

# WAR *For Anarchism* KOMMENTARY

Vol. 5, No. 22.

MID-SEPTEMBER, 1944.

TWOPENCE

## WHAT'S COOKING?

DURING THE PAST fortnight a perceptible and even obtrusive change has taken place in the public mood towards the war and its conclusion. Events move so rapidly that it is difficult to realise that only a few days ago we were still living in an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty caused by the presence of the flying bomb attacks and what seemed the imminent probability of attacks from V2 and other hypothetical terror machines. Then the end of the war was discussed rather as a compensating possibility for present dangers than as a certainty.

Now, almost literally overnight, the whole mental scene has changed. The flying bombs are almost forgotten, except by those who suffered directly from their effects, and V2 has been relegated by most people into the realms of mythical fancy. The sweeping military

successes of the allies, the apparent disintegration of the German army on the Western Front, have given rise to a general feeling of confidence that the war in Europe will be over soon, in a matter of weeks or possibly even days.

The recent actions of the Government show that they are willing to foster this idea of an imminent peace. The compulsory drills of the Home Guard have been abolished. Blackout is virtually to cease on the 17th September, and the hours of duty of firewatchers and voluntary Civil Defence workers are to be reduced to a mere fraction of what they are at present. Statements by political leaders and newspaper writers are all made in a tone of judicious confidence which is intended to impress the reader or listener.

We do not take upon ourselves the role of prophets,





and have no intention of contradicting or otherwise the prevalent ideas concerning the proximity of peace. We have no inside military information and no adequate knowledge of internal conditions in Germany that would justify us in making any such statement. However, in view of the prevailing public attitude we feel justified in pointing out some of the implications of a cessation of hostilities.

Peace is considered by most people in terms of more freedom and more material well-being. There are few who imagine an immediate return to 'peacetime' conditions; on the other hand many people expect a progressive betterment of the standard of life. It is our object to give some attention to the various factors which will affect the changeover from the present war society to what most people hope will be a peace society.

Four main topics of discussion appear. They are, wartime restrictions on liberty, unemployment, demobilisation and the re-establishment of international contact between the peoples of the world.

Wartime restrictions on liberty are represented mainly by the mass of regulations which have been issued by the civil service to regiment every aspect of national life during the war. The Conservative Party, realising the hatred with which these regulations are regarded by the workers, has appeared as the champion of freedom, and the Government has undertaken to repeal many of the regulations when the war is ended. We are warned, however, that the withdrawal will be gradual, and it is obvious that the ruling class hope to keep the working class quiet by spreading their concessions over a long period. It is also obvious that they will hang on as long as possible to the key regulations on which their attack on liberty has been built, *i.e.* the regulations against strikes, those restricting the freedom of the press, providing for the censorship of correspondence and the internment of political suspects, and the notorious regulation 1AA. The withdrawal of black-out gives nothing in the way of real freedom; on the other hand, it obviously pleases everybody, and so long as the ruling class can continue to hand out little sweeteners of this kind they will retain all of the regulations that are essential for their purposes of repressing working class activity. But even if the opposition of the workers forces them to give up these regulations, there are still ways and means of maintaining their stranglehold on social liberties. The Trades Disputes Act and the law against incitement to disaffection provide in themselves a good basis for ruling class tyranny. And in even more subtle ways the civil service can hinder the spread of 'unsafe' ideas. For instance, only recently the Treasury vetoed an agreement which had been made with America for the import of a large quantity of newsprint at the end of hostilities in Europe, on the grounds that the country could not afford the sterling necessary to pay for it. This was an obvious government manoeuvre to impede the return to some measure of freedom of the press.

The second problem, unemployment, is already becoming evident, even before the war ends. Factories are dismissing employees, and the changes in Civil Defence which will come into operation shortly provide for the dismissal of many of the full time employees. When the war ceases in Europe it is obvious that there will be a further drop in wartime production, and a further flow of men and women from the factories on to the labour market. So that even before any of the men come back from the forces an unemployment problem will already have commenced. The kind of future which the government itself anticipates is shown by the recent white paper on Unemployment Policy, which assumed an "average level of 8 per cent. unemployment".

The third problem, demobilisation, is intimately connected with that of unemployment, in that it seems to be the policy of the government to try and keep unemployment within bounds by restricting demobilisation. Among soldiers the prevalent concern is how soon they will get out of the army, and they obviously regard any long-term peacetime mobilisation with the greatest discontent. Meanwhile, the government has made its demobilisation proposals even more unpalatable by withdrawing the earlier principle of demobilising according to length of service and substituting one of releasing key men first. This may suit the government and the employers, but it is palpably unjust that a man should be kept longer in the forces than another just because he did not have the good fortune to hold a key job in peacetime. The government after the last war attempted to apply this principle to demobilisation, and the result was a great manifestation of discontent among the men which made the authorities think better of their plans and speed up demobilisation to an appreciable degree.

The re-establishment of contact between the workers of Europe is an event which the ruling classes of all countries regard with something approaching fear. The British government have already made it known that it will be some time before free travel will take place between England and the Continent. In the meantime they are making the best of the time that is left to them to strengthen the links between the various sections of the ruling class and the bodies that support them. Representatives of capitalist newspapers, of international finance, of big business will be allowed to circulate freely, as they do now under the guise of war correspondents or government agents. Soon, no doubt, the official representatives of such reformist bodies as the Trade Unions and the Labour Party will be let loose on Europe to link up with similar class-collaborationist bodies on the Continent. But it is obvious that the representative of a working class paper or the delegate of a revolutionary group will find it next to impossible to cross the Channel, or to pass over the frontiers of any European country, until many months after the war has ended. In the meantime, the

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# ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

## ANARCHISM ON CLYDESIDE

A LONDON comrade who visited Glasgow recently has given us an encouraging report on the general situation on the Clyde and the activities of the Anarchist Federation in Scotland.

There is considerable discontent among the workers in the industrial areas of Scotland, and this has shown itself—particularly during the past twelve months—in militant strike action. In the coalfields of W. Scotland strikes are continually taking place and at Shotts there have been twenty strikes during the past year. Our Lanarkshire comrades are carrying on active propaganda work and whenever the strikes begin to look as though they are going to spread throughout the coalfield—as they actually did on an issue of solidarity last year—the press, coalowners and Stalin stooges raise the bogey of the “hidden hand”.

The struggle has also become sharp in the shipyards, docks and factories. The Dockers' Union (a breakaway from the T. & G.W.U.) has adopted a number of syndicalist methods, including recall of delegates and direct action—particularly in support of victimised dockers. The sympathy which our policy is gaining among the dockers is shown by the number of them who regularly attend our open-air meetings and buy and distribute *War Commentary* among the dock workers.

Syndicalism is also gaining support in the factories and the Trotskyite *Socialist Appeal* recently devoted two articles to the “syndicalist tendencies” among the Clydeside workers.

Open-air propaganda activity is considerable and the Anarchist Federation runs some half-dozen meetings every Sunday in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Paisley, Burnbank and other towns. These are no lack of speakers to put our case and the platforms invariably draw large and enthusiastic audiences. While our comrade was there young Alan Burnett, who has just completed a sentence of twelve months imprisonment, for refusing military service, was released from gaol. His first comment on meeting a group of comrades was: “Where will I be speaking on Sunday?”

The Anarchist Hall in Wilson Street, has become a centre of activity. Discussions take place every Monday evening, and during the winter months social evenings are held regularly, as well as public meetings on Sunday evenings. The level of discussion is high and many practical issues are dealt with. The bookshop in George Street is another focal point of Anarchist work and at all hours of the day there are a group of people reading the newspaper cuttings, posters and cartoons displayed in the windows.

The growth of our movement in Scotland and the general militancy among the Clydeside workers is extremely inspiring to anyone who is accustomed to the less revolutionary atmosphere of “Southern England”, and gives the lie to those who claim that the British workers are incapable of organising and acting in a revolutionary way. The Clyde has historically been the birthplace of some of the most bitter struggles of the British workers. It is our task in other parts of Britain to develop and increase revolutionary propaganda, so that the “syndicalist tendency” on Clydeside to-day spreads throughout the country.

## STRIKES IN GUATEMALA

mala:

“After Dictator Ubico's forced ‘resignation’ some weeks ago the country has been shaken by a great outburst of strikes, mainly directed against the United Fruit Company, one of the part-owners of Central America. The strikes are in most places confined to the labourers and are usually of the *grévé*

*perlé* type. At Bananera an offer of government arbitration was rejected and the strike was eventually a success. At Tiguasabe the demand is for a 50% wage increase. The *Compania Agricola* (local subsidiary of the United Fruit) have offered 15% and have laid the matter before the provisional president. The strikers here have refused discussion, having just presented their demand and then come out for it. The struggle is still in progress.”

## VILLAGE HORRORS

AT last the Women's Institutes have dropped their knitting, and their fruit bottling; they have ceased to be a gossip club and have undertaken a sound job in investigating rural conditions. As a result a report has been issued by the British Federation of Women's Institutes which contains a damning indictment of the water and sewerage systems throughout the countryside. The report has been prepared as a result of information received from house-to-house investigations and collected by rural district councils in reply to questionnaires. Only a few of the W.I.'s refused to work because they feared trouble between landlords and tenants.

The report, dealing with water-supplies to farms, states that no special provisions were made under the Rural Water Supplies Act 1934 with the result that supplies are now wholly inadequate on many farms. In Oxfordshire, recently 40 cases of rejected milk were due to unsatisfactory supplies. At Kingham (Oxon) these dairy farms are dependent on the public wells. About 2,500 villages out of 3,500 odd reported that they had piped water. In most cases the water is not laid on to the houses, and stand pipes are shared by several houses. These freeze up in winter and add to the daily labours of the country housewife. About 2,000 villages report that their water supply is tested, but it was also found that contaminated wells are still being used, e.g. in Sheepscombe (Glos.) a number of wells have been condemned, but there is no alternative supply. Upham (Hants) has no main water or drainage, and five out of seven wells were condemned five years ago.

At Keevil (Wilts) five farms pump water for drinking and all other purposes “from a brook into which runs all the drainage from the farms and from which cattle drink and dung into”.

The school of Cockhill (Worcs.) has no water, since its well, which is in the burial ground, was condemned. At Tunstall (E. Suffolk) fourteen council houses built shortly before the war share one pump. In Great Shefford (Berks) there are two groups of council houses and each group shares one stand pipe. Each tenant pays 17/8d. per year for this privilege. Eight council houses in Twynning (Glos.) have water carted to them from 1½ miles away. Each house is supplied with four buckets daily to serve all purposes. Wells (Somerset) has not enough water to supply its 150 houses after only a fortnight of dry weather, but the villagers complain bitterly that they pay water rates.

Reporting on the sewerage system of the countryside, the W.I.'s claim that 26 counties estimate that over half the number of houses surveyed had earth, bucket or chemical closets.

In East Suffolk there are only two villages, which can boast having no earth closets, 22 have over 100 each, and a great many householders share. The report adds that most village women are hotly discontented. Some villagers are willing to pay 6d. to 2/- per week extra for water and drainage! Of the few who were unwilling to pay, one claimed that they were paying to the neighbouring urban areas already. They all realised the heavy cost of drainage and water but felt that since the country contributed to town amenities it was time that similar support should be forthcoming for the villages.



Although this particular report by the W.I.'s is useful it will doubtless remain just another report as long as the W.I.'s retain within their ranks so many reactionary elements—landowners' wives, etc. What is needed is a federation of villagers' administrative committees elected and subject to recall by the villages. Such a committee need have no tender feelings towards the landowners and a programme of action could be worked out.

## BIG BILL HOLMES —COWBOY?

Agricultural Workers, is retiring at the end of the year at the age of 71. Like most Trade Union leaders, he seems to have begun his political career in all sincerity, being appalled by the disgusting wages of farm workers which were at that time merely 9/- in winter and 10/- in summer. His early campaignings were begun with much energy. It is said that he pedalled round the country on his cycle in order to address meetings of farm workers in a manner rather reminiscent of the reactionary William Cobbett riding his horse on his rural rides. But this time the pawns in the game were not the big land owners but the farm workers. There was much unrest and at every farm strike and lock-out Bill Holmes was always on the scene eager to use the militant actions of the workers as stepping stones in his career. Within the Union framework he played some considerable part in the 'rural revolt' of 1923. Norfolk farmers demanded a 3/- reduction in wages which were then 25/-. The men resisted successfully and over 12,000 came out on strike. They held demonstrations and great meetings at King's Lynn and Norwich and marched in processions with banners flying and bands playing. Trouble from blacklegs resulted in pitched battles before they were finally chased away.

Bill Holmes has been on the Union's Executive continuously since 1911, was president in 1922, and has been General Secretary since 1928. In the wider sphere of the Trade Union movement he was one time President of the Trade Union Congress. In recognition of his Chairmanship of the T.U.C. a tribute was paid to him by the Congress in selecting him as their 'unofficial ambassador' in 1941 for a 10 months tour of New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia in order to tell the people of the Empire the story of Britain's war effort. Such are his achievements for posterity.

What are his achievements for farm-workers? Well, the hours have been regulated somewhat, £3 5s. od. has been established as a minimum wage as against a £4 10s. od. demand, overtime rates have been fixed, and the Union has reached a membership of over 100,000. This year what Bill Holmes regards as the greatest achievement of all is the alliance and Joint Consultative Committee between the N.U.A.W. and the N.F.U. But it must be remembered that this is not an alliance with small farmers or crofters and workers, but an alliance with the big business interests in farming and the big land-owners, and the executive of the Union. Small farmers have very little representation in the N.F.U. mainly because they are too busy farming and lack the time to attend Union meetings.

But what do the farm-workers think of benefactor Bill Holmes? Well, most of them don't think about him at all. Most have never heard of him. Whenever the rising cost of living forces the Central Wages Board to adjust the wages accordingly an adjustment is taken for granted. Bill Holmes has lost his identity within the executive of the N.U.A.W. and the Central Wages Board. The farm workers shrug their shoulders, laugh and say that 'they b—s' will give us a rise in six months. They know that the 65/- minimum wage to-day gives a standard of living which is hardly more than equivalent to the 12/- of 1914. Such petty reforms have strangled the fine militant spirit which was characteristic of the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the men who took part in the 'rural revolt'.

Mr. William Holmes, C.B.E., general secretary and former president of the National Union of

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ruling class hope to keep the workers divided until their own international and national organs of repression have been perfected and the period of revolutionary ferment which it fears has been safely passed by. But the international contact of the workers can never be completely stopped. Any intercourse between nations involves the mingling of workers—railwaymen, seamen and soldiers. And in these contacts, however small, the seed of any really deep discontent, of any real revolutionary movement, would be passed from land to land. However carefully the governments guard the frontiers, they cannot stop the transmission of thought, which recognises no boundaries, nor can they prevent the growth of an international working class discontent which will threaten the very foundations of all they build for the oppression of their subjects.

## ANTI-LABOUR LAWS VICTIMS DEFENCE COMMITTEE

In our Mid-August issue we gave the address of the above committee as 38, Great Ormond Street, W.C.1. This was incorrect, and we wish to point out that the address of the Committee is 318 Regents Park Road, N.W.3.

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Freedom Press, 27, Belsize Rd. London, N.W.6.



# A WORD FROM THE UNDERWORLD

DON'T MAKE THE mistake of thinking the miner a revolutionary crusader. He is not. Neither is he a fool: he knows where he stands—well and truly at the bottom of the Shaft; and at the top, arm in arm, stand Government, Trade Union and Management. Occasionally they spit down the Shaft, when the miner is not looking, and occasionally, when he is looking, the Trade Union cocks a polite snook at the Management with his left while his right hand warmly shakes the Governmental glove. Look closely—Management and Government are twins! Look still more closely—they are one and the same! No wonder the Trade Union winks.

The miner knows this. He knows it every day. The result is not to make him an anarchist, for he is already an anarchist: in other words, he does not detest this particular government so much as being subjected to the process of government. But this is a spontaneous and untheoretical reaction, thank goodness. He is not interested in theories. He is interested in wages and conditions.

We almost went on strike because the hauliers were being paid less proportionally for a certain piece of overtime than were the colliers. But there was no mention of a strike when the Anti-Strike legislation was introduced, which, from a theoretical point of view, was a much greater danger to the miners.

My comrades had a very direct and adequate attitude. Their opinion of their Trades Union officials was well expressed by a friend of mine who said "Them? They couldn't Trade Union my missus." They do not imagine, and have never imagined, that the war is being fought for their benefit, but neither are they prepared to create a revolutionary situation to make the war their own. They are interested, as I said, in wages and conditions, and not only do I not blame them for that, but day by day in the Pit it was the foreman who represented Power and who was to be resisted, not the Acts passed in Westminster; and it was to the foreman that we directed our swearwords, having no regard for larger organisation.

The Communists and the Socialists have been very vocal as to the exact steps which should be taken to improve wages and conditions. These do not include swearing at the foreman. Nationalise the industry, they reiterate. The theory behind this programme is of less interest to my comrades than the FACT that the programme will, they are told, benefit them materially and magically.

As for conditions themselves: I only wish that Mr. Bevin, the friend of the workers, would take it upon himself to spend a day among his "comrades" in the Pit, working. There is just room for him to kneel at the Coal-Face. No room to swing the pick, Gil jerks with it, stabs from roof to the coal the machine has cut and the charge blown down. It is a huge lump. Where there is a conveyor belt the coal is shovelled directly on to it. Where there is no conveyor the collier's mate loads the lumps into a tram by hand. Ponies drag it away. The collier clears a floor-space with one foot, sitting on the other. "Cap, Jim!" Jim passes a wood-block and a steel prop. Gil stands the steel prop, thrusts the cap between it and the roof and swings his hammer sideways. Then he lifts the pick and jerks at the coal, with each stab a grunt.

Life in the Pit causes a number of physical and mental ailments. One haulier said to me: "The worst thing in the Pit is that after a bit you don't care. Everything can go to hell." And that is a fact. It is both arduous and mono-

tonous—for the collier more arduous, for the haulier more monotonous. For the pony — !

I hope you liked your seven and a half hours, Government, with a quarter of an hour rest to eat your "snap" at 10.45 and, since the wage increase—gained as a result of agitation—your wage packet of £5, minus deductions for Income Tax, Tools, Canteen and Bath payments, Insurance and various other small items.

And if you were not exactly pushed into the Shaft I imagine that at least you did not fail to notice the sarcastic grins of the men when you addressed them about the future. If you ask them they will tell you the story of their Trade Union official who, when first appointed, disappeared across the fields one day for fear he would be asked to interview Management about a small matter; and who later attacked me with no end of verbal violence for writing a very mild article containing a little truth about the miners' attitude for a very mild newspaper.

Never once will you hear a man agree with what a Trade Union leader declares is the miner's viewpoint. They are too cynical to be more than blasphemous about it. The older men have given their money and their ideals to the Trade Union movement which let them down in 1926. The younger men have another solution—leave the mines. A large number will do so as soon as the war ends. Many will remain through inertia and due to the fact that work in the Pit from sixteen years onwards does not fit a man for another job. Fathers do not intend to let their sons go down. Their sons are eager enough to step into the Cage until they have had a month or so of it. Then they wish for the sunlight. After a few years they are hardened to futility. Some few love the job, and a larger number are proud of it. It is a job hard enough and useful enough to be proud of. It is these men who should run the mines. If there are not enough of them let society discover the possibilities of water power. At present the only Power used to its fullest extent is Political Power, which does not benefit the population to any noticeable degree!

I am sorry to say good-bye to many of my comrades. They are of more worth in the world than their so-called "leaders". If they were to decide one day that cynicism is not enough, and kindness is not enough and strength is not enough, but that revolution to establish all their true though hidden certainties must burst upon a complacent world—then, Government, take to your shelters!

JOHN PICK

## PUBLIC LECTURE-DISCUSSIONS

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15th SEPTEMBER

Mat Kavanagh

22nd SEPTEMBER

"The Meaning of Anarchism"

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# THE FILM RACKET

THE INDUSTRY IN which monopoly capitalism in this country has developed at the most formidable rate is that of producing and distributing films. From the earliest days there was a tendency for highly financed bodies to emerge. The great cost of producing a sufficiently elaborate film to satisfy the artificially stimulated needs of the box office demanded heavy capitalisation, and the cost of making films was stepped up by the competition of Hollywood spectacles. Here were the best conditions for the rise of large combines, able to bear the financial strain of producing expensive pictures and the risk of losing money on them. These combines, by gaining control of renting organisations and of circuits of cinemas, were able to assure themselves from any great risk, as they showed their films in cinemas they controlled directly or indirectly and did not have to rely on peddling them in the open market. The result was that the shareholders were assured of their profits, the stars of their inflated salaries, and the regular cinema-goers had to put up with any kind of dope the combines chose to give them.

In the last two years the progress towards monopolisation has been accelerated to a vast extent. It was only, however, quite recently that the public became fully aware of the real state of affairs, and that the government felt impelled to show at least a sign of concern.

The results of the recent moves in cinema finance and company control are to leave the British cinema industry virtually in the control of two organisations, the great Odeon-Gaumont British combine, controlled by Arthur J. Rank and the Warner Associated combine, controlled by Warner Brothers of America.

The following is an impressive description of the actual situation:

"The main outline of Mr. Rank's cinema finances is well known. Through Manorfields Investments Ltd., he controls the General Cinema Finance Corporation, which in turn controls General Film Distributors, a large renting company which finances and distributes many of the films produced by Mr. Rank's companies. Through the General Cinema Finance Corporation, Mr. Rank holds the majority of the voting shares in the Metropolitan and Bradford Trust, which controls Gaumont-British and its eighty-nine subsidiary companies. By similar holding companies Mr. Rank is the main influence in the Odeon circuit. He thus possesses absolute control of two out of the three main cinema circuits, the third belonging to Associated Pictures in which a half share is held by Warner Brothers of America. Between them, these circuits own approximately one thousand of the 4,250 cinemas in this country. Whilst this may hardly look like a monopoly at first glance, it represents an almost complete stranglehold. Most of these theatres are 'first-run' houses, which take considerably more than one-third of the £110 million which every year flows into the box-offices all over this country. In London the circuits own two-thirds of between three hundred and three fifty 'first-run' cinemas."

*New Statesman & Nation, 12/8/44.*

In terms of actual film production the influence of the two large combines is equally dangerous.

"... of the thirty stages now in operation, thirteen are controlled by Mr. J. Arthur Rank's companies, two by Two City Films, Ltd.—a company over whose production activities Mr. Rank also has control—and five by the Warner Associated British Picture Corporation group. Some two-thirds of the available stages are in fact con-



trolled by the two big vertical combines. Independent British producing units, as well as some American concerns desirous of producing films in this country to satisfy the quota provisions, have had no alternative but to make application to Mr. Rank's organisation for studio space and to accept the terms that might be imposed, such as distribution through General Film Distributors Ltd., and release to one or other of the Rank controlled circuits."

*The Economist, 12/8/44.*

Even this does not show in its full extent the hold of the big combines on the film industry. The independent film producer can be assured against the failure of his pictures only if he gets them distributed by a renting company connected with one of the large circuits. In this distribution he finds his productions usually at a disadvantage. Either they are given second place to the productions of the renter's associated producing group. Or, if they are exceptionally good, they are used as bait to induce exhibitors to take inferior films which the distributors wish to sell. Furthermore, the commission charges are fantastically high, being usually from 20 to 30%.

The independent exhibitor is almost equally at the mercy of the big combines. If he wishes to get the films which have been most publicised and which are therefore likely to bring him good box office receipts, he has to trade with the renters associated with the large combines. And in order to get one good film from them, he will probably have to accept a number of inferior films which it would not be worth his while exhibiting on their own.

Thus it will be seen that the whole film industry is afflicted by this growing tendency towards monopoly. For the film goer the results are equally depressing. With the steady destruction of independent producing units, the variety and originality of films has decreased. The large combines, with their monopolistic control of the market, will find it progressively less necessary to provide good quality films to their publics. So long as the films are not bad enough to drive people away from the cinemas, they have no immediate reason for concern. And they know that the majority of cinema-goers would continue to pay even for rubbish, just because they have no other way to forget the ugliness and monotony of their own lives. So the man who wants an opiate evening at the flicks is likely to pay more and get less value for his money in proportion as the influence of the monopolistic combines increases to its maximum.

So far as the workers in the cinema industry are concerned, their lot is likely to become no better. The cinema industry is characterised by an exaggeratedly hierarchical



formation. At the top are film stars whose incomes approach £100,000 a year, executives and producers who are all among the highly paid strata of society. Below them are a whole crowd of executives, secretaries, script writers, technicians, who have comfortable salaries or fees for their services. And below them are the carpenters, electricians and other craftsmen, and the great mass of extras and small-part actors, the proletariat of the film industry.

This last class of film worker is, for the most part, a casual worker, engaged for a day, or, at best, for a film. He has no kind of security in employment. His pay which has risen from a guinea a day to anything up to thirty shillings, is greatly reduced by the travelling expenses to the studios, which are almost all some distance from London. It has also to be considered as spreading over the days, of which there are many, when no work is to be had. Only a small nucleus are regular film workers. The rest are men and women who drift into the industry because they are out of work and leave it as soon as they get more regular or congenial employment.

These casual film workers are poorly organised. An attempt has been made to bring them together on ordinary trade union lines, but it is obvious that such conditions of employment demand something far less rigid and more capable of being used spontaneously at the place of work. The union which was founded, the Film Artists' Association, is developing along orthodox trade union lines, and is at present engaged on a heresy hunt against those who do not

wish to join it, by attempting to enforce the 'closed shop' principle in the studios.

An industry of this kind, based on casual labour, is one which is peculiarly fitted for organisation on free, anarchist lines. Moreover, it is only by some really militant organisation among the cinema workers, which will endeavour to secure the co-operation of the film-going public that the great monopolistic control of the cinema will be broken. Direct action by film workers and film-goers would be far more effective than the gentleman's agreement between the Minister of Trade and Rank, by which the latter is said to have agreed not to extend his activities any further, but, for the present at any rate, to rest content with his winnings.

The relation of the film to the anarchist ideas of free art is a subject closely related to that we have been discussing. But it requires a much more exhaustive study than is possible at present. It is sufficient to point out that the film is an art in which the completely untrained actor, the ordinary man drawn from his work, has been proved proficient by a number of recent experiments, such as "The Forgotten Village", "Man of Aran" and many British documentaries. It is an art form in which it is most evident that, to use Coomaraswamy's phrase, every man is a special kind of artist. In the cinema we are likely to see the people's art springing up sooner than anywhere else, and for this reason the development of the film is of peculiar interest to the anarchist.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

## ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ *Book Review* ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

# ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **The Revolt of the German Navy, 1918.** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE WILHELMSHAVEN REVOLT, by  
"Icarus." Freedom Press, 6d.

WHEN HISTORY leaves the rough uneven path of economic fact and enters the slippery road of political action, it becomes little else than a mass of stupid class prejudices. History then becomes the servant of political intrigue and fraud. We are only too familiar with the gross perversion of history regarding the U.S.S.R. But too few of us are familiar with the real facts of the revolt of the German Navy at Wilhelmshaven in 1918. Recently we came across a book called "The Last Days of the German Fleet" by Ludwig Freiwald which purports to be an account of the revolt from the standpoint of a patriotic sailor. Significantly, the introduction is by Harold Bywaters who has been much in evidence lately as a naval expert. The fact that they find a common footing speaks loudly for the unity which exists in the ranks of the counter-revolutionaries.

The history of this revolt is especially worthy of study at the present time

when there is every possibility of the German Navy following the line of 1918. Despite the strict censorship reliable accounts have come from neutral countries of bitter and continual struggles in German seaports. On this account, Icarus' new book "The Wilhelmshaven Revolt" is a great importance. From Freiwald we get but little history, and what there is is of slight value, except for the broadsheets issued by Icarus during the crisis, which he reproduces. We get all the old slanders and abuse, the rebels being represented as merely criminals actuated by greed, envy and lust.

The new Freedom Press pamphlet describes how ship after ship fell into the hands of the revolutionary sailors who made their officers prisoner; how the workers took over the means of life and distributed necessities according to need, abolishing the use of money. They solved these problems in a similar manner to that adopted by the Spanish workers and peasants in many instances during the revolution of 1936. These practical demonstra-

tions of the German and Spanish workers are a complete refutation of the Socialist and Social Credit school who seem incapable of envisaging any system of society not actuated by the profit motive. Icarus' book is additional proof (if any be still needed at this stage of history) of the Anarchist teaching that "evolution must be worked out, not talked out."

It is deeds, not words, that make history, and for that reason all workers and students of social history must read this booklet. The author was one of the active participants in the Wilhelmshaven Revolt, and here tells for the first time in English, the precise lines on which the struggle developed. It is such knowledge we must all have for the coming stormy days that are ahead. For all who are weather-wise can see that the storm clouds are gathering. We know, in the words of the Chicago Anarchist martyr, Louis Lingg that "the Anarchist is not merely the stormy petrel, but the harbinger of the coming spring."

MAT KAVANAGH.



## MORE STRIKES

Figures made public by the Department of Labour show that there were substantially more strikes in the first seven months of this year than in the corresponding period of last year, but that they were of considerably less scope and intensity.

From January 1 to July 31 this year, 3,035 strikes have occurred, as compared with 2,241 in 1943.

The current year's figures involve about 1,000,000 workers with an average loss of four working days each. Last year over 1,200,000 men left their jobs with a time loss averaging seven days.

*News Chronicle, 1/9/44.*

## WORDS WON'T HELP



Mr. Winston Churchill, in a message to Poland, declared that the world was watching the heroic struggle for freedom in Warsaw. The message said:

The Poles have earned the admiration of all free peoples. For five years, despite the most barbarous treatment at the hands of the Nazi thugs and torturers, Polish courage and Polish constancy have never faltered. At home and abroad the Poles have remained at one in their determination to continue with the United Nations the struggle against the German oppressors of their country.

*Manchester Guardian, 2/9/44.*

A bit less admiration and more help would have been welcomed by Warsaw's fighters.

## THE FALL OF MUSSOLINI— SEEN BY HIMSELF

According to the *Sunday Dispatch* 3/9/44 Mussolini has published a book entitled *The Stick and the Carrot* which is a narrative of his fall from power. Some of the extracts quoted throw an interesting light on the causes of his defeat and on Badoglio.

Mussolini describes how the King was obliged to give him the sack because of the disintegration of the Army:

It was the afternoon of July 25, last year, when Mussolini was summoned to the King's villa—the Villa Ada, which he had visited only once before in his years of association with Victor Emmanuel.

Victor started the interview blandly but firmly, by saying at once:

"My dear Duce, things cannot continue like this. Italy is falling to pieces. The Army is morally prostrate—the soldiers won't fight."

Badoglio, now the Allies' friend, sent a letter to Mussolini on May 3, 1940, concluding:

"If I am proud of anything, it is of always having faithfully served you, Duce, with unlimited devotion."

Mussolini says that immediately after his dismissal and while still trusting the King's assurances and not dreaming he was about to be sent into captivity, he wrote the following letter to Badoglio:

"I thank Badoglio for his attentions. The only residence I possess is Rocca Della Caminate, whither I am disposed to retire. I desire to assure Badoglio, with special regard to our past collaboration, I will not make difficulties for him. On the contrary I will collaborate in every way."

## DIPLOMATIC SUCCESS

The diplomats of Britain, the U.S., South Africa, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Norway have agreed that one blue whale equals 2½ humpbacked whales, two fin whales or six sei whales.

The table of whale values, set down in the protocol signed by the Governments of the seven countries, regulates the taking of whales as soon as the war ends and the whalers can go back to work.

*The Star, 10/8/44.*

# Through

## WHEN THE WAR ENDS



Throughout the country cities and towns are making preparations to celebrate the defeat of Germany, and they are all acting on the basic assumption that every adult American will be drunk.

Big stores have arranged to close, and those in New York's Times Square area

have also arranged to board up their windows.

Wall Street has advised brokers and bankers and other business men to lock all securities, stocks, bonds, and cash in their solidest safe.

The din will be terrific.

The Mayor of Pottsville, Pennsylvania, which seems to deserve its name, will mark victory by ringing all church-bells and tying down all whistles and sirens in one perpetual shriek.

*Reynolds News, 3/9/44.*

And after the celebrations, when America will find itself with an army of unemployed which has been numbered at as many as fifteen millions, then it is hoped that Wall Street bankers will have some better reason to lock their money up.

## INDIAN "DEMOCRACY"

Lord Wavell's inclusion of the depressed classes among the minorities whose interests deserve protection through the treaty between India and Britain follows representations made on their behalf which are worthy of serious consideration.

The Central Assembly, which has 140 members, has only two representatives of the depressed classes, while the Council of State, consisting of 60 members, has none. The Viceroy's Executive Council includes Ambedkar, the sole representative for 60,000,000 untouchables, though the Moslems, numbering 94,000,000 have four.

*Manchester Guardian, 30/8/44.*

## BOOMERANG PROPAGANDA

Our leaflet and other propaganda has never yet suggested to the German troops that they should revolt against or shoot their officers. It may be that a high-level policy decision is needed before such advice is given. I hope the decision will not be delayed by any ruling-class chariness about "dangerous ideas".

Tom Driberg in *Reynolds News, 3/9/44.*

We are shocked by Tom Driberg's suggestion. Obviously the kind of leaflets he proposes would put ideas in our soldiers' heads and, as one knows, what is good for the Germans is not good for us.



## WAR COSTS MORE

In the last week of its fifth year the war was costing over £16,000,000 a day. Exchequer returns to September 2 show that the amount required for supply services, which had been falling steadily for some time, rose sharply. Only on two occasions since D-Day has this figure been exceeded. Last week it was £115,171,718, compared with £84,260,000. *Manchester Guardian*, 6/9/44.

# the Press

## WHERE IS THE TRUTH?



No matter what you may read elsewhere, it is the truth that in Paris the Germans behaved, on the whole, with almost ludicrous correctness. There was not the famine we had expected. True, the very poor were hungry, but they always were, long before 1939. To those, almost exclusively Socialists and Communists, who fought them either with arms or by underground propaganda the Germans were, of course, completely ruthless.

Apart from them neither I nor any other correspondent in Paris could find real evidence of brutality.

From D-Day until the liberation of Paris it happens to be true that most of the material damage to French soil and the actual deaths among French civilians have largely been caused by Allied arms. All this the French know, and they still welcome and cheer us, knowing these things have been done because we saw no alternative.

In France it is the pathetic, ignorant little prostitute who has her head shaved and been paraded before a jeering public. The more deadly people, the more dangerous people, were probably among those who sat near us in the swaggar Paris hotels eating a lunch that, with wine, cost in the region of £5. *Reynolds News*, 3/9/44. By a Special Correspondent just returned from France.

An enclosure used by the Germans as a torture chamber has been found near the Porte de Versailles, said the F.F.I. radio yesterday, quoted by Reuter.

Victims were put to death by means of excessive heat, the announcer said, describing the enclosure, which measured 10 by 12 yards. They were strapped to electrically heated seats and forced to keep their hands on railings which were also brought to great heat by electric current. At least four coffins have since been dug up near by. They are thought to contain between two and three corpses each. They will be opened in the presence of a medical expert. German prisoners, surrounded by F.F.I. guards, are being made to dig up the coffins. These prisoners are believed to have had a hand in these atrocities. Final details will not be available until they have been interrogated. *Manchester Guardian*, 1/9/44.

## A SUPER VERSAILLES

Territorially, according to well-informed French sources, France has already made it clear that she is in favour of depriving Germany of any control over the left bank of the Rhine. At the same time she will support the Polish claim for a frontier on the Oder. In addition the French may be expected to ask for the handing over of the Ruhr for a period of years to an international body as was done in the Saar in 1919. The Ruhr's output would be devoted to the first place to making good the damage caused by the Germans in France, Britain, Belgium, and Holland. As far as the

occupation of the rest of Germany is concerned French opinion is thinking in terms of a period of between five and ten years, but this question has not been settled.

*Manchester Guardian*, 5/9/44.

Shall we also have a super-Hitler in ten years time?

## "THE COUNTRY WANTS TO HUNT"

Lieutenant-Colonel McKergow, chairman of the Crawley and Horsham Hunt, is begging landowners, tenant farmers and keepers not to slaughter foxes.

"I can plainly see," he said at the Hunt's annual meeting yesterday, "that if this destruction goes on, we shall have no foxes to hunt."

"It seems hard on those who have supported our Hunt during the war years to find that we have few foxes when the war is over, and the country wants to hunt three days a week."

Hounds are welcomed by landowners and tenant farmers throughout the country, contends Lieut.-Colonel McKergow.

*Daily Mirror*, 31/8/44.

## ENSA JOKE

Extract from a letter written by an R.A.F. officer in Normandy:

"Recently, at an Ensa show, some comedians were typifying the usual Hyde Park scene. (A Socialist, a herb pedlar and a female teetotal expert were holding forth.)"

"I felt that the audience were hurt that their material aspirations towards Socialism should be 'guyed' in this way until the 'Socialist' said: 'Capitalism is the root of all evil.' There was a roar of applause which completely destroyed the artist's intention to nullify it by some 'crack' about his 'rhubarb tonic.'"

## FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

132 Cheltenham Road, Bristol

Freedom Press publications advertised elsewhere in this issue also in stock. The following books are still available:

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# TRUTH IN HISTORY

HISTORY, AS MANY students learn to their bitter disappointment, is not so much an interpretation of actual events as it is an evasion of truth by suppression of pertinent facts. The case of Pearl Harbour can serve as an excellent example of what "history" can do with such presumptuous ease—since it has at its disposal all the facilities, such as schools, colleges, press, pulpit and radio. That is history in the hands of the powers that rule us.

If one accepted the "historical" version of the events that took place at Pearl Harbour in December 1941, it was a diabolical act of treachery by one nation against another (peace-loving) nation. But truth has a way of coming to light and the facts of Pearl Harbour are slowly emerging in their true perspective.

Miss Jeannette Rankin, until 1943 a representative in the U.S. Congress had the distinction of being the sole one casting a negative vote at the joint session of the Congress and Senate on December 8th, 1941 when the U.S. declared war on Japan. In the last world war Miss Rankin also voted against the declaration of war on Germany when she had the company of some fellow members from both houses. Logically, Miss Rankin should have had far greater company in 1941, but logic among politicians is something only the innocent look for.

As far as the radical and labour movement was concerned there was no anti-war movement prior to the U.S. entry into this war. The Anarchist and Trotskyist opposition to war was not strong enough to become widespread, but there was far more anti-war sentiment in 1940-41 than in 1917. The people, as always, were instinctively against war for they know only too well that it is they alone who have to bear the burden of sacrifices in every war. The greater part of the press too, made it appear (as aid for Roosevelt and Willkie in the last election) that they were against any actual participation in the new world war, and it was against this atmosphere that the outbreak at Pearl Harbour came like a bombshell.

Overnight the erstwhile anti-war politicians, together with press and pulpit, turned into ferocious supporters of the immediate declaration of war against Japan, Germany and Italy. The people of America were dumb-founded at the somersault enacted by yesterday's anti-war spokesmen. But naturally the politicians were not against war as a means of perpetuating the present order.

The disillusionment of the masses, however, would have been far greater had it not been for the manner in which the ruling class handled the publicity regarding Pearl Harbour. It is with regard to this that Miss Rankin's actions merit the attention of all those who love the truth. By her lone vote against the war she brought upon herself the condemnation of every journalist in the country. She took that stoically, and when in 1942 Congressional elections came along, Miss Rankin was again alone in declining to run for re-election. She did not do this out of fear of defeat for nearly every pre-war "isolationist" candidate was re-elected and her position came to a head on the eve of her departure from Congress.

Every Congressman and Senator has the right to insert into the Congressional Daily Record any statement he may wish to make and since it was her last chance to explain her actions, Miss Rankin availed herself of this right. She inserted a detailed exposure of all the facts she was able to obtain as the background of the events which led to the Pearl Harbour attack. This appeared in the Congressional Record for December 26th, 1942.

As was to be expected, the kept press and radio suppressed any mention of Miss Rankin's action. Congress chose the dishonest course of hushing up the unexpected

exposure. But, by setting out to present as she states, "a number of historical antecedents of the Pearl Harbour attack and to raise a few questions . . . as to the meaning of certain activities which led up to that attack", Miss Rankin has performed a most creditable act as a representative of the people.

She began with an editorial from *The Christian Century* of November 19th, 1941, three weeks before Pearl Harbour, which almost prophetically stated:

"It is no secret that the whole colonial structure of the white empires is threatening to fall apart unless we intervene in Asia. Many British leaders would welcome American involvement with Japan . . . So the thesis of Sidney Rogerson's pre-war book 'Propaganda in the Next War'—that the surest way Britain can bring the United States to her aid will be to involve us in war with Japan is being validated by events."

and continues:

" . . . his book was published as one of a series of books on The Next War edited by a well-known writer, Capt. Liddell Hart, and was banned from export to America by the British censorship in 1939. A copy has been secured by the Library of Congress, however, and now reposes in the rare-book room. On page 148 Mr. Rogerson makes this admission as to the plans of the British imperialists: 'To persuade her (the United States) to take part will be much more difficult than in 1914 . . . The position will naturally be considerably eased if Japan were involved and this . . . would bring America in without further ado. At any rate, it would be a natural and obvious object of our propaganda to achieve this, just as during the Great War they succeeded in embroiling the United States with Germany.'

But exactly how was Japan to be embroiled with the United States? There is no better way of goading a nation into war than by imposing sanctions, especially in the case of nations devoid of essential raw materials."

The world was to believe that the first secretive confab at sea between Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt concerned itself chiefly with the construction of the Four Freedoms. Miss Rankin brings forth some interesting proofs to the contrary. She cites the following from an article in *The Ladies Home Journal* of July, 1942, "How War Came" by Forrest Davis and Ernest K. Lindley (the latter an intimate friend of President Roosevelt):

"When they (President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill) met in a Newfoundland bight for the Atlantic Conference, Churchill wished to meet the issue head on. He asked the President . . . to join in an ultimatum declaration to Japan."

Continuing, Miss Rankin quotes the following from a speech of Mr. Churchill in the House of Commons, as reported in the *N.Y. Times* of Jan. 30, 1942:

"It has been the policy of the Cabinet at almost all costs to avoid embroilment with Japan until we were sure that the United States would also be engaged . . . On the other hand, the probability since the Atlantic conference, at which I discussed these matters with President Roosevelt, was that the United States, even if not herself attacked, would come into the war . . . and that expectation has not been falsified by the events."

and adds:

"This would seem to indicate that not only did President Roosevelt accede to Churchill's pressure to send an ultimatum to, and impose sanctions upon Japan, but made a blanket commitment to bring America into the war even if Japan did not attack."



Miss Rankin proceeds then to analyse sanctions:

"Now, an ultimatum is a demand accompanied by a threat. It sets up a dilemma: 'Do so and so—or else.' In this case the alternative to be offered to Japan was . . . an admitted provocation to war . . . There seems to be excellent evidence that such an ultimatum was sent by President Roosevelt . . . a perusal of other sources throws considerable light upon the extent to which the Roosevelt administration invoked economic sanctions against Japan in the months between the Atlantic Conference and the attack upon Pearl Harbour . . . in the *New York Times* of August 17, 1941 . . . we read: 'Vice-President Wallace, the Chairman of the Economic Defence Board to-day confirmed reports that his group was already working on projects for exerting pressure on Japan'. In other words, in less than a week after the Atlantic Conference the machinery of economic sanctions was getting under way . . . Six weeks later the economic stringency in Japan had become acute, as we read in the *New York Times* of October 24, 1941: 'Japan's raw material shortage has been sharply aggravated and her industrial activity seriously disrupted by the cessation of her trade with important foreign countries, the Department of Commerce reported to-day. . . Ship movements and trade between Japan and the United States, the British Empire and the Netherlands Indies, it is pointed out, have become virtually non-existent.' Did President Roosevelt realize that 'economic sanctions mean war' . . .? It is hard to see how he could have failed to realize this, inasmuch as he himself had made the following statement to the Volunteer Participation Committee on July 24, 1941, as reported in the Department of State Bulletin of July 28, 1941: '*Now, if we cut the oil off, they (the Japanese) probably would have gone to the Dutch East Indies a year ago, and you would have had war.*'"

Thus far Miss Rankin unveiled only the round-about way in which Japan was driven to war by the Roosevelt administration at the behest of Churchill. Still, Roosevelt was only too well aware of the fact that the people of the United States were unalterably opposed to any war involvement. It was to overcome this great difficulty that the Roosevelt administration committed, according to Miss Rankin's proofs, its greatest act of perfidy. We will let her tell the story:

"Astounding as the Pearl Harbour attack was to the American public as a whole, if it was anticipated by the administration why did the President permit our forces to be taken by surprise . . . The answer seems to be that everything possible was done to warn our forces at Pearl Harbour of the extreme likelihood of attack . . . for two weeks prior to the Pearl Harbour attack almost daily warnings had been sent . . . do not the very wordings of these warnings, indicate that the Pearl Harbour attack came as no surprise to the President? . . . A very curious piece of evidence appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* of Oct. 10, 1942 . . . in an article by Lt. Clarence E. Dickinson, U.S. Navy . . . relates: '*On this cruise we sailed from Pearl Harbour on Nov 28, 1941 under absolute war orders. Vice-Admiral Wm. F. Halsey, Jr., the commander of the aircraft battle forces, had given instructions that the secrecy of our mission was to be protected at all costs. We were to shoot down everything we saw in the sky and to bomb anything we saw in the sea.*' Could such orders have been issued by Vice-Admiral Halsey except by specific direction from the Commander in Chief, namely, the President of the United States? In other words, if Lieutenant Dickinson's account is true did not the President at least 9 days before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, without a declaration of war, authorize an identical attack upon the Japanese?"

Small wonder that the secretive and treacherous roles enacted by two of the leading "official" spokesmen of the so-called democracies have disgusted as sincere a person as Jeannette Rankin seems to be. Her courageous action should serve as an eye-opener to the toiling masses of the "United" Nations, who are discovering that Churchill and Roosevelt are bringing them no nearer to true economic and political liberation than Hitler or Stalin might have done.

The only road to liberation lies in the action of the people themselves. No true co-operative commonwealth will ever be built by politicians or through any state institution. It can only be achieved by people acting in spontaneous and voluntary association with their fellows. This is the message the anarchist has repeatedly brought to the people. It is the message that stands to-day as trenchant as ever before.

Truth in history may be distorted and falsified, but it cannot be destroyed. Like murder, truth will out!

MARCUS GRAHAM.

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# TROUBLE AT THE DOCKS

THE FALSE EXCITEMENT following the Allied invasion of France seems to have sapped the fighting energy of the dockers, and seems to have caused a temporary lull in the struggle for improved conditions, so that domestic troubles thrive like weeds on a dung heap. But the dockers of Aberdeen have had problems to face and it is to their credit that they did not shirk their responsibilities. Their dispute has been the only one worthy of note since "D"-Day. The men ceased work in support of a demand that the gang discharging coal should be increased from four to six men. Despite the usual brow-beating by the Union officials it was only with great difficulty that they finally persuaded and cajoled the men into an acceptance of the Union policy of arbitration. It was obvious that the claim was of long standing and could have been submitted to arbitration much earlier but it was not until the dockers resorted to direct action that any notice was taken. It is also obvious that the demand could easily have been met because during the last few months there has been a rapid influx of new labour in every port, up to 10,000 men in Manchester docks.

This new labour is made up mostly of inexperienced men but has to be registered under the Dock Labour Corporation Scheme. But already the regular dockers are beginning to fear unemployment as their lot after the war. A certain amount of resentment is felt towards the new men because of this fear, although the majority of the men do not show any resentment and seem willing to train the new men and work with them in a comradely spirit. Unfortunately, the attitude of the minority has provided an opportunity for the employers to divide the men and create a barrier between them. Apparently the new men are to be regarded

as supplementary to the existing labour register and they will therefore be looked upon as temporary labour. Assurances have been given to the Union that should the volume of work be reduced the supplementary men would be removed from the register. This alone pre-supposes labour troubles after the war, and it should be noted that so far no assurances have been given that the special Army Dock Brigades will be disbanded, or that they will not again be used as strike-breakers as on the London Docks last year.

The new labour has raised special problems and hardship. Many of the men have been drafted in from outside districts by the Ministry of Labour. If a docker is transferred from one port to another he automatically comes under the Docks Transfer scheme and receives 5/- per night as subsistence money. The port employers have refused to give the new men this money as they argue the new men are not dockers and should therefore come under the Ministry of Labour Transfer Scheme and receive only 3/6 per night. As a result one finds groups of men working in the same port, doing the same work and in most cases sleeping in the same lodging-houses and yet some get 3/6 while others get 5/-. Naturally this causes dissatisfaction. To subdue the unrest the Union has agreed to place the matter before the National Arbitration Tribunal. Arbitration, even if successful, is a slow and unnecessary procedure. The grievance is still a fact. The new men who are scattered and diluted amongst the more experienced men, should seek support and solidarity in the direct action methods of the men of Aberdeen and they would find that in this way this and other anomalies would be rectified with great speed.

C. H.

# CRACKS IN THE NAZI EDIFICE

A SHORT REVIEW of the actual changes imposed upon the masses under National-Socialism reveals that Western Europe's social structure has been altered in such a way that gigantic explosive social powers have been accumulated.

Germany's military strength depends upon a complete transformation of private economy into a State-directed wartime economy, where individual rights and liberties are subordinated to one aim: the strengthening of the authoritarian state.

National Socialism or nationalistic "Socialism in one country", is exactly the reverse of collective ownership. It is the highest centralisation of political and economic power in the hands of small castes composed of the party elite—Gestapo, (in Russia the G.P.U.) the S.S., the Army, and the Bureaucracy. The latter manoeuvres between the former groups. There are constant clashes among the three groups with subversive intrigues and counter-strokes. If one caste does become too independent, its strength is bound to be broken by purges. Nevertheless, first one caste, then another, tries to better its position in relation to its rivals. But basic common ties also unite them, since all three castes derive from the authoritarian State-régime and are dependent upon it for their existence.

Since the Russian purges in 1926-28, and the 1933-34 blood-baths in Germany, we can discover amazing similarities in the policies of the German and Russian dictatorships. In June 1934, Hitler "liquidated" his intimate "Parteigenosse" Roehm and thousands more. Generals like Schleicher and

his nearest colleagues were shot without trials; other generals died under mysterious circumstances. Furthermore, when Trotsky was driven out with the help of Bucharin, the latter's fate was likewise sealed. And, when the G.P.U., under the command of Yagoda, "liquidated" the generals of the "Red" Army, Yagoda signed his own death warrant.

A split in the ruling castes does not necessarily mean the beginning of a revolutionary situation, because—in Germany as well as in Russia—a state of continual crisis is always regularly occurring. It is significant that "purges" have rather strengthened the totalitarian régimes.

In the light of that, the events in Germany some weeks ago, are surely not void of meaning—though the version of an "officer laying a bomb on Hitler's doorstep and getting away with it" i.e., without being killed on the spot, may be dismissed. What does seem certain is, that a number of military aristocrats—encouraged by agents of the "Big Three"—conspired to replace the "Fuehrer" by a military dictatorship. They failed, because the higher-up officers cannot appeal to the masses, whom they have suppressed. They lack every quality which makes for success under the present conditions, where mass revolutionary action alone counts.

Nevertheless, these are cracks in the Nazi edifice. Since 1933, the number of workers employed in German industries rose from 8 millions to more than 15 millions. Members of the "middle class" were forced to become factory workers. Hundreds of thousands of engineers, chemists and other skilled workers filled the ranks of industrial labour. The

(Continued on p. 13)



# ITALIAN PRISONERS

THE POSITION OF the Italian prisoners-of-war in this country is a peculiar one, seeing that Italy has for nearly a year now been a "Co-belligerent" with the Allies. Our readers may be interested to know something of the relationship between this "legion of forgotten men" and the authorities.

The Italian prisoners have recently been divided into two classes—"collaborators" and "non-collaborators". By transfers from one camp to another, it has now been arranged that there are no "mixed" camps, as feeling runs very high between the two factions, and many incidents occur. In one case a whole camp went on strike because two men were given a few days' detention for refusing to work on the same farm as collaborators. It should perhaps be pointed out that the term "collaboration" refers to collaboration with the British authorities.

Collaborators were offered certain privileges, about which they have since become very disillusioned; many have applied for transfer back to Prisoner-of-War conditions. "Privileges" have amounted to: (1) Increase of weekly pay from 5/6 or 6/- to 9/-. (2) Loss of about 8/- a month given to prisoners-of-war by mutual arrangement between Governments. (3) "Liberty" to walk unaccompanied within a 3-mile radius, but not to talk to civilians. (4) Liability for unlimited hours of work on any type of job, including "danger" areas (Prisoners-of-war have to be kept in safe areas by the Geneva Convention). (5) Removal of "patches" from their uniforms and adornment of their shoulders with an "Italy" flash. An unlooked for privilege was the stopping of all allowances to families in Italian territories administered by the Fascist Government. This was announced by radio soon after the division.

"Non-Collaborators", erroneously referred to by the press as Fascists, remained so because (1) they anticipated reprisals against their families by the German authorities; (2) they anticipated the undignified spectacle of wanting to change back again for a variety of reasons, including the possibility of military reverses, etc.; (3) they did not want to be employed on vital work being done by an Englishman who

might then be sent to the front (i.e. for the Englishman's sake); (4) a general feeling of dignity which attaches to being consistent, even if they come off worst. They feel the stigma attaching to the word "collaborator" also; (5) a genuine pro-Fascist, anti-British feeling. These represent quite a minority however. The division between collaborators and non-collaborators was about fifty-fifty over the whole country.

Both groups qualify for the description "forgotten men". The collaborators because they are no longer "prisoners" and so have no protecting power. The latter because, as all Camp discipline depends on the nature of the Commandant (there is surprisingly little uniformity of conditions), certain moral restraints have been removed from the P.O.W. code. The writer has been witness to cases of unchecked flouting of the Geneva Convention since this division, and sent a full report in to a prominent socialist M.P. in the hope of getting publicity which might result in action being taken to prevent a repetition. Too little is known of the sufferings of many Italian boys which date continuously from 1935, and which are all the more poignant because they are so bravely and cheerfully borne, and have left so little malice. From a long association with them, the writer feels deeply about the insults that are flung at them.

L. H.

(Since this article was written, the War Office on August 19th, made the following announcement:—

## "NEW PRIVILEGES"

In view of their loyal work, 'good behaviour and discipline,' co-operators may now—

Talk with members of the public;

Visit private houses, if invited to do so;

Exchange part of their pay into sterling to use in local shops;

Visit cinemas, at the discretion of the commanding officer, and,

Write two airgraphs a month to their families in Italy.

The situation of the ex-prisoners does not seem to be greatly altered, nevertheless.—Ed.)

(continued from p. 12)

modern industrial slaves in Germany are skilled workers, concentrated in large-scale industry, trained in modern arms. Class interests have tied them together with millions of foreign workers slaving in Germany. They have been searching for a revolutionary re-orientation of the working class, and have found it. If any country harbours a workers' revolutionary underground movement which is relying on experiment, it is Germany. It is well known that its underground press appears regularly. Some of these papers appear with a supplement in foreign languages for prisoners of war and deportees.

Meanwhile, the masses carry on, as the mass of the soldiers go on fighting. They hear the threats of the victorious imperialist chieftains and the chauvinistic hate-propaganda of the self-styled Labour Leaders. It is necessary, however, to be quite clear about what is at stake in this development. Unless there is a radical change in the ideas of the masses in this country as well as in the U.S.A. and, of course, in totally nationalist poisoned Russia, the German Revolution is bound to be bloodily crushed. The result then is bound to be, that the fate of the European workers of to-day will become the fate of the workers in Britain and the other European countries of to-morrow.

Not hypocritical parliamentary election phrases like "Socialism in Britain" but the facts of to-day, will determine the post-war world. The workers as a class must clarify their ideas immediately or suffer the greatest defeat in history.

ICARUS.

## PSYCHOLOGY OF BOOT LICKING

Now, I know nothing of Polish affairs, and even if I had the power to do so I would not intervene in the struggle between the London Polish Government and the Moscow National Committee of Liberation. What I am concerned with is the attitude of the British intelligentsia, who cannot raise between them one single voice to question what they believe to be Russian policy, no matter what turn it takes, and in this case have had the unheard-of meanness to hint that our bombers ought not to be sent to the aid of our comrades fighting in Warsaw. The enormous majority of Left-wingers who swallow the policy put out by the *News-Chronicle*, etc., know no more about Poland than I do. All they know is that the Russians object to the London Government and have set up a rival organisation, and so far as they are concerned that settles the matter. If to-morrow Stalin were to drop the Committee of Liberation and recognise the London Government, the whole British intelligentsia would flock after him like a troop of parrots. Their attitude towards Russian foreign policy is not "Is this policy right or wrong?" but "This is Russian policy: how can we make it appear right?" And this attitude is defended, if at all, solely on grounds of power. The Russians are powerful in Eastern Europe, we are not: therefore we must not oppose them. This involves the principle, of its nature alien to Socialism, that you must not protest against an evil which you cannot prevent.

George Orwell in *Tribune*, 1/9/44.



## Red and Black Notebook

THE DE HAVILLAND Workers' Canteen Committee has recently issued its report after its first year of operation. Careful readers of the "Notebook" will recall that in the summer of last year the workers of 'D.H.' threatened strike action against the well known firm of caterers who ran the works canteens. This threat resulted in the taking over of the canteens by the workers who elected their canteen committee to control the 14 canteens of the works. De Havilland's are, of course, dispersed over a wide area, due to the necessities of war-time production; the work of the committee was, therefore spread over an area of about 20 square miles.

The enterprise started off by borrowing £8,500 worth of equipment and obtaining a month's food on credit. During the year's operations, the turnover was £150,000, a profit was shown, and much equipment has been added to the canteens.

### "Can't Afford It"

Factory canteens often suffer from unskilled and indifferent staff who have little interest in their work because of the low wages and bad working conditions. The first act of the 'D.H.' committee was to advance staff wages by 20 per cent. They further decided to use profits to raise wages. Now the canteen staff is paid factory rates with double time for Sundays. Chefs are paid £9 per week with extras, waitresses 1s 3d. per hour, plus food, protective clothing and holidays with pay. The cry of the capitalist factory caterers is always, "We can't afford higher wages, we'd have to raise the price of meals." The second act of the committee was to reduce the price of tea from 1½d. a cup to 1d. and of filled rolls from 2½d. to 2d.

In case you think it is a small affair—the 'D.H.' committee is responsible for 80,000 to 100,000 main meals, 120,000 snacks, 185,000 tea meals and 4,000 breakfasts a month. The committee is unpaid.

### Miners' National Union

The delegate conference of the Miners' Federation having met and approved the proposal for one national union for miners, the proposal goes back to the districts for ratification. At present the Miners' Federation is a federation of county unions, chiefly, South Wales, Durham, Northumberland, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Notts, Fife and Lanark, with a few smaller county unions. Each county union, representing a separate coalfield, has complete autonomy. Further, the miners' local branch, usually called a lodge, has much greater autonomy than the branches of a national union. This local autonomy does not prevent the miners acting on a national scale through their national federation. The Miners' Federation has a record of national strike action second to no national union. Remember the three months' strike of 1921 and the eight months' long strike of 1926!

Separate county unions have not prevented a national wages agreement as alleged, nor will the abolition of county autonomy necessarily bring about a national wage. The engineers were the first to have a big, national union, yet even now they have separate district wage agreements; the district minimum wage varying as much as fourteen shillings per week on a journey of 75 miles.

The danger in the new scheme is that local initiative will be further cramped, as it is in other national centralised unions such as the N.U.R. and A.E.U.

### Out Of Work

Unemployment in the war industries grows. Aircraft follows the downward path of shipbuilding and ordnance. Rootes Securities, aircraft, in Liverpool district has felt the breeze badly. Coventry sees the slump coming. South Wales unions have formed a "Council of Action" to tackle

the problem. London aircraft firms are paying off. The government is doing nothing to replace the worked out jobs by peace-time development, and employers are complaining that they are not allowed to do so themselves because of government control. Handley Page complains that aircraft constructors are having a 'raw deal'.

At the same time, American industry is fast developing its peace-time production for cut-throat competition with Britain or any other competitor.

### Production Committees

In this situation, production committees, suggested by the unions and taken over by Communist shop stewards, are looking sick. The job of a production committee is to get more work from the same amount of labour, which means, in different circumstances, the same amount of work by fewer workers. Fortunately, most production committees have produced nothing but talk, having the same attributes as the barber's cat, but some have given the boss a few hints on how to reduce labour costs. Where this has happened the result must be looked for in the dole queue. Oh! and don't forget, the unions and the comrats intend to maintain the production committees in peace time, even during slump! That's the agreement. Look after your job. Half of you won't have one if these folk have their way. Tell them nothing!

### Home Guard

The partial release of the Home Guard is reluctantly granted. Those Home Guard who are now enjoying an extra night at the pictures or the local should remember the strike against Home Guard duties, just carried out by a number of railwaymen, and the large number of men, particularly railwaymen and farm workers, who have gone to prison for their resistance to excessive parades. Undoubtedly, this resistance and the threat of repetition on a large scale helped the government to its decision.

### SYNDICALIST

## WHEN CHURCHILL SPEAKS OF FREEDOM . . .

In his farewell message Mr. Churchill warned the Italian people to be "most on their guard against unscrupulous parties seeking after power and most zealous in the preservation of their liberties." Commenting on this yesterday we wrote (after some hesitation) that "this must be read, and certainly will be read in Italy, as an expression of faith in the Bonomi Government and the new forces of Italy . . . as against Badoglio and the old gang." It seems, however, that the Italians are not so sure. A few of the Socialist and Communist papers (including Signor Nenni in *Avanti*) accepted this view, but others, more hesitant if possibly wiser, played safe by leaving the passage out of their reports altogether, obviously fearing that when Mr. Churchill referred to "unscrupulous parties" he had the Socialists and Communists in mind. It need hardly be said that the Right Wing and Royalist press is sure of it.

The moral is clear. By rejecting "ideology" and praising impartially such champions of democracy as General Franco, Mr. Churchill has rendered himself unintelligible to his audience. It is surely a sad fate for the most eloquent statesman of the age that when he speaks of political freedom in liberated Italy his hearers should be uncertain as to whether he is championing Badoglio or Bonomi, Fascism or its opposite.

Manchester Guardian, 31/8/44.



# Soldiers' Letters from Abroad

## FRANCE

"War Commentary still reaches me as usual over here in France. Your publication provides a psychological relief from the surrounding insanity of war and digesting it keeps political news up to date, which is more than I can say for official communiques."

F.R., B.L.A.

## MEDITERRANEAN

"I have received a few copies of War Commentary out here. They more than compensate for the periods when reading and writing are impossibilities. We have of course the Union Jack and the Eighth Army News all nicely provided for us by the 'Psychological Warfare Branch' and this makes War Commentary doubly welcome, especially since the main features in these papers, until recently, consisted of lengthy debates on the merits or otherwise of V cigarettes. It reminded me of an old Communist Party tactic and I amused myself imagining how the Daily Worker would have represented itself as having been in the vanguard against Vs. Your letters are very welcome, giving as they do a sense of solidarity which is most encouraging, especially in present circumstances.

Any enthusiasm which may have been felt has evaporated rapidly on reaching the front. This I find replaced by a sense of self pity which is expressed by alternately attacking the people getting 'ten pounds a week for doing nothing' and the foreigners who are 'having the time of their lives in Blighty' while we are sent overseas. There are others who invariably exclaim 'Good old Joe' whenever they see a newspaper, not that they know much about either Stalin or Russia but because to them the advance of the Red Army means a quicker return home."

T.O'M., C.M.F.

## FRANCE

"War Commentary's arrival here is eagerly awaited for my copy is read by many who find that Anarchism is what they are looking for. At odd times, amongst ourselves, informal discussions take place and the subject of Anarchism often comes up. A few are beginning to realize that perhaps, after all, all isn't so right with the world. Once shaken out of their mental apathy, they will be able to take an active part in the

inevitable revolution. For it must be up to the people to know what they want, lest the mistakes of the French and Russian Revolutions be repeated. The B.L.A. part of my address stands for 'British Liberating Army'. I don't think I need comment on that." J.T., R.A.F.

★ ★ ★

## BURMA

"Let us have the Army Act and Conscription Laws as our Bible. Let us re-write the Lord's Prayer in praise of those few for whose financial interests we serve and die.

'Our Creators who are in Blighty, hallowed by thy name. Thy profits grow. Thy will be done with as much damage as possible. Give us this day our weapons to use. And forgive us our fear of the slaughter and misery you have brought upon us, for it is thy welfare that we do serve, though it may cost us our lives. For thou art our gods, who have power and money. For ever and ever, Amen' And the Apostles' Creed too:

'I believe in the Armament manufacturers, Makers of Hell on Earth. And in the financiers our Gracious Lords, who were the creators of Hitler and of Roosevelt and Churchill who invent for us our 'freedom' and 'new orders'. It is for them that we do fight and slaughter one another and in their name, that they may grow rich in the safety of their homes, from where they shall sing praise to our glorious dead. I believe in Democracy and Freedom (for those who have the money) and in the necessity for this war, life never lasting, Amen'."

R.D.L. (Burma Front Infantry).

★ ★ ★

One soldier sends us a long list of pointed quotations. We have selected one by Albert Einstein the famous mathematician:

"That a man can take pleasure in marching in formation to the strains of a band is enough to make me despise him. He was only given his big brain by mistake; a backbone was all he needed.

This plague spot of civilization ought to be abolished with all possible speed. Heroism by order, senseless violence and all the pestilent nonsense that goes by the name of patriotism—how I hate them!

War seems to me to be a contemptible thing; I would rather be hacked in pieces than take part in such an abominable business."





# SYNDICALISTS ABROAD

## Our Comrades In Poland

The International Working Mens' Association (the Syndicalist International) through its headquarters in Stockholm is attempting to re-establish regular contact with the Anarchist and Syndicalist movement now underground in Poland. The I.W.M.A. Press service writes:

"About the Polish syndicalist movement we can say that in 1928 the Central Confederation of Workers was formed, which was especially influenced by the theories of French syndicalism. The most active militant, Szurich, lived in France for a long time. The theoretician of the Movement was Professor Zakazewski. In 1931 the organisation merged with another syndicalist organisation the "ZZZ". The new organisation controlled shortly before the War some 130,000 members and directed several big syndicalist conflicts against Polish capitalism. Officially the "ZZZ" was not affiliated to the Syndicalist International, but maintained relations with it. One of the reasons for this attitude was that had they openly affiliated, their organisation would have been immediately suppressed by the Government. There was also a Polish Anarchist Federation which was affiliated to the Syndicalist International. When Poland was crushed as a result of the collaboration of Stalinist Russia and Hitler Germany in 1939, all the capitalists fled the country. The workers remained, forced to continue the fight against the invader. In a declaration sent by the Polish syndicalists to the Secretariat of the Syndicalist International at that time we read: 'Once more we declare to the world that the workers did not fail, because they had no influence in the country. Those who miserably failed were the bureaucrat directors of the State from Ministers and Generals down to country mayors, industrialists, etc. All of them abandoned 'People, honour and country' to seek safety abroad well provided with passports and money'.

About the future of Poland and the line of conduct for the fight of the working class the Polish syndicalists say: 'The existence of an independent Poland during the last 20 years must have proved to the class-conscious workers and peasants of Poland that State and people are not the same thing, and that the interests of the State are not always those of the people.'

'At the first external shock the Polish state collapsed. The state is destroyed but the people still exist. The people can only be free when in a collective organisation they enjoy full liberty and material well-being. There-

fore we must fight that propaganda which says that the re-establishment of the Polish state and unity among all Poles for that purpose is desirable.'

'The masses who live under the occupation have no particular interest in lifting the terrible burden of foreign domination from their shoulders if it means continued disenfranchisement and exploitation by their own State. They do not want to fight the butchers of the Gestapo to be ill treated later on by Polish policemen and imprisoned in 'National' concentration camps as before. For the class-conscious working class the reconstruction of the Polish state is not the objective of their fight. Our fight is for the liberation of our country and people from all oppression, and for the establishment of completely new forms of social relationship. The new libertarian Poland must look to Syndicalism for future forms of social organisation. Only the free collective economy of the workers, peasants and artisans and the co-operative movement and the free associations of culture, science and art, united by means of free councils can realise Socialism.'

## —And In Sweden

General Jung, the Swedish C. in C., has just published an order forbidding certain newspapers to be publicly exhibited in military camps. Besides the extremist papers of Right and Left, *Arbeteren*, organ of the I.W.M.A. section in Sweden (SAC) has also been forbidden. The order does not limit the individual right of soldiers to subscribe privately to the papers which they prefer.

The cause for this order as far as *Arbeteren* is concerned is the anti-militarist line of the paper, and above all the special campaign it is conducting against pro-Nazi elements among the officer corps. This measure will not stop the Swedish syndicalists. Each day the paper is being sent to some 250 military camps in all the country. The members of the organisation take care that the paper is read by the soldiers. *Arbeteren* has a great number of sympathisers among the conscripted soldiers. This is an established fact."

Note: S.A.C. represents Sveriges Arbetares Central-organization, the Swedish Syndicalist movement, about 50,000 strong. *Arbeteren* is one of the two daily papers run by our Swedish comrades.

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