

# WAR COMMENTARY

## *For Anarchism*

Vol. 3 No. 9

APRIL, 1942

Twopence

## Hypocrisy and Callousness

**T**HE collapse of Malaya and the East Indies has shown how little capable British Imperialism is of "protecting" its colonial subjects. It is ridiculous therefore for the Government to send Cripps to India with "concessions" in his bag, just at the moment when they are scared of losing the brightest jewel in the Imperial Crown to the advancing Japanese. They are evidently not prepared to grant concessions until such time as they are in danger of losing control over the Indians themselves. But if the Malayan experience is not very encouraging for the Indian Congress leaders, they evidence none of the contempt for their Imperial masters which that experience might have been expected to breed in them. On the contrary, they show signs of welcoming such tardy concessions. If the experience of this country is anything to go on, the degree of "freedom for India" which Cripps is empowered to offer will be rather theoretical. In order to be able to fight "efficiently" for freedom they will no doubt, like us, have to forgo liberties during the war. So whatever the nature of the Cripps-Congress deal, India will have to wait till after the war to reap the benefits (if any.)

While the Japanese menace makes the India Office rush with "offers" to the Congress leaders, the Colonial Office

has passed measures introducing forced labour into Kenya. In the British—as, indeed, in any other—Empire, you have to be in a threatened strategic position before you can expect to be offered "freedom." Those who place faith in such offers, or who think they indicate that the British government is becoming more liberal in outlook, had better bear Kenya in mind. They will get their liberty when the enemy is on their borders—unless they seize it for themselves first.

Of course the obvious way to secure India from the Japanese invaders would be to arm the Indian people. But such a course of



“HE MAY KICK ME OUT, IF I SET HIM FREE!”



action poses the question: secure India for whom? It would secure it for the Indians, but that of course would suit neither the British or the Indian bourgeoisie represented by the Congress. Such a course would therefore not occur to them.

As in all parts of the world, the actual threat of invasion exposes the complete hypocrisy of the claims of governments whether in Whitehall or Wardha to "protect" the people. Rather than arm the Indian workers and peasants, the Congress no less than Amery & Co. will allow the Japanese to take over.

The only way to protect India is for the Indians themselves to take their own defence into their own hands—but they can only do so by making the social revolution in India. If the Indian workers and peasants take the land and the instruments of production and transport into their own hands they will be able to defeat not only the Japanese, but also the British Imperialists and the Indian bourgeoisie, who will have immediately sought assistance from the Japanese in order to keep their colonial slaves in subjection.

And that would not be all. The Indian Revolution would light up once more the revolutionary fires in the Chinese masses, for long oppressed by Chiang Kai-Shek within and the Japanese without. For the oppressed workers of the East there is no other road to freedom.

### The Horrors at Hong Kong

When the government began in autumn 1939 to draw attention to the Nazi concentration camps, we pointed out that the interesting thing was that they chose that moment to get indignant about events they knew had been going on for the previous six years while they were friendly with Hitler. It is the same now. Eden exhibited the government as shocked beyond measure etc., at the atrocities of the Japanese at Hong Kong. But in order to lay it on a bit thicker he had to refer to the fact that the Japs had been doing the same thing to the Chinese for five years! Are we to suppose that they have only just discovered the bayonetting of Chinese prisoners? *Picture Post* had already published photographs of these horrors, before Eden made his disclosures. Anti-fascists who have been persecuted by the National Government for years were pointing them out years ago, but the government didn't care. Nor did they once wax indignant over the cruelties and massacres perpetrated on the heroic Spanish anti-

fascists during the Spanish war by General Franco. British capital abroad has to be swiped before such typical fascist excesses are pointed out by the genial British government. Eden's disclosures tell us nothing we didn't know already about the Japanese; they underline however the hypocrisy and callousness of the government.

"Atrocities" are a part of war, and are inseparable from it. We regard the blowing up of French workers in the raids on the Renault works as atrocities perpetrated by the ruling class upon the workers. We are not bamboozled by their well simulated "horror" at the murdering of Chinese workers which the Japanese ruling class have been carrying on with the help of British and American arms and oil and rubber and tin for the four years before December 1941.

### Labour Party Planning

Hypocrisy and stupidity are hard to distinguish in men who are presumably capable of thought and reasoning. The Labour Party still goes on issuing plans and prints for the post war reconstruction. Yet Greenwood has been sacked from the Ministry of Reconstruction and replaced by Jowitt, a lawyer. Meanwhile British capitalists are planning their post war future very much more realistically than Attlee & Co. "British Shipowners," stated the *Daily Telegraph* on 27th February, "British Shipowners view with alarm the competition passenger liners may have to face from air transport after the war. They are now discussing this problem with the Minister of War Transport, Lord Leathers . . . if British Airways are to be in competition with British passenger shipping companies, there will be no inducement to build new ships."

\* \* \* \*

Every day provides fresh evidence of the determination of all governments to stabilize the existing status quo in social relations, or to augment still further their power over the workers. Every day new instances of the greed and incompetence and callousness of the ruling classes in every country become apparent. With famine in Europe and shortage of commodities universal, the determination of the ruling groups to maintain the profits on which their domination over the destitute workers depends becomes daily more glaring and revolting. Let the workers of the world seize for themselves the land

(continued on page 3)



# Morrison's Spring Offensive

**T**HE Government seems to be only able to launch offensives and show initiative in the suppression of the workers' rights and the liberty of the Press. Mr. Morrison has started his spring offensive by warning the *Daily Mirror* that if it goes on with its criticism it would be suppressed. Under Defence Regulation 2D Morrison is able to suppress any paper without any form of trial. He does not even have to warn the paper he intends to suppress.

In this case the excuse for the warning is peculiarly feeble. The cartoon for which the *Daily Mirror* is attacked suggested—according to the Home Secretary—that merchant seamen died to protect the interests of petrol concerns. (The *News Chronicle* pointed out, incidentally, that it could equally be interpreted in an entirely patriotic sense) Mr. Morrison's anxiety to protect the susceptibility of the capitalists is not very well suited to a Labour minister. He is on the way to becoming one of the most unpopular men in the government. In spite of the fact that he goes out of his way to assure the House that the Prime Minister and the whole government entirely approve of the measures he takes, he is nevertheless held to be responsible. He does the dirty work for the government and is covered with insults by the whole press. Such is the fate of lackeys and traitors; no one will pity them.

The case of the *Daily Mirror* has aroused much comment and provoked a great deal of indignation all over the country. While we are very pleased to see these protest we suspect that all this talk about liberty of the press means something entirely different in the mouths of liberal M.P.s, in the editorials of the capitalist press, or at communist meetings; what they mean by the liberty of the press is the right to criticise the conduct of the war. All of them are opposed to maintaining the right to criticise the war itself. This is made clear by the editorial in the *Manchester Guardian* for March 21.

"It is therefore unhappy that so early in the new start there should come an onslaught on the press, not on the little pacifist or defeatist sheets (which go on unrebuked) but on a newspaper which differs from others only in the violence and asperity of its pursuit of what it conceives to be shortcomings in carrying on the war."

If the government suppressed papers which criticise governments and wars (i.e. those that the *Man-*

(Continued from page 2)

and the instruments of production and out of the present carnage and want secure for the first time in recorded history freedom and plenty for all. Unless the workers control their own lives they will never be able to crush oppression, whether it be called fascism or any other name. But by seizing for themselves the fields and factories from which all wealth flows, and controlling them themselves in free syndicates and communes, they will be able not only to crush oppression but to end war and banish poverty for ever.

*chester Guardian* calls "pacifist and defeatist") no one would protest. When the House and the press accepted the regulations they thought they would only be used against revolutionist elements. They raised no objections to that. Now that they themselves feel threatened and see the instruments they had hoped to use being used against themselves they raise their voices.

The kind of liberty we want, the freedom the workers should work for, is not a mere right to criticise within certain regulations and limits defined by people in power, but the right to attack the causes of wars and injustice.

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## THE RIOM TRIALS

**A**T the time of the stay-in strikes in France in 1936, and when he initiated the "Non-Interventionist" policy, the anarchists denounced Leon Blum as an enemy of the revolutionary workers. His collaboration with the employers at that time is now brought out by Blum in his defence against the Riom "judges," as reported in the *Manchester Guardian* for March 11th. "When the factories in three quarters of the country were occupied by 1,000,000 'stay-in' strikers on June 4, 1936, there was 'public insistence' that he should 'immediately assume power, and the speedy application of social legislation was demanded on all sides. The employers agreed to an increase in salaries without insisting on the immediate evacuation of the factories. The use of force, which was not asked for by the employers associations, would have led to civil war.'"

Although the employers "did not ask for it," Blum seems only to object to the use of "force" against strikers on the grounds that it would have "led to civil war." It does not seem to have occurred to him that force should not have been used against workers by their supposed leaders—or anyone else—when they seek effective means of enforcing their demands from the employers.

One would have preferred to see Labour leaders who betrayed the working class delivered up to the revolutionary justice of the workers.

## THE INTERNATIONALE AND THE SOVIET EMBASSY

**I**T has been suggested that we were wrong in our mid-February issue to say that the Soviet Embassy had "approved" the Bantock version of the Internationale. In the matter of a song with as long and pregnant a history as the Internationale, and with so much significance in working class struggle, disagreement on the part of the Embassy of the workers' state would have been expressed in strong terms. Actually the Embassy issued the following statement:

1. *There is only one Soviet national (!) anthem, which is the "Internationale."*
2. *As is clear from the above, the Soviet Embassy could not approve, and in fact have not approved, any change either in the music or in the words of the "Internationale."*

(*Manchester Guardian*, 20.2.42)

Sir Granville Bantock remarked "the Soviet Embassy has not approved of the new arrangement, but they raised no objection." In a matter involving the emasculation of so well known a revolutionary song, the Soviet Embassy should clearly have condemned the "new version" absolutely. Merely to deny approval in such a case is as if a Trade Union were to refuse to express approval of the action of an employer in victimising one of their men, but take no positive action about it. In effect to condone it.

## DEFINITION OF A BOLSHEVIK

Definition of a Bolshevik by Soviet newspaper *Pravda*: "a special type of man who works with revolutionary verve combined with the business like approach of the American."

*Daily Express* 24.3.42

## ON THE ROAD

**W**HEN the London County Council decided to place a memorial tablet on Lenin's old home they laid on the gush with a trowel. A procession, speeches, M.P.s, the Home Guard and of course Ted Bramley of the Communist Party. The party ended with the singing of the "national anthems of Britain and Russia." "God Save the King" in honour of the "founder of the U.S.S.R.!" How a man gets on after he is dead!

The incident is not isolated, but is typical of what is happening everywhere. The ruling class appears to be going Bolshevik. Engineering factories are plastered with posters demanding aid for Russia, increased production for Russia, Stalin expects, all these issued by the Government. Cabinet ministers and conservative politicians echo the chorus. The capitalist press which, though timidly, criticises Churchill has nothing but the most adulatory praise for Stalin. The Russian crossing of the "River X" or the capture of half-a-dozen anonymous villages becomes a smashing victory. In the headlines a village becomes a town, a town a great city; "the railway station at M" a world famous strategic point.

But the leopard has not changed his spots or the Ethiopian his skin. The ruling class is still an exploiting class; they have relinquished none of their claims to the best fruits of the workers' labours. On the contrary they are seeking to increase their powers of exploitation, but to accomplish that the old cries will not do. "King and Country," "Land of Hope and Glory" are as unattractive as yesterday's beer dregs; the old platitudes of politicians are as pricked balloons. Capitalism must find new battle cries. In Germany it found new vigour in the horrible synthesis National Socialism. Why then should not British Capitalism adopt the same method and give us National Bolshevism?

The ruling class, long ago, recognised that the Bolshevik State was no danger to privilege and wealth, but was only a change of masters. Even so many of the "White" Russians, as Maisky, saw that and changed sides. For in the U.S.S.R. we see all the inequalities of the capitalist world. The Webbs, in "Soviet Communism," state that the degree of inequality of salaries in Russia is as great as in Britain or even U.S.A. The privileged may have two or three cars, a town house and a country estate and the right of inheritance enables the accumulation to be extended over several generations. The abundant enjoyment of the good things of life by the few must be paid for by the impoverishment of the many. Instead of individual exploiters the Russian workers face a collective exploiter, the State, the strongly organized ruling class.

### DEAR OLD PALS

The "Soviet" state once aroused the fear and anger of the British, now it moves it to envy, for the Russian bosses possess means of coercion as yet unacquired by their British allies. So, our native employing class is seeking to develop similar propaganda and repressive machinery and adapt it to its own peculiar needs. So, the flood of pro-bolshevik propaganda from the press and the Ministry of Information; the alliance of the conservative and communist parties and the growing state control of the trade unions.

But in Britain the employers possess no Siberia or factory prisons. Their Bolshevik propaganda



# TO NATIONAL BOLSHEVISM

lacks the necessary terrorism to back it up. Many workers may approve of bombs falling on Russia instead of London and may applaud the anonymous victories of the Red Army, but to work harder for less wages—no, their enthusiasm does not stretch so far. So, the war propaganda of the Communist Party in the factories has generally failed, that is if we judge it by its own cry of "increased production."

The communists in the unions and factories are in an unhappy position. The employers accept every "sacrifice" of principle from them and give nothing in return. Indeed generally, they refuse them any real co-operation and treat the capitulators with undisguised contempt. Every rebuff from the employers sends the Stalinists back to the workers; as the workers become more disgusted the Stalinists must turn again to the bosses for support. Unhappy men! Do they not know that it was written two thousand years ago "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one; and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other." The "party line" could not have resulted in anything less than the complete identification of the bolsheviks and the bosses.

## WOMEN IN THE FACTORIES

Just now the C.P. is spending a great deal of money to plaster the hoardings and tube stations with calls to women to "man the factory-front" and release men for the forces. In other words, women to displace their husbands and sons who will be sent to the slaughter. Here again the capitalist press aids with its bolshevik propaganda. We hear so much of the women having the same rights as men in Russia. As the working men of Russia possess no rights at all this does not mean much. As no rights of free organisation, meeting, publication, election or

criticism exist, it seems the only right left to women is the right to be exploited. But the propaganda is dangerous for it is aimed at the fruits of a struggle the British workers have waged for one hundred years; the fight to keep women out of certain jobs. Of course we are not referring to the narrow minded action of certain craft unions in trying to keep women from skilled jobs, but to the struggle to stop women labour in and about mines and in heavy industry. The workers then felt such labour to be degrading to women, and most harmful to their health. The first fruits of the struggle was the abolition of female labour in the mines and (within recent memory) about the mines. Later the ban was extended to the heavy labour of the Black Country. All this was a real step forward to a position which is now threatened.

Here the propaganda enters. The screen and the illustrated press shower on us pictures of Russian women working on the docks and elsewhere at the most laborious and roughest tasks. The moral—if Russian women do it why not British women? After all the Russian Trade Union delegation said so. Don't British women want equal rights with men? Equality with what man—the worker or the employer? Talk of equal rights in a society based on inequality is nonsense.

Whether it deals with women in industry or increased production (or any other subject) the increasing alliance of our old native capitalism with the state capitalism that is bolshevism is a menace to the workers. The menace must be met by the creation of an independent labour movement; a movement willing to fight not only historic capitalism, but also capitalism in its new disguises National Socialism and National Bolshevism.

**TOM BROWN**

## FUTILE ACTIVITY

A FRIEND remarked to me recently that we live in a Foolish Age. Rather an apt description I think. It conveys the idea that we modern mortals are not wicked or vicious, but rather, lost in a wilderness of false aims and stupid inefficiency.

The other day I had to stick a number of stamps on a number of National Health Insurance Cards and then cancel them with a date stamp. Every year thousands of clerks use gallons of saliva on hundreds of millions of Health stamps, spend thousands of hours sticking them on millions of cards, and spend thousands of hours making "necessary" entries in the books kept by the concerns employing them.

Every year thousands of Insurance clerks and Insurance agents spend thousands of hours distributing Health Cards and making entries in the books of the concerns employing them.

Every year many printers spend many hours, and use tons of cardboard and gallons of ink, lots of paper and gum, to make the cards and stamps.

Every year thousands of Post Office clerks spend many hours handing the stamps over the counter to purchasers.

And so on.

One remembers the acclamation that attended the introduction of the National Health Insurance Scheme, and one may, justifiably I think, assume that the purpose of this great reform was to ensure that all might have medical attention when necessary, with consequent improvement in the Nation's health.

YET, has one single person ever been saved one second's pain by all the labour expended and material used in making and distributing and handling millions of cards and hundreds of millions of stamps?—No, a thousand times NO.

All benefits that have accrued have come from a visit to a doctor and the following of his advice.

No sensible person would desire to visit a doctor unless he felt unwell, nor would he wish to not visit a doctor if he did feel unwell.

BUT, suggest to people that all that is really necessary is a sufficiency of doctors and the right for all to visit them without charge, and you're either told you're mad, or that you're born before your time.

Yet the suggestion is perfectly practicable if people had sufficient sense to act upon it with a sense of responsibility towards each other—and, surely, much more efficient than the present mass of complexity bound in red tape.

Have we that sense,—or must we continue behaving like fools in this FOOLISH AGE?

STANLEY H. ELLISDON.



# American Labour News

## I.W.W. ON JOINT MANAGEMENT

From the *Industrial Worker* (organ of the Industrial Workers of the World) (17.1.42) we reproduce the following article giving the attitude of the reformist Unions the A.F.L. and C.I.O. towards the participation of the workers in the management of industry and the attitude of the Industrial Workers of the World which is that of all revolutionary workers.

"While the C.I.O. is boiling over with chagrin because it got a kick in the pants when it came to Washington with a plan for joint labour-industry-government management of war industry, the A.F.L. hastens to disclaim any desire to horn in on what it regards as the rights of private owners.

A statement issued this week by the A.F.L. executive council asked that the A.F.L. be represented on all government boards whose 'policies and decisions will directly affect the interests of American workers'; but, the statement continued, 'The executive council wishes to make it clear that it does not ask for the right to manage industry, or to interfere in purely managerial matters. We freely concede to industry the right to function in the managerial sphere in accordance with its best judgment and in accordance with the policies of the government.'

The I.W.W. position on this question of workers' voice in management has not varied on account of the war situation. It holds that the extent of worker influence in determining conditions of production still depends upon the extent and quality of organization on the job, on the ability of the rank and file to make its wishes felt. It holds also that the presence of union leaders in the councils of management and government does not necessarily indicate any degree whatsoever of real worker control.

The immediate aim of the workers now, says the I.W.W., is to build up democratic, industrial labour organization on the job, to unite all workers in One Big Union, to strive for power and understanding, to fight every inch of the way for better conditions, shorter hours and more wages.

As for control of industry by the workers—that, says the I.W.W., will be established when the working class is ready for it, with or without the consent of the bosses; but with the consent of the majority of the people."

## MINERS, FARMERS & COWS

### ALL IN ONE UNION

The C.I.O. is described as an industrial union but actually it has nothing in common with industrial organisation advocated by anarcho-syndicalists. This is further proved by the inclusion in the C.I.O. Miners' Union of 5,000 dairy farmers. Why dairy farmers should be organized in the same industry as miners is better explained by the fact that John Lewis, the boss of the United Mine Workers of America, is losing ground in the C.I.O. and therefore is anxious to increase his influence by adding to the miners a substantial number of dairy farmers. A nation drive is to be made for 3,000,000 small farmers.

The Union fees are most curious. The initiation fee is 10c. a cow, and dues are 3c. a hundredweight. The membership of the United Mine Workers union is opened to any wage earner working "in or around coal mines," and there is no reason for cows grazing round the mines to be excluded.

## ORDER OF LENIN FOR HENRY FORD?

"Henry Ford, through his radio mouthpiece on the Ford Sunday Evening Hour, has approved of the Soviet Union and its economic system. He furthermore reserved for Russia an honored place in history as a staunch defender of Western civilisation. The reconciliation of Hank and Uncle Joe marks the striking of the white flag on two of the mightiest strongholds of prejudice.

Ford's message paid great tribute to Stalin by noting that communism does not exist in the U.S.S.R. True communism exists only when "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs" obtains. But in Russia it is "To each according to his work." This is capitalism in its most primitive form, the message pointed out."

*Industrial Worker* 7.2.42

## RACE DISCRIMINATION IN U.S.

"Seven Buffalo concerns, all of them producing vital war necessities, were denounced Jan. 26 on the floor of the New York assembly at Albany as refusing to employ Negroes. Criticism was voiced by Rep. William T. Andrews, Harlem Democrat.

Firms named were Buffalo Arms Corp., American Car and Foundry Co., Worthington Pump and Machinery Corp., Sterling Engine Co., E. I. duPont de Nemours and Co., Irving Air Shute Co., and Remington Rand Inc.

Andrews also disclosed that Bell Aircraft employs 51 Negroes out of 11,000 workers, and Curtiss Wright has 35 Negroes out of 18,000 employees."

*Industrial Worker* 7.2.42

## CAUSES OF STRIKES

That workers always strike for increases in wages is disproved by the following figures published by the Labour Department.

"Almost half, 49.8 per cent, of all the strikes beginning in the period between January and July of 1941 has union organisation as their basic issue.

Wages and hours disputes accounted for 35.9 per cent of the strikes while the remaining 14 per cent of the strikes were caused by miscellaneous reasons.

Strikes for wage increases amounted to 31.4 per cent of the 2,359 strikes in the six month period and involved 750,328 of the 1,390,545 workers involved.

Recognition of unions, required by law when the union has a majority, was the next most important cause from the point of view of the number of men involved. Strikes for recognition were 9.3 per cent of the total number of strikes and involved 163,710 workers.

The number of workers involved in strikes for wages increases amounted to 53.9 per cent of the total number of men involved in strikes for the period."

*Industrial Worker* 20.12.41

It is extraordinary that American workers—in the "home of democracy"—should have to strike for the right to organize. Yet the above reports show that as many as 9.3% of all strikes were for recognition of unions.



# A Red and Black Notebook

**A**NARCHISTS are constantly faced by the assertion that law prevents crime so "we must have lawmakers and prisons." The obvious reply that the law and its goals do not cure crime is illustrated by the following case I find in my diary and reported in the *Evening News*.

An old man was charged with the theft of a lady's handbag from a shop. He "looked like an old and surly dog. His hair was hung in grey tangles . . . his shoulders were hunched under the worn cloth of his overcoat. He seemed to crouch in the dock of the East End court rather than stand in it; and he blinked as though he were watching with dim and savage eyes for the return of a drunken master."

'How old is he now?' asked the magistrate (Mr. Metcalfe) of the detective.

'Seventy, sir.'

'An old thief, eh? Has he had penal servitude?'

'Twice sir, five years each time.' and 'he's been in and out of prison all his life sir.'

Mr. Metcalfe did not believe that prison prevented or cured crime. "Well," he said, "you're a terrible old thief, with a perfectly frightful record. You got yourself into prison soon after you were born, and I shouldn't be surprised if you ended your days there. Six months' hard labour."

The magistrate expected the worst possible result of his and his colleagues' work. So the melancholy procession goes on daily, from the streets to prison, from prison to the streets, and back again, and the cause of crime remains.

\* \* \* \* \*

## A Rose by Any Other Name . . .

"The National Foremen's Association, formed 20 years ago for the supervisory staffs in engineering and allied trades has changed its name to Association of Supervisory Staffs and Engineering Technicians."

*Reynolds News* 15.3.42

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## Jekyll and Hyde

While looking through the files of the *Daily Worker* I came across the following in the issue of October 17th 1939:

"THE COMMUNIST PARTY DECLARES THAT 'This war is a fight between imperialist powers over profits, colonies and world domination. All warring powers are equally responsible. The Soviet Union is leading the world fight for peace. The immediate issue is the cessation of hostilities and the calling of a peace conference.'

'If you agree with this you will JOIN the Communist Party today.'

That from the people who now shout "Victory in 1942." The C.P. leaders would be very grateful to Morrison if he would suppress all past issues of the *Daily Worker*. By next year they will be grateful that no files for 1942 bear witness to their contortions.

## Communist Cenotaphs?

A friend tells me of the last meeting of his A.E.U. branch, where a Communist Party speaker attended. The C.P.er told them of the virtues of the leader Churchill, and the necessity of working harder and lending for Warship Week (remember how communist processions once chanted "We want parsnips not battleships). But before doing so he called upon those present "to stand in silence for two minutes in memory of the British soldiers and sailors who fell at Singapore."

No one fails to sympathise with those victims of imperialist war, but how disgusting it is to see such exploitation of sympathy. Even the authorities chucked it up when war begun. The bankrupt Stalinists must clothe themselves in the cast-off rags of Conservatism.

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## Late Discovery

"The worst of all generals to entrust with winning the war was general invective," declared Viscount Samuel, Lord Chancellor at Portsmouth last week. But why did they not think of that two or three years ago? They would have rewritten their speeches then.

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## Dogs' Diet

"Sir Stafford Cripps promises to scotch the waste now to be seen at dog races and boxing matches. A reader who lives near Altcar sends an example of hare-coursing. He gives a singularly disagreeable account of half-tame hares being chased by dogs, screaming while they make their last desperate turns and then being torn to death. He adds:

Apart from local noblemen a large proportion of the supporters are farmers of the gentleman type, exempted from military service and running big cars, no doubt on the allowance of petrol granted to them as producers of foodstuffs. One could almost say that they are completely immunised from the effects of the war, excepting, perhaps, that their bank balances are somewhat swollen.

*I happened to remark to one of these sporting gentry that it must be a problem to provide food for so many dogs, to which he replied it was certainly more difficult than before the war, particularly so with brandy, which together with the whites of eggs forms a most suitable diet for dogs in training. Without blushing he gave me an approximate canine menu for the day. This included the gravy from stewed beef steak, Benger's Food, tinned chickens' breasts, and new laid eggs whisked with port wine. All this to say nothing of the hares which are sacrificed."*

*New Statesman & Nation 7.3.42*

## British Modesty

"Never was there a nation so noble as ours, so splendid in its public and private integrity with such widespread ideals of progress or such general devotion to betterment.

Sometimes you hear ancient Greece cracked up to you. Bear in mind that in fair Athens at the height of her fame there were 19 slaves for every free citizen who had a vote.

That is not the democracy that we are aiming at, but there never yet was a great nation that did not have at least a subsection on a level that was in fact or figure slavery."

*William Barkley in the Daily Express 17.3.42*

## Educating the Workers

"The General Council of the Trades Union Congress has decided to stress the imperative need of all possible support being given to the national savings movement. The Council points out that if inflation is to be avoided the cost of the war must be met by a 'pay as you go' policy as far as possible. 'Direct taxation,' the statement continues, 'is income tax. The trade union movement has always held that this form of taxation is the fairest and most desirable.' Trade unionists as individuals are not yet converted to this view and it behoves the T.U.C. to promote an educational campaign."

*Liverpool Echo 12.3.42*

## Shareholders' Gratitude

"At the annual general meeting of Milton Propriety, Ltd., the Chairman said that the accounts for the year to September 30, 1941, showed a net profit of £41,677. The directors proposed to allocate £5,000 to general reserve and to declare a dividend of 12½% on the ordinary share capital.

*Once again the board wishes to thank the management, the office and outside staffs, and the factory workers for their efforts which during the second year of war difficulties, have contributed so much to the satisfactory results obtained."*

*Manchester Guardian 27.2.42*

Profits for the shareholders, thanks for the workers.

# Through

## Labour Party in decay

The *Tribune* (6.3.42) published an interesting article on "The decay of the Local (Labour) parties"

"The Local Parties in the constituency in which I live, with few exceptions, exist only on paper. I know of one local branch which in recent years figured on the divisional books solely because the divisional chairman resided in this area, and out of his own pocket paid for a fixed number of membership cards, giving these out to various individuals: no meetings were held, no party existed.

The T.U. branch to which I belong, caught in the early maelstrom of the opening days of war, let the committee get a decision through suspending all branch meetings, putting full power in the committee's hands, and only allowing branch meetings to be called if and when circumstances demanded it. With the result that for the past two years, the only opportunity for rank and file participation in T.U. affairs has been two Annual meetings.

The second one, held last week, enjoyed an attendance of twenty, mostly officials and committee men, and this with a branch that despite 500 members in the forces, shows a membership of 1,700 at the present date.

On a question relating to the fact that an item marked "political fund" on the statement of accounts showed a £50 increase on the previous year, it was revealed that this £50 had been expended on a gold chain for a committee member, who during the course of the year had been selected as chairman of the Urban District Council for the area where he resided."

## Pertinent Question

Mr. Groves recently asked the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food, if he was aware that the prices charged for food in British Restaurants, reckoning at retail prices for the food supplied and allowing a reasonable sum for overhead expenses and costs of cooking, show a profit of over 100 per cent; and what steps he was taking to see that the saving in costs by reason of voluntary help was passed on for the benefit of the consumer.



## A Politician's Career

"Captain Margesson is going into the City. He is appointed a director of Lord Hirst's £10,000,000 General Electric Company. The former War Minister is not a wealthy man. When he was Conservative Chief Whip, Captain Margesson got £3000 a year as a Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury. When he moved into the War Office his pay went up by £2000 a year.

In the City it is expected that Captain Margesson will join the boards of other companies. *I understand he will not be a working director.*"

The fact that he is taking up a business career does not mean that Captain Margesson has relinquished political ambitions. Many politicians have taken the same path when they have lost office at Westminster. Captain Margesson is personally popular among M.P.s, many of whom hope he will make a 'come-back.'"

*Evening Standard 13.3.42*

When workers are sacked they are put into the Army.

# the Press

## They still get caviar

The Sunday Express (15.3.42) published the following extracts from Joseph E. Davies' (U.S. Ambassador to Russia 1936-8) diary. These "remarkable extracts" are given great predominance with the design no doubt, to win over those who are afraid that by supporting Russia they might lose their privileges.

"It appears quite clear that the governing powers have, through necessity and for self-preservation, been compelled to abandon at least temporarily, many of their Communistic principles. The idea of a 'classless' society has been and is being destroyed in practice.

The Government itself is a bureaucracy with all the indicia of class, to wit: special privileges, higher standards of living, and the like.

An illustration is found in the fact that the only caviar which can be obtained here is served by the high Government officials or possibly obtained as a matter of favour through the Kremlin restaurant, which is provided for the high Governmental officials living therein. From the top down, there are to be found indications of class.

Writers, artists, even leaders of jazz bands, receive high compensation and have the class privileges which money provides in luxuries and the like.

In industry classes have been established and are being rapidly intensified and developed through the system of offering greater pay for greater work. This in turn has induced higher standards of living among certain of the workers, and class consciousness is evidenced in differences in housing and living conditions and indications of style consciousness on the part of women and wives of the workers."

## Famine for the Poor

"The morale of the people has fallen considerably; morality has begun to weaken before the harsh voice of nature and before the need of self-preservation. Many become grave-robbers at night and steal the clothes from the dead to warm themselves or to sell them for money to buy food." *News Chronicle 28.2.42*

So we learn from this report that there is food in Greece for those who can afford to pay high prices for it. This is what the capitalist press calls the "harsh voice of nature."!

## Democracy at work

"When Sir Stafford Cripps landed on January 23rd, 1942, Mass-Observation made a small survey of how much interest people took in him and what they thought he should do next. One person in five thought he ought to try and join the Government or Cabinet. Most of the others had no idea and little interest; an appreciable minority had never heard of him. It was not until the second week in February that the ordinary public became aware of him as a potential leader figure. His postscript on Sunday, February 8th, had a sensational effect; over 15 people said they were enthusiastic for every one who was critical, higher favourable reaction than that obtained by Winston Churchill at his highest.

The wider implications of this event are important. *The radio has become the most powerful political weapon in this democracy. If a man is a good broadcaster he can make himself a national figure overnight.*"

Tom Harrison in the *New Statesman & Nation 14.3.42*

## Soldier's Mother Starve

"When an elderly widow was sued at Shoreditch county court today for possession of two rooms let at 9s. a week, she stated that her only income was 10s. a week widow's pension and 7s. allotted from her son's Army pay.

Mr. Registrar Gilbert Hicks: You can't live on that. It is starvation. I advise you to go to the Public Assistance Committee and see if they will grant you a few shillings weekly. *Star 10.3.42*

## Thank you, Commander!

"Commander King Hall urged "self-rationing," and suggested a weekly limit of 5s. for tobacco, 10s. for alcohol, and 10s. for entertainment."

*Daily Herald 11.2.42*

## M.O.I. Explains

Good reasons given by the Ministry of Information to justify the withdrawing of the subsidy on copies of "Picture Post" going out to the Middle East.

1. That it has been withdrawn from all picture papers because they "do not need subsidising." This is not true—and the subsidy was not in any case paid to the papers.

2. That pictures of attractive girls are "harmful to natives." This belongs to the category of "Believe It or Not." It has, however, been seriously stated.

3. That criticism of Britain's war effort should not be read by native peoples. Our answer is that the copies of *Picture Post* were not being read by native peoples. We offered to prove our case. The Ministry has shown itself unwilling to put the matter to the test. *Picture Post 21.3.42*



## Imperial Hospitality

**A**MONG the 'lesser breeds without the law' who people the odd corners which imperialist strategy has rendered it necessary for our ruling class at least to attempt to hold, none has displayed a blinder loyalty than the plebeian classes of the tiny colony of Gibraltar.

The present war has given our government an opportunity of demonstrating their gratitude for such loyalty. The entry of Italy into the war in 1940 converted the Mediterranean into a major war area, and Gibraltar became almost immediately a target for bombing attacks. The government decided, somewhat hastily, to evacuate the women and children and other members of the community not engaged in work of an essential kind, and in the autumn of 1940 several thousands of Gibraltarians reached London. They arrived just in time for the blitz and, as our authorities seemed to think their responsibilities ended with dragging them willy nilly from their homes, these unfortunate refugees from one air terror endured a second at a time when the government was trying frantically to persuade Londoners to send their women and children into the country, away from danger.

Through some of the worst raid months the refugees lived in hotels and other buildings in the West End. Some of these places were bombed, and refugees were killed and injured. The survivors joined the troglodyte poor of London in the underground stations.

Eventually many of the Gibraltarians were moved into suburban centres. A few details of life at one of these centres will serve to demonstrate the lavish kindness of a grateful imperialism. At this centre some hundreds of exiles, mostly women, children and adolescents, inhabit a disused block of modern 'luxury' flats. The rooms where they live are furnished only with the folding camp beds on which they sleep. There are no chairs, no tables, and no form of cupboard accommodation, unless they are fortunate enough to inhabit rooms with built-in cupboards. They have no kind of privacy, as they are given no means to lock their doors and the manager of the centre and his assistants are authorised to enter their rooms whenever they choose.

Food is served in a building to reach which they must, whatever the weather, cross an open courtyard. Nevertheless, they are forbidden to cook food or even boil water in their rooms, and oil stoves which some of them have procured for this purpose are confiscated by the authorities. The food, although adequate in quantity as most working people enjoy today, is unimaginative, and deficient in certain important nutritive elements. In consequence, deficiency diseases, and scabies and dermatitis, are common among the children. In spite of the large number of people concerned, arrangements for storing food are inadequate, and there is no refrigerating apparatus.

For such palatial hospitality, those who have any money, or whose husbands remaining in Gibraltar can be persuaded to contribute, have to pay a certain charge to the Government. For the destitute there

(Continued on page 14)

## Ill Health

**I**N industrial countries general ill-health and periodical sickness are such a commonplace in the lives of the workers, that the low level of public health to-day is usually accepted as "normal." The extent of hospital services, national health insurances and such like organization for dealing with illness, is adduced more as evidence of enlightened administration than as an index of widespread ill health. All reformist bodies are content to urge the extension of such health services, to demand increased means of curing disease instead of treating the prevalence of disease as an indictment of social organization under capitalism. They, too, accept ill health as a normal condition of the workers' lives. The partisans of Soviet Russia take essentially the same viewpoint; they issue numberless pamphlets to prove that the medical services under Stalin are better than anywhere else, instead of considering the problems of abolishing the need for such services by establishing health instead of illness as the normal state of the worker. It is against this attitude of tacit acceptance of preventable disease on the part of those who claim to be interested in social betterment, that we shall consider the problem of public health in this article. Over the past ten years, especially, a body of evidence has been steadily accumulating which directly connects ill health with poverty. This evidence makes nonsense of reformist "solutions," and demands a radical approach to the whole problem. Within the limitations of a short article we shall attempt to summarize this evidence and indicate such an approach.

### Health of Conscripts in Last War

The general state of health is well illustrated by the figures obtained from the medical examination of conscripts in the last war. These were published in 1920 in the "Report on the Physical Condition of men of military age by National Service Medical Boards from November 1st, 1917 to October 1st, 1918" issued by the Ministry of National Service. Of 160,000 men examined no less than 48.5 per cent were placed in Grades III and IV (31.5 per cent in Grade III and 10.0 per cent in Grade IV). Grade III was described as: "Those who present marked physical disabilities or such evidence of past disease that they are not considered fit to undergo the degree of physical exertion required for the higher grades. Examples of men suitable for this grade are those with badly deformed toes, severe flat foot, and some cases of hernia and varicose veins . . . the Third Grade will also include those who are fit only for clerical and other sedentary occupations, such as tailoring and boot-making." Grade IV is described briefly as "All those who are totally and permanently unfit for any form of military service." It is worth bearing in mind that Medical Boards would not be apt to be too stringent in their requirements of a conscript towards the end of a four years war. The figure of 48.5 per cent for these two grades is a striking commentary on the level of health and development reached by the adult male population 25 years ago. Some figures from another field of enquiry show that the standard in recent years is still very low indeed.

### Elementary School Children

Out of 1,855,499 children who underwent routine medical examination in this country in 1933 no less than 17.3 per cent were found to require immediate



# under Capitalism

By John Hewetson

medical attention of one kind or another (quoted by McGonigle and Kirby, *Poverty and Public Health* 1936, p.44). In Stockton-on-Tees in that same year only 7.0 per cent of the elementary school children possessed entirely sound milk teeth. In Durham a committee set up in 1927 to assess the prevalence of rickets examined 1,638 5-year-old children. Of these, only 12.5 per cent were found to be completely free from any sign of rickets—that is, 87.5 per cent exhibited some sign of the disease.

Such figures could be multiplied almost indefinitely. Let us turn to the question of how ill health is distributed throughout the population.

## Death Rates Higher Among Poorer Workers

The Registrar-General publishes detailed information regarding mortality based on census returns. He divides all men between the ages of 20 and 65 into 5 social groupings, as set out in the following table, and shows the relative mortality in each group for 1930-32.

Social Grouping	Relative Mortality in 1930-32
I Professional, etc.	90
II Clerks, Shopkeepers, etc.	94
III Skilled manual workers	97
IV Semi-skilled manual workers	102
V Unskilled manual workers	111
(Average adult mortality taken as 100)	

It will be seen that as the social status falls the mortality rises: the mortality of the unskilled worker in class V is 23 per cent greater than that of the professional class (in 1921-23 it was as much as 51 per cent greater). The infant mortality in the different social groupings shows an even greater divergence. Thus the mortality for children between the ages of 6 months to 1 year in class V is more than five times greater than that of Class I. Analysis of the figures for infant mortality in the different groupings for various ages from birth to 1 year, however shows that although the mortality is 5 times as great at 6 months to 1 year in Class V as in Class I, for infants *under one month* the figure is only half as great again in V as in I. This powerfully suggests that environmental factors are far more important than hereditary ones.

"When we inquire into the individual causes of death" says H. M. Vernon,\* from whom the above figures are cited, "we usually find much greater variations between classes. For instance the death rate from phthisis (tuberculosis of the lungs) and from pneumonia is about twice as great in Class V as in Class I, whilst that from bronchitis is five times greater."

A Ministry of Health officer examined 125 poor class children (mostly of unemployed parents) and found 17 cases of pneumonia, 32 of bronchitis, and 32 of measles; whilst in a group of 124 children coming from well-to-do families, there were 2, 2 and 6 cases respectively of the diseases mentioned.

It is clear, therefore, that the incidence of disease, and the death rates are considerably higher among the workers—particularly the poorer sections—than among the wealthy classes in society.

## Reforms may be Worse than Useless

In 1936 a report was published on overcrowding. Overcrowding was taken as being present if there were more than 2 people in one room, 3 in two rooms, 5 in three rooms, etc. In Bournemouth, not more than 0.3 per cent of all families showed overcrowding, whereas in certain areas of Scotland the figure was as high as 40 per cent. The Registrar General found that mortality increased with the average number of people per room, the death rate being 36 per cent higher when the number of persons was doubled.

Obviously, however, overcrowding only occurs where there is economic distress. That it is not of itself a main cause of increased death rate is shown by the following experiment at Stockton-on-Tees.

In 1927 a slum clearing scheme was instituted, and about two-fifths of the families living in a particular area were re-housed in a modern housing estate. Records for the 5-year periods 1923-27 and 1928-32 gave the following results for both areas. The standardized death-rate per 1000 in the area which was not cleared fell from 26.10 in 1923-7 to 22.78 in 1928-32. But among the families which had been removed from the same insalubrious slum to the model housing estate *the death rate rose from 22.91 per 1000 during the period 1923-7, when they were slum dwellers, to 33.55 in 1928-32 when they were well-housed!* This unexpected result was found on analysis to be due to the fact that since they had to pay 9/- per week in rent in the Housing Estate, as against 4/8 in the slum, there was less money available (after all other fixed and essential payments had been made) to expend on food. About 90% of the families in the housing estate were unemployed, and it was found that after unavoidable payment for rent, fuel and light, clothing and insurances, doctor's club etc. had been met, there remained for spending on food among these families only 2/10½ per head per week, as against 3/9½ per head per week in the uncleared slum where rent was about half that at the model estate. The disparity between these amounts available for food explains the 48 per cent increase in the death rate in the latter area compared with the former. That the amounts available for food expenditure were incredibly low in both areas is shown by the fact that the standardized death rate for Stockton-on-Tees as a whole—about 12.0 per thousand—(itself higher than that for the whole of England) was half that of the slum area and one third that of the housing estate. (For those readers who wish to read the details of this enquiry, McGonigle and Kirby's book *Poverty and Public Health* 1936 is recommended. Only the bare outlines have been summarized here.)

This experiment clearly shows that attempts at reform within the structure of capitalism may have results exactly opposite to those intended. The whole thing was quite correctly ridiculed by Bertolt Brecht in *A Penny for the Poor* (the English Translation of the *Drei Groschen Oper*)

\* *Preventive Methods for Improving National Health.* (British Association for Labour Legislation)



"Don't talk to me about social reforms," he often used to say. "I remember once there was a great outcry in the papers about slums being unfit for human habitation; they were unsanitary and unhygienic. So they pulled down the whole district and moved the inhabitants into a colony of beautiful, solidly built, hygienic houses up in Stockton-on-Tees. They kept very careful statistics and after 5 years compared the results. It then became apparent that, although the death rate in the slums had been 2 per cent, in the new houses it had risen to 2.6 per cent. They were very astonished. Well, it was simply due to the fact the new houses cost from four to eight shillings more per week and this money had to be made up by saving on food. Our social reformers and humanitarians had never thought of that!"

The social reformers had never thought of that! One could not ask for a clearer demonstration of the mischief caused by bureaucratic interference. The reformer bends his efforts towards attacking secondary causes ("we must begin somewhere"); but within the rigid framework of class society and the wage system which both depends on it and forms one of its essential supports, such meddling merely disturbs an equilibrium; improve one thing and worsen another—in this case more essential.

Yet anyone in contact with the workers' lives could have foreseen the result. Centralized administration inevitably lacks that contact. But the workers themselves know their own needs only too well, and could easily satisfy them *if they had access to the means of production*. The evidence summarized in the following paragraphs demands the social revolution and the abolition of the wages system as the only remedy for the present chronic ill health.

#### Diet, Malnutrition and Income

Sir John Orr, in his famous report "Food, Health, and Income," published in 1936 stated that "The degree of adequacy for health increases as income rises. The average diet of the poorest group, comprising 4½ million people is, by the standard adopted, deficient in every constituent examined. The second group, comprising 9 million people, is adequate in protein but deficient in all the vitamins and minerals. The third group, comprising another 9 millions, is deficient in vitamins and minerals . . . A review of the state of health of the people of the different groups suggests that, as income increases, disease and death rate decrease, children grow more quickly, adult stature is greater and general health and physique improve."

It is constantly being suggested—nowadays especially—that all that is required is "intelligent buying by the housewife" and adequate vitamins. Sir John Orr—in 1936, i.e. before the war—stated that "To make the diet of *the poorer groups* the same as that of the first group whose diet is adequate for full health, i.e. Group IV, would involve increases in consumption of a number of *the more expensive food-stuffs, viz. milk, eggs, butter, fruit, vegetables and meat*, varying from 12 to 25 per cent" (our italics)

He concluded "that a diet completely adequate for health, according to modern standards, is reached at an income level above that of 50 per cent of the population. . . The important aspect of the survey, however, is the inadequacy of the diets of the lower income groups, and the markedly lower standard of health of the people, and especially of the children in those groups, compared with that of the higher income groups."

There is therefore overwhelming evidence to show that mere reforms are completely inadequate, where they are not actually harmful, to alter the widespread ill-health directly due to poverty. The P.E.P. report (in the Pelican books) to which Lord Horder contributed a preface, declared (p.177) that "to be effective, proposals should be made bolder. Whatever policy is selected the most effective means of improving nutrition is unquestionably *a rise in the real wages of the workers*, with a consequent increase in the amount the housewife can spend on food."

#### Wage System and Ill Health

This is not the place to discuss the question of "raising real wages." It is sufficient to point to the past and to state that, under capitalism—or any other system where the majority is ruled by a minority—wages are always kept at the lowest possible point, any concessions being immediately followed by a rise in price levels to offset them. Furthermore the Government White Paper on "Price Stabilization and Wage Policy"—condemned by many a city editor as too weak—is quite definite on the point of preventing a rise in real wages during the war.

To conclude; it is true that certain diseases have disappeared to a large extent or been greatly mitigated since the turn of the century. But the evidence summarized all too briefly above is a terrific indictment of class society. Kropotkin, writing more than 60 years ago in his *Appeal to the Young*, sketched the picture that revealed itself to the young doctor

"To-morrow a man attired in rough clothes will come to fetch you to see a sick woman. He will lead you into one of those alleys where the opposite neighbours can almost shake hands over the heads of the passers-by; you ascend into a foul atmosphere by the flickering light of a little ill-trimmed lamp; you climb two, three, four, five flights of filthy stairs, and in a dark, cold room you find the sick woman lying on a pallet covered with dirty rags. Pale, livid children, shivering under their scanty garments, gaze with their big eyes wide open. The husband has worked all his life twelve or thirteen hours a day at no matter what; now he has been out of work for three months. To be out of employ is not rare in his trade; it happens every year, periodically. But formerly, when he was out of work, his wife went out as a charwoman—perhaps to wash your shirts—at the rate of fifteen pence a day; now she has been bedridden for two months, and misery glares upon the family in all its squalid hideousness.

What will you prescribe for the sick woman, doctor? You who have seen at a glance that the cause of her illness is general anaemia, want of good food, **lack of fresh air**. Say a good beef-steak every day? A little exercise in the country? A dry and well ventilated bed-room? What irony! If she could have afforded it, this would have been done long since without waiting for your advice!"

With all medical advances, all social reforms, the situation does **not differ in essentials** today. This widespread ill-health can only be overcome when the wage system has been abolished; when free access to the means of life has been assured to everyone by anarchist revolution.

**In the next issue of WAR COMMENTARY the effects of the war on the health of the workers will be considered.**



# PALESTINE and the JEWS

In the article published in the last issue of War Commentary the origins of Jewish nationalism, and the international factors bearing on the problem of Palestine were outlined. In the following pages the possibilities of Zionism are discussed, and compared with the path of revolutionary class struggle as the solution to the problems of the Jewish and Arab workers and peasants alike. For a further statement of the anarchist attitude to this question, the reader is recommended to refer to the article "Anarchist Tactic for Palestine" by the same writer, published in "Revolt!" of March 25th, 1939.

**T**HE policy pursued in Palestine, therefore, could only lead to disaster. The Arab peasants were forced off the land, and saw relief only in the national feud. There was a section that saw relief in assistance from the Axis powers, "since they too were against the Jews" (Quite obviously this was nonsense; European anti-semitism would speed up Jewish immigration into Palestine rather than the reverse. The Axis was interested in fostering its agents amongst this section because of the very tactical nature of Palestine in the Mediterranean, rather than from any motives of ideology). There were also the wealthy Arabs who looked forward to a scheme of division, in which their own future would be assured, by the scarcity of land and hence its high market value. (This scheme, roughly resembling the "Pakistan" of some of Mr. Jinnah's followers in India, but in a much smaller country, would have allowed so many cantons on the Swiss model to Jews and so many to Arabs). The whole civil war that blazed up in Palestine was in the last analysis vain; because the nationalist leaders would not in any case have looked for sole independence, but merely an end of the system of colonisation being pursued.

On the Jewish side, the persecutions breaking out again in Europe had brought a large-scale immigration to Palestine. For a long time Hitler permitted the Zionist organisation to exist, and it enjoyed the unenviable position of being the only non-Nazi political organisation in Germany tolerated by the State. The leaders of Jewish communities, particularly in America, accentuated the efforts to get Jewish families out of Germany, especially into Palestine. The British Government, which had never foreseen such a move, was reluctant to permit this, particularly since it did not wish to disturb the situation in Palestine any more. The whole effect of the Palestine experiment so far as the victims of Hitlerism were concerned was to raise a false chimera of hope before them, of allaying anti-Nazi feeling which would have broken out in Germany itself on this issue had not the Jewish homelessness been explained away by "but the Jews have somewhere to go—it's the British Government that prevents it," and most of all it encouraged the Governments that wished to have an excuse not to admit immigrants themselves, but to express their desire for the refugees to enter somewhere—in particular, the American Government.

## Can the Zionist Experiment be Pursued Further?

It does not seem as if abandonment of Zionism is anyone's war aim. The British Government no doubt intends to continue as before, allowing a trickle of immigration, not to disturb its present basis. Hitler

too wants a Ghetto State—a Jewish "Pale of Settlement," but apparently in the worst areas of Poland. Palestine itself is no doubt regarded by the Nazis as a vital link which they would colonise themselves. In short, a Nazi victory in the war would mean the re-colonisation of Palestine, and the position in a few years' time would be similar to today. An oppressed Arab population would be still struggling for independence.

A British victory no doubt means the status quo in Palestine. But we have the usual claims on the Government, and policy may be influenced in one or the other direction. Ever since the war began the Revisionists, and later most Zionists, have been clamouring for a "Jewish Army" in Palestine, with its own flag, its own divisions, its own commanders, on a level with other Allied nations. In vain has the Government explained that there is no Jewish State, that Jews are citizens of other States, consequently Jews can only be soldiers of the armies of the Allied Governments and not of their own non-existent Government. There is no pressing demand by Jews in the ranks to have their own Army, why therefore create one? Yet the demand persists, especially from American Jews (Dr. Abba Silver is at the moment in England on this very mission). The answer is obvious. They want a Jewish Army based on Palestine as the thin edge of the wedge for a Jewish State based on Palestine.

Why should this demand be so popular amongst American Jews? They have no disabilities in America; there is no urgent need for an exodus of Jewish refugees from New York; the problems of European anti-semitism do not affect them. It must be admitted that American Jews thinking of the creation of a State in Palestine have no intention of taking its citizenship themselves. They want to see the State, but with citizens strictly limited to those from Europe. They cannot see that actually they themselves are preparing the ground for American anti-semitic laws.

For essentially the whole prospect of Zionism for the Jews is as unsatisfactory as it is for the Arabs. The exclusion of the latter from their homes is equally balanced by the exclusion of the former. The gainer in each case is the coloniser and the landlord; and the loser both the immigrant worker and the native peasant.

The kind of Zionism envisaged before the war meant essentially co-operation with Hitler and other anti-semitic rulers. The kind of Zionism envisaged for after the war means that it is considered that anti-semitism will still prevail in the countries from which the settlers are emigrating.

The solution of Jewish miseries in the world to-day does not therefore lie in Zionism (nationalism); it



lies in the fight against anti-semitism, and hence the fight against nationalism.

In the last analysis, the solution to the whole problem of Jewish homelessness and persecution, lies in the solution to the problem of the workers everywhere: i.e., the building of a world freed from nationalism and States.

But it may be asked, can this particular problem wait? No problem can wait. A desirable conclusion may have to wait, but the means of action must be taken now.

### In Palestine

It is clearly difficult and nearly impossible for the anti-Zionist Jew in Palestine itself to take action. He not only incurs the hostility of the majority of other Jews, but cannot allay the suspicion of the majority of Arabs. But an anti-Zionist minority, and a class-conscious Arab minority too, can grow, and from the nucleus of a minority of revolutionary Jews and Arabs can grow a movement with the main principles:

- (a) the abandonment of the Zionist State experiment on the one hand, and of an Arabic kingdom on the other;
- (b) anti-Imperialism, opposition to external capitalism and internal landlordism;
- (c) disregard for the religious scruples causing a barrier amongst the people;
- (d) the struggle for an independent workers' country, to take its place amongst other independent workers' countries of the new world, on the same principles of revolutionary libertarian socialism (and with absolute disregard for race).

I do not say such a minority with such a programme is an immediate likelihood, but it is towards the creation of such a minority that the policy of revolutionary workers elsewhere must be. It would not matter whether such a movement were inaugurated solely by Jews or solely by Arabs; the point is that such a movement can arise to take in all of whatever nationality. It is by aiming at such a movement, and not by supporting any propositions which may come from interested parties during this war, that the revolutionary workers may know they are not being misled by false nationalist divisions once again.

On the question of Arab independence: it may be that Arab revolutionaries would feel themselves bound to a movement of Arab independence, similar to Indian and Moroccan revolutionaries. We agree, it may sometimes be necessary to go part of the way with colonial bourgeois nationalists; but our aim in all cases is to expose the leaders of the colonial peoples, and point the way to their own emancipation. The support of any independence movement should not therefore prejudice the main object, that of a movement of all the toilers.

### In the Rest of the World

This may well point to a course of action for the Jews of Palestine, but it will be argued that the Jews in the pogrom countries will be left without hope, except with the hope of far-off revolution. In the first place, this is an improvement, for even the hope of a revolution and a free system of society in the future is more practicable than the hope of a peaceful national state, when one views the position of all other small states, in far less strategic positions.

Moreover the course of revolution can be pursued, but as the "Struma" tragedy shows, the Governments of the world have no intention of letting immigration be pursued. It may be that Herschel Grynspan, before the war, had a clearer notion than many of the worthies who washed their hands of him, as to how the pogrom governments should be fought. It was better to have struck at Vom Rath than to have committed suicide, at least; and while perhaps it did not accomplish much—had not Grynspan been denounced so readily by those who wished to show they had nothing to do with it—the example might have been contagious.

We do not have to go into details to show that fascism can be fought from within. It goes equally to show that anti-semitism is a product of capitalist and nationalist society, and that it can be equally fought with the system by the revolutionary workers; that in fact, a government cannot impose it without the aid of the masses (as witness Holland, Denmark and Norway, countries where the virus of anti-semitism had never infected the masses, and where the Nazis have been unable to carry through the Nuremberg laws).

Countering nationalism with nationalism does not solve a national problem. The revolutionary class struggle does. Anti-semitism will finally be smashed by the revolutionary class struggle, if pursued logically. And the logical course of the class struggle is not to confuse anti-semitism with anti-Zionism. The former is reactionary, but the latter is one of the means of fighting the former.

A.M.

### IMPERIAL HOSPITALITY

(Continued from page 10)

is an allowance of pocket money—6d a week for adolescents under 16, 1/6 for any person over that age!

One can imagine how much of the small extra necessities can be purchased for 1/6 in these expensive days! In addition, the poor receive the cast off clothing of the charitable, distribution, as always, being in proportion to servility.

There is much indignation among the refugees at their treatment and one wonders if they will return with so high a pride in their membership of the great empire on which the sun at last sets with unkind haste. But a ruling class which hopes to achieve the support of the peoples of Europe by slaughtering the citizens of Paris in hundreds where the Nazis have killed them in dozens can hardly be expected to display any sort of tact towards its own own subjects, even if they do not transgress the holy social laws of colour:

G.W.

Next Issue of

**WAR COMMENTARY**

Out on the 11th of APRIL



**LEY FARMING**

by R. G. Stapledon and William Davies.

Professor Stapledon is technically the most revolutionary of our agricultural experts, and he has a genuine concern for British farming. His work on grass cultivation has been the most valuable agricultural research of the century, and he has attempted to carry his results beyond the academy and into public attention.

The book under review is a plea for the cultivation of grass as a crop, for the abolition of the permanent pasture system and the adoption of a ley system of sown grasslands alternating in planned rotations with various food and forage crops. His revelation that no more than 1.6% of the pastures of this country are of the first grade shows how much can be done to increase production by a scientific cultivation and treatment of the grasslands.

Stapledon sees beyond the immediate needs of the war to an improved agriculture in the years afterwards. What he does not realise is that such a revolutionary change cannot take place under imperial capitalism, which is bound by its very nature to keep peacetime farming in a low condition. The new agricultural revolution can only exist as part of the social revolution.

\* \* \* \*

**HOW RUSSIA PREPARED** by Maurice Edelman.

Maurice Edelman talking of the Soviet Union has the simplicity, slightly disgusting to the unconverted, of the Revivalist talking of Zion. He also appears to affect that peculiar form of bad writing used by English Communists when addressing a working class they evidently consider congenial nitwits.

He attempts to describe the industrial development of the U.S.S.R. from the October Revolution to the present. The picture is that of the rise, not of a workers' society, but of a military state. He gives no adequate description of workers' conditions in Russia. The war has obliterated the need for glowing stories of a mythical paradise, and Edelman is frank about the policy of the Bolshevik leaders. "At no time has the Soviet Government hesitated to throw aside a development which it regarded as socially progressive in order to serve the greater end of defending the State." There is no longer any Leninist claptrap about "the withering away of the state"!

The executions of the Bolshevik leaders are justified by a reference to Quisling, and, while Edelman admits the internment of hundreds of thousands of "suspects," he dismisses their sufferings in the slave camps of Siberia and the North with the euphemism "They were not allowed to decay in idleness"! He does not mention that instead they died of cold and toil, the pistol and the whip.

\* \* \* \*

**THE CENTURIES' POETRY, Pope to Keats.**

Edited by D. Kilham Roberts.

The eighteenth century is a stagnant backwater in the poetic tradition. Pope at the beginning, Blake at the end, were its only poets of first magnitude, and even Blake was not a 'great' poet of the calibre of Donne or Dryden.

Mr. Roberts, in order to give substance to his

## Book Reviews

# New Penguins and Old

anthology, has extended it some three decades to include the Romantics, who, if one excepts Byron with his affinity to Pope, are in no way 18th century poets.

Even so, it is a poor selection, a gleaning of the second best even of this dull age. The allocation of space is quite incomprehensible. Coleridge is given 24 pages, Pope and Blake 4 pages each, while the peasant John Clare, one of the few vital 18th century poets, is unrepresented. The best that can be said for the anthology is that it conveys faithfully the lack of spirit and purpose which characterises most 18th century poets.

\* \* \* \*

**CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL ORDER** by William Temple

This book acquires a peculiar significance by the appointment of its author to the leadership of the Anglican Church. On reading it one gains the impression that the Church is somewhat belatedly following the example of Rome, and embarking on a demagogic policy of courting the working classes by advocating a socialistic reform policy. The interference and guidance of the Church in social affairs is advocated and, while some of the reforms proposed by the Archbishop are good in themselves, the underlying object of his contentions seems to be that of gaining more power and influence to the Church. As the Anglican Church is by its traditions and interests bound up with the State, there is no reason to believe that its embarkation on a political career will be other than part of a general policy of the ruling class, and its overtures should be regarded by the workers with the suspicion appropriate to any form of state machinery.

George Woodcock

\* \* \* \*

**THE GOOD SOLDIER SCHWEIK** by Jaroslav Hasek

Re-reading *The Good Soldier Schweik* in the abridged English version reminds me of an article by Frank Leech in a recent *War Commentary* issue, in which he claims that a good way of arousing people's consciousness of their position in Society is to ask them the simple question "For What?" For

(continued on page 16)

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## POLICE CASE AGAINST COMRADE LOHR FAILS

**F**OR the second time since the war started, our comrade Fredrick Lohr, was arrested on the Hyde Park platform on 14th March last. The charge was the familiar rigamarole about "insulting words likely to cause a breach of the peace." Needless to say the meeting was entirely orderly, Comrade Lohr having been on the platform only a few minutes. A woman asked a question about India and he replied—according to the police evidence—"If India falls, and it will do, it will be through the rotten treatment by this government. They have bled them white." The police secured a remand at the first hearing in order that their prosecuting counsel could prepare the case. When the case came on, however, the magistrate held that the words—if indeed comrade Lohr used them—were not insulting, and dismissed the case, no witnesses for the defence being called. Lohr was not even required to speak.

The last time this charge was put up by the police against our comrade he got three months. Usually the magistrate accepts the police evidence that following the uttering of the "insulting words" they intervene to prevent the speaker being lynched by an infuriated crowd, and pronounces the speaker guilty. It is most unusual for any question to be raised on the interpretation of the word "insulting," and our comrade is lucky to have been spared six months this time.

This was an unusual decision. This particular charge can be brought at almost anytime by the police against any speaker provided they can find someone who objects to what is being said from the platform. Almost all our speakers have been victimized by this all-embracing charge, which puts them at the mercy of the police. Literature sellers can be arrested in exactly the same way on this charge (if what they are selling offends someone) or on a charge of "wilful obstruction of the free passage of the highway." With such means at their disposal the ruling class can safely "allow freedom of speech and expression."

(Continued from page 15)

what do we fight in wars, pay income tax, work in factories?

Jaroslav Hasek adopts a similar, indirect way of criticising the Society in which we live—and the Austrian Monarchy of 1914-18 is essentially not much different from present-day Britain though the outer form may have changed considerably. But his method is exactly the opposite. The soldier Schweik believes in the Divine Right of authority, militarism and discipline. Unthinkingly and without question he obeys every command to the letter, executes every order to the bitter end. And since there is no situation which cannot be reduced ad absurdum by carrying it beyond the limits of common sense to its last logical consequence, the erratic course of the—allegedly—feeble-minded, ingenious Czech peasant traces the most savage indictment of the Army, Judiciary, Police, Administration, in short the entire structure of society in Imperial Austria.

Much of Hasek's fiery hate may be attributable to his Czech patriotism which made the Imperial oppressor the special butt of contempt and ridicule. But like all great literary satires of the past and present the implications of his book are much wider and more general than intended. While we laugh at Schweik's misadventures we are made conscious of the inconsistencies, iniquity and often down-right stupidity of the modern social structure. And from consciousness to action is only a step—if we are but willing to take it. R

## WHO IS GUILTY?

**F**ROM America and Switzerland we have received more information about the fate of our comrades in France.

It is feared that Lecoin, the editor of *Libertaire* the anarchist weekly, was amongst the hundred hostages shot by the German authorities.

Two hundred Italian anarchist comrades who had been interned in French concentration camps (in particular Le Vernet, which has been described by Koestler in his book *Scum of the Earth*) have been sent to Italy and are now in prison there. A comrade who managed to escape to Mexico described how the anarchists are persecuted more vigorously than the socialists and republicans who still enjoy a certain amount of freedom.

The Spanish comrades who were interned in the Le Vernet Camp have been transferred to North Africa and put to work on the Sahara railways under appalling conditions. Cipriano Mera, who was one of the leading anarchist military leaders during the Spanish war is interned there.

Who is responsible for the terrible conditions in which anti-fascist militants find themselves now in Europe? The British Left-wing press is too much inclined to shift the blame on the Daladier and Vichy Governments. The Spanish militiamen who took refuge in France after having fought Franco for almost three years were interned by the French government and no other country offered them hospitality. Britain only took 200 refugees from Madrid while France had a quarter of a million! It is easy now to blame the French government which is of course guilty but why did not our own labourites and liberals here agitate in order to bring refugees to this country? Why did Russia refuse to accept even communist refugees from Spain?

The persecutions of refugees like the Japanese atrocities are now used to justify the crusade against fascism. The lesson we draw from them is on the contrary that democratic and fascist governments act in similar fashion and in many cases collaborate in the persecution of revolutionary militants.

This should teach the workers to show their solidarity towards exiled revolutionaries before the governments, democratic or fascist let them slowly die of cold and hunger, or torture them in prisons or concentration camps.

Let us remember that the fate of the Spanish refugees is now that of the French people and may become that of the British people also. The British working class may have to remember with bitterness its indifference and lack of solidarity towards persecuted revolutionaries in other lands.

### WAR COMMENTARY

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