

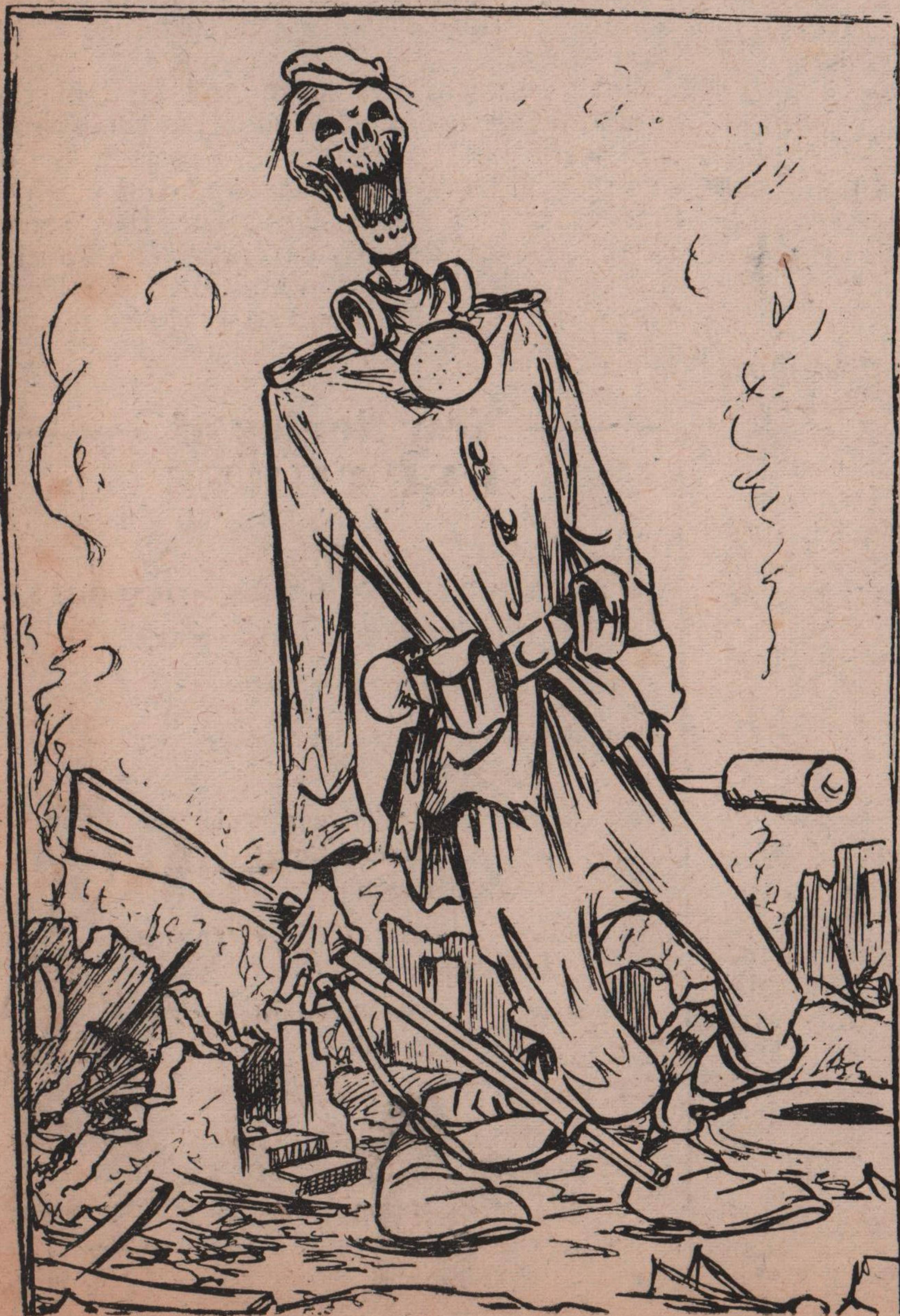
# WAR *For Anarchism* COMMENTARY

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Twopence

## *Victory 194—*



**T**HE fine words and "dogged determination" of the Churchill government make a ridiculous contrast with the actual inefficiencies and wasteful sacrifices of men and material in the conduct of the war; a contrast which must have struck every worker who is seriously interested in fighting against Fascism. Churchill's reiterated appeals to the workers for self-sacrificing struggle for a victory in 1943 or 1944 or 1945 would have more force if they came from a ruling class which showed ability and determination to make the same sacrifices themselves that they demand from the workers. But after every one of the long series of defeats which make up the history of the Churchill government — as well as the Chamberlain one — the same "excuses" have been brought out; maladministration, incompetence, unpreparedness, lack of supplies. Exonerating Churchill at the expense of the men of Munich will no longer wash. The farcical cabinet jiggery-pokery of recent weeks has demonstrated clearly that Churchill backs the incompetents. They and the government as a whole represent the

British ruling class, the owners of the land and factories, the mines and transport. It is the guarding of their interests and privileges which obstruct the efficient conduct of the war.

Meanwhile, every strike, every industrial dispute reveals the same thing—workers driven to take action to defend their living standards against the arbitrary attacks of owners and managers who show themselves more interested in maintaining their profits and evading taxation than in promoting maximum war production. That is the decrepit ruling class the government represents and the Labour Party defends—inefficient, corrupt, incapable of defending their collective interests against German and Japanese (let alone American) rivals, and unwilling to fight the Fascism they represent. This is the owning class which the Minister of Labour and the Home Secretary support when they fine and imprison militant workers fighting for working class rights. At every crisis, the State has revealed itself as the enemy of the workers, unable to organize the war, and an obstacle to the effective fight against Fascism.

#### Victory for Whom?

What prospects would victory for this ruling class have for the workers? With the need for maintaining the wartime level of production gone, mass unemployment and the consequent fall in wages would reappear. Meanwhile, as a means of keeping this unemployment within bounds the army would maintain several millions of the workers in uniform under military discipline and soldiers' levels of pay. In short, a militarized and pauperized England.

The workers on the continent would be even worse off. Their position after the last war was ghastly enough. This time it is unlikely that any recovery of "prosperity" such as belatedly followed the years after 1918 can occur. Post war plans must not be left to Labour leaders for whom no better job can be found than mitigating the tale of horrors on the continent by talk of food supplies sent to Europe . . . after the war. Such "plans" only exist to fool the workers. If the war goes on as at present there will be no timber for rebuilding London and Coventry on model Labour Party lines, no shipping to bring food to this country, let alone planes to transport supplies for starving Europe. All such fancy fairy tale talk is to prevent the workers from taking action now. Incapable

of organizing the war our ruling class are still less capable of organizing the peace. A victory for Fascism offers the same prospects of misery and oppression, disease and starvation.

#### Victory for the Workers only by Social Revolution

These are the workers' prospects if they let Capitalism survive; an incompetent ruling class and a ghastly post war period. Yet the resources of the world are limitless—the soil holds untold wealth and there are millions to work the land and factories. But while this potential wealth is hoarded and fought over by a corrupt bourgeoisie on the one hand and their totalitarian rivals on the other, its abundance will be squandered and denied to the workers who produce it by their labour.

Until the workers seize and control the land and the means of production their arms will never be free to crush Fascism. Let them overthrow the State and the class it represents, let them fight for the Social Revolution and destroy capitalist and Fascist oppression both at home and abroad. Freedom alone can put an end to workers' misery and slavery throughout the world.

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# RAILWAYS—Shares and Wages

**G**EORGE Ridley's pamphlet putting the case for the nationalisation of railways by showing that it would be cheaper for the government to buy the railways rather than to hire them as it is doing at present, has caused a certain amount of comment in the press. These are the arguments used by Ridley in favour of nationalisation:

"The State is hiring the controlled undertakings (that is, the four Group Companies and the L.P.T.B.) for £43,000,000 per annum. I hold that it would be cheaper to buy them and I explain my contention as it applies to the four Group Companies. Their hiring figure is about £38,000,000. Their Stock Exchange value is about £750,000,000. If for the purpose of purchase a loan was raised at 3 per cent, the interest charges would be £22,500,000, instead of the hiring charge of £38,000,000.

This would leave a balance of £15,500,000 a year for capital redemption, plant modernisation, or whatever else may be thought to be desirable."

This shows very clearly the ridiculous position in which the government finds itself with regard to the railways. The nationalisation proposed by certain members of the government at the beginning of the war was so strongly opposed by the Tories that a compromise had to be sought which would give satisfaction to vested interests. The arbiter in these matters was the Minister of War Transport, Lord Leathers, who like so many of his colleagues in similar positions, is a director of many companies and a City man.

The Labour Party case for the nationalisation of railways may seem convincing but it is difficult to see in what way it is a socialist scheme. If the State has to purchase a loan at 3 per cent., who is going to pay for the interests if not the already heavily exploited workers? But people with money to invest will be able to put it in a government loan at 3 per cent., instead of railway shares which, at their best, pay 2 per cent interest.

\* \* \* \* \*

Railway workers are now asking for a minimum wage of £3 a week. Agricultural workers who have always been the lowest paid workers in Britain are now in a better position than railway workers and yet railway workers generally live in towns and have more expenses than people working in the country. J. Marchbank, N.U.R. General Secretary declared recently that—

"The lowest rated employee was to-day, with 47s. a week, plus his war bonus, still 3s. 1d. below what was necessary to preserve his inadequate standard. The 48s. employee was 3s. 5d. the worse off, while the 50s. worker was 4s. below the standard.

Nearly 200 grades, including women, were receiving, excluding war bonus, less than £3 a week. About 195,000 employees were affected in the traffic grades, some 3,500 class V clerks, and 100,000 female staff. As any change in the basic minimum was bound to have repercussions on grades earning over £3 a week, about 320,000 workers on the traffic side alone would be affected."

The wages of railway workers are ridiculously low and action should be taken for an immediate rise. Railways are of primary necessity in wartime and railway workers should, just like agricultural workers, take this opportunity to demand and force from the railway companies a rise in wages.

\* \* \* \* \*

Railway workers will have been pleased however to see that their sacrifices are not in vain. The railway companies have this year paid the highest dividend since 1930.

"The London Midland and Scottish Railway Company has declared a dividend of 2 per cent on its £95,000,000 of ordinary stock for 1941. For each of the previous two years holders had received 1½ per cent, and not since 1930 has 2 per cent been paid. That is the first clear sign of how the agreement of last August, with its still unpublished arrangements about war damage, is working out."

Manchester Guardian, 19.2.42

2 per cent dividend may not seem very high as compared with the 8 per cent and more paid by rubber, steel and petrol shares, but it comes all the same out of workers, thousands of them, who get less than £3 a week, a bare minimum to live on. It is also worthwhile mentioning that while railway shareholders safely put their dividends in their pockets every year, retired railway workers get as little as 3/6d a week (in many cases they have worked for railway companies for 20 years or more!) When Pick retired however he got £5,000 a year and Lord Ashfield the L.P.T.B. chairman will get some thing in relation to his salary of £15,000 a year!

\* \* \* \* \*

The refusal of the government to take over the railways glaringly proves the hypocrisy of the "sacrifice for all" and "conscription of wealth" empty declarations. While soldiers are sent abroad to sacrifice themselves for the defence of the Empire, while children are put in uniform, women ordered to leave their homes according to the whims of the Minister of Labour, the rights of shareholders remain sacred.

Nationalisation offers no solution to this question. Those who will have to pay for the "buying of railways" will be the workers and when the railways will be owned by the State their conditions will not improve. We have many examples of State owned industries or institutions where the conditions of the workers are similar or worse than in privately owned industries.

Railway workers cannot rely on Labour Party M.P.s to better their conditions. They have to organize the struggle for their interests by relying on themselves and on their fellow workers.

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**BACK NUMBERS OF WAR COMMENTARY CAN BE OBTAINED FROM FREEDOM PRESS (3d. post free)**

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THE "Internationale" has appeared in the news at almost weekly intervals since June of last year.

Russia's entry into the war was followed by the B.B.C. controversy "to play or not to play." The song might serve Russia in place of a national anthem but still that did not live down its rebel past. After that came news and rows about it being played or not played at anything from political banquets to football matches.

From all this hullabaloo has come the idea, repeated again and again by the ill-informed Press, that the "Internationale" is a Russian Bolshevik work. Our readers will know of course, that it is neither Russian nor Communist. It was written in French by Eugène Pottier in 1871 and composed by Pierre de Gayter, a Belgian worker who became resident in Paris. It was adopted by the French labour movement, especially the revolutionary syndicalists, became known throughout Western and Central Europe, and eventually reached Russia. After the Revolution the Russian National Anthem was scrapped and no other adopted. Instead the new Russian Government sought to gain the support of the international workers by using their rallying song, the "Internationale." Since the Bolsheviks seized power they have dropped internationalism and developed "soviet patriotism," but the old melody lingers on. People are rarely conscious of what they are singing, a visit to church will prove that, and a man who has never sent his mother a postal order for years will bring himself to tears by singing of that much cele-

## The Internationale

brated, but neglected, lady. So the "Internationale" is being sung on queer occasions and in queer com-

pany. Recently at a West Ham football match, the band played it and followed up with "God Save the King," the crowd standing bareheaded throughout.

But just to make sure of it the song has been reformed. The words have been rewritten by Helen Bantock and the music rearranged by Sir Granville Bantock. The new publication claims "all rights reserved" and "copyright in the U.S.A." (So far the new authors or their publishers, are not claiming the rights of the "Londonderry Air" or the copyright of "Hamlet.") The words have been made so respectable, they cease to have any meaning—the "Internationale" in a top hat!

"Awake, O sleepers from your dreaming, Uplift, uplift your longing eyes: the star of Truth above is gleaming." begins the new version. In the second verse the workers of the world are to "wrest the wealth from land and sea." That is what they are doing now, but the product gets into the wrong hands—the new "Internationale" says nothing of that. None of the old "on our flesh too long have fed the raven, we've too long been the vulture's prey." Perhaps the chorus is the most dashing part of this middle-class version of the old fighting song. "O comrades, assemble" it bids. Altogether a worthy companion of "God Save," and like it could be used for emptying picture houses. Just as a matter of historical interest we reprint the old words. No rights reserved, no copyright.

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Arise! ye starvelings from your slumbers,  
Arise ye criminals of want,  
For reason in revolt now thunders,  
And at last ends the age of cant.  
Now away with all your superstition,  
Servile masses, arise! arise!  
We'll change forthwith the old conditions  
And spurn the dust to win the prize.

Chorus

Then comrades, come rally,  
This last fight let us face—  
The Internationale unites the human race.

Repeat

No saviours from on high deliver,  
No faith have we in prince or peer,  
The slave's own arm his chains must sever  
Chains of slavery, greed and fear,  
E'er the thieves will disgorge their booty  
And to each grant a happier lot  
Each at the forge must do his duty  
And strike the iron while it's hot.

Chorus

Instead of these stirring words, we are to have petit-bourgeois sweet nothings. No song, no music ever suffered such a wretched fate—not even the Marseillaise or Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. "O comrades assemble," take your partners for the Floral Dance!

These kings defile us with their powder  
We'll have no wars within the land,  
Let soldiers strike, for peace cry louder,  
Lay down arms, join hand in hand.  
If these vile monsters still determine  
Heroes to make of us in despite,  
They'll know full soon the sort of vermin  
Our bullets hit in this last fight.

Chorus

We peasants, artisans and others  
Enrolled among the sons of toil,  
Let's claim the earth henceforth for brothers:  
Drive the indolent from the soil.  
On our flesh too long has fed the raven,  
We've too long been the vulture's prey,  
But, now farewell the spirit craven,  
The dawn leads forth a better day.

Chorus

TOM BROWN

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War Commentary cannot devote much space to theoretical articles on Anarchism and Syndicalism, but the Freedom Press has published a number of books and pamphlets on Anarchism which should be read by all interested in the ideas put forward in War Commentary. Ask for our list of publications or turn to page 10 of this issue for advertisement of selected pamphlets.

# A Red and Black Notebook

**M**ILITARY writers are trying to rescue militarism from its bankruptcy (*at present* limited to the "United Nations") by recommending guerilla tactics. How far removed from the methods of Anarchists and revolutionaries are these writers is revealed by the following extract from *Guerilla Warfare* by Bert Levy. "One of the best ways to start is to give a city a good laugh at the expense of the Nazis . . . That technique can be used very effectively to cause all sorts of dislocation. Placard the town with a notice: 'Mothers desiring extra milk for their children should apply to the Town Hall within the next three days,' then sit back and watch the fun."

A peculiar sense of humour, Mr. Levy; when the disappointed mothers and hungry children are turned away we are expected to see the joke.

## BRING HIM BACK ALIVE!

**W**EST Cumberland District Committee report that John Winter is posing as a fitter in that district. The man is a labourer. Shop Stewards please note." (A.E.U. Monthly Journal, February)

Scotland Yard, The Royal Canadian "Mounties" and the Gestapo have been warned.

## BLAH AND BLAH AND BLAH

**T**HE Communists for eight months have been shouting for increased production of munitions without producing one idea or suggestion other than extra speech making. From the Stalinist pseudo Trades Union journal "New Propellor" we take the following typical example. A.B. calls for "Leading members to visit every factory giving pep talks, and rousing the factory workers to really great things. The conception of our war effort and what it takes to bring about a complete change of attitude on the part of all concerned is, in my opinion, much too gentle, slow, lacking in sparkle, ideas, movement and above all, colour . . . Let us have inspiring messages from Stalin, Chiang Kai-Shek, Timoshenko, from leading Commando units etc. Send the world greetings on behalf of our factory workers through a delegate or two, especially America."

So that's the way to increase production. Get a few delegates to knock off work and take a holiday in America. Greetings from Stalin and speeches from ex-boilermakers will do the rest. It was best portrayed by a cartoonist who drew a picture of a busy factory in which a Shop Steward was calling "Stop work boys! We've got to hold a meeting to demand increased production."

## PRODUCTION COMMITTEES

**W**E have received many enquiries about our attitude to the production committees being, or about to be, set up by Bevin in all munition factories. Should militants serve on them for propaganda or as watch-dogs? Our answer is NO! The Committees will not be concerned with wages or conditions of work. They will not even have any real control of production. They will be used as the employers' private police force, to enforce discipline, punish absentees and slave-drive the workers.

The authorities will allow "Elected representatives" of the workers to sit on these committees in order to lend democratic colour to their Star Chambers, but this will not soften the result. Indeed it will be easier to put it across the workers if they take part

in the mummery of election. Better to boycott the elections and deprive the committee of their prestige. In the face of a boycott any worker who serves on such a body will immediately reveal himself as a scab. Militants on the committees will cover the movements of these wretches. If we are to fight these Stakhanovite bodies, we must be outside of and against them, not of them.

## CANNON FODDER

**D**AILY we hear of increasing reports of sick and disabled men being passed into the army after medical examination—that's what they call it—examination. Recently *The People* reported the annual meeting of the Chelsea Branch of the British Legion, where it was said "Men suffering from tuberculosis, varying forms of insanity and heart trouble are going into the army . . . whilst a man with one eye was passed Grade A by a medical board, and had not been discharged from a fighting unit." The paper further said "Lord Davies will point out that hundreds of men from Wales alone have been called up, despite the fact that they suffer from tuberculosis."

Readers of *The Good Soldier Schweik* will be reminded of the army doctor in that excellent anti-militarist story. He had examined 10,000 recruits and was proud of having passed as fit 9,999, but he carried a grudge against the odd man who had spoiled his record. He had been about to pass him Grade A when the poor man fell dead of apoplexy. "Take away that malingerer!" cried the doctor.

## SYNDICALIST

## Freedom of the Press ?

**THREE** members of the Oxford F.F.P. were selling 'War Commentary' outside a "Freedom of the Press" rally organised by the Communist Party recently. The sellers met with great success before the meeting, but afterwards the C.P. employed its usual tactics in attempting to suppress the right of our comrades to put their case before the workers.

After the meeting one of the sellers stood fast inside the door of the Town Hall while the others sold outside. Immediately the former was surrounded by stewards and without a word of warning, thrown into the street. However, selling continued. Annoyed by this success, two C.P.'ers who had been in conference with the stewards, came out and tried to "beat up" one of our comrades, tearing up the papers of another, who was in the middle of selling a copy. A seller of "Socialist Appeal" defended our comrades by calling the attention of those around to the C.P.'s "manifest belief" in the Freedom of the Press!

The Communist Party could have done itself little good by this display of Fascist tendencies. Many people around were amazed at the methods employed by those who had a few moments before avowed themselves believers in the right of minority expression! But only the determination of the workers to put an end to these fascist tactics will show the C.P. what is really meant by the Freedom of the Press. As far as our comrades were concerned it made no difference to their selling. A very large number of "War Commentaries" were sold as well as many anarchist pamphlets.

## Exit the old school tie

WITH the Far East in the news, and Englishmen in general learning only now how far flung the Empire really was, an article on British North Borneo, published in a recent issue of *Picture Post*, is timely and most informative. In fact we would say that the article was too informative for certain sections of the community because it exposes in no uncertain manner the true nature of Imperialism—including British Imperialism.

British North Borneo with a population of a million people, actually belonged to a limited liability company with offices in the City of London. The Company was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1881 and it was given in perpetuity the Independent State of North Borneo. Of course "perpetuity" implied that Britannia would for ever rule the waves and that all but the British ruling class should be slaves. However as the article points out even under the protection of the British Government it was not possible to prevent "the locust-like swarms of little yellow men from taking possession of it."

But to return to the Company. Its occupation is worthy of close attention. The President is (or was?) 72 years old Major-General Sir Neill Malcolm whose qualifications for the post are that he is "a fine product of Eton, Sandhurst and the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders." The Vice-President is Sir Dougal O. Malcolm (brother of the President!) who is also a product of Eton and a "well known figure in the City, and is a director of the British South Africa Company and other great Companies. Other Directors include a Mr. Buxton yet another product of Eton who in the last war was "Lieutenant-Colonel of the Imperial Camel Corps," while septuagenarian the Hon. Mountstuart William Elphinstone, another Director is "a member of the Turf Club." Now these gentlemen appoint (or did until the other day) the Governor of British North Borneo, whose job presumably was to safeguard the Company's interests.

Now, these gentlemen met once a month to discuss, and we need hardly say that they did not discuss the welfare of the 48,000 Chinese, 12,000 Malaysians and about 200,000 natives, for the Company, like most Companies is not concerned with the health and well-being of the natives—particularly when their skins are the wrong colour. It was concerned with the successful exploitation of this rich territory which contains gold, oil, copper, while the rubber plantations are its biggest source of income.

But the "company does not indulge in trade as such. It draws its revenues . . . from Customs and Excise, Duties, Court fees, stamp duties, licences, royalties and land rents. It has loaned a lot of land to rubber plantation companies and it directly controls the North Borneo State Rubber Company. It also has a revenue from telegraphs, wireless stations, wharfs, lighthouses and a railway 125 miles long."

The article continues by pointing out that "Foreigners have often questioned whether the British Crown should rule over rich territories which it seems to have done so little to develop or protect." Actually we might remind the writer of the article

(Continued at foot of next column)

## CAMPAIGN Vansittartism spreads

THE German refugees have been the objects of a shameful attack by the *Sunday Dispatch* of the 8.2.42. This newspaper which always preached appeasement with Hitler and published pro-nazi articles at a time when the people it denounces were making enormous sacrifices in order to fight fascism, is now the most rabid Hun-hater. Under the headline, splashed on the front page, "The Free German Trick" and the subtitles "Exposure Of Influential Groups Working Here To Save The Enemy," "Some Refugees Who Must Be Checked" the paper denounces the whole section of the German refugees which, though supporting the war on Britain's side, is opposed to a policy of revenge after the war. Here are the crimes of which the *Sunday Dispatch* accuses those people:

*"The views of these groups have the sympathy of certain Britons concerned with British propaganda in and to Germany. Which explains why so many of our broadcasts appeal to the "other Germany" as distinct from the Nazis.*

*It explains also why in a recent broadcast the speaker told the Germans that the vigorous anti-German views of Lord Vansittart do not represent British official opinion, and have been the subject of much controversy here.*

And the article ends with this menace "The men concerned must be watched and their activities curbed"; the whole article is an incitement to the reinternment of German Refugees.

The article gives a very detailed account of all the socialist and communist organisations concerned and of their leaders but it is of course directed against all the socialist and communist workers, members of these organisations. It also involves the German militants who independently of their particular views consider it their duty to carry on the work in the German section of the I.F.T.U. (International Federation of Trade Unions—"Amsterdam International") in Great Britain.

that there are also a number of Englishmen as well as the "Foreigners" who have asked the same thing for many years. But the climax of this article is where the writer says "no doubt the little yellow men are now busily exploiting the wealth of British North Borneo and Sarawak for the evil purposes of imperial aggrandisement." And for what object did the British North Borneo (Chartered) Company exist, if not for the evil purposes of imperial aggrandisement? In which case, the 250,000 Chinese, Malaysians and Natives of North Borneo are no worse off now than they were when governed by remote control and the old school tie (Triple Etonian at that).

# AGAINST GERMAN REFUGEES

## to Labour Leaders

### Part of a Campaign

The article is signed by "our diplomatic correspondent" but does not represent the views of an individual or even one paper. It is obviously part of a definite campaign against all the Germans guilty of not sharing Vansittart views on the German people. Laski (in *Reynolds News*) and the *New Leader* have already pointed out that British Labour Leaders and officials are connected with this campaign of defamation. This does not surprise us as we have always denounced the reactionary views of the Labour Party and Trade Unions. One also remembers that not long ago Camille Huysmans, veteran Belgian socialist and ex-president of the 2nd International wrote an article against the whole of the German people and received great support amongst labour circles. Certain "socialists" have come openly on the side of Lord Vansittart. The German socialist Walter Loeb has even founded a publishing company to popularise his views. The Board of directors contains another German socialist Geyer and prominent leaders of the British and allied Labour Movements like James Walker, George Gibson, Charles Dukes, John Brown. Spain is represented by Araquistain one of the leaders of the Socialist Party and friend of Caballero!

### Vansittart Views Triumph

How is it that less than a year after Vansittart published his pamphlet *Black Record* which was at that time condemned by most of the left public his views receive such a support by the British and allied Labour Movements?

At the beginning of the war it was fashionable to speak of revolution on the continent, of the two Germanies, of the German people who were only waiting for an opportunity to overthrow Hitler. The Beaverbrook press quoted Lenin and even Trotsky on World Revolution. *War Commentary* was the only paper, to our knowledge, not to be fooled by this beautiful talk about revolution; in several issues of *War Commentary* (Jan. and Aug. 1940 and April 1941) we denounced this talk as a manoeuvre to win the war quicker by exploiting revolutionary movements on the continent. That this was purely a hypocritical manoeuvre is now proved by the fact that leaders of the Labour Movement can openly declare their Vansittartism without causing any scandal.

This has been further proved by a recent declaration of the Minister of Information, Brendan Bracken in Parliament. Asked by a Conservative member why, in a broadcast to Germany, it had been said that we respect the German people and the German Army he answered "*When talking to the Germans it is very wise to put a lot of what you call sugar on the pill.*" The talk about the German people not being responsible for Hitler crimes, the promises that the Versailles mistakes will not be repeated—all that turns out to be, as we had assumed, merely 'sugar on the pill.'

### More Cynicism

Tact does not seem to be Mr. Bracken's chief quality. When in the House last week a member

suggested broadcasting more music to Italy he replied that "*Personally he would rather send bombs.*" The British Government seems to use propaganda merely because it is cheaper and easier!

H. C. Strauss a Conservative M.P. described in a few words what was the Government's real attitude towards a "revolution on the continent." He said to the House that he "*thought that at present the tendency of a great deal of our propaganda was to encourage a sham revolution in Germany, the effect of which might be to weaken the power of our propaganda when there was a real revolution. It was no good putting out propaganda thought to be useful for Germany which if heard in Allied countries might have a disastrous effect there.*"

### Tasks of the German Refugees

The Germans attacked by the Sunday Dispatch are as we have already said on Britain's side in this war and they give their support to the British government by their writings and by their talks on the B.B.C. While they may not be aware of it they help Bracken and Co. to 'sugar the pill for the German people.' All will be well for them as long as the British government is able to afford the sugar. But if the trick does not work and military disasters continue to follow one another as they do now, Mr. Bracken's preferences will be satisfied, instead of broadcasts the Italian and German people will get bombs.

Very soon the British ruling class will feel that it had better stop all this gentlemen's talk and preach a crusade of extermination of the Hun. The Germans and other socialists now collaborating with the Government will be eliminated or they will have also to adopt the Vansittart line.

But should socialists wait until the Government wants to get rid of them? Is it not obvious to all of them that they are only playing into the hands of the Ministry of Information? How can they have the courage to address themselves to the German people inciting them to revolt when Mr. Bracken cynically admits that it is all 'sugar on the pill'?

As long as they are the spokesmen of the Government or the Ministry of Information, German, French and Spanish Socialists cannot hope to have any influence on the masses in Europe. They will only be considered by the workers of Germany, France and Spain as the agents of the British Government. And so they are. If there are any socialists amongst the refugees who sincerely believe that fascism can only be defeated by world revolution let them repudiate an alliance with governments, which have always been and will always be the enemies of a workers' revolution. Let them appeal to the masses of Europe with more scanty means but with the consciousness that they are working, not for the enemies of the workers, but for the social revolution.

### A CORRECTION

Last month in our notice of our comrade Oscar Swede's death, the sentence "Already in the twenties he contracted tuberculosis" should read "In the early thirties . . ."

## MORE ON BETTESHANGER

"With his wide knowledge of the trade unions Mr. Ernest Bevin must have known that the imprisonment of the men's representatives would be immediately followed by an agitation for their release. To refuse this would have meant an increase in bitterness all round with consequences far beyond the merits or otherwise of the miners' case at Betteshanger. Now that the men have been released so promptly the effect is to make them heroes in the eyes of their fellows. So Mr. Bevin loses both ways. He has gained neither a reputation for steadfastness of purpose nor for sagacity. In fact, he behaved exactly as every other Minister of Labour has behaved before him."

*The Tribune* 6.2.42

## ROOSEVELT FAR-SIGHTEDNESS

"General Chiang Kai-shek, in a telegram to President Roosevelt thanking him for the loan of 500,000,000 United States dollars to China, says:

'On behalf of the Chinese Army and people I wish to convey our deep gratitude for this timely assistance. *Your far-sightedness in this world's greatest crisis is the envy of all statesmen.*'"

General Chiang Kai-shek seems to have a short memory regarding the U.S. Up to the entry into the war she has been selling oil and scrap iron to Japan. Chinese and British troops are now being bombed thanks to American supplies and Roosevelt's enviable far-sightedness!

## SINGAPORE BOUGHT for £2000

"The man who acquired Singapore for Britain, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, then a clerk in the East India Company, argued for years with London as to the strategic value of the island. Eventually and protestingly they allowed him to cross over from Java and take peaceful possession of it. The expedition cost £2000.

*He was ultimately called home 'to answer for his costly expeditions in the East,' lost his case in court and died broken-hearted. For a long time after his death his widow was still paying the £2000 by instalments."*

*Evening Standard* 1.12.41

# Through

## YES MAN

"What further blows can the British worker suffer? They are subject to complete military and industrial conscription, and this without any concession from British capitalism to ease their circumstances. *And all this under a Labour Minister. Make no mistake about it. Our governing class has no real quarrel with Mr. Ernest Bevin. So far he has answered their main requirements.*" *Tribune* 14.2.42.

## LOGICAL HUNS

"The truth is that high-level bombing when the aircraft are being subjected, as they always were at Brest, to intense and skilful anti-aircraft fire is grossly inadequate. That is why the Germans were logical in taking as their bombing targets huge built up areas like London or other big cities. No accuracy of aim is then required, yet every bomb that falls is likely to do damage by killing people, wrecking buildings, and destroying public services such as water, electricity and gas." *Evening Standard*

Now Germans are logical, but last year they were Huns trying to hit women and children!

## TWO YEARS AGO

"Before his departure for Melbourne, Mr. D. R. Grenfell, the Bristol Labour M.P., in an address to Labour and Trade Union officials, said that if Great Britain were forced to declare war against Soviet Russia the British Labour movement would stand solidly behind that decision." *London Times*

This was of course in February 1940!

# HUNGER amid PLENTY

## Greece

The food and health situation in Greece is very grave, according to reports from the Greek Government in exile and also from United States travellers. said Mr. Sumner Welles, Assistant Secretary of State, at his press conference. Infantile mortality and malnutrition in Greece are "utterly appalling," he said.—*Reuter*.

*"Manchester Guardian"*

## India

"To more than half the population, hunger is a constant companion. According to a recent report of the Bombay Labour Office, certain classes of industrial workers consume the maximum of cereals allowed by the Indian Government Famine Code, but less than the diet prescribed by the Bombay Jail manual!"

## Brazil

Brazil has three different gluts—oranges, coffee, nuts. Oranges are normally shipped to Argentina. This trade is going on as usual. But vast quantities of fruit grown for Europe now flood the markets of Rio, can be bought for almost nothing. Often it is left on the trees, finally to drop from over-ripeness.

## Argentina

Argentina also has its gluts, no less serious than elsewhere. Wool, mutton and beef, wheat, maize and linseed are the most important.

## The West Indies

The West Indies has for long not known what to do with its bananas limes and grapefruit. To save planters from complete disaster, Britain bought the entire banana crop. But that did not get rid of the fruit.

## Palestine

Palestine is in a very bad way. Thousands of Jews and Arabs have tilled large "groves" where oranges, mandarines, grapefruit and lemons ripen to be shipped overseas. No longer are there any ships. Ruin faced the pioneers last week.

The Palestine Government has subsidised less than half the growers. Others are nearing bankruptcy.

*"News Review"* 5.2.42



## THE ROTHSCHILDS DO THEIR BIT

"There were strong protests when it was announced at yesterday's meeting of Croydon Public Assistance Committee that the Ministry of Health had decided to pay Mr. James de Rothschild £1,700 a year for rent of part of his Buckinghamshire mansion, Waddesdon Manor, at which 75 children from the Committee's homes are evacuated.

Previously, Mr. de Rothschild has received a billeting allowance of £1,300

Councillor Mrs. Ella Regan followed other protests by saying: "I think it is too bad that people in their position should make a profit of £400 a year by having children in their house at this stage of the war. The Government should deal with them." *Reynolds* 15.2.42

# the Press

## POLLITT AND CHURCHILL

This is what Harry Pollitt had to say about Mr. Churchill in the December issue of *Labour Monthly*.

"Labour's own daily newspaper, the 'Daily Herald,' hails Churchill as Britain's man of destiny. That is the measure of Labour's shame, the betrayal of every principle of Socialism and Peace. For one thing now understood by our people is that, wherever Churchill speaks or acts, suffering and death are the result, exactly the same as when Hitler speaks or acts."

We would not care to contradict Mr. Pollitt, but he can perhaps explain to us why the Communist Party asks the people to support the Conservative Candidate whenever elections take place. If Mr. Churchill is not Britain's man of destiny what is the point of people voting for the party of which he is the leader.

We would like also to know if Mr. Gallacher agrees with his party comrade because as far as we know he did not join Maxton in the lobby when he voted against the vote of confidence in the Prime Minister.

## FLOGGING

"Mr. John Dugdale (Labour, West Bromwich) will ask in the Commons how many natives were flogged by the Police in Kenya and Nigeria during the past six months."

*Reynolds News*

Why not ask for the abolition of flogging?

## PAPER WASTE GOES ON

When recently in the House the Chancellor of the Exchequer was asked that expenditure by firms on advertising goods which no longer exist should be disallowed as expenses for Income Tax purposes, Sir Kingsley Wood refused to take such a step in spite of the fact that the proposal was supported by all parts of the House. (The Government hired L.P.T.B. recommends firms to keep their goods before the public by advertising in every tube coach)

Journalists will go on writing moving articles on people giving their love letters and beloved books to the paper salvage while the newspaper bosses will go on reaping profits from advertisements. The price of advertisement space has gone up considerably since the war started and newspaper owners are doing good business.

## ARMY PRISONS

In the February issue of War Commentary we reproduced cuttings from the Press describing the conditions in army prisons under the title "glass house scandal." The same week the Reynolds News printed an article giving a most favourable view of army prisons. From the number of protests Reynolds News say they have received, we seem to have been right. Here are some extracts from the letters they quote.

"The chief difference is the sense of fear pervading a detention barracks. Although the shocking pre-war conditions have been relaxed dread of several days' bread and water and 'solitary' for the slightest infringement of rigorous rules still succeeds in reducing most military prisoners to outward subservience and inward bitterness.

"Physical ill-treatment certainly has not disappeared."

\* \* \* \* \*

"The battalion to which I am attached punishes its own offenders, field punishment being the penalty for absence without leave.

"This consists of having one's hair shaved completely off and existing on bread and water for the first three days of the sentence. The provost sergeant has been given permission from the C.O. to use any means that he thinks fit to punish the men. Believe me when I say he can think of a lot of brutal methods."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Colonel Fraser's words, 'Men are allowed to write and receive letters and to have visitors,' are rather ironic: men are allowed to write one letter per week on a sheet of paper measuring 6 in. by 4 in., with the regulations of the camp printed all over one side.

"Secondly a man is NOT allowed to receive visitors—unless Colonel Fraser means new inmates.

"You have not mentioned one of the worst features—solitary confinement, which consists of placing the offender in a completely dark cell for three days and feeding him on bread and water."

"I have seen lads drop to the ground from sheer exhaustion, and what happened to them? Three days on nothing but bread and water. That was punishment diet (P.D.3 for short). All this doubling was done in full kit and so was P.T. You couldn't visit the latrines until a parade was detailed—and even that was done at the double.

"Solitary confinement every night. I never spoke to a soul except when the staff asked me something, 14 days of plain, unadulterated hell.

"I could feel myself going weaker each day. All my hair was shaved off, all but a little tuft at the front. When we went into our cells after parades had finished our braces and laces, and any other articles, with which we might be able to commit suicide, had to go outside our cell doors. Some of the toys used to hammer on their cell doors, and shout and scream all through the night."

## WILL WORKERS CELEBRATE?

This year is the centenary of the introduction of income-tax. Newspapers.

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Next Issue of  
**WAR COMMENTARY**  
 Out on the 15th of MARCH

# Two Fronts in Malay

*I still have fresh divisions. I intend to keep them to maintain order."*

General Weygand in June 1940.

**N**OW that Singapore also has fallen the capitalist press is busy conducting post-mortems on the strategy employed, lack of supplies and a hundred and one other factors. We do not expect Imperialist blimps to be efficient where sacrifices in property are required, nor do we doubt that supplies were inadequate. But all these "explanations" really serve the ruling class (they are put out, after all, by the capitalists' press) by concealing the fundamental problem that confronts any imperialist power fighting a military action on colonial territory.

## Capitalist Imperialism Fights on Two Fronts

While the British Sahibs were fighting against the Japanese imperialists, they still had to carry on their bitter class fight against their oppressed colonial slaves. In war between rival imperialist "mother-countries" such as Germany, Britain or France, the fundamental class war can be glossed over by stressing patriotism, "union-sacrée," love for the Fatherland etc.—of course to the advantage of the dominant class. Such a method of side-tracking class antagonisms is however not open to colonial rulers. Calls to "patriotism" could hardly be expected to muster the Malayans to solidarity with their imperialist oppressors—the opposite result of arousing Malayan nationalism would be far more likely!

Thus Japan's most powerful weapon in the Pacific war is the resentment with which the victims of Imperialism view their British and American oppressors. History—particularly the history of the working class—is full of instances where men labouring under a tyrant's yoke have preferred "the devil they don't know" —in this case Japanese imperialism—to the "devil they know." For to them it appears that no change could worsen their position.

It is said that the British were "*unprepared for a land attack on Singapore—having always expected a Japanese attack by sea.*" But we find that Mr. P. C. Spender K.C., a member of the Australian Parliament already envisaged such an event when he said in *May 1939* "Sometimes I wonder what would happen if Singapore were attacked from behind."

*Reynolds News* of Jan. 14th, declared "*Singapore must be held . . . and for that, the co-operation of all the peoples of Malaya, Singapore, and the East Indies is essential . . . otherwise the roar of Singapore's big guns may do no more than echo the greatest Empire crash in history.*" Of course "the co-operation of all the peoples of Malaya, Singapore, and East Indies" is just what imperialist tyrants cannot manage to obtain. So far from being "stupid" about it, as most of the socialist press describe them, the British Sahibs seem to have realized this from the start, for they made no serious attempt to enlist the co-operation of the Malay and Chinese coolies in the Peninsula. They knew they wouldn't get it. But *Reynolds*, in the article already cited, complains "*we forgot to make allies of the Malayans and Chinese*

*who make up the mass of the population, not only of the Malayan Peninsula but of the surrounding islands on which the Japanese are now tightening their grip.*" The nature of Imperialism being what it is, we would like to know how one makes "allies" of a subject people? Even the ingenious Nazis are finding it a difficult job in occupied Europe!

## Better the Japs than Malayan Insurrection

But the British masters were not only unable to make "Allies" of their slaves, they actually feared them. How else can we explain the failure to arm and equip the population, or understand the fact that "*Chinese troops went into the battle for Singapore armed with nothing more than shot guns.*" (*Evening Standard*, 17.2.42.)?

While Mussolini was defending Abyssinia against the British the Press was full of reports about the imminent revolts of Abyssinian "patriots" against the Italian Imperialist tyranny. But when the British troops marched into Addis Ababa they found the Italian Army had remained on duty, "to maintain order."

The *News Chronicle* for 16 Feb. 1942 reported that "*1000 armed British soldiers will be left in Singapore City to maintain order until Japanese Army completes occupation.*" The *Evening Standard*, later in the same day, added "that it was in the interests of the population that the British troops who were there should maintain order rather than allow any trouble to grow and be dealt with by the Japanese . . . there are 1,000,000 inhabitants still in Singapore, including 100,000 British" (i.e. 10 per cent). It is the old nightmare of every ruling class—"We are many, they are few."

Scared of a revolt against themselves—they would rather not "allow any trouble to grow and be dealt with by the Japanese"—it now only remains for the Empire propagandists to broadcast radio appeals to the Singapore and Malayan coolies "groaning under Japanese oppression" to "rise up and throw off the invader's yoke" etc., etc.

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# CHIANG KAI-SHEK and the Communists in China

Have those who now extol Chiang Kai-Shek as a great democrat looked at his record? Have they forgotten that his merciless slaughter of the revolutionary Chinese

workers had earned for him the title of "Butcher of the Chinese Revolution"? This article gives a short account of his career.

**O**UR new ally Chiang Kai-Shek is now boosted by the Press as a great statesman, a great general and a great democrat. He appears in the news as the man who not only defended his country's independence but who is working for that of India. Very little is said however about Chiang Kai-Shek's record and about his regime. People seem to have forgotten that not very long ago Chiang Kai-Shek was called "the butcher of the Chinese Revolution," a title which naturally does not prevent him from becoming the ally of 'interventionist' Churchill, of red-tsar Stalin and strike-breaker Roosevelt, but which prevents all true revolutionaries from feeling any sympathy for the man and his regime.

The relations of Chiang with the Chinese Communist Party show some light on his reactionary character and it may be worthwhile to look back on this page of history which both democrats and communists have an interest in forgetting.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Communist Party started to play a role in Chinese politics in 1923 when Sun Yat Sen the leader of the Chinese revolution accepted the help of Moscow in order to strengthen the position of the Kuomintang which was set to achieve Nationalism (freedom from foreign imperialist powers), Democracy (equal political status for all if not equal power) Socialism (national control of major industries). Sun Yat Sen's programme was petit-bourgeois as compared with that of the Bolshevik party in Russia. But the Comintern was at that time in favour of 'united front tactics' and an alliance was concluded between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party and Sun Yat Sen received two Russian advisers. This alliance caused the right wing of the Kuomintang to leave the Party and while Sun Yat Sen was trying to bring them back he fell ill and died in Peking in 1925. After his death the government—always under the influence of the communists—moved further to the left and was able to increase its influence.

But the collaboration between the Kuomintang and the Communists was not to last long. In May 1925 a general strike took place in Shanghai in answer to the fire which the military cordon at the International settlement had opened against striking and demonstrating textile workers. The movement immediately spread all over China and to such an extent that the Chinese industrialists frightened by its revolutionary character made a compromise with the administration of the international settlement. Suddenly, on 20th March 1926, Chiang Kai-Shek, the military commander of Canton, organised a putsch against his own government. He dispersed the workers' militia and arrested communists, trade unionists and members of the Kuomintang. The leader of Chinese democracy used, in order to gain power, similar methods to those used by Mussolini, Hitler, Franco and all modern dictators!

After the Shanghai events, instead of breaking with Chiang Kai-Shek the Communists tried to compromise with him. The agreement they reached was very unfavourable to the Communist Party while Chiang was recognized as head of the Canton Government. Conflicts soon arose and while Stalin and his representative in China, Borodin, hoped for a continuance of the compromise Chiang Kai-Shek prepared himself to crush the Communist forces. In Shanghai he gave orders to the workers to deliver up their arms to the army. The Communist Party did not revolt against this but advised its members to hide the arms instead of giving them up. Chiang Kai-Shek took advantage of his adversaries' lack of decision and ordered the arrest of the Shanghai Committee and of all known communists. The Communist Party decided at last, to resist but it was too late. The workers disarmed, demoralised and lacking organisation were defeated and mercilessly slaughtered. Similar massacres followed in Canton and Hong Kong and in all revolutionary districts. After a few months the defeat of the Communists in China was completed and Chiang had won the title of "butcher of the revolution."

\* \* \* \* \*

After these events the attitude of the Communists towards the Kuomintang had to be completely reversed. In 1927 the policy of collaboration was abandoned and the war against both the left and the right of the Kuomintang started under the slogan of the Soviet regime. The attempt to create soviets in the big towns failed as in the terrible disaster of Canton in December 1927. But in the Southern districts peasant soviets were formed from which partisans were recruited for the Red Armies which were to fight Chiang Kai-Shek's armies for the next ten years. Chiang Kai-Shek organised four campaigns of extermination against them without succeeding in annihilating them in spite of the fact that he concentrated all his strength against the Red armies thereby allowing the Japanese to conquer Manchukuo. He was able however thanks to the great superiority of his forces, to weaken considerably the Red armies in the South.

Partly because of these defeats, partly for political and strategical reasons (the Chinese Red Armies would become an advance guard of the Russian Red Army) Stalin gave the order to the Communist forces in the South to reform themselves in North China. The Red Army left the South East and proceeded to the North West, avoiding Central China where the Kuomintang forces were massed. After having covered 10,000 kilometres and in spite of tremendous difficulties the Red Army reached Shensi, the new Soviet base. But out of 90,000 men only 20,000 were left\*. When it reached Shensi the Chinese Red Army was in a better position to follow Stalin's instructions but it had lost all its social character. This did not matter however as far as

Moscow was concerned, the new "party" line consisted not in bringing about the world revolution but in defending democracy by fighting fascism. The Chinese Communist Party received therefore the order to win the Chinese government to a policy of military struggle against Japan.

The Comintern did not of course rely on the Chinese masses to fight against fascism. If it had been faithful to its revolutionary ideals it would have contrived to deliver the Chinese people from 'Butcher Chiang Kai-Shek' and have helped them to achieve a revolution which would have given the Chinese people something to fight for against Japanese aggression.

These are not Moscow methods however. The Communist Party did not try to get the support of the people but of Chiang Kai-Shek who had persecuted them for so many years.

In 1936 the Communist International worked for the alliance of the communist party with the bourgeois governments of all European countries. This succeeded in France and Spain but in China the communists were faced with a bourgeois government which refused to become their ally. Chinese Communists failed to seduce Chiang Kai-Shek, they had therefore to resort to violence and they did so successfully. In December 1936 the communists kidnapped him and "imposed" an alliance!

When in 1936 Chiang launched a new campaign on Communist forces in North West China, Chang Hsue-Liang was at the head of the forces. But his army was soon infiltrated by Communist propaganda and he himself was convinced that the Communists did not want social revolution but an alliance of all the Chinese in order to fight Japan. He soon became the ally of the Communists and when Chiang visited him at his headquarters he detained his generalissimo and obliged him to promise that he would declare war on Japan. Chiang Kai-Shek was probably driven to promise and he was then released. So that the generalissimo's honour should not be tarnished the rebel general was put in prison, condemned and liberated the next day. That is how the Communists secured Chiang Kai-Shek's alliance.

Chiang Kai-Shek soon adopted a hostile attitude towards Japan and Japanese agents were arrested. The Red Army was not suppressed but received on the contrary 500,000 dollars grant. The Communists on the other hand made some concessions as well. The Red Army became the 8th Army and abandoned all revolutionary activities. Chiang Kai-Shek had adopted the Comintern foreign policy against Japan while the Communists adopted the Kuomintang bourgeois programme. It was a return to the 1923 policy but with a difference. The Kuomintang had moved very much to the right since then.

At the beginning of 1937 the Communist Party addressed a message to the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang accepting in advance all the conditions it might think necessary to the formation of a united front.

On the 22nd of September 1937 the Communist Party published a manifesto in Nanking showing clearly that they were prepared to make any compromise. The manifesto emphasized the four following points:—

1. Realising that the Three People's Principles of Sun Yat Sen are indispensable to the reorganisation

of the country, the Chinese Communist Party undertakes to concentrate all its strength to the realisation of those principles.

2. The Chinese Communist Party has decided to abandon all activities having for aim the overthrow of the Kuomintang Government by force, as well as its policy of sovietisation of China, the propaganda of Communist ideas and expropriation of the land by force.

3. The Chinese Communist Party has decided to dissolve the Government of Soviet China and to support a democratic government so as to allow the unification of the administrative authority in the whole country.

4. The Chinese Communist Party has decided to suppress the title and insignia of the Red army and to regroup its forces under the name of revolutionary national army which will be under the command of the Commission of Military Affairs of the national government. The revolutionary army is prepared to go to the front under the orders of the Commission in order to fulfil its duty towards national defence.

\* \* \* \*

There is little information about the relation between the Communist party and Chiang Kai-Shek during the past few years. But it is reasonable to suppose that during the first years of the war, when Russia and Japan concluded a non-aggression pact and newspapers reported that Stalin had kissed the Japanese ambassador on both cheeks declaring "We are both Asiatics" the Chinese Communists did not prove to be so hot in defending democracy. Now that Stalin has joined the crusade the Chinese Communists will no doubt find themselves wholeheartedly at the side of Chiang Kai-Shek in asking the maximum sacrifice from the Chinese masses.

The history of Chiang Kai-Shek's career is therefore merely one of sordid intrigue and counter-intrigue with the Chinese Bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the Chinese section of the Comintern on the other. The most consistent feature of his regime has been his determined suppression and massacring of the Chinese revolutionary workers. His reputation as a liberator has about as much claim to be true as Hitler's or Mussolini's, and to represent him as a "democrat" is simply fantastic. The support which the Left in this country has almost universally accorded to him is a disservice to truth, and as such, can only do harm to the workers' cause, both in China itself, and in the rest of the world. M.L.B.

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\*Figures given in *The Communist International* by F. Borkenau.

**A.B.C. of Anarchism****A. Berkman****WHOSE IS THE POWER?**

Several comrades have asked us to publish more extracts from Alexander Berkman's book, "ABC of Anarchism." The following article is a chapter from Part I of his book, which deals with the situation of the workers under capitalism. The Freedom Press will shortly issue the second and third parts, dealing with "Anarchism" & "Revolution" in the near future.

**P**EOPLE talk about the greatness of their country, about the strength of the government and the power of the capitalist class. Let us see what that power really consists of, wherein it lies, and who actually has it.

What is the government of a country? It is the King with his ministers, or the President with his cabinet, the Parliament or the Congress, and the officials of the various State and Federal departments. Altogether a small number of persons as compared with the entire population.

Now, when is that handful of men, called government, strong, and in what does its strength consist?

It is strong when the people are with it. Then they supply the government with money, with an army, and navy, obey it, and enable it to function. In other words the strength of a government depends entirely on the support it receives.

But can any government exist if the people are actively opposed to it? Could even the strongest government carry out any undertaking without the aid of the populace, without the help of the masses, the workers of the country?

It is clear, of course, that no government can accomplish anything alone. It can do only what the people approve of or at least permit to be done.

Take the great World War for instance. The American financiers wanted the United States to get into it, because they knew that they would rake in tremendous profits, as they actually did. But labour had nothing to gain from the war, for how can the toilers benefit by the slaughter of their fellows in some other land? The masses of America were not in favour of mixing in the European imbroglio. They had elected Woodrow Wilson President on a "keep us out of war" platform. Had the American people persisted in this determination, could the government have gotten us into the carnage?

How was it managed then, that the people of the United States were induced to go to war when they had voted against it by electing Wilson? Those interested in entering the war started a great propaganda in favour of it. It was carried on in the press, in the schools and pulpit; by preparedness parades, patriotic spellbinders, and shouting for "democracy" and "war to end war." It was a heinous way of fooling the people into believing that the war was for some "ideal" instead of being just a capitalist war for profits, as all modern wars are. Millions of dollars were spent on that propaganda, the money of the people, of course, for in the end the people pay for everything. An artificial enthusiasm was worked up, with all kinds of promises to the workers of the wonderful things that would result for them from the war. It was the greatest fraud and humbug, but the people of the United States fell for it, and they went to war, though not voluntarily, but by conscription.

And the spokesmen of the workers, the labour

leaders? As usual, they proved the best "patriots," calling upon their union members to go and get themselves killed, for the greater glory of Mammon. What did the late Samuel Gompers, then President of the American Federation of Labour, do? He became the right-hand man of President Wilson, his chief recruiting lieutenant. He and his union officials turned sergeants of capital in rounding up labour for the slaughter. The labour leaders of the other countries did the same.

Every one knows that the "war to end war" really ended nothing. On the contrary, it caused more political complications than there have ever been before in Europe, and has prepared the field for a new and more terrible war than the last one. But that question does not belong here. I have referred to the matter merely to show you that without Gompers and the other labour leaders, without the consent and support of the toiling masses, the Government of the United States would have been entirely unable to carry out the wishes of the lords of finance, industry, and commerce.

Or consider the case of Sacco and Vanzetti. Could Massachusetts have executed them if the organized workers of America had been against it, if they had taken action to prevent it? Suppose that Massachusetts labour had refused to support the State Government in its murderous intention: suppose the workers had boycotted the Governor and his agents, stopped supplying them with food, cut off their means of communication, and shut off the electric current in Boston and Charleston prison. The government would have been powerless to function.

If you look at this matter with clear, unprejudiced eyes, you will realize that it is not the people who are dependent upon the government, as is generally believed, but just the other way about.

When the people withhold their aid from the government, when they refuse obedience and pay no taxes, what happens? The government cannot support its officials, cannot pay its police, cannot feed its army and navy. It remains without funds, without means to carry out its orders. It is paralyzed. The handful of persons calling themselves the government become helpless—they lose their power and authority. If they can gather enough men to aid them, they may try to fight the people. If they cannot, or lose the fight, they have to give it up. Their "governing" is at an end.

That is to say, the power of even the strongest government rests entirely in the people, in their willing support and obedience. It follows that government *in itself* has no power at all. The moment the people refuse to bow to its authority, the government ceases to exist.

Now, what strength has capitalism? Does the power of the capitalists rest in themselves, or where does it come from?

It is evident that their strength lies in their capital, in their wealth. They own the industries, the shops, the factories, and land. But those possessions would do them no good but for the willingness of the people to work for them and pay tribute to them. Suppose the workers should say to the capitalists: "We are tired of making profits for you. We won't slave for you any more. You didn't create the land, you didn't build the factories, nor the mills or shops. We built them and from now on we will use them to work in, and what we produce will not be yours but will belong to the people. You will get nothing, and we won't even give you any food for your money. You'll be just like ourselves, and you will work like the rest of us."

What would happen? Why, the capitalists would appeal to the government for aid. They would demand protection for their interests and possessions. But if the people refuse to recognise the authority of the government, the latter itself would be helpless.

You might say that is revolution. Maybe it is. But whatever you call it, it would amount to this: the government and the capitalists—the political and financial rulers would find out that all their boasted power and strength would disappear when the people refuse to acknowledge them as masters, refuse to let them lord it over them.

Can this happen, you wonder. Well, it has happened many times before, and not so very long ago in Russia, in Germany, in Austria. In Germany that mighty war lord, the Kaiser, had to flee for his life, because the masses had decided they did not want him any more. In Austria the monarchy was driven out because the people got tired of its tyranny and corruption. In Russia the most powerful Tsar was glad to give up his throne to save his head, and failed even that. In his own capital he could not find a single regiment to protect him, and all his great authority went up in smoke when the populace refused to bow to it. Just so the capitalists of Russia were made helpless when the people stopped working for them and took the land, the factories, the mines, and mills for themselves. All the money and "power" of the bourgeoisie in Russia could not get them a pound of bread when the masses declined to supply it unless they did honest work.

What does it all prove?

It proves that so-called political, industrial, and financial power, all the authority of government and capitalism is *really* in the hands of the people. It proves that *only* the people, the masses, have power.

This power, the people's power, is *actual*: it cannot be taken away, as the power of the ruler, of the politician, or of the capitalists can be. It cannot be taken away because it does not consist in possessions but in ability. It is the ability to create, to produce; the power that feeds and clothes the world, that gives us life, health and comfort, joy and pleasure.

How great this power is you will realize when you ask yourself:

Would life be possible at all if the workers did not toil? Would the cities not starve if the farmers failed to supply them food?

Could the railroads run if the railroad men suspended work? Could any factory, shop, or mill continue operations but for the coal miners?

Could trade or commerce go on if the transport workers went on strike?

Would the theatres and movies, your office and house have light if the electricians would not supply the current?

Truly has the poet spoken:

"All the wheels stand still  
When your strong arms so will."

That is the productive, industrial power of labour. It does not depend on any politics, nor on king, president, parliament, or congress. It depends neither on the police, nor on the army and navy—for these only consume and destroy, they create nothing. Nor does it depend on laws and rules, on legislators or courts, on politician or plutocrat. It resides entirely and exclusively in the ability of the workers in factory and field, in the brain and brawn of the industrial and agricultural proletariat to labour, to create, to produce.

It is the *productive* power of the workers—of the man with the plough and with the hammer, of the man of mind and muscle, of the masses, of the entire *working class*.

It follows, therefore, that the working class, in every country, is the most important part of the population. In fact, it is the only vital part. The rest of the people help in the social life, but if need be we could do without them, while we could not live even a single day without the man of labour. His is the all-important *economic power*.

The strength of government and capital is external, *outside* of themselves.

The strength of labour is *not* external. It lies *in* itself, in its ability to work and create. It is the only *real* power.

Yet labour is held lowest in the social scale.

Is it not a topsy-turvy world, this world of capitalism and government? The workers, who as a class are the most essential part of society, who alone have real power, are powerless under present conditions. They are the poorest class, the least influential and least respected. They are looked down upon, the victims of every kind of oppression and exploitation, the least appreciated and least honoured. They live wretchedly in ugly and unhealthy tenements, the death rate is greatest among them, the prisons are filled with them, the gallows and electric chair are for them.

This is the reward of labour in our society of government and capitalism; that is what you get from the "law and order" system.

Does such law and order deserve to live? Should such a social system be permitted to continue? Should it not be changed for something else, something better, and is not the worker interested more than anyone else in seeing to it? Should not his own organization, built especially for his interests—the *union*—help him do it?

#### OXFORD F.F.P.

THE Oxford F.F.P. group held a very successful inaugural meeting there on February 13th when John Hewetson set the ball rolling with "An Introduction to Anarchism." An interesting series of lectures has been arranged for the next month, all to be held in the Old Library, St. Mary's Church, High Street, to which readers are encouraged to come and bring their friends. Wed. March 4th, 8 p.m. Debate with Fourth International. Wed. March 18th, 7 p.m. Jack Housden; Anarchism and the Spanish Revolution. Wed. April 1st, 7 p.m. Charles Davey; Anarchism and the Land Question. A study group has been formed at 64a, High Street, Oxford on the subject "Syndicalism, and the discussion will be opened by Jack Housden—this will take place on the alternate Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

The organiser would be pleased to hear of anyone in the district interested in the activities of the group. Write to Desmond Fenwick, 64a, High Street, Oxford. Notices of these lectures can be had from him on application.

# Letter from America

We have received the following letter from an American comrade in San Francisco. It represents the feelings expressed in the letters of many of the American Comrades who write to us and give War Commentary their moral and material support.

Dear Friend,

Outside it's raining. The sky is dark—just as nearly the entire globe now is . . . Well, the thing we feared has happened to us too. And how could it have been otherwise?

The tiller of the land sows seeds in order to reap the harvest. The person who goes into the plant to prepare machinery that will sow death and destruction should expect to be the object of the very same sort of destruction—as the soldier who submits to be taught the trade of killing. The pity of it all is that neither the civilian who works at arms or ammunition, nor the soldier or all their closest relations realize this fact. *If and when* that time shall come about—when the people will learn to respect the sacredness of their own lives—they will then show the same amount of respect for the lives of their fellowmen. But as long as they do not acquire an understanding of the entire social order of slavery that their respective exploiters and governments have forged out for them—they will be unable to become imbued with that kind of ethical conception that would keep them from submitting to economic exploitation and political rulership of any form, or to prepare the very instruments by which their fellowmen's lives as well as their own are being repeatedly sacrificed. Without the people wars cannot be started or fought.

Have our trade unions anywhere taken that sort of ethical stand that would bring to an end exploitation, rulership and their chief weapons of counter-revolution against the people—wars? We know only too well the answer . . . The Trade Unions serve the interests of capitalism by aiding in the actual upkeep of the present system, instead of working for its destruction. Do the unions of Great Britain or this country act any differently from the directly government-controlled unions of Germany, Italy or Russia? We know the answer to that too.

Our voices were cries in the wilderness. We were either ridiculed as dreamers of impossible utopias

or damned as bloodthirsty revolutionists.

And what do we witness before our very eyes? With the billions of wealth that has already been spent by the ruling powers to murder by the ruling powers to murder and destroy a part of the masses and their creative products, and with the as yet untold billions that these powers will spend in order to carry on their huge counter-revolution against the true interests of the people—this people could have built an earthly paradise for every living soul. Thus the disproof of our ideas being impossible-to-be-realized utopias. And as to the charge of being blood-thirsty revolutionists—we hurl back the lie on two grounds: First, we would rather not shed a single drop of blood in order to transform the present system of injustice into one of justice. Second, wherever any blood is shed in any revolution of a social nature it is caused by the ruling powers that bring this about. And with all the blood shed in any social revolution—the loss of human life pales into insignificance when it is compared with the loss in all wars that mankind has been subjected to as a result of economic exploitation and political rulership.

The bloody account that must be added up to the present system rests by no means in wars alone.

What about the lives born that fail to survive due to poverty? What about those who survive—the great masses—at all times at the mercy of their economic exploiters and rulers—who use only the toil and sweat of the masses when it can bring the first two named—profits?

Only the blind in mind can choose to take sides in favour of one of the ruling powers that are carrying on the war of counter-revolution.

That is why I am so relieved in mind to witness how our comrades issuing *War Commentary* and those issuing *L'Adunata* and *Das Freie Wort*—understand the true issues involved in the present struggle between the evil powers that wish to maintain their imperialistic reigns and the evil powers that strive to become equally strong imperialistic regimes. (I need hardly state that the pro-war stand with one of the evil powers as expressed by the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* is as much of a betrayal of our ideas as it was when Sh. Yanofsky enacted a similar perfidy in the last world war—as editor of the same paper.)

## ★ SPEAKING AT A LUNCHEON

We are fighting for our Liberty,  
We are working for a Cause—  
For Freedom and Democracy  
Against this cruel Autocracy,  
And so on . . . (Loud Applause)

Oysters and Caviare,  
Chicken and Champagne,  
A Three and sixpenny cigar,  
And on we go again.

Our sacrifice will win the day  
Against this evil force.  
The workers will not want more pay  
Whilst Bleeding Honour stands at bay,  
And so on . . . (Loud Applause)

Oysters and Caviare, etc.

Then resolutely, bold and brave,  
A valiant concourse;  
Each one resolved to seek his grave  
Rather than be a tyrant's slave,  
And so on . . . (Loud Applause)

Oysters and Caviare, etc.

W. A. Rathkey



Our ideal embodies with it those great truths than can and will aid mankind to most assuredly bring about its true emancipation—economically as well as politically. And when mankind begins to think for itself—it will begin to tread upon the road of social liberation.

Shall we then despair at the fact that humanity has so far not heeded to our great ideal? Despite all the prevailing darkness around us—I say emphatically—NO!

Our ideal carries within itself the very kind of assurance that denotes ultimate and complete happiness for everything that lives and thinks—*for mankind*. Therein lies our consolation as well as our strength to carry on propagating this ideal before mankind—against all the difficulties and darkness that surrounds us.

So—dear comrades—let us not allow ourselves to be carried away by the wave of the counter-revolution of all the forces of reaction that have been let loose upon mankind. Now, more so than ever before we must stand by our ideals and continue to work for the ultimate triumph that will be liberated mankind's triumph.

# Workers are always wrong

**T**HE Betteshanger strike has recently shown that when workers were driven to strike because of the injustice of the employers it was they who were fined and gaoled while the management remained unpunished. This was only one example of what goes on on a large scale all over the country. Here are a few others taken from the press.

## Ministry's Delay; Workers Fined

"Seventy men who had gone on strike at a Northern Ireland factory were prosecuted under the Conditions of Employment Order at Belfast yesterday. It was stated that, as a result of the dispute, 20,000 working hours had been lost. The men ceased work because they alleged a workmate had been dismissed without his case being heard by the firm.

Defending counsel described the men as "honest workers who have done their utmost for the war effort."

*There must have been some justification, said counsel, for the dismissed man had now been reinstated. The men had reported the dispute to the Ministry of Labour, but when the Ministry had taken two and a half days without considering or adjudicating on the matter they felt the Ministry was useless and the delay monstrous. If the Ministry was to be of any service to the country it must act promptly.*

The Stipendiary Magistrate, Mr. W. F. McCoy, imposed a fine of £3 on each of the men who had been on strike for more than a day, and a fine of 30s. on those idle for one day."

*Manchester Guardian, 7.2.42.*

## Gaol for Miner

In the House recently "Mr. Gallacher said he wanted to draw attention to a case of gross injustice concerning an ex-miner from his own constituency named Grossett. He had been sentenced to 14 days' imprisonment for not going back to work in a coalmine as a stripper. The man had had six or seven accidents. The Lord Advocate had shown servility to the Executive or else a vicious attitude towards the worker which could not be tolerated.

Mr. Gordon MacDonald said the man's own doctor supported him. It was unfair to leave his fate to

be decided by a second doctor who disagreed with the first."

The Lord Advocate in his answer made it clear that he refused to reconsider the case. But why rely on M.P.s and Lord Advocates to obtain justice? The Betteshanger Miners got their leaders out of jail by other means.

## Children Work 53 Hours a Week

By an order issued on December 23rd the Government has extended the hours of young persons in the pottery industry, between 14 and 16, from 48 to 53 hours per week.

Lord Gainsworth in the House of Lords recently blamed the British Potteries Workers' Society and the British Potteries Manufacturers as well as the Ministry of Labour. The answer of Lord Snell was that "conditions are better to-day than when he was a boy!"

Mr. Bevin tried to justify his order by the need of maintaining an urgently needed output and he added that he "regretted the need for this action, but there was no alternative consistent with his public duty."

Curiously enough the public duty of ministers, even if they are Trade Union Leaders, never seems to be to look after the welfare of the workers but to produce more—that is to say look after the interests of the capitalists and the State.

## Scots Girls Protest

Another example is provided by the way Scottish girls are sent to England and are billeted in scandalous conditions and even sent to work in factories where dermatitis is rife. But again Bevin & Co., will not admit that the girls are right in leaving the jobs they are sent to—

"Mr. Bevin gets quite irritable when questioned on the matter. He says he has the best welfare organisation in the world and he knows that the girls are well cared for . . . He will find, if he can get off his high horse and make a few enquiries, that the girls are not welcome either in the homes or factories, and that his scheme of transfer is almost as big a flop as his training centres."

*A. Sloan in Forward, 7.2.42.*

## Wrong Again?

"Because he had a grievance about overtime at the war factory where he worked, Ronald Bushell, a youth, of Bungalow Road, South Norwood, wrote on a wall that the firm consisted mostly of money-grabbers.

Bushell was summoned under the Defence Regulations at Croydon to-day and fined 10s., with two guineas costs."

*Evening Standard 10.2.42.*

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## KEEP THE PAPER GOING

LACK of space prevents us from publishing the Press Fund lists in this issue. We hope that by the time we publish it on the 15th March, we shall have received more contributions from our readers. Do not forget that to bring the paper out every fortnight with sixteen pages for 2d. puts a heavy burden on our shoulders. If you think War Commentary serves a useful purpose send us along a contribution now.