

WAR *For Anarchism* COMMENTARY

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MID-OCTOBER 1942

TWOPENCE.

The Tyne Shipyard Strike

THE SECOND FRONT has opened, not on the shores of Flanders, but on the banks of Coaly Tyne; not against the barbarous Nazi, but against the scarcely less condemned fitters and boiler-makers of Newcastle and Wallsend. All sections of the Press, Liberal, Labour and Conservative, and that tin can tied to the dog's tail the 'Daily Worker' unite in the chorus of hate and condemnation.

The 'News Chronicle (6/10/42) calls the Tyne Shipyard Strike the "Stupidest-Ever Strike" and goes on to say "Shipyard workers on Tyneside have been idle as a protest against the new method of paying their wages. They are acting in defiance of their leaders' advice and in spite of an appeal made at a meeting of shop stewards by Mr. Harry Pollitt, leader of the Communist Party."

"The men refused to start work because they fear the new agreement entered into last week between the unions and the employers will rob them of two days' pay, and prejudice their position with regard to Sunday work".

All this seems very small grounds for fears in the minds of the 'News Chronicle' writer, but what is small as far away as Fleet Street, may be very important to the hard-working and poorly paid men of the Tyne yards.

One might seek in this quotation an inference that it is only strikes on trivial issues which the capitalist press condemns, but whenever the workers have fought on an issue which no one could deny as being important, they have attacked just as bitterly. When the miners fought against savage cuts of their already starvation wages; when they fought against an increase in their working day (which meant a big increase in fatal accidents) what support did the capitalist press give? All strikes, except strikes of journalists, are wrong in Fleet Street.

But no one with any experience of lesser strikes will deny that the issue on which the strike is forced is not the only issue. Such strikes are usually the culmination of a long series of provocative actions by the employers. The shipyards are by no means exempt from this rule. Shipbuilding is one of the world's most dangerous occupations, (we would welcome the sight of journalists and politicians dashing backwards and forwards along a plank eighty feet or so above the keel for 8½ to 12 hours a day). The wages, in many branches, are well below those paid in much lighter industries of the South and very bad weather often reduces the pay card still further. We say *very bad* weather for in ordinary rain, snow and gale the work is carried on with wet feet and chilled flesh.

To add to the rigours of the work the shipbuilding employers impose what must be among the harshest conditions of employment. We have room to cite but one which was a cause of aggravation for years. When the hooter blows at seven-thirty in the morning the shipyard gates are slammed and locked. The two minutes grace allowed factory workers, is not allowed in the yards and the gates are not reopened until noon. No notice is (in most shipbuilding districts) taken of bad transport or fog, four-and-a-half hours pay must be lost.

Consider a multiplicity of these aggravations, add to them a vast collection of irritants added under cover of war and then seek the cause of shipyard strikes!

THE HOLY ALLIANCE

A strange collection of bureaucrats have assembled to condemn and bully the strikers. The union leaders, the Minister of Labour, the local mayors, Flag Officer Admiral Maxwell, Ellen Wilkinson and Harry Pollitt.

Of these, the most unseemly is the Communist crowd, Says the "News Chronicle" (6/10/42) under the heading "COMMUNISTS WORK".

"It is significant that, so far as can be asserted, every known Communist on the Tyne turned up and reported for work this morning. This is, I understand, what Mr. Harry Pollitt told the shop stewards at the secret meeting last night. He urged the stewards to get in contact personally with as many of the men as possible, and to try and make them carry on."

So Pollitt considers the duty of a shop steward is to go around recruiting blacklegs.

The local C.Pers. use the old boss's trick of telling the workers the strike is bound to fail "The Tyneside District Committee of the Communist Party has issued a statement to-day appealing to the men to return to work and accept the total time agreement:"

"Call off the strike' they say 'which is already doomed to failure'." (Daily Worker 7/10/42) The same issue spreads the usual fables of working class disunity as in this jingoist story. "Tyneside seamen are bitterly against the strike." Had it been the seamen on strike it would be the shipbuilders who condemned it (according to this imaginative type). The workers of Tyneside are too well acquainted with strikes to be taken in by that old-fashioned stuff.

The high-sounding "Engineering and Allied Trades Shop Stewards National Council" chips in with a circular to shop stewards asking them to condemn the strike, and declaring that only 50 per cent. of the workers in each enterprise are out. (an obviously untrue statement). In spite of its high-sounding name, this outfit can be ignored. It is NOT A TRADE UNION BODY. It has been disowned by the trade union movement. It is a Communist outfit with just another fancy label.

O, BASE INGRATITUDE!

Scrambling to join the anti-strike brigade, Miss Ellen Wilkinson joins the chorus.

"She hopes the strikers will lose. She said so 'courageously at a meeting in Newcastle'".

"Nothing could be so disastrous to the future of the strikers themselves" she declared 'as that

they should win this strike' " (Daily Express 12/10/42.)

What she really means, is that nothing could be so disastrous to the future of Ellen, the trade union bureaucracy and the government.

Now Ellen owes her political career to the shipyard workers of the Tyne. When she was rejected by other constituencies she sought a refuge in Jarrow the shipbuilding town. There she found a warm welcome among the unemployed platers and riveters who worked without pay for her and contributed their precious pennies to the Labour Party's funds. Returned in the election of 1935 she quickly soared to a post in the Government. Ellen no longer courts the electors of Jarrow. She no longer fears a General Election. It is seven years since the last election; it may be seven years to the next. She can reveal her true self. "She hopes the strike fails." Me-ow! A poor return to the shipyard workers of the Tyne to whom she owes all.

The chief lesson of the strike stands out clearly. In times of strife all political parties whether "Labour" or capitalist must increasingly ally themselves openly against the workers. Political parties are the expression of the middle-class who in their moral poverty steal the name of Labour. The workers' form of organisation is economic — the union. The Lefts support Leftism so long as it means Peoples Fronting, that is reviving the corpse of the Liberal Party. But in the Class War, they are indistinguishable from the most reactionary Conservative.

But real unionism does not mean the degenerate trade unionism of to-day. It can only mean Revolutionary Industrial Unionism, that is Syndicalism. The shipyard workers must treat with scorn the "advice" of admirals and ex-boiler-makers, (who left boiler-making many years ago to take up the less strenuous job of telling others to work hard.).

They must scorn, with the deep anger of their fathers, the blacklegging activities of the Communist Party of petty-middle-class job hunters and tired ex-working men, and look to their own strength. Forming the Shipbuilders' Section of the Metal Workers' Syndicate, they will become the power Ellen Wilkinson fears. Fraternal greetings to the shipyard workers of Tyneside!

JUST OUT

TOM BROWN

TRADE UNIONISM OR SYNDICALISM?

How often we hear the question "What's wrong with the Union?". In factory, ship or mine, in pub and club, by non-unionists and trades unionists, the question is raised. In this pamphlet Tom Brown, himself an industrial worker, shows up the weaknesses and inconsistencies of the present union organisation. He then goes on to contrast with it the syndicalist methods of workers' organisation. The pamphlet provides a much needed short introduction to syndicalism. 24 pages. 3d. (postage 1d.)

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The Development of Syndicalism

By GEORGE WOODCOCK

THE FOUNDERS OF ANARCHISM in rejecting the state, postulated a society which would be based on the satisfaction of the economic needs of man by means of voluntary functional organisations of the workers, acting in free co-operation. The necessity remained for the evolution of a method by which this could be attained and of a revolutionary tactic that could work through the workers' economic life under capitalism towards the overthrow of the state. This revolutionary method and tactics were to appear in syndicalism, which represents the great strategy of the social revolution, the manifestation in concrete, immediate terms of the theory of anarchism. The development of syndicalism is closely associated with that external authority and the realisation both that the economic is the most vital part of man's life and also that in their economic aspect the state and capitalism are most vulnerable.

Syndicalism might be described as an extension to the whole field of economic activity of the idea of producers' co-operation, by which men, instead of being organised downwards in political forms such as the state, would be organised upwards in economic or functional forms, such as the syndicate. The syndicate would be built up within the state society, and would become both the means of struggle for the change in society and the means by which after the revolutionary change in society, the workers would control and work by free consent the various industries within the community. As the basis of society would be economic (concerned with 'administering things' instead of 'governing men') these syndicates, with their local and national federations, would be the basic forms of voluntary social organisation.

Syndicalism favours a change in society, not through parliamentary means or a political revolution which would merely change one government for another, but by the direct economic action of the workers, expressed in such methods as the boycott, sabotage, ca'canny, the strike, above all the General Strike, and aiming at the true revolution and the abolition of property and the state.

Within the present system syndicalism differs from ordinary trade unionism in that it has no allegiance with reformist politics and is uncompromising in its attitude to capitalism. It does not seek, by means of compromise to get the best possible deal for the workers under capitalism. Syndicalists realise that the workers can gain no permanent amelioration of conditions under an exploiting system, and they are, therefore, entirely revolutionary in their aims. They maintain the day-to-day struggle for better conditions, but regard this primarily as a tactic for embarrassing their enemies and preparing the workers for the revolutionary struggle which is the only means of ending government and exploitation.

For this reason, the syndicalists in their organisations do not adopt the irrelevant functions of modern trades unions. They are not interested in friendly societies or coffin clubs. For them the liberation of the workers from the chains of property and the state is of paramount importance. Nor do they adopt the separatist tendencies of trades unions, which further the interests of one section of the workers' in an industry, one craft or function, and so erect barriers among the workers and, by their own

divisions, present a scattered front to their enemies. Syndicalists hold that the workers should be organised according to industry, not according to craft, that the workers in each type of industry should form a single syndicate and so present a single front of attack against their masters.

The syndicalists, realising the corrupting nature of power wherever it may arise, reject the centralist and authoritarian structure of the trade union. Instead, they adopt a federal organisation, in which local units are autonomous and carry out the actions without reference to any central executive authority. In this way greater elasticity and speed of action is gained and there is no chance of the betrayal of the workers by a governing bureaucracy. Affairs concerning the syndicate as a whole, are conducted by delegates, who are allowed only to voice the will of the workers who elected them, and there is a minimum of officials elected for short periods, after which they return to bench or field, and subject to recall if their actions dissatisfy the workers. In this way the rise of a bureaucracy divorced from the workers and their interests is avoided and the revolutionary nature of the syndicate preserved.

Just as in England, the anarchist theory appeared in the work of Godwin, several decades before the development of continental anarchism, so there arose in England the first manifestation of syndicalism, in the early revolutionary trades unions which grew under the influence of Robert Owen, the disciple of Godwin, in the early part of the nineteenth century. The most important of these unions was the Grand National Consolidated Trades Union, which I have described in an article in the June issue of War Commentary. The Grand National, like the syndicates, aimed at the overthrow of capitalism by the direct industrial action of the workers, and also adopted the theory of the General Strike, which was first expounded by William Benbow in 1832.

The English revolutionary unions collapsed through certain internal weaknesses, and large scale revolutionary unionism disappeared from Europe for some fifty years.

It appeared again when syndicalism grew out of the peculiar circumstances in which the French trade union movement arose during the 1880's. Throughout the early part of the nineteenth century, since the veto imposed by the 'revolutionary' Constituent Assembly in 1790, trade unions has been forbidden in France, because even the Jacobins could not bring themselves to admit the right of any free association to infringe on the prerogative of the divine state. In 1864, the Emperor Napoleon III, who had ingenious ideas of ruling by division, attempted to play the working class malcontents against the bourgeoisie by granting in principle the right of workmen to form trades unions. His edict remained a dead letter, and the legal persecution of the unions continued until, by a law passed in 1884, the Third Republic granted the right to form associations, *for the defence of economic interests only*

The unions allowed by this act arose from a working class already impregnated with the revolutionary virus of the French nineteenth century. Many of the founders had fought at the barricades of Commune and had maintained

the underground struggle during the bitter years of tyranny under the Thiers administration. Moreover, political currents in France at the end of the nineteenth century had such an extreme and stinking turgidity that men with any integrity were turning aside in distaste from politics. In such circumstances many of the men who found their way into the new syndicates were in reality more concerned with the social revolution than with the day-to-day demands of the workers. Prominent among these were many anarchists, such as Pouget, Pataud, Pelloutier, Delesalle and Yvetot who saw in the syndicates the kind of economic organisations which had already been foreshadowed by the anarchist theorists and by whose means the libertarian society could be established through the direct action of the workers.

The C.G.T. the French trade union organisation, was never completely revolutionary. It did, indeed, maintain for long an independence of parties which made it a good seedbed for revolutionary ideas, but at no time were more than half of its members imbued with revolutionary motives. The remainder were reformists who saw in unionism the apparatus for safeguarding class interests within existing society. Nevertheless, the revolutionary syndicalists were extremely influential within the movement. Pouget and Pataud were secretaries of the Confederation, and Pouget edited its newspaper, 'Le Voix du Peuple'. The anarchist carpenter Tortelier introduced the conception of the General Strike, and Yvetot and other anarchists were responsible for the assumption of an anti-militarist and anti-governmental attitude.

In the early years of the twentieth century the idea of syndicalism gained strength. In France the workers showed their growing awareness by a series of great strikes. Syndicalism as a mass movement spread to the other Latin countries, particularly Italy and Spain. In Spain the C.N.T. was founded in 1911, and, in spite of savage persecution, grew rapidly until by 1919 it was the largest revolutionary syndicalist organisation in the world with more than a million members.

In England the Syndicalist Education League was founded by Tom Mann and Guy Bowman, and for a period both before and after the 1914-18 war, syndicalism although it did not reach the proportions of a mass movement, was very influential among the militant workers, particularly in certain industrial areas such as the Clyde. And in 1905 was founded in America the Industrial Workers of the World, an organisation whose objects were closely similar to those of syndicalists. The anarchists who had carried out such a bitter campaign in the America of the nineteenth century, joined the I.W.W., and eventually came to guide its policy, with the result that it was, and has remained the only important revolutionary organisation in the U.S.A. and Canada.

The world war marked a hiatus in the development of the syndicalist movement but the arrival of peace in a Europe sick with discontent and misery gave a great impetus in the Latin countries to some South American countries and Scandinavia. In December 1922 an International Conference was held in Berlin, where all the important revolutionary syndicalist organisations were represented, with the exception of the Spanish C.N.T., then forced to work underground through the Rivera terror.

This conference made a declaration of the principles of Revolutionary Syndicalism (reproduced in the Nov. 1941 number of *War Commentary*), which closely resemble the ideas propagated by the anarchist theorists, and demonstrate the organic connection which exists between

the two doctrines and which led naturally to their fusion in the synthesis of Anarcho-syndicalism.

These principles, which included a repudiation of the fallacious theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat are not merely a statement of belief. They represent also the reaction of the syndicalist movement against Bolshevist leaders, recognising the influence of syndicalism in the Latin countries and America, had attempted to draw the movement into the ambit of the Third International. Negotiations were actually started, for the syndicalists still believed the October revolution to be a real social revolution, but the visits of delegations to Russia brought about a realisation of the true nature of Bolshevism, and as Bakunin in the previous century had found himself impelled to oppose Marxist Communism, so were the international syndicalists obliged to denounce its more grandiose manifestation in the twentieth century.

The Berlin conference marked the climax of the international syndicalist movement. The Marxists had an advantage by mere fact of the existence in Russia of a state that paid lip service to workers' control, and were able to divert many of the militant workers from syndicalism, with the consequence that, except in Spain where the C.N.T. eventually reached a membership of 2½ millions, the syndicalist bodies, although large, remained minority bodies.

In consequence, when totalitarianism spread over Europe, the syndicalists were prevented from decisive and successful action by the fact that the majority of the workers followed either communists or parliamentary social democrats, both of whom retreated and betrayed their supporters when the ruling class attacked. In Italy, for instance, the Unione Sindicale Italiana, in co-operation with the Unione Anarchista Italiana, declared a General Strike in 1922 to avert the impending threat of Fascism, but in this they were opposed by the other working class organisations and the strike failed because of its fragmentary nature.

But before the twilight of the total state settled over the continent, anarcho-syndicalism had in one country, opportunity of proving itself in practice. That country was Spain, where the working class revolution which broke out to combat Franco's reactionary assault resulted in a period of workers' control in industry and agriculture, during which the practice of syndicalism proved itself more efficient in the administration of industrial affairs than any of the systems that preceded it. The revolution and the system of workers' control were eventually destroyed, not by Franco but by the republican government and its jackals, the Communists, but not before the syndicalists of Spain had proved decisively that the methods of free organisation advocated by syndicalists and anarchists will actually work more easily than those of government parties and will cause an immediate increase in industrial efficiency and in the welfare of the workers.

Syndicalism may appear much weaker to-day than it was twenty years ago, but its eclipse will be temporary. The present world crisis has shown the failure of every other social doctrine that has promised to lead the workers to the millennium of freedom, and when the needs of the people are once again asserted in a revolutionary period, anarcho-syndicalism will stand as the one social method by which the free, classless society can be attained, and the evils of government be abolished for ever.

THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT AND THE

THE EXTREME URGENCY OF THE situation makes it imperative that revolutionaries should examine every working-class organisation in an attempt to discover the remedy to the social ills that beset us, and we shall find that there is still a certain amount of faith, diminishing it is true, in the power of the co-operative movement to assist in our struggle. The ultimate ideal of the co-ops. is the co-operative commonwealth in which capitalism shall no longer exist and where each works for the benefit of all, an ideal which is vaguely formulated but which we may take as being similar to that of anarchists. Much hard work and sincere belief in this principle has gone into the building of the movement, but this is no guarantee of its ultimate success through this method, in fact I think that it is certainly a vain hope to expect in the future even partial relief from the co-ops.

THE CONSTRUCTIVE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CO-OP. MOVEMENT.

Since the days of the Rochdale pioneers, and in the face of great opposition, the workers have built up a huge organisation for the purpose of producing and distributing goods. Local societies own and control farms, dairies, market gardens, factories producing all sorts of goods, cinemas and chains of shops for the sale of their products. These societies are autonomous, but are linked into the Co-operative Union on federal lines, while the Co-operative Wholesale Society exists for the undertaking of large scale production that cannot be managed by local societies. In addition to the production of goods, local societies and their subsidiaries run educational courses, entertainments such as dramatic and musical groups, social clubs for men, women and the youth, and other diverse activities. In the North the influence of the Co-op is much greater than the south, and it is possible to live a life fed, clothed and housed entirely by the local society, and you could also go to the Co-op. cinema for your weekly entertainment ration.

In addition to its important role in everyday life, the Co-op. of the North has also played its part in times of strife. Local societies have extended to striking workers credit for food, for instance to the miners of Durham, and the first concern of the workers on returning to the job has been to pay back this debt as soon as possible by means of weekly contributions.

Thus we can see that the Co-ops. demonstrate what anarchists have maintained, namely the constructive ability of the workers and the practicability of mutual aid as a social factor, although in many cases the Co-ops. may have exploited these in a way which we would not approve.

BUT WHERE DOES THIS GET US?

The history of the Co-ops., like that of the Labour Party and Trade Unions, is bound up with the growth of industry and modern capitalism, and since it has accepted the same outlook as its fellows, the gradualist outlook, it has become not the uncompromising opponent of capitalism but its fellow-competitor in the general market. This entails all the things which we object to in capitalist society; the exploitation of wage labour, production for profit and not for use value, the principle of insurance, landlordism on the part of the societies and subsequent rents, and the worst of all—usury. We can see in this country that Co-op.

managements can provoke strikes—for instance in a London factory by the introduction of non-union labour, and they can also introduce the worst form of wage slavery, that is the piece rate and bonus system. The conditions on the Ceylon tea plantations created a much hushed-up scandal, and demonstrate that fundamentally the Co-ops. are built upon the same foundation as capitalist enterprises. This provides an interesting parallel with some of the cocoa firms which in this country build ideal factories for their workers and give them every consideration and then form a buying ring to force the price of the raw material down, thus causing misery and suffering to the African growers.

With regard to the Co-operative Insurance Society we can find examples of other societies which make no profit and in which surpluses are distributed to the members, and we do not hesitate to classify

SOCIAL REVOLUTION

these as capitalist because there are no owners in the strict sense of the word. The other activities of the Co-ops, too, are no less bourgeois or un-ethical because it is members of the working class who reap the benefit in the form of a dividend.

We can see that since Co-operativism is a capitalist institution, although inaugurated and built by the working class, it is dependant upon that system of society which "free" capitalism requires, which is typified by parliamentary, bourgeois democracy. Parliament is necessary to this form of capitalism as a debating chamber to settle their main differences and is necessary for the co-ops. also for the same reason. The holding of large stocks of money and property compels a highly legal position in order to defend them, and this entails a voice in the legislation which affects them, and thus the support of that governmental form which gives a voice to all shades of capitalist opinion. This exposes the great weakness of the co-operatives, since their legal position makes them extremely vulnerable to any kind of revolutionary movement in either the economic or political fields, and they are therefore forced into the role of defenders of the status quo in peace and war, although perhaps against the wishes of great numbers of their members. Since we realise that the old order is in any case doomed, whatever the outcome of the war, we must look to the various likely eventualities and the position of co-operativism in each case.

Let us first consider the possibilities of British defeat, with a German occupation of the country. It would lead to the break-up of all workers' organisations, as we can see so clearly in Occupied Europe and Germany itself. Even if Britain remained autonomous and escaped the Gestapo the dispossessed imperialists would be forced by their worsened economic situation and by their psychological make-up (as rulers over "ignorant" natives) to introduce the full-blown fascist system here, and the co-ops. would be one of their chiefest enemies unless they willingly submitted to integration with the state-controlled economic machine, which would have the same effect of eliminating them from independent existence. The

realisation of this fact undoubtedly has a large influence on the attitude of the co-ops. to the war, without considering such things as the rights of small nations or the Atlantic Charter.

On the other hand, if Britain is on the victorious side after the war, what will be the result? It is well to mention here two documents which give away quite a lot about the so-called unity of the United Nations. Stalin's letter cannot, surely, be put down to an irresponsible member of the Russian public, and is clearly an indication of Russian dissatisfaction with British co-operation. "Life's" open letter to the English people commented upon in some of the papers of 10th October, is a confirmation from the horse's mouth that some Americans see through the bluster of the ruling class of this country and their phrases about freedom and democracy. But it certainly does not mean to say that the Yanks are any better in this respect! A victory of the United Nations could only mean a scramble for the spoils, as happened last time, and since Britain is the declining power and America the ascending power, this country is bound to get the dirty end of the stick. This would result in a lowering of the power of British capital and thus the nationalisation of large sections or all of the economic system, which is a polite way of saying that a greater or less degree of active Fascism would ensue. Again, for the co-ops. there are two alternatives, either their acquiescence in this process or their destruction by the State, and again the same resulting loss of their independant existence.

To generalise, therefore, we are bound for totalitarianism so long as capitalism lasts, which must result either in the physical destruction of the co-ops. or of their being taken over by the State machinery.

THE REVOLUTION AND THE CO-OPS.

So far as anarchists are concerned a revolution which does not destroy the State machine is an aborted revolution, and whatever political grouping, calling itself the vanguard of the proletariat, rides to state power on the crest of the wave, the ensuing society can only resolve itself into a new tyranny and new social groupings which will have the same functions as the present ruling class. A totalitarian, one-party state can only result from a revolution on the

STARVING COUNTRY EXPORTS GRAIN

"Mr. Allan Lloyd, Commerce Secretary, told the Council of State to-day, that during the period September 1939, to June, 1942, 827,000 tons of rice, 430,000 tons of wheat flour, and 278,000 tons of other grains and pulses had been exported from India to the United Kingdom and a number of other countries."

Manchester Guardian 26/9/42.

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NOVEMBER 22ND.—*The Humanitarianism*

of Jesus (Rev. Moreton Stanley).

lines of the C.P., the Trotskyists, or the I.L.P., and so far as the co-ops. are concerned this will be just as bad as the advent of Fascism since revolutionary socialism demands a planned and state controlled economic system which would leave next to no liberty for independant organisations. The totalitarian society of either the right or left is the enemy of all democratic, bourgeois institutions which it cannot use for its own purposes, and that includes the co-ops. too.

The successful social revolution, the revolution of the workers themselves, the revolution that destroys all organs of suppression and institutes the free, classless society, in short the anarchist revolution, would destroy the need for the present day co-ops., since their true nature is reformist and is to gain a little more of the profits of capitalist exploitation for a section of the workers. It is quite true that within a free society there will be a need for a distributive organisation, and this may in some respects resemble the present day co-ops., but we cannot believe that an organisation that is capitalistic by nature can fulfil this need. We have the example of the co-ops as an organisation built by working-class efforts, but doomed to eventual failure through its non-revolutionary and bourgeois outlook. If the workers put as much energy and hard work into the building of revolutionary syndicates the future of the free society will be assured.

JACK WADE.

TWO IMPORTANT EVENTS

A SOCIAL & DANCE will be held at the National Trade Union Club, Great Newport Street, W.1., (next to Leicester Square Underground Stn.) on Friday, October, 23rd. at 7—10.30. Tickets (including refreshments) 1/6.

ALSO

A SOCIAL & DANCE will be held at Youth House, 250, Camden Road, London, N. on Saturday, November 7th; 7—10.30. (Nearest Station Camden Town Underground) and Trolley Buses pass the door. Tickets (including refreshments) 1/6. For both events tickets must be obtained in advance because of the limited accommodation.

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Details in next issue of War Commentary

OUR DEMOCRATIC ORDER

CAN'T MR. AMERY find a job for Miss Pamela Hinkson? In the September issue of *Good Housekeeping* she shows a deep understanding of Indian affairs. Says the lady:

"In the Chamber of Princes at New Delhi, where the rulers of the Indian States meet during the cold weather, there is a device which, by its necessity, indicates the vast size of the continent called India and the variations of its climate. A small electric radiator, easily regulated, in each seat, enables every Prince to sit in the temperature which pleases him. For some come from the south where there is no cold weather, and these would find Delhi's spring chilly. And some come from northern states where at that season snow covers the hills. Is there a symbol in that necessity, of the problem of framing a scheme of self-government to satisfy all India, a country of such varied climates, races, ideals and needs?"

Now I am sure Mr. Churchill never thought of it. Think of what will happen if we quit India: clearly a self government will never be able to give every Indian a seat with the right temperature and civil war is bound to break out.

THERE IS A QUESTION which worries M.P.s, and Lords alike. A question which may provoke a debate in the House, a question on which the Government was beaten in the House of Lords, a question of such vital importance that at least sixty M.P.'s will give the War Office no peace till it is settled. "Why should an officer in the army travel first class while an officer in the Home Guard travels third?" M.P.'s and Lords would never think of asking themselves or the Government if first and third classes shouldn't be abolished in this war for democracy; if it is fair that workers should stand in corridors when first-class carriages stand empty and locked. But the thought of the humiliation undergone by an H.G. officer travelling third class makes their blood boil.

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THE AMERICAN MAGAZINE *Life* (7/8/42) makes the following candid comments about the bill presented to Congress on June 17th by the Chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee and authorising the eventual construction of a Five Ocean Navy totaling 1,900,000 tons of warship, which will be piled on top of the vast Two Ocean Navy now being built "A Navy like that means, in simple words, that the U.S. will be powerful enough practically to run the world for decades to come."

We hope that after reading this Lord Vansittart and his friends will renew their efforts to make sure that when this war is over Germany will not be able to raise her ugly head again and try to dominate the world!

IT HAS SUDDENLY occurred to the American War Production Board that it was not worthwhile to go on digging gold from gold mines in order to bury it again in the Kentucky mountains. But gold will still be accepted in payment for goods not covered by the lend-and-lease Act, South Africa, Canada, Russia will go on digging out gold, transporting it across the oceans to increase American gold reserve of over £5,000,000,000. The only purpose seems to give American economists headaches, as they have not found a use for it yet.

SEVERAL READERS, have been surprised by the figure of 31 bathrooms for 1,000 people which I gave in the last issue. Yet Great Britain comes only second to America which has 35. According to the *Evening Standard*, from which the figures are quoted the number of bathrooms available for every 1,000 people are: in Germany 26; Switzerland, Holland, Denmark 20; Belgium 18; France 14; Japan 12; Czechoslovakia 10; Norway 8; Italy and Hungary 6; Poland, Spain Portugal 4; Rumania 2; Yugoslavia 1; and in Russia there is only one bathroom to every 10,000 people. but there are many public baths in Russia which have not been included in the statistics.

Post-war planners who seem to worry merely about better planned kitchens would do well to keep these figures in mind.

—000—

A CORRESPONDENT suggests that War Commentary should pay a tribute to Lord Woolton. He points out that while Sir Archibald Sinclair has not been known to fly over Germany or Mr. W. Churchill to take part in Commando raids, Lord Woolton has been regularly eating pies in British Restaurants. And he says, I know what that means —I had some myself.

M.L.B.

DOCTORS AGAINST WOMEN FIRE-WATCHERS.

"Doctors in Sheffield are supporting the protest against the compulsory enrolment of women as fire-watchers.

A doctor who served throughout the last war said yesterday: 'We do not want a race of children growing up from fire-shocked mothers who will produce fire-complex and bomb-complex babies. I saw enough of it in the last war.'

Forms protesting against the scheme are being circulated in Sheffield works. The organiser said yesterday that he had been astonished by the demand for forms, and he believed that the total of signatures would be nearer 100,000 than the 10,000 he had in mind when the protest was started."

Manchester Guardian 3/10/42

BIRCH AND CHRISTIANITY.

"Christianity and beatings should go together," said Mrs. Lewis Richards, daughter of the late Mr. Justice W. W. Grantham, at the Workers' Conference of the Primrose League at Caxton Hall, London, yesterday.

She said she believed the birch should be given to 'mean, despicable boys.' If they could be given Christianity as well we would have a finer race."

Daily Mirror 1/10/42

C.P. GOOD BOYS.

"The Southern Railway motor drivers who struck on Monday morning against the alleged wrongful dismissal of one of their number returned to work yesterday afternoon, the company having agreed to re-open the case.

A leaflet issued by the Battersea Communist Party, and widely distributed, stated that although the men had a case, and the company was being provocative, strike action was not justified. This position was being explained at a meeting, which was abandoned earlier than was intended so that the men could go to their own meeting and decide their future course of action. It was at this meeting that the decision to call off the strike was taken."

Daily Worker 7/10/42

CAPITALISM & THE "DAILY EXPRESS."

"Who owns the *Daily Express*, asks the leader writer of that paper. It concludes that the ordinary shareholders control it, but they do not get the earnings. These are paid to the Government. The Government has taken £565,000 and the Ordinary shareholders get £30,000 of the earnings for 1942. What is the chief end of capitalism, asks the Editor. To sustain the Government and pay for the war.

Probably shortage of space compelled the Editor to cut short his answer at that point. May we complete it? Here it is. The London Express Newspapers, Ltd., have issued 409,000 Ordinary shares of £1 each and 816,000 "A" shares of £1 each. Lord Beaverbrook and Control Nominees, Ltd. (whoever they are) hold 290,717 of the former and 581,424 of the latter shares. This, too, is capitalism, m' lud."

Tribune 2/10/42

HAPPY BED FELLOWS.

"Mr. Churchill will probably advise the Conservative electors in the Clayton Division of Manchester to vote for the Socialist candidate. In effect he will only be telling them to vote for the Government, for the Socialist candidate, Alderman H. Thorneycroft, is the Government candidate. If Mr. Churchill's advice is sent, it will be in the form of a joint message signed by himself, Mr. Attlee and the two Liberal leaders, and will be addressed to all the electors in the division. The local Conservative leaders have already advised their followers to give their votes and support to Alderman Thorneycroft, who is pledged to support the Prime Minister and the Government in the prosecution of the war.

This is the first time Conservatives have been officially appealed to by their leaders to support a Socialist candidate."

Evening Standard 6/10/42

Through

SENTENCE ON MOTHER.

"Frederick Henry House, aged 22, described as of Albert Road, North Woolwich, admitted at East Ham to-day that he had been a deserter from the Army for two years, and had been using a dead man's identity card.

His mother, Mrs. Gertrude Ellen House, aged 45, of the same address, was charged with assisting her son to conceal himself, and both were accused of making a false statement to obtain a food ration book.

House was fined £4 and remanded to await an escort. His mother was fined 50s. for the false statement, and bound over for 12 months for assisting her son to conceal himself."

Evening Standard 6/10/42

GAOL SENTENCE ON WIFE.

"Alice Mary Cater (35), of Conewood Street, Highbury, was sentenced to a month's imprisonment at the North London Police Court yesterday for assisting her husband, knowing that he was a deserter from the army."

Reynolds News 4/10/42

What is one to think of a legal system that punishes a wife for helping her husband (the marriage service authorized by the State requires her to swear to succour and obey him), and sends her to gaol? And what can one think of a magistrate who sends her to prison, when he himself, in all probability, would have despised her if she had informed on her husband? The law is a dirty business.

Incidentally, it is not so long ago that publicists and the press were decrying in righteous indignation the practice of the Nazis and the Russians in requiring members of a family to spy on and denounce one another. It seems that in this country too, now a woman's relationship with her husband is to be regarded as secondary to her duties to the law and the State.

When in Glasgow, visit the

ANARCHIST BOOKSHOP

127, George Street,

War Commentary and all
Freedom Press and Anarchist
Federation pamphlets in stock.

ARMY, NOT FUSSY.

"Recording a verdict of 'Death from natural causes,' the West Denbighshire coroner yesterday expressed surprise that a soldier graded A1 should have died from long-standing tuberculosis.

The soldier, Cyril Mander, of the Pioneer Corps, a native of London, collapsed and died on a shooting range at a North Wales camp.

A doctor who made a post-mortem examination said that had Mander's condition been diagnosed he would not have been allowed to walk or march. He should have been a bed patient in hospital.

A detailed examination could not have failed to show that the man's lungs were badly affected by tuberculosis of long standing." *News Chronicle* 10/10/42

"The fact of having only one eye does not, in itself, render a man unfit for service."—Mr. Ernest Bevin, Labour Minister, in a written reply."

Evening Standard 9/10/42

The Press

STALINIST DEMOCRACY.

"Stalin has given up his post of People's Commissar for Defence and Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army to his brilliant military adviser, Marshal Boris Shaposhnikov.

At the same time he has named Shaposhnikov, who has been Chief of the Russian General Staff since 1941, Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force and a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party."

Daily Mirror 5/10/42

THE "DAILY MIRROR" ON GERMAN PLANS.

From the *Daily Mirror* (24/9/42) correspondence column:

"Mrs. Johns, of Dorking, Surrey, writes:—

I try to save a little each week, and put it in the P.O. Savings Bank. But I have been told not to put any more money in, because the Germans, if they came over here, would take every penny and we should get nothing back. Is this true?

It is NOT true. And your duty is to go to the police and give them the name and address of the person (the Fifth Columnist) who made the statement."

How is the *Daily Mirror* informed about Germany's plans?

BUREAUCRACY GONE MAD.

"A parent who used a twentieth of a gallon of petrol to drive a hysterical child out of the city, to calm her during an Alert, was summoned at Bath to-day.

The child, a girl of 12, had been through 30 bad raids in another West Country town, and had seen her grandfather die during a raid.

The chairman of the bench said the case was 'quite trivial,' and another magistrate called it 'bureaucracy gone mad.'

The child's father, Reginald S. Bryant, of Sidney Buildings, Bath, was fined 10s. for using motor fuel for a purpose other than that to which his ration application related."

Evening Standard 29/10/42

WASTE AND MORE WASTE.

"A report showing that nearly 90 tons of food in the Manchester markets was condemned as unfit for human consumption in the four weeks ending August 27 will be presented to the City Council to-day.

It included 37½ tons of meat, 31¾ tons of fish, 16¾ tons of vegetables, 1¼ tons of fruit, 126 game birds, 1,803 poultry, 739 rabbits and 445 eggs."

News Chronicle 7/10/42

While Lord Woolton continues to warn the British worker of further cuts in his meagre rations, good food is allowed to go bad. Is there anything more insane than this particular example of the "efficiency of our food distribution schemes?"

PARADE OR PLOUGHING?

"Very careful consideration is given before any prosecution is started against a member of the Home Guard," was a War Office statement to me to-day following the case at Melksham (Wilts) yesterday, when a farm labourer was sent to prison for a month for not attending parades.

The farmer who employed the man sent to gaol yesterday said: 'He has not been to drill with the Home Guard because we have so much work to do that I cannot do without him. We are called on by the Government to sow 80 acres of corn, and he should be ploughing to-day.'"

Evening Standard 6/10/42



"We should never forget that our Empire was won by the sword, That it has been preserved safe by the sword through generations, and in the last resort in the future it could only be safeguarded by the sword" (Field-Marshal Viscount Gort, V.C., 27th July 1939)

THERE ARE VERY FEW people nowadays who would deny to themselves or others the right to regulate the number of their offspring by methods of Birth Control. Yet the governments of the world fought most savagely, and by every kind of misrepresentation, suppression and persecution to prevent the spread of information on the subject, or the setting up of Birth Control Clinics. Ida Craddock in America was sentenced to five years imprisonment for her pioneer work in this field; to avoid it she committed suicide.

As always the State attempts to interfere with the right of individuals to make decisions regarding the affairs even of their most private lives. Yet while other political groups displayed indifference, the Anarchists alone gave wholehearted support to the work of the pioneers, and Emma Goldman went to prison on this issue.

If family limitation by Birth Control methods is accepted, it is illogical to object to voluntary abortion. Women are *supposed* to have equal rights with men (after all, they have the vote!), yet the laws against "criminal" abortion deny a woman the right to terminate an unwanted pregnancy.

Abortion is illegal in all "civilized" states. Exception is made in cases where competent medical opinion declares that it would be detrimental to the health of the mother to continue the pregnancy. In such cases *therapeutic* abortion is tolerated; but only in countries where the influence of the Roman Catholic Church is small. In Ireland, for example, rather than do an abortion they will allow both mother and child to die. Such is their respect for the immortal soul! Needless to say the provision of facilities for therapeutic abortion is an advantage mainly felt by the wealthier classes.

In spite of the penalties, however, abortion is recognized to be a very widespread practice. It is now fairly well established that the decline in the birth rate in all industrialized countries during the last fifty years has come about because the rearing of a large family places an intolerable strain on the economic position of most workers. (For a discussion on this point, see Louis Ginsburg: "*Parenthood and Poverty: the Population Problem of Democracy.*" 1939. Fabian Research Series, No. 43). The same economic problem has made inevitable an increase in the number of abortions. In France in 1936 it is stated that there were over a million and a half illegal abortions which

Abortion

eventually came to the knowledge of the police. But of course the ones which appear in the records are those in which some complicating factor has occurred which makes the women apply to a doctor or hospital for treatment. In the absence of such complications, there seems no reason why an abortion should ever be officially recorded. (According to one authority, there are now in France as many abortions as births). This fact should be borne in mind whenever statistics about abortions are considered. In Switzerland (population, four and a half million) there were in 1935 over 100,000 known abortions, while in Geneva alone there were over 5,000. This means that one in every fifteen women in that year had an abortion requiring some form of medical treatment. One authority states that in England, a figure of 100,000 per annum would be a very conservative estimate. Illegality leads to a concealment which defies accurate measurement of the extent of a practice, but it is clear that it is very widespread indeed.

Governments have always been concerned to ensure that there shall always be a reserve of labour and cannon fodder. They objected to Birth Control and still obstruct the rational interruption of undesired pregnancies, because from their point of view it is not satisfactory that women should be able to regulate their fertility themselves. It is not surprising therefore that when the falling birth rate was shown to imply far reaching population problems, abortion and Birth Control should be attacked once more with renewed vigour. In Germany, under the Weimar Republic the abortion rate rose steeply; there were 240,000 in 1911, 500,000 in 1923, 875,000 in 1924, and 1,000,000 in 1927. The Nazis therefore tightened up the anti-Abortion laws, and have recently suggested prohibiting the sale of contraceptives. Similar methods were enforced in Italy. In France further restrictions were placed on Birth Control propaganda, though not on the sale of actual appliances. (These were *never* allowed to be advertized as contraceptives, however, but only as preventives against venereal or other diseases). The result was an increase in the number of abortions. Under Petain, however, it is said that the sale of contraceptives is now illegal, owing to the Catholic leanings of the New France.

and the State by JOHN HEWETSON

The effect of this anti-Abortion legislation has been wholly destructive. Abortion can be very dangerous and produce a fatal end-result, or it can be almost free from risk. It all depends on when and how it is performed. The effect of Governmental prohibition is to ensure that the worst and most dangerous conditions shall obtain in the majority of cases. Thus operations conducted in hospitals under aseptic precautions and with immediate facilities for dealing with such catastrophies as hæmorrhage—that is, under almost ideal conditions, are completely ruled out. As Dr. Leunbach remarked at the Congress for Sexual Reform in London in 1929, "The law sets a heavy penalty on the procurement of abortion and therefore the doctors and the public hospitals refuse to give their support. As a consequence the women try to help themselves." Hence the accidents and the appalling nature of some abortions carried out by unskilled hands.

Inhumanity of the Law

Nevertheless the practice is so widespread that the law is helpless to carry out its own provisions. The women themselves are virtually immune, while the severest blows fall on those who are best qualified to carry out the operation efficiently and safely, namely the doctors and midwives. The maximum of publicity is given to such cases as the recent one in which a doctor was sentenced to five years penal servitude. They form a kind of "Moscow Trials" to terrorize the medical profession in particular, and in general to impress on the public the awful consequences of abortion and so produce a deterrent effect. Such methods have no success however; all they do is to secure that any girl who has determined to cut short an unwanted pregnancy shall suffer the greatest possible amount of terror, isolation, and mental anguish. Furthermore she is compelled to rely on unskilled advice as doctors are afraid to assist her, as well as being wholly inexperienced in, and so incompetent to deal with, this kind of case. The position is the more illogical and inhuman since most experts who have experienced this problem—gynæcologists and Birth Control workers for instance—are agreed that once a woman has made up her mind to terminate a pregnancy, she will do so whatever difficulties are placed in her way, even to the point of killing herself in what may be an unsuccessful attempt. The enormous number of abortions which occur every year in spite of the law lend

support to this view. Yet the law ensures that she cannot get skilled or responsible assistance and advice; hence the horrible and amateurish manipulations with hat pins and meat skewers, the fatalities from overdoses of supposedly abortifacient drugs, to say nothing of the torture and mental anguish.

Abortion in the Soviet Union

But another most serious source of danger which arises from the illegal status of abortion, has been demonstrated by the results obtained in Soviet Russia. By a decree of 1920, abortion was made legal in principle, while its performance by unskilled persons was declared illegal and subject to considerable penalties. Now, in the times when the operation was still illegal, many women would put off taking steps to terminate the pregnancy until the later months, thereby considerably increasing the danger of complications. Thus in 1912, 25 per cent of all abortions were performed *after the third month*. But when it became legal less than 0.5 per cent were performed after the third month. It is clear therefore that the illegality of the operation tends to defer its performance until a dangerously late stage in the pregnancy.

In spite of widespread belief in the progressive nature of Stalin's regime, this original legislation, which served to provide most valuable material to those interested in the practical aspects of the abortion problem, has now been entirely repealed. The legalization of abortion is rightly regarded by progressive opinion all over the world as an essential foundation for the emancipation of women. Semashko, the People's Commissar for Health, himself used to play leading rôles in films which showed the ghastly results of illegal abortion and public ignorance. Abortoriums, or special hospitals, provided free operations for abortion. But in Russia to-day abortion is illegal, and attempts to educate the public in this matter would meet with the most rigorous suppression. In 1937, Professor Alexandrov assured visiting British gynæcologists that "nowadays no such hospitals (Abortoriums) existed, for he and every other scientific adviser to the Union had very fiercely denounced such methods, which, *if allowed to continue, would unquestionably undermine the fabric of the State.*" He added that "to-day, he was glad to say, the same barriers existed to the performance of abortion in Moscow and throughout Russia as in all civilized countries."

The Bourne Case

The Governments of the world are faced with a future which makes increased militarization a necessary condition of survival for their class interests. With population problems which not even the Nazis have been able to go any way in solving, it is hardly likely that there will be any amelioration of the abortion legislation. As we have seen the trend has been in the contrary direction. An opportunity occurred a few years ago for making the inhumanities of the law apparent to all, but unfortunately the result was merely to clarify a minor point, of interest mainly to the medical profession. Dr. Aleck Bourne, a well known gynaecologist, openly and in a public hospital performed an abortion on a girl of fourteen who had been the victim of a mass rape at the hands of a number of guardsmen. On simple humanitarian grounds an abortion was clearly essential. At the trial, the defence averred, however, that the abortion was justifiable on the grounds that it would have been a terrible nervous strain on the girl to allow the pregnancy to continue. Thus the case was brought within the existing provisions of the law, whereby abortion is permissible if the pregnancy would damage the health of the mother. Dr. Bourne was acquitted and the law remained unchanged, and virtually unchallenged, although the limits of the term "damage to the mother's health" had been slightly extended.

Privileged Rich

It should be pointed out that the dangers and difficulties of abortion are avoided to a large extent by the rich. They can usually have an operation performed through this legal loophole of possible damage to mental health (I do not mean however to suggest that this is fictitious; the legal position is enough to produce thoroughly bad psychological effects on almost any girl who subscribes to bourgeois codes of morals, and yet is unlucky enough to be burdened with an extra-marital pregnancy). Dr. Leunbach declared at the Sexual Reform Congress that "When the doctors maintain that they will have nothing to do with the termination of pregnancy on social grounds, this must be taken to mean that poverty is *not* regarded as an adequate indication, while wealth, on the other hand *is*."

The position is summed up in the following clause in a petition presented to the Danish Government early in 1929 by a number of working women's organizations in Denmark.

"The old penal law, in spite of its severity, has not been able to prevent numberless cases of intentional abortion. The penalties have simply meant that the law on this matter has struck at women of the poorer classes, for where sufficient means are available there will always be methods of evasion such as a trip abroad, etc. It has, on the other hand, brought death or severe lifelong suffering to many less fortunately situated women by forcing them to resort to dangerous methods or seek inexperienced help. The numerous actions for infanticide must also be regarded as a consequence of this defect in the law."

Women clearly disregard the law in this matter while a few doctors and midwives are made to play the part of scapegoats. The position is made all the more absurd by the fact that, in this country, the law is compelled to recognize its inability to cope with the problem. It lays down, for example, that it would be unthinkable for a doctor to report a case of attempted abortion to the authorities. Mr. Justice Hawkins in 1896 declared that "to his mind, a thing like that would be a monstrous cruelty."

The economic conditions which obtain today make an extra child an intolerable burden to many working class parents who have two or three children already. A further addition to the family would depress even more the low standard of living and malnutrition of the other members. Is it surprising in such circumstances that women resort to abortion, in spite of all the horrors and dangers which the legal position has linked it with? In my opinion it would be simply inhuman to go on with a pregnancy in such cases.

In the present economic conditions, the legalization of abortion, and the provision of free facilities for its proper performance, are a simple necessity, though it is extremely unlikely that such a step will in fact be taken by any modern government. But beyond such palliative treatment there lies the fundamental problem of poverty itself. It is revolting that the material conditions of such huge sections of the world's population are so bad that an additional child becomes terribly undesirable and disastrous. It is intolerable that women should be compelled to limit their families from economic considerations merely or, indeed, from any other arbitrary consideration. Made more revolting by the obscurantism inseparable from governments, the fundamental problem of abortion will be solved only by the abolition of poverty, and the attainment of individual freedom, by the overthrow of the class system itself.

OUR POLICY

in brief

WE ARE AGAINST the war because we are opposed to the governments now at war with each other; because the war is caused by conflicting commercial interests and imperial desires; and because the war is not waged in the interests of the common people anywhere, and acts as an obstacle in the way of social transformation by the nationalist and subservient ideas it brings into being.

While war is an obstacle to social transformation, however, the fact that the governments of the world are weakened in their hold over their subjects, makes war the opportunity for the working class, but only if they are not themselves weakened by the patriotic delusions brought forward. Privations and military setbacks, therefore, are only aids to revolution when they destroy patriotic delusions; they can, however, build a feeling of national unity, out of the fear of their perpetuation. Thus the intensified air raids in Britain did not lead to revolution or even to a revolutionary feeling; and the other week, at the Nazi conference, Hitler's popularity was shown to be on the wane even amongst his own followers, by the insipid reception he received—but General Rommel received the ovation of the patriots. It is seen therefore that even the sufferings of war do not necessarily weaken governments, and war is primarily an obstacle to social revolution.

Social revolutions arise out of war only when there is a strong sense of class-consciousness as well as the current war-weariness; and that sense is only aroused out of industrial struggle. Revolutions do not appear suddenly, "spring from the soil fully armed," but are the culmination of a long series of circumstances. The social revolutions we have seen in the past decades have all been in countries where long drawn out struggles have taken place between the rulers and the ruled.

The sense of war-weariness at the end of the last war would have been sufficient to have lasted for the second world war, especially when it is remembered how much class consciousness and revolutionary feeling there was in the world between 1919 and 1926. That it has not done so is primarily the fault of the Labour and Communist parties; in each country these parties have appeared to do the work of the ruling class. First the social-democratic

leaders formed the Cabinets of the ruling class, and did their best to persuade the masses that their interests were identical with the "progressive capitalists." Then, when the Labour leaders were sufficiently discredited, the Communist leaders began, first with the "Popular Front" patriotic ideology; they dropped this at the beginning of the war while the Labour leaders enjoyed an Indian summer of popularity as the recruiting sergeants of the ruling class; now, when the Labour leaders are again discredited, out comes the Communist Party again as the pet Peke of the bosses.

Of course, these may not be the "reasons" of those parties, but it is certainly the reason of the ruling class for using them in that way. The reasons they advance are: the Labour leaders say we must take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the war. Certainly. But not by surrendering the chance of pursuing a more vigilant struggle, but by increasing that struggle. The pretexts advanced by the Labour leaders in the "democratic" countries have a very strong family resemblance to those advanced by their collaborationist colleagues in the Fascist countries: "keeping in" with the ruling faction.

They say Fascism must be fought, to justify their support of the countries which happen to be at war with the Fascist countries, in spite of the fact that not a few of the "United Nations" have been equally dictatorships, and will not alter when they return home. But our very firm belief is that this is only a propaganda gesture; whether the opponents of the Allies were Fascist or not the democrats would still support the Government, perhaps with a fresh excuse. If they believed in fighting Fascism we would expect to see them aiding the internal struggle against Fascism. In spite of broadcasts telling the slaves of Hitler that they were doomed from birth, however, this is not the case.

In Norway and Holland we read of the Nazis taking over the trade unions and using them as their own Labour Front. This is not the fault of the trade union leaders now in London, it may be argued. We disagree. The very fact of the structure of these trade unions, and the fact of their parliamentary dependence, made it possible for the Nazis to take them over. If the unions had been built as revolutionary bodies they could not have been taken over. The Spanish Fascists were able to destroy the C.N.T. as a military body, but they could not take it over; and so it is not des-

THIS SYSTEM

MILITARISM.

THE HITLER YOUTH MOVEMENT is looked upon with horror by the majority of people, but how many are aware that, with the support of Royalty, large numbers of *children* are being trained for an army career in this country? In a quiet part of North Devon the Duke of York's Royal Military College trains boys between the ages of *nine* and *fifteen*. Of course, they are taught various subjects, but the wearing of khaki uniform is compulsory and the effect of this and the general drilling and training must have the effect of preparing their young minds for a "life" in the Army.

All that is necessary is that their fathers should themselves have been soldiers and be willing for their sons to follow in their footsteps. We are proud of the fact that we do not use compulsion to get the young people into pre-"service" organisations, but perhaps someone will be good enough to say what freedom of choice these lads of nine have when the decision is made for them by fathers whose minds have already been militarised by the de-humanising process of army life.

WASTE.

POTATOES.

AT THE BEGINNING of the year the Ministry of Agriculture instructed all farmers in the country that, in view of the approaching food shortage, a quarter of their acreage *must* be devoted to the growing of potatoes—at a guaranteed price. The farmers were told to await instructions as to when the potatoes were to be lifted and in some cases this information arrived two months too late. In the meantime, of course, the potatoes had rotted. Those who *did* lift their potatoes were told to store them pending instructions to despatch. Finally the growers were informed that none of the potatoes were needed

troyed as a possibility for the future.

Essentially, therefore, the fight against war, the fight against Fascism (where opposition of a parliamentary nature is impossible), the fight for social transformation at home, are all industrial struggles, and the industrial struggle internationally is essentially one and the same.

Our policy on war and revolution is summed up in one phrase: the industrial struggle. The revolution can finally be carried out on that basis, by the workers taking control of the means of life, and even considered as a defence of the revolution later it is a powerful auxiliary arm.

A. M.

and were told to dispose of them as best they could. Result—thousands of tons of potatoes rotted—and this at a time when waste is considered a criminal offence and people in Greece and other "Allied" countries are starving to death—with the assistance of the Allied food blockade.

EGGS.

COMMERCIAL EGG PRODUCERS are compelled to sell all eggs to Government packing stations at 3/1d. a dozen. The producers are then allowed to purchase the eggs back from the Government at 2/9d. a dozen and retail them at 3/1d. a dozen. All eggs are kept at the packing stations for at least 14 days, during which time they are graded. This occupies 4,000 grading officials. Lorries, drivers and petrol are furnished by the government and journeys are sometimes up to 50 miles. Huge numbers of eggs either go bad or are broken at some stage of handling, thus furnishing yet another proof of how chaotic life would be without government.

L. A. H.

COMRADES JAILED

OUR COMRADE HARRY JONES was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment when he appeared at Tottenham Police Court recently, charged with refusal to submit to medical examination under the National Service (Armed Forces) Act. Comrade Jones, who has been associated with the Anarchist and anti-militarist movements for a number of years, has given several lectures in the Friday evening series at Belsize Road.

From Scotland we learn that our Glasgow militant, Eddie Shaw, appearing before the Justiciary Appeal Court in Edinburgh on September 22nd, lost his appeal against the decision of the Glasgow Sheriff Court that he should be detained in the Barlinnie Prison for a period not exceeding seven days pending medical examination. Comrade Shaw argued that the Ministry of Labour summons to him was illegal because they stated, in a previous letter, that his name had been removed "without qualification" from the roll of conscientious objectors. He pointed out that this phrase had been abolished from the National Service Act by an amending schedule in 1941.

"I am the only tradesman in Glasgow among the sheet metal workers who has been called up," he said. "The Ministry of Labour don't know my trade. I am now 36, and according to the schedule of reserved occupations I should not be called until January next year."

An Appeal to Farmers

MANY CRITICS of present-day society, persist in regarding the farmer simply as a capitalist exploiter, despite the fact that only about 20 per cent of the farmers in this country are capitalists in the true sense of the word. Farming is still more or less a closed profession, and only the rich, retired industrialist has the opportunity of farming properly—with the aid of an experienced, highly-skilled and underpaid bailiff. Most farmers, in my opinion, are frustrated workers, spurred on by the profit motive of the monetary system, and hedged in by the thousand difficulties created by that system.

The acute shortage of labour, especially skilled craftsmen and general labourers, due in some extent to war conditions, has presented the great majority of farmers with a considerable problem. The problem however, has not been created solely by the large number of men drafted into the forces. Although the number of full-time farm workers has dropped by about 10 per cent. or roughly 50,000, since the war, the shortage was apparent in many districts long before the start of hostilities. Higher wages and better amenities drew many thousands of young potential agricultural workers to the towns and industrial areas and the agricultural industry became stagnant with old men.

For a number of reasons another body of men representing some of the real craftsmen, have also disappeared from the land, and many farmers of the present generation are not aware that they ever existed. These men were known as 'commoners'. They owned their own little houses and a few other buildings on a little plot of ground acquired by 'squatting' and legalised by the Enclosure Acts. The big landowners however, had more time to do their squatting and more capital available to enclose the land, and they were therefore able to limit the area of land the commoner was able to acquire. Nevertheless large numbers of commoners did exist up to about thirty years ago. They usually owned a small orchard and about half an acre of garden, and kept a few fowls, a pig, and perhaps a pony and cart. The more fortunate possessed a cow, and perhaps reared a bunch of heifers. Their holdings however, did not by any means make them self-supporting, and invariably they had to find ways in which to supplement their incomes. Thus the commoners, apart from being good cultivators and husbandmen, became skilled craftsmen and part-time general labourers on the larger farms and estates. They assisted the local farmers with essential work such as hedging, ditching, hosing, thatching, harvesting, threshing etc., and were highly valued. The profit motive, both directly and indirectly, completely wiped out these commoners. They were persecuted by the landed aristocracy, and frequently victimised on charges of poaching. Many of them gave up the struggle and were bought out by the larger farmers or sought an easier existence in the towns. Others tightened their belts, slaved from morning till night, bought or rented extra land, and did a little dealing in livestock. The more cunning or fortunate of them eventually became successful farmers or horse and cattle dealers.

To-day there are men both in the towns and country who would seek a way of life similar to that of the commoner. The town-worker, tied to one of the many parasitical jobs of capitalism, would welcome the opportunity of asserting his individuality in creative work. Similarly, there are many farm-workers and potential farm-workers who sheer away from the land when confronted with the seven-day week of the stockman.

Every farmer is familiar with the stupidity displayed by the government, even at times of 'crisis', when agriculture becomes a leading industry. Even the editor of the pro-government *Farmers' Weekly* complains bitterly of the lack of organisation in the areas where occasional workers are most required. He points out that under the existing arrangements, the fruit grower in need of help, having applied to the Ministry of Labour for assistance, receives a thin dribble of unemployables with prams and a horde of fruitarian infants. Having scattered themselves among the fruit, they snatch off ripe and unripe specimens, until their vegetarian cravings are curbed by colic. He deplores 'holiday labour', which, except at certain rush periods and in certain unskilled work, is useless.

Every farmer is aware of the facts mentioned above, but he also knows that no amount of organisation on holiday camp lines will make these people more efficient or skilled. Organisation or bureaucratic lines is useless; the organisation must come through the initiative of the individual when he becomes conscious of his own needs and the needs of his fellow men. If the government is incapable of dealing with the farming situation in war-time, what treatment can farmers and farm-workers expect from them after the war, when vested interests will once more come openly to the fore?

It is high time that farmers realised that the countryside cannot be farmed by an army of glorified book-keepers and theoreticians, whose sole interest in the land lies in the fat salary they draw every week. Farmers are surely capable of farming successfully without the guidance and stupid utterances of R. S. Hudson!

In the past farmers have successfully fought against the dictates of the Milk and Potato Marketing Boards. With continued resistance against fines, and imprisonment and an intelligent use of the existing legal machinery, the selling of produce locally and the moral help of sympathisers and active supporters, the authorities would be powerless to act. In the past, farmers have achieved successes alone,—with a little co-operation from outside they could put up a much more effective resistance against the coercive power of the State.

Let the farmer forget that he is a 'boss' and realise that he is a worker, like the rest of the farm staff. Strife between worker and farmer is futile—there are bigger issues at stake. The farmer to-day is merely a cog in the state machine. State control of the land is imminent, and once this comes the fight will be more difficult. Farmers, don't be blinded by the idiotic war slogans—wake up and realise that you are individuals and not slaves at the beck and call of bureaucrats and vested interests!

T. C. HOLDEN.

VOTE — WHAT FOR ?

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The promises of politicians are notoriously unstable, and more and more people are becoming disillusioned about the advantages of "universal suffrage". This pamphlet is in the form of a dialogue between an anarchist and a socialist, and the whole subject of parliamentarism and electioneering is entertainingly discussed. It is a free translation from E. Malatesta's "En Periode Electorale", and appears for the first time in English.

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Daily Worker

Protests too much

We have received the following letter from Messrs. William Sedley & Co., Solicitors for the *Daily Worker*:

Dear Sir,

We have been instructed by the Management of the *Daily Worker* as well as the Keable Press Limited, the proprietors of the *Daily Worker*, with reference to an article which appeared in your paper in the issue of Mid-September last and which article was headed "*Daily Worker Strike*." The article in question contained many inaccuracies which have had a serious effect on our clients. We must therefore ask you to take immediate steps to publish in your next issue, and in a prominent position, an apology for these inaccuracies and also set down the true position. Briefly the inaccuracies are as follows:—

In paragraph one of the article—following the suspension of the *Daily Worker*—the members of NATSOPA were employed in various categories until the destruction of the *Daily Worker* premises by enemy action. The employment of the member of NATSOPA concerned was, however, terminated by the management before the other employees were stood off as a result of the destruction of the press.

In paragraph two, the facts are that NATSOPA officials instructed certain members not to work, but the Management of the *Daily Worker*, with a view to averting any possible strike, accepted the demands of NATSOPA pending further negotiations. As you may already have been told, no appeal was made to the T.U.C., but in point of fact, Mr. William Rust telephoned the Secretary of NATSOPA, Mr. George Isaacs, who at T.U.C. Conference. It was therefore Mr. George Isaacs and not the T.U.C. who refused to intervene.

Paragraph three contains a very serious misstatement in so far as it is wholly incorrect to say that non-NATSOPA operatives were called in, and in point of fact, we understand that an official of NATSOPA wrote to the *World's Press News* on 11th September last to this effect. All the men involved in this dispute were in fact Union men.

Finally we are instructed to say that there has been no capitulation or re-engagement of any employee in so far as the Management acceded to certain demands of NATSOPA pending negotiations. Our clients, at this particular junction are unable to give you the full story until the matter has been finally settled.

Will you please be good enough to give this matter your immediate attention, and we await to hear from you that you are taking steps to attend to this matter without further delay.

Yours faithfully,

WM. SEDLEY & SON.

When our representative called at the Natsopa offices on Monday, he was given information by the General Secretary of the Union, Mr. G. A. Isaacs, which proves the foregoing letter to be rather off the rails in point of fact.

In paragraph two of the solicitors' letter it is stated that the employment of the Natsopa member in question was terminated *before* the other employees were stood off. Dealing with this Mr. Isaacs said: "The employment of the members of the staff of the *Daily Worker* terminated on January 22nd, 1941, when the *Daily Worker* was banned. The Overseer, Howard (the member in question), continued to work until January 31st when he received one month's notice. Three of the original eighteen of the staff were found employment on the Marston Press until April 17th, when the premises were destroyed by enemy action."

With regard to paragraph three, Mr. Isaacs stated: "On Sunday, September 6th, officials of Natsopa were engaged in negotiations with the *Daily Worker* management regarding the terms of employment and the constitution of the team of workers to be employed. Whilst the negotiations were proceeding, six men were called in by the management before an agreement had been reached. The Society instructed them to withdraw and await the settlement of the negotiations. I was contacted in Blackpool by the *Daily Worker* management, but did not intervene, because the firm had had ample opportunity of settling the matter during the preceding week."

"Although the members engaged were Natsopa operatives," said Mr. Isaacs, "they acted entirely as non-Union members with a view to prejudicing the negotiations in progress."

It appears that no settlement has yet been reached between Natsopa and the *Daily Worker*. The General Secretary offered to meet the *Daily Worker* and negotiate settlement, but withdrew the offer because the conditions made by the *Daily Worker* were unacceptable, and the matter has since been referred to the Ministry of Labour by the *Daily Worker* management.

The admission of Messrs. Sedley & Co. that the men who scabbed were Union operatives only strengthens what we wrote previously, for the men were therefore blacklegging on the Union as well as on their fellow workers. The incident is one that the workers should take note of for it illustrates the kind of treatment they can expect if the C.P. ever gets into power.

War Commentary

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