

WAR *For Anarchism* COMMENTARY

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TWOPENCE

CAN WE AFFORD IT?

DISCUSSION OF THE possible degree of Britain's post-war prosperity has become a popular pastime. Cabinet Ministers and journalists, soldiers and factory workers debate, "Can we afford Beveridge?" Will there be jobs for all? "Must there be rationing?" Opinion, even among Government spokesmen ranges from the blackest pessimism to the most feather-headed optimism. Let us consider the optimists first. Chief of these has been Churchill who points to the National Debt as an indicator of national prosperity.

In a speech some time ago, Churchill quoted the War Loan stock and the income tax post-war credit payments as cases of post-war wealth. Nest eggs he called them. Let us see. The money and goods collected by income tax and war loan were immediately turned into shells and bombs which were exploded, ships which were sunk and aircraft which were shot down. That wealth was destroyed; it no longer exists. What exists in its place is printed paper slips. War loan and such bear no resemblance to a peace-time bank which does not destroy the wealth its clients deposit in its keeping, but invests it in industry, business and houses. Churchill's argument is equal to saying that if A owes B £100, and B owes C £100, and C owes A the same amount, the three of them will be £300 better off.

On the other hand are the pessimists with Bevin as chief spokesman. Even working men are heard saying, "This war has got to be paid for. The country will be broke after the war." This illusion is encouraged by a large part of the Press and most of Authority. We are told that we shall have to work hard; rationing must continue; we shall not be allowed to spend as we will and disabled soldiers must not expect generous pensions. The War must be paid for, they sternly conclude.

To such we answer, the War has been paid for. Wars, like all forms of physical activity, are fought by labour applied to natural resources. Guns, tanks and

airplanes are the products of human labour. That labour has already been expended. The real price has been paid. And generations yet unborn are expected to pay, over and over again, the cost of war already paid by our own generation. So, do we still owe the price of the Battle of Trafalgar, though the men who built the ships of oak and teak and who cast the cannon are dead and forgotten. The war debt is a financial trick without foundation in physical nature. By encouraging workers to share in War Loan investment, Authority hopes to gain working class support for the finance racket.

To the worker with fifty or a hundred pounds invested in War Saving Certificates, it may seem that he will be that amount better off when repayment starts. But, as the wealth invested was straightway destroyed and the scrip now has no backing, it follows that repayment will be by paper without additional goods to back it; that is by inflationary methods. All that happens is that more paper is issued, the prices of commodities rise and the workers are no better off. War loan repayment will have gone on to the cost of living.

So much for finance. All true wealth is produced by labour applied to natural resources. Any estimate of Britain's post-war prosperity must be based upon a survey of the available labour power, the natural resources at hand and the means of applying the one to the other. Only by such a method can we correctly answer the question, "Can we afford it?" What we have to consider is how far the war has diminished or increased Britain's capacity to produce wealth.

War has not diminished the natural resources of these islands. The annual outtake of coal is less, many ore mines, tin, lead and iron, have been saved from dereliction and millions of acres of once barren land now yield crops of wheat and oats. The sea, as ever, offers its endless harvest of fish, oil and soil food.

Against this a million buildings have been destroyed by air raids, but thousands of new factories have

been built and most of the old have been extended. War production has called for the installation in factories, new and old, of tens of thousands of up to date machines. Industrial capitalists have been quick to exploit this position by renovating their premises, modernising them and installing new plant, with eyes on post-war chances. New and more productive labour processes have been introduced. Millions of people unused to industrial processes, housewives, clerks and persons of parasitic trades have entered factories and been trained. It has even been discovered that thousands of cripples and invalids can do useful work and more than earn their keep.

Our ability to produce goods is now immensely greater than it was in pre-war days. We can produce almost limitless supplies of shoes, clothes, furniture, houses, books, wireless sets, motor cars, toys, pottery, glass ware, pots and pans, refrigerators, gramophone records, pianos, bicycles and all the things we need or desire. We can grow more than 95 per cent. of our food; better food than most of us ever enjoyed. Why then should anyone hunger in post-war Britain? We can produce 90 per cent. of our needs, even with a vastly raised standard of living, and yet have a large surplus to set against imports of timber, cotton and fruit. Why then should we be poor? Why then should we ask, "But can we afford it?" Why accept the gloomy prognostications of Ernest Bevin?

The answer is plain. We must reject the fruit of our labour and live in poverty and alternate idleness and overwork to keep going capitalism and its finance system and to repay the interest on the War Loan trick.

What is post-war life to be? High taxation, low wages, unemployment, the old to the wall, the young to the treadmill, poverty and insecurity? Or shall we fertilise the land, turn the factories from producing the tools of death to producing the good things of life and use the brickfields, the bulldozers and concrete mixers which have gone to the creation of aerodromes, fortifi-

cations and barracks, to build a million homes a year? Shall we use that new machinery to lighten labour, to reduce the working day to six hours and to give everyone a decent holiday? The choice is in your hands. If we continue to tolerate capitalism, if we are dazzled by its tinsel reforms, then post-war Britain will be the Britain of 1919; the Britain of the dole queue and the lock-out. If we are to enjoy the things we produce and those we might produce, then we must end capitalism. We must adopt a system of social ownership without a wages system or finance. We must ourselves take the idle factories, land, pits and transport, and controlling them by our workers' organisations, end the profit game, producing for use instead of for profit, producing for all instead of a few. If we continue to tolerate capitalism, we ought not to complain at the inevitable poverty and misery it brings.

Yes! We can afford it. We can afford a decent life. What we cannot afford is capitalism and its finance system which give us five years of the agony of the battlefield and twenty years of the misery of the dole queue.



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ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

"ORDER REIGNS IN WARSAW"

WHEN Hitler began the systematic extermination of Poles in the manner he had already initiated for Jews, he pointed out to the Nazi Party that no one now remembered the massacres of the Armenians that once had aroused the indignation of the whole world, and in a like manner the horror at the atrocities in Poland would be forgotten in fifty years' time.

Poland has many times been the abattoir of imperial Europe—the last time it was divided between the jackals of the Austrian, Russian and Prussian empires, who had bitterly suppressed as much of Poland as they could. The Czar reigned more arbitrarily in Poland than elsewhere. When Bakunin was passing through Poland on his way to prison in Siberia, thousands of Polish peasants flocked to the railway stations to pay homage to the first Russian to speak out in favour of the downtrodden Poles.

His teaching had its effect on the Russian revolutionary workers and peasants, for they renounced their claim to the Russian empire—to Poland no less than to Finland, the Baltic states, the Asiatic dependencies, even Georgia and Ukraina, but the new Czar Lenin insisted on his claim to "all the Russias" only they now called it "the Soviets".

Poland nevertheless regained independence, but with the aid of the Allied imperialisms, of the carvers and chisellers at Versailles, of whom the majority were unsympathetic to Poland but saw in it a buffer-state between Germany and Russia. They therefore made it an independent state, but subject to outside big business; they gave it untenable territories and left the feudal system intact. In the new state the progress of the militarist-fascists of the Pilsudski and Smigly-Ridz type was made easy, supported as they were by the big landowners and aristocrats. They instituted a dictatorship as severe as any in those days, which fostered anti-semitism, suppression of free thought, and the other insignia of Nazism.

Nevertheless the Polish masses began to follow the path of struggle, especially in the major cities where the nucleus of a proletarian movement was growing, and even in the universities where some stand against the "ghetto-benches" practice was made. All hopes in this direction were crushed by the advent of Nazism in 1939. Stalin shared in the plunder until his ally Hitler turned on him and marched through Russian-occupied Poland into Russia. Between Hitler and Stalin the Polish people had little choice—forced labour, imprisonment, was their lot on either side.

Meanwhile in England the Polish Government has grouped the reactionary elements of Polish administration with the majority of their unstable politicians. Thieves fell out when the old gang of feudalism quarrelled with the Bolshevik inheritors of the Czarist tradition. (One may mention that spokesmen of Czarism have pointed out their complete agreement with Stalin's policy in Poland). The Socialists' policy of support for the war effort has led them nowhere: it has not liberated Poland, where the masses operate independently of them; it has not altered the character of the London Government of Poland; and in Russia they lost their most well known leaders, Erlich and Alter, executed by Stalin who cannot brook any opposition however mild.

The future of Poland is indeed black, even blacker than its past, and the capture of Warsaw and eventually of Poland can mean little to Polish exiles. Countless thousands of them have even given up hope itself, with "nothing left to dream about". One of the most honest and certainly courageous leaders of the Polish-Jewish Socialists, Szmul

Zygelbojm, killed himself because he could see no further hope in the methods in which he believed, and he was one of many. More numerous are the Polish exiles who have asked if it were not better to follow the example of the American Polish community, and settle down abroad for good. But such a policy while it solves the problem for many does not solve the problem of the masses within Poland. In this respect Poland symbolises Europe. Poles scattered over Siberia, the Middle East, German labour camps, British military centres, Todt Wall fortifications or even in Poland itself, can only ensure real freedom for Poland by tying their cause to that of the social revolution.

Resistance to the Nazis has been entirely in the hands of the working people, and has assumed large proportions. To it to a large extent is due the German breakdown on the front. In spite of the racial antagonisms bound to result from the condition of Poland to-day, stories of international solidarity nevertheless come through, such as that of German deserters from the front being hidden in the ghettos, and of Polish slave-labour in Germany joining with its fellows in the industrial struggle. Resistance to the Nazis will not be easily broken by the new masters, and the Bolshevik dictators who come as rulers will not find things so easy, especially in view of the common interests existing between Russian and Polish workers and peasants who have been through the same experiences, and forged a bond of friendship that will not be easily broken by a puppet government of politicians anxious to get on the band-waggon.

In the present system of the world there can be no solution to the so-called "problem" offered by Poland and other countries in Europe where the boundaries are vague. Nature knows no boundaries. When the masses learn their common interests—as they are indeed learning through common suffering—they will sweep aside the artificial boundaries caused by the nation-states and empires; they will live together in peace whatever their diversities. But this can only be done when the empires—whether capitalist, Nazi or Bolshevik—are crushed, and when their destinies are no longer in the hands of politicians and militarists.

WARSAW'S SECOND MARTYRDOM

"THE last hours have come. This is no dramatisation of the position, but the simple truth." This message was sent to London on August 8th by General Bor, said to be leader of the insurrectionary forces inside Warsaw, which rose up against the German occupying forces on hearing that the Red Army was approaching the city. General Bor's message ended with this significant comment: "The Soviet attack has slowed down on the eastern outskirts. Liaison with the Red Army has not been established." He also appealed to the Allies for arms: "We request immediate assistance in anti-tank weapons and ammunition. We are doing our utmost to hold the capital, despite shortage of ammunition and no artillery, tanks or aircraft. The enemy is bombing the city for the eighth day in succession, and is using flame-throwers in whole districts. I state solemnly that Warsaw in its fight received no assistance from the Allies, just as Poland received none in 1939."

The Polish Government is said to have stated at first that the rising was ordered from London to take place on August 1st. When it seemed likely that the rising was being annihilated, however, they stated that it was a spontaneous rising of the Polish workers. The Polish government blames the workers, and the *Daily Worker* (10/8/44) blames the Polish government "for having given the signal prematurely."

Meanwhile the insurrection has been crushed with frightful reprisals. While Stalin's mouthpiece blames the Polish

Emigré government in London, and the latter blames the Polish workers; no arms were sent by the Allies to the insurrection. They boast of the amount of material they have sent to Russia, but were apparently "unable" to send any to Warsaw. And what of the Soviet Union itself? The Communist Fernand Grenier attacks the Allies for not sending arms and medical supplies to the Maquis, but Stalin sent nothing, not even the Red Air Force, to the Poles in Warsaw. And when they rose up in the Germans' rear, when the Red Army was approaching Warsaw, what happens?—"The Soviet attack has slowed down on the eastern outskirts".

In all these conflicting reports (which reflect conflicting interests) the truth seems to be that there was a people's rising in Warsaw; that the allies followed their traditional policy of refusing arms to any but constituted (i.e. reactionary) governments; and that Stalin, like Churchill when Milan and Turin and Genoa rose against the Germans a year ago, preferred to let the Germans mop up the revolutionists and so held back the Red Army's advance. There has not been a single instance in this war where a spontaneous rising of the workers against the enemy occupying forces has received the smallest assistance from the Allies.

As General Bor said in another dispatch: "Three times a day the Germans bomb Warsaw without interference."

THEATRE SLUMP

THE West End theatre managers have been so presumptuous as to criticise London musicians and theatre staffs for not voluntarily accepting a large reduction in salaries, in view of the conditions in which the London theatre now finds itself. During the exceptional boom-period of the war, occasioned by war conditions such as the influx of Allied servicemen to London and the greater demand for entertainment, the West End managements were making money hand over fist, but it never occurred to them to invite the staffs and pit orchestras to share in the profits. As soon as the war hits them, they appeal to the slogan "the show must go on", and invite them to share in the losses. Needless to say this offer has been rejected by the workers. A large proportion of managements have however shown they place profits first and the myth of serving the public nowhere by closing down their theatres as soon as they saw the danger of attendances falling off. This sudden closure has hit theatre workers very badly, and it may be the thin end of the wedge of forcing all London salaries down.

If this should happen provincial salaries will also be cut, even though the air raids do not concern the provinces. The provincial theatres have always paid a lot less than London, even less than the union minimum, and except for some of the bigger theatres where they must aim at the best orchestras and the most efficient staffs, which they can only do by offering better wages, any excuses to lower the absurdly low rates will be seized on, and lack of openings in London will be one of them.

Apart from hitting hard at theatre staffs and pit orchestras, the present conditions are going to affect the smaller-paid performers too, who especially in the music-halls have managed to improve their position during the war, especially as regards minimum salaries and payment for matinees. The fewer halls open, the less vacancies there are for those not in the front line of the profession. Already managements are breaking the promises they made to the variety artistes during the shortage period. Worst hit of all performers are the lower paid play actors, who cannot rely on the provinces in the same way as the variety artistes can, and for whom London is the main market. Already they are beginning to taste in advance the position that will be in force after the war.

The slump in London has caused a slump all over the country, as fewer producers are risking shows in present conditions, not even those top producers who have made fortunes during the war. Added to the effects of the coastal

ban, restrictions on travelling, etc., a crisis approaching that of 1939-40 is in the offing. Theatre staffs are being laid off everywhere, musicians, once so scarce, are now plentiful.

There is one encouraging sign, and that is that at last all sections of workers in the industry are beginning to discuss the question of how organisation can offset the evils of the profession, and we suggest that instead of thinking along the lines of working staffs, variety artistes, actors, electricians, pit musicians, stage musicians, front-of-house staffs, they think instead in the terms of industrial unionism. One industry—one union. And not in collaboration with the managements.

MILITARY GLORY

THE way in which militarism sets out deliberately to crush the personalities of the man it uses, to root out all their humane feelings and sentiments of true solidarity, have always been stressed by anti-war writers of all schools, but it is not until a war takes place that we find the champions of militarism, in a country like England at least, admitting these facts openly. During The Abyssinian War and the Spanish Civil War, the mild liberals of the *News Chronicle* wilted with horror at the glowing terms in which Fascist enthusiasts described these very effects. Now, however, we can gather from the pages of the same paper such a passage as the following, written by S. L. Solon in a despatch from Caen:

"All men hate death, but there comes a time when death ceases to enter into the calculation. The mental adding machine loses the integer for it. It ceases to exist as reality, as fear and even as symbol. Strapped into the plane, hands deftly dealing with the control or launching the shells behind the cannon down below, men have lost individuality for the time so utterly that to distinguish between the machines and the men who drive them does not enter the mind.

"The mind, too, is part of the engine, and the mind is occupied with the problem of destruction. All else, personal considerations, what one has thought, what one has reasoned and believed, the warmth of body and the will of brain, are all now fourth dimensional, unrecognisable, factors."

This is written by a man who obviously supports the war and is willing to accept such a condition. Yet at the same time the anti-militarist needs no better justification of his attitude than this passage from the writings of a militarist.

Comrade killed by Flying Bomb

We regret to report the death of our Barnet comrade C. C. Simmons, who was killed last month by a flying bomb. He had been active in the North London area and had helped to form our North London group. During the present war he maintained a consistent anti-militarist stand, and had been imprisoned twice for refusing to be conscripted either into the forces or into industry. We extend our sympathy to his comrades and friends.

BY FIRE AND SWORD

IN THE PREFACE to the Baedeker for Paris and its surroundings, published in 1881, one finds a description of the "most deplorable recent disasters caused by the fiendish proceedings of the Communists during the second 'reign of Terror', 20th-28th May, 1871". According to the writer "Within that week of horrors no fewer than twenty-two important public buildings and monuments were wholly or partly destroyed, and a similar fate overtook seven railway stations, the four principal public parks and gardens, and hundreds of dwelling-houses and other buildings."

If Baron Karl Baedeker would have had to write a preface to a guide to Paris in the years which will follow the present war he would probably have had to record far more "fiendish" proceedings on the part of the retreating German army and the bull-dozing, all-levelling armies of liberation. There will be a difference, however; the scars that Paris, like the other French towns of Caen, Cherbourg and many more will wear will be noble scars of which the French people will be asked to be proud, and it is doubtful if they will receive slighting references, like those levelled at the Commune, by the generations of guide-writers to come.

It is the privilege of revolutions that the acts of violence to which they give rise have always received the utmost publicity in newspapers, history books, novels, plays, films and even travellers' books. The horrors of war are forgotten or are glorified for the benefit of tourists, like the ruins of Verdun, but everything conspires to keep alive in people's minds the acts of violence which have taken place during revolutions. Ask any French schoolboy what was the most bloody period in the history of France and he will most probably mention the period of the Terror during the French Revolution. A few thousand people were killed during that period, a small number compared with the Napoleonic wars; an infinitesimal figure compared with the war of 1914-1918. Yet the French schoolboy will know all about the horrors of the French Revolution, the killing of priests and nobles, the death in captivity of Louis the Sixteenth's heir and the beheading of Marie-Antoinette. But he will know nothing about the million dead of the last war and the hundreds of thousands of children who died of starvation and disease as a result of it.

Revolutions spell wholesale murder and destruction not only to schoolchildren. How many times have experienced socialist politicians and learned Fabian professors advocated submission and compromise with the ruling class by waving the spectre of bloody revolution in front of the misguided masses? It was with tears in his eyes that Leon Blum asked the French people not to intervene in the Spanish revolution. It was in order to "spare lives" that he watched one of the most splendid revolutionary movements be suffocated and allowed the Fascist powers to gather strength to fight a world war. Of course when the present war started Leon Blum forgot all his sensitive love for humanity and urged French people to go to the massacre. As everyone knows revolutions are bloody affairs but to die wholesale for the motherland is called supreme and sublime sacrifice, so that death does not really count.

One can easily prophesy that after this war there will



still be people to talk about the horrors of the Commune, the shooting of fascists, capitalists and priests in Spain. The bombing of Hamburg, Paris and London; the bombardment of Caen; the sinking of troop-ships; the death in the skies of thousands of young men; the starvation and pestilence devastating hundreds of countries; these will all be classified as necessary evils, unavoidable curses which humanity must be proud to bear. Revolutionists once again, will be considered bloodthirsty fellows who had better be kept locked up and, if the choice between war and revolution presents itself again, no doubt christians, socialists and communists, will, *on humanitarian grounds*, again choose war.

For the benefit of those sensitive souls we give below some extracts from recent publications.

Massacre By Bombing

Vera Brittain, in a pamphlet called *Massacre by Bombing* gives some facts which should be kept in mind at a time when journalists and politicians are renewing their efforts of throwing onto the shoulders of the Nazi the monopoly of wholesale destruction and massacre.

The pamphlet states that while 50,000 British civilians have been killed by raids on this country, according to German sources 1,200,000 civilians have been killed or were "missing" in air raids carried out by the Allies on Germany from 1939 to October 1st, 1943.

The "rate of delivery" of bombs dropped by the Allies has increased almost tenfold and is going on increasing. It has passed from 17½ tons a minute on Cologne in May 1942 to 120 tons a minute in recent raids (80 times the intensity of the heaviest attack ever made on London).

The horror of such bombing cannot be compared with anything we have experienced in this country. The fires started by this intensive bombing suck up so much oxygen that people in nearby shelters are asphyxiated. In Hamburg nearly 20,000 perished that way, suffocated and burnt in their shelters; those who tried to escape from these death traps were burnt alive: "Women and children in light summer clothing who emerged from the cellars into the storm of fire in the streets were soon converted into human torches."

The Obliteration Of Leipzig

An account of the bombing of Leipzig has been given by the American magazine *Life* (15/5/44) which publishes a report by three American girls who lived there all through the bombing of the city. In an introductory note *Life* says that:

"By Feb. 21 the German city of Leipzig (pop. 700,000) had been effectively 'obliterated' by allied bombing. Some 90% of the city installations were said to have been destroyed. Four heavy raids had done the job—three night attacks by British planes; one daylight raid by U.S. Fortresses and Liberators. It was the first time a city of this size had been destroyed by air-power."

This is how the girls described the raid which took place on 19th February:

"He was barely inside the door when the bombs came. They were very near. There weren't just a few of them, but a whole bunch all together. From then on, for nearly an hour, they came incessantly.

The noise was just beyond words. The house shook and shook. First it would sway from side to side, then it would sort of jump, then it would sway and jump together. My knees kept bouncing up and down off the floor.

We never seemed to hear waves of planes, they were just there all the time, all at once. This time we were sitting, holding each other tight with our heads down on our chests. I couldn't really think at all, but I remember once hearing Christina yell: 'There's a bomb coming, open your mouths!' She had seen or read somewhere that soldiers open their mouths when they fire off cannon.

It had never been this bad before. The house was like rubber, bending back and forth, the floor rising up and down like waves. Nobody talked, nobody screamed. It was quiet as a mouse in the cellar except for the bombs. Even the children were quiet. The people just sat there with their heads bowed, looking as though they were praying . . ."

"Sometime then I realized that it should have been daylight outside but it wasn't. All that day the sun never got through the smoke and soot and ashes flying through the air. It was twilight all the time, a sort of yellowish brown twilight that stung your eyes and your throat as you breathed . . . Later that day we went out to check on the city . . . there were fires everywhere. At least two houses were burning on every street we came through, usually many more. I had to make one detour after another where streets were completely blocked. It was very difficult walking, piles of rubbish everywhere, people streaming along the streets out of town, many still fighting fires, others carrying things, still others digging for the dead."

The bombing of Germany which is supposed to demoralise the German people and bring them to their knees has the opposite effect. The report in *Life* says that the people of Leipzig displayed courage during and after the bombing and that the anger they felt brought them to give a greater support to the war:

"The city looked destroyed, in ruins, but the people were alive and building up again with what they had. They were doing it, too, in a mood of anger and with a sense of companionship that actually gave the people a higher morale than before the bombs fell."

The bombing seems also to have increased the popularity of the Nazi Party:

"The organisations for bomb-damage worked wonders. It was all in the hands of the Party and the work of these organisations won the Party a lot of prestige again. It was all done about as quickly as it could possibly be done and people were taken care of in some way at least right away, even if only with tents and field kitchens."

The Armies Of Liberation At Work

There are still people who find words of indignation every time a church or an hospital is hit by Nazi bombs. They seem to forget that the destruction carried out by the Allies in their war of liberation aims at the destruction of whole towns and villages. While the armies of the French Revolution were followed up by the overthrow of tyrants

and the armies of the Russian revolution conquered their enemies by fraternizing with them; while the militia columns of the Spanish revolution left behind them expropriated estates and peasant collectives, the armies of the Allies everywhere bring wholesale destruction and massacre. The recent headlines of a daily paper epitomized the whole character of this war: "BULLDOZERS ARE KEPT BUSY AS WE ADVANCE."

The towns of Messina, Leghorn, Caen, Cherbourg are typical of hundreds of other towns similarly destroyed during the German retreat and the Allied advance.

The *Manchester Guardian* described the destruction of Messina in its issue of the 29/5/44:

"When the war left Messina behind it the city was examined by experts, who pronounced it 94 per cent. uninhabitable. It had been subjected to months of aerial bombardment, culminating in a terrific hammering during the last days of the Sicilian campaign with a view to interfering with the evacuation of the German troops.

No fewer than 10,483 bomb bursts had been counted in the residential quarters of the town, not to mention the port. Afterwards it was heavily bombarded by German guns across the Straits, but the buildings of Messina are of especially strong construction. After the earthquake in 1908 the city was rebuilt of reinforced concrete calculated to resist many times the stresses for which architects normally provide. Consequently, although almost every house was rendered roofless and shattered internally, the outer shell stood firm under bombardment."

The state in which the Allies found Caen is described in the *Manchester Guardian* (10/7/44):

"Caen, after more than a month of bombing and shelling, is a dead city and bulldozers have been moved up to prepare a path through the rubble for the tanks.

One officer at the Command Post was so excited that he kept referring to Caen as Cassino. He was not very far wrong as far as the rubble is concerned. Caen is a devastated city; even the trees were flattened and the buildings were unrecognisable as human habitations. Lebieux itself is not much better and the stench of death is heavy over the town. Even some British dead from D-Day are still lying about. The Germans evidently had no time to bury them as they had been under almost constant bombardment for the last month. The prisoners were unshaven, dirty, smelly, and obviously glad to be out of the war at last."

One could multiply the quotations. Every day newspapers carry fresh news and heart-breaking photographs showing the heavy toll this war is taking of human life and dwellings. In Italy the population hid in hovels in the mountains during the Allied advance and came back later to find their homes destroyed. In Caen the inhabitants took refuge in ill-smelling caves and the crowded cathedral. Hovels, caves, roofless houses, this is where this war has condemned millions of people to live. Often they have insufficient food and water supplies which makes them an easy prey to epidemics.

And this war has been accepted as a "lesser evil" . . .
M. L. B.

Anti-Labour Laws Victims Defence Committee,
38, Gt. Ormond Street, London, W.C.1.

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MONEY for JAM

THE SOFT FRUIT (Maximum Prices) Order which came into operation this year has been the means of shattering the illusions of the good farming folk and the small retail shopkeepers, and their trust in a benevolent Ministry of Food has been replaced by a scathing criticism.

Since the beginning of the war there have been attempts to reduce the acreage devoted to soft fruit production by the Ministry of Agriculture. These attempts have merely served to expose the inability of a bureaucracy to solve the food problems which are the primary concern of farmers, and have taken the more obvious form of forcing farmers to grow alternative crops on land known to be unsuited. But the manoeuvres of the Ministry of Food are much more subtle, and the latest price lists only serve to expose the greatest travesty of justice yet perpetrated on both producer and consumer. A comparison of 1938 price and 1944 prices is given below:

FRUIT PRICES (per lb.)			
Fruit.	1938.	1944.	
Strawberries, main crop ...	1/-	8½d.	
Raspberries ...	8d. to 1/6	8d.	
Currants (Black) ...	8½d. to 1/2	1/1	
(Red) ...	5d. to 8d.	6d.	
Loganberries ...	4d. to 6d.	7d.	
Gooseberries, main crop ...	3½d. to 4d.	4½d.	
Dessert ...	10d. to 1/-	10d.	
Blackberries, cultivated ...	6d. to 8d.	5½d.	

The price lists have been compiled without regard for the fact that production costs have risen 100% and in some cases 150% above pre-war. The Government have these figures at their disposal, but prior to the fruit-tree census of 1943, no statistics were available and no data collected either direct or through the W.A.E.C. Only vague generalisations were made as to whether fruit crops were good or bad, whether rain had affected pollination or frost destroyed the entire crop.

In pre-war years the gap in price between producer and consumer was at most between 2d. and 3d. per pound. Although the comparatively simple arrangement of commission to selling agents did not adequately solve the problem, it was superior to the elaborate controls of to-day and a whole series of middlemen, primary wholesalers and secondary wholesalers, introduced by the Ministry of Food, in spite of which the majority of the public is still prevented from a share of soft fruit because the majority of the crop is requisitioned by the Ministry and sold as pulp to jam manufacturers, on the grounds that fruit in the form of jam assures a wider distribution to the public. This argument coupled with the high price of jam as compared with the low price of fruit does not bear examination. The quality of the jam has been reduced and replaced by a variety of substitutes, while at the

same time the price to the public has been doubled.

FRUIT PRICES 1944 (per lb.)			
	Growers price.	Retail.	Distributors margin.
Strawberries ...	8½d.	1/3½	6½d.
Raspberries ...	8d.	1/2½	6½d.
Currants, Black	1/1	1/9	8d.
Red	6d.	10½d.	4½d.
Loganberries ...	7d.	1/1½	6½d.
Gooseberries, main crop ...	4½d.	7d.	2½d.
Blackberries, cultivated ...	5½d.	10d.	4½d.
RETAIL PRICES OF JAM (per 2 lbs.)			
Variety.	Pre-war.	1944.	
Strawberry ...	1/1	2/0½	
Raspberry and Redcurrant ...	1/-	1/11	
Gooseberry, red ...	11d.	1/8½	
Blackberry and Apple ...	11½d.	1/11	

The 1944 fruit prices and the exorbitantly higher distributor's margin and the retail price of jam compared with pre-war may be noted. The small retailer has only one license which entitles him to the last stage in the margin but the big combines get the whole rake-off from grower to public.

The inevitable reaction to such a state of affairs is that many growers are allowing their fruit to rot and putting their pickers on more profitable occupations. This is a purely negative attitude which deprives the public of much valuable fruit, and if carried out on a larger scale would only serve to alienate them.

The fruit growers should take no part in price negotiations through the National Farmers Union, by which they allow themselves to be betrayed into accepting or approving practices detrimental to their interests, and to the consuming public. But while the whole blame can be laid at the door of the Ministry farmers should take a more responsible attitude than that of prosecuting members of the public who succumb to the temptations of a handful of fruit amidst acres that lie rotting. The public should be invited to invade such orchards, direct contacts made with the retailers, distributive centres set up, with a nominal fair price paid all round. Against such co-ordinated action of producers, distributors and consumers the Ministry would be powerless. This would be the first step the farmers could take towards the eventual solution of the great problems connected with man's most essential need—food.

C.H

NORTH LONDON FREEDOM DISCUSSION GROUP

Saturday, August 26th, at 7 p.m.

in the Adult School, Palmers Road, Arncliffe Grove.

Ethel Hall: "The Abolition of the Wages System."

Questions and Discussion

THERE'S A GOOD TIME COMING

Your son is six years old to-day. He will be 60 before the London of To-morrow becomes the London planners visualise to-day.

Sixty before he takes his grandson for a walk in the West-End and points out to him the Late Twentieth Century marvels of London.

For the planners of London make no extravagant claims for the pace at which their plans can be carried out. No knowledgeable student of the subject has laid down a minimum of less than 50 years for the completion of the job.

Sunday Chronicle, 16/7/44.

THE MINERS' ANSWER

Mr. Curtin, the Australian Prime Minister, has issued an ultimatum to mine owners and miners that until the end of the year they must produce a minimum of 1,200,000 tons of coal a week.

Among the towns affected by this Order is Portland. The nine pits round Portland produce 6,000 tons a day.

And the nine pits of Portland have gone on strike. More than that, the other industries in the town have gone on strike. The businesses have closed, the shops have shut.

In fact, all Portland has gone on strike—a solidarity strike.

The reason is not Mr. Curtin, but 18-year-old Betty Wyld.

And who, you may ask, is she?

She is, or was, employed by Portland's only butcher, 28-year-old Peter Dargin, and she was dismissed by him.

So Portland went on strike. Everything closed down; the butcher was boycotted; the local hotel served only vegetarian meals.

The local unions say that Betty Wyld had been victimised; the butcher says he is upholding the right to hire and fire.

To-morrow the Federal Industrial Registrar will hold a compulsory conference with the parties concerned in an attempt to reach a settlement.

But in the meantime the nine pits of Portland are not producing.

News Chronicle, 31/7/44.

ARMY OF LIBERATION ?



In Rumania, the Red Army remains completely aloof from the population, and, apart from security measures, takes not the slightest interest in working the Rumanian State.

Indeed, some Rumanian Jews are disappointed because the Russians have not restored to them property of which Antonescu deprived them. A few Rumanian Radicals who expected "Sovietism"

to be introduced, under which they might hope for jobs, are equally disappointed.

Alaric Jacob (War Correspondent),
in *Daily Express*, 17/7/44.

How do those who use the Nazi persecution of the Jews for Russian propaganda purposes, explain the continued discrimination against them in Russian-occupied Rumania? Stalin has not the "slightest interest" in such internal affairs.

We can picture the disappointment of Rumanian Communists in being cold-shouldered from the official jobs which remain in the hands of the old gang.

CAPITALISTS HAVE THEIR REASONS



American relief supplies sent to liberated Europe will be of good quality.

It is felt here that shipments of cheap poorly made goods—clothing in particular—would tend to damage United States prestige abroad and create distrust of American products.

News Chronicle, 4/7/44.

Through

THE LAW IS AN ASS

When Edgar Smith, of Kingdown, was accused, at Bromley, Kent, to-day, of misusing petrol, the police explained that he was summoned because he drove his car home from a garage where it had been repaired.

If the garage mechanic had driven it no offence would have been committed, but a mechanic was not available and the garage owner gave Smith trade petrol to enable him to drive.

Smith was fined £1 for "a technical offence."

Star, 24/7/44.

THERE AIN'T NO JUSTICE

Pte. Patrick Francis Burns (23), of the Pioneer Corps, has been sentenced by an Aldershot court martial to three years' penal servitude for smashing up the contents of a cell at Aldershot detention barracks, tearing his clothing and equipment, and refusing to go on parade.

"The whole place was a shambles," said a witness.

Burns, who was already serving one year's detention for absence without leave, refused the services of a defending officer and declined to make any statement in court.

Reynolds News, 30/7/44.

Three years for smashing up the contents of a cell when towns and villages are destroyed every day by the British Army!



BEST DRESSED WORLD LEADER

At a Kremlin banquet the tables are laid with Dutch linen cloths, plates engraved with imperial monograms and modern silver bearing the hammer-and-sickle design. In the Russian way, wines and cold hors d'œuvres—*zakuski*—stand on the tables.

At sessions of the Supreme Soviet, Stalin slips in modestly around a half-opened door and studiously avoids sitting in the central position; yet it is on him that the whole vast, packed hall seems to pivot. He sits joking quietly with neighbours and, when delegates give him an ovation, he rises and joins in the applause as if unaware it is for himself.

Stalin is undoubtedly among the best-dressed of all world leaders. Even when he wore the familiar tunic, with trousers tucked into high, soft leather boots, he made Churchill in his siren suit look positively shabby.

Look (U.S.A.), 27/6/44.

HOW SEAMEN ARE TREATED

The Executive Council of the National Union of Seamen has decided to press immediately for a new Bill, along the lines proposed by the union's special Merchant Shipping Acts Amendment Committee.

This Bill, the committee suggests, should lay down higher standards for accommodation. "Cases have been quoted by Port Medical Officers of Health, which clearly illustrate that seamen have suffered ill-health, and many have died as a result of bad accommodation, bad sanitary arrangements, and absence of pure air," it is stated.

the Press

The committee recommends that the men's diet should be more balanced and varied, and ship's cooks should be adequately trained. Salads, green vegetables and fruit should be provided in tropical climates, instead of a diet of "roast beef, baked potatoes and suet pudding, when the thermometer is over 100 in the shade."

The new Act should, they say, lay down standards for the carriage and storage of water, which are not covered in the existing regulations.

Another grievance is that, except in the coasting trade, men who are articulated monthly do not receive their wages until the completion of their voyage.

Wages, the union considers, should begin from the day of signing on and be paid regularly. Under the present method, "a seaman is left to the mercy of the master as to when and where he can receive payment of any part of his wages."

Observer, 23/7/44.

NO WONDER PEOPLE SWOON

The world's greatest money-maker is undoubtedly Frank Sinatra, the American crooner. His annual income from films, wireless, night-club engagements, and gramophone records has now reached the colossal figure of £375,000, of which he pays £250,000 in taxation.

News of the World, 30/7/44.

Let's see—clear of tax that makes nearly £2,500 a week—not counting other sources of income. Why tell the kids that Americans look on Washington or Lincoln as their greatest man?

PIT WORKERS FINED



When the trial was resumed at Hamilton Sheriff Court yesterday of fourteen colliery drawers and strippers who were accused of adopting a 'canny' policy, the Fiscal (Mr. Joseph C. Patterson) said there had been no suggestion that the accused were acting on the instructions of any outside body.

The accused, employed at Fortisat Colliery, belonging to the Shotts Iron Company, Limited, were charged with having between November 8 of last year and March 6 of this year wilfully failed to perform their daily tasks. Twenty-two mineworkers were originally involved in the trial but the Fiscal has withdrawn the charges against eight of them. Four other men were acquitted yesterday.

Sheriff Dobie fined each of the remaining ten £5, with the alternative of thirty days' imprisonment.

Manchester Guardian, 28/7/44.

BIGGEST VALUE FOR MONEY?



Motion picture stars share the distinction of being the best paid people in America.

A partial list just issued by the Treasury Department discloses that the highest paid business man is Mr. E. G. Grace, president of the Bethlehem Steel Company, whose salary in 1942 was £135,000.

Claudette Colbert topped the movie list with £96,000.

News Chronicle, 19/7/44.

American business-men are leading a fervent campaign against wage increases for workers. Strange to say, their attacks on strikers are supported by motion-picture stars' propaganda work.

LATEST CHURCH FASHION

The Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Temple), dedicated at Mill Hill, London, two mobile churches for the British Army in Normandy.

The churches have been made in two converted lorries. The interior of each is fitted with polished wood and an altar. The altar-cloths and hangings are the work of three A.T.S. officers, with whom the Archbishop shook hands and congratulated them on their work.

Gramophone records of peals of bells and organ music with amplifying apparatus will be carried. Free Church chaplains will be able to use the mobile churches as well as Church of England chaplains.

Manchester Guardian, 26/7/44.

"SELF-DETERMINATION"

The liberation of Poland brings another danger of which Hitler will take full advantage—the struggle between rival interests in Poland for control of that country.

It is a problem that will arise in every liberated country. And we must make it clear to squabblers in Poland, as in all other lands yet to be freed, that the future of these lands will be decided not by what one interest or the other desires, but by what is best for the countries as a whole, and for the world outside.

Editorial, *Sunday Express*, 30/7/44.

The future of the lads, be it noted, is not what is best for the masses living in them but what is best for "the world outside"—i.e. the major powers. The paper is the organ of Beaverbrook but the voice is the voice of Hitler, Stalin, Churchill.

WAR COMMENTARY

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ANARCHISM

CUBA has perhaps associations with many people in this country only with sugar, the rumba, Mr. Churchill's cigars and its vicinity to the Duke of Windsor's haven of rest, but nevertheless Cuba has a history of struggle which should be of great interest to British militants should the full tale be told one day.

↳ Economically one of the most important islands in the West Indies, Cuba's history is similar to that of many South and Central American countries. One of Spain's earliest colonies, it was colonised in 1511 and negro slavery was established thirteen years afterwards. The highly religious Spanish imperialists maintained negro slavery for three-and-a-half centuries and when in 1868 the Cubans attempted to abolish negro slavery it heralded a long anti-imperialist struggle which reached its peak with the abolition of slavery as late as 1886.

The doctrines of anarchism found a natural response amongst the colonial workers when introduced to it by Spanish anarchists who emigrated to Cuba soon after the original International, and in 1887 the first anarchist paper in Havana (the capital) appeared—*El Productor*, edited by Enrique Roig y San Martin. *El Productor* was especially active among the numerous and well-organised tobacco workers. Several workers' organisations were formed at that time—precursors of present-day anarcho-syndicalism—and in 1888 following the tobacco strike, Cresci, secretary of the "Artisan's Junta" endeavoured in uniting them in the "Workers' Alliance", which was later developed into the Confederation of Cuban Workers (C.T.C.). In spite of the murder of many of the most active militants in this movement (including Roig, the editor) the movement grew and took an active part in the war of independence.

The Cuban Anarchists of that time took a position similar to that which we advocate in colonial countries (e.g. India) to-day, in struggling for colonial independence while remaining in opposition to the native bourgeoisie. In the Workers' Assembly of 1894 the anarchist movement declared itself wholeheartedly in favour of the struggle against imperialism, and a message from Malatesta was received with great enthusiasm. In 1895 the great Cuban insurrection against Spain began, and Spanish Imperialism was thrown off. In the course of the struggle (in which the Cuban workers received the active support of the Spanish working-class, which included the great anarchist anti-war demonstrations and strikes) many libertarians fell, and Cresci, who was shot without trial, received a funeral similar to that of Durruti in 1936—his remains followed by a sea of workers. Manuel Miranda, who had been looked on as responsible for the organisation of the working class movement, was deported to the prison-isle of Fernando Po in the Gulf of Guinea. Nevertheless the insurrection was successful, and it had shown the world a

glimpse of international workers' solidarity—Americans, Mexicans, Spaniards and Cubans co-operating in the struggle against Spanish and American Imperialism.

In 1898 as a result of the insurrection America and Spain (both eager to grab the natural wealth of Cuba) went to war. The United States emerged vic-

IN CUBA

torious and took possession of Cuba, establishing its own Provisional Government. The libertarian movement turned to the struggle against the new imperialism.

Since the suppression of the *Productor* there had appeared *El Rebelde*, which was suspended during the war. After the war came *Nuevo Ideal* and *Tierra!* and numerous other papers, crystallising in themselves the intense workers' struggle. The C.T.C. was built up into a strong and militant organisation. *Tierra!* was formed during the general strike of 1902, which was followed by a long period of strife. In 1909 the United States withdrew from open control of Cuba. Under the dictatorship of General Aleman propaganda was difficult but still carried on, and in 1914 it was renewed more vigorously than ever with a dozen papers. In that year a delegate was sent to the Anarchist Congress at Ferrol (Spain) but the police persecutions there stopped the Congress and the delegate, Jerez, was imprisoned in Seville and died while on hunger-strike.

The C.T.C. lost its anarcho-syndicalist character after 1918, like the C.G.T. in France. It did not come under the control of the socialists, but of the communists, whose influence in Cuba spread with the "glamour value" of the Russian Revolution. Their role in Cuba has been particularly despicable, since they deliberately steered the workers from a revolutionary course to acquiescence in the governmental dictatorships, without even the excuse that the workers were "backward". The event of Machado as dictator led to terrible repressions in Cuba, and during it the Communists remained legal and supported the government in order to capture the C.T.C. The anarchist movement went underground and fought against Machado, insisting on a general strike to unseat the dictator. When the workers went on strike against Machado, the Communist-controlled unions appealed for them to return to work, compromising themselves even more than the British Labour Party in 1926. Since the advent to power of Batista, whose reactionary government supports the alliance with Russia, the Communists have led their followers into a position little different from the Falangists, urging them to vote for the most reactionary Right-Wing candidates.

Especially since the example of the Spanish Revolution of 1936, there have been signs that the workers are growing disgusted with Leninist tactics, and are returning to their natural home, the anarcho-syndicalist

(continued on p. 11)

CA'CANNY TRIAL

TWENTY-TWO MINERS from Shotts, Lanarkshire, were involved in what is known as the 'ca' canny trial'; but when the case was concluded only ten were convicted and a fine of £5 was imposed on each of them. This case aroused considerable interest all over the country and the alleged 'Free Press', by innuendo endeavoured to turn the public against the miners. There were hints about "hidden hands"; "ring-leaders"; "stabbers-in-the-back"; and all the usual clap-trap which we are now well accustomed to. On this occasion the tactic failed as it is evident now, after nearly five years of this type of propaganda the people are very sceptical and not so easily fooled.

In official language the men were charged with contravening the Essential Works (Coalmining) Order, 1943, and the Defence (General) Regulations, 1939, by wilfully adopting a system of slow working between November 8th, 1943 and March 6th, 1944. It was also stated in the complaint that there was an average daily deficiency in output, during the period libelled, of from 1 cwt. to 2 tons 8 cwt. per pair of men. There was a pile of books produced by the prosecution which entailed a lot of wearisome detail. Documents galore were spread out on the tables and were gone into with an air of apathy and martyrdom on the part of the prosecution. It was plain to be seen that neither fiscal or sheriff were enjoying their jobs and that the N.S.O. and the pit management were the persons determined to get a conviction. Sheriff Dobie in summing up paid scant attention to the evidence of the witnesses for the defence; but placed great reliance on the evidence of the pit manager, Mr. Howden, whose name he mentioned repeatedly—one could say, monotonously.

It is easy to see that if twenty-two miners adopt a ca' canny policy there must be evidence of meetings, decisions and, perhaps, conspiracy, yet the prosecution failed to show any such evidence. Then there is the fact that twelve accused were sent from the dock without being convicted surely destroys the allegation that a particular policy was adopted.

The remaining ten miners in the dock must have been amazed to hear the prosecution alleging that they were the cause of a drop in production to the amount of 926 tons 8 cwt. which the twenty-two miners were originally accused of. This absurdity was conveniently forgotten both by defence and prosecution. The loss in production was admitted by the defence but this, they explained, was due to bad working conditions. One commendable thing about this case—it can be seen in the evidence of the miners reported

in the local press—was the solidarity of the men in this pit where they worked. They gave their evidence in a clear and certain manner and one is regretful that they did not conduct their own case instead of allowing the Union to tie them to a solicitor.*

On the day of the debate four miners were singled out and the charges against them were found not proven. This bare fact tells nothing until you consider the clever retreat of the wily fiscal who stated in his opening remarks that he was glad to find no sign of any "hidden hand" or "outside interference". One felt he was covering a weak case by pretending he did not mind the miner having a dispute with the boss provided that Trotskyists, Anarchists and the Duke of Bedford had no fingers in the pie. Had he been able to prove his case he would not have worried unduly whether the miners had been influenced by "hidden hands" or not. One is left with the impression that something was crooked and that gas was not used—not ordinary gas anyway. A Fiscal has to have scalps and when he sees twelve men out of twenty-two walk out of the dock without being convicted he must excuse his failure by blaming someone or something. However, on this occasion the wily Mr. J. C. Patterson changes the tactic: he clears the "Hidden Hand" and yet, gets his men. Perhaps he has been "stewing" dialectics, à la Moscow.

The case will be well reported by now but one angle of this case will not be touched, namely, the persecution of a few miners to frighten the majority. That was the reason for this lengthy, wearisome trial, that and nothing else. In this district (Shotts) the miners have followed a direct action policy and as in all other militant districts efforts are being made by the authorities to destroy this unity and movement. Of course these efforts are futile. This trial had not been concluded when the miners of Stane Colliery, Shotts, declared a strike.

JOHN CARRACHER.

*John Y. Robertson who conducted the miners' defence is the son of a miner M.P. who, it is said, left £16,000 when he died. He is also an ex-councillor (Labour?) and was nominated by the Transport and General Workers Union for Duncan Graham's seat in Parliament when D.G. died. He is also legal representative for T. & G. Workers Union in this district. He now appears to represent the Miners Union as he did in the above case. He has a large private practice. He is also prosecuting fiscal for the Burgh of Hamilton. Not the best representative for workers in trouble.

(Continued from p. 10)

movement, which has proved its worth, and a syndicalist movement independent of the C.T.C. is now a practical possibility. The Cuban proletariat is beginning to recall under which banner it fought its most successful struggles, and is beginning to emancipate its movement from politicians.

The formation of the Libertarian Association of Cuba has been received with great enthusiasm. At Whitsun the Libertarian Association held its first Congress, presided over by comrade Juan Gutiérrez, secretary of the miners' syndicate at Santa Rita, and attended by delegates from all over Cuba. The Congress was a great success, bearing testimony to the vitality of the movement, and a series of declarations testified to its clear thinking on national and inter-

national problems. The necessity of an independent syndicalist movement was made clear; opposition to the war was reaffirmed; the attitude of the movement to the problems of the day was made clear. The enthusiasm and vigour shown at the Congress will be a great inspiration to comrades not only in Cuba.

Comrades will be interested to know that *War Commentary* has reached Cuba, and been warmly approved in the movement. In the April issue of *Solidaridad* a report of our activities in Britain is given, and we understand that readers there are supporting our "Solidarity tickets" drive.

We are certain that we are echoing the sentiments of the international movement here in conveying fraternal greetings to our comrades in Central America.

A. M.

"MONTY FOR PARLIAMENT?"

"MONTY FOR PARLIAMENT—Yes—and why not? He is leading the Forces to Victory in War, so what is more logical than that he should lead us into Peace when the 'cease fire' sounds?" So writes *Reveille* (July, 1944) under the headline "Monty, M.P.? and your B.2626." It then boasts "No fewer than six of Monty's closest Associates from El Alamein onwards are prospective candidates for Parliament . . . Moreover, Monty himself, as a candidate in the General Election, when it is estimated that his name alone will influence more than 5,000,000 votes to our cause, will just about dynamite the present reactionary set-up."

The A.E.A. (Allied Ex-Services Association) publishes a "Forces Charter" according to which it fights for: 1. A job, a home and a real living wage for each returned ex-Serviceman and women. 2. Freedom of choice of employment for ex-Servicemen and women. 3. State recognition of financial responsibility to those incapable—through war disablement or old age—of earning their living. 4. Equal opportunity in life for all our children. Etc., etc.

"As we cannot count upon civilians to be 'actively' sympathetic to our cause" says *Reveille*, "we must unite . . . there is only one way—and that is by creating public opinion—the mass voice of the ex-Service men and women, for by the strength of their votes in General Elections to come, we can force a really representative Government upon the country."

One of Montgomery's officers, a candidate for Parliament, according to *Reveille*, wrote—"I find it easy to enrol members for the A.E.A. out here in Normandy, for there is a vast new political thought which has become obvious ever since we landed." We agree! As one of our correspondents writes, "Few have any faith in the present political parties and many say that they have all let down the people who supported them. They don't expect a positive political programme from either side; their votes will probably go, not to the party which they consider best, but to the one which is not as bad as the other. Churchill is every day proving himself more a liability to the Tories, but to counter-balance this there is also a distinct loss of faith in men like Bevin, Morrison & Co. I think even the Government is beginning to realise that the 'Land fit for Heroes' line is falling hopelessly wide of the mark. A.B.C.A. sessions, talks on citizenship, 'educational' lectures and discussions are only regarded as official 'dope'. Naturally the army makes them compulsory; what it fails to do, of course, is to get them to swallow the medicine."

We feel that Montgomery's agitators may not realise just how vast new political thought is growing out here. "For," as another soldier-comrade writes, "as republicans and revolutionaries were bred in the great Czarist fortress-prisons, so to-day Anarchists are being born, inside the army, into a consciousness of their task." And judging from the following soldier's letter we doubt very much if Montgomery's name will influence 5,000,000 votes to the so-called "Cause of the A.E.A." "The last war showed that no army can survive a modern war with its morale untouched, and that, if the war drags on long enough, even undefeated armies break up. The disintegration of the rank and file last time was to the advantage of the Left. In Russia, Germany and Austria the Left represented the protest of the people against prolonged suffering caused by the war. That popular protest—as many realise now—was exploited for political ends by the pseudo-revolutionary parties."

"Again the tide of popular feeling is likely to turn. This time not only in a new protest against Capitalism alone, but also against the pseudo-socialists. The corrupt

political parties will once again adopt revolutionary slogans in order to gain the support of the masses, and again they (the masses) will find themselves betrayed (as in Germany, 1918) by the Labour and Communist parties, who would rely on the reactionary officers' corps to crush the revolutionary wing of the working class. These groups of officers, inspired by the success of the military caste in Germany, Italy and Spain, are trying now to influence, control and exploit the obvious existing disintegration, and behind these elements hide the bourgeoisie, hoping to find in the officers' corps a bulwark against the revolution. The officers' corps, recruited mainly, if not exclusively, from the propertied class, has always shown itself to be politically conscious and aware that its interests coincide with the existence of a counter-revolutionary Government, based on the rights of property.

"We have witnessed the political cleverness of the German Reichswehr and its support of the 'National Revolution' which led to the complete liquidation of the German working class. In Spain throughout the nineteenth century the officers sponsored whichever party served their interests and History shows a long series of attempts on their part to counter the revolution, culminating in the Franco Rebellion.

"The natural sympathies of the rank and file are with the Social Revolution. No one realises that better than the officers, so they pretend to be revolutionary themselves. Just like the Nazis, our own set of National Revolutionary officers attack (to judge from the A.E.A. Forces Charter), regimentation, legislation, bureaucratic tyranny, threats to individual and economic liberty, dependence on charity with the humiliation of appeals, etc., etc., voicing the discontent and demands of the masses, promising everything to everybody and using every known constitutional means to, in fact, intrigue against and weaken the growth of the Social Revolution, while preparing a Fascist counter-revolt. The counter-revolution has the natural support of the officers. Its liveliest activists are those who dread nothing except being reduced to ex-officers in a peaceful society.

"Fascism is in the making. The army's attitude in the coming revolutionary situation will be determined by the officers *unless the rank and file, learning from the last war, forms its own soldier councils and unites with the workers for the defence of the Social Revolution.*"

We would like to add to this letter an appeal from our comrade I.D.: "The Army Authorities are now asking men to prepare to vote, by giving them Army Form B.2626. Those men who have for years seen the bureaucratic machine at work will know best what to do with these forms. To them and to all other soldiers I say: 'Vote!—vote in your own hearts for the overthrow of this strangling system. Vote—not for the rule of one more useless official to think for you but—vote yourselves free from Authority! Vote yourselves free to live!'"

FROM THE RANKS

War Commentary for Soldiers!

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Red & Black Notebook

Out Of Work Shipyard Men

WHEN THIS WAR began it was anticipated that it would be followed, as all other great wars have been followed, by widespread unemployment and poverty. It was not anticipated that unemployment would begin before the war ended. Yet, from the end of 1943 unemployment has threatened hundreds of thousands of engineering workers as reported in *War Commentary* some months ago.

Early in the summer of this year the out-of-work scourge struck the shipyards of Tyneside and now its threat is spread to thousands of homes in Newcastle, Wallsend and Jarrow. During this summer several thousands of shipyard men were dismissed and most are still unemployed.

The authorities claim they can find work for some of the men in other parts of the country. As this sort of thing usually results in extra expense, and even lower wages, most of the men refused the offers, claiming that the solution lay in bringing the work to the men and not the men to the work.

The Danger In Dilution

While men are being dismissed from the yards, women workers are being retained. The men point out that this is an infringement of the dilution agreement. When the trade unions agreed to unskilled women being trained to do skilled men's work, they did so on being given a guarantee that if and when work in the yards slackened the women workers would be laid off before the men.

Local feeling on this matter will be better understood if we remember that in the North East, working class opinion is against married women working outside their homes and unfavourable to any woman doing the rough, hard and dangerous work of shipbuilding.

Women in one shipyard, according to the *North Mail*, sent to the management a deputation protesting against the retention of women while men are being sacked.

The Shadow

South country people who recall the terrible plight of Tyneside towns such as Jarrow during the slump of the early thirties when Jarrow literally died, may imagine that the war ended all that for Jarrow, Wallsend and Walker which were among the chief cradles of the British Navy. No so. The spectre is diminished, but not exorcised.

So grave is the problem that several conferences have been held to discuss possible solution. Present at these were trade union officials, delegates of the local boroughs and Members of Parliament for Newcastle, Wallsend and Gateshead. A deputation representing the first of three gatherings visited the First Lord of the Admiralty (A. V. Alexander).

After some delay, the secretary, F. C. Egner, Town Clerk of Tynemouth, received a letter from Alexander, stating that it was impossible for the Admiralty to "authorise the opening of the disused yards as a war measure."

At a resumed conference the following resolution was carried unanimously:

"That, this conference expresses keen regret and disappointment at the decision of the Admiralty to take no steps to reopen the closed but yet efficient shipbuilding yards on the Tyne, and that the First Lord be reminded that the case submitted did not only relate to war-time shipbuilding.

"That this conference petition the Minister of Reconstruction and President of the Board of Trade, drawing attention to the urgent need for schemes and plans to

be formulated for the reopening or adaptation and use of the closed and efficient yards to provide employment for the labour which now is available and which now is, and in the past has been engaged in shipbuilding heavy industry."

"Nothing But The Dole"

After several speakers had expressed dissatisfaction at the Government's treatment of Tyneside, the Mayor of Jarrow, Councillor G. Diggle, reminded the conference that soldiers leaving England for the first wave of the invasion of Normandy had asked Bevin "Are we coming back to the dole when we finish this job for you?"

"I cannot see anything else," said the Mayor. "It appears to me that once again the younger generation will have to go South to look for work."

The Death Of A Town

The sad condition of Jarrow in those years of misery is now largely forgotten, even by Ellen Wilkinson who became M.P. for the town because of it. In this once busy, prosperous, town entirely devoted to shipbuilding, the majority of the population was out of work. Others, shopkeepers, teachers and municipal workers indirectly lived upon the dole of their fellow townsmen. The town was on the dole. In once busy streets three-quarters of the shops were empty; the others clung to a diminishing trade. Grass grew on the yards. The young set out to tramp the Great North Road; the old stayed to eke out a life that was fading, on a miserable pittance and a memory of days of wakes and sturdy independence. A town died.

It was at this time that the British shipbuilding companies set up Shipbuilders' Security Ltd., a finance company, for the purpose of buying up certain shipbuilding yards, closing them permanently and preventing them *ever again* being used as shipyards. It must not be thought that the yards thus closed were small, inefficient concerns. Some of them, such as Palmers' of Jarrow, were among the biggest and most important in the world.

Even during the war these yards have not been reopened. Last month's Tyneside conference pointed out that it was these yards that it was attempting to get reopened. The replies of the Government, through H. Dalton, President of the Board of Trade, and A. V. Alexander have all been evasive, but one thing is now clear—the Government will not interfere with the rights and privileges of Shipbuilders' Security Ltd.—war or no war. So much for patriotism!

SYNDICALIST

PUBLIC LECTURE-DISCUSSIONS

EVERY FRIDAY EVENING 7.30 p.m

18th AUGUST

"What is Propaganda?"

25th AUGUST

"Class Struggles in Germany"

1st SEPTEMBER

"The Meaning of Anarchism"

8th SEPTEMBER

"Reformism in Public Health"

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Letters to the Editors

INDIAN FREEDOM

DEAR COMRADE,

While sympathising heartily with the attitude expressed in Mr. Das Gupta's letter (*War Commentary*, Mid-July) I feel that the phrase "India's Freedom" requires further clarification.

Many sincere friends of India do not realise that there is no clear-cut issue between "British" and "Indians", where the real freedom of the country is concerned. Were every British soldier and civilian to be miraculously removed overnight, the India that we should then see would be a capitalist state, with Big-Business men whose class-interests are as clearly defined as those of their brethren in this country.

It is a well-known fact that British policy in India has been to keep industry at the "go slow"; one reason for this is that India provides the dumping-ground for British exports. This policy has been pursued even in war-time, in spite of American protests, and has not been materially altered even now, in the face of Jap invasion. Mulk Raj Anand, in *Letters on India* says "Not an internal combustion engine was manufactured in India in the first two years" (i.e. of the war) "not a tank or a tractor; not a ship or a motor car." For this, of course, there is the additional reason that the presence of the means of production of munitions on a large scale would be extremely dangerous to the British, in a country seething with discontent and largely held down by force.

While industrialists in Britain have been making large profits out of the necessities of war-time, their fellows in India have been chafing at the Government's restrictive policy. Small wonder, then, that they support Mahatma Gandhi and the "Quit India" movement! It is reported in the *News Chronicle* of July 17th that "leading Indian industrialists, headed by Sir Housie Mody" have addressed a joint manifesto to the Viceroy, urging him "not to miss this opportunity of exploring the possibilities of a settlement" (i.e. Mr. Gandhi's most recent pronouncement). In the admittedly very unlikely event of India's being handed back to the Indians, it would be into the hands of native Big Business that our fellow wage-slavers were delivered. The existence of this subtler form of slavery is often ignored by well-intentioned people who imagine that every Indian crying "Swaraj" is actuated by the highest motives of selfless patriotism.

This is *not* to be taken as a defence

of the present system—God forbid! But it does, I hope, emphasise the fact that India's real freedom will come, not by any amount of negotiations and settlements, but by an act of evolution.

Yours sincerely,

J.F.

Stonehouse, Glos.

SOLDIER IN GAOL

COMRADES,

For over 18 months now I have been (or was) in the army and one of the eagerly looked forward to events was the arrival of my copy of *War Commentary*. However I would not stand the "discipline" etc. of the army, and refused to obey orders and received 93 days civil imprisonment at Armley prison, Leeds. I appeared before a tribunal at York and I received my discharge unconditionally upon going to train as a maintenance engineer in the mines. At my Court Martial one of the officers said a very significant thing: "You know that for refusing to obey an order the Army can do what they like with you". I have no desire to have anything to do with such an organization—except to fight that ideology. I have followed Comrade Leech's case with every sympathy and in Armley Prison I found two *War Commentary* readers—refusing military service. Yes, they are springing up everywhere — individuals, yes — but islands of sanity in a world driven mad by capitalism. At last our ideas are beginning to have weight, our ideology is beginning to count. Carry on, comrades. To-morrow is ours.

Yours in the struggle,

G. C. (Leeds).

SOVIET LITERATURE

DEAR COMRADE,

You are of course fully aware of the peculiar propagandist methods of the pseudo-Communist parties. I happen to have before me a very damning piece of evidence as to their Jesuitry and it is from a scholar not affiliated to any political party, it seems.

I had consulted a well-known socialist journal upon the reliability or otherwise of a book one of the C.P.G.B. sympathisers had lent to me. Probably you know it and have "placed" it where it belongs. "A scandalously dishonest book", was this journalist's assessment. Happening to take out of the Edinburgh Public Library Gleb Struve's "25 Years of Soviet Russian Literature" the following passage should prove a standing caveat against C.P. literary morals (in other spheres): "The positive (C.P.) censorship of

authorship has a damaging effect on literature. If you think that Trotsky had merited from the revolution *you must not say so*. But that is not enough. You are expected not only to *abstain* from giving Trotsky his due, but also you are to portray him as a traitor, even in those early days when he was laying down the foundations of the Red Army." "You are expected (i.e. commanded) to say that it was Trotsky who bungled the whole campaign during the civil war, and that—but for Stalin—it would have been well-nigh lost." This writer quotes from a Soviet novelist, Gladkov; "Socialist Realism (!) demands, not general truth, but a specific truth, *our Communist truth*." Yes, even if a falsification of historic facts is expedient! Trotsky's personal disappearance may on these grounds become as hallucinative as the Gospel story of Jesus!

In another passage we get, in a lament for the loss of genuine communism by Pilnyak, (some of whose writings were banned in Russia):

"Communism is primarily love, an intense attraction of man to man, friendship, co-operation, collaboration. Communism means giving up things, and for a genuine Communist (Stalin!) the primary things must be love, respect for men—and men."

There are many indications throughout this fine survey, that "Literature in the U.S.S.R. is stifled and bureaucratized." And certainly this book with all D. S. Mirsky's histories, which seem to merit the name of history, is one to respect and consult.

Faternally,

ED. T. KERR.

REICHSWEHR AND RUSSIA

DEAR COMRADES,

The aims of the Reichswehr officers in the National Committee of Free Germans are not quite what they pretend them to be. They say they want to end the war to save lives. I take it they mean their own, for they were never concerned for the lives of others. They say they want to overthrow Hitler. Why now turn against the man they jockeyed to power, whose every crime they supported? Because his "no surrender" might mean the end of German militarism at the hands of the Anglo-Americans. The end of that militarism certainly will not come at the hands of Stalin, who has the greatest interest in preserving a reactionary military force in Germany, for he knows that most German Communists have lost their illusions about

the "Workers' Fatherland" and are now his most bitter enemies. A social revolution in Germany might have an undesired effect on the Bolshevik gang.

British workers hardly know the extent to which the Soviets helped the Reichswehr after the last war, when the Secret Alliance between them was directed against Poland and Britain. The reconstruction and modernization of the German War machine was only possible through the assistance of Russia, with, of course, the connivance of the City and Wall Street. The renewed Alliance between Stalin and the Generals may not seem dangerous at present. But by Russia occupying a third of Germany, and exploiting the willingly co-operating German military genius, the way may be paved for World War No. 3 to achieve the long dreamt of destruction of Britain by the Russo-German war machine.

There is only one effective answer to this: International Social Revolution of the working class!

Yours fraternally,

WILLI FREIMANN.

STALINIST TACTICS

The Society of Friends (Quakers) have been holding an Institute on International Relations in this city. They have requested speakers from all radical groups to speak at their open Forums.

At two of their open Forums held in the Plymouth Congregational Church the National Secretary of the Socialist Party and Bertram Wolfe, author and lecturer, spoke.

They said things the Stalinite Communist Fascists didn't like about Stalin's Russian dictatorship and the present capitalist working class slaughter and destruction.

So a group of Stalin's finks, local Secretary of the Communists, Congress of Industrial (C.I.O.) officials and goons' squad hoodlums took possession of the meeting.

About 50 of these rats went in and booed the speakers, calling them liars, traitors, etc. Then 4 Commie C.I.O.'ers mobbed the speaker Wolfe, pulling him off the platform.

These Commie speakers urged the workers not to strike, buy Bonds and speed up production. The Finks then tried to frame the Institute speakers, reporting them to the F.B.I. as Fascists, Nazis, etc.

These Communists are acting as Stool Pigeons, Scabs and Finks for the capitalist class and their governments. Class conscious workers everywhere should be on their Guard against these Stalin stooges.

G. B. A.

Seattle, Wash.,
U.S.A.

C. P. on Railways

Recently the N.U.R. gave its approval to the epidemic of nationalisation which is infecting the Trade Unions and voted for state control of railways. As was to be expected, the Communists were not far behind, and have issued a pamphlet "How to End Muddle on the Railways" which is in the best tradition of King Street boot licking.

The first few pages are devoted to a description of the muddle which exists on the railways, which the Communists regard as reprehensible because it interferes with the Second Front. The workers are told of the bad conditions under which they work, and are exhorted to take action about them. But there is no need to imagine that the Communists have turned revolutionary—the action consists of "Pressure from the union E.C.'s, deputations to M.P.'s etc." to make the government "face up to its responsibilities". Anything more direct than this gentle pressure would of course be stabbing our boys in the back!

We are encouraged to hear that to-day the workers' organisations have "a bigger struggle on than ever before". Evidently the class struggle

has at last met its match, for we find that this bigger struggle is that to persuade the capitalists to be more efficient in fighting their own war.

Irrelevantly, the Teheran conference is dragged in, to give a little boost to Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin who are represented as carrying out "the policy for which the working-class has fought so long". Then the pamphlet returns to its subject, with a demand for "Public control", where we are actually told that "it will pay the country handsomely to buy out the companies at a reasonable figure". The conclusion of all this is an appeal to the Government to "treat the railways as an essential part of the preparations for the Second Front", to the public not to travel, and to the workers to give "Everything for the Second Front and Victory".

This is a nauseating piece of writing, but, apart from its smell, it is relatively innocuous, as any railway worker who knows his job will be impatient of its irrelevance to actual conditions, and those who are not railwaymen will find it just another boring pep talk which has saved the Ministry of Information a little trouble.

L. T. C.

World of Plenty

Paul Rotha's film *World of Plenty* has received a very wide showing in this country, and has more or less been "adopted" as the semi-official propaganda. Besides going the round of cinemas it has been shown in factory and army canteens and has been pushed by the Ministry of Information.

The film is in three parts, and the first part deals with food as it was before the war. Malnutrition is clearly demonstrated amidst a world where farmers cannot find a market for their goods. Inequality of income is shown to be the cause of this ridiculous state of affairs. Coffee and wheat are destroyed in America, while at the same time millions of U.S. workers can't afford a cup of coffee and a sandwich. The film then passes to the present war-time situation and reviews the people's food. Food as it is according to the film gives us all we need for health, and we are shown that for instance cheese and egg powder are supplied by the U.S. to England on the Lease-Lend scheme; not because of direct profit motives, but because they are needed in Britain. And in the third section, food as it

might be, we are shown a bright and shining picture of the post-war world, in which everyone has security and sufficient food. But although the film does show up quite clearly some of the faults of the capitalist system it never gets down to the basic problem. Always the assumption is that a solution can be found to these problems within capitalism. Farming was prosperous in the last war, it declined between the wars, and now it is prosperous again. The reason is that an industrial country must import food in order to pay for its manufactured exports. But this is not emphasised by the film.

The film closes by saying that we must see to it that never again is there starvation and unemployment in a world of plenty, but never does it give any practical method by which this can be achieved.

If Rotha's film makes people think about the problem then it may have done some good, but its merits are certainly not that it gives any course of action for the workers. That they can only find themselves by their own independent efforts.

JACK WADE.



We dedicate the above cartoon to the "Daily Worker" confident that, when the time comes, this gallant paper will show no softness towards the vanquished enemy and will instruct the British people in methods of torture which will make German women wish they merely had their heads shaven.

*

"Would it have been credited that, in this fifth year of the war and after the many years of struggle against Fascism, two British newspapers should rush to sympathise with the tool and accomplices of the Fascist enemy?"

Yet this is the meaning of the astonishing outbursts this week in the "Daily Herald" and the "Daily Mirror" on the subject of the women collaborationists in France whose hair has been shorn or shaven.

Whatever the motive, chivalry towards women or tenderness towards the enemy, either is misplaced.

What would have been our own reaction toward English women collaborators with an enemy that had ravaged our land, killed and tortured everyone who offered resistance, murdering thousands of innocent hostages, locking men and women, old and young, hale and infirm, workpeople and tradespeople, laymen and clergymen, into the village church to burn?

It is certain that we should not be writing superior articles about how wrong it would be to treat them with unkindness.

Indeed, it may confidently be predicted that we should consider that they had got off exceedingly lightly with only a penalty of a haircut.

The episode is a warning of the persistence in this country of a softness towards the enemy... Fortunately, our troops, who, with their own eyes in Italy and France, have seen what he is capable of, will not need the warning."

"Daily Worker" Editorial, 207/44.

IMITATING THE NAZIS

FEW people, on seeing the newsreels of 'collaborationist' women being forcibly shorn of their hair, can have been immune from feelings of disgust.

Nor is it very attractive to see fascistic types dragging individuals who are now in a minority position to gaol by their hair, or compelling them to shout "Vive Churchill!" It does not greatly matter what crimes the individual collaborationist may have committed. Negroes in the southern states of America are doubtless sometimes guilty of rape. But that does not make the lynching any the less hideous. This pillorying of collaborationists is essentially lynching, except that it does not appear to be done by local populations as a whole but only by individuals who seem especially anxious to demonstrate their allegiance to the Allied cause. Either way, whether it is done on Jews in Germany and Poland, on Negroes in America, or on anybody else—whatever their alleged offences—the spectacle of those who are now strong publicly beating or deriding those who are now the minority

is profoundly disgusting. The Allied authorities' passivity in the face of these revolting episodes, and the publicity given to them in the press, is just one more indication of the threadbare morality behind the 'war for freedom'.

It goes without saying that the *Daily Worker*, which glorified the Moscow trials, justified the Hitler-Stalin pact, and vilified the revolutionists who gave meaning to the Spanish War, should now vociferously support these head-shavings in France. Walter Holmes goes one better even, and suggests that they should be branded. In Italy the Communist Party was the first to turn round and support Badoglio (Stalin was the first to recognize the 'Mustard Marshal's'—it was the *Daily Worker's* nickname—government) and deplore the attacks on the House of Savoy. The *Times* correspondent in Italy writes (*Times* 8/8/44): "While the Communists thunder at the Monarchists as crypto-Fascists, the latter piquantly reveal that half the staff of the Communist newspaper *Unità* held authenticated jobs under the Fascist Party."