

WAR *For Anarchism* COMMENTARY

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TWOPENCE

SWINDLED AGAIN

OUR GENERATION CAN hardly be blamed for being cynical. In the last war, after the first flush of patriotic enthusiasm had died down, it was whipped up again by promises of "a better world after the war", "homes for heroes to live in", "a war to end war", and every catchpenny lie that could be thought of. The hangover after the Armistice dispelled all thoughts of this temporary intoxication. We saw instead the slump, the dole, new wars. No sooner had the present war begun than all the old banners were taken out of the store-rooms. Again we were promised no more war, a better time ahead, a new world and all the rest of it. Anyone who is not cynical is a fool.

"The devil was ill, the devil a monk would be,
The devil was well, the devil a monk was he."

In 1940 and thereabouts, when things looked ill, the promise-mongering reached its limits. Especially for foreign consumption, long stories were spoken about revolutionary changes in Britain. We were going to have a people's army, socialised industry, the end of class distinction, we were going to support revolutions abroad and undergo a "democratic revolution" here and all the rest of it. There are even to be found, in isolated lighthouses off the West of Scotland, occasional individuals who believed some of it.

However, it was patent that promise-mongering could not go on indefinitely, and when things looked a little brighter, the promises had to be allayed somehow. The politicians did not want particularly any disillusionment such as succeeded the last war, and which so endangered their positions. Hence in 1941 the Ministry of Reconstruction set about making a climatic promise which had the possibility of fulfilment. Mr. Greenwood, the then Minister, asked the university don Sir William Beveridge, to survey existing schemes of social insurance. When after exhausting pedantic research Sir William produced his Report, it was hailed as the advent of the Millennium.

Now there is nothing startling or sensational about any of the proposals in the Beveridge Report. As a matter of fact the proposals in it are nothing that depart in any way from the basic principles of the earliest

social insurance proposals, as already operated before the war. But after all you couldn't expect the whole population to read the Report. It was hailed as a great advance; though it is quite simple to put into words the criticisms of the Beveridge Report. In the first place, the main criticism which Anarchists must perform make of it, is the fact that it takes for granted the continuance of poverty. This we cannot for one moment admit. The assumption that there must be rich and poor is implicit in the schemes that aim at "allaying" poverty and unemployment. The mass of the workers will see through this in a second; one girl summed it up by saying to me, "How nice—they tell us there's going to be no unemployment after the war and that they're going to raise the unemployment pay."

The Lloyd George proposals envisaged the payment of unemployment pay to cover periods of transitory unemployment, not realising that the time would come when with the breakdown of capitalism, large masses of workers would be unemployed for years at a time with no other means of subsistence. The dole came to be the symbol of capitalism's failure in the years between the world-wars. Under the Beveridge plan it is the symbol of the "brave new world" also. Beveridge failed to see any other means of patching up capitalism other than a glorified dole system. The new Government plan follows faithfully in Beveridge's steps on this point. There are to be doles for everything. Unemployment benefit will last thirty weeks. That does not say much for the policy of continuous employment after the war. After that it ceases. Then comes the Hitler policy of transference and direction and compulsory training, introduced by Bevin by stealth. The State fails to provide means of livelihood, the State therefore conscripts the person whom it has made unemployed. Certainly by the withdrawal of the dole, most probably by the continuance of the National Service Acts in so far as they affect work, the unemployed man will be "directed" elsewhere.

We do not for one moment imagine this will affect only the unemployed; it will affect all the employed workers too. Evidently the Government imagine that

the workers are going to take lying down the policy of industrial conscription. It is certainly suggested from the social insurance plan that this is their method of ensuring "full employment". They will keep on the National Service Officers and all the tin-pot Hitlers of the labour exchanges, and make us work where they think we ought to work. Let them not think that there will be no objection from anyone. We can at least speak for a certain body of opinion when we say that we shall have just as much objection to State conscription in peace-time as we have in war-time.

We are not disposed to argue about the niggardliness of certain of the Government proposals, because we are convinced that the usual red-herring merchants are going to seize on this, and that is obviously the Government's wish—to argue about details. That the details of the scheme are niggardly, no one can for a moment deny. Family allowances, for instance, are far lower than even the Army admits! The first child gets nothing, like Wednesday's child in the rhyme. Each succeeding child gets five shillings, which it is pointed out (rather unnecessarily) "is not designed to cover the cost of keeping a child" but is intended to lessen the burden on the parent. How far that can possibly lessen the burden is dubious, particularly when one remembers that the parents are already paying extra on what they were paying before the war with regard to social insurance contributions.

Also, a significant detail is the phrase "persons of working age". This again suggests the remaining in being of the slave-state of to-day. Persons of working age not earning money pay more than persons of working age earning money. It is true that some of the persons not earning money include capitalists, etc.; although it is probable that their directorships, etc., will bring them into the other class, but it also includes a large proportion of people earning very little money—particularly amongst women.

Again, the scheme is designed to bring into permanence the "keeping tabs on people" inaugurated by the National Service Acts. *All* persons come under the scheme from birth to death. *All* are expected to pay tribute to the State insurance scheme. One more link of freedom is snapped permanently. The State which aims to create a new slave-state adapted to peace-time conditions, uses, firstly military conscription, secondly industrial conscription, and thirdly, this form of common pauperisation by which all are made dependent in sickness and want on the Westminster almoners.

"Beveridge" looked all right to a good many viewed from a distance, but when the war is over "Beveridge" will receive just the same criticisms, create just the same disillusionment, and perhaps arouse the same mockery, as the dole or any of the other panaceas of last time. It is no more a social advance than the Portal Home (the hut so called, we mean, not the place where Lord Portal lives) is a "home fit for heroes to live in".

It may be asserted that the Beveridge scheme as adopted by the Government does represent a social advance, whatever its shortcomings. This is the usual argument of reformists. This was their excuse when they attempted to divert the rising criticisms of forces and workers to discussions on whether we were going to be allowed to get the Beveridge plan or not. It is frankly not true. During the years between the wars we had the dole. It may be said that was better than starvation. But the alternative to the dole was not starvation—it was the occupation of the land and the places of work by the workers themselves. No other alternative was practical—unless one counts as practical the policy of mass malnutrition amidst plenty, idleness with the tools to hand, and a new war to even things out. The social insurance scheme of the Government is based on the Beveridge assumption that what is wanted is bigger and better doles. We reject this policy with contempt. We stand by the wider, more comprehensive, more sane policy that only by the workers taking over the places of work will they be able to fashion production and distribution to their needs and desires. We reject State control, and therefore we reject the implicit vein throughout the social insurance scheme, that the State must extend its influence throughout all phases of life. Freedom in the modern world can only be the freedom from the State.

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Political Aspects of Social Security

ONCE AGAIN THE Tories have played the Disraeli trick on their opponents. The appearance of the White Paper on Social Security represents a pre-election manoeuvre of the most cunning kind, which the Labour Party will find it hard to counter. The Tory tactics are masterly. When the Beveridge plan was produced they appeared unenthusiastic and talked deprecatingly about the expense. This led the Labourites to take the Beveridge plan as an obvious position to defend, and make it the basis of their demands for social reforms after the war. The Tories kept silent and let the children play. But now, suddenly, just before the first election for many years, they produce a plan which costs almost as much as Beveridge and is even better in some respects than the original. That is to say, it gives the old age pensioners 20/- instead of 14/-, while it gives the children 5/- instead of 8/-. The old, of course, have votes, while the children have none.

The Labour Party, who all this time have been gallantly defending Beveridge, are completely outflanked. Disraeli himself could not have stolen their thunder in a more effective manner. They may, indeed, try to go one better than Beveridge, but, as the *New Statesman* remarked (30/9/44) "the electors will probably regard 90 per cent. Beveridge in the hand as worth more than Beveridge plus 10 per cent. in the bush". After this coup on the part of the Tories, the election defeat of the Labour Party becomes as near a certainty as the laws of chance will allow. Nothing short of a social revolution is likely to unseat the Tories in the decade after the war.

Once again, we can congratulate ourselves on the equivocal honour of being ridden by the most clever ruling class in the world. British Toryism is by no means a spent force. The astuteness of its leaders is not diminished, and their power has been increased rather than otherwise during the war years. The White Paper on Social Security is only one among many examples of their unweakened ability for political manoeuvre. The Tory grip on England is as strong as it ever was, and they intend to keep it so, by cunning or by force, as long as society allows them. If we underestimate the power of the forces against us, we shall be making a great mistake which will render us eventually as powerless as the Labour Party has now become to affect in any profound way the destiny of the British people.

We have so far considered the Social Security proposals as a move in the game of party politics. They are, however, significant as a further step in the establishment of the improved—one might almost say streamlined—type of managerial society which the Tories hope to establish in Britain after the war. The feature of which the promoters make the greatest play is the universality of the scheme. It will apply to "the entire population of all ages, and all occupations or none". Two facts appear obvious in relation to this "universality". Firstly, it will form a peacetime equivalent of the universal registration and liability for conscription of wartime. It will give the government a means to keep track of every individual in the population. Thus it will provide the administrative skeleton of the slave society of the future. Secondly, it gives the illusion of a uniformity which embraces all classes in the community. The duke as well as the dustman will have his card stamped every week. The thin illusion of sacrifice which was nurtured during the war will thus be spread over into the peace but the 3/4d. a week paid by the duke out of his fortune is obviously unnoticed, while the 3/10d. to be paid by the dustman means a considerable reduction in his ability to buy food. And the duke when he grows old will be comfortable whether or not he picks up his pound a week retirement allowance, while the dustman

who has nothing else will be hard pressed to buy even necessities, unless his children are able to support him.

When the Beveridge plan was published we made our comments on the main points (*War Commentary*, Mid-Dec. 1942). Nothing has happened to make us change our attitude, and therefore, as the proposals in the White Paper are substantially those of the original report, there is no need to repeat our strictures.

The whole scheme envisaged in the White Paper is little more than a means of regimentation, of maintaining and strengthening the hold of the ruling class of this country. For this blow at his freedom the worker will have to pay, in hard cash, in return for which he receives benefits whose value is negligible. To conclude, we can do no better than repeat our own previous summing up of the Beveridge plan.

"The Beveridge Plan proposes only the salving of the sores of capitalism, not the removal of their cause. The problems it 'tackles' arise only because of the poverty of the workers inherent in the wages system. So long as capitalism exists the workers will be poor, Beveridge or no! Remove the cause of insecurity and poverty—capitalism, and such plans are unneeded."

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ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

FARM WORKERS' WAGES

ON the 4th October, the Agricultural Wages Board rejected the application of the farm workers for an increase in their minimum wages rate to 90/- a week. This means that the present rate of pay, 65/- a week, will be continued for an indefinite period.

By present standards of wages rates in other industries, such as engineering, shipbuilding, dock working, etc., this is extremely low. It is also well below the average wages being paid in industry in general, and the only main industry which bears comparison is that of railway workers in their lower grades. Compared with the cost of living, which is still rising and is likely to continue to rise after the war, 65/- again appears to be an unreasonably low rate which is bound to put labourers with families on the malnutrition level. Nevertheless, the members of the board had the effrontery to state that "all things considered, the present wages compare favourably with those in similar industries". Just what is meant by similar industries we do not know, but certainly this statement will not bear examination in a comparison with industry in general. Yet, as members of the Government have themselves pointed out, agriculture is the most important of all industries, in peacetime as in war. It would seem that the main consideration in dealing with workers is not their importance to the community, but their power of resistance. A show of militancy among the agricultural workers might have been more effective than the polite representations of the unions on this occasion.

THE CASE OF CAPTAIN RAMSAY

NOISES on the Left are attempting to create a seven day disturbance over Captain Ramsay, M.P. for Peebles, recently released from 18b detention after four years without trial or charge. Let us make it doubly clear; we have no sympathy whatsoever with the politics of Captain Ramsay. He is of that party, the Conservative, with which the labour leaders sit in Cabinet, with whom they are in alliance, whose leader they revere. He is of that party, the Conservative, which the Communists ask the workers to vote for at by-elections and whose leader's portrait they carry in honour to Tragalgar Square.

Yet, no matter how bitter our opposition to Ramsay's politics, we are not in favour of any man being gaoled without trial or charge. We are not of those who celebrate the fall of the Bastille in 1789 and seek to establish its essential features in 1944. We are against 18b and all the other war-time Fascist type legislation.

But it is not upon general principles of liberty and justice alone that we refuse to join the seven day row about Ramsay. Such measures called for by alleged anti-fascists are two edged swords to the workers, with the edge directed against the worker considerably the sharper. Call for 18b to be used against Mosley and Ramsay and it will be used against you to-morrow.

All recent experience teaches this, in the years of Hitler's rise to power in Germany and during the last ten years in Britain. During 1938 the Labour Movement and the Communists called for legislation against Mosley's B.U.F.; the laws were passed. Yet, during the first six months operation of these laws in East London nearly one hundred anti-fascists were gaoled or heavily fined, but not one Fascist!

The same Labour Movement, through the East London Labour mayors, called upon the Government to prohibit Fascist processions in the East End, although in October

1937 the East End workers showed they could stop Mosley, even against the police. The Government prohibited Fascist processions in the East End, but also, the law being impartial, prohibited Labour demonstrations in the traditional home of the London workers' movement.

We can break Fascism, but by our own efforts, not by appealing to Authority. We can defeat Fascism, not by shouting for injustice like 18b, but by the spreading of ideals higher than those of the Blackshirts.

CHANGE IN FORMAT OF WAR COMMENTARY

As announced in the last issue of "War Commentary", our November issue will appear in newspaper format. We particularly remind readers who buy their copies from our street sellers of this change so that when they look for the paper next time they won't pass by our sellers because they happen to be selling a large size paper and not the usual small "WAR COMMENTARY"!

The next issue also will be the 100th number of "WAR COMMENTARY" and we hope that those numerous readers who have read every issue of "WAR COMMENTARY" published during these past five years but who have never let us have their opinions on the paper will mark this occasion by putting pen to paper and sending us their general reactions, their constructive criticism and suggestions for the further improvement of the paper.

Last but not least, we hope that the 100th issue of "WAR COMMENTARY" is an occasion for our comrades and friends to lend their support to our Press Fund. We need that £1000 by the end of the year very badly and at the end of September we had just reached the £500 mark. That leaves us with £500 to be raised in 3 months and with the enthusiasm of only a few hundred readers (including all those who have not settled up yet for their books of Solidarity Tickets) we shall reach our goal.

NORTH LONDON FREEDOM DISCUSSION GROUP

Saturday, 28th October, at 7 p.m., at Adult School, Palmers Road, opposite Arnos Grove Tube Station.

SUBJECT: "INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP"

BRISTOL COMRADES, PLEASE NOTE!

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FREEDOM BOOKSHOP,
132 CHELTENHAM ROAD
every Thursday at 7 o'clock instead of Monday.

The Warsaw Insurrection

AFTER A STRUGGLE of more than two months against the Nazi occupation, the people of Warsaw have been forced into submission by the sheer weight of numbers and arms against them.

The Warsaw rising will be remembered not only for the heroic struggle of the workers on the barricades, but also as one of the most shameful political betrayals of all time. In this article we briefly sketch the background and sequence of the events.

THE POLISH UNDERGROUND

The underground resistance movement in Poland falls roughly in two categories: firstly revolutionary groups, and secondly the official State underground controlled by the emigré Polish government in London. The first grouping includes the Socialist Party, the Jewish Socialist Labour Party (Bund) and the Anarcho-syndicalist and Syndicalist youth organisations. Each of these groups has organised militias, which although largely autonomous, have worked in liaison with the regular Home Army under the control of the Polish government. The various sections of the movement have issued a number of clandestine papers. A point to be stressed is the working-class nature of the underground movement—a fact to be borne in mind when considering the rising.

Up to August this year there had been, with one exception, no organised open revolt against the occupation. The exception was the heroic rising in the Warsaw ghetto in May, 1943, as a result of which many thousand Jews were massacred. Otherwise resistance had been carried on by means of sabotage, ca' canny and other means.

RED ARMY APPROACH WARSAW

During July, the Red Army under General Rokossovsky was advancing through Central Poland and by the end of the month was within 15 miles of Warsaw. The threat to Warsaw appeared so great that the Nazis abandoned the suburb of Praga, evacuated their civilians from Warsaw proper and closed down the German-controlled press. It seemed that the "liberation" of the Polish capital by the Red Army was only a matter of days, and articles in the British press foretold that Warsaw would be the first European capital to fall to the arms of the "United Nations!"

Moscow Radio broadcast several appeals by the "Moscow Union of Polish Patriots" for the rising in Warsaw during July. The last, on July 30th, stated:

"The more than a million inhabitants ought to become an army of a million men fighting for liberation and destroying the German invaders."

Two weeks later, the same people proclaimed that the rising was premature, and no aid would be given.

It is stated by Polish socialists in London that when Mikolajczyk, the Polish Premier, saw Stalin in Moscow on July 31st and told him the rising would take place the following day, Stalin signified his approval and stated that the Red Army would have occupied Warsaw by August 6th!

WORKERS' CONTROL IN FACTORIES

The rising began on August 1st. From the outset it had a marked revolutionary working-class character. Not only was the struggle conducted on the barricades with the guerilla tactics for which the Polish workers have a long tradition, but a decree issued by the Polish civil authorities during the first days, proclaimed control of the factories by workers' councils. This was a clear indication that the workers had already taken over.

In the fact that the struggle was more than one merely for national liberation lies the reason, as in the case of Madrid, November 1936, for the length and heroism of the

rising. In addition it provides a sufficient reason for Poland's so-called allies to sabotage the struggle.

BETRAYAL

On the third day, a Captain Kalugon, sent to Warsaw by Rokossovsky, contacted General Bor-Komorowski and made an appeal by radio to Stalin, via London, for arms and supplies. A request was made for five tons of supplies to be dropped daily by plane.

The Russian government not only refused to send aid, but denied British, American and Polish pilots, who flew a certain amount of supplies through, the right to use airfields in Soviet-controlled territory. *The Red Army commenced to retreat.*

A request made by the Polish government for 2,000 Polish paratroops in this country to be dropped on Warsaw was refused by the British authorities.

MORE SOMERSAULTS IN MOSCOW

During the first week of the rising the line of international Stalinism was that no rising had taken place and the whole affair was a propaganda trick by the London Poles. When events unmasked this lie the line changed. We were then told that the insurrection was a "crime" because it had taken place "too soon". This was reported by the *News Chronicle* and *Reynolds News*. Even after the rising had finally been crushed an editorial in the *New Statesman* said:

"That the rising was mistimed we must all agree."
(7/10/44).

If this was the case, it reflects strangely on the broadcast of the Soviet puppets quoted above.

When the reactionary General Sosnowski was dismissed from the post of Polish C.-in-C. and was replaced by General Bor (apparently as a gesture of appeasement to Stalin), the marionettes of the Polish National Committee of Liberation were animated to a pitch of fury. They stated that if Bor or others taking part in the rising were to fall into their hands, they would be court-martialled as criminals. This, of course, from Moscow and Lublin, miles from the scene of the fighting.

The following quotation is equally illustrative of Stalin's attitude:

"... the Polish official daily accuses the Lublin Patriots of having disarmed and interned whole detachments of the Polish Home Army that were rushing from the provinces to Warsaw to assist the insurgents. The names of the detachments, their numbers, the places where they were disarmed have been published. What will the Lublin Commander-in-Chief—General Rola-Zymieiski—reply to this?" (Tribune, 6/10/44).

The people of Warsaw found themselves in the same situation as the workers of Paris during the Commune. On one hand the guns of the Nazi occupation, on the other the guns of the Red Army. Encircled by enemies they fought on until, finally overwhelmed by the arms of their opponents and the treachery of those who claimed to be their allies, they were forced to surrender.

During the fighting over 250,000 Poles were stated to have been killed or seriously injured. The Nazis have decreed that the civilians remaining in the city must get out to face ... starvation and death.

CONCLUSION

The above facts speak for themselves. Stalin, like Hitler, aims at the subjection of the Polish people. Red Imperialism is on the march. Unlike the grovelling intellectuals of the "left-wing" we have not found it convenient to forget that Stalin and Hitler carved-up Poland by agreement in September, 1939.

(Continued on p. 10)

LETTER FROM AMERICA

Oakland, California.

Dear Fellow-Workers,

Judging from your articles and quotes from U.S. periodicals, you no doubt get a fairly accurate picture of conditions here. I find your paper quite illuminating. The article on "Housing" by Brown I liked very much, but in my opinion as the mother of two children, I believe he should have dealt with housing in regards to children and their needs in a future co-operative society. Here in the State of California, we mothers have a big problem, that of finding landlords who will accept families having children. And now that there is a severe housing shortage in this defence area, it has become the policy of landlords to evict families having children, if they can. Probably the same situation exists in England, too. The claim is that many children are noisy and destructive. Even so no reason for denial of housing. Children are the adults of to-morrow.

Earlier in the war, many workers believed the claims of the Atlantic Charter—Four Freedoms, etc. Now that they've seen deals in N. Africa, Italy, and now in France where General Patton and Robert Murphy are being pushed to the front, and Bullitt is accepted into the French Army after he was one of those who helped turn Paris over to Nazis in order to crush French working-class, they are fast becoming disillusioned. Although workers hear and read with horror of the extermination camps in Lublin, etc., and of the rocket-bombing of London and S. England, still many realize that all war is a shambles and the flame-throwers used by Alkes as barbarous a method, and that people starving in India, China and Puerto Rico and elsewhere without all reason is not a pretty picture either.

Have just finished reading John R. Carlson's book "Undercover"—revelation of the Nazi underworld of America, and in the preface he states that "Democracy" like "Fascism" is a state of mind, not of physical boundaries or hallowed ancestry. Of course, I don't quote him because I think he has the answer to our problems, as he believes in Nationalism and doesn't condemn Capitalism and doesn't mention the basic causes or solution. He does mention that certain moneyed people have backed fascist organization. It's worth reading regardless.

Because of government contract cutbacks in Aircraft plants and elsewhere, workers who come here from the Southern and Middle Western states are now returning to their home-states (thousands are staying here in coast, though) although they are being appealed to as their patriotic duty to stay here on the Pacific Coast and transfer into other war industries. Workers have become incensed because of the fact that the greater share of radio and newspaper commentators as well as writers in magazines have condemned labour wherever they can—as to strikes (misrepresent issues) to money spent on clothes, vacations, fur-coats and wrist-watches. (I see few fur coats on working women and as there are no clocks or cheap watches on the market, workers have no alternative but to buy the higher priced wrist-watches.) Most commentators write and talk on the radio that the armed forces are greatly incensed over strikes. Large numbers are workers and realize it is the duty of workers at home to fight for labour's rights so that they won't come home to find labour completely sold down the river as the leadership of the A.F.L. and the C.I.O., with the help of the Stalinists, with their pledge of no strikes either now or after the war is over, are attempting to do.

Cases of tuberculosis and heart trouble have increased as much as double. Labour is condemned because there are not more blood donors. Statements are made that armed forces perform must donate blood in addition to "fighting

for their country". Until the invasion of France, the number of merchant marine seamen who had lost their lives at sea were five times the loss of the armed forces. Yet because the seamen are militant union men, they are discriminated against. The bonuses formerly paid for going into dangerous waters, have either been cut off entirely in some cases, and in others lessened to a much smaller amount, while living expenses have gone up for their families and they have not been listed as entitled to social security unemployed compensation, however meagre that is.

Here are a few more peeves of the workers here. In the shipyards there are paid agents of the companies (making super-profits although 7% plus cost was supposed to be the limit at the beginning of the war) to see that workers don't stop work a few minutes before the half-hour lunch period and quitting time (although tools must be put away and the toolroom is sometimes at a distance, before checking out, and sometimes workers have a long distance to walk to the gates).

Rents were supposed to be frozen in Defence Areas at levels of March 1942, but many tricks are found to get round it. Landlords find any excuse (creating a nuisance, drinking, radio on loud or too long, noisy children, etc.) to give eviction notices. Then if workers don't want or can't pay an attorney and court costs (if case is lost) and if they are fortunate in finding another place, they move out. Then after putting in a few improvements in apartments or house vacated, the landlords boost rents beyond reason. Another—single rooms formerly provided with gas-plate for cooking (incapitated persons on miserly amount allotted by charities and elderly individuals on pension can't afford to pay rent for two rooms on \$50 a month—California pays the most, I believe) now have cooking privileges denied them by many greedy landlords who enforce state law that no cooking to be done in sleeping room, although that law has of necessity been overlooked for years. Still another grievance—owners of homes rather than rent at O.P.A. (Office of Price Administration) Ceiling Prices per March, 1942, offer homes for sale at exorbitant prices. When workers who buy lose their jobs and have no money to pay instalments, they will either be paid a small amount or none at all, losing all they paid out.

Another way landlords have of getting around ceiling prices is by offering houses or apartments for rent provisional that renters buy the second-hand furniture, sometimes at double its value even when new.

The prices at dry-goods stores have gone up and the quality has deteriorated. There are exceptions as to quality—stores patronized by the wealthy still have good quality—plenty of luxury goods in the stores but workers have difficulty in finding articles such as sheets, towels, cheap house-dresses, babies' diapers, small child's training pants, etc. (I went with my brother to six big department stores in San Francisco looking for training pants for his eighteen-months-old son, none to be had). That while there are dresses, fur coats, in windows of fashionable stores, marked at \$50 to \$300, also plenty of stylish cotton dresses and sun suits and slack suits in stores for Milady.

As to moving-picture shows: workers as well as members of the armed forces are expressing resentment at the continuous diet of either war and propaganda pictures or sexy leg-show pictures. Now there are a few more pure entertainment or travel pictures.

Since the war has brought lots of contracts to Southern California aircraft industries, etc., the unions have been very active there organizing. For years the employers of Southern California have enforced the Open Shop. This year

these employers have backed a bill—No. 12—called “the right to work” which is an attempt to break up the unions. The A.F.L., C.I.O. and the Railroad Brotherhood and other independent unions are out to defeat this bill. That reactionary bill along with the temporary breaking-up of the machinists’ (A.F.L.) strike in San Francisco (forcing the nine-hour day on the workers with the more militant of the strikers being blacklisted for future work in industries, shipyards, etc., which have government contracts). Just part of the reactionary crushdown on labour. From now on, labour’s struggles will be intensified.

There is a lot more I could have written but the foregoing are a few things I’ve gotten off my chest as a class-conscious working woman. More and more workers are becoming disillusioned, and if they are reached, the way of class struggle rather than that of class collaboration can be pointed out. Of course plenty are still fooled by fear of fascism—as pointed out by Stalinists, if they don’t engage in class collaboration, and the excitement by shallow workers at great strides made by Red Army. They’ll all wake up soon. Hope it’s before it’s too late. I’m hopeful though at strikes taking place regardless of misleadership. Racial discrimination must be fought though.

(1) A housewife who once turned in cooking fat to butcher (sign on can “Medicinal purposes only”) receiving on red ration points and four cents a pound, turns it into garbage can or gives away. Decided it would probably go for explosives anyway.

(2) Two sailors in restaurant. First one: “You went overseas to fight for a cause.” Second one: “You and I both went *be-cause* we had to.”

(3) Sailor coming back from South Pacific told a shipyard worker (sailor had worked in shipyard prior to being drafted) that he had received not one free cigarette, although workers in this country have donated money to buy cigarettes

for members of the armed forces. He said he had expected to get at least a few during the months he was in the hospital, but not one did he get, paid for every one he smoked outside of those sent by friends and relatives.

(4) We have heard from various families who receive letters from members of armed forces—they are sent money by soldier or sailor (who may previously have been patriotic), “Do not use any of this for war bonds. Patronize the black market. I’ll explain when I get home”. One shipyard worker met a sailor who said, “The sooner you workers stop buying war bonds, the sooner we’ll be coming home!”

This is a sample of what is being heard. Also here is another one. A soldier in South Pacific who admitted he acquired a lust for killing Japs but told the men he was talking to that this war must end soon. “Too much bloodshed.” Even those who don’t understand class implications of this war are sick to the core of it. Even still more so now that admissions are made that there are no sure post-war plans in U.S.A. except unemployment for from six to twelve millions—more like sixteen millions probably. We working people are the majority. Time we all got wise and united to take what is ours and create a world where there will cease to be war, poverty, hunger, injustice, and where production will be for use and the bettering of mankind rather than profits. Get rid of the armament princes who also in time of peace make money on teargas bombs used on workers, as well as making immense profits out of workers of all countries killing each other off so that the upper crust can re-divide the world markets. As a mother of an 11-year-old daughter and a 17-year-old son who has been at sea in the Merchant Marine for the last six months, I’m sick and tired of it all. I’m sure there are plenty like me.

Sincere best wishes to all the fellow-workers over there.

ANNA M. SMITH.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ Theatre Review ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

★ AFTER THE WAR ★

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HAPPY AND GLORIOUS,

by Wilfrid Walter. Chanticleer Theatre.

We have all some idea of what is likely to happen to society after the war. The brilliant plans and promises of the government and their Labour Party stooges convince very few people, and most of us look forward to a future of poverty and social oppression and regimentation. However, our ideas of the future tend to be speculative only, unless we base them on some analogous situation, whose concrete facts can give some body to our conception of the future. Therefore it is salutary to remind ourselves and others as frequently and as forcibly as we can what has happened when other wars have ended in the perpetuation of a society based in greed and coercion, where human

values and, indeed, any other genuine values are subordinated to the satisfaction of privileged interests.

For this reason a play like “Happy and Glorious”, which makes an honest endeavour to portray the physical and mental tragedy of the last war and its aftermath, has a topical quality which is undiminished by the fact that in term of time its subject is twenty years before us.

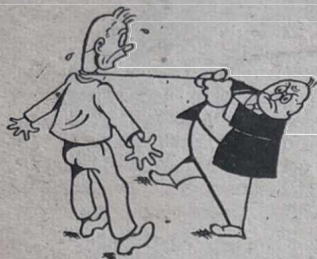
It is a simple play, dealing with two people, a man and a woman, whose actions before the war were dominated by ideals which did not stand up to the attack of reality. The woman is a suffragette who struggles bravely by methods of direct action to achieve the vote for women. She suffers injury and imprisonment, and then, in the end, comes to realise that the issue over which she fought has in

fact brought no real improvement to the lot of women. The man believes in the war, and suffers the disillusionment which came to millions like him. He fraternises with the German soldiers, and afterwards is wounded and suffers a shock which sends him into the world a physical and nervous wreck. After the war both the man and the woman find themselves faced by a hostile and unsympathetic world. To-day the same world faces the individual, and on his struggle against it depends the achievement of the vision of a better world which ends the play.

The parts are acted competently by Joy Harvey and Robert Marsden, and the production has an intentional simplicity well suited to the theme.

G. W.

TRADE UNION DEMOCRACY!



The National Union of General and Municipal Workers has decided that its Newcastle No. 9 Branch, of which the dockside strikers are members, is to be closed down.

In a branch membership of about 800 the strikers number 600.

On Monday Mr. Mark Hewitson, chief industrial officer of the union, said that behind the strike he believed there was "a deliberate attempt at sabotage to impede the war effort."

A new branch of the union is to be constituted immediately, and members of the old branch who promise obedience and respect the union constitution are free to join.

Those who refuse to give this undertaking will not be admitted, and will be regarded as non-unionists.

Evening Standard, 4/10/44.

LUNCH BEFORE CHURCHILL

The speech was also one of the most informative he has made. Mr. Churchill gave more facts and figures than in any previous war report, and the House displayed an absorbed interest in them.

There was a suggestion of a break in his voice as he spoke of the "glorious and fruitful" operation of the Sky-men at Arnhem. The House's sympathy was profound though unexpressed by any demonstration.

Although members knew there was to be a luncheon break in Mr. Churchill's speech, I noticed that about 12.55 a number of them began to slip out. In a few minutes between 20 and 30 had disappeared. The manner of their going suggested that they hoped they would not be noticed.

Evening Standard, 28/9/44.

The House's sympathy for the heroes of Arnhem did not spoil the gallant members' appetites.

ALLIED CRIMINALS ESCAPE

Mario Berlinguer, High Commissioner for the Punishment of Fascist Crimes, announced yesterday that he would seek a Court order within a few days to reopen the Matteotti murder case—one of the blackest chapters in Mussolini's rise to power.

Berlinguer, who sent Caruso to the firing squad last week, said that the new Italian law for sanctions against Fascism provides for the reopening of any case where it is shown that justice was not done under the Fascist régime.

Six Fascist thugs, charged with participating in the killing of Matteotti, Socialist Deputy and arch-foe of Mussolini, were convicted in 1926, sentenced and then granted an amnesty.

It is also disclosed that a man believed to be one of the plotters in the assassination of the brothers Carlo and Nello Rosselli in Normandy in 1937, has been arrested on Berlinguer's orders.

Anti-Fascists have for a long time linked the names of the highest Fascist officials, including Mussolini himself, with this slaying.

Daily Herald, 25/9/44.

Has Mario Berlinguer the power to re-open the cases of Sacco and Vanzetti slain by Yankee fascism, and of Berneri and Barbieri, slain by the G.P.U.? Genuine anti-Fascists have linked the names of high officials with these slayings too.

OVERWORKED M.P.'S?

Parliament met yesterday, after nearly eight weeks' holiday—and was "counted out" at 8.10 p.m.

So the committee stage of the Housing (Scotland) Bill was held up. It had apparently interested less than twenty M.P.s, for even with the cry of "Count!" only eighteen members came running.

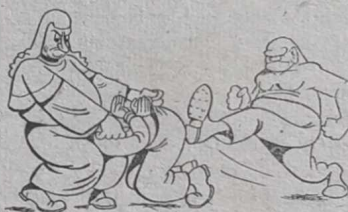
But they were not enough to make up the necessary quorum of forty. The rest had gone home.

That meant that the House was "counted out" and rose for the day.

Daily Mirror, 27/9/44.

Through

WHAT'S IN A NAME?



Police courts are to be known in future as magistrates' courts. A Home Office committee in May condemned 'police courts' because the name suggested they belonged to the police or were run by the police.

Now the Home Office has issued a circular advising that, as far as possible, courts should be called magistrates' courts.

Star, 28/9/44.

By any other name they still stink.

BABIES—BY ARMY ORDER

A correspondent sends us the following extract from a letter from a soldier with the Middle East Force:

There is a new bit of impudence on our orders to-day. It says that any man over 35 who is married and has no children may put in an application for a home-posting. His wife must prove that she is able and willing to bear children. Also (they ask) if the man has been married twelve months previous to going abroad, why he (or his wife) has had no children. I think the authorities have a damned cheek, asking for this information. Surely a couple can please themselves whether they have children or not.

The writer of the letter has a wife and two children; the youngest boy hardly remembers his father, for he has been in the M.E.F. for the past four years.

A *Times* message (per Press Association) from Cairo states that a Middle East General Order published at the end of August announced that married Service men with more than three years' service in the Middle East could obtain compassionate leave on grounds that they wanted to return home "to start a family." Within a few days there had been more than 1,000 applications with more coming in daily.

Then appeared in General Orders three weeks later an amendment to the original order which restricted it to men whose wives are over 35 years of age and who could show good reason why they had not started a family before the war. Wives and husbands were required to produce a medical certificate that they were willing and able to have children.

Manchester Guardian, 29/9/44.

CHRISTIANITY AND POLITICS

The Rev. H. R. Keithahn, an American missionary, has been ordered to leave India for taking part in politics. With his wife and two children he lived in native style with Indians in a tiny village near Bangalore.—Associated Press.

Daily Herald, 25/9/44.

According to the Arch. of Cant. 'christianity is inseparable from politics.' Has he protested? Or does he think Rev. H. R. Keithahn was engaging in the wrong kind of politics?

the Press

CAPTAIN REFUSES TO FIGHT

Captain the Hon. William Douglas-Home, 33-year-old younger son of the thirteenth Earl of Home, refused to fight at Le Havre, according to a second letter he has written to the *Maidenhead Observer*.

His first letter, which brought a spate of angry replies, announced that he had asked permission to resign his commission in the Royal Armoured Corps.

Writing from the Pas de Calais on September 17, the captain now says: "When ordered to attack Le Havre I refused to do so because, rightly or wrongly, I could not bring myself to take part in an operation against troops who admittedly did not want to fight but whose commander refused to accept unconditional surrender."

Further, displaying a little more tolerance and unselfishness than some of your correspondents, he offered to evacuate all civilians, which offer was refused.

"Since the battle for Le Havre, in which several thousand civilians lost their lives, I applied to be allowed to visit the German commander in Boulogne with a view to reaching some agreement to avoid a second tragedy.

"I sat in my jeep with a pair of newly-washed pants beside me to serve as a white flag, waiting for an answer to my application. It did not come."

Daily Mirror, 28/9/44.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

An R.A.F. escort drew his revolver and shot an airman who tried to escape near Aldershot railway station this afternoon while he was being taken to detention barracks.

The man, who was taken to hospital with serious injuries, was one of several prisoners who had arrived under escort at the railway station.

The party had walked about 500 yards when he broke away and dashed across the road.

Star, 29/9/44.

When the Germans shot British officers trying to escape from a prisoners' camp there was an uproar about it. When a British airman is shot by an R.A.F. escort it is merely a news item.

THOSE POOR CAPITALISTS



The fifteenth annual general meeting of the Decca Record Company Ltd., was held on Friday last in London.

The directors recommended a final dividend of 75 per cent, less tax, and the ordinary shares, making a total dividend for the year of 100 per cent, less tax, requiring £32,084. The directors

further recommended the transfer of £50,000 to general reserve, bringing it to £200,000.

Manchester Guardian, 4/10/44.

STRONG MEN POLICY AT BOGNOR

Decorations in a house belonging to Bognor Council were not carried out because the tenant owes the Council 2d. in rent.

This was stated at last night's meeting of Bognor's Council.

The case was brought forward by Mr. A. J. Moore, vice-chairman. He said he understood that the tenant was a cripple who had lived in the house for 15 years.

"I understand," Mr. Moore went on, "that this tenant owes the council 2d., an amount which he regards as an illegal charge, and I would like to know whether that is the reason why the housing committee refuse to sanction internal decorations."

Mr. F. E. Phillips, chairman of the housing committee, said that it had been the policy of the committee in cases termed "obstinate," where there was a persistent refusal to pay arrears, to hold up any necessary internal decorations.

The facts mentioned were therefore correct so far as he knew, and the reason why the decorations in the house had not been carried out was because the tenant owed 2d.

WISHFUL THINKING

The British workers, recognizing in the Trotskyists the advance guard of their movement, the consistent, never-flagging champions of their class interests, sprang to their aid. They condemned the prosecution and demanded the release of the prisoners. They assisted in setting up a defense committee. They contributed funds for its work. This movement of class solidarity even spread to sections of the army. Soldiers have passed resolutions protesting the persecution of the Trotskyists and defending the workers' right to strike.

The Tory-capitalist attack on the Trotskyists, the fact that they were railroaded to prison under the Trades Disputes Act, is indicative of the sharpening of the class struggle in England. The Trade Disputes Act remained in desuetude for seventeen years. It was a weapon kept in reserve by the British ruling class for just such situations as that which developed last March—a rising wave of strikes threatening to develop into a general strike.

4th International (Trotskyist) July 1944.

Surely comrades, you are seeing events a bit out of focus! The British workers, who probably nine out of ten had never heard of the Trotskyists, gave only a very limited support to the victims of the Trade Disputes Act. It is sad . . . but that's the truth.

FRATERNISATION

"STRICT INSTRUCTIONS against fraternisation with Germans will be issued to Allied soldiers. Such instructions have already been issued to some units with the warning that a breach of these orders will be regarded as a serious offence." (*Reynolds News*, 17/9/44). "Fraternisation must be strictly forbidden. For the soldiers it should be made a court-martial offence. We are out to conquer the Hun, not to liberate him." (*Daily Mirror*, 20/9/44). Eisenhower's orders from the Anglo-American war-lords read: "We will be ruthless as we progress in Germany." (*Reynolds News*, 17/9/44) "and be ruthless with the Nazis after the war." (*Evening Standard*, 22/9/44). At the same time the German agents of the Allies broadcast to the German people assuring them that they have nothing to fear from Allied troops and that Goebbels' propaganda about the ruthlessness are nothing but atrocity stories.

Fraternisation is only possible when the troops, weary, harassed by political doubts and having grievances of their own, begin to sympathise with the people under their occupation. Their friendliness is the most unwelcome thing for our war-chiefs. Propaganda therefore sets out to brand the friendliness of the German people as hypocrisy and to create antagonism. The tactic of the ruling-class to combat the fraternisation with warnings and next-war bogies shows that they fear fraternisation more than a German Maquis or Armée Blanche! Why? Because they are haunted by the ghost of the social revolution and they do not feel sure of themselves, in spite of their European police force and their North-West frontier technique of using bombing planes, or even tanks and flame-throwers, to subdue an insurgent civilian population. They realise that a general revolutionary situation will arise out of the sufferings of the war, coupled with the realisation of the workers that governments are responsible for all economic privation and wars and are opposed to the aspirations of their class.

The method of the Social Revolution is to awaken the sense of essential solidarity and identity of interest between armies and peoples. The Social Revolution is not concerned so much with adopting modern military 'science' and the most efficient type of military organisation, as with the task of winning the support of the armed masses by persuasion.

Our counter-revolutionaries have learned from the masters of ruling class strategy, Thiers, Bismarck, Radetsky, Pitt and Ludendorff. They fear that the class consciousness and revolutionary instinct of the workers may awake. But with their strict instructions against fraternisation with Germans, they are displaying their dread and at the same time confirming the teaching of historical facts that the power of the proletariat is superior to the power of any ruling class based upon force. The Russian Revolution was heralded by mass desertions of peasant soldiers from the front and fraternisation with the German soldiers (the fraternisations spread to the Western front). The actual March Revolution started when the very military units which the Russian government had considered their most reliable counter-revolutionary force fraternised with the insurgent workers. In the French Revolution the guards became unreliable from a Royalist point of view because many were married to Parisian working class women. The whole French Army, establishing close contacts with the civil population through fêtes and confederations, proved susceptible to fraternisation. During the Paris Commune, Thiers had to withdraw his army from Paris because of the beginning of spontaneous fraternisation. The October mutiny of the Kiel sailors, followed swiftly by fraternisation with army units and the civil population, broke the morale of the entire German war machine.

The tremendous value of fraternisation was exploited

successfully by the Bolsheviks to meet the militarily superior Allied intervention and White rebellion. The Red Army men swore an oath to fight for the cause of socialism and the fraternisation of all races. In the beginning of their degeneration, the Bolsheviks on many occasions felt the effect of this revolutionary weapon, when the disillusioned Red Army men fraternised with the anarchist army of Machno, or as in 1919 and 1920, when nearly three million men deserted the Red Army.

The situation which is developing will induce men to put their class loyalty before their military allegiance. The question before them will be whether they shall risk the penalties attaching to fraternisation or betray their corporate loyalty as members of the international working class, whether they shall support imperialism or class solidarity! The workers in uniform, when they rediscover their common interests with the workers of all nations, cannot accept the conception of being impersonal robots at the service of their rulers against the interest of the ruled. They will tear down the artificial barriers between races, and no orders will prevent their fraternisation.

MICHAEL PETERSON

(Continued from p. 5)

The rising in Warsaw showed clearly that Stalin's Punch & Judy show at Lublin is no more representative of the Polish people than Pétain and Laval were of the French. This, together with the revolutionary character of the rising, made it imperative for Stalin to have it crushed. Once again, as in Germany, China and Spain, he made sure that the forces of the working-class were overwhelmed.

The heroic fight of the Warsaw workers shows more clearly than ever, that only international action by the workers themselves can bring about a society where political betrayal, together with politicians, are eliminated for all time.

K. H.

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IN STALIN'S RUSSIA WHERE ARE THE ANARCHISTS GHEZZI AND PETRINI?

"Stalin first recognized Badoglio and later Bonomi. Normal diplomatic relations now exist between the 'liberated' regions of Italy and the U.S.S.R. The representatives of the former are democrats, socialists and communists. To all of them we put this question which they should transmit to Moscow: What has happened to the Italian Anarchist Francesco Ghezzi who sought in Russia? Is he locked up and forgotten in some Russian prison or has he been assassinated by the OGPU?" The above is a translation of the opening paragraph of an article in a recent issue of the monthly review *Mundo* published in Mexico dealing with the Ghezzi case. He was a militant in the Italian Anarchist movement from the age of 16 and played a prominent part in the anti-militarist activities of the movement during the last war, as a result of which he was arrested and later was obliged to flee the country. The events which led up to his seeking refuge in Russia are detailed in a letter sent by the International Working Man's Association to the Russian Government and signed by a number of internationally prominent people such as Romain Rolland, Ernst Toller, Andrée Viollis, Heinrich Mann, Leon Werth:

"On June 24th, 1929, the Secretariat of the I.W.M.A. sent a registered letter to the Soviet of People's Commissars asking the reason for the arrest of the Italian Anarchist Francesco Ghezzi and urging his release. We hereby call attention to his case and at the same time repeat our demand for his liberation.

Francesco Ghezzi was prosecuted by the Italian courts on the charge of alleged participation in the Milan explosions in 1920. He was sentenced in his absence to 20 years imprisonment. In 1921 Ghezzi was arrested in Germany, and Italy demanded his extradition. The German Ministry of Justice refused to extradite him on the grounds that the prisoner was a political refugee and the charges against him of a political nature. Ghezzi was freed by the Berlin authorities, but was ordered to leave the country within three days.

As the Soviet Government had repeatedly declared that it would give refuge to all proletarians persecuted in Capitalist countries, Ghezzi decided to go to Russia. There, he felt, he would be safe from persecution. The Russian embassy in Berlin issued to him official documents of a Russian citizen.

In Russia Ghezzi lived and worked as one of the proletariat. But he remained true to his Anarchist

convictions and that proved his undoing, because in Soviet Russia there is no liberty of thought and free expression of opinion is not tolerated. Like numerous other Anarchists and revolutionists before him, Ghezzi was arrested by the OGPU and condemned administratively (without hearing or trial) to three years' prison in Suzdal.

The imprisonment of Francesco Ghezzi is more than an ordinary outrage against the freedom of speech and thought; it is a direct demonstration that the Russian Government has betrayed its solemn promise to give asylum to the proletarian victims of political persecution in bourgeois countries.

We hereby again voice our demand that the Bolshevik authorities make known the reasons for the arrest of Ghezzi, and that he be liberated at once.

At the same time we call attention to the fact that the belief of revolutionary workers who are hounded in capitalist countries that they will find refuge in Russia, has been fundamentally shaken by the fate of Ghezzi.

On this occasion we also repeat our oft-made demand that the Soviet Government cease its persecution of the revolutionary elements and free the thousands of politicals imprisoned and exiled in Russia."

There is not much to hope from a public conscience which has been brutalized by five years of war and hate but it is not out of place to pause and consider that the leader in the Kremlin is prepared to see Badoglio and his type at large in Italy while proved revolutionists of the stamp of Ghezzi, (not to mention another Italian anarchist prisoner of Stalin: A. Petrini) are languishing in Russian jails. Such is the position after 27 years of Soviet Communism.

Sentence on Anarchist Quashed

Recently our Glasgow comrade, Eddie Shaw, was sentenced to one year's imprisonment for refusing to attend a medical examination. Comrade Shaw appealed to the High Court, and as we go to press we are informed that the sentence has been quashed and Comrade Shaw has been granted ten guineas expenses. A full report will be published in the next issue of *War Commentary*.

DANGER—Police “Nationalisation”

ANARCHISTS ARE NEVER found within the Government and so likewise they are never found within the Police Service. Therefore only by playing the role of observer can any conclusions be drawn from the trend of opinion within such an institution. Casual contacts and conversations with the police over a wide area of the country, coupled with a careful perusal of the *Police Review* give one a fairly comprehensive picture. Frequently within the boring columns of that journal can be found a note of discord which corresponds closely with the views expressed by many men in the Police Service. These views are spontaneous and show a growing but somewhat distorted awareness by the men of their class position in society. There is an increasing discontent within this coercive body of super-bureaucrats that is ostensibly responsible for the preservation of law and order, which forces upon one the realisation of the fundamental similarity of interest between these men and those engaged in more productive work. The discontent is manifest not so much among the rank and file or beat-plodders who constantly dream of promotion, but amongst the more specialised men. As the solutions put forward take an even more anti-social form than the system which prevails to-day, it is opportune to examine the cause of unrest, especially in the light of the proposed re-organisation of the police forces on the lines of the National Fire Service which has been proposed in a report drawn up by Home Office experts.

The evolution of the Police Force to meet the modern needs of an ever increasing dictatorial system has necessitated the development of various departments, which, to be efficient apart from the ordinary routine work must be staffed by highly specialised men. These departments, as far as one can ascertain, can be segregated and briefly summarised under the following headings—radio-communication, transport, finance, photography, forensic science, storekeeping, criminal investigation, training, etc. The inventive genius of our scientists has made it possible for a people to be bludgeoned into obedience by a comparatively small body of men armed with all the available technical knowledge and every conceivable weapon. The tendency has, therefore, been to reduce the number of men in the Police Force so that chances of promotion remain even more remotely on the horizon. To-day, any ambitious member of the Force who has performed many years of tedious beat-plodding, and has in his leisure hours studied to become a specialist, finds on realising his ambition that there is little opportunity for further advancement. He soon realises that even though he may be a member of a large Borough Force he is faced with a dead-end job. As in all bureaucratic institutions he is not so much concerned with the amount of enjoyment derived from the performance of the job as with the increased standard of living which accrues to the holder of the higher posts. The effect on such a specialist is that, although he may have passed for promotion to a Sergeant a long time past, he has become convinced that, by choosing a specialist's work he has spoiled his chance of promotion.

Many headaches seem to have been caused by such situations and much energy seems to be expended in casting about for a solution. This has so far resulted in a mild form of agitation for the nationalisation of the Police, which presumably would offer scope for the specialist somewhat on the following lines. If we take radio-communication as an example, the country could be divided into regions and each region in turn could be divided into areas, and each area into districts. Each district would comprise, say, three existing Police radio-transmitting stations, and would be supervised by a Sergeant. A region would be supervised by a Superintendent and would consist of three areas. In charge of police radio-communication throughout the country would be a Commissioner of Police. With such a type of

organisation, it is suggested, the ambitious police officer could choose a branch of police work well suited to his vocation with the assurance of the chance to rise to a high position. Periodical promotion examinations in this particular subject would give him opportunities under Nationalisation which are now non-existent.

Such attempts to grapple with the problems of promotion are merely manifestations of the discontent even among the more highly paid officers and are clear indications of the inadequacy of the wages paid. They show that the problems of the worker have also to be faced by the policeman, who performs his anti-social duties merely in return for slight concessions and privileges and a legal outlet for his sadistic impulses. One concession much prized by policemen is that of retiring at the age of 45 which was contained in the Police Act of 1890. However, the Pensions (Increase) Act which became law this year, stipulated an age limit of 60 below which the benefits of the bill do not apply. So that there is no relief under the act for those pensioners until they reach the age of 60, and yet this has never been the retiring age of policemen, although such has been the case for civil servants and teachers. Pensions are greatly reduced in value by the steadily rising cost of living.

The police are also greatly concerned regarding the inadequacy of the pensions payable to widows and dependents of members of the Force. They are very bitter because the Government neatly side-stepped the issue by accepting the recommendations of the Snell Committee which suggested that the Police should themselves shoulder the burden of such increases. Under the Police Pensions Act, 1921, a pension of £30 per year was allowed for the widow of a constable or sergeant with an addition of £10 for a child. Under the new Pensions (Increase) Act, police widows who are capable of proving that they are over forty, have at least one dependent, or are disabled by physical or mental infirmity, may now receive an additional 3/5d. per week to their present pension of 11/6d. per week, making a total of 14/11d. And of course there is the usual rigmorole of defining the exact terms of 'dependent' and 'infirmity'. Arising out of these grievances one could quote dozens of examples of unjust treatment meted out by the Government to individual pensioners.

Looking back one can see attempts by the police to improve their own conditions. Pre-war (1914) the starting wage of most provincial police was 18s. per week. In August 1918 there was a war-time strike by the police. The Government, realising the danger, instantly gave lavish promises in order to buy off the strike. In July 1919, the Police Union (Union of Police and Prison Officers), called a strike but the only response was in Liverpool and among a section of the London police. All the strikers were dismissed and the government bought off any further trouble by giving huge wage increases.

The reorganisation into Regional Police Forces as envisaged in the report of the Home Office experts (outlined in the *Daily Mail*, Oct. 3, 1944) is merely an extension of compulsory amalgamations carried out by Morrison in 1942 ostensibly on the grounds of public interest and the efficient prosecution of the war. In counties like Sussex it meant the absorption of the separate forces at Brighton, Hove, Eastbourne and Hastings, as well as the West Sussex Constabulary and East Sussex Constabulary, into one body. It is suggested that smaller counties and boroughs should be grouped and merged so that each chief constable shall have under him approximately the same number of men. At the same time training centres are to be set up for new recruits and it is estimated that 14,000 men will be needed after the war to bring the police force up to full strength. It is obvious from the foregoing that the Government proposals have

a certain similarity with the views already put forward from time to time by the rank and file within the Police service. Thus such a policy serves a double purpose. It will tend to settle the unrest within the service, and also lessen the responsibility of individuals, so that acts of brutality can be committed with even greater impunity. Thus there will emerge by the end of the war a powerful and ruthless Police Force to quell any unrest on the part of the workers of Britain. This, of course, is not the first time the police have undergone a semblance of nationalisation. Frequently, during big coal strikes, hundreds of police have been drafted into the district from all over the country. As such police have no intimate knowledge of the strikers and are not conversant with working conditions, their strike-breaking activities are less personal and more ruthless.

The average worker has little sympathy for the police as they are always figures to despise and mistrust, so that frequently and justifiably they have been the subjects of ostracism, boycott and even more violent forms of direct action. The police have to admit that always their first allegiance is not to their fellow men or fellow workers, but to their uniform and their job. They work for any master

without discrimination so long as such a master retains the greatest authority and power over all other men. For this master they defend property and the means of production. This was aptly illustrated when the Allies evacuated Singapore. Both white and coloured police were left in the town to protect the property rights and maintain 'order' for the Japanese administration. A similar state of affairs existed when the Germans occupied Paris; the police remained to work for them. More recently, however, when they saw the balance of power swing over once again to the Allies they also swung over.

Therefore although the worker can extend a certain sympathy towards the policeman in the midst of his domestic troubles, he must always regard him as a potential enemy and a strike-breaker. It is the policeman himself who must finally solve his dilemma by the clear recognition of his fallacious role in society. He must realise that he is an anti-social parasite perpetuating a system which brings misery and suffering to all. Only by casting off his uniform and joining the ranks of the workers will he be of any use to himself or his fellow men. The police force is an impediment to social progress and as such it must be swept away on the stream-tide of the revolution.

THE PEST OF POLITICS

THE DRIFT FROM parliamentary politics is becoming more and more apparent every day and is finding expression in the ever recurring strikes in the mining and engineering industries. The pacts which the Trade Union leaders have made with the employing class and the Government—without the consent of Trade Union members; their constant bullying to produce more and more—all these are wearing down the nerves of the tired and overworked men. No matter how indifferent they were in the past, they are conscious of the fact (without the help of any agitation) that the worst slave drivers are not so much the foremen employed by the capitalist, but the officials and organizers of the Unions. The Unions are now part and parcel of the government machinery, tied by agreements which they hope to carry through into the post-war years, and with the greater part of their finances invested in War Loan and government stock. They can never function as fighting organizations on behalf of the workers—even if the desire were there, which it is not. Their main concern is: How to re-establish export trade—that is, how to set capitalism on its peacetime feet again?

Already we are being told that we must double our efforts, we must be prepared to make sacrifices if the old country is to regain its place among the nations. In a word, we must slave to maintain the capitalist system of restricted production and mal-distribution. The *Daily Cesspools* tell us that we can never go back to the pre-war standards of living. No, they are quite right; there is every prospect of our going back to something far worse. Pay-As-You-Earn has come to stay, and the self-styled economists tell us that we must expect the high cost of living to be maintained but we must not expect wages to rise. Nor would any such expectations be justified in a world of contracted markets. New forces are making their appearance, and workers must be prepared to meet such changed conditions. They must employ tactics suited to the change, and must take full

account of the corruption which has eaten out the vitals of the trade union movement.

They must learn the lessons of recent history; learn that they must never under any circumstances delegate their power into the hands of paid functionaries wedded to inaction by fear for their jobs. Workers must always keep the weapon of industrial direct action ready for instant use. Above all they must be prepared to fight labour politicians, for these are a real and ever-present danger. Unfortunately, they often enjoy the support of workers who style themselves revolutionary and on the extreme left. It is these adherents of the leadership principle, who believe in centralised direction, and so make strenuous efforts to get the workers interested in the mental disease of politics, we hope, in vain. As anarchists, we are confident that the workers are seeing that the story has been the same, not only in this country, but all over Europe. The loud mouthed trade union leaders have sought and sometimes gained political power, not to help the workers but to help themselves. When told so by the workers they claim to represent, they denounce such views as "cynicism", but it would be more correct to call it sanity—a sanity generated by disillusion and disappointment. But out of this disillusionment will come a knowledge, born of experience, that only they themselves can win emancipation. And their emancipation will be achieved not by voting or placing their trust in "leaders" and "representatives", but by taking the wealth they have made. The means of life, the factories and mines and cultivated fields, have been built by years of work, by hand and brain, of generations of workers. When workers operate these sources of life and wealth for the benefit, not of the few, but of the whole of the community, the day will dawn when man will be able to grasp the hand of his fellow, and see in his eyes the love of a comrade instead of the hate of a competitor.

MAT KAVANAGH.

Red and Black Notebook

THE NATIONAL UNION of Drug and Chemical Workers has adopted a post-war policy of advocating "share in control of industry through standing joint committees to deal with questions of production and efficiency"; a programme similar to that of most other unions. Of course "joint production committees" do not give any share (even the smallest) of control. Even Communist members of such committees are willing to admit this privately. Such committees are kept as talk shops and safety valves by the employers or, if they have any worth while information, used to get more labour from fewer workers. As to efficiency, what is meant is capitalist efficiency, and the most efficient capitalist is he who gets the highest rate of exploitation from his workers. I prefer an inefficient boss. A good example of an efficient employer is Ford, but no one enjoys working in the inhuman system known as Fordism.

There was a time when trade unions were sufficiently virile to discuss Syndicalist principles such as Workers' Control of Industry; now in their decay they parody this principle by discussion of "share in control".

Blacklegs On The Land

Many newspaper readers were surprised to read of Irish labourers earning £2 10s. a day piece work potato harvesting. It was no surprise to capitalist farmers or to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The Min. of Ag. and Fish, as it is popularly known, has tried to prevent the high earnings of gipsies and Irish migrant labour and guard against a possible harvest strike of regular farm workers by organising "farm holiday camps" of city workers at the cut price of a bob an hour.

The Young Communist League has, for three seasons, been active in recruiting such land scabs, issuing expensive posters as part of their blackleg campaign.

IN U.S.A. Too

The idea has been adopted by the employing class in the United States, particularly in the West. This has led the I.W.W. paper *Industrial Worker* to make the following thought-provoking statement:

"A group of Californian harvest workers met last month and agreed to ask permission from the government to have a vacation so that they could scab on the city workers who were busy scabbing on them. They want to leave the farms during July and August to the city scabs, while they go into the factories and get the wages normally paid to urban workers. Governmental agencies in the area have ignored this reasonable request, while keeping a sharp look-out for any worker who tries to escape from the farm."

Sweated Labour In The Office

Clerical workers in the Handley Page aircraft works, members of the wages office staff, in revolt against low wages, have issued the following statement:

TO THE WORKERS IN THE FACTORY FROM
THE STAFF OF WAGES DEPT.

We think you ought to know that the staff in our office is at present working for a salary upon which we defy anyone to make ends meet. On an average we get £2 5s. basic salary and a production bonus of 7/6d. in the pound, which usually makes our money up to about £3 5s. per week. If we are absent for part of the week through illness, WE LOSE THE WHOLE BONUS. Similar rates are being paid in the other offices, and this Committee declares that it is impossible to live on such pay.

This week we have made the following demand for basic rates of pay:—

16 & under	...	£2 p.m.
17 & under	...	£2 5s. p.w.
18 & under	...	£2 10s. p.w.
19 & under	...	£3 p.w.
20 & under	...	£3 10s. p.w.
21 & over	...	£4 p.w.

So far the Management have refused to negotiate collectively with us and in spite of repeated approaches from ourselves and the T.G.W.U. Organiser very little progress has so far been made.

We are fed up with waiting and hope to take more drastic action in the near future.

WE ASK ALL OF YOU TO GIVE US YOUR
SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT.

Wages Staff Committee.

An average wage of £3 5s., from which is deducted "social insurance" and income tax and from which fares to work must be paid means poverty in war-time London. How these workers manage to make ends meet when their pay is reduced to £2 5s. beats the imagination. The production bonus is likely to be reduced to vanishing point by the slow down of war production. In such circumstances the demand for a stationary basic rate seems needful. All things considered, the demands listed above seem to err on the side of extra caution.

Divided We Fall

The gloomy part of this business is that the office workers are traditionally divided from the "manual" workers, although they work for the same employer in the same building. The boss is always careful to nurse a stupid snobishness of clean hands against dirty hands, of black coats against greasy overalls. This snobishness is subtly encouraged by the educational system which also furnishes an ever increasing supply of cheap labour to the offices. The B.B.C., the press and the cinema openly encourage it. Any character used in the imaginative works of these three is portrayed as an idiot (as radio and British film portrayals of charwomen, domestic servants and navvies) unless he "goes to the office", receives a salary instead of wages and "goes out to business", not to work.

The first step for office workers must be to throw away this boss-nursed notion of office staff superiority and unite with their fellow wage slaves of the factory, pit and mill. Factory committees should represent *all* workers in the concern—skilled and unskilled, male and female, blackcoats and blackhands. The wages office staff of Handley Page's know that if such had been their condition their wages would have been double what they are at present.

Man Hunt For Miners

A.E.U. shop stewards in London have received the following sinister letter from their district officers. Stewards in other parts of the country are receiving, or are about to receive, similar epistles:

TO ALL SHOP STEWARDS

Dear Sir & Brother,

1944 NATIONAL COMMITTEE RESOLUTION
No. 50. EX-MINERS IN THE ENGINEERING
INDUSTRY.

I am in receipt of a communication from Executive Council requesting information regarding the number of *able bodied* ex-miners at present working in the Engineering Industry as dilutees. The information required is as follows:—

NAMES OF EX-MINER DILUTEES.
CLOCK OR CHECK NUMBERS.
NAME OF FIRM.

(continued on p. 16)

Letters from the Ranks

I find the soldiers' page interesting as a sounding board for the views and experiences of other servicemen, but on the whole a trifle disappointing. Too often the correspondence consists largely of complaints against the system, against individual commanders and repressive measures and so on—but many, I am sure, would welcome a rather more constructive tone in these matters. We all know that militarism and militarists are stupid, brutal, illogical, anti-social and a dozen and one other things. I need not go further than my own unit to find cases of gross injustice in the treatment of men for trivial offences, punishment of large numbers of entirely innocent men for minor breaches of discipline by a tiny minority who generally "get away with it" altogether, and so on. The military mind will always bludgeon its way along in this imbecile manner! It is time we lost *all* our illusions about it. The symptoms of the disease have long been recognised. Let us all get right down to the cure—mighty quick.

A. C. W.

Most of the fellows here are regular soldiers who have been repatriated after more than six years abroad. The majority of them hate the Army and would be willing to do anything short of murder to get out.

B. L.

Apart from personal ties, the attitude of civilians to the army at the end of a long war may well be one of distrust and distaste. The Army will have come to symbolize for them the hated war that they have so gladly seen ended. The soldier, too, will feel estranged from the social, industrial and intellectual environments whence he was taken six, seven or more years before. He will feel like a liberated prisoner thrust out into the midst of a City that has undergone many changes during his captivity. That he himself has had no hand in these changes, either to effect them or try to prevent them, will be vexatious to him.

Moreover, in the escape from, and in reaction to, a life of discipline very irksome to his nature, the average soldier may not want to settle down complacently in compliance with fixed authoritative rules. He has seen the stupidity and futility of Army regulations in their working; has observed how a "rule" conceived in the narrow mind of a superior officer, can be enforced with bleak consequences to his personal life. Therefore, he will be inclined to view the many civil Rules and Regulations as having been born in the same way, not seeing these as he has so often questioned among his friends the childish irrational army laws to which he had been lately subject. And if several millions of disgusted and disgruntled men begin questioning that civil authority so long accepted as sacred we may well look forward to interesting post-war developments.

I have never yet, in four years, seen any of that *esprit de corps* which a little pamphlet, sent me with my calling

up papers, prepared me to accept and rejoice in! But I have seen many fine examples of that Mutual Aid which must ultimately become the basis of social life. This made itself manifest even in little things, such as the voluntary bringing of meals for those sick, making the beds of those who might not be returning until after "lights out", the sharing out of cigarettes, and the "covering up" of one another's peccadilloes from the watchful eyes of Authority.

These and many more instances convinced me that if men can live so well in such a forced and unnatural state, how much better and more amicably would they live in a state of complete liberty!

I. O.

In the past I have carried on an extensive correspondence with people of different professions and beliefs and have recently found many of them voicing syndicalist beliefs. One or two have even advised me to read *War Commentary*.

C. B.

On Tuesday we attended a Common Wealth meeting. Being out of literature somewhat I could only sell one or two copies of "Trade Unionism or Syndicalism" and "Vote, What For?"

A. H.

Yesterday we went to a Commonwealth meeting in D. where we accepted some of their literature on the promise that they read some of ours.

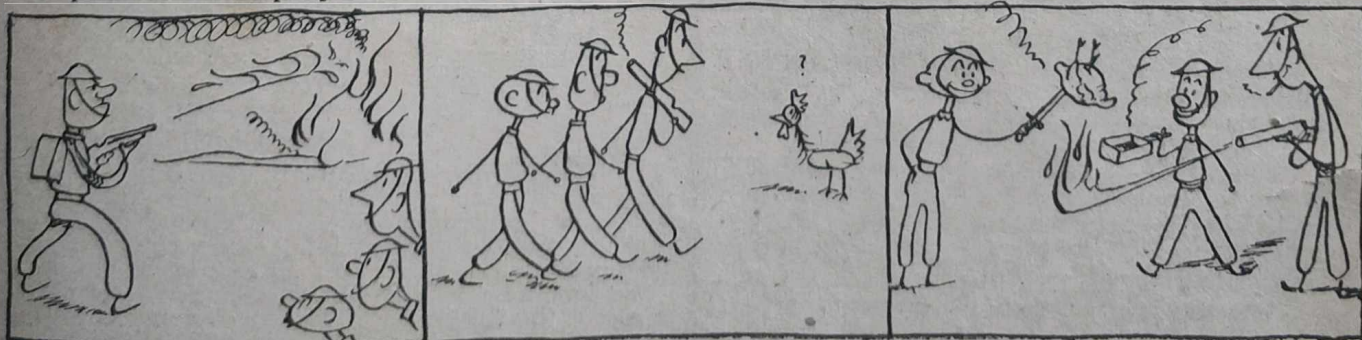
W. L.

At this camp there is a News Room and a Library where I plant all my F.P. pamphlets and copies of *War Commentary*. It is comical to see Malatesta and Kropotkin rub shoulders with trash like "Democratic Poland" and the wretched A.B.C.A. booklet and *War Commentary* keeping company with Hansard and *Picture Post*.

I. D.

I had an interesting discussion with a Naval officer who had just returned from a visit to Russia. "We could do with a bit of their discipline," he said, "There is much too much back-answering from the men." No more soldier soviets as in 1917, no more group discussions, discussions even among privates prohibited. Group complaints or complaints for others regarded as mutiny. The Commissar system abolished by Stalin. No wonder our officers admire the Red Army. How times change! In 1905 Lenin stole the anti-militarist slogans of the Anarchists, just as in 1917 he stole the slogans of the Social Revolutionaries in order to gain the support of the masses. I just came across a manifesto written by him in 1905 in which he formulates the demands of the Army.

(continued on p. 16)



The Newcastle Dockers' Strike

THE DOCKERS OF Newcastle Corporation Quay who have struck work have set the "big 'uns" a problem which is not being solved by the drafting of soldiers to their jobs. In the language of the Newcastle dockers the "big 'uns" have for years included, not only the Government and the employers, but, also, the officials of their union, the National Union of General and Municipal Workers. It will be noticed that most of the Newcastle dockers are not organised in the Transport and General Workers' Union as most other ports are.

Removing hatches is an old cause of war on the Corporation Quay. Newcastle is a piece work dock, some other ports are not. If a ship calls at a time work port, say Hull, the dockers will willingly lift the hatches (maybe an hour or two's work). All is grist to the time workers' mill. But if the ship, after discharging part cargo, puts in at Newcastle, the same request to lift hatches will be refused by the piece work dockers, who, being paid by the cargo, will have to lift the hatches in their own time. The result is that Newcastle dockers always refuse to lift, stow and replace hatches unless the proportionate extra payment is made.

Now, the trade union boss of the N.U.G. & M.W. (a union with permanent officials as unseatable as the king on his throne) is greatly upset. Major Mark Hewitson, national industrial officer of the union has hard words to say about the men whose contributions win his bread. The Galloping Major (sometimes greeted by a musical rendering of "Hi! Hi! Clear the way, here comes the Galloping Major!") has laid a heavy report against the dockers at the feet of the Ministry of Labour. The report says that "Newcastle is the blackest spot in the country for unauthorised and illegal trade disputes in wartime."

The Major, in the way of all majors, smells a plot by saboteurs and calls for police and narks. "The group responsible are saboteurs of the first order," he cries. "There is an organised front here that is worth investigation." Major Hewitson, trade union boss, sadly admits that the nasty rough "dockers of Newcastle are out of the union's control."

Now you know what unions are for! To control the workers for the boss. We told you. The Major uses the term "out of control" as though he were speaking of horses running headlong down Westgate Hill.

They will remain out of control. The dockers are risen from being the lowest paid and worst conditioned of workers to standards comparable to other workers, *by use of the strike weapon.* They will not relinquish it. Sorry Major.

GEORDIE.

(Continued from p. 15)

"Better food, better clothing, better living quarters, better pay, reduction of the period of military service and the daily exercises, the right to read and keep in the barracks all newspapers, freedom of conscience, equal rights for all nationalities, complete abolition of saluting outside of barracks, the abolition of officers' orderlies, the abolition of courts-martial, the right to defend oneself against the slightest attempt of a superior to strike a blow."

The C.P. discussion groups and agitators ought to ask the rank and file which demands it prefers, the modern C.P. "more war effort" or the above. By the way, how would our comrades formulate to-day the demands of the army?

M. P.

(Continued from p. 14)

DEPARTMENT.
APPROXIMATE AGE.
WORK EMPLOYED ON.
LENGTH OF TIME IN THE MINING INDUSTRY.
LENGTH OF TIME IN THE ENGINEERING INDUSTRY.

It would be appreciated if you would supply this information at your earliest convenience.

Yours fraternally,

J. REID,

London (North) District Secretary.

Red and Black Notebook gave a warning of this nearly a year ago. The intention is to hunt miners back to the pits after driving them out in the nineteen-thirties. Such examiners now have their homes in London. Must their homes be broken up to man hunt them back to the pits to cover the coalowners' greed and mismanagement? We will have none of it. Let the boss do his own dirty work.

SYNDICALIST.

WAR COMMENTARY

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