feel of the increasing social discontent. The Government is scared of widespread industrial unrest, the Trades Unions are frightened of their own members. This fear, and not the actions of agitators, is the real cause behind this latest advance towards the Nazi state.

ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

TRUTH AND THE "DAILY MAIL"

April 7th, 1944, we read an interview with former Assistant Commissioner of Scotland Yard, Sir Wyndham Childs, whom we believe was in charge of its political witch-hunting section at one time.

Sir Wyndham Childs expressed himself forcibly on the question of the strikes which the *Mail* was endeavouring to place on the shoulders of the Trotskyites. Being too cute to involve himself in libel actions, Sir Wyndham put the blame on a dead man. Unfortunately it happened to be the orthodox Stalinist Albert Inkpin. According to detective Sir Wyndham Childs Albert Inkpin up to the time of his death was receiving money sent from America by the "International Workers of the World" in order to foment strikes in this country. "Find his successor and you will find the man who ought to be arrested".

Let us examine the flaws in Sir Wyndham's statement. (a) Albert Inkpin was the secretary of the Russia To-day Society. As a Stalinist he was of course pro-war at the moment, and very definitely anti-strike. (b) If Albert Inkpin had been the "guilty party" his successor would presumably be the present secretary of the pro-Russia outfit, which if being financed from abroad at all would certainly not be financed from America! (c) There happens to be no such body as the International Workers of the World. There is the Industrial Workers of the World. Apparently Sir Wyndham deliberately made the alteration in order to avoid bringing in an existent body, for a moment's investigation of the Chicago *Industrial Worker* (organ of the I.W.W.) would show that it was extremely anti-Stalinist, and anti-Trotskyist.

These examples show that Sir Wyndham Childs made, probably deliberately, otherwise stupidly, an unfounded allegation, a misrepresentation and to put it bluntly told a downright lie. We do not hold any brief for the late Albert Inkpin—we would have thought more of him had the allegations been true!—but this incident shows how much trust we must place in the statements of Scotland Yard and the heads of the police force. How many innocent people have they railroaded on just such lack of evidence as Sir Wyndham Childs put forward in the *Daily Mail* interview?

HOME GUARD STRIKE

"AN unofficial one-day strike of 300 engine drivers and firemen took place at Doncaster yesterday as a protest against compulsory Home Guard duties, particularly on Sundays.

The men maintain that it is unfair to expect them to do Home Guard duty after a week of long irregular hours."

News Chronicle, 3/4/44.

If one of these drivers were to relax his vigilance for a moment owing to fatigue, and a train smash were to result, that man would be held responsible for the accident. Yet the military authorities attempt to make them do Home Guard parades even when they are tired.

The same blind administration of the law is shown in the case of the farmer at Bewcastle in the Cumberland Hills who was hauled up before the court because he had failed to attend H.G. drill "without reasonable excuse".

The farmer's evidence was that he attended H.G. parades regularly until he lost his only farm man.

Now he had to run a farm of 149 acres with 48 head of cattle and 70 sheep without any help. He worked from

six in the morning until nine at night.

He had sown four acres by moonlight.

This was deemed an unreasonable excuse! What crass Blimpery! The matter was so obviously absurd that the man's case was dismissed by the Bench.

CONTINUED FAMINE IN INDIA

A RECENT report in *The Observer* carries an admission that the danger of famine has by no means passed in India, and a tacit contradiction of statements by Amery and the Governor of Bengal that there will not be a repetition of the tragedy of last year. The report goes on to say:

"Chief among the disquieting reports are stories of continued maladministration. Racketeering in prices, rents, and supplies is still widespread.

"The position may well be much better this year. It certainly should be. But it still seems likely to be alarmingly and painfully bad. It is not enough in India to stop famine. A large part of the people are perpetually half nourished, and the lingering aftermath of famine is disease and dreadful distress."

This statement, made in a newspaper which represents the interests of the ruling class, can be taken as a fairly reliable warning that, as we have already contended in *War Commentary*, the standard of living of the Indian people is still abnormally low, even by Indian standards, and is likely to result in further food crises in the comparatively near future.

CHILDREN DRAW PRISONS

WE live in an age dominated by prisons. It is the epoch of the Police State, and on the continent, at all events, there must be few families which have not seen the shadow of the prison gates or the concentration camp. In this country also the menace of prison is gradually impinging on the consciousness of increasing numbers of people. An instructive instance of this trend is shown in the exhibition of pictures by children at Summerhill, (A. S. Neill's school) now showing at the Arcade Gallery, Old Bond Street. Several of these pictures show prison scenes, or men enchained. These children presumably have no direct experience of prison; but it is significant that deprivation of freedom should present itself to their imaginations.

FORMS KILL FARMER

FARMER BRUNT, of Ludlow Farm, Knutsford in Cheshire, was found drowned in a pit on April 14, having committed "suicide while the balance of his mind was disturbed". Early in the mornings, he was out on his 520 acres of land, but when evening came, he knew he would have to set about the piles of forms, and returns with which a farmer is beset. Everyday the postman brought him 30 letters—or more. Forms arrived which had to be filled in to keep his herd of 270 Freisians in rations. Forms arrived from the Milk Marketing Board. Forms for machinery, for tractors, for labour returns, for journeys made, for income tax, for barbed wire, came by every post.

He had managed to stand this strain on his nerves and mind for four years, but when Pay-As-You-Earn forms arrived, it was too much, and he committed suicide because of the worry.

Why the Busmen Struck

Provocation by L.P.T.B.

Bus Strike was against Harsh New Conditions

THE L.P.T.B. HAS utilized the war years to get more and more work out of the busmen, and the entry of women into the industry has not made them relax their slave-driving in the least. The bus strike of last week was not for an increase in money wages, but a protest against the further intensification of work which the Board has introduced in this year's summer schedules. These schedules are the worst the Board has ever tried to impose on its employees. They are worse even than those of this time last year which also resulted in strike action. The Board knew, therefore, from experience of the past, what to expect when it laid down still harsher conditions of work. The new summer schedules constituted a direct provocation on their part.

Ernest Bevin, until his appointment as Minister of Labour, was General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union. He knows perfectly well the conditions in the bus industry, and also knows what sort of employers the L.P.T.B. are. But did he take any action against the Board for their new provocation? No! "Mr. Ernest Bevin is considering what measures he can take against the strikers." (*Daily Mail*, 21/4/44). The new Defence Regulation 1AA is a clear encouragement to employers to impose the harshest possible working conditions with the full knowledge that any active retaliation by the men will be vigorously opposed by the government.

Conditions of Busworkers

Before considering the actual terms of the present summer schedules which the busmen and women object to, it is necessary to outline briefly the general working conditions in the bus industry.

Since 1928 there has been a progressive speed up of all buses. This was an important grievance in the Coronation strike of 1937 in which the men were sold out by the unions, and in particular by Ernest Bevin. Speeding up has continued since then, and has been especially accelerated during the war years. Briefly it means that more journeys are crammed into the working day. The strain for the drivers in stopping and starting increasingly abruptly in order to keep up to schedule is enormous. The conductors have to get round their fares more quickly, and in a bus which is lurching and jolting more than ever before. Since the war, the regulation regarding standing passengers has been relaxed so that people may now stand at all hours of the day, instead of only during the rush hours as formerly. Meanwhile the reduction in the number of buses—at a time when there are probably more people going to work—makes every hour of the day a rush hour. That is why you cannot always get on the bus when it comes along, and why the conductor in exasperation and overwork refuses to let more than a certain number stand, and turns the remainder off the bus. On account of all this each bus is carrying 900 to 1,200 people a day, where before the war then carried 300 to 400. In addition, the buses have received less effective maintenance and virtually no renewals during the war, so that the men are asked to drive an older and less efficient vehicle faster, and with a much greater load, than ever before. To the tremendous strain of such conditions is added the blackout driving of the long winter months.

The New Schedules

The immediate occasion for the present strike are the new summer schedules introduced on Wednesday 19th April, which added the last straw to the years of increasing exasperation produced by the above conditions.

Still further speeding-up was demanded, so that, for example, on some routes six journeys could be crammed into the working day instead of five. This of course means extra work without extra pay. The most maddening feature of all, however, is the increase in the number of 'spread-over' shifts. The eight-hour working day is in some cases spread over twelve or even thirteen hours. A busman may start work early and work for three hours, and then have two and a half hours "off"; then two hours on again, then another hour "off"; and so on. For most workers there is no time to go home, even supposing it were worth going home for so short a period. Instead they have to pass the time in billiard saloons or cafes. The result is that they get up early and get home late. In extreme cases a man may have to get up at 3 a.m. in order to get to work at 5 a.m. and not get back home again till 10 p.m. That leaves less than five hours for sleeping, let alone any home life. In many cases these spread-overs apply to women who have children to look after. The Board doesn't care.

The new schedules increase the number of these idiotic and exasperating spread-overs. Whereas it used to work out at about one spread-over week in ten, the new summer schedules work out at one week in three.

The Board's explanation for this inhuman method of work is "shortage of staff". Yet if the bus industry is so important that soldiers can be spared to smash their strike, and they are adjured to go back to work for the sake of the Second Front, men and women could be spared for the industry to relieve this shortage. But in order to attract men and women to an industry where working conditions are so bad, better rates of pay must be offered; and this is exactly what the Board will not do, secure in the knowledge that the Government will intervene on their side if their workers take action against their low wages and bad conditions of work. The new schedules make these conditions still harsher; they are obviously unbearable and insulting.

One-sided Sacrifices

Even the *Daily Mail* (21/4/44) has to admit that the busmen have to put up with worse conditions since the war: "They have had to take their vehicles through air raids, they have had to work longer hours, and London vehicles are carrying more passengers now than they ever did." But they then have the effrontery to add: "Mr. Bevin hoped that the drivers and conductors would show the same responsibility in an emergency as they have done in carrying war workers through the past four years." In other words, the same old wartime excuses, the Second Front, national-unity-in-a-time-of-crisis, and so on, are being used to serve the same old purpose; to make workers work harder—and for the benefit of whom? Who but the employing class for whom the Government acts as stooge! The hypocrisy of the Governments and the Board's appeals is shown by the fact that the strikers in some instances offered to carry war workers to work during the rush hours without wages and without taking fares (just as the soldiers were doing, in fact); the offer was refused.

Strike Action

In the circumstances the busmen had no alternative but to strike. The token strikes in East London trolley garages the previous week-end were a warning to the Board of the likely response of the men to harsher terms in the summer schedules. This warning was unheeded, and on Wednesday morning more garages, including now petrol as well as trolley buses, came out on strike.

Neither the Transport and General Workers' Union nor the National Passenger Workers' Union have made any effective stand against the Board, as is shown by the way in which working conditions have steadily deteriorated during the war years (let alone the years before the war). And of course the Unions opposed the strike.

The Board's provocation show that they haven't the slightest intention of "studying the complaints of the workers"; they are only concerned with higher profits and more slave-driving. At the same time, the schedules themselves show that the men's lack of faith in the unions as a fighting force, is wholly justified, so that they are compelled to resort to independent action. Accordingly the strike was organized sporadically and on a local basis at the different garages and depots. There is no doubt that if it had been more fully organized and embraced all the busmen; if it had had been able to apply the lesson of 1937, that the trolleys, trams and tubes must come out too and so effect a general transport strike, the Board and the Government would have had to concede the busmen's demands. Unfortunately the traitor unions are still there to break up the men's resistance, while there is as yet no alternative form of organization. But the very circumstances of the strike point the way to that form—the syndicalist form of fighting organization, based on the places of work, the garages and depots, and on the workers on the job instead of on timorous, comfortable, purse-tied union bureaucrats aspiring to government posts.

A further indication that the necessities of the class struggle are imposing syndicalist methods on the workers, was the decision of the Hendon garage to "work to rule". The *Daily Express* (22/4/44) was kind enough to explain what this involved: "This means, among other things, that passengers can take as long as they like while boarding a bus. The conductor will not hurry them, and the driver will not start until the bell is rung." (It goes without saying of course that if a passenger fell and broke his leg because the driver started before the bell in order to maintain the new summer schedules, the driver would be held responsible). The *Evening Standard* described working to rule as "complying exactly with orders and ceasing to show initiative". It is an old syndicalist method which is particularly effective because it makes the rules and the law look an ass, and paralyzes the boss. If it goes on, clearly the Government will have to introduce a new Defence Regulation against it! Actually the strike was called off before the Hendon garage men put their threat into operation.

Soldiers as Blacklegs

The Government had to resort to extreme means in order to break the strike and safeguard the Board's sacred privilege of overworking and underpaying its men and women workers. Bringing in soldiers is a brutal measure. There is no doubt that working class solidarity demands that soldiers should refuse to be used as blacklegs. Military discipline was not however framed by the ruling class for nothing. Single men in uniform risk the glasshouse, a brutal punishment, but one which will not kill them provided they have not got advanced tuberculosis. But married ones lose their family allowances as well if they offend against discipline. The Army holds their wives and children hostages for their good behaviour—a singularly revolting state of affairs. That the strikers realized that the position of the soldiers was difficult is shown by the fact that they displayed

considerable good humour towards them. Whether they take the same view of the inspectors and other lackeys of the Board who assisted the R.A.S.C. lorries to perform their strike-breaking function is doubtful.

But while recognizing the position of the married soldier it is impossible to read without a certain revulsion of those soldiers who "found it great fun" to fasten the chains more securely round their fellow-workers in busmen's uniform; nor of those who did well out of "tips". Soldiers' pay may be small; but it is dirty enough work to be an enforced black-leg, without accepting Judas-money for it.

Inevitably the use of unskilled labour to preserve profits produced accidents. One bus driven by a soldier took a wrong turning, went under a too-low bridge and had its roof ripped off; another crashed the pavement and demolished a lamp-post.

Whatever the personal feelings of the busmen were towards the soldiers themselves, the decision of the Government to call out troops incensed them. The Hounslow garage, previously running as usual, came out on Friday as a protest against the use of soldiers as strike breakers. A few members of the public showed their working class solidarity by refusing to use the blackleg buses, or by getting off when they saw they were on one driven and conducted by soldiers. The effectiveness of an extension of both these methods of protest is obvious enough.

This strike shows clearly a number of aspects of the class struggle. The way in which the Government introduces legislation to safeguard employers' profits and their power to exploit the workers; how the employers use that legislation as a shield behind which to worsen working conditions and, in effect, reduce wages; how the unions back up the employers and the government, however reactionary their strike-breaking methods may be; lastly how the workers, seeing themselves betrayed by the unions, take action on their own account. Even when superior force and economic blackmail has compelled them to go back, they have learnt from the experience to rely on themselves and their fellows solidarity, and have also learned to use new and effective methods of maintaining the struggle on the industrial field.

JOHN HEWETSON

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WHAT IT'S LIKE IN PRISON



THE PRISON SYSTEM is one of the most essential parts of the state machine, and at the same time the conditions prevailing inside the prisons are shrouded in mystery. There is, naturally, no official attempt to give a clear picture of prison life, and the vagueness in the mind of the man in the street is the basis of his fear of the law. To serve a term of imprisonment is to have many of one's ideas confirmed and many of them shattered.

After being convicted in court the prisoner is taken to prison in the Black Maria, a vehicle consisting of individual compartments, on either side of a central gangway, which are only just large enough for one person to sit in. On entering prison one is first stripped of all personality, the contents of one's pockets and all clothes are taken away and their description entered in a large register. Then one's body is measured, weighed, described, bathed and dressed in coarse, ugly, ill-fitting grey clothing. A very short medical examination follows which cannot possibly give an accurate idea of the prisoner's health, and then a short interview with the Governor and Chaplain who confirm the information previously given. A place of work is allocated and one enters on the prison routine.

The Daily Routine

The events of prison life are simple to the extreme of heartbreaking monotony. Rise at 6.30, wash, tidy cell, empty slops. At 7 breakfast, 7.30 until 8.00 exercise, 8 until 11.30 work, 11.30 to 12.15 dinner, 12.15 to 1.30 cell task, 1.30 to 2.00 exercise, 2.00 to 4.30 work, 4.30 supper and lock up for the night. These times are approximate and relate to Wormwood Scrubs, January to September 1943, as does all information given in this article. The daily routine is the skeleton upon which hangs the rest of prison life, and which varies only in minor details. On Saturday afternoon there is no work in the shops, instead one cleans out the cell, and on Sunday there is no work at all but church service in the morning and afternoon.

Prison Food

Most people find at first that the food is insufficient in quantity, but usually after a while this wears off and it might be said that there is a bare sufficiency. As regards the quality there can be absolutely no doubt that it is totally inadequate in many essentials, and is nearly always dirty, far from fresh, badly cooked and most unattractively served.

The breakfast consists of one pint of porridge, one pint of so-called tea, six ounces of bread and a small pat of margarine. This is dished out at 7.30. The supper, dished out at 4.30 consists of one pint of cocoa, eight ounces of bread, a small pat of margarine and a small piece of cheese three times a week. Dinners vary over a short range of dishes, and during the forty-five days from August 8th to September 21st, 1943, the dinners were as follows:

Fish, potatoes, greens, sweet duff, 8 days (Fish inedible 7 days, greens inedible 8 days).

Bacon, beans, potatoes, greens, 6 days (Greens inedible 6 days).

Corned beef, potatoes, greens, rice, 6 days (Greens inedible 6 days).

Vegetable soup, potatoes, duff, 9 days.

Meat soup, potatoes, duff, 8 days.

During the remaining 8 days there were various sorts of pie served, consisting of fish, bacon or corned beef baked with potatoes forming a "pie crust", and on 4 of these days greens were served, being inedible twice. It will be seen that on only 24 days out of 45 greens were served, and on only 2 days were the greens fit to eat. Add to this the fact that on 7 days when the greens were inedible the fish also was inedible, so that one could only eat potatoes and sweet duff.

The main reasons for the inedibility of greens are that they are kept in the stores until they are half rotten and then cooked without cleaning, one is served with greens which contain a high proportion of yellow leaves and ample supplies of mud. The fish is possibly good when it gets to the kitchen, but it is so badly cooked that the result is a strong-smelling mixture of fish and bones. Most of the other food is not properly cleaned and is not very well cooked.

The cocoa served for supper is suspected by many people to contain some soporific drug like bromide or luminol, but no concrete evidence can be brought to prove this. However, after having had prison cocoa for about seven months, I and a number of other prisoners (who had served various lengths of time) gave up the cocoa and the effects were noted by a trained observer. This was of course an unofficial experiment. Within about a week I noticed that I did not dream so much, that memory, concentration and general mental awareness were greatly improved. The others taking part noticed the same results.

Morrison has stated that prisoners receive the same rations as civilians. This is a lie. During eight months in Wormwood Scrubs I never received any jam or marmalade. I am also convinced that the amount of meat and sugar served is far below the normal ration. But one would be foolish to question Morrison's statement, he can no doubt prove it any day of the week from official statistics.

Work in Prison

Work is compulsory in prison, and is of two kinds, cell task which is to be done during the dinner hour and the evening, and associated labour which is done during the morning and afternoon in the workshops. To deal with the cell task first of all, this is a definite allocation of work which must be completed in a specified time, generally it is allocated, and completed work collected, every two days. Nearly all prisoners are given mail bags to sew. These are of hesian and have to be sewn with waxed thread, the stitches being 8 per inch. The task is supposed to take a certain time to do, but if it is to be completed during the hours per day allocated then the prisoner has to sew at 14 feet per hour. This means in an hour he should make 1344 stitches, or between 3 and 4 per second.

This is obviously quite impossible, and generally the prisoner is forced to use most of his little spare time on it, the spare time which is his for writing his fortnightly letter or reading his library books. Even if he does this he probably does not have enough time and the work is often improperly done. If the quota is not fulfilled or if the quality is too poor then punishment is likely to result.

The "associated" work in the shop is reckoned a privilege by the authorities, and there is more variety than in the cell task. Many of the commodities consumed in prison are produced by the prisoners under conditions which can only be described as slave labour. Clothing, shoes, bedding, are made in prisons, some of the food also is grown. Practically all the cleaning, maintenance, library work, cooking and baking are done by prisoners with prison officers (called "screws") as foremen. But the standard of living of the prisoner is so low that most of them are engaged in producing goods which are used outside the prison, generally by Government Departments. The largest shop in Wormwood Scrubs is the Mail-Bag shop, which prepares the raw material for cell task and produces other canvas goods like hammocks, kit-bags, etc., for use in the Forces. There is also an Envelope salvaging shop which is almost entirely non-productive of goods used by prisoners. The Basket Shop and the Tailors' Shop are smaller than the previous two, and most of the baskets produced are for outside the prison while many of the tailors are producing uniforms for the officers. All the other parties are much smaller, they are Garden Party, Library, Bath-house, Cooks, Bakers, Yard Party, Works Party, Cleaners, and sundry other odd-job men. The work performed by those lucky enough to be in one of the small parties is relatively interesting; and the gardeners, Yard Party, Works Party for instance spend most of their time in the open air. Discipline is not so strict in a smaller party and minor concessions can be obtained from the officer in charge.

The majority of the prisoners are in one of the larger workshops and nearly all the jobs are extremely monotonous and soul-destroying, consisting of endless repetition of some uninteresting operation. Under such conditions one would expect a mass ca'canny movement to develop, but this is prevented by the fact that the work is paid after the first month of imprisonment on a piece work basis. The money thus earned can be spent on tobacco. Such an inducement is sufficient to break any strike attempts even though the wage paid is microscopic. The minimum wage payable is 3d. per week and the maximum 11d. per week. In order to earn 3d. per week a man who is sewing mailbags by hand must do 30 hours worth of work at the rate of 20 feet per hour, and his stitches must be 8 per inch. This means that in an hour he must do 1,920 stitches, that is more than 5 per second. This is obviously even less possible than the cell-task rate, and results in wholesale graft. By various methods a person can boost his production, and thus according to book figures the required rates of work are maintained.

Clothing and Shelter

One of the rules of the Gloucester Penitentiary House 1785 says: "Offenders shall be clothed in a coarse and uniform apparel with certain marks or badges affixed to the same, as well to humiliate the wearer as to facilitate discovery in case of escape." (My italics).

Although the "certain marks or badges" no longer appear, the dress still has a decidedly humiliating effect upon the prisoner. Being made by prison labour upon the piece work rates described it is shoddy and ill fitting. The material of the jacket and waistcoat is of the coarsest grey flannel, much too hot for the summer and yet hardly sufficient for the winter. The trousers are dark "moleskin" drainpipes, the socks black wool, the shirt white with a black pin stripe, the tie grey. The shoes are ill-fitting and made of very soft leather, the only cleaning material being a weekly application of dubbin which naturally collects the dust. Inadequate capes are provided in wet or cold weather. The psychological effect of the contrast with the officers dark blue uniforms with their bright buttons and highly polished shoes is profound and greatly helps to produce that submissiveness and animality so dearly loved by the official mind. To receive a visit from relatives or friends when one is dressed in such outrageous clothes, when they are wearing bright and cheerful colours, is to experience an even greater reaction which produces an acute feeling of self-consciousness and renders one almost inarticulate.

Each prisoner inhabits a separate cell, sized 10ft. 6in. x 8ft. These cells are in great halls about 400 feet long, the doors of the cells facing inwards from each side onto a narrow landing and a space about twenty feet wide. Like all the rest of prison equipment, the cell is extremely bare and gives the impression of abject poverty. The floor is of wooden planks, which must be scrubbed white. The walls are of brick, painted a dull yellow to a height of about four feet, the upper half being whitewashed as is the ceiling. The door is of solid steel about three inches thick, and naturally opens only from the outside. Illumination during the day comes from a small window about eight feet off the floor, small paned and heavily barred. When it is dark there is electric light, controlled from outside the cell, which is switched off at about 8.45 p.m. The bulb is 50 volts, 25 watts, and produces a sickly yellow light that is very trying to the eyes. Most of the cell furniture is of wood, there is a plain wooden table 3 feet by 2, wooden chair and washstand. The bed consists of three planks raised from the floor by bearers, and the bedding consists of a mattress and pillow stuffed with coconut fibre, three blankets, two coarse sheets and a pillow slip. During the daytime these must be folded in a particular manner and the bed-boards and mattress propped against the wall. An enamel bowl is provided for washing and an enamel jug as water supply. The only sanitary arrangement while in the cell is a chamber pot which is often found to be barely sufficient.

Such is the "home" of the prisoner, and in spite of its unattractive appearance, many men take a pride in keeping it as clean and bright as they can with the insufficient cleaning materials supplied. When one has inhabited a cell for a certain time one can immediately tell if one accidentally goes through the wrong door into a row of seemingly identical cells. Although the contents of every cell are the same, and must be arranged in the same way, yet one senses an atmosphere in one own cell that is not to be found in that of anyone else. Thus does human individuality assert itself even under the rigid mechanism of the prison system.

JACK WADE

MAY DAY MEETING

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WORKING TO RULE

Employees operating from the Hendon garage adopted a "go slow" policy yesterday.

They feel that the "working to rule" system will be more effective than striking.

This means that drivers and conductors will follow all regulations to the letter, which inevitably results in loss of time. For instance, a conductor is not supposed to ring the bell from the upper deck. If this rule is carried out the bus cannot keep up to schedule.

All buses on the Hendon routes were about half an hour late.

Sunday Express, 23/4/44.

SHINWELL—A REBEL ?

"We have no intention of throwing the Commonwealth of Nations overboard in order to satisfy a section of the U.S. Press or indeed anyone else."

Mr. Shinwell (Lab., Seaham) made this comment when opening the debate on Imperial Affairs in the Commons to-day.

It has become fashionable in certain quarters to indulge in sneers at the British Empire, he said.

"Perhaps here and there our administration was far from perfect, but it does not lie in the mouths of other nations and other peoples who indulge in derogatory terms regarding our administration until they put their own house in order."

Mr. Shinwell said he had often differed with the Prime Minister, but he was in hearty accord with him on what he had said regarding the liquidation of the Empire.

Evening News, 20/4/44.

It is not so much American as British "certain quarters" that oppose British Imperialism. In shaking himself loose from the odium of anti-imperialism, and therefore of socialism, and allying himself on the subject to Churchill, Mr. Shinwell shows his "criticisms" of Churchill merely pave the way not to socialism but to the Cabinet.

THE HIGH COST OF DYING

In this war it costs £10,000 to kill an enemy soldier. In the last war, the cost was £5,000. The figures were given yesterday by an American Statistical officer. He calculated that in the American Civil War, the cost was £1,000, in the Napoleonic Wars £600, and in the days of Julius Caesar only 3/9d.

Daily Express, 17/4/44.

WELSH ON TROTSKYIST BOGEY

The mining industry is a prolific breeder of mishap and error, but the recent exaltation of Trotskyism is a jewel even in this shining crown of dissension. For years employers and miners have been engaged in skirmishes and minor fisticuffs. Recently the Government intervened as referee and was promptly hustled into a tight corner. Now the whole basis of discontent and mistrust is discovered by our cartoon-conscious public. It is not Nationalisation or its absence, not low wages or long hours or disgusting living conditions or social apathy. No, it is the wicked Reds—not the Stalinists who have apparently earned amnesty overnight, but a special variety of evil Russophiles who are labelled Trotskyists. A nation so ready to swallow patent medicines may conceivably gulp down this mental sedative. But the miner in Blaengarw or Aberbargoed will be surprised to learn of his own foolishness in following false and foreign gods. It must be difficult however to imagine what antedated variety of Russian agitator caused the French Revolution or the great Dockers' Strike.

Cardiff and Suburban News, 15/4/44.

GETTING READY FOR NEXT WAR

Mr. W. S. Morrison, Minister of Town and Country Planning, was asked by Mr. Sorensen (Lab., Leyton, W.), in the Commons to-day, when, in view of the possibility of another war, in rebuilding this country provision for the construction of bomb-proof shelters should at least be considered.

Mr. Morrison said that such considerations formed part of the general security policy of the country in peace and would not be lost sight of.

Star, 31/3/44.

Through

BOOMERANG

Letters from our readers, published on this page, show that considerable confusion has been caused among the public by the indiscriminate use of the name "Revolutionary Communist Party" without an accompanying explanation that this is the Trotskyist organisation, followers of the man who tried to overthrow the Soviet Union and standing in violent opposition to the Communist Party and the principles of Communism.

Thus the credulous section of the public which is at last beginning to escape from the grip of the Bolshevik bogey has been given a new dose of horrific propaganda. This is, in fact, just what the Trotskyists want, as one of their chief aims is to discredit the Communist movement.

Daily Worker, 13/4/44.

Things are taking a distressing turn for the *Daily Worker*. The people of Britain are apparently not able to distinguish between the Bolshevik bogey and the Trotskyist bogey. It is a sad state of affairs and we offer the Communist Party and its gallant paper the *Daily Worker* the expression of our deepest sympathy in the painful situation they find themselves. In an attempt to be helpful we venture to suggest that they adopt the title of Royal Communist (Stalinist) Party so that no confusion would be possible between the loyal subjects of His Majesty and the fascist-viperous-treachorous-Trotskyists.

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CHRISTIAN CHARITY

New Forest Rural District Council have refused Dr. Barnardo's Homes permission to use a house which they have bought for £8,000 as a home for boys.

The Rev. E. W. Powell, a retired clergyman who lives at Lyndhurst and is chairman of the rural district council, told me this afternoon: "We refused permission for the conversion of this house into a hostel because the village of Bank is zoned for private residences and the hostel is objected to by residents and by the council on that score."

Star, 12/4/44.

the Press

MEA CULPA

At a conference of the Allied Control Commission in Naples it is reported that known Fascists are creeping back into key positions as prefects and that the Fascist Youth Organisation is being revived under a different title. The best that the Chief Commissioner, General Mason-Macfarlane, could do about it was to urge that anything of this sort should be brought to the attention of the Italian Government.

We need a more robust policy towards Fascists, a franker and bolder policy in seeking out and supporting our true allies among the Italian people. A Government headed by Badoglio and Victor Emmanuel—or any other princely rat of the House of Savoy—inevitably favour Fascists.

The mass of the Italian people have been dulled by twenty years of terrorism, war and starvation. Out of their torment they will throw up new, young, vigorous leaders. It should be our pride to find and encourage these men. It is our shame that, so far, we have backed the worst elements of old Italy.

Reynolds News, 16/4/44.

RATS & BUREAUCRATS

"A rat in a haystack is an agricultural rat and is dealt with by the Surrey War Agricultural Committee, but if it is in a cottage, it is dealt with by the Ministry of Health, as an urban rat."

Councillor R. Laing said this at last night's meeting of Caterham and Warlingham Council.

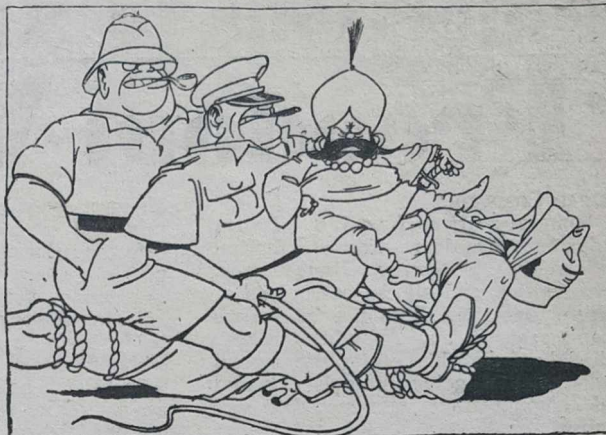
"Our rats," he continued, "are sagacious animals, and if they see the agricultural rodent officers approach they leave the haystack and go into Mrs. Jones's cottage over the road, where they know they are safe until the arrival of the divisional rodent officers from the Ministry of Health."

"Then they go back to the safety of the haystack."

"Eventually, maybe, the two lots of officials get together and throw a cordon around the haystack and the cottage, round up the rat, and probably send Mrs. Jones a bill for £5 for rodent infestation clearance."

Councillor W. C. Love, chairman, said that it was a good thing there were no ships' rats in the district, or the Ministry of War Transport and the Admiralty might have to join in the hunt.

Evening Standard, 6/4/44.



REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT

In high spirits the Maharaja of Kashmir, formerly Sir Hari Singh, arrived at Waterloo to-day to attend meetings of the War Cabinet, as one of India's representatives.

These can be few richer men in the world than the Maharaja. He inherited £10,000,000 from his father, and his income is said to be over £2,500,000 a year. His jewels are world famous.

When a boy, he was a page of honour to Lord Curzon, then Viceroy, of India. His golden robe and pearl chain are said to have cost £1,000,000. At King George V's Durbar his dress of gold, glistening with diamonds, was worth £3,000,000.

His personal aeroplane is finished with silver, even on the outside of the body. When he came to London for the Jubilee he booked 16 rooms in one hotel and a suite in another. He brought 42 polo ponies.

Star, 12/4/44.

Doubtless the Maharaja will be an excellent representative of India's starving masses.

A MONARCH'S ROLE

Ercoli, leader of the Italian Communist Party said, in Naples that the Communists had shelved the monarchical question.

"The monarchy during recent decades has not accomplished—nay, has betrayed—its functions as a balancing force, but we cannot get anywhere if we make all policy hinge on the monarchy question," he said.

Daily Worker, 12/4/44.

It will be news to many Communists to hear that the monarchy should play a role as a "balancing force". Why don't they make a kingdom of the U.S.S.R.?

WASTE

Sir John Anderson, Chancellor of the Exchequer, told Sir Waldron Smithers (Con., Chislehurst) in Parliament to-day that the approximate cost of paper, printing and distribution of the pay-as-you-earn tables and forms was £300,000.

The approximate weight of paper involved was 3,000 tons.

Evening Standard, 4/4/44.

The Government does not allow paper to be used to reprint books which run out of print in a few weeks, text books and exercise books of which there is a great shortage, but finds always enough paper for official forms.

Objections to Anarchism

'Freedom Won't Work'

DEAR COMRADE,

I am at heart an Anarchist. I want complete freedom from authority, oligarchy, plutocracy, bureaucracy, chauvinism, and all the other evils of this system, but I do not believe we can achieve an Anarchist society directly from this capitalistic system without first going through a period of communism or state-controlled socialism.

If a man who had had his limbs bound from his birth were suddenly released from his bonds, it would take several years of tuition and practice before he could use his limbs, during which time he may find it very painful. He may even want to put his bonds on again and he will have to be prevented from doing so by the person who released him. The same applies to the people who live and are educated under capitalism, when they are released from same.

After the civil war in America, the majority of the negroes who had been born in slavery and had lived all their lives in slavery, were unable to exist as free citizens. Some of them begged their former masters to take them back as slaves, whilst others were forced to work under worse conditions than they had to under slavery. The remainder either starved or resorted to robbery, or the law that might be right.

The majority of the people who live under a capitalist system are slave minded, they would abuse freedom, and not know how to use it, unless they were firstly moulded into an anarchist way of thinking. Imagine what would happen if we suddenly dispensed with the police and courts of law without attempting to set up another such organisation in its place.

Hungry people would immediately seize and eat a large amount of food before a system of rationing could be put into effect, and thereby cause an unnecessary famine at a later date. Men in unhappy marriages would probably leave their wives and children without means of support. People who have been harbouring grievances against others would probably commit murder. There would be chaos.

It will take years of careful planning and vigorous work to produce anything like enough commodities to meet the requirements of the community, during which time the people who are capitalistic-minded must be

given encouragement by personal gain, until such time as they are anarchistically educated.

Our first task is to overthrow the capitalists and landowners which can only be done by revolution (a violent one I believe is necessary in this country) and then the grip of the state must be relaxed very slowly but surely.

Although I am an Anarchist at heart I will support and do everything I possibly can to assist the Communists in their struggle for power, because I believe it is only through communism that we will achieve our final aim.

GUS.

Our Answer

Anarchism means complete freedom from the State. We do not agree that the way to learn freedom is to be shackled even more to the State; on the contrary, if any "transitional period" were necessary it would surely be one in which the "grip of the State was relaxed". That is certainly not the case under State communism, where the grip of the State is tightened more securely year by year. In Russia the original aim was for the State to "wither away": it has been shown that only the opponents of the State wither away. The communists struggle for power and change masters; the new masters so far from being more likely to be prepared to relax the control of the State have actually fastened it even more than under the Czar, whose tyranny was limited by inefficiency and tempered by assassination. The new State is a worse despotism insofar as it is more efficient. From the material point of view, the conditions of the workers have changed little from when they slaved for private capitalists and landlords and when they work for the State.

We do not see what advantage the masses have in changing one set of masters for another. There is to us no purpose in abolishing one set of tyrannical laws to replace them by another. Anarchy means freedom not only from one set of bosses but from all bosses.

To take the specific instances mentioned: we agree that it would perhaps be painful for a man to begin to walk after being bound for years. Nevertheless the only way to learn is

for him to get on his feet again, not to remain seated, painful though the initial stages might be. In political life, there is no kind friend who breaks the bonds for him—"the emancipation of the workers must be the work of the workers themselves"—he must do it himself, and the strength he brings to do that is sufficient strength to get accustomed to the new life.

The instance about Negro emancipation is historically wrong. In spite of differences, we would point to a man like Booker T. Washington, born a slave as an instance of how the Negroes of America rose from bondage. True, some had to beg to be taken back into bondage for the simple reason that they were left to starve; in other words, they did not become economically free when they became politically free. In spite of the delusion fostered by Southern novelists, the Negroes of the South showed far greater forbearance in their hour of emancipation than the slaveowners had any right to expect: far more than the Nazis will get from the oppressed peoples of Europe.

We do not agree that the majority of people would abuse freedom. Even if we believed it were so, we have seen in so many instances how much worse it is to rely on governments (themselves composed of men with the same human failings) to prevent them from so doing. What is to prevent anyone coming to power from feathering his own nest, from using governmental machinery to satisfy his grudges, from eating the largest amount of food before the hungry people got any at

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all? Nothing—and we have seen that proved, in every system where it has been tried.

People will learn how to behave themselves in a free society when they get a free society. Meanwhile we can work towards a free society by "careful planning and vigorous work" now, by mass organisation in all the places of work that aims at an eventual taking over of the maintenance of life which by rights belong to those who produce. In such a way the "transitional period" comes now, under the old system, by those who are struggling against it: every strike becomes a means to an end; the struggle against the system becomes at the same time part of the transitional period towards freedom. State socialism, bolshevism and the like are just as much hindrances against us as the confessedly capitalist and fascist States: in exactly the same way as the latter must eventually be overthrown to make way for anarchism, so must the former.

Greater freedom does not grow out of greater tyranny, but out of freedom. We recognise that there must be a certain transitional period between tyranny and freedom: that period is the period of struggle. It is in struggling against the ruling-class that the masses learn to be free. The organisations that are developed in the period of struggle are libertarian organisations those which are imposed by the State are authoritarian organisations. Contrary to the beliefs of State socialists, anarchism does not mean "no organisation" but "libertarian organisation". In developing the libertarian organisations that are naturally evolved by the masses—which were developed in the Spanish Revolution, for instance—we are moving towards anarchism. In helping any political party into power we are preparing for a new tyranny, for when it gets to power it will inevitably become a new instrument of oppression.

A. M.

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AN ARGUMENT often used to justify support for the war is that the Allies are fighting a "progressive" struggle against Fascism, and that until Fascism "has been finally defeated" the struggle for a better world should be postponed. Under this pretext the British government has been allowed to convert the organised labour movement (with the ready consent and assistance of the labour leaders) into a totalitarian labour front, to introduce military and industrial conscription, to enforce the Defence Regulations (including the new rAA directed against striking workers), in fact to lay the firm foundations of a fascist state.

That totalitarianism is only the logical development of capitalist "democracy" in a world of competing imperialisms and shrinking markets is a fact that has been stressed in Anarchist propaganda during the past twenty years. *War Commentary* pointed out at the beginning of the war that the British ruling class would use the war situation as an excuse to introduce totalitarianism. The Anarchist movement—in Britain and elsewhere—has opposed the war from the outset and has pointed out that the working-class have nothing to gain from a victory by either side. Consistent with our revolutionary principles we have advocated the overthrow by the workers of governmental and capitalist exploitation and oppression and the building of a free society.

It is surprising therefore that some Anarchists have taken a pro-war stand. Among them is Rudolf Rocker—who was a vigorous opponent of the last capitalist bloodbath. The above pamphlet is written in reply to an article Rocker contributed to the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme*, a Jewish Anarchist paper published in New York. The author, Marcus Graham, was editor of the Los Angeles Anarchist paper *Man* and is well-known to the militant working-class movement in the United States and Canada.

The pamphlet is a smashing attack on the arguments put forward by the supporters of imperialism. Using as his sources the capitalist press and speeches by capitalist politicians the writer demonstrates the real war aims of the so-called democracies. He shows how continental fascism was built up by Wall Street and the City of London and how the capitalist cartels have maintained their connections

across warring frontiers. He compares economic planning in Germany and the United States and shows that the two supposedly opposite systems are virtually the same, and deals with British fascist rule in the colonial Empire.

The Issues in the Present War is an invaluable collection of material showing only too clearly the real imperialist aims of capitalism in the war, and justifying fully the stand which Anarchists have taken against it.

KEN HAWKES

The Issues in the Present War, 32 pages, 6d. (postage 1d.)

Daily Express Attacks Us

The *Daily Express* for Saturday, April 22nd carries an article headed dramatically: "Anarchists poisoning factories." The article does little except to quote disparagingly from the mid April number of *War Commentary* in a manner which gives little idea of its actual contents. Anarchists are described as "carrying on active and undisturbed subversive propaganda at Britain's war factories," and, says the *Express*, "a copy of this publication has been handed to the Home Secretary", as if he had never seen it before!

Although the *Daily Express* does not call for the suppression of *War Commentary* at this stage, obviously their article is the first of a campaign which can only end in such a demand. The Beaverbrook press has always maintained a petty bourgeois outlook of respectability and fair play, although at the same time it has carried out a dishonest campaign against the co-operative societies.

We do not expect the truth from the largest newspaper combine in Britain, nor do we expect these monopolists to be defenders of free speech. We know that it is only by the independent actions of the workers that these principles can be maintained, and we shall do all in our power to give a true representation of the workers' view-point upon current events and the ever increasing strikes in industry. Although in the near future they may suppress *War Commentary*, or the *Socialist Appeal*, or the *New Leader*; yet the struggle for free speech will go on, and will be victorious.

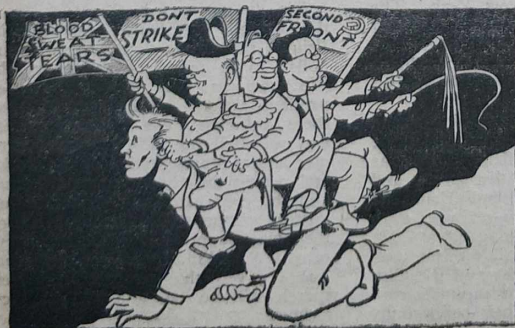
MANCHESTER GAS STRIKE

"INQUIRIES ARE BEING made into the origin of the London and Manchester strikes, and the Government may be faced with the problem of taking action under the new regulation against agitators before M.P.s have had a chance to challenge it in debate." (Press Report). As might have been expected, the new regulation 1AA is to be used as a threat against strikers in general, despite the claim of the Government that this is not so as there already exists legislation against illegal strikes (*i.e.* strikes). On another page an article on the bus strike in London, shows what conditions under which busmen work are like, and how the strike was a direct response to virtual provocation on the part of the L.P.T.B. The succession of strikes is due to conditions, not agitators, and every member of the government knows it. But it also knows that terroristic legislation to the tune of 5 years or £500 or both may for a time stem the expression of industrial unrest.

The Manchester gas workers followed the advice of their unions and bosses and submitted a claim for wage increases to a tribunal. They were awarded the insulting sums of 1d. to 2d. per hour increases. As a result they came out on strike (are the tribunal members to be prosecuted under 1AA for incitement?). The Manchester Corporation did not give in, so the strike lasted several days, during which the yellow press has given the most lurid accounts of the effects of *the men's action*. How bread baking was held up, hospitals abandoned major operations, consumers were hit and so on. All this is very terrible no doubt. Such stoppages do undoubtedly give rise to much inconvenience, may even (conceivably) cause loss of life. Now strikes constitute a struggle between *two* parties; the inconvenience to the consumer goes on until the struggle

is resolved *one way or the other*. It is the curious assumption of the yellow press, and of the government spokesmen, that only one outcome is possible, and that the consumers' inconvenience is dependent on the workers giving in. Somehow they do not seem to realize that bread could be baked, major operations carried out, gas fires operating again, as soon as the employers gave in also. An impartial observer might say that the press gents and the government spokesmen showed bias. But perhaps he would not make so obvious a comment if he reflected that the employing class control the yellow press (that's why its yellow) and the government too. When a paper like *War Commentary* makes any comment reflecting its undoubted working class bias, its collaborators run the risk of 5 years or £500 fine (the Press Fund wouldn't run to that though) or both. That's life under class-divided society. It is filthy and unjust and hypocritical, and cruel, and that's why we don't like it and fight against those who seek to maintain that society.

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Pages of Revolutionary History

MUTINY IN THE BRITISH ARMY

PRESENT DISCUSSION OF post war demobilization should naturally recall the discussion of the subject in 1918. Then, as now, the politicians had well-laid plans abundantly reported by the Press. How true is the comment of Burns, "the best laid schemes of mice and men gang aft agley". In a few weeks the demobilization plans of the politicians were shattered by the soldiers who almost demobilized themselves.

But it was not demobilization alone which caused the mutinies of 1918 and 1919. It was also a revolt against tyrannous discipline, low pay and senseless parades. The first post-war mutiny occurred on November 13th, 1918 at Shoreham, only two days after the Armistice. The strike was led by a Northumberland sergeant, G.P., who in response to an act of tyranny by a major against a private, marched the troops from the naval docks, the guard of marines opening the gates to allow them to pass. Some distance from the camp he held a meeting urging the soldiers to stand firm.

The next day the General arrived and addressed the troops, G.P. being made to stand to one side. The General invited any man to step out and go to work.

"You can imagine my feelings (wrote G.P.) as being an old soldier of twenty years service, of course, I knew the consequences of my act.

But I never saw such loyal men in my life, not one man moved. I could hear the sergeants in the rear of the men telling them to stand by me, and it was well they did, or I should have got ten years or so.

The following Monday one thousand of us were demobbed, my name at the head of the list, and one thousand every week afterwards."

Mutiny, by T. H. Wintringham.

Troops mutinied at Folkestone on January 3, 1919. Two thousand men met and agreed that no military boat should be allowed to sail to France, only Canadian and Australian troops being allowed to go, if they wished. The Colonials stood by the English mutineers. Troop trains arriving in Folkestone with troops *en route* to France were met by pickets. In a mass the returning soldiers joined their comrades.

An armed guard which was posted at the docks with loaded rifles and fixed bayonets fell back before the demonstrators who set up their own harbour guard. The rebels, now about 10,000 strong, held a mass meeting and decided to form a Soldiers' Union, and elected delegates and spokesmen.

The Chief of Staff, Sir William Robertson, hastened from London and at once agreed to the men's demands. All with jobs to go to were demobilized at once. Men who claimed prospects of a job were given a week's leave to make arrangements. Complete in-

demnity for all acts of mutiny was promised. By this time 4,000 men at Dover demonstrated and would have stopped troopships the following day if the Folkestone settlement had not been made.

A few days later 400 soldiers *en route* to Salonica refused to board the boat train at London. Within the next few days the revolt spread to Shortlands, Grove Park, Kempton Park, Sydenham, Park Royal, Maidstone, Aldershot (where a serious riot took place) Bristol, Chatham and other places.

An outstanding feature of most of the mutinies was the distrust and scorn of the men for their officers. The promises and cajolery of officers, even colonels and brigadiers, were scorned. The men refused to talk to any but the "top notchers". The Army Service Corps, Mechanical Transport at Kempton Park and Grove Park seized army lorries and drove to London, where they blocked the traffic in Whitehall while their deputation was inside.

On January 15, 1919, Winston Churchill became Secretary of State for War and Air. He did not have to wait long for a visit of the troops. At half past eight on the morning of February 8 he received an urgent summons to the War Office. Arriving there by car he saw a battalion of Guards drawn up in the Mall. A report of mutiny awaited him. 3,000 soldiers of many units had arrived at Victoria Station the previous evening on their way to France after leave. The Director of Movements (according to Churchill) had failed to make any arrangements for the feeding, housing or transport of these men, most of whom came from the North of England. Most of them had waited all night on the platform, without tea or food.

"They had suddenly upon some instigation resorted in a body to Whitehall, and were now filling the Horse Guards' Parade armed and in a state of complete disorder. Their leader, I was informed, was at that very moment prescribing conditions to the Staff of the London Command in the Horse Guard building."

Churchill, *The Aftermath*, page 63.

What Churchill calls a "state of complete disorder" was simply the refusal to continue obeying the orders of the military commanders. So far as public conduct is concerned the men were most orderly, self disciplined and organised.

Now, one might think this a glorious opportunity for the fire-eating hero of pen and radio to stalk out and address the troops, to give them some "fight on the beaches" stuff or a basinful of "blood and tears". Not likely! Winston regarded discretion as the better part of valour—indeed the whole of it. The whole of Churchill's account of the affair consists of reports.

Although he was only a hundred yards away, he remained in his office.

"Sir William Robertson and General Fielding, commanding the London District, presented themselves to me with this account, and added that a reserve Battalion of Grenadiers and two troops of Household Cavalry were available on the spot. What course were they authorized to adopt? I asked whether the Battalion would obey orders, and was answered 'The officers believe so'. On this I requested the Generals to surround and make prisoners of the disorderly mass. They departed immediately on this duty.

"I remained in my room a prey to anxiety. A very grave issue had arisen at the physical heart of the State. Ten minutes passed slowly. From my windows I could see the Life Guards on duty in Whitehall closing the gates and doors of the archway. Then suddenly there appeared on the roof of the Horse Guards a number of civilians, perhaps twenty or thirty in all, who spread themselves out in a long black silhouette and were evidently watching something which was taking place, or about to take place, on the Parade Ground below them. What this might be I had no means of knowing, although I was but a hundred yards away. Another ten minutes of tension passed and back came the Generals in a much more

cheerful mood. Everything had gone off happily. The Grenadiers with fixed bayonets had closed in upon the armed crowd; the Household Cavalry had executed an enveloping movement on the other flank; and the whole 3,000 men had been shepherded and escorted under arrest to Wellington Barracks, where they were all going to have breakfast before resuming their journey to France. No one was hurt, very few were called to account, and only one or two were punished and that not seriously."

Churchill, *The Aftermath*.

The soldiers' movement proved to be one of the most successful strikes ever attempted. Immense gains were won in a few weeks, but the story is incomplete if limited to Britain's shores. The success of the soldiers' strike was due to its sweeping movement over England and France. Beyond the Channel was half of the British Army, armed and battle seasoned. How did the veterans of the battlefields of France and Flanders respond to the strike call before they marched to the occupation of the German Rhineland?

(Next issue, "British Mutiny in France.")

TOM BROWN

Moscow's Marble Tube

EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT, since 1935, Moscow has an underground. A Londoner has no reason to be surprised at such a common thing, but as he has been told over and over again that the stations are decorated with marble, a few words of explanation are necessary.

Moscow is a city much less concentrated than London; immense districts have houses of only one or two floors. In this situation a general development of underground public transport by electric trains is not urgent. This system, which is very expensive to instal, is only advantageous where the density of the city creates an overcrowded traffic. In Moscow it is all the more unnecessary in that the city has only a few buses and taxis. In order to resolve the problem of public transport one should have first saturated the city with buses. It would have been far cheaper, yes, but . . . there are some prides and fantasies which kings and dictators have and which are stronger than reason.

Just as Peter the Great wanted an European town (now Leningrad) to be built on marshes, just as another tsar wished that the railway line 650 kilometres long joining Moscow to St. Petersburg should be completely straight, so Stalin wanted an underground. It was he alone who wanted it, in 1933.

The navvies who built the tube had a hard time because the line had to be constructed at all costs in the record time decided. A confession in the

Trade Union paper *Troud* 6/6/34 is worth quoting:

"Most barracks where the workers of the underground live are extremely crowded . . . It is not rare to see families of workers living in promiscuity in the same room with bachelors. Baths and douches are extremely scarce. Not everywhere does one find sheets and blankets. In an inspection of 40 barracks, it was revealed that only *three* were habitable . . ."

The State not only accommodated the builders of the marble tube in slums but also stole from them half-a-million days of hard work. *Za Ind* of the 8/4/34 reports that:

"During the last 75 days, five hundred thousand workers outside the usual gangs, have contributed their work gratis in order to put the work on the underground up to date."

When the line was finished it was realized that it had cost a tremendous amount and the prices of tickets were accordingly fixed at 0.50 roubles per journey. As the greatest number of Moscow workers and small employees earn from 4 to 10 roubles a working day, it is of course impossible for them to spend one rouble every day for transport to the factory. There were very few travellers and on the 1st of October 1935, the price of the ticket was reduced to 0.30 rouble per journey, 0.25 with a season ticket. This means that the ordinary worker must spend from 1/20th to 1/8th of his salary to go to work by tube. We bet that he doesn't much appreciate the colour of its marble . . .

YVON

Translated from *L'U.R.S.S. telle qu'elle est*.



Tuberculosis and Malnutrition

ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL
MEDICAL SCHOOL,
W.2.

SIR,

With reference to your comment on the extract from the *Manchester Guardian* dealing with Tuberculosis in Glasgow (Mid-March *War Commentary* "Through the Press"). Your statement that "Tuberculosis is mostly due to malnutrition" misleads your readers, since malnutrition is only one of the many factors concerned. Your criticism of the Government based on a distortion of fact is, to say the least, unjustifiable in this case. Criticisms based on distorted fact is destructive of your own cause, and only serves to discredit your other statements about whose truth we are less qualified to judge.

W.S.P.
J.L.C.
M.S.B.

Although the fact of malnutrition has been abundantly proved by such workers as Sir John Orr and the late Dr. G. C. M. McGonigle, there seems to be an extraordinary reluctance to recognize the factor of inadequate nutrition in the causation of the bulk of contemporary ill-health. This reluctance is unfortunately common among doctors, who ought to be the first to grasp its importance. Dr. W. R. Aykroyd, in his book, *Human Nutrition and Diet*, states that "the medical mind has been extraordinarily slow in grasping the fact that poverty and wretchedness are the fundamental causes of most disease" (p. 160). This is also the view of Sir Jack Drummond, Government Adviser on Nutrition; "An astonishing feature of the many discussions on nutrition which are heard on all sides to-day is the reluctance on the part of some of the experts, and a not inconsiderable proportion of the higher ranks of administrative officials, to admit that malnutrition is responsible for poor physique and ill-health among the working class to-day." (*The Englishman's Food*, 1939, p. 544).

Orr has shown how expenditure on food diminishes with decreasing income, and how inadequate are the

diets of over 50 per cent. of the population.

The facts with regard to Tuberculosis are particularly clear, and our statement that Tuberculosis is mostly due to malnutrition is borne out by many authorities. Dr. Aleck Bourne, for example, states that "It may almost be claimed that a nation's incidence of tuberculosis is an index of its social state. *It thrives in conditions of malnutrition, bad housing, overcrowding, and ill-ventilated dark surroundings.*" He goes on to lend point to our criticism of the government which our correspondents seem to think so ill-timed; "A high mortality or increase in the incidence (of tuberculosis) suggests therefore, other things being equal, that social conditions are bad. *The environmental causes of tuberculosis are so well known and its prevalence so widespread that it provides an outstanding example of scope for the application of preventive medicine, health services and social amelioration*" (*Health of the Future*).

Sir Pendrill Varrier Jones, the founder of the Papworth Settlement, when giving his reasons why the children of the tuberculous people who lived at the colony were free from the disease, put adequate food supply first on his list (quoted by the Chief Medical Officer to the Ministry of Health in his Annual Report for 1933, p. 139). In the last war, the official enquiry into the increase in Tuberculosis, recognized as the two main causes, food shortage, and long hours of factory work. (The latter factor can be regarded as, in part, dependant on the former, as the harder one works the more food one needs).

The Final Report of the Mixed Committee of the League of Nations on Nutrition (1937) declares: "The world war afforded a striking demonstration of the effects of deterioration in diet, *when other factors (housing, sanitation, medical knowledge, etc.) were practically unchanged.* The general death rate, and especially the death rate from tuberculosis—a still more sensitive index of nutrition conditions—rose in all countries (belligerent and others) where food restrictions were imposed on the population." (p. 28. *Italics ours*). They also showed that of the various factors among which tuberculosis flourishes, nutrition is the

most important: "In Denmark, the tuberculosis death rate, which had been steadily falling before the war, increased a little during the war as a result of food restrictions, although at that time there was no housing shortage. Subsequently, after the war, the tuberculosis death rate resumed its downward trend in spite of a prolonged housing shortage; circumstances had dissociated two of the causes of tuberculosis mortality—housing and nutrition—and had demonstrated the outstanding importance of the latter."

In conclusion it is only necessary to record another finding of the League of Nations' Committee. On p. 77 of their Final Report they declare: "Every tuberculosis specialist is convinced that the appearance of tuberculosis before the twentieth year is due to two main causes; overwork and malnutrition." In view of these findings by many who have had special experience of the problem, we feel fully justified in maintaining our opinion—which is also based on common sense and everyday observation—that the main cause of tuberculosis is inadequate diet due to poverty. The other factors all spring from this same poverty, whether they be overwork or bad housing.

EDITORS.

Defence Committee

DEAR COMRADES,

The arrest of Anne Kean, Heaton Lee and Roy Tearse raises grave issues for the working-class.

A local Defence Committee is being set up to arrange for their defence, but the financial means are very limited and I would ask all lovers of freedom who can contribute in any way to get in touch with me at the above address.

The repressive class legislation of the Trades Disputes Act of 1927 under which are comrades have been arrested might be fought at all costs and their fight is our fight.

Yours fraternally,

Chairman N.E.D.C., I.L.P.

c/o Socialist Club,

Royal Arcade,

Pilgrim Street,

Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1.

The Solidarity of Labour

OF RECENT YEARS May Day seems to have lost its meaning. The early May Days were fraught with a significance that could not be mistaken: they celebrated the solidarity of labour throughout the world. The international workers' movement made this particular day, May 1st, a day on which labour everywhere downed tools and declared its solidarity in the struggle for a better world. Indelibly associated with the festival were the Anarchist pioneers of the Chicago revolutionary and labour movement who were martyred in the famous Haymarket Trials of 1887.

The very downing of tools not on a particular wage issue or strike, but in celebration of the solidarity of labour everywhere, was in itself a revolutionary act. It was a blow against capitalism demonstrating a clear anti-capitalist message, as the early Christians celebration of Easter in the catacombs of pagan Rome was a challenge to the Roman Empire.

The Roman Empire could not defy that challenge except by taking over the religion that challenged it. In the same way capitalism could not make an effective reply to the new creed that undermined it except by taking it over. Its task was rendered easy by the fact that within the labour movement existed two trends: one, anarchist, which proclaimed the abolition of the State, and the institution of free socialism; and the other, the then called social-democratic or authoritarian socialist, which believer in "using" the State machinery. Because of this belief in using the machinery of the State which its own leaders realised was "nothing but the executive committee of the ruling class", the authoritarian socialists were an easy prey to the blandishments of the capitalist class. First they split the international in order to monopolise the labour movement themselves; they endeavoured to isolate the more revolutionary and anarchist sections of the working-class in some countries from the social-democratic movements in others, lest the rank-and-file of the workers be "corrupted". Then they proceeded to make peace

with the capitalist class, wherever it would allow them to, by opposing revolutionary action, and getting into parliamentary contact with the representatives of the ruling-class.

We have seen in our own day the sorry consequences of that policy, unfortunately followed by the majority of the workers. The German Social-Democratic Party, the party of Marx and Engels, supported the first world war and the counter-revolution which followed it. Finally it took over the government in conjunction with the bourgeois elements, and then handed it over as a present to Hitlerism, which succeeded without even a struggle. The British Labour Party, for years reckoned as the greatest social-democratic movement second only to the German, and of late years considered to be the fountain-head of all Labour Parties everywhere; has supported two world wars in defence of the Empire; has three times taken office during periods of savage repression within the Empire; has shown itself unwilling to move one inch against repression abroad except when its masters allowed it to support them in their war; has tackled the dirtiest jobs on behalf of the Conservatives.

When we look at the record of the Russian Social-Democrats, or rather of its "majority section" ("Bolsheviks") that took power, we see the final decadence of the Marxist idea. They have taken State power with a vengeance, and reduced the Russian Revolution to a dictatorial state controlled by the bureaucracy. They have split the international workers' movement throughout the world worse than it has ever been split before, by unprincipled methods and opportunist politics. They have supported Labour *versus* Conservatism; Conservatism *versus* Labour; Liberalism *versus* both; Nazism *versus* Democracy; Democracy *versus* Nazism; remaining loyal to one thing only, the interests of Stalin.

May Day has declined correspondingly. As the authoritarian socialists have become increasingly more nationalistic, they have toned down on the idea of the solidarity of labour. For war purposes they have resurrected the dead idea of international solidarity, for the thoroughly base reason that they wish to exploit it on behalf of the belligerents. Even here, however, their true attitude is seen when the Communist Party issues a poster for May Day headed with an old slogan, "Workers of All Lands Unite" but adorned with the national flags of Britain, America, China and Russia.

The fascists, "capitalism's bolsheviks", have the same idea. They too use May Day and the old socialist slogans, to foster the idea of labour's solidarity not internationally with fellow workers, but nationally with the capitalist class and the State. This like the other is a mockery of all that the original May Day stood for.

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