

WAR

For Anarchism

COMMENTARY

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Twopence

“Work Harder!”

WHENEVER Britain's ruling class suffers military defeats it raises the cry to the workers of “Work harder”! The responsibility for “increasing production” is passed on from the government and the employers down to the managers and foreman and production committees, until it finally reaches the workers themselves. They can't pass it on to anyone else! The employers use the meanest tricks, like sending R.A.F. pilots into the aircraft factories to appeal for harder work.

The workers cannot increase production just because they wish to. They do not control production, and the employers who do, limit the amount of work so that if an individual does succeed in increasing his output, others will be taken out of production for the army or futile government jobs. The aggregate of production remains the same.

But it should be noted that the Left—the C.P. and others—echo this “work harder” cry of their conservative masters. Thus Cripps declared to a working class crowd last Sunday that “if we had worked harder we should not have been defeated in Libya.”

The military defeats are not the result of lack of working class energy—we repeat, it is not the workers who control production. Defeats are the result of ruling class inefficiency and selfishness, and the impossibility of reconciling the ever-growing contradictions of capitalism—particularly in its modern form of Finance-Capital.

The owners of the rubber plantations in Malaya would not apply a scorched earth policy. The government sent inadequate supplies and reinforcements, so that when the defenders of the peninsular retreated to

Singapore they still lacked sufficient air support.

British capitalists evade EPT and sabotage production in the interests of profit. Even while the rubber of Malay and the East Indies falls into Japanese hands the vested interests of the plantation owners prevent the development of a synthetic rubber industry which would nullify such setbacks. At the same time the export capitalists prevent the expansion of British agriculture for fear of losing markets after the war, and so expose the British people to starvation and consequent defeat. Such people are incapable of waging a war against Fascism. It is no wonder that the Bombay banker, Sir Victor Sassoon, is reported as saying that “there was the choice of copying totalitarian methods, in part at any rate, or of going under.” (Evening News, 7.2.42). More and more this solution will appeal to the most powerful controlling groups. They are interested in destroying economic competitors, and, as their record shows, have no objection to fascism itself.

But if the effete ruling class are incapable of fighting fascism without wishing to embrace fascist methods themselves, the workers are very much interested in fighting fascism wherever it develops. At present they are shackled by fetters imposed by the needs of capitalist profit seeking. In order to fight fascism and all other oppressions and injustices they must throw off the capitalist yoke here and now, before the British capitalists strangle their efforts entirely and hand them over tied hand and foot to victorious fascist power as their former Vichy collaborators did. They must them-

selves seize control of the factories, mines and land, and then call on their working class comrades in all countries to join them in the task of overthrowing governmental oppression everywhere.

CRIPPS.

With the example of Morrison and Bevin pulling Tory chestnuts out of the fire, it is not altogether surprising that Cripps turned down Churchill's offer of the Ministry of Supply. He obviously does not wish to join in with this moribund government, and so tarnish his political future with its record of failures.

Meanwhile, however, his reputation as a "realist," a man who gets things done, has made him say a few things "out of turn" last week end. Our victory peace plans must be made now, he urged, "before the Russians get to Berlin. If we do it now we shall be less out of the picture" (Reynolds News, 8.2.42). In other words, Britain has got to look out in case it is Stalin and not Churchill who dictates the peace terms and allots the winnings. We do not share Cripps' wishful optimism about ultimate Russian success, but his suggestions indicate the nature of our "complete and absolute alliance" with the Soviet Union. Allies for purposes of fighting Germany, they become competitors when it comes to sharing the spoils!

But Cripps also had some hard things to say about the future work of the Comintern. To the disappointment of our "revolutionary" adherents of Stalinism, it appears that this outfit is to go on holiday. Under the heading, "Soviet will not export Communism, says Cripps," the Daily Express (10.2.42) says that "the former British Ambassador to Russia, is convinced that the Soviet Government has no desire to interfere with other governments of Europe. 'It is impossible to introduce the system and methods of one country into any other country'" said Cripps. He added that "people are inclined to be afraid of the spread of Russian ideals. The danger is greater if we are in hostile than if we are in friendly relationship." So the alliance is also to protect us from the "ideals" (we use his term) of the Soviet Government!

BEAVERBROOK and MACMILLAN

Beaverbrook, one of the most powerful capitalists in Britain has moved on to the Ministry of Production. We shall see if he can make his class confederates relinquish

Betteshanger Strike

THE strike ended with the colliery owners, Pearson and Dorman Long, agreeing to pay the amount by which the miners' money fell short of the Minimum Wage—although it should be pointed out that it was paid "ex gratia" and "without prejudice"; presumably in order that this should not jeopardise any action by the Company in the future. Also, it should be pointed out (contrary to the impression given in some papers)—no money was paid for the time the men were on strike.

The decision to return to work was made after several hours discussion, during which D. Grenfell, Minister for Mines, urged that by returning the miners would strengthen his hand when proposing the release of their three leaders by the Home Secretary.

Now that the leaders have been released, this must automatically lead to a cancellation of the fines imposed on the men, as both the gaol sentences and the fines were imposed under the same Defence Regulation. No mention of the fines has, however, so far appeared in the national press.

Although the miners are to be congratulated on the result (apart from the fact that they lost a considerable amount in wages) they should not lose sight of the fact that the Government was in this case no doubt concerned with the loss of output during the strike, and for that reason adopted a conciliatory attitude. When there is no "national emergency" to consider, as has been found in the past, the clash of interests between the owners and employees becomes sharper. Whilst they are able to do so, let all workers consider how they may best organize in order to not only so safeguard their day to day interests, but to seize the earliest opportunity of gaining their freedom from all exploitation—by taking control of the means of life themselves and using them for the common need of all.

their profits in order to increase production.

Macmillan, who has taken over the Ministry of Supply, was an opponent of the Munich policy and a critic of the Chamberlain regime.

But the tying up of production, as we have seen is a question of the rivalries within the capitalist class, and their inability to preoccupy themselves with anything other than profits. Since Mr. Macmillan is related to the Duke of Devonshire, is a member of the Colonial League, an organization for the defence of British Colonial concerns, and has interests in the G.W.R. it is clear enough that he, too, is merely part of the machine. These "new" appointments will make no difference. We reiterate that the only way to fight fascism is for the workers to control and organize production under their own direct control. It is not the men of Munich alone who form Hitler's Fifth Column, but the whole capitalist class. Only by the overthrow of class society itself can the workers release their hands for the destruction of fascism.

A Red and Black Notebook

THE completion of the air-raid shelter programme, the prohibition of house building work and other causes are throwing out of work thousands of building workers. In London hundreds of bricklayers are unemployed.

Yet these men could easily find work elsewhere if they were free but instead find themselves tied to the trade by Bevin's Essential Works Order. Freedom is superior to bureaucracy in adjusting human relationship.

THE BOLSHEVIKS ARE PUZZLED

"ONE thing that puzzled the Soviet delegates in Britain was that strikes could take place at this time," said Sir Walter Citrine at Maidstone (*People* 25/1/42) Puzzled! Of course any remnants of freedom which the workers of this country hang on to must puzzle the men who run the O.G.P.U. and the concentration camps.

THE WAR PARTY

SIR Walter went on to say of the labour movement "We can be charged by other sections of the community as being one of the organised sections that demanded war. No one can say that we did not enter this war with our eyes open."

Yes, they are the war party but when the slaughter ceases and the labour leaders address meetings of the homeless, the cripples and the bereaved will they boast of their demands for war or will they, as after the war of 1914-1918, claim to be the party of peace?

IN MEMORIAM—THE 8 HOUR DAY

AT the beginning of this century the trade unions demanded an eight hour day but we have progressed since then. "It has been decided that the hours which gave the best results were 55 to 60 a week," said Citrine. Join the union and get a 10 hour day and no Saturday afternoon off.

THE PEOPLE'S WAR

"IF I had my way, I should pay the men in the Forces £10 or £12 a week and give some of these munition workers in sheltered occupations 15s. a week." said Mr. T. E. Carpenter (Chairman) at Hendon Police Court (*Star* 26/1/42)

We believe the latter part of your statement Mr. Carpenter, but whom are you fighting, the Germans or the munition workers?

GLASGOW CORPORATION

—T. U. RIGHTS DENIED

ANARCHISTS have persistently declared that state capitalism (nationalisation or municipal ownership) can be just as hard an employer as the private capitalist. Nor does it happen differently when the Labour Party administers the state machine, but we did not expect corroboration of our case from trade union officials.

Under the above title Robert Allan an Amalgamated Engineering Union organiser states, in his January report. "I spent many years working to

create a Labour majority on the City Council. My ideal was a Council which would hear and voice the demands of the workers with a view to giving practical assistance towards helping them to realise their desires. I quote two items with this comment. Did we fight for democracy or bureaucracy?

1. Along with D.C. delegate met Executive of Glasgow Trades Council. The refusal of the Corporation to allow claim to proceed for arbitration was explained and assistance requested in order to expedite the settlement of a long-delayed wage claim.

2. Reply from Health Committee advising me that, as there is no question of demarcation, there is no necessity for our meeting. Further letter sent to Town Clerk asking Corporation to rescind the decision of the Public Health Committee refusing to meet deputation. Reply from Town Clerk refusing to put our letter before the Corporation."

SHOP-STEWARDS IN SHACKLES

THE Bevin scheme to tame shop-stewards by setting up joint committees of stewards and factory managements completes the degeneration of the trade unions. Even the lower organs are to go the way of the leaders. The function of the committees will be the discussion of methods of increasing production. In other words getting more work done for less wages paid. The "workers' representatives" will have no part in the management of industry. They will be cats-paws.

The idea is not new. The United Society of Boilermakers and other unions, on 21st March 1941, made a similar agreement with the Shipbuilding Employers' Federation. The agreement included plans to set up Yard Committees. The functions of the Committees to be :

1. To deal with matters affecting the *best use of labour.*
2. Consultations on questions arising as to the services which any person may reasonably be asked to perform outside his usual occupation.
3. To deal with matters of discipline, such as *absenteeism, lateness, ceasing work before stopping time, failure to obey orders, refusal to work overtime, or behaving in such a manner as to impede effective production.*

Nothing to do with wages or working conditions—only increased work and discipline. But why pay trade union contributions to get that? The slaves of Rome had all that free.

MINERS FALL FOR IT

Aforetaste of such job committees is being sampled by the Durham miners, who have allowed pit committees to be formed for the purpose of increasing production and tightening discipline. These committees have set up themselves as courts and fine miners who have a day off. If the miner refuses to pay he is informed against and fined more heavily by the police court. Under Stalinist guidance the labour movement becomes the bosses nark.

SYNDICALIST

DEMOCRACY and ALL THAT

FROM time to time we see in our national press, reports of speeches made by Government spokesmen, M.P.s and newspaper columnists, telling us how "democracy" is being applied to the Empire, how the U.S.A. the "land of liberty" is turning over to war production, how the workers are straining at the leash to "go to it."

Two illuminating examples were given in the Daily Express of Feb. 4/42. Lord Wedgwood, formerly Mr. Josiah Wedgwood, "Socialist" M.P., made his maiden speech in the Upper House and delivered "an impassioned appeal that the land in India should be given back to the peasants." This revolutionary demand is, however, to be the only bait to entice a more concerted war effort from the labours of the Indians. In Lord Wedgwood's following remarks, "five million should be recruited for the Army and the workshops." Not conscripted, mark you, but *recruited!* He goes on to suggest, and here we have the scintillating part of his speech, "Approach them in the Churchillian manner. *Offer them nothing save blood and toil, tears and sweat.* Give them something to fight for" (!) This dramatic appeal will, no doubt, go straight to the hearts of the people of India, who have suffered for 150 years from the "blood and toil, tears and sweat" of British Imperialist rule!

* * * * *

There appeared in the evening papers towards the end of January, a photograph taken in a town in Libya, which had been captured by the British. It showed Italian policemen, with loaded rifles, searching a car, and the explanation underneath said that "these Italian police are cooperating with the British forces in *helping to keep the local population under control.*" So much for the liberating armies of Democracy!

* * * * *

In the recent agreement between Britain and Haile Selassie, the Emperor is to undertake to issue a decree abolishing slavery in Abyssinia. It should be pointed out however, that the two million slaves in that country are not to be given their freedom; they will still be exploited by the princes and chieftains, under the guidance of British Capitalism and the Italian settlers. From the slave's point of view, he will still be chained by means of the exploitation system; he will still have to work for a landowner and in no sense will he be free. It is interesting to note, too, that Italian property in Abyssinia is to be protected by Britain, showing again how the white sahibs, supposedly enemies engaged in war, will combine to protect their loot from the native races, to whom it should rightfully belong.

OUR READERS WRITE

FOOD RELIEF

I disagree with the article on this subject, for the following reasons:

1. Objections to the campaign are not based on fact. No attempt is made to refute the feasibility of the Hoover plan. No reference is made to the conditions imposed on both belligerents.

2. The possibility of all Europe being ravaged by starvation and pestilence is not considered. Disease germs do not heed revolutionary slogans advocating social revolution.

3. Anarchists also believe in reforms—and this one would not weaken the workers' position. If the demand were great enough (and anarchists could increase it) it could give birth to international solidarity.

4. The Government *can* be made to act. To say not is mere defeatism.

5. Slavery is not perpetuated by the 'humane feelings' of the slaves, but mainly through their ignorance.

6. 'Lay the axe to the root'—yes. Workers have been sharpening the axe for decades but starving people cannot wield with much force.

7. We cannot decide for the Greeks or anyone else. They must decide whether they will accept "Government bread" or starve.

8. Re supplies. U.S.A. are reported to have largest stocks ever, and if they can burn vast quantities under the eyes of the hungry in 'peace' time, they can send it free to Greece, Belgium, Poland, Spain etc. now. You wouldn't have to have an economic revolution to do it.

9. Obviously if 'Hitler' took the food supplies would cease. One can point out, however, that thousands of parcels reach Allied prisoners in Germany without interference through the Red Cross.

Let us appeal to the people to demand the sending of adequate supplies before it is too late.

Laurie Hislam

For lack of space, I will not try to answer all Comrade Hislam's points. I agree with him that we cannot decide for the Greeks. The workers cannot decide anything while governments control decisions; that is why we demand nothing short of workers' control as the pre-condition of progress. My main point stands; Governments follow their own interests, not those of the workers. Apparent concessions only serve to allay agitation, cf. the blockade of Germany *after* the last war. They therefore *worsen* the condition of starving continental workers, I certainly made no reference to the "conditions imposed on both belligerents" because these "conditions" are imposed by the governments concerned (not by the workers) and so serve their joint interests. The states will always make use of humanitarian sentiments in order to further their own interests, and it only harms the workers cause to fall for it once again.

J.H.

Sooner or later, the masses of the "democratic" countries will be disillusioned over their belief that they live in freedom. They will then realise that they exist under as much a fascist state as do the Germans and Italians. The real struggle will begin, between the possessing powers—that be, and the enslaved workers everywhere, and the establishment of a really free world community will finally be achieved.

T. W. BROWN

Pages of Revolutionary History

GERRARD WINSTANLEY and The Digger Movement

VICTORY at Marston Moor in 1644 assured the final success of Parliament. The new moneyed class had virtually destroyed autocratic monarchy and, far from establishing the promised reign of liberty, were already preparing a tyranny which would vary only in degree, according to which section within their own split ranks was triumphant. For the differences between Presbyterians and Independents were, politically, superficial. Both wanted a bourgeois regime, and both proved hostile to petit-bourgeoisie and wage-earners. The freedom they desired was one of exploitation, like the famous Free Trade of the nineteenth century.

That the people soon recognised that Parliament was fighting only for a minority is shown by the fact that by 1643 it was necessary to conscript the Parliamentary armies. From the beginning of the war there were peasant riots against enclosures in parliamentary territory, and the poor, despairing of material amelioration, were plunging into a frenzy of mystical religion.

In 1645 the discontent began to take organised and vocal form. It had become evident that the liberty Parliament had promised would not be granted. Business had dwindled, and the large merchants thrived on the ruin of the small tradesmen. Unemployment was extensive among town and country workers, and much distress was caused by the enclosures of common lands. The soldiers had many grievances, the most immediate being impressment and arrears of pay. But they were also deeply troubled by the autocratic nature of the new regime, and numerous agitators and pamphleteers warned the army and the people, as Lilburne put it, to "*call those to account that endeavour to destroy and betray your Liberties and Freedomes.*"

From the discontent in the army and the agitation of the radicals arose the Leveller movement, a movement of the petit-bourgeoisie against the rule of the landowners, financiers and city merchants.

For a time the Levellers were an important menace to the Cromwellian regime. When their leaders were imprisoned enormous demonstrations marched through the City. Huge petitions were presented to Parliament, and when Cromwell reviewed his troops in Hyde Park, most of the men wore the green emblem of the Levellers. During May, 1649, the Leveller agitation reached its climax in a rising of regiments in the West of England. The mutiny was broken and the military dictatorship assured. In the army the Leveller faction disintegrated, and although agitation continued among the civil population and there were a few riots, by the middle of 1645 active opposition had virtually ceased.

The Leveller movement was in no way proletarian. Although the Levellers were sincerely concerned for the poor, they defended property and opposed common ownership, and their proposal of extended suffrage excluded the wage-earners.

The characteristic proletarian manifestations of the time were religious and mystical. A multitude of sects arose who preached, as Christianity had preached to the slaves in Rome, a heavenly kingdom where the poor should rule. Poverty itself became an asset, because it was the way to Heaven. Out of this movement arose, paradoxically, the most advanced

— *By* —
George Woodcock

social philosophy of the time, that of Gerrard Winstanley and the Digger movement.

Winstanley, a small City tradesman whose business had failed during the economic depression and who had moved to the country at Cobham, appeared in 1648 as the author of two theological pamphlets which differed in no fundamental from the mass of contemporary mystical literature.

But his ideas developed rapidly. In the latter half of 1648 he published two further pamphlets, which showed that he had passed from a mystical to a rational religion, in which he envisaged a pantheistic god whom he identified with reason. "*The spirit of the father is pure reason, which as he made so he knits the whole creation together in a oneness of life and moderation, every creature sweetly in love lending their hands to preserve each other and so uphold the whole fabrique.*"

From this conception of God arose a new theory of conduct based not on the arbitrary law of an anthropomorphic deity, but directly on reason and expediency. "*Let reason rule the man and he dares not trespass against his fellow creatures but will do as he would be done unto. For Reason tells him is thy neighbour hungry and naked today, do thou feed him and cloathe him, it may be thy case tomorrow and then he will be ready to help thee.*"

In a few months Winstanley's ideas had crystallised into a definite social code, and in March 1649 he published "*The New Law of Righteousnesse,*" in which he revealed an understanding of social problems in advance of any English social thinker before Godwin. He realised the corruption inherent in government—"*everyone that gets an authority into his hands tyrannises over others.*" He realised that economic inequality was the principal barrier to freedom and peace—"*So long as such are rulers as call the Land theirs, upholding this particular propriety of mine and thine, the common people shall never have liberty nor the land ever be freed from troubles, oppressions and complainings.*" He denounced private property—"*Self-propriety is the curse and burden the creation groans under.*"

He realised too that the social system could be

rectified only by the direct action of the poor. "*The Father is now rising up a people to himself out of the lust that is out of the lowest and most despised sort of people . . . In these and from these shall the Law of Righteousnesse break forth first.*" The people should act, Winstanley contended, by seizing and working the land, which represented the principal source of wealth. He did not favour the forcible seizure of estates. These might be left while the poor settled on the waste lands (which he estimated occupied two-thirds of the country) and worked them in common. From their example, he thought, men would learn the virtues of communal life and the earth become a "common treasury" providing for all men plenty and freedom. He ends his pamphlet with the promise of action. "*And when the Lord doth shew unto me the place and manner how he will have us that are called common people to manure and work upon the Common lands, I will then go forth and declare it in my actions.*"

The Lord did not delay. On April 1, 1649, Winstanley and his followers set out on St. George's Hill, near Walton-on-Thames, to dig and plant the waste land. They were joined by other comrades, until they numbered between thirty and forty people. Winstanley believed that their numbers would soon be increased to 5,000, and invited the local populace to join them. All they gained, however, was the hostility of their neighbours, who regarded the Diggers' ideas as a direct threat to their own property interests. A few days after their arrival, the Diggers were attacked by a large mob, who burnt their sheds, destroyed their tools, and imprisoned several in Walton Church.

The activities of the Diggers soon became widely known, and on April 16 information reached the Council of State, who suggested to Fairfax that he should take action, as they feared the experiment might be "*a beginning whence things of a greater and more dangerous consequence may grow.*" Fairfax sent troops to Kingston, and the officer in charge reported on the triviality of the matter. On April 20 Winstanley and Everard appeared before Fairfax. As a token of disregard for authority they refused to remove their hats in his presence, and insisted firmly that they intended to continue cultivating the waste lands. They assured Fairfax, however, that they would use no force, and the general evidently regarded them as harmless, for it was some time before the authorities took any further part against them. But the hostility of the local populace continued without abatement. Time and again the Diggers were attacked, their persons injured, crops damaged, tools and sheds destroyed, time and again they were forced to leave the common, but for a whole year they kept returning and starting work again, maintaining their passive struggle with heroic persistence.

Early in July Winstanley and the others were prosecuted at Kingston for trespass. They were fined ten pounds each, and two days later a Digger was imprisoned for three days. In August Winstanley was again prosecuted and fined, and a little while later five Diggers were imprisoned for five weeks.

In November soldiers were sent, at the request of the Lord of the Manor, to destroy Digger property. Winstanley records that some of the soldiers appeared reluctant to carry out their orders, and that one of them left a small sum of money. As they had done on previous occasions, the Diggers returned, rebuilt their huts, and sowed several acres of wheat and rye.

Early next year Winstanley sent a delegation through the South Midlands, to ask for assistance and call on the poor to follow their example and free the land. At Wellingborough (where the delegation was imprisoned) and at Coxhall in Kent, groups of people started to work on the commons, but at neither place did they meet anything better than the persecution that befell the parent group.

In March, 1650, the Diggers were finally driven from St. George's Hill, but established themselves on a small heath in the vicinity. Even here their enemies would not leave them, and in April a clergyman led a mob who drove them away for the last time. Armed patrols were set to watch the common, and the Diggers did not return.

After the failure of the Surrey experiment, the Digger movement vanished. But during the months of struggle they had developed their social ideas, and they left a heritage of permanent value in the literature they published, remarkable for its depth of analysis and maturity of vision.

They perceived more clearly than any social thinker before Godwin and Proudhon the economic basis of social problems, and the necessity for evolving an economic remedy. It is for this reason that they were so insistent that the land (then the principal source of wealth) should be held and worked in common. "*True religion and undefiled is this. To make restitution of the Earth which hath been taken and held from the common people by the power of Conquests formerly and so set the oppressed free.*"

They believed that many human faults originated in the social factor of exploitation. "*. . . I am assured that if it be rightly searched into the inward bondage of minds as covetousnesse, pride, hypocrisie, envy, sorrow, fears, desperation and madness are all occasioned by the outward bondage that one sort of people lay upon another.*"

They realised that the cause of war was economic rather than spiritual. "*Propriety and single interest divides the people of a land and the whole world into parties and is the cause of all wars and bloodshed and contention everywhere.*"

Further, they realized the double role of the state as protector and tool of the property-owners—"*. . . for what are prisons and putting others to death, but the power of the Sword to enforce people to that Government which was got by Conquest and sword and cannot stand of itself but by the same murdering power.*"

The only way to abolish oppression, they declared, was to abolish property, the only way to give men freedom was to give them a common share in the land and its produce. "*True freedom lies where a man receives his nourishment and preservation, and that is in the use of the Earth.*"

I have no space to detail their scheme for a communal society. But it did anticipate in many ways the society envisaged by anarchists today, a society of work according to ability and remuneration according to need, a society without money or armies or permanent bureaucrats, a society where "*Law is a Rule, whereby men and other creatures are governed in their actions, for the preservation of the Common Peace.*"

In this last phrase Winstanley anticipated Kropotkin's idea of Mutual Aid, as he anticipated anarchism in so many other ways. It can indeed be said that this obscure revolutionary and his tiny movement represent the most advanced and clear-sighted social conception that arose in Europe until the days of the French Revolution.

Asking Why

by Frank Leech

FOR what? Yes, For What? The title of the front page article and cartoon in February "War Commentary" could not be more apt than in a period of war, and this War in particular. The terms For What? Why? are weapons of the rebel, the weapons of the child seeking knowledge, the weapons of those who do not accept the explanations of their "Elders" their "Leaders," the "custodians" of their "welfare." These terms are the weapons of those who wish to expose to the light the fraudulent decoys of our lying statesmen.

We hear so often the question "For what?" that one might jump to the conclusion that it was the password for some subterranean organization. It certainly places those who use it on common ground. So, let it rip! "The World is at War today" "For what?" We have Income Tax deducted from our wages" "For what?" "Many of our boys went down with the Repulse" "For what?" Ask those in uniform for what they are in uniform, and you will immediately discover the value of the question.

Take the "demands" of our potential taskmasters: the "Communists," who are begging of our Ruling Class for an opportunity to wield the whips jointly with the managers of industry, for "More production" etc. Reply: "For what?" Is it the purpose of these demands to produce more of the traditional Socialist "use values" i.e. Food, Clothing and Shelter? Is it to produce more agricultural machinery, more tractors to plough up the unused land? If we produced tractors as we produced tanks, and really set out to accomplish it Britain would soon be one large garden, producing those foodstuffs we need most, in abundance.

Are the "demands" for "More production" of pots and pans and household utensils or Building plant and material for house building? Production of these goods to satisfy working class needs would be sensible demands. But No! The demands are "More production" of instruments of destruction: "Tanks for Russia" so that the lower classes in Russia may be used as cannon-fodder in defence of the privileges of the "Communist" bureaucracy and in defence of Anglo-American Imperialism—Oh! I beg your pardon "Democracy" of course. We are told that our "colonial subjects" are greatly enamoured with the "protection" afforded by our "Democracy" though according to one Capitalist journal: "the natives didn't seem very perturbed at the prospect of the Japanese occupying Malaya." It is rather unfortunate that "Hitler" is still occupying the Ukraine, preventing our newspaper correspondents from reporting the sentiments of the Ukrainian workers and peasants. It would be embarrassing to our "Communists" if these workers and peasants disclosed the same indifference to the occupation of the Ukraine.

But let me get back to my subject. On the Clyde, following the logic of their premises, the "Communist" Shop Stewards are anxious to serve along with "Labour" and Capitalist representatives on the Yard, Workshop and Production Committees. Workers who come late or are absent or accused of

slacking are hauled before these committees and fined or reported to the outside Police Authorities for prosecution. Some workers have been sentenced to imprisonment.

If any worker suggests Strike action at the workers meetings he is immediately jumped on by the C.P.ers and told 'this is not the time to strike.'

Regarding the discontent about payment of Income Tax, the recent protests from officials and Shop Stewards were directed not against the payment of Income Tax, but against the methods by which it was collected. This lack of struggle by those who claim to be looking after Working Class interests is naturally giving rise to a desire for a new industrial movement.

To be successful this new movement must not leave the worker's destinies in the hands of officials. Each one must take his share of responsibility, welding a solidarity which aims at the placing of the land, the factories, shipyards etc., in the hands of the working class. Let Anarcho-Syndicalism be the basis of this new industrial movement.

PROFITS FROM DEFENCE WORK

THE profitable nature of some forms of defence work can be judged from the following typical figures regarding camouflage carried out by private firms for the Air Ministry on R.A.F. stations. Contracts usually consist of two kinds, camouflaging of buildings, or of roads and runways. It is to the latter that the following figures and remarks apply.

For a maintenance scheme involving three coats of paint, for which the contractor gets £9,500, typical costs are as follows. Paint, £4,500; wages, plant and equipment overheads, £500. The work is entirely executed by spraying apparatus and the labour required seldom consists of more than seven men. The contractor secures a profit of about 90 per cent.—a good margin in times of "equal sacrifice."

The essence of this type of contract consists in applying as economical a coat of paint as possible in the shortest time. Areas of camouflage on most stations amount to about 250,000 square yards, and each coat is usually completed in about a month, especially during the summer.

The final effect is entirely temporary, since the economy with which the paint is applied, combined with its poor quality ensures effective life of less than a month on runways and of about a week on roads.

DEFEND THE EMPIRE

During the war debate which recently took place in the House, Mr. R. Richards (Lab., Wrexham) said that "behind the Far Eastern question there was another fundamental one. Was this generation to witness the disintegration of the British Empire?"

"The Empire was the basis of the high standard of living enjoyed here, and we must not let the Empire dissolve before our eyes."

THE INTERNATIONALE—1942 VERSION

LATEST musical best seller is a new arrangement of the Internationale, Russia's National Anthem, by Sir Granville Bantock, 73-year-old British composer.

His wife, Helen Bantock, has written a modern version of the words and both words and music have been approved by the Soviet Embassy.

He added that his wife had kept the sentiments of the traditional words.

Helen Bantock has changed the opening lines "Arise ye starvelings from your slumbers, Arise ye criminals of want" to "Awake O sleepers from your dreaming. Uplift, uplift, your longing eyes."

Daily Express 10/2/42

PLAIN TALK

Sir Patrick Hannon, M.P., speaking to Manufacturers in Birmingham declared:

"It will be a very grave day for industrial life and for the relations of industry itself, if we transfer, either in whole or in part, any substantial share of the executive power of industry to bodies elected by the workers."

Daily Herald 24/1/42

A FREE VOTE?

Commenting on the recent vote of confidence the *Evening Standard* (27.2.42) remarks:

"A really close watch is going to be kept on all M.P.s. Those who choose to go into the lobby against the Government and in deliberate defiance of the whips will be black-listed as usual. I don't think they will be many. The abstainers will be noted too as far as possible, for their offence will be only a little less serious than voting against the Government. Members who are present in the building when the division is called but take no part in it will be assumed to have committed a hostile act.

All the missing, that is, members not in the building at the time, will have to account to the whips later for their failure to answer the summons. In normal times there is only one valid excuse for absence from a vital division and that is illness."

Freedom Press

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Through

KU KLUX KLAN

FLOG AMERICAN TRADE UNIONISTS

LAST November, in Georgia, one of the Southern states of the U.S.A., six members of the Ku Klux Klan—the private police of the employing class—were sent to prison for flogging pro-union mill workers. They used heavy stock whips of which Duke, the State Assistant Solicitor said "you could kill a bull elephant with them." The Governor of the state, Eugene Talmadge, has announced however, that he was sorry for the floggers, and would take their pleas for clemency into consideration. He said he had once helped to flog a negro himself, adding "I wasn't in such bad company. The Apostle Paul was a flogger in his life, then confessed, reformed, and became one of the greatest powers in the Christian Church. That proves to me that good people can be misguided and do bad things."

There is in all countries one law for the employers and another for the workers; what the governor might have said was that "good people"—i.e. members of the employing class—when engaged in useful persecution of militant workers, sometimes are "misguided" enough to transgress the law. But there is always the Government to come to their aid, and with the help of a few church texts, make it easy for them.

LAST WAR PENSIONS

"Biggest Congressional headache of the week came from a new demand by the war veterans for pensions and subsidies totaling more than \$10,000,000,000. At a time when billions are needed for the conduct of World War II, few men in Washington had stomach to confront the restless ghosts of World War I."

("Time" 8.12.41)

Potential pensioners ("restless ghosts") of this war please note.

MORE CHEAP LABOUR

ANOTHER example of how labour is being used at cheap rates of pay is given in the *Daily Express* Jan. 30/42., under the caption "Soldiers May Shout 'Coal!'" It goes on to say "Soldiers will be dump-to-cellar coalmen, as well as wagon-to-dump coalmen at railway stations which they are already."

Join the army, boys, and see the world!

T.U.C. ECHOES VANSITTART

MR. Frank Wolstencroft, T.U.C. chairman, proposing the toast "Success to the unity of the Soviet and British people and the Allied Cause," also stressed the need for exacting retribution for Nazi crimes.

By their crimes in Russia the Germans had asked for all that was coming to them.

"I hope they will get it and a bit more," he said, amid cheers.

the Press

RUSSIA'S RICH MEN

"From each according to his ability, to each according to the work performed," is a tenet of the Soviet Constitution which the U.S.S.R. has applied literally and generously to Alexei Tolstoy, whom it considers after the late Maxim Gorky its greatest writer. Tolstoy, born a count, a kinsman of the late great Leo Tolstoy has received every material mark of Soviet esteem. He owns a dacha, he owns a large and valuable art collection. He is Russia's richest man, a rouble millionaire with a fortune estimated at upwards of 2,500,000 roubles (\$500,000)"

"The Tolstoy's became the wealthiest people in Russia after a bomb killed even richer Director and Writer Alexander Afinogenev."

"To most Americans the U.S.S.R. is a vast, dreary, egalitarian poorhouse in which every worker and peasant receives exactly the same allotment of shoddy garments, bad vodka and over-crowded living quarters. Actually Russia, a land of surprises, has not only its "millionaires" but its "town and country set" to boot. These extraordinary pictures, taken last month by *Life* Photographer Margaret Bourke-White, show how comfortable life can be for Soviet favourites. They show the dacha, or country house, of Movie Director Gregory Alexandrov, Russia's Darryl Zanuck, and his movie star wife, Lynbov Orlova, who plays roles reminiscent of Mary Pickford. Alexander and Orlova have an apartment in Moscow as well, but they prefer to stay at the dacha, some 35 miles from Moscow and now within range of German guns.

Orlova, much decorated, herself holds the Order of Lenin. She is paid about 50,000 roubles a year, with a buying power of about \$10,000. She can invest her earnings at 4% in U.S.S.R. bonds. If her dacha suffers from such generic Russian faults as imperfect plumbing and lack of central heating, it boasted six servants and two automobiles before the war began. Since then, as a patriotic gesture, she and her husband have sent four of the servants to work in the factories, given one car to the Government.

The only people in Russia with such comforts are the top-rank writers, artists and politicians. If Orlova and Alexandrov remain ideologically "sound," they may live on the same scale as a top commissar."

Life 1/12/41

The average wages of the Russian worker are from 150 to 250 roubles a month.

OXFORD

FRIENDS OF FREEDOM PRESS

FRIDAY, February 27th, at 7 p.m.

OLD LIBRARY, ST. MARY'S, HIGH ST.,

Debate with Fourth International (Trotskyist)

WHAT HE IS FIGHTING FOR

Canadian newspapers report that Gunner Archie McOwen writing to his wife that Queen Mary gave him a lift, declared: "She is a marvellous woman. I am proud to be able to fight for her."

WHAT RUSSIAN WORKERS GET

Jail for Russians if they leave work

RUSSIAN workers in war industries—men and women alike—are now to be treated as though mobilised for the duration of the war and attached to the factories in which they are now working.

A decree ordering this was signed yesterday by M. Kalinin, President of the Supreme Soviet.

Any worker leaving his factory of his own accord will be regarded as a deserter and will be tried by a military tribunal, says the decree. Sentences of five to eight years' imprisonment may be inflicted."

Sunday Express 28.12.41

RUSSIAN HOSPITALS

THE interesting question in Russia is how far the Russians have found it possible to translate the achievements of medicine, in pathology, surgery, and therapy, into terms of social security. In 1913 there were 175,634 hospital beds in Russia; in 1928, 246,100; and in 1932, 405,800. But the population of Russia in 1933 was 165,748,400, and the figure of just over two beds per 1000 of the population compares badly with the normal of five beds per thousand taken by the International Labour Office, or with the seven beds per thousand in this country."

The Economist 27.12.41

C.P. FOLLOWING THE COMINTERN

That the C.P. policy is everywhere the same is shown by *World News and Views* (17.1.42). In "contrast" to the reactionary ruling oligarchy of Argentine the C.P. Argentina "put forward the demand for a national government of all anti-fascist forces, (sic) including the Conservatives."

Coming Meetings

NORTH LONDON

Freedom Press Rooms
27, Belsize Road, N.W.6.
Lectures start at 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20th

Dr. JOHN HEWETSON

Public Ill-Health

Questions and Discussion Admission Free

KINGSTON

The Dart Room, The Fighting Cocks,
London Road

Wednesday 18th, February, 7 p.m.

Dr. JOHN HEWETSON

Anarchism and the Land Problem

Wednesday 25th, February, 7 p.m.

G. WOODCOCK

Gerrard Winstanley and the Diggers Movement

For GLASGOW meeting see p.16.

FROM OUR READERS

COMMUNITY CONTROVERSY

Dear Friend,

I read your article in War Commentary with great sympathy. So much of what you say is so true but dare I suggest it out of date. It is true that their weaknesses are perennial but a stable body of practical workers is developing. Anarchy demands personal responsibility from individuals. Large scale creative anarchy will only be possible when a sufficient number of free and responsible people are able to inspire their fellows—until then the arm of the law will be necessary. We aim at producing at least some of those folks.

Do you see Community Broadsheet? This reveals something of what is being *done* by folk in community. But community means the *working* out of an ideal shared in common, not necessarily on the land.

With all good wishes,

Yours Fraternally,

BERT SHIPLEY

ELMSETT COMMUNITY,

Nova Scotia Farm,
Elmsett, Ipswich.

* * * *

Dear Comrades,

In an article in your January issue George Woodcock mentions my name and makes a gross misstatement of fact. He writes: "I do not agree with Comrade Gibson's contention that communities 'demonstrate in practice the ideas which we propagate in theory.'"

I made no such contention; it would be fatuous and untrue—especially with reference to the existing community movement of this country.

I was writing of a possible development of anarchist communities, and the part from which Woodcock extracted half a sentence (and misrepresented the context) actually read: "an association of communities working on the practical basis of anarchist-communism would bring an evergrowing number of people into the movement as genuinely convinced revolutionaries, and would demonstrate in practice the ideas which we propagate in theory."

I wish to point out this distortion of the facts concerning my own writing in the interest of objective truth, and as a significant example of the premises on which his article was written.

Yours sincerely,

24, Wharton Street,
W. C. 1.

TONY GIBSON

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

A REPLY TO CRITICS

I was interested to read Bert Shipley's letter, as I know something of the Elmsett Community and have a considerable admiration for the way in which they have set about the practical business of farming by efficient methods, and have undergone inconvenience and physical hardship to ensure, as far as possible, the success of their venture. Nevertheless, even this community, free as it is of atavistic tendencies and Murryite authoritarianism, cannot by its very nature escape the major weaknesses I pointed out in my article. It is still forced to use the capitalists system of exchange in order to live, and this economic dependence makes it vulnerable to the attacks of a hostile society, against which it has no plan of social struggle.

I cannot agree with Bert Shipley that "Large scale creative anarchy will only be possible when a sufficient number of free and responsible people are able to inspire their fellows—until then the arm of the law will be necessary." On the contrary, 'the arm of the law' represents coercion, exploitation, obscurantism, ignorance, and only when its repression has ended will men attain freedom and responsibility.

With regard to Tony Gibson's rather acrimonious letter, I cannot see where I have mis-stated fact, as the words I quoted seem to me to summarise his contentions, i.e. that by living in communities we could demonstrate anarchism. Although my criticisms were levelled in particular at contemporary communities, as concrete examples of community ideas in practice, I intended them to have a general application, as it seems to me any community existing in a capitalist society would display the social and economic contradictions I outlined.

I cannot understand what Gibson means by "communities working on the practical basis of anarchist-communism." No organisation can work on an anarchist basis within the state, because anarchism presupposes the abolition of the state, which such a community must perforce accept if it wishes to survive. Similarly, no organisation can be truly communist within a capitalist economy, as it is bound to gain a large part of its keep, either in wages or in payment for goods, from the capitalist society.

Gibson appears to infer, wrongly, that I accused him of basing his contentions on the "existing community movement in this country." But from the first sentence of his letter which runs as follows:-

'In this country there are a number of groups of people living co-operatively and communally, and in this rudimentary community movement lies the potentiality of great revolutionary significance.'

One would suppose that he does in fact put forward this "existing community movement" as the basis of his ideas!

I would also express my objection to the superior attitude Gibson adopts towards people who do not live in communities. There is nothing in anarchist theory that would say that people must live in community. Indeed, it would be a contradiction in terms, for surely in an anarchist society a man will be allowed to conduct his private life as he chooses, whether it be by living in a community, in a family or in solitude.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

From the Headlines

THE Hon. U. Saw, Premier of Burma, came to Britain to demand self-government for Burma. He made it quite clear that if he did not get what he came for there would be "No welcome" on the mat. He stated quite plainly that there were to be no half-promises or equivocations—either self-government or something disagreeable to the Raj.

The reports that he had rather a stormy interview with Mr. Churchill may therefore be believed. U Saw did not disguise his disappointment, and left Britain without concealing his bitterness. The next we heard of U Saw was that he was detained because (if the reports in the Allied Press are to be believed) he had been in contact with the Japanese.

Is it not strange that U Saw should turn to the Japanese? Their record in China does not show the rulers of Japan to be believers in self-government or national independence. Can one believe that an astute politician like U Saw imagined the Japanese to be in sympathy with Burmese Nationalism? No, his own statements belie this. U Saw made it clear that he abhorred Japanese militarism equally with British Imperialism. One saying of his is quite well-known—"I prefer the devil I know to the one I don't know." At first he thought the British Government "the devil he knew," but his London visit did not bear that out.

He came to Mr. Churchill to ask for Burmese independence—that does not look as if he knew Mr. Churchill very well. No doubt he thought that anxiety over the Japanese moves in the Pacific would make even the Imperialists ready to concede the demands of the colonial races. He did not know—not being a revolutionary—the "lesson of Vichy," namely that they would sooner risk losing empires in imperialist combat than lose them by giving way to progress.

Not being a revolutionary but a nationalist politician, U Saw apparently wished to bargain with the other side. As French and Russian politicians switched to opposite corners of the diplomatic ring, the one from the Allies to the Axis, and the other vice-versa—so U Saw must have wished to do a deal with the Mikado.

We know he would have been

double-crossed, but U Saw could only see that "the devil he didn't know" might be the lesser evil.

Is it only U Saw we are dealing with? May not the experience of Burma be that of India? Subhas Chandra Bose, who was a Socialist and not merely a nationalist, has also been alleged to be in Japanese territory aiding the eastern imperialism. It is most certainly the case that the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem is now in German pay as an Arabic Quisling; that he fled Palestine to Iran, and escaped the British troops occupying Iran presumably by Afghanistan.

It is profoundly regrettable that blind nationalism has led some of those who formerly led a demand for colonial independence to the service of a rival imperialism, but it is not unexpected.

Indeed, from a nationalist point of view, it may be good politics to counter one side with another in the imperialist game. It is from the revolutionary point of view alone that one must hold aloof from the intrigues of the ruling-class.

I remember listening to a Hungarian professor expounding his country's claims at a lecture some time before the war. He had a variety of multi-coloured maps showing the divisions of Hungary, over the past five hundred years. He explained her wrongs and rights over the centuries; explained which pieces of territory should go back to her by pinning little flags on the

maps; and by the time he'd finished Hungary was practically the *only* country left in Eastern Europe. The upshot of it all was that we were to see that Hungary got her "place in the sun"—as Lord Rothermere (whom he quoted proudly) put it.

As none of his listeners were quite influential enough nothing came of it, but it struck me that here was precisely the weakness of all nationalist politics—none of those who heard the professor could help him, and his one course of action was to take all his multi-coloured maps and pin-flags around the Chancelleries of Europe, bargaining here and there. And what time more profitable than war-time for concessions?

So U Saw, and Bose, and the Mufti, who find Churchill so obdurate, find Hitler and the Mikado sweet reasonableness. But Churchill is not always obstinate. So far from his opposing nationalism we find in London any number of "Free Governments" awaiting the time when they will set up their administration in their homeland, free from Foreign aggression. Poland, Yugoslavia, Norway, Czechoslovakia—all assemble at St. James' Palace with their coloured maps.

Jumping on the bandwagon of a possible German triumph are Finland and Bulgaria. Rumania and Hungary are not so badly off. Her Quislings take their maps to Berlin, while her "Free Movements" grow up in the U.S.A.—possibly from a

(continued on page 12)

Borghi still Interned!

OUR Comrade Armando Borghi, ex-secretary of the Italian Syndicalist Union, which was formed of the most militant part of the working class, is still interned at Ellis Island (N.Y.). An American comrade writing to us recently remarks: "While Italian fascist are allowed to go free Borghi is still detained". The first thing all democratic countries have done after having declared war on fascist countries was to intern well known anti-fascist militants thus proving once more the hypocrisy of the "democratic" cause.

The U.S.A. Government has no reasons for interning Borghi. Mussolini had deprived him in 1927 of Italian nationality, he can't be interned as an enemy alien his anti-fascist activities being too well-known. Fascists with Italian, German or Spanish passports can remain in the U.S.A. safely but political refugees are considered as being outside the law. As Koestler says they are considered "The scum of the earth."

(continued from page 11)

nationalist point of view the safest road.

After the war the treaty-makers will again plot and intrigue at the Council tables—indeed they are not waiting until after the war.

It cannot be too often emphasised that it is no use interfering in these intrigues.† The imperialisms will not give up empires. The European states cannot agree on spheres of power or on boundaries. But the workers and peasants can live together amicably, granted their desire to do so.

We can begin right away, in however limited an environment, in breaking down national, racial and colour prejudices. In that we are doing an important part of preparing the way to a free world. The task of the conquest of freedom is more difficult—but the revolutionary method is the only one and it must be faced. A.M.

* *This applies too to the naive theory that the workers at home can gain concessions by intriguing with the ruling-classes—“You grant this and we grant that.” Everyday experience shows that the rulers grant some “satisfactory” speeches of post-war reform, and the workers grant the sacrifices.*

† *It is assumed here that the reports in the capitalist press regarding the detention of U Saw are correct and not merely discrediting lies.*

★ War Profiteers—1942 variety

A correspondent in a recent issue of *Truth* (30.1.42) claims to have discovered who are the real profiteers in this war. For as the reader will guess this gentleman believes that it's the worker who is the war profiteer whilst “the managers of businesses, professional men, the capitalists and last but not least, the shareholders have certainly been prevented from profiteering” indeed, the Government is taking up to 19/6 on the pound of their already “severely cut” earnings. Whereas the workers, well they are just piling it up and the statement made in the paper that unskilled labour in the building trade is getting in wages as much as £12 per week is nothing compared with this correspondent's experiences. He states that unskilled dockers are demanding and being paid £20 per day at one of our western ports.” In other words, if these men work only five days a week they can net in a cool £100 a week or a Cabinet minister's salary of £5,000 a year. And mark you, “these are not isolated instances” and can be found in every trade where there is “a powerful trade union.” In fact the lamentable state of affairs today, in which we find the workers literally making fortunes, and getting cheap

lunches and subsidised foodstuffs is all at the expense of the poor capitalist and shareholders for it is they, according to this correspondent, who have to pay for it in their taxes and not the weekly wage-earners. Of course *Truth's* correspondent is too much occupied in pouring forth his hate of “those communistic agitators who are incapable of doing an honest day's work” and whose sole “function is to make trouble” to see that he has contradicted himself for if there were to be so many unskilled workers earning £5,000 a year, surely it is they who would be paying the 19/6 in the £ income tax. Or is it that there are poor capitalists who are paying 19/6 in the £ on incomes of £10,000, £20,000 and even more, a year?

Regarding unskilled building labourers it should be noted that there are very few who can earn more than 1/7d an hour. In order to earn £12 a week therefore, it would be necessary for them—taking into account the Uniformity Agreement for Overtime etc.—to work about 15 hours a day and the full 24 on Sunday at double rates. And on wartime rations a labourer however patriotic and avid for money he might be just wouldn't do it!

OSCAR SWEDE

We regret to have to announce the death of our comrade, Dr. Oscar Swede, on January 29th, at Bourne-mouth, at the age of 41.

Oscar Swede was trained as a medical student at Sheffield. During the last war he was a C.O., although he was only 18 years old when the war ended. While doing land work to which he was totally unsuited, he got pneumonia with the result that his lungs were permanently affected. On account of his anti-war convictions, a scholarship which he had won was refused him; nevertheless he distinguished himself in medicine, and specialized in the treatment of Tuberculosis.

He was early associated with the Freedom Press, being active in the publication of *Freedom* after the war. He then went to Germany where he studied medicine, music, and the socialist movement. He collected amongst other things a mass of material relating to the

international armaments racket. Although he did not publish the results of this research, it proved of considerable use to other writers.

On his return he worked at various sanatoria, and also did research work for the Labour Research Department. He was a voluminous reader, and had acquired a tremendous body of knowledge regarding the literature of Anarchism. But he had read widely in many other fields, and used to pay tribute to Bernard Shaw, Havelock Ellis, and Bertrand Russell for their influence both on his own development and for others. Amongst his small “list of books which everyone should read” he always included Peter Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid*.

Swede was an unsparing worker, and in his desire to give of his best he neglected his own lungs, already weakened by wartime pneumonia. Already in the twenties he con-

tracted tuberculosis in both lungs. From then on, he was compelled to be alternatively doctor and patient. Although he recovered to some extent from the TB., his heart was badly affected.

During the last ten years he devoted much of his time to the history of political theory and current manners and customs. He accumulated a large store of notes for projected books, but his state of health limited the work he could allow himself. The world does not yet know what it has lost in the man, nor what is yet still hidden in the volumes of his notebooks. But many individuals knew him as a friend who would give generous advice from his store of knowledge and experience from the whole range of human conduct. Throughout the present war he had remained an anarchist and had opposed it. He will not be easily forgotten by those who knew him and, for at least one, he remains an inspiration.

H.J.J.

The Need for a Proletarian Progressive School

This article comes at an opportune moment when the only solution the government can offer for the child's problem in wartime is conscription and more conscription. The writer, on the other hand offers a constructive method whereby children can become the builders of the new world instead of being merely instruments of destruction in the hands of the State. It does not offer a complete blue-print, but it should provide material for serious discussion.

SOCIETY, through its economic structures, its political forms, its moral customs and its ideologies, is the major control in forming the individual mind. The individual in his turn plays his part in the shaping of a society which is but an aggregate of individuals very much like himself. But since in the main he is a product of that same society and is made to believe in the utility of its institutions, his contribution will tend to perpetuate the status quo rather than be a force in changing it into a rational community.

Up to the present the culture of society has been informed by an ideology which is favourable to its dominant class, superimposed upon relics of previous ideologies which were in vogue when other classes were in power. Our present urban culture of industrial capitalism has not yet succeeded, for example, in liquidating the rural feudalism personified in the local squire and the village parson. Society seeks to perpetuate its traditional culture through its educational institutions. In its state schools the new generation is indoctrinated with capitalist culture into which has been absorbed such elements of previous cultures which cannot be conveniently ignored. Thus we have the sad spectacle of children growing into men who will strive strenuously to retain the chains which shackle them to their masters.

The problem of the revolutionist is the question of how to break the vicious circle involved in a capitalist society creating capitalist-minded individuals who defend and perpetuate the capitalist society. How are revolutionists to change a traditional capitalist barbarism, masquerading as civilisation, into a rational socialist anarchist society which is genuinely civilised? There are, it seems, two main points of attack. The attack may be made directly against society in its economic and political institutions. The workers who produce the economic goods and services may seek in the class struggle to transform the economic order from one in which production is for profit to one in which production is for use. On the other hand the attack may be delivered indirectly through the educational institutions. The workers who educate either the young or the adults may seek to encourage those individuals who think and act for themselves and will not tolerate the division of society into slaves and slave owners. The rest of this article will be concerned with this indirect approach although it is well to remember that in practice the two cannot be easily separated.

For many years now socialist education has

been pegging away through the medium of such organisations as the N.C.L.C., the W.E.A., trade unions and political parties. Thousands of periodicals and pamphlets have been issued and innumerable books have been published. And yet those who long for a new order of society often despair at the slow rate of progress. It may be that a revolutionary situation will give a grand opportunity to effect a revolutionary change. But to many it seems a long time in coming. It may be that our technique is not sufficiently adapted to the needs of the time. Our weapons of propaganda seem helpless against the organs of the national press, against the pulpit and the B.B.C. The trouble is that we are dealing with adults who have already had their minds made up for them. What we want to do is to prevent the individual's mind being warped during the impressionable years of childhood. Although our aim is to liberate and not to dominate the child, we would do well to take a leaf out of the book of the Jesuits who boasted that if they were allowed control over the child for the first seven years then they cared not who tried to influence him afterwards. It is to child education then that we must turn if we hope to revolutionise society through its individuals.

There are many who, being profoundly sceptical of our civilisation, see in state education a means of providing docile citizens who do the bidding of their rulers without question. They recognise that the ideal aim of providing instructed and responsible citizens is a camouflage for the real aim of inculcating a slave mentality in the working classes. Such people see a way of escape for their children in the progressive school. But these are so expensive that they are beyond the reach of working class parents who are forced to continue sending their children to the elementary school. Since it is the proletariat who suffer most in a crazy world it is they who at last will rebel and it is therefore the proletarian child who is in greater need of emancipation. What is wanted is not so much a middle class progressive school as a working class progressive school. Here again the profit motive must be vigorously excluded and the usage motive must take its place. They must be run so efficiently and so economically that parents find it costs less to send them to such schools than it does to keep them at home.

There is wisdom in the advice that if you want anything doing well you must do it for yourself. The workers must provide their own schools if they wish their children to grow up free and responsible for their own lives and call no man their master. Recently we have had the inauguration of the Friends of Freedom Press for the dissemination of

anarchist ideas among adults. Why not inaugurate a proletarian school where the ideals of freedom may be planted in the minds of the friends' children?

Supposing that we had decided upon the founding of such a school, what would be its character? How would it be organised? How do we propose to carry out our aim of educating our children so that they are free from neurosis and impervious to the seductive voices of those who would rob them of their birthright of liberty in a rational society? Libertarian socialists and anarchists are chary of publishing blue-prints in advance but we may suggest the broad outlines and leave it to those who run the school, the parents, the teachers and the children, to modify and revise according to experience.

Here then, let me suggest six tentative principles:

1. Since society is the major factor in determining the character of the individual, and since education should be a preparation for living one's life to its fullest capacity harmonious relationship with one's fellows, the life at such a school as I am advocating will be organised, not on the lines of society as it is at present constituted, but in accordance with society as we would wish it to be. We want a classless society in which all have their part to play in determining its character. Since a young person learns the art of living only by the practice of living, the school community should be such a society in miniature. The school will be run therefore, not on authoritarian, but on libertarian lines. It will be a free school with no headmaster in control but having a syndicate consisting of all the teachers and all the children who would determine all the practical details of running the school. It will naturally be co-educational, consisting of approximately an equal number of men and women as teachers and an equal number of boys and girls as pupils.

2. Childhood should be the playtime of life in which the child learns about his environment and himself naturally rather than artificially through the grinding mill of the lesson book, although of course the latter process must have its place. The child should be allowed to develop spontaneously so that it may be free from neurosis. Its teachers will therefore be child psychologists before they are "subject" academicians.

3. But to the child who has not been artificially repressed the world is fresh and wonderful. He is continually asking the why and how of things. The child learns best about that in which he is spontaneously interested. What interests him at any particular time will depend upon the stage of development which he has reached. Broadly speaking, but with many modifications, the child's development recapitulates the evolution of the species. Therefore the knowledge of the child will increase roughly as the knowledge gained by the species has increased. This process will be encouraged, but it will, of course, be modified in the important respect that the errors of the past will be replaced by the truth as we know it at present.

4. Since we are socialists or anarchists partly because we believe that capitalist ideology is deliberately obscurantist to

further vested interests, and that socialism or anarchism is to the advantage of all and therefore has no particular axe to grind, independence and freedom of thought will be deliberately encouraged. There will be no embargo on economic and political thought. The pros and cons of socialism and anarchism will be discussed equally with those of capitalism. There will be no tabooed subjects. Sexual knowledge will be rationally treated. Superstition will not be inculcated. Religious dogma will not be taught as gospel truth.

5. The emotions will be educated equally with the intellect. The arts, both creative and interpretive, will be appreciated as being worthy of their place beside the more intellectual pursuits. Mutual love and the sense of the solidarity of the community, both inside and outside the school, will be developed equally with knowledge.

6. The culture of the body will by no means be the least consideration in such a school. A scientific dietetic, combined with play and exercise, will insure the fullest development of the body. Sun and air bathing—nudism—together with water bathing will combat the asceticism of our puritanic civilisation.

If we are not being the victims of wishful thinking, we see in the world wide chaos which confronts us today the death convulsions of the old barbarism grappling with the birth throes of the new civilisation. Old values are being repudiated with increasing confidence and new ones are being courageously adopted. If we are not mistaken, orthodox education does not escape its share of the criticism. More parents are becoming dissatisfied with the available means of educating their children. More teachers are realising that they are gripped by the dead hand of tradition and are struggling to free themselves. Discerning parents are realising that if the world is to be freed from recurring holocausts, their children must be allowed to develop qualities which they themselves have been denied. The more intelligent teachers see that these are the qualities of the libertarian, educated in the free school, and not afraid to challenge age old institutions. It is for these parents and teachers to translate thought into direct action. Let them get together through the medium of the Freedom Press and establish a school of their own. Let the acknowledged difficulties and undoubtedly they are many, be a challenge to those who are determined to do their utmost to transform a world burdened with misery into one in which happiness is within the grasp of all.

B. C. LEWIS

DO NOT MISS !

The Next Issue of
WAR COMMENTARY
 Out on the 1st of MARCH

Book REVIEWS

"JAPAN'S KAMPF" by JAYA DEVA

Victor Gollancz Ltd. 6/-

PUBLISHERS are generally supposed never to read the books they put on sale, while at the same time being able to give a just appreciation on the cover to the author's efforts. Let us see if these ideas are verified in the case of Mr. Deva's book.

According to the blurb on the cover, we are to understand the deep seated cause of Japan's aggression, with a view to preventing the recurrence of such a catastrophe.

Now it is clear to us that capitalism is the cause of war, and that the only way of preventing it is to overthrow the capitalist system itself—an overthrow that can only be effected by the working class. The issues of the war are therefore vitally bound up with the class struggle; a picture of a capitalist country at war should not restrict itself to describing only economic potentialities and necessities, but should treat the internal struggle of the workers against the ruling class as an active element which interferes in a decisive way with the war.

How far does Jaya Deva apply these principles? He begins with a historical account of the growth of Japanese capitalism. His views are unfortunately incomplete, as he restricts himself to an analysis of the internal struggle of the capitalists for power, and then passes on to an explanation of Japan's particular capitalist structure. The fact that she jumped over some of the intermediate stages of capitalist development is explained by the "Law of Combined Development." It seems to us, however, that before explaining combined development one should consider the question of development itself. How did it come about that Japan was singled out on the Asiatic continent to play the role of a great competitive power in the imperialist struggle? Why not China or the Dutch East Indies? A correct answer to this problem, besides settling a historical question, would throw some light on the present war, the relation of Japan to the other great capitalist powers, and the development of world capitalism.

Like so many other books, whereas the history and organization of fascist and bourgeois parties are treated at great length, the problems confronting the workers and peasants in their struggle are hardly mentioned. It is easy, for example, to state that the necessities of competition forced low wages, anti-labour measures, ruthless dictatorship etc. The question remains: why were the workers unable to force better conditions? To give an example; Belgium is also largely dependent on the foreign market with the same necessity for low wages etc.; it was the "paradise of capitalists." Nevertheless the Belgian working class was able in an epic struggle of thirty years to improve its condition markedly.

It is particularly difficult to give a comprehensive account of the condition of the exploited masses in Japan; nevertheless, no understanding of the present war can be reached if this consideration is left out. But it is a question which does not seem to preoccupy Mr. Deva much. Concentration of the workers, strikes, peasant riots, tenants' disputes, the Japanese

so-called trade unions, "labour" parties are given little attention.

The question of Nippon totalitarianism is also superficially dealt with. It is merely an account of how the reinforcement of government power and State interference was engineered. We know that authoritarian evolution is a feature of every present day government. We should like to know how this evolution affects the working class, if there are still strikes occurring etc. Such data would enable us to understand the conditions in which the Japanese workers will oppose the aims of their rulers.

Still more superficial are the chapters dealing with Japanese and German ideology, their similarities and differences. If we are going to examine the aims of the imperialists merely in the light of what they say of themselves and others, we shall not get very far. To state that "there are greater and more real conflicts of economic power and domination" between "Nipponism and Naziism," instead of examining the different economic structures of Germany and Japan, the possibilities of clash etc., is not helpful. Jaya Deva gives anti-Japanese extracts written by Hitler! As if anybody cared for the views held by the Fuhrer when he was in a prison cell! This very superficiality is reflected in the title itself, which has no definite meaning.

We have indicated some of the book's shortcomings. What are its merits? An up to date account of Japan's economic and political development, which gives an explanation of some of the peculiarities of this imperialist power. D.S.

POEMS FROM THE FORCES

Edited by Keidrych Rhys. Routledge 6/-.

OUR poets, unlike our generals, have learnt from history, and in this war they start beyond where Owen ended in November 1918. It is a matter for satisfaction that the majority of the young poets who had established themselves before the war have been sufficiently responsible to keep out of uniform, either through the B.B.C., the Ministry of Information, flight to America or the more honest course of conscientious objection. Even those who have reached the ranks prove in their poetry, like Owen, conscientious objectors with very seared consciences, and poetry glorifying war is left to the over-age fogs of the Sunday Times.

Thus Mr. Rhys has encountered a difficult problem. Firstly, there is little good poetry being written in the forces, and secondly, what there happens to be is far from pro-war in outlook.

But if one disregards Walter Eliot's ridiculous literary-cabinet-minister preface and assesses the verse on its merits, the anthology is worth reading, as it does give an idea of the attitude of the educated soldier. The absence of H. B. Mállalieu and the presence of Laurence Whistler and Christopher Hassall are to be regretted. There are good poems by, among others, Gavin Ewart, G. S. Fraser, Alun Lewis, Mervyn Peake, Alan Rook and the editor. But the poet who stands out for the maturity and competence of his verse is Roy Fuller, and I will end by quoting his shortest poem, Epitaph on a Bombing Victim, as an example of the poetry of this war.

Reader, could his limbs be found
Here would lie a common man:
History inflicts no wound
But explodes what it began,
And with its enormous lust
For division splits the dust.
Do not ask his nation; that
Was history's confederate.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

CHILDREN in UNIFORM

THE compulsory registration of youth has commenced, boys of 17 already having 'signed on.' Stress is laid on the fact that they are only "encouraged" by the Youth Committees who will interview the boys and girls—without any trace of compulsion—to join one of a number of recommended organisations.

In the first place those who refuse to register are, under Defence Regulation 92, liable to 3 months' imprisonment and a fine of £100. Secondly, we know from experience that compulsion is only withheld so long as the victims go willingly to the slaughter.

We can imagine what "encouragement" will amount to—especially when combined with offers of free uniforms, free games and the chance to handle lethal weapons (a thrilling novelty to the immature mind—not knowing the foul reasons for their existence)

Board of Education Circular 1577 says—"While . . . young persons should be left free to express their preference for the type of training or organisation in which they may volunteer or enrol, *every encouragement should, in the present war emergency, be given to fit boys, not already associated with some organisation and not otherwise suitably occupied, to undertake some form of pre-service training.*" The next sentence adds that the minimum entrance age for the Home Guard has been lowered to 16. Also "For boys of 17-18 the most appropriate body of this kind . . . is clearly the Home Guard." Even the activities of boys in organisations of a civil character are looked upon as being ". . . of considerable value from the point of view of pre-service training. . ."

Lord Somers, Chief Scout, in *The Scouter*, January, says ". . . I want the Senior Patrols to get some training in the use of weapons, under qualified instructors, and I shall be asking the co-operation of the Home Guard in this. . ."

This conscription of youth which would have shocked many liberals who before the war used to deplore the militarization of German and Italian youth, is being brought in under the skirts of Juvenile Delinquency Welfare work. The Board of Trade (Circular 1486) states "The social and physical development of boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 20, who have ceased full-time education, has for long been neglected in this country . . . *Today considerably less than half of these boys and girls belong to any organization . . . The Government is determined to prevent the recurrence during this war*

of the social problem which arose during the last." Of course this conventional whitewash is taking in all those who refuse to be disillusioned about governmental methods

In effect it means that from earliest school age till they are in the army, children will be soaked in the ideas and propaganda thought suitable for them by the ruling class. It is a scarcely veiled totalitarian measure, similar in intent, though not in form, to those carried out in earlier years by those states whose economic position forced them into fascist modes of government earlier than this country. And it derives from the same causes—the increasing necessity for stringent control of the workers common to all governmental regimes.

For these reasons anarchists will condemn this extension of conscription *unreservedly*. Juvenile crime has its roots primarily in capitalist relations in society. Conscription won't "keep them out of mischief," nor will juvenile delinquency disappear until the cancer of capitalism is torn out.

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North London Group F.F.P.

This group has been in formation for several weeks and meetings are held every Tuesday at 7.30 p.m. at 30 Salmons Road, Edmonton, N.9. It is hoped to extend activities by open air and indoor public meetings and the sale of *War Commentary* in the streets. Comrades in Tottenham, Edmonton, Wood Green, Palmers Green and Enfield should contact C. J. Wade 919 Hertford Road, Waltham Cross, who will give further particulars of this group's activities.

London W.1. and W.2.

Comrades and sympathisers in these areas are asked to get in touch with T. Brown at 27 Belsize Road, N.W.6. with a view to activity in West and Central London.

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