

WAR

For Anarchism

COMMENTARY

Vol. 3 No. 4

MID-JANUARY, 1942

Twopence

THE PRESENT APATHY

IT is a hard and stubborn fact that the present mood of the workers is one of apathy. Their hopes of the past three years have fled. The war was to be over by Christmas (1939 not 1949). Germany was isolated. The Luftwaffe had no petrol. The Germans were starving and on the point of collapse. The war was so easy, it would not cause the slightest disarrangement of our private lives. Now that fond hopes have fallen like ninepins the worker realises he is in for a long war or series of wars. The development of Japan's adventure may make the Anglo-German conflict look like a domestic quarrel and as the war takes shape the last treasures and comforts of life are snatched away. Goods rapidly disappear from the counters of the cheap stores. Onions and eggs are savoury memories and worst of all the beer is watered. Now the poorly fed, overtime strained worker is being forced into doing unpaid fire-watching as his serf ancestors ploughed their masters' fields. Even those highly ornamental railings, the outer palisade of the Englishman's castle, are being swiped without so much as "by your leave."

In other times he might have looked to his trade union for redress or, as in the previous war, have developed a semi-trade union organisation such as the shop stewards' movement. Now if he looks to the trade union he sees an official who is a cabinet minister or National Service Officer. If he looks to the shop steward he too often finds a "production committee" merchant who aspires to be the management's nark, a self-

appointed Gestapo, a puffed up Stakhanovite. Of course all stewards are not like that, but the most noisy man holds the stage. So the worker is left rather bewildered and helpless, his belly full of windy rhetoric, his mouth bitter from the ashes of dead hopes.

Considering all these, are we surprised at the general apathy of the workers? But apathy is not a lasting condition. As nature abhors a vacuum so must action dispel dull apathy and hope be born again. Life demands that. To be sure, before the working class again acts of itself much rubbish of a dead past is to be cleared away and chief among the litter are two illusions about the present character of trades unionism. One is the belief that militants can capture the trade unions and turn them into organs of class struggle. The other is the fable that trade unionism, as bad as it is, preserves a high wage standard.

The Government Rescues the Labour Leaders

As to the first, it is little known that the law can now prevent any change of leadership, rules or function within the trade unions.

"A measure which directly affects the trade unions as organisations was the Societies (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1940, which amended the law relating to trade unions, building societies and friendly societies."

"Before the introduction of the Bill there had been consultations between the

Registrar of Friendly Societies and the General Council of the T.U.C. During the war of 1914-1918, an act was passed "to empower the Registrar to suspend the obligation of various organisations, including the trade unions, to hold annual or other statutory meetings and it was thought that under the conditions of the present war a similar measure might be useful . . ."

"Accordingly, the effect of the Act (Societies Act 1940) upon trade unions was to improve the procedure for the transfer of engagements and to empower the unions to relax their rules and statutory requirements as to the holding of meetings and conferences and the appointment of officers."

("Labour in the War." John Price.)

So if the bureaucrats are ever in danger of losing their jobs they may appeal to the Registrar and all elections and meetings may be indefinitely suspended. The labour leaders support the state and the state supports the labour leaders. "United we stand" is the one lesson the bureaucrats have learned from the banners of trade unionism.

Do we need Careerists?

But if the state had not intervened in the interests of the labour leaders would it be well to send our men seeking trade union jobs? "Turn out the present leaders—elect militants" we are urged, but most of the present leaders began as militants—that is how they got the jobs. Men like George Hicks who began as a rebel industrial unionist and is now a minister of state or the militant of militants, the leaders of the Glasgow shop stewards in 1914-1918. Men like Gallacher a last war rebel—now the House of Commons echo of Churchill. Men like Kirkwood who, in the last war, began his career by insulting Lloyd George on a public platform and in this war speaks with rapturous praise on the Glasgow platform of Lord Beaverbrook, interlarding his speech with as many "his lordships" as a court flunkey.

It may be the men or it may be the job but about 99 per cent. of office seekers go like that. A trade union office or a seat in parliament are not the places to seek revolutionaries. The place of a real militant is at the bench, machine or coal face where

one's ideals do not conflict with one's job.

Nor must we suppose that the trade unions, even in our hands and led by revolutionaries, are so fashioned as to be weapons of revolt or instruments of social reconstruction. Trade unions with craft basis divide the workers against themselves; their coffin club function, by accumulating wealth, emasculates the labour movement. Their ponderous rules trip the feet of the struggling workers. Their long tradition of compromise and betrayal smothers the struggle. "But we could reform the unions" say the timid. The only effective reform is to rub them out and start all over again.

T.U.s a Brake on the Workers

As to the claim that trade unionism guards living standards and that without the unions wages would fall; this may have been true a few decades ago but not now; certainly not in the third year of the war. Look around—you will see many trades and industries well organised into unions and yet poorly paid; the miners and lesser grades of railwaymen are obvious examples. On the other hand millions of workers, by individual or group action, have won for themselves wages above the trade union rate. In engineering the trade union rate of piece work earnings is less than that of twelve years ago, but the real earnings are well above that standard. This has been accomplished, not by accepting the slave piece work standards of the engineering unions but by creating new standards. It is often said, in apology, these rates are only minimum rates, but if a rate is below standard it has no meaning. There is no such thing as a minimum rate, only prevailing rates count. If one is buying a commodity one does not ask "what are the minimum and maximum prices" but only "what is the price?"

So far from acting as a guarantor of high wages trade unionism acts as a brake upon the workers' efforts to gain a higher standard of life. When a group of workers seize an opportunity to screw a few more bobs out of their boss he immediately confronts them with a union agreement, usually an agreement signed during a depression. If two men, the policeman and the trade union official. Trade unions are the employers best safeguard against strikes.

(Continued on page 3)

Brief Comments

MR. EDEN SPILLS THE BEANS

THE government discovered in November 1939, that Hitler had been torturing and beating to death Jews and Left wing elements ever since 1933. So they published a White Paper on the Treatment of German Nationals in Nazi Germany. We anti-fascists who had known about Hitler's brutal regime ever since he came to power, were sceptical about this sudden change of heart, this new found indignation against horrors which every decent person had known about and been revolted by ever since 1933.

Our doubts about the government's sincerity have now been amply confirmed by Mr. Eden in his broadcast speech on his return from Moscow. After conversing with "Mr. Stalin," (who also, after two years of close alliance with Hitler, probably has a good deal of fellow feeling for the German dictator in his struggle against the German working class,) Mr. Eden made a plain statement. "The trouble with Hitler, for instance," he said, "was not that he was a Nazi at home. The trouble with him was that he would not stay at home." (Times. 5th Jan. 1942)

So it does not worry the government, after

What must we do?

The first step is to rid ourselves of the silly traditionalism that shackles us to the unions' dead past. The second is to be stirring in our places of work. Nothing but action can dispel apathy. The dormant one is the apathetic one. We must take up every struggle for wages or working conditions or against the petty tyranny now so rampant. We must not despise individual action, even one rebel is a living witness that man need not be a slave, but our chief work must be the gathering of groups in all factories, mines, shop and offices. Large groups if possible, small groups if we must but in all cases bodies of men and women who are willing to push back at the encroachments on their wages and liberties. The immediate future will give plenty of exercise to such units. Once started their numbers will grow. Once growing we can give them federation and aim; we can weld them into the Syndicates of the new British labour movement.

all, if Jews and socialists have been consistently tortured and beaten to death all through the six long years while they were were friendly towards Hitler. To governments do to their workers, so long as they keep them in order. But to the workers it does matter very much what happens to their fellow workers in Germany, or Italy, or Russia, or America, or India, or China and Japan. That is why we Anarchists who have always been anti-fascist, instead of only being so since September 1939, have urged the workers all over the world to stand together in solidarity to overthrow all their oppressors.

GIRL C.O. GAOLED.

IT is reported that Constance E. Bolam, aged 20, a domestic servant in Newcastle refused to take up work as a dining room maid at a Newcastle Eye Hospital to which she had been ordered by the Ministry of Labour. She was fined 40/-, but refused to pay, and was therefore sentenced to one month's imprisonment.

WEAR GAS MASKS OR LOSE SICK PAY.

BY an order of the Aberdeen Town Council, municipal employees are compelled to wear their gas masks between 10 a.m. and 10.30 a.m. on the first Monday of each month. If they refuse, they will lose the sick pay concession which the Council had agreed to pay employees injured by enemy action. This ridiculous piece of petty Hitlerism has been resorted to by the Town Council because certain "obstinate" employees had refused to obey an instruction to wear their gas masks. So freedom of choice again turns out to mean "freedom" to do what one is told by the boss.

AIRFIELDS and FREUD.

THE government has had to face considerable criticism recently regarding its conduct of the defence of important airfields. Since Freud tells us that no mistake is ever "accidental," the writer in the Scottish "Evening Times" (2.1.42) was presumably a critic of the Government when he wrote that "it is officially disclosed that the number of troops is "large," and it will be under the command of General Wavell, whose name is mentioned as the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied land and Air forces in the Pacific."

Land Community Ventures

SOME time ago, in a Supplement to War Commentary, we asked for information regarding Land Communities, with special reference to their social and practical aspects. The response to this request has been rather slight, but the following reports may be of interest.

The War Resisters' International (WRI) have assisted in the formation of a memorial farm to George Lansbury. The main object of this venture, according to our correspondent, is to provide work for C.O.s, and the results obtained seem to reflect this special object. Only one out of seven members has had previous experience of farming (in Canada). Capital was needed in order to start the venture off, and a fair amount of capital has been expended. It is hoped that the farm will eventually pay for itself, but at present—it has been going for just over a year—it is not yet paying its way fully. The community members including one domestic worker are paid a fixed sum per week (£1). The farm receives helpful co-operation from neighbouring farmers, and the members in return assist them with harvesting, ditching, thrashing, etc. It has received helpful and efficient advice from the War Agricultural Emergency Committee (Essex), which has made certain criticisms in order to conform with the Government's ploughing up policy. Our correspondent writes that their "brief experience seems to indicate that the Committee are helpful and efficient although a trifle officious." This probably arises from the fact that the Committee is mainly concerned with maximum productivity, while the community is principally interested in the welfare of C.O.s.

The Hollingthorpe Community has rather more interest for us, because its aims are more clearly of a sociological nature. Our correspondent writes: "This Community is an experiment in a new form of society which is desirous of establishing christian principles of human relationship. Insofar as this involves pacifism, renunciation of competition and exploitation, it offers points of contact with those of anarchical outlook. Such an objective implies being as self-supporting as possible and it is for this reason that it looks to the land for its main source of sustenance." There are four men and one employee farming 70 acres, 9 cows are fed from fodder grown on the farm, poultry are kept, and there are 2 acres of market garden. The members had no previous experience of farming, but "they are fortified with book knowledge, have the practical assistance of a paid employee and have received considerable assistance from the West Riding War Agricultural Committee and the Department of Agriculture at Leeds University." The community has approved all the technical advice given them by the W.A.C. All the members work at all the departments of farm work in a rota, so that all receive all round experience. We have no information regarding the questions of capital and relationship with surrounding farmers. This community seems to be an interesting experiment which, if continued, offers instructive light on the general problems of community.

We have only the broad outlines of its organization, but attention might be drawn to certain considerations to which George Woodcock adverted in his article in the January issue of War Commentary. This community hopes to justify its mode of internal organization by becoming a flourishing commercial concern; it is therefore a serious practical venture. But it will be interesting to see whether this practical aim will conflict seriously with the stated aim of renouncing competition and exploitation. Our correspondent does not explain in detail the status of the paid employee; there is of course a danger that his position will become anomalous as the prosperity of the concern increases. No doubt, however, the members are fully aware of this consideration. Competition for markets is probably less easily settled; there seems to be no way of eliminating it. Similarly, self sufficiency is an unattainable object for a purely land community, as Woodcock pointed out, while capitalistic control of land and industry generally persists.

Communities of this kind are, nevertheless, of considerable interest. We are inclined to think that their most useful contribution (assuming that they continue to be tolerated by authority) will be to demonstrate that co-operative effort can be a more effective stimulus to production than the wage system can supply. This has been demonstrated many times before, but these communities may help to make the fact more widely known. We are chiefly interested therefore in the internal social organization of such efforts; and we consider that success (insofar as it is possible within the limitations of community outlined by Woodcock) will follow careful consideration of this aspect primarily. The Hollingthorpe community seems to give some weight to these considerations and we wish them success in their tasks.

MEETINGS:

● HUDDERSFIELD

PUBLIC MEETING

Sunday, 18th January at 3 p.m.

SPEAKER: TOM BROWN

P. P. U. Rooms
19, John William Street.

Organiser: L. Hopkinson, 4 Kelvin Avenue,
Dalton, Huddersfield.

● GLASGOW

Inaugural Meeting

Friends of Freedom Press

Wednesday, 4th February at 7.30 p.m.

Anarchist Federation Rooms

127, George Street, C.1.

A.B.C. of Anarchism

LAW and GOVERNMENT

The following article is taken from Alexander Berkman's book "What is Anarchist-Communism?" It comes from the first part—that dealing with capitalist society. The Freedom Press will shortly be publishing the second and third parts of the book—those on Anarchism and Revolution—under the title "The ABC of Anarchism."

Yes, you are right: the law forbids theft.

If I should steal something from you, you can call a policeman and have me arrested. The law will punish the thief, and the government will return to you the stolen property, if possible, because the law forbids stealing. It says that no one has a right to take anything from you without your consent.

But your employer takes from you what you produce. The whole wealth produced by labour is taken by the capitalists and kept by them as their property.

The law says that your employer does not steal anything from you, because it is done with your consent. You have agreed to work for your boss for certain pay, he to have all that you produce. Because you *consented* to it, the law says that he does not steal anything from you.

But did you really consent?

When the highwayman holds his gun to your head, you turn your valuables over to him. You "consent" all right, but you do so because you cannot help yourself, because you are *compelled* by his gun.

Are you *compelled* to work for an employer? Your need compels you, just as the highwayman's gun. You must live, and so must your wife and children. You can't work for yourself; under the capitalist industrial system you must work for an employer. The factories, machinery, and tools belong to the employing class, so you *must* hire yourself out to that class in order to work and live. Whatever you work at, whoever your employer may be, it always comes to the same: you must work for him. You can't help yourself. You are *compelled*.

In this way the whole working class is compelled to work for the capitalist class. In this manner the workers are compelled to give up all the wealth they produce. The employers keep that wealth as their profit, while the worker gets only a wage, just enough to live on, so he can go on producing more wealth to his employer. Is that not cheating, robbery?

The law says it is a "free agreement." Just as well might the highwayman say that you "agreed" to give up your valuables. The only difference is that the highwayman's way is called stealing and robbery, and is forbidden by law. While the capitalist way is called business, industry, profit making, and is protected by law.

But whether it is done in the highwayman's way or in the capitalist way, you know that you are *robbed*.

The whole capitalist system rests on such robbery. The whole system of law and government upholds and justifies this robbery.

That's the order of things called capitalism, and

law and government are there to protect this order of things.

Do you wonder that the capitalist and employer, and all those who profit by this order of things, are strong for "law and order"?

But where do you come in? What benefit have you from that kind of "law and order"? Don't you see that this "law and order" only robs you, fools you, and just *enslaves* you?

"Enslave me?" you wonder. "Why, I am a free citizen!"

Are you free, really? Free to do what? To live as you please? To do what you please?

Let's see. How do you live? What does your freedom amount to?

You *depend* on your employer for your wages or

By

Alexander Berkman

your slavery, don't you? And your wages determine your way of living, don't they? The conditions of your life, even what you eat and drink, where you go and with whom you associate,—all of it *depends on your wages*.

No, you are not a free man. You are *dependent* on your employer and on your wages. You are really a wage slave.

The whole working class, under the capitalist system, is dependent on the capitalist class. The workers are wage slaves.

So what becomes of your freedom? What can you do with it? Can you do more with it than your wages permit?

Can't you see that your wage—your salary or income—is all the freedom that you have? Your freedom, your liberty, don't go a step further than the wages you get.

The freedom that is given you on paper, that is written down in law books and constitutions, does not do you a bit of good. Such freedom only means that you have the *right* to do a certain thing. But it doesn't mean that you *can* do it. To be able to do it, you must have the chance, the opportunity. You have a *right* to eat three fine meals a day, but if you haven't the means, the opportunity to get those meals, then what good is that right to you?

So freedom really means opportunity to satisfy your needs and wants. If your freedom does not give you that opportunity, then it does you no good. Real freedom means opportunity and well-being. If it does not mean that, it means nothing.

You see, then, that the whole situation comes to this:

Capitalism robs you and makes a wage slave of you.

The law upholds and protects that robbery.

The government fools you into believing that you are independent and free.

In this way you are fooled and duped every day of your life.

But how does it happen that you didn't think of it before? How is it that most other people don't see it, either?

It is because you and everyone else are lied to about this all the time, from your earliest childhood.

You are told to be honest, while you are being robbed all your life.

You are commanded to respect the law, while the law protects the capitalist who is robbing you.

You are taught that killing is wrong, while the government hangs and electrocutes people and slaughters them in war.

You are told to obey the law and government, though law and government stand for robbery and murder.

Thus all through life you are lied to, fooled, and deceived so that it will be easier to make profits out of you, to *exploit* you.

Because it is not only the employer and the capitalist who make profits out of you. The government, the church, and the school—they all live on your labour. You support them all. That is why all of them teach you to be content with your lot and behave yourself.

"Is it really true that I support them all?" you ask in amazement.

Let us see. They eat and drink and are clothed, not to speak of the luxuries they enjoy. Do *they* make the things they use and consume, do they do the planting and sowing and building and so on?

"But they pay for those things," your friend objects.

Yes, they pay. Suppose a fellow stole fifty dollars from you and then went and bought with it a suit of clothes for himself. Is that suit by right his? Didn't he pay for it? Well, just so the people who don't produce anything or do no useful work pay for things. Their money is the profits they or their parents before them squeezed out of you, out of the workers.

"Then it is not my boss who supports me, but I him?"

Of course. He gives you a job; that is, permission to work in the factory or mill which was not built by him but by other workers like yourself. And for that permission you help to support him for the rest of your life or as long as you work for him. You support him so generously that he can afford a mansion in the city and a home in the country, even several of them, and servants to attend to his wants and those of his family, and for the entertainment of his friends, and for horse races and boat races, and for a hundred other things. But it is not only to him that you are so generous. Out of your labour, by direct and indirect taxation, are supported the entire government, local, state, and national, the schools and the churches, and all the other institutions whose business is to protect profits and keep you fooled. You and your fellow workers, labour as a whole, support them all. Do you wonder that they all tell you that everything is all right and that you should be good and keep quiet?

It is good for *them* that you should keep quiet, because they could not keep on duping and robbing

you once you open your eyes and see what's happening to you.

That's why they are all so strong for this capitalist system for "law and order."

But is that system good for *you*? Do you think it right and just?

If not, then why do you put up with it? Why do you support it?

"What can I do," you say; "I'm only one."

* * * *

Are you really only one? Are you not rather one out of many thousands, out of millions, all of them exploited and enslaved the same as you are? Only they don't know it. If they knew it they wouldn't stand for it. That's sure. So the thing is to make them know it.

Every workingman in your city, every toiler in your country, in every country, in the whole world, is exploited and enslaved the same as you are.

And not only the workingmen, the farmer is dependent on the capitalist class. He toils hard all his life, but most of his labor goes to the trusts and monopolies of the land which by right is no more theirs than the moon is.

The farmer produces the food of the world. He feeds all of us. But before he can get his goods to us, he is made to pay tribute to the class that lives by the work of others, the profit-making, capitalist class. The farmer is mulcted out of the greater part of his product just as the worker is. He is mulcted by the land owner and by the mortgage holder; by the steel trust and the railroad. The banker, the commission merchant, the retailer, and a score of other middlemen squeeze their profits out of the farmer before he is allowed to get his food to you.

Law and government permit and help this robbery by ruling that

the land, which no man created, belongs to the landlord;

the railroads, which the workers built, belong to the railroad magnates;

the warehouses, grain elevators, and store houses, erected by the workers, belong to the capitalists;

all those monopolists and capitalists have a right to get profits from the former for using the railroads and other facilities before he can get his food to you.

You can see then how the farmer is robbed by big capital and business, and how the law helps in that robbery, just as with the workingman.

But it is not only the worker and the farmer who are exploited and forced to give up the greater part of their product to the capitalists, to those who have monopolized the land, the railroads, the factories, the machinery, and all natural resources. The entire country, the whole world is made to pay tribute to the kings of finance and industry.

The small business man depends on the wholesaler; the wholesaler on the manufacturer; the manufacturer on the trust magnates of his industry; and all of them on the money lords and banks for their credit. The big bankers and financiers can put any man out of business by just withdrawing their credit from him. They do so whenever they want to squeeze anyone out of business. The business man is entirely at their mercy. If he does not play the game as they want it, to *suit their interests*, then they simply drive him out of the game.

Thus the whole of mankind is dependent upon and enslaved by just a handful of men who have monopolized almost the entire wealth of the world, but who have themselves never created anything.

"But those men work hard," you say.

Well, some of them don't work at all. Some of them are just idlers, whose business is managed by others. Some of them *do* work. But what kind of work do they do? Do they produce anything, as the worker and farmer do? No, they produce nothing, though they may work. They work to mulct people, to get profits out of them. Does their work benefit *you*? The highwayman also works hard and takes great risks to boot. His "work," like the capitalist's, gives employment to lawyers, jailers, and a host of other retainers, all of whom *your* toil supports.

It seems indeed ridiculous that the whole world should slave for the benefit of a handful of monopolists, and that all should have to depend upon them for their right and opportunity to live. But the fact is just that. And it is the more ridiculous when you consider that the workers and farmers who alone create all wealth, should be the most dependent and the poorest of all the other classes in society.

It is really monstrous, and it is very sad. Surely your common sense must tell you that such a situation is nothing short of madness. If the great masses of the people, the millions throughout the world, could see how they are fooled, exploited and enslaved, as *you* see it now, would they stand for such goings on? Surely they would not!

The capitalists know they wouldn't. That is why they need the government to legalize their methods of robbery, to protect the capitalist system.

And that is why the government needs laws, police and soldiers, courts and prisons to protect capitalism.

But who are the police and the soldiers who protect the capitalists against you, against the people?

If they were capitalists themselves, then it would stand to reason why they want to protect the wealth they have stolen, and why they try to keep up, even by force, the system that gives them the privilege of robbing the people.

But the police and the soldiers, the defenders of "law and order," are not of the capitalist class. They are men from the ranks of the people, poor men who for pay protect the very system that keeps them poor. It is unbelievable, is it not? Yet it is true. It just comes down to this: some of the slaves protect their masters in keeping them and the rest of the people in slavery. In the same way Great Britain, for instance, keeps the Hindoos in India in subjection by a police force of the natives, of the Hindoos themselves. Or as Belgium does with the black men in the Congo. Or as any government does with a subjugated people.

It is the same system. Here is what it amounts to:

Capitalism robs and exploits the whole of the people; the laws legalize and uphold this capitalist robbery;

the government uses one part of the people to aid and protect the capitalists in robbing the whole of the people.

The entire thing is kept up by educating the people to believe that capitalism is right, that the law is just, and that the government must be obeyed.

Do you see through this game now?

TRADE UNION BLACKMAIL

Just outside London is a capitalist concern employing only Trade Union labour, male and female. It is a condition of their employment that they subscribe to the funds of the union for the usual benefits of support when unemployed and coffins when they are dead. Owing to the great call up other workers called "war emergencies" are sympathetically received by the Trade Union but denied the usual benefits *although they are compelled to subscribe the full rate*. No coffins for these workers or unemployment pay if their job should cease. Recently several enlightened War Emergencies refused to pay on the principle "no benefits, no pay." Who the hell wants to pay for nothing? The union beneficiary called the secretary who was soon on the scene with the shop steward who immediately filled their master's place and informed the objectors that unless they paid up they could have their cards. In other words Trade Union officials were prepared to do the dirty work of their masters, so corrupt has Trade Unionism become. We must pay for the right to work, must sacrifice our independence, must become subject to the tyranny of governments, politicians and Trade Union flunkeys with the active participation of the T.U. bosses.

J. P.

P.S.—Now, however, the "war emergencies" have obtained a concession in the shape of 6d. off their union subscription!

ANTON CILIGA

THE RUSSIAN ENIGMA

300 pp. (Originally published at 7s. 6d.)

Special Cheap Edition 2s. 6d. (post 6d.)

The author is a Jugo-Slavian Communist who went to Russia in 1926 to study the revolution at first hand. He remained in Russia until 1935 but the last five years of this time were spent in various prisons and concentration camps. Ciliga does not write with bitterness and reactionary disgust; he remains a revolutionary, but is profoundly critical of the Stalinist regime, which is responsible for the sufferings of the workers and peasants. But in particular this book ably describes the political persecution which is on a fantastic scale, and gives a direct description of prison life.

This is a book for the shelves of all revolutionary workers, and Freedom Press feel privileged in being able to offer this cheap edition. Order your copy while stocks of the book are available.

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PASSING THE BUCK

SENATOR INDICTS MALAYAN VESTED INTERESTS

The defeats in the Far East have been almost unanimously laid at the door of the Brass Hats. Brooke-Popham has been sacked to the accompaniment of ignominious and spiteful obituary notices by Lord Addison and others. On the other hand, Churchill blandly states in America that the defeats are due to the relative shortage of material in Malaya occasioned by the "greater necessities" of the Libyan Campaign. Since, however, Brooke-Popham is so manifestly a scape-goat, this explanation—apart from the fact that it makes the imputations of blame seem rather unjust—clearly suggests that there is something discreditable of a class nature behind it all. Senator Foll's declaration to the Sunday Express (4.1.42) indicates that as usual vested interests are to blame. "I think, frankly," (he said) "that people holding large interests in Malaya were themselves principally responsible. They were engrossed in

Through the Press

the big profits the war was bringing them and they resented even trivial taxation for the defence of their holdings. The Singapore Legislative Council had great difficulty in passing the first Income Tax Bill just before my arrival. It was only passed on the understanding that taxation would not exceed eight per cent. . . . It is only fair to say that when Air Marshall Brooke-Popham went to Singapore he stressed the need for stronger defences for all parts of the Empire."

If the inefficiency of the administration were to create so much unrest as to threaten the stability of the regime, Brooke-Popham would no doubt have to face a "Moscow Trial." Fortunately for him, things are not quite so bad as that, so he will only have to take a back seat for a while, like Sir Samuel Hoare did after the lamentable Hoare-Laval plan.

C.P. AGAIN DO THE JOB FOR THE POLICE

The C.P. in this country have issued instructions to their branches to "treat the Trotskyite Quislings as you would treat a Nazi!" In accordance with these instructions, sellers of the Socialist Appeal (The Trotskyists' paper) and of the New Leader have been subjected to varying degrees of hooliganism when selling at Stalinist meetings. Reports of such attacks have come from London, Liverpool and Birmingham, although the rough handling of a New Leader seller outside the Stoll Theatre on December 28th. has been rather naively denied by Ted Bramley, "following an enquiry."

Of course this is merely the usual tactics employed by the Bolsheviks towards any rivals, especially those with a programme for the working class. Their rivals on the political field (apart from the Labour Party who, with the Home Secretary on their side, have won the first round by suppressing the Daily Worker) are their first objectives, and this hooliganism may be regarded as an initial phase in the struggle for political power.

We have recently heard that some of our Anarchist comrades in the provinces have also been molested by C.P.'ers. It is clearly the aim of the Comintern to crush any revolutionary elements.

HOW MORRISON TREATS FASCISTS

Further comment on the treatment of Fascists in Holloway Prison was made in the House of Commons on its first sitting in the New Year.

Sir Oswald and Lady Mosley had been given a room in a separate block for married couples. "There was also a kitchen and two other rooms which might be used as a sitting-room and drawing room."

"There is nothing luxurious about it' said Mr. Morrison, 'But I did think it the right and humane thing to do.'"

News Chronicle, Jan. 2/42.

"THIS ENGLAND"

"King's Regulations provide that the first six bars of the National Anthem should normally be played *pianissimo*. Approval has now been given for these bars to be played *fortissimo*."

Captain Margesson in the House of Commons.

MALAY "AMNESTY"

In spite of the Anglo-Soviet Alliance some members of the Malayan C.P. were sent to terms of imprisonment some weeks ago (it was reported at the time in a recent issue of War Commentary). It is now reported that "the Communist Party in Malaya, hitherto an illegal society, has issued a manifesto to the workers which has been given official approval to the extent that the Department of Information has circulated extracts from it." (Manchester Guardian, 6.1.42)

This instance affords yet further evidence that the C.P. is regarded by the British ruling class only as a political rival, with whom it is perfectly possible to enter into an alliance. It goes without saying that alliances are quite out of the question between the ruling class and the working class, however simple they may be between the colonial administration of Malay and the C.P.

A MINISTER'S PLEDGE

Mr. Bevin had given the Labour Party a pledge that no conscripts under the age of twenty would be sent abroad. In spite of this Mr. Churchill asked the House to relieve the Government of the undertaking not to send any conscripts abroad under the age of 20.

SIGH OF RELIEF

The wage packet of the war worker has been examined under a Ministry of Labour microscope. It is visibly thicker.

That microscopic scrutiny is valuable. There has been a lot of sweeping talk about inflated wages, of millions of envelopes bulging on pay-day with twenty or thirty pounds, of people squandering money all over the country. The facts are less alarming. Five pounds a week is no extravagant reward for the labours of a skilled man. Women cannot buy mink coats and grand pianos on £2 4s. 4d. a week.

(The Evening News, 2/12/41)

Revolutionary Aspects of the War

SOME socialists—such as Huxley—have put forward the idea that the war itself and the economic changes which it necessitates are driving England towards Socialism. As examples of this tendency they cite the abolition of the First Class on the Railways, the limitation of profits in the war industries, and State intervention into various problems of private life, like education, housing, protection from air raids, etc.

The objection to this theory is that the same claims can be made by the Fascists themselves, and that none of the changes which Huxley and Co. glorify bring the slightest bit more liberty, independence or well being to the workers. This "socialism" is perfectly acceptable to Hitler—with the difference that in this matter, the German dictator was the pioneer!

This strange intellectual and labourite mentality, which is very widespread among social democrats and the reformist trade union movement, has produced curious results in moments of crisis. One has only to think of the betrayals of Leipart, Henri de Man, and Belin, to distrust this method of achieving socialism.

Being obstinate people, we refuse to believe that there is the slightest trace of human emancipation in the fact of working at maximum output, consuming as little as possible, and leaving the daily lives of millions of people in the hands of a State power over which they have no control whatever. Propaganda is certainly an industry which has reached a high degree of perfection, and possesses a remarkable technique . . . but there are some things which are really too much to swallow!

Instead of hoping, like Mr. Huxley, that socialism will spring from the disastrous defence of this moribund regime, we should attempt more modestly to discover the elements which can be of use to a revolutionary movement, in the light of the war itself, to draw the conclusions from the present situation. Mr. Huxley is the mouth-piece of British Imperialism and writes for readers of bourgeois papers across the water. We on the other hand address ourselves to the workers whose best militants

are in prison or concentration camps or are forced to work underground. The aspects of the war which interest us are therefore bound to be different.

In this war—mechanized, highly organized, technical—in which steel, coal, and petrol are the essential things, and in which millions of men are concentrated and drafted, one might logically have expected the complete disappearance of all individual initiative. The whole military technique of Germany, reflecting the technique of industry and expressing the change in the social leadership, must tend towards the suppression of the soldier in favour of the military unit; in the elimination of the worker in considering only the factory. It is no longer a question of flesh, brain, and nerve, but instead, statistics, schedules, and plans.

The Hitlerian conception of social, economic and military organization—a conception very similar to the methods of Stalinism and the "advanced" tendencies in the Democracies—has in part been tried out. But it remains none the less true that even the new technique is still dependent on the initiative, courage, and morale of some of the units of the vast machine.

As an example, the capture of the fort of Eben-Emsel, the key position in the defensive fortifications of Belgium, was not due to the battering of the heavy artillery, nor to the effects of heavy bombing, but rather to the handful of soldiers who risked crossing the stream which separated the two armies, entered a space near the fort where the guns couldn't reach them, and placed in position the charge of explosives which opened a breach.

Other examples are the improvised defence measures devised by the Asturian miners which have been since adopted by the Soviet General Staff; the dynamite cartridge and dynamite bombs for resisting the German tanks and armoured cars, which became a powerful means of defence against a highly developed technique. Even, again, the use of another primitive method employed in Spain, the incendiary petrol bottles which made it possible to advance in street fighting. These elementary tactics

demand courage and morale with nothing at all in common with barrack-room discipline or the close observance of the military code.

Other facts could easily be cited to prove that however high the degree of organization, looked at from any point of view, the element of individual morale still remain important, not to say the predominant, factor.

The Italian Army, which was provided with motorized equipment, was organized according to the new technique, and imbued with the same "blitz" formulas, nevertheless fled at every serious encounter. The tradition of desertion maintained itself after 20 years of Fascist training. The Russian Army, after many re-organizations, after being decapitated by political purges, and "purified" by the GPU, but without revolutionary roots, was heavily battered by the huge Hitler machine.

Taking into account its technical advances and its superiority in systematic preparation, the real strength of German expansion is due to the morale of the German people. And this morale is due to the social transformation effected since the overthrow of the Weimar republic, and to the relatively revolutionary character of Hitler's policy and to the enormous propaganda machine of the Third Reich. After the collapse of the German revolution and its submergence in a bourgeois and self-contradictory republic; after the treachery and somersaults of the workers' parties, the Nazi party has succeeded in giving a certain enthusiasm to the whole German nation. The youthful vigour of this propaganda, the speed with which it triumphed, increase still further its inherent strength.

This revolutionary character is undoubtedly very superficial; the disparity between speeches and actions is doubtless obvious enough; being reactionary and socialistic in turn; there is no doubt that we are dealing with a kind of swindle which has no genuine results; nor is there any doubt that the aspirations of the German people have been deflected into a caricature of socialism while the old hatreds and rancour accumulated since the Treaty of Versailles are methodically exploited. But the fact remains that compared with the decadent bourgeois democracies, German National Socialism takes on the character of a revo-

lutionary movement. And to try and fight it while still remaining on the basis of the old classical capitalism is to steer straight for defeat.

In the anti-Nazi struggle, the essential thing is to get at the minds of the German workers and soldiers. To imitate the German technique as the British and American "Democracies" try to do, is either to copy Fascism and destroy the liberal regime without any advantage to the working classes (and there will hardly be socialists who would recommend or permit this course being followed); or it is merely an advertizing stunt, a caricature without significance.

The destruction of the morale of the German masses can only be brought about by offering them something higher. To struggle against this morale by defending the Weimar Republic is a waste of time.

That is why we believe that the movements which are displaying resistance against the Nazis in Europe will have a chance of success only if they succeed in undermining the mental attitude of the army of occupation. If these movements attach themselves to Anglo-American Imperialism they will inevitably fail. But if they present a broader significance and offer a more generally acceptable solution both for the peoples who have been invaded and for the German people, they will be able to conquer. The Italian problem is different in the sense that no dynamic has ever really existed in Italian Fascism, except with the support of the Banks of the Democracies, and thanks to the weakness of the working class movements. The industrial condition of Italy has not allowed of the rise to power of a class of technicians but of a party bureaucracy with no social function.

The Russian reverses were only made possible by the cleavage between the new class in power and the initial revolutionary forces. The emigré refugees must undertake the same task as the movements now fighting in Europe. Hitherto their achievement has been nil, because they have only been pawns in the imperialist game, instead of concentrating their efforts towards participation in the social struggles within their own countries.

Such a policy cannot be initiated by ambassadors and ministers; it can only be born, re-born, and developed by the international revolutionary movement. It can only live and triumph through the movements which struggle against dying capitalism, and set up against the technocratic and state-worshipping Hitlerian caricature of revolution, the true revolution—internationalist and libertarian.

RIDEL.

**WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED WITH
YOUR COPY OF WAR COMMENTARY
PASS IT ON TO A FRIEND**

Our new Ally

"American Democracy"

WHEN a few months ago Hitler forced Russia to come into the war on our side the Republic of Soviets immediately lost its totalitarian character and became one of the great defenders of democracy. This metamorphosis must have caused some headaches to our journalists and politicians: the Russo-German pact was not very long ago nor were the Moscow trials. However it did not take our press more than a few weeks to endow Russia with all the attributes of a democratic country. All this work is superfluous as far as our new ally America is concerned. Their reputation of being a "great democracy" has never failed; not even when Tom Mooney was kept in prison nor when Sacco and Vanzetti walked to the scaffold. This belief is so deeply rooted in people's minds that stories of negroes being lynched, of trade-union members being beaten to death by the boss' hirelings always meet with incredulity. In spite of books and films describing the degrading life to which the negroes are submitted or the standard of starvation to which the unemployed and the evicted farmers are often reduced, America remains in the minds of the majority of people the land where workers go to work in a car and where prejudices of all kinds are abolished.

The great democratic reputation enjoyed by America in Europe for more than a quarter of a century is entirely due to this "American Myth." It is obvious that neither President Wilson nor Roosevelt could have commanded such respect—not only amongst left-wing petit-bourgeois but also among the workers—if the truth about the nature of American democratic institutions had been known. When Roosevelt recalled his ambassador from Berlin as a protest against the persecution of the Jews in Germany the democrats everywhere approved; but there was nobody to point to the persecution of the Negroes as brutal as those to which the Jews were submitted.

It is important to explode the myth; for too long the peoples of Europe have awaited for the voice across the Atlantic to guide them in the right path. To what limits

that voice will be allowed to guide us now depends on America's position in the war; her prestige and influence will increase in direct proportion to her victories in the Pacific and the output of her war industries.

Indifferent to that kind of consideration let us draw a balance sheet of America's fight for democracy at home up to the time of her entry into the war.

Measures against Labour

Like all countries fighting for democracy or preparing themselves to do so America has taken active steps to curtail the liberty of labour's organizations. Though no new anti-labour legislation was passed a serious blow was given to the right to strike by Mr. Roosevelt's method of sending the army to occupy factories where strikes were in process. The excuse given was "Our country is in danger." The greatest publicity was given to the strikes so as to give the impression that they paralysed the whole industry. In reality, according to Bruce Bliven, in the Manchester Guardian "*there have been fewer strikes in this period of sharply expanding industry and rising prices than ever before in the United States' history.*"

These strikes gave an excellent excuse to American capitalists to obtain anti-strike legislation. Democratic Isolationist deputies did not hesitate to resort to open blackmail in order to obtain such much coveted laws. When Roosevelt asked the House of Representatives to repeal the Neutrality Act Democratic representatives threatened to oppose neutrality revision unless the Government "puts a stop to labour dictatorships," thus making it clear that they were more anxious to crush labour unrest at home than to destroy the German navy in the Atlantic.

In order to pacify the democratic elements Roosevelt promised to consider anti-strike legislation. The Newspapers announced at the time that Roosevelt was considering an anti-strike programme to be modelled according to the plan in effect in Canada.

"Guarantee workers in the defence industries their present wage;

Guarantee them wage increases to meet any increased cost of living;

Demand from labour in return for these guarantees a pledge not to call further strikes in the defence industries."

The Army

The training of the army reflected also the anti-labour preoccupations of the ruling class. Instead of training the army to fight Japanese or German paratroops, recruits were trained in strike-breaking. Instruction in riot training was formerly restricted to state-controlled National Guard units. Recently training in strike breaking, riot duty, street fighting and handling of mobs was extended to the regular army—which included the new conscripts.

(continued from page 11)

George Seldes in the July 28th issue of *IN FACT* gives examples of camps where anti-labour manoeuvres are practised and quotes press releases describing the training to which soldiers are being submitted. "It is a fact, he says, that instead of training boys to meet panzer divisions with tanks and guns, the first training received by many thousands of new soldiers is how to smash labour disputes, occupy mines, factories and towns" and he goes on to remark that these methods are the same ones that the private army of Benito Mussolini used in the 3-year period before he took power.

A proof that the administration will not hesitate to use the anti-democratic legislation it has taken into its hands under the Smith Act of 1940 is given by the indictment before a federal grand jury of 29 C.I.O. leaders and Socialist Workers' Party members on a charge of "seditious conspiracy." Previous to this anarchists had been prosecuted and prevented from publishing their newspaper. The Editor of the old anarchist paper *Man!* Marcus Graham has been imprisoned and prevented from resuming the publication of the newspaper.

Will America go Fascist?

Before its entry into the war the United States seemed to have gone further on the road to fascism than Great Britain after two years of war. Will the state of war accelerate the movement or not? It will all depend on the attitude adopted by the labour movement and on the success attending the conduct of the war.

We know already that as soon as Japan had declared war on America the Trade Union leaders called off the strikes in progress and pledged their full support for the successful prosecution of the war. As a result Roosevelt seems to have put aside for the moment his plans for anti-strike legislation. As in Britain therefore the Trade Union leaders are prepared to sacrifice the interests of the workers. But war means rising prices and in spite of their willingness to sacrifice the workers Lewis and Green will be obliged to ask for a rise in wages. Just like Bevin and Co. here they will have to meet the demands of the workers to a certain extent. Will American capitalists be willing to sacrifice part of their profits in order to prevent violent struggles which would weaken the war effort or will they follow the road taken by the French ruling class who refused to make any room for workers' claims and a few hours after the war was declared established a dictatorship which had nothing to learn from the Italian and German regimes?

The example of France has taught the ruling class that it is important that the facade of democracy should be preserved or the people lose all interest in the war and refuse to fight. The American Government will probably remember the lesson and will be careful to take away the workers' liberties one by one and with a great show of "mediation," "arbitration" and such-like committees claiming to represent the opinion of the workers, the employers and public opinion alike but which in reality only serve the interests of the Government.

The American workers must not be fooled by these "democratic" methods. They must understand that as war difficulties increase, the democratic pretences of the Government will disappear and that they must defend their liberties and interests now before it is too late.

M.L.B.

Armando Borghi Arrested

ARMANDO Borghi has been arrested in New York and interned on Ellis Island as an "undesirable." Our comrade is the ex-secretary of the powerful Italian *Unione Sindicale*, and for years, inspired by revolutionary and anarchist teachings fought against the rising power of Mussolini's Fascists.

His arrest took place a few days before America came into the war against Germany. It is significant that the American "crusade for Democracy" should be preceded by the arrest of an old anarchist and anti-fascist militant. Borghi has fought for forty years in the Labour Movement. When he had to abandon the anti-fascist struggle in Italy, he carried it on from the U.S.A. His book "Mussolini Red and Black" sold several editions in America and England, and was one of the first to denounce the Italian dictator in his true colours as an enemy of the working class.

Errico Malatesta and Armando Borghi were the two most prominent figures in the Italian revolutionary movement. The first in the Anarchist Union, the second in the Revolutionary Syndicates. Unable to leave Italy when Mussolini took power, Malatesta was kept in prison in his own house and died after a few years. His body was thrown into a common grave, the fascists being afraid that even his grave would provide too much inspiration to the Italian workers. Now Malatesta's friend and companion in arms, Armando Borghi, is gaoled by the so-called enemies of Mussolini.

It is clear that Fascist and Democratic governments alike are the enemies of the genuine anti-fascist and revolutionary militants. It is for the workers to defend such fighters. It is for us and our American comrades to see that fear of the workers' anger prevents the governments from committing such acts.

Borghi's arrest has raised a storm of indignation and protest amongst the Italian anarchists and anti-fascists in the U.S.A., they will not permit one of their best militants to lie in an internment camp. They will not allow newly "converted" anti-fascists to suppress the liberty of a man who has fought all his life against oppression.

Books on Japan

There are no really penetrating books on Japan which are easily accessible. Nevertheless, in recent years a fair amount of matter has been published as a result of the Sino-Japanese conflict. The following notes on such books as are available may be of use to those wishing to find out something about the present conflict.

Freda Utley: "JAPAN'S FEET OF CLAY":
Faber & Faber, 1936, pp. 379.

AS indicated by the title, the author seeks to describe and explain Japan's extraordinary weakness in the economic and social spheres. Lack of raw materials, very limited industrial capacity, unbalanced industry, backward agriculture and, combined with this backwardness the troubles arising from an exceedingly high concentration of capital; general discontent and unrest among the peasants and workers. As a natural outcome of all these factors the author predicts a social revolution.

It is important to remember that the author supports China's national fight against Japan, and is in favour of a blockade of the latter by Britain and the U.S.A.—a reactionary attitude. The book is, nevertheless, very interesting as it seeks to explain policies and social structures as arising from economic motives.

We disagree also with the author's conception of the coming revolution. She compares Japan's position with that of Russia before 1905! The economic system of Japan, despite feudal remnants is definitely capitalist. A bourgeois democratic revolution can therefore hardly be possible. The author's views on Japanese fascism spring from the same erroneous conception.

Finally we must remark that her explanation of the attitude of the various capitalist countries towards Japan is, in our opinion, superficial. The fundamental unity of the capitalist system as a whole has not been taken into account.

Freda Utley: "JAPAN'S GAMBLE IN CHINA": Secker & Warburg, 1938, pp. 200.

THE question why the Japanese workers do not overthrow the Government instead of following its policy of aggression, cannot be answered correctly from a consideration of internal factors only. The question is bound up with the attitude of the other components of the world working class. With reference to the Sino-Japanese war, this question immediately suggests the similar one—why do the Chinese workers join with their own bourgeoisie for the purpose of the war instead of revolting against it?

We have already seen that Miss Utley does not concern herself with this question. Nevertheless her book does contain a few truths about Chiang-Kai-Shek, the butcher of the Chinese proletariat, and his "communist" supporters. She evades the issue by the classical lesser evil method. There is some material in the book for those interested in the conditions and feelings of the exploited masses of China and Japan.

Tanin and Yohan: "MILITARISM AND FASCISM IN JAPAN," Lawrence and Wishart, 1934. Out of print.

THIS is a thorough account of the military and fascist movements in Japan, based on Japanese documentation, by two Soviet orientalists. It is a unique sound book.

Information is also given about the trade unions, and political and economic movements of the workers and peasants; but never in a detailed manner. It is treated as an accessory where required for the understanding of the main subject. The political conceptions are, of course, communist. Karl Radek in a preface, discusses the question of Japanese Fascism. Contrary to the opinion of the authors, he considers that Fascism rules in Japan. The book contains the usual communist slanders against anarchists.

Tanin and Yohan: "WHEN JAPAN GOES TO WAR," Lawrence & Wishart, 1936.

THE authors believed that a Russo-Japanese war was imminent. Again it is a thorough study. The desperate situation of Japanese capitalism and the deepening of its contradictions in the course of a war are dealt with. The objective conditions for a revolution are considered. Subjective conditions are not considered at any length. It contains much useful material. They make an acute analysis of Japanese statistics, which has, however, in view of changed conditions since the book was published only a methodological value.

Royal Institute of International Affairs: CHINA AND JAPAN," O.U.P., pp. 162. 4s. 6d. also

Sir F. Whyte: "JAPAN'S PURPOSE IN ASIA," pp. 61, 1941. 1s.

A NEAT and complete exposition of the history of foreign relations, and economic and political facts connected with them, provided with good maps. Up to date (June 1941).

The trouble with books of this kind is that one has the impression after reading them, that one has acquired an understanding of foreign policy. In reality, no useful explanation has been given. Revolutionists go to the root of the matter, whereas bourgeois historians merely describe outward appearances. The dividing line between the two attitudes is shown in consideration for form or for content. The lack of content is more obvious in these last mentioned works than in the previous ones. The real value of both books is the comprehensive résumé of events.

Union of Democratic Control: "THE EASTERN MENACE: THE STORY OF JAPANESE IMPERIALISM," 1936, pp. 95. 6d.

A BRIEF and useful account of Japan's economic, political, and social movements, of her aggression in China, a chapter on the Mongolian Republic, one on China, and finally, a few pages on the imperialist struggles in the Far East.

We do not wish to repeat criticisms, nor to emphasize errors, which may be due to lack of space. Mention must be made, however, of the fact that the paragraph on social democratic and trade union movement is very vague and does not make it clear that these organizations differ considerably from Western organizations of similar names. The account of the Mongolian people's republic and the Chinese Soviets should be regarded with the utmost caution, in view of the fantastic tales and downright lies of Russian propaganda concerning them, which have been exposed by reliable specialists.

D.S.

GALLACHER ON CONSCRIPTION

Willie Gallacher, the Stalinist stooge in Parliament, recently got up in the House of Commons to approve the new Conscription Bill, declaring himself in favour of the conscription of M.P.s. When a member asked how old he was, he said he would be 60 on Christmas Day.

During the last war, he expressed a different view—he was still in his thirties then. In his book "Revolt on the Clyde," he says "I remember speaking at a meeting on Glasgow Green and drawing attention to a speech of Churchill. He had been talking about me, I said, and I didn't like what he had to say. His words had been 'We will sacrifice our last shilling and our last man' One of the workers present interjected, 'You're wrong, Willie, he wasn't talking about you, he was talking about himself'"

BUSINESS ETHICS AGAIN.

The Industrial Worker, the organ of the IWW in Chicago a short while before America entered the war reported a short homily on business ethics given by the publicity director, Mr. Lyman, of the Standard Oil Co. "We must assume an international point of view in this matter"—the matter of sending oil to belligerents—"As a private enterprise we cannot proclaim any boycott of our own. We sell to anyone who wants to buy and can pay us." He went on to declare that with regard to the relations between the company and the Fascist states, oil is sold on Tenerifa, and the company was unaware whether it is afterwards transported to Germany or Italy. He added that if transport were effected, it would be entirely the fault of the British blockade.

Nevertheless in spite of the above ingenuous account we were not altogether surprised to read in the Evening Standard for 16.12.41, that "The German-controlled Condor airline . . . suspended operations when Standard Oil at Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires refused to supply further petrol . . ." At the same time the Italian Lati line to Rome has also been suspended. So it seems they were aware after all. And yet one is sometimes admonished for saying that capitalists are liars!

From Our Readers

OPEN LETTER TO THE BRAINS TRUST Any Questions?

Dear Sir:

Certainly!—

1. Can anyone explain why Sir Walter Citrine's best-seller "My Finnish Diary," has been re-issued for publication, in view of the fact that the original issues of 1940, contained some decidedly uncomplimentary remarks about the activities of those whom the B.B.C. now terms, ad nauseam (presumably for the same reason that songs are "plugged") "Our Allies"? I have not yet seen the re-issue of "My Finnish Diary": has it been "purged" of embarrassing material and brought up to date to conform with the latest twists and turns of power politics?

2. Can anyone explain to the satisfaction of listeners what the present Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill, meant in early 1940 when he broadcast (by kind permission of the B.B.C.) the following opinions?—

The service rendered by Finland to mankind is magnificent. They have exposed for all the world to see, the military incapacity of the Red Army and of the Red Air Force. Everyone can see how Communism rots the soul of a nation; how it makes it abject and hungry in peace, and proves it base and abominable in war.

3. The ability of ex-lawyer Roosevelt to prove by rhetorical dialecticism that black is white is patent enough. But how does Mr. Churchill reconcile the assertion (vide the Archbishop of Canterbury) that "we are on the side of God," with his own remark in another broadcast, of April 27, 1941:

"There are less than 70,000,000 malignant Huns, some of whom are curable and some killable . . ."

Can any member of the Brains Trust imagine God giving utterance to such sentiments?

4. Who wrote the following?—

"From his youth up Mr. Churchill has loved with all his heart, with all his mind, with all his soul, and with all his strength, three things—war, politics, and himself."

5. (To be addressed to Dr. Joad personally):—

"WHY WAR?"

Pertinently yours,

T. J. E. WARBURTON.

GAOLED FOR "BAD TIME KEEPING."

John Thomas Davis McGuinness, aged 18, was sent to prison for one month with hard labour at Newcastle for bad time keeping. He was said to have lost 46 hours a week on an average, and was charged under the Essential Works Order. McGuinness stated that his basic wage was 32/- a week, and his income tax papers showed that he had earned an average of £2 a week, so that he could not have lost much time . . .

OUR ACTIVITIES

We are pleased to be able to renew our reports of activities in various localities, having had to postpone these recently owing to lack of space

LONDON

Hyde Park.

We have continued to hold meetings here every Sunday and most Saturdays, and, in spite of some wintry weather have had some good crowds. Frederick Lohr and Tom Brown have been our mainstays on the platform, and have capably dealt with the many and varied questions from the audiences. It is noticeable that to-day 'Jingoism' is almost non-existent, apart from the kind displayed by a small but very vocal section, which perhaps we should call 'Stalingoism.' However, the majority are willing to give the Anarchist case a good hearing, and literature sales are maintained by a hardy and determined group of sellers.

Conway Hall.

Frederick Lohr's series of lectures on Anarchist philosophy are being very well attended, and a good meeting is expected on the remaining Sunday—25th January.

West London

A strong group in this area is rapidly materialising, largely through the enthusiastic work of Bill Gape. At a discussion in Hammersmith on 6th January it was decided that, in addition to arranging meetings, discussions and debates, social activities should also be organised. All comrades and enquirers are encouraged to call at 15, Poplar Grove, Hammersmith, where they will be welcomed at any time. Telephone SHEpherds Bush 2854.

A public meeting was held by this group at East Acton Co-op Hall on 14th January: speakers Mat Kavanagh, Bill Gape and Fredrick Lohr on the subject "Freedom for all the World's Workers." We hope to report on this in our next issue.

Peckham.

Several old comrades have made contact with the F.F.P. group, which continues to meet every Monday evening at 158, Queen's Road, S.E.15 at 7.30. On the 9th February there will be a special "Introduction to Anarchism" meeting, when comrades are asked to bring along as many friends as possible—preferably if they have not attended previously.

Kingston.

14th January was also the date of a meeting addressed by Tom Brown at Kingston Hotel on "The War—Now and After," of which we also hope to publish details.

The local F.F.P. group will meet every Wednesday at the Dart Room, The Fighting Cocks, London Road, Kingston, commencing on 22nd January, and an interesting series of talks and discussions is being arranged. Details can be obtained from T. W. Brown.

HUDDERSFIELD.

A good send-off for the F.F.P. in this district is anticipated on 18th January, when a public meeting will be held. The organiser is Larry Hopkinson, 4, Kelvin Avenue, Dalton, Huddersfield, and as many Yorkshire comrades and sympathisers as possible are encouraged to get into touch with him.

The Real Wastage of Man Power

THE social organization proposed by anarchists is frequently dismissed by its superficial critics as being 'too complicated.' The present discussions and evasions about Man-Power are throwing some light on the grotesque inefficiency and criminal waste of the productive power of the community which, under capitalism, and especially in war, maintain millions of men, women and children in poverty and want.

Consider the question of rationing—supposed to be a means of distributing scarce commodities equally and justly. Those who cannot afford to pay the enhanced price of butter and bacon, for example, have to do without their "portion." Anarchists would divide all scarce necessities equally and distribute them free. There would be no question of being unable to afford them, and the black markets (whether illegal or the legal kind—the expensive restaurants where those who can pay, can eat meat three times a day if they wish) which flourish so brazenly to-day, would be eliminated. Yet while debates and resolutions about man power are being solemnly conducted, no less than 30,000 policemen, who could and should be employed in useful productive tasks, are engaged in "detecting" the black merchants. In order to see that no one escapes Bevin's call ups, thousands are taken on to swell the ranks of parasitic workers who work in the Labour Exchanges. Many manufacturers of peace time goods have no wares to sell to the public. But that does not prevent them from using up a considerable proportion of what little paper there is to advertise them. You can't buy the stuff but "manufacturers must keep their products in the public eye." Meanwhile thousands of people are employed on this wholly unproductive business, which, under a rational economy, would not exist. Finally, "twenty-five thousand men and women, thousands of whom are under thirty, are employed in the income-tax offices" (A. L. N. D. Houghton, quoted in New Statesman, 10-1-42). Capitalism and any other system which maintains a Government with its army of bureaucrats, policemen, armed forces, gaolers, middlemen and a whole host of unproductive trades, wastes more man power than any socialist or anarchist could conceive possible. All these non-producers live on the backs of those workers who are engaged in producing the means whereby the population feeds clothes, and shelters itself. And then they have the callous cheek to declare that poverty and want are inevitable "because of over population."

OXFORD.

We are pleased to report the formation of another F.F.P. group here, and their first meeting will take place on Sunday 1st February. Will all those interested please contact Desmond Fenwick 64a, High Street, Oxford, who will supply details about the meeting.

CHELTENHAM.

The F.F.P. group meets fortnightly on Thursdays—the next one being on 15th January, but as the existing organiser will shortly be moving from the district, we shall be glad if everyone requiring information will communicate with us at 27, Belsize Road, N. W. 6.

A Step Forward!

EVER since "Revolt" ceased publication and was incorporated, together with "SPAIN and the WORLD" in "WAR COMMENTARY," it has been our aim to come out as a fortnightly again. Although our influence in this country over the past few years has been steadily increasing we have still been unable to issue our paper as often as we used to during the Spanish War. There are various reasons for this, but the principal one is obvious. "SPAIN and the WORLD" was the only paper in this country which defended the Spanish Revolution, and brought the work of our Anarchist comrades in Spain to the notice of the British workers. Hence it was immediately popular and quickly achieved a large circulation; hence we were able to appear fortnightly and were also obliged to come out with supplementary numbers and pamphlets.

The defeat of the Spanish revolution by the internal and external forces of reaction, and then the outbreak of the present war brought discouragement to many of our readers. Nevertheless, during the past five months we have been compelled to augment our monthly paper with a mid-monthly supplement. This partly covered our needs, but it also brought difficult problems for the Editors and for our sellers. After a discussion with many groups and comrades it was unanimously agreed to retain the small format and come out every fortnight with sixteen pages.

This can only be done, however, by limiting to a certain extent the number of copies printed, which implies a more careful distribution of the paper. We shall no longer be able to allow booksellers and groups to take the paper on a sale-or-return basis; we

cannot allow a single copy to be wasted, and we urgently ask our comrades to sell all the copies they receive from us, and to ask those who buy from them to pass their copy on. Each copy of WAR COMMENTARY should be read by at least two or three people, so that even if the number of copies is decreased, the circulation will actually have increased.

By coming out twice a month, WAR COMMENTARY will be able to devote more space to news items and theoretical articles. We shall also be able to give more news about the activities of the movement, and perhaps include cartoons, etc.

Although our sellers will now have only one paper to sell instead of two—the 16 pp. WAR COMMENTARY and the Supplement—they will have only two weeks instead of four in which to sell it. They should therefore organize their selling so as to cover the greatest number of meetings while at the same time arranging to sell at least once in the fortnight at the factories and stations.

Although the retail price of the mid-monthly paper will now be twopence instead of a penny, the subscription rates will remain unchanged, at least for the present. But we must emphasize that this new venture will place an even greater strain on our financial resources (We are determined not to raise the price of the paper unless it is absolutely necessary; but we must point out that the rise in costs has compelled many other journals to raise their selling price, or reduce their output of reading matter. So far

from adopting the latter course we have endeavoured to increase the amount of matter, by reducing the size of print, economizing space etc.) Furthermore, the entry of

America into the war will almost certainly curtail the support we have hitherto enjoyed from American comrades. We therefore appeal to all readers and comrades to send to our Press Fund as much as they can possibly spare. They will thus enable us to keep the paper going and also permit of the publication of more pamphlets and other literature. Even the smallest amounts help in this way. But we also appeal to all comrades to go all out to get us new subscribers, and to spread our pamphlets as widely as possible.

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