

# WAR *For Anarchism* COMMENTARY

Vol. 5, No. 2.

MID-NOVEMBER, 1943.

TWOPENCE

## Hatching the Counter Revolution

WAR PROPAGANDA PROCEEDS in jerks. When the workers are beginning to question the issues for which the war is fought, the governments immediately attempt to inject new enthusiasm by means of high-falutin' declarations. The last war saw three such; there was the "War to End War" slogan of 1914, then the tentative fiddling round with the League of Nations idea, lastly the famous "Fourteen Points" of Woodrow Wilson. This time, our government managed to stave off the demands for a statement of war aims until August 1941. They then released the "Atlantic Charter", which was acclaimed by the pro-war left press as a great democratic profession of faith. *War Commentary* derided it.

But at Quebec doubts about the "full accord" between the Allied powers began to become apparent. Editorial comments were made in the Press about the absence of Joe Stalin from the meetings of Churchill and Roosevelt. Hence the Moscow Conference, and hence the inevitable stress laid on the "full agreement" between the Foreign Secretaries which the Conference achieved. Once more, doubts are laid at rest, and the great crusade for freedom can continue again without backbiting.

All the same, there are still some doubters. The *Glasgow Forward*, for example, says, "One studies this document in vain to discover any trace of the revolutionary spirit of the Russian propaganda that helped to precipitate the German revolution which destroyed the Kaiser's régime in 1918. It is not even as revolutionary as President Wilson's famous Fourteen Points." In those days Lenin used to describe the war as a bloody struggle between the imperialist bandits, while he stigmatized the League of Nations as a "Thieves Kitchen". The politer

Eden, Molotov, and Hull speak of "a general international organization, based on the sovereign equality of all peace-loving States", and Stalin, in his recent report, talks of the "patriotic war".

But in reality the war policies of the Anglo-American bloc and the Soviet Union show wide divergencies, even though these divergencies can still be bridged for propaganda purposes by joint declarations. We have repeatedly pointed out in *War Commentary* that the present war—no less than the last—was forced upon the capitalist class of the world by the needs of their profit economy. When re-armament programmes no longer served to draw them out of the slump of 1929-32, they were compelled to embark on war as the only means of maintaining production and ensuring profits. Driven into war, they cannot regard the return to peace economy with anything but alarm. For them the important thing is to keep the war going as long as possible. That is why, after every victory, Churchill or Roosevelt, or both, come out with "grave warnings" that the "bloodiest fighting still lies ahead," or that recent successes must not make us think that the war is likely to be soon finished. After Hitler, there is still Japan; and so on, regular as clockwork.

A recent confirmation of our view is to be detected in a recent article by Harry Hopkins (official enough, one would think) in which he states that victory over Germany and Japan will be won in 1945. This forecast provoked a remarkable article in the Soviet official paper *War and the Working Class*, warning of the dangers of a long war. Why is Russia afraid of a long war? Clearly because the Russians are having to face an exhausting war of attrition, and also, probably, because the increasing dependance of the Russians on British and



American supplies is driving them deeper and deeper into debt to their Allies. Is, in fact, permitting the British and Americans increasing control over Russian affairs. Whatever the explanation, however, there is no doubt that the whole Second Front propaganda is really propaganda for a shortened war.

The Moscow Conference had a depressing effect on Stock Markets (except for Central European and Russian Tsarist Bonds, which rose. Austrian 5 per cent., for example, went up from £17 10s. to £23). Oscar Hobson, the Financial Editor of the *News Chronicle* summed up the City's reaction on 3/11/43, by saying, "For the rest, the main Moscow reaction may be summarized in a phrase heard in the market yesterday—'increased danger of peace'. Business was discouraged." And it is from the City that the British Commonwealth of Nations is ruled.

The article in the Soviet *War and the Working Class*, already referred to gives an equally illuminating view of the Russian war aims. The gist of the article was explained in the *Economist* for 16/10/43.

"The Russian critic states frankly why Russia cannot accept the prospect of a protracted war—because of the devastation of Russia's richest areas and the fact 'that every day of war means the loss of many Soviet lives'. He goes on to describe the risks incurred by the other Allies as well in case of an unduly protracted war, *the risk of revolutionary processes which the Government will not be able to control*. War brings in its wake upheavals in defeated countries such as the collapse of Tsardom and of the Central European monarchies in 1917-18. The first World War was followed by social convulsions even in the victorious countries; *more violent and eruptive convulsions threaten if this war lasts much longer*."

And the *Economist* comments: "Russia, the warning implies, *may well be able to act as a force of law and order in Europe* if the war is brought to an early conclusion; she may have to wash her hands, however, if, by unduly prolonging the war, the Allies themselves let loose the revolution." (The italics are ours.)

How far have the Russians travelled since 1917! From urging the workers "to turn the Imperialist

war into civil war", to warning capitalist governments of the danger of revolution. It proves the logic of the anarchist teaching that revolutionists who assume State power become by that act counter-revolutionists.

The counter-revolutionists of the Kremlin are realistic enough nevertheless. They have put their finger on the dilemma of the capitalists—the war provides the only means of maintaining profit, but its continuance will lead inevitably to revolutions. The world's rulers will not be slow to learn their lesson. It is not only the Hitlerites who fear the spirit of November 11th. Already they will be perfecting their plans for counter-revolutionary action against the coming revolution. Already they will be preparing their weapons for the crushing of workers' insurrectionary movements wherever they appear. For they will cheerfully crush the German workers when they revolt against Hitler, just as they bombed the Italian workers who dislodged Mussolini. So the workers too must read the lessons of the Moscow Declarations and the circumstances which made it necessary to issue them. They must prepare their organisations for the initiation of the revolution, and for its defence and extension until the detestable society which breeds wars, which keeps workers in poverty and despair, is utterly overthrown. If workers will organise, the fears of the ruling class will materialize in the social revolution, and a new world of freedom and plenty will dawn.

## Direct Action Saves Home Guard

On 21st October, at Sunderland, Harold Woods, a 32-year-old Home Guard was sentenced by a Military Tribunal to 28 days detention in a military Detention Camp for insubordinate language to an officer. The "insubordinate language" consisted of refusing to do gun drill. Why did Woods refuse? Because he has suffered from tuberculosis for the past 10 years and has had four operations for it. On the day in question he had gone to his work as an electric welder in a shipyard at 7.30 a.m.; knocking off at 5 p.m. He then went on a Home Guard parade, did gun drill from 7.30 to 8.30 and again from 9 to 9.30. The Officer, Captain Hastings, then ordered the Sergeant to give them more gun drill. Is it surprising that Woods refused?

At the trial the medical evidence was declared irrelevant, and Woods was sentenced to 28 days detention. Clearly military authorities have learnt nothing from the Clayton case. This instance shows also that we were right when we declared that the Chatham Detention Camp was not an isolated case of brutality; Clayton's killer-Sergeants were merely scapegoats for the whole detention system.

Fortunately for Woods, his fellow-workers from the Wearside were not prepared to let him be done to death. A mass meeting of 2000 workers urged immediate action "to avoid trouble". Instead of signing petitions, asking the authorities to reverse the decision, they simply sent telegrams to Churchill and Grigg stating that unless Woods was released they would go on strike. That was on October 28th.

Four days later Woods was released. He had served 11 days of his 28-day sentence.

## KINGSTON SUNDAY LECTURES KINGSTON TRADES & LABOUR CLUB

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NOVEMBER 21st Jim Barker

Local Government

NOVEMBER 28th

Atheism versus Christianity

DECEMBER 5th M. L. Berneri

Working Class Struggles in Italy

DECEMBER 12th Frank Soden

The Child in Society



# ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

## AMERICAN MINERS' STRIKE

AMERICAN coal miners have been seeking redress for their complaints all this year. Finding the bosses adamant and their union leaders indifferent to their demands they declared a strike throughout the industry last May. In reply Roosevelt took over the pits for the government, and sent troops to guard them. After some weeks, the miners mostly accepted the command of their union boss, John L. Lewis, to return to work (some, however stayed out in spite of him), while the dispute was referred to the War Labour Board. Writing in the Mid May issue of *War Commentary*, we wrote: "In class battles delay always favours the bosses. They utilize the time to organise reserves of material . . . to arrange for blacklegs, do disruptive propaganda among the strikers by means of press and agents provocateurs, and to strengthen their position in every possible way. Strikers lose the advantage of sudden decisive action and gain in all probability—nothing at all . . . By returning to work and relying on negotiations carried on between union politician Lewis and State politician Ickes, they have abandoned their main card, and shown a willingness to open the way to "concessions". Such a voluntary lessening of the intensity of their struggle gives the bosses and politicians their chance to win out. With their experience they will not be slow to take it".

The strikers declared a "truce" until October 31st. If their demands were not met by then, they would come out again on strike. Of course what we predicted has happened. The government and the bosses did nothing about it. As October 31st approached the War Labour Board referred the coal question to the government, and Roosevelt threatened to take over the mines again. Meanwhile several pits came out. The United Mineworkers' "Leader", Lewis, already by the middle of October, was urging the Alabama miners to return to work. "I hope each mine-worker will sacrifice his personal interests and subordinate his righteously outraged feelings . . . We all want to avoid any damage to the war effort or to the interests of our country." (*Reynolds* 17/10/43). Lewis, in fact, talked just like the bosses and the politicians.

In spite of all Roosevelts' threats, the miners came out again on October 31st, 530,000 of them. The State immediately took over the mines as before, and threatened the "suspension of dues, collections and other 'benefits, privileges, and rights' of union and revision of the men's exemptions from military service". (*News Chronicle*, 25/10/43). Lewis then called off the strike, a compromise increase in wages having been agreed to.

It will be seen that our remarks of Mid-May have been borne out by events. That the miners were far more militant than their "leaders" is shown by the fact that they came out against Lewis' advice, and not all of them went back when he called off the strike. The *News Chronicle* American correspondent said on 3/11/43, "The miners, indeed, appeared to be in an uncompliant mood. One of them said at Pittsburgh 'I am getting sick of loafing while those guys in Washington make a political football out of this contract business'." Let us hope that workers' disillusionment with politicians and union traitors will go further. Already Lewis has been referred to as "the Judas of American labour".

## BEVIN AND THE STRIKERS

BEVIN has had a few things to say about strikes recently. On 2/11/43 he reiterated his statement of September 24th to the effect that some strikes were deliberately provoked by employers. To a Conservative M.P. (Sir Archibald Southby) who asked that such employers should be proceeded against, Bevin was quick to take up the cudgels in defence of the employers as a class. "Replying, Mr. Bevin said that he made his statement after great deliberation. He did not say that all employers were provoking strikes, but that some strikes were provoked by employers. The Federated Employers had been a tremendous asset in carrying on our vital industries, but there were exceptions—on both sides" (*News Chronicle*, 3/11/43).

Bevin went on to reveal—in effect—that his statement had only been made for propaganda purposes in order to appease dissatisfied workers. "I felt when I spoke," he said, "that I was living on an industrial volcano. There were many motives at work and many forces operating. They were boiling up." His remarks reveal, incidentally, that he is just a tripe hound of the employers.

## TROOPS BREAK STRIKE PICKETS

IN an article in this issue on the London Dock Strike, the question of how striking workers can overcome strike breaking by means of troops is discussed. The Canadian government has also used the Army recently. In Montreal 2,500 employees of the Aluminium Company of Canada were on strike. The Canadian Government sent 500 troops who broke through the picket lines and brought food and relief to the handful of scabs (the capitalist press calls them "loyal workers") remaining at the works. Revolutionary workers would be well advised, in view of the plight of their fellow workers under the openly fascist regimes to work out ways and means of countering the armed force of government troops' intervention in industrial disputes.

In this Aluminium Company strike, the yellow press made great play of the number of bombers "lost" to the United Nations because the strike allowed the refining pots to "freeze" through being left unattended. When a few commodities are lost during strikes they accuse the workers of sabotaging the war effort, of sacrificing the lives of men in the forces—heap every kind of calumny upon them. But what about the revelations of the Select Committee on National Expenditure about the 41,000 shells which the Government allowed to be produced after they knew they had become obsolete, and which they knew would be destined for scrap? What is dubbed "treachery" on the part of the workers becomes merely "inefficiency" in the bosses and the Government. Nor does the yellow press point out that all strike stoppages are due to the refusal of the employers to accede to the demands of the workers—they can be prevented just as well by the employers capitulating as by the workers returning to work. Let the bosses take a dose of their own "patriotism", for a change!

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# The Same old Tory!

## What the "Controls" Agitation Means

IN THE LAST few weeks we have heard a lot of talk from the reactionary circles demanding "freedom from controls". How popular this demand would be if we could only trust the sponsors of it! Control of our lives has been so intensified and sharpened since the war that any attempt at alleviating the burden under which we work would be considerably welcomed. The State is fast becoming the master, and an ever-growing bureaucracy with ever-widening powers is assuming the role of a ruling-class. We have seen that in Germany and in Russia State control has led to a totalitarian structure little different from old-time slavery. The workers in this country will certainly do well to resist State control, and to aim at the lessening of it—but when we hear that Conservatives and some Liberals and queer selections of titled gentry such as the "Society of Individualists" and others are campaigning against State control we have not the slightest illusion as to *their* reasons.

They are out to resist State control, not because they oppose dictatorial control (they include the most hide-bound anti-libertarians) but to maintain the rule of the old ruling-class: the control of Big Business, the old ruling-class against the new bureaucracy. The word "freedom" should stick in their gullets—their hypocrisy can be discerned by one question: Do you believe in conscription of men and women? Certainly, every manjack of them does. They are putting forward suggestions, which will eventually become law since they do not conflict with the interests of the bureaucracy they are supposed to be combatting, that the conscripted men of the country should be kept in uniform for maybe ten years more (see our mid-October editorial). Year by year after the war they expect the youth of the country should be shoved into uniform to keep up the strength of the armed forces to defend us against enemies that can only be armed by our own industries. One does not hear Captain Balfour and his like call for "freedom from control" for these conscripts-to-be-and-remain! No: keep them in serfdom, refuse to allow them to take an open part in politics, ban them from an industrial struggle like their colleagues in the industries, let them listen in silence and be subject to the control of a Tory caste!

It appears certain that the freedom the Tories advocate to-day is not for individual humans, but for vested interests. Not only do they support a dictatorship for the military—they are also in the forefront of the hue-and-cry against strikers. Such men are imperilling the nation (yet the same hue-and-cry was levelled against them in peace-time): and so members of Parliament, lawyers, barristers, editors, journalists, clergymen, peers, coalowners, retired officers, magistrates, councillors, and suchlike raise such a to-do about occasional strikes in the mines and the factories, aided and abetted by that fifth wheel in the Tory chariot, the trade union bureaucracy. We do not hear them demanding the abolition of those controls that make all strikes illegal, prosecute and imprison workers for taking a day or so off (they themselves take no days on!) The controls that have to be abolished are not those that affect the workers at all: these in fact are welcomed.

Nor do we hear the Conservative gentlemen raise much of a complaint about the limited freedom of the Press. Instead they advocate its curtailment, and press the Home Secretary to take action against papers like our-

selves who dare to question the good faith of the ruling-class.

We are solemnly warned that the State is taking too great a part in our daily affairs. That is true, but it hardly can be meant seriously by those who do not view with displeasure the fact that the State is making prison records for an ever-increasing section of our population. Whereas once few people had any prison record and prison was even thought of as a disgrace, except by political prisoners, there will soon be few people in the country who have not been in jail for something. For not joining the Army—or for joining and being jugged for some trivial offence that with a civilian employer would hardly merit a raised eyebrow. For not firewatching, or firewatching and turning up late to work persistently as a result. For not registering, or registering and declining to take some job arbitrarily selected as a result. For getting more clothes than one is entitled to—or not being able to afford to get enough and therefore selling the ration-book.

When Conservatives complain about the 18b regulations their protests are always on behalf of the upper-class detainees such as Sir Oswald Mosley, Captain Ramsey, Admiral Sir Barry Domville, and their like: never for any inquiry into those detained of humbler origin some of whom are not fascists, as the titled gentry are.

The "freedom" being advocated by the Blimps is not genuine freedom; merely freedom for the old ruling-class to do as it likes. It finds itself confronted at present, not with genuine "socialism": merely State socialism, the control by the State of the means of life. Between these two there is nothing which Anarchists choose—we see on one side those who support the rule of a newly-born State bureaucracy, and call it "socialism"; on the other side those who support the rule of the old ruling-class and call it "freedom". And this struggle is so far as the main protagonists are concerned, a fake one. If the totalitarian side wins, the Tory ruling-class will not go out of business, but merely seize the comfortable jobs, in a tight squeeze with Civil Service, Trade Union and capitalist industrial bureaucrats, and all other politicians. Although they now oppose State control, if State control is finally established they will not stick to so-called private enterprise, but do what they do to-day—grab themselves seats on the band-wagon and use their colonial-garrison mentality talents as members of a government administration. If on the other hand the private enterprise people win, the Civil Service bureaucrats and their like will not disappear on their side; for the capitalist class will still need a State as their executive committee for ruling the masses. Hence we see a sham fight between politicians, in which the working classes are asked to take sides, on the issue of whether they are to be exploited by Whitehall bureaucrats or Big Business.

We must maintain vigorous opposition to both sides: against those who would impose Nazi-like State control upon us, and those who, expounding a sham freedom, would fasten a fascistic capitalist grip on us instead. Anarchists demand FREEDOM. Control of industry should go neither to the State (as the Labour Party demands) nor to private employers (as the Conservative Party demands) but to the working class, industry by industry, to operate for the masses as a whole.

A. M.



# Man-Made Famines

THE HORRORS of war, of destruction and carnage, have been surpassed by those of famine, by millions of skeletons swept by diseases and epidemics. Famines which were caused by floods and droughts pass unnoticed to-day but the world is shaken by famines of a magnitude hitherto unknown, caused by Governments for political reasons.

Our generation has witnessed famines both in Asia and in Europe which present all the characteristics of man-made famines; they are particularly revolting to man's conscience because all of them could have been avoided if the masses had not been at the mercy of their Governments. Eugene Lyons who witnessed the Russian famine of 1932-33 points out that its singularly macabre quality was due to the fact that the destruction and suffering which seemed a natural calamity was in fact man-made, artificially whipped up and that a word of command from Stalin could have stopped it: "It was as if, in the midst of a terrible volcanic eruption, one were to catch sight of someone turning a crank that kept the hot lava pouring over men and towns".

We have had, a few days ago, the privilege of catching a glimpse of the men who hold in their hands the fate of the Indian people. In the House of Commons thirty-five people were present at the debate on the famine in India. It was lunch time and M.P.'s don't like waiting for seats in the restaurant. Amery, secretary for India, arrived late (he had been securing tickets for his wife in the gallery). Pethick Lawrence delivered the speech he had prepared in answer to the not-yet delivered speech by Amery. He reminded the House that they were all M.P.'s for India, a rather tactless point to make in the circumstances.

The people who "turn the crank" are chatting and gossiping in restaurants and clubs, Lord Linlithgow arriving from India has nothing to say on the situation there and goes to Buckingham Palace to receive the Knighthood of the Garter, Amery has to be given police protection on his way to the House and jokes are made about his small size but his ability as a pugilist. In Moscow, Stalin entertains American and English statesmen, the dinner begins at 8.30 p.m. and ends at 2.30 the following morning. According to a witness "The courses seemed endless, there were more than twenty toasts".

If politicians are not concerned, business men are even less so. If one only read *The Chamber of Commerce Journal* one would think that India is the most prosperous country in the world. Each issue informs the readers that new "progress" is being made. Says the October number:

"The war has given a great impetus to many

Indian industries. New ones have been started and old industries have been put on a more stable basis. An up-to-date fruit canning factory, which will be able to produce 300 tons of canned fruits this year, has started work somewhere in Northern India. The new factory is for the time being concentrating on plums, peaches, pears and apricots—fruits which are available in large quantities in its vicinity."

The fruit is preserved in a syrup or sugar solution and can be kept "a considerable time". The review ends cheerfully: "With a plentiful supply of good fruits and sugar in the country it is reasonable to expect that the fruit canning industry will have a great future in India".

The November issue of *The Chamber of Commerce Journal* announces that: "The Commerce Department of the Government of India is evidently out to tell the world about the great post-war and present possibilities for development in India. The Government of India are publishing a series of pamphlets, brightly written, very informative and illustrated, about different aspects of Indian industries". Pamphlet No. 3 deals with the jute industry which is partly responsible for the famine, the cultivation of rice having had to be abandoned for that of jute, causing starvation in wide areas. That it was "worthwhile" is proved by the fact that "the exports of raw and manufactured jute constitute about one quarter of the total value of the Indian merchandise exported. In thousands of rupees the exports of jute in 1940 doubled by comparison with the previous year.

The Press has not been able to ignore the Indian famine and every day newspapers carry figures about the number of deaths due to starvation or cholera. But we can be sure that famine is far more serious than we can gather from journalists' reports. The Russian famine which took place after the forced collectivization of the land and which cost the Russian people from three to seven million lives, passed almost unnoticed at the time. It started in November 1932 and it was not till the 30th of March 1933 that the *New York Times* mentioned "widespread malnutrition". As in the case of India the publication of statistics was stopped and it was impossible to calculate the increase in death rate with any certainty. Journalists could abandon themselves freely to a little trick which consisted in calculating the deaths (due to executions for example) in one town and cabling them to their newspaper giving the impression that they were the figures for the whole of Russia. Reuter's correspondent also sends precise information as to the number of deaths in the streets of Calcutta or in such and such hospital but neglects to talk about the corpses lining the railway trucks and accumulating around stations.



Correspondents are allowed to mention the hundreds of deaths in the cities as a screen for the hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of deaths which take place all over the country. The Government responsible for the famine has also the means of suppressing the news which by their intense horror might awaken the conscience of mankind.

As in the Russian famine scapegoats are found by the Government to cover itself. Stalin and his henchmen blamed the kulaks, on the one hand, and the bureaucracy on the other, expelling from the Party well-known Party members like Kamenev, and shooting high officials. Even the Church was made responsible. Bells were taken down, shrines were destroyed, priests and rabbis were rounded up and imprisoned. In the case of India everybody is blamed in turn, black-marketeers, hoarders, the local governments, Japanese agents and fifth-columnists. A few people attacked the Viceroy and the *Daily Worker* goes as far as asking Amery's resignation. But Churchill, the Cabinet, the whole Government are not held responsible. The people responsible remain in high places and the privileged class they represent does not suffer. This is a characteristic of all modern famines. The rich people, the ruling class don't starve and even go on enjoying a luxurious life. We see now in Russia the Communist leaders giving sumptuous receptions, in India while people die in the streets restaurant's menus have eighteen courses on them, in Spain smart restaurants offer their customers whole chickens after the soup, hors-d'œuvres, fish, etc.

How do people react to so much suffering and injustice? They do not rebel as one would expect. While food shortage has always caused riots and revolts, mass starvation seems to have the effect of annihilating people's will and strength to rebel. Riots do take place but not in proportion to those caused by occasional and short-lived food shortages. The Government obviously relies on this demoralization of the masses or it would never dare to provoke such catastrophies.

The first reaction of starving people is to emigrate from the countryside to the cities. Russia and India have seen vast movements of populations constantly in search of food. The second reaction is the abandonment of any kind of work, Indian peasants from the Jute areas for example refuse to go back.

The Russian peasants fought against the main cause of the famine: the forced collectivization of the land by widespread sabotage. They slaughtered their cattle, horses and pigs on such a large scale that Stalin was forced to modify his plans for 100 per cent. collectivization and make important concessions to the peasants. Faced with the menace of complete disruption of the economy of the country the Government had to give in.

The British Government is prepared to let hundreds of thousands and even perhaps a few millions of Indians die of hunger. An over populated country like India can survive such an ordeal. But if the Government was threatened with a complete breakdown of the life of the country, agriculture, industry and transport it would try to appease the anger of the people. If peasants producing industrial crops, workers in the leather, paper, glass, lacquer and dye industries as well as in the mines and transport went on strike or used means of destruction similar to those of the Russian peasants one can be sure that the Government would find the necessary ships to bring food to India. Newspapers announce that India must be provided with 1,500,000 tons of wheat and rye to allow her to regain control of the position. They add that: "It will be for the British Government, in conjunction with the other United Nations, to decide if they can be released." The only way the Indian masses have to force the Government to release that food is by threatening them to destroy those industries which are such a profitable source of investment to the readers of *The Chamber of Commerce Journal* and who are of no use whatsoever to the Indians who can't afford boots, lacquered objects or canned peaches.

Other practical means of fighting against man-made famines not only in India but in all countries in which they occur would be: to picket restaurants which though probably using a small proportion of the total food consumption are an insult to the starving masses. To expropriate stocks of food either in the hands of hoarders or the Government and to set up Workers' and Peasants' Committees to ensure a fair distribution amongst the population. Looting of shops always takes place in periods of scarcity but it only benefits a minority of audacious men or women. The expropriation should be carried out on a large scale, not for the benefit of a few but of the whole community. Charity as organised by Lord Linlithgow, General Wavell and even the Cadbury Quakers is an insult. The masses don't want crumbs from the loaded tables of the rich, but what is their natural right. They should take it whenever they have an opportunity. Indian dockers and seamen should refuse to export food which even in times of famine continues to be exported (India, Ireland, Russia, Spain) as exports mean profits and capitalists are never willing to relinquish those.

What we must realise in Britain is that the Indian famine is not a matter for the Indians alone to solve. This is the time to demonstrate our solidarity to the Indian workers by all the means at our disposal. We must remember also that if it is their turn to starve to-day it may be ours to-morrow; the sooner we devise means to fight against famine the better.

M. L. B.



## Soldiers' News

# BACK FROM PRISON CAMPS

THE BRITISH PRISONERS who have recently returned to England have talked (according to Press reports) with a certain satisfaction about the sallowness of German women and children "pale, even yellow with under-nourishment".

A "real Britisher", equal in his race arrogance to any conceited Nazi made the following statement: "The Germans are now ready to lick an Englishman's boots. The food situation is bad and the Germans will do anything to get food." The proud and inflexible British, of course, wouldn't—or would they? We are not so sure when we read what another chap has to say describing his unwilling hunger and that of other British prisoner's march from the front to the prison camp. "I have seen fellows fight for a handful of broken biscuits that had been thrown among them". He has also seen them foraging in the fields for potatoes, picking up greenstuff lying about, bits of rhubarb and swedes.

A British prisoner who has spent a long time in a Japanese gaol writes: "But by far the worst part of the conditions in the gaol was being hungry. After about two months starvation diet you get beri-beri or some kind of deficiency disease. And it is really awful to be hungry. The worst is that it paralyses your mind. You can't think of anything but food. And you get to the stage when you look at other people's food and you begin thinking

how you can get hold of it. Sometimes somebody in the cell managed to get a little extra rice or bread, and then I am afraid it was difficult not to hate him".

Hunger is a most impressive teacher of hatred. Where the preaching of radical theories fails hunger succeeds in producing determined rebels. The cunning ruling class may plan to use hunger as a weapon to check revolution but it may well prove a boomerang deadly to themselves.

The sufferings of the people which drive them to hate the men who cause their misery, also produces other results much to the dislike of the war lords. A British prisoner who worked in a German hospital writes: "As we got to understand those poor devils we felt no more hatred. When their German Red Cross parcels came in, they would cut them in half and share them with us and though they only had three cigarettes a day, they wouldn't smoke them unless we had a smoke too."

When workers in uniform get to "understand" their class comrades in enemy uniform, the unnatural chauvinist hatred is bound to disappear, class consciousness awakens again and leads to fraternization. Fraternization occurs between individuals and groups and the more it extends, the sooner it will give the same results as in the last war.

## Cat Out of the Bag

One of the boasts of the "war for democracy and freedom" is that those who go and fight are "guaranteed" their jobs back after the war. This incentive to fighting received a rude shock when Doland, the Conservative M.P. for Balham, revealed in Parliament on November the 4th that Messrs. Alexander Duckham & Co., had informed one of their former employees, Sergeant Whitehead, that they could not undertake to give him his job back after the war. Whitehead, who is now serving in India, had been with the firm for eight years before joining the Forces.

Replying, Bevin said that he had seen the firm's letter and had written to them. "They informed him" according to the *News Chronicle*, "that, in their opinion, the letter could not be interpreted as indicating that past employees now in the Forces were not likely to be re-employed by them in post war, but they considered it would be no kindness to a soldier to allow him to feel that his re-employment was a certainty."

Bevin then made it clear that "the firm have not committed any legal offence". He was willing to believe that they meant no harm. (No such trustful attitude is shown to soldiers who have overstayed their leave, or workers who are late for work), but added "I must express my astonishment at their stupidity in not realizing the effect such a letter must have on its recipient". To reassure the House he declared amid cheering that "I hope the answer I have given will have the effect on employers' minds of not sending such letters to men who are actually in the firing line".

Note it well. The firm committed no legal offence. Therefore there is no guarantee that soldiers will get their jobs back after the war. So far as the government is concerned the chief significance of this incident is that it is a warning to employers not to let their former employees think they are not going to get their jobs back. We suppose Bevin thinks that after the end of the war will be soon enough to break the truth to them. It's kinder that way . . . .

Ex-servicemen of the last war will remember the street organs and the matches. Indeed many of them are still to be seen eking-out a precarious living by street begging.

## Incentive to Virtue

Sir James Grigg, the Minister for War, replying to Mr. Burke, Labour member for Burnley, on November 2nd, explained that Army law forbids a married couple to serve in the same unit. "If a man and woman in the same unit married, then obviously their destinations were changed". So if you want to be separated from your girl friend the thing to do is to marry her. Sir James says that this particular rule was not "conducive to ill feeling and discouragement". Maybe not, but it isn't conducive to conventional morality either.

Bishops and parents and all who want to put the young in moral strait-jackets might turn their attention to attacking Army rules instead of bleating about "promiscuity".

★ ★ ★

## In Short

Third-rate pay, for first class service: Basic Service Pay per day:

England 3s.	Canada 5s. 6d.
Australia 6s. 6d.	New Zealand 7s. 6d.
U.S.A. 8s. 7d.	

Weekly allowance for wife:

England 21s. 6d.	New Zealand 22s. 9d.
Australia 31s. 6d.	Canada 34s.
U.S.A. 34s. 10d.	

Weekly allowance for first child:

England 9s. 6d.	New Zealand 10s.
Canada 11s. 6d.	Australia 21s.
U.S.A. 14s. 2d.	

★ ★ ★

Up to December 1942 there were over 800,000 applications for War Service "charity" Grants. Only about 400,000 received meagre grants after usual "Means Test".



## GOD IS AN ENGLISHMAN



The subject of religion came up. Mr. Churchill said he is a man of faith. He believes that Almighty God has saved England in several critical situations.

Notably, he remarked, upon the failure of the Germans to follow up their success at Dunkirk, the calm sea which prevailed at the time; of the invasion of North Africa; and several other occurrences of like moment.

Archbishop Spellman,  
"Sunday Dispatch," 3/10/43.

"God is with us."—Eisenhower.

*Sunday Express*, 10/10/43.

Lieut.-General Sir William Dobbie, former Governor of Malta, said that during the most critical days Malta experienced, after Italy had entered the war he received from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff a telegram bearing only the words "Deuteronomy 3, 22." It reads . . . "Ye shall not fear them: for the Lord your God He shall fight for you."

"I have not a shadow of doubt that it was God Who saw us through and it was due to our complete faith in God that Malta still belongs to the British Empire," said General Dobbie.

*Sunday Express*, 10/10/43.

## COST OF WAR

Chinese casualty lists had never been published, but Dr. Yeh stated he could now reveal that up to 1941 military casualties were 6,000,000, with almost four times that number of civilians. Since then they had given up counting; losses had been tremendous.

*Glasgow Herald*, 11/10/43.

## DIPLOMACY

Someone blundered when President Inonu held a reception in Ankara yesterday to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Turkish Republic.

Allied and Axis diplomats were in separate waiting rooms, but someone showed the new Italian Ambassador, Guido Rocco, into the Axis room.

The Axis diplomats rose from their seats and stormed out.

When a review was held, Rocco was given a seat between the Allied and neutral envoys.

*Daily Herald*, 30/10/43.

Where do the envoys sit whose countries are at war with some but not with others?

## WORKERS' HOUSES CAN WAIT

Dr. Metcalf Brown in a talk on "Housing and Health" said that bad housing was not the only factor causing unfavourable health conditions, but it was, he thought, the most lethal one. "We give much thought to tuberculosis, and rightly so," he continued, "but in doing so we sometimes forget that the incidence of bronchitis and pneumonia is probably even more serious than that of tuberculosis. Tuberculosis, in its clinical form, attacks quite a small fraction of the community, but bronchitis and pneumonia do, sometime or other, tend to affect practically every family, and most seriously those families where housing is bad."

*Manchester Guardian*, 5/11/43.

Nothing is done to remedy bad housing but Mr. Churchill has declared that the Government cannot wait for a new House of Commons and that its rebuilding should be started during the war.

## FURTHER STEP TOWARDS COMMUNISM

A half-page photograph of Marshal Stalin, published in the Revolutionary anniversary number of *Pravda*, shows the Marshal wearing two stars, one of them gold encrusted with diamonds and other precious stones.

Marshal Stalin has always lived simply, and this picture probably marks the first time in his life that he has worn jewels.

In addition to the gold star, the photograph shows him with a silver-studded star, shoulder stripes, and a collar embroidered with gold.

*Daily Mail*, 8/11/43.

# Through

## KID GLOVE DIPLOMACY



Russian diplomats and Foreign Office officials are to have new uniforms.

Details of the new uniforms are:

Double-breasted dark grey tunics for ordinary wear; black double-breasted tunics for ceremonial occasions.

White shirts, hard or soft collars, dark grey ties, black boots or shoes.

With their parade uniforms the diplomats will wear white shirts, double stiff collars, stiff cuffs, mother of pearl cuff links, black silk ties, white kid gloves, black silk socks, naval style elastic-sided boots without laces, and a small dagger as worn by the Red Air Force and Navy.

Parade slacks are to have a broad black silk band down the side and gold piping. First secretaries and lower ranks will wear piping only.

Ordinary dress uniform will have gilt buttons, double cuffs with two gilt buttons, and shoulder straps.

Parade uniform will have a velvet collar with palm leaves in gold, gold edging to the tunic and ornamented cuffs indicating rank.

*Evening Standard*, 15/10/43.

## DIFFERENT WAR

When Mr. Riley (So. Dewsbury) asked in the House of Commons why Abyssinia is excluded from the United Nations Commission on war criminals, Mr. Law, Minister of State, said:

"Generally speaking, the policy of the United Nations is that only those nations associated with this question at the beginning should be members of the Commission.

"The Ethiopian Government were kept fully informed at the time the negotiations began, and they have offered no comment."

Mr. Shinwell (Soc., Seaham).—In view of the use of poison gas by the Italians against the Abyssinians, would it not be an act of justice to hand over Italian war criminals to the Ethiopians?

Mr. Law.—That was a different war.

*Evening Standard*, 3/11/43.



## WILLKIE ON STALIN

I have said to a good many of my friends that if Josef Stalin had either been born in the United States or had come to America as a boy, to-day he would be chief executive of one of America's principal industrial corporations or leader of one of our large trade unions.

His manner and his talk, his directness of approach, is almost a replica of the manners of those men who drive American industry.

*Wendell Willkie on Stalin in the "Sunday Dispatch," 3/10/43.*

That Stalin might have been a Ford or a Kaiser is hardly a compliment for a Bolshevik leader!

# the Press

## MORE COLOUR BAR

The Secretary for War is to be asked by Mr. Riley (Lab., Dewsbury):

"Whether he is aware that ATS girls in a training centre at Dalkeith (Midlothian, Scotland) are told by their officers that if they are seen out with coloured soldiers they will be put on a charge?"

An official at ATS headquarters told the *Daily Mirror* yesterday: "There is no definite ruling against girls walking out with coloured soldiers, although they are not encouraged to do so."

*Daily Mirror, 27/10/43.*

## PEACE AIM AT LAST!

After the war I want drinks all day.—C. B. Cochran.  
*Sunday Dispatch, 31/10/43.*

## BUS STRIKE

Lancaster and Morecambe Ribble bus drivers and conductors stopped work to-day in protest against a new time-table, complaining that it meant increased strain.

"We are, however, seeing that all workpeople are taken to and from their work," said a union official.

*Evening Standard, 6/11/43.*



"And I can't get a cook anywhere under three pounds a week. It's people like that who cause wars."

## MORALITY?

If a man takes his girl friend to the cinema in Clones, County Monaghan, Ulster, he must sit on one side of the hall and the girl on the other.

The rule that couples must be separated was announced from their pulpits by the Catholic clergy.

Married couples are exempt from the rule, which has been rigidly enforced since it was introduced early this week.

*Daily Mirror, 27/10/43.*

## ANARCHY—THE CHOICE



French newspapers to-day referred to the inability of the Vichy Government to cope with "the looming civil war."

Writing in the *Nouveaux Temps*,

Guy Crouzet said, according to the German-controlled Paris radio: "The legal Government appears to be powerless, and civil war is looming. We have but one choice left—anarchy or Fascist revolution."

*Star, 21/10/43.*

And the French workers will choose Anarchism not Fascism.

## AMERICAN PRISONS

In the tiny, heat-sodden office building of the Cartersville (Ga.) State Prison camp sat Warden Arthur W. Clay: a stocky, tight-lipped man with hair clipped high above his ears, his white shirt open at the neck, his wash trousers hitched up above his garterless white socks.

Through the office passed a long line of convicts in stripes, to testify for the visiting members of a special legislative committee. The testimony might have made impassive Warden Clay squirm:

Prisoners get a diet mostly of peas, beans and syrup, work sunup to sundown on road gangs, know they will be beaten if they ever slow up under the hot sun.

Convicts are put in leg picks—two-foot iron bars locked over an ankle—for trying to escape, for failing to call Warden Clay "Captain," for no reason at all. The picks stay on day and night.

Being "taken to see the pigs" means a trip to a little shack near the camp hog-pen. There "Big Jim" Bryant, a 7 ft. 2½ in., 330-lb. guard, holds the door shut while Warden Clay administers a whipping—up to 50 lashes—with a rubber hose.

Convict Walter C. Huff, 21, serving a year for reckless driving, testified: "I came here with two other boys and after Captain Clay took off my handcuffs . . . he busted me in the mouth with his fist and my teeth are loose now. Big Jim kicked us and put two picks on us. Captain Clay . . . then took us back to the little house in front of the pigpen and beat me up. He made me bend over the bed and he let loose . . . I was so sore I had to lay on my stomach . . . The beating was on Sunday and I had to work Monday . . ."

Four convicts have used safety razor blades to cut their "heel strings" (the Achilles' tendon) and thus crippled themselves to escape the work and beatings.

After the convicts finished, Big Jim Bryant and everyone else on the prison staff blandly denied the stories. Warden Clay, who used to be a farmer before he got \$160-a-month job, said:

"I expect they need kicking sometimes but I don't do it and I don't want my men to do it . . . I have been just as good as it is possible to be in the chain gang . . . It's all a frame-up . . ."

But last week the "frame-up" showed signs of blasting Georgia's prison system out of its antiquated, sadistic, scandal-ridden past. Georgia's Governor Ellis Arnall, trying hard to erase the black marks of the Talmadge regime, turned the Cartersville investigation into a study of all State prisons. First step; suspension of Warden Clay and Guard Bryant. Second: a tour by legislative leaders, to learn what other State prison systems had been up to since Oglethorpe first brought his oppressed debtors to the New World.

*Time (U.S.A.), 13/9/43.*



# WHO IS OUR ENEMY?

**By Bill Brown**

WITH THE RAPID change of events of the war, it is becoming very difficult to keep pace with the line-up of friend and foe. With one-time allies becoming quislings, and enemies heretofore now our allies, it is not at all astonishing to hear the question raised "Who is our enemy?" A brief review of the topsy-turvy state of affairs may reveal the answer.

On September 3, 1939, the sombre voice of the Umbrella Man informed the British working people that their mortal enemy was henceforth the German nation whose "aggression in Poland has made a declaration of war necessary", and he called on the workers to sacrifice all for the "just war of liberation". During the "phoney" period, Finland was engaged in battle with Russia, and the British Government was very busy and energetic in organising an expedition to "aid gallant little Finland against the Russian aggressors". On Jan. 20, 1940, Churchill made the statement: "The service rendered by Finland to mankind is magnificent. They have exposed for all the world to see the military incapacity of the Red Army, and the Red Air Force. Everyone can now see how Communism rots the soul of a nation, how it makes it abject and hungry in peace, and base and abominable in war." So at this period we were enemies of Russia and Germany, and friends of Finland, France, and a host of other European countries.

The war moved a stage further on, and Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Holland and France fell to the scythe of the German war machine. Our "gallant ally France" was now subject to bombing by British aircraft, and her navy was attacked by the British fleet at Oran. Calumniation was poured upon the Vichy Government, for acting like any capitalist ruling class would in the same circumstances. Italy, seizing her opportunity, reconquered some territory in the South of France, and from that date, she was included in the list of enemies of Britain. Though up to that time, Italy had been ardently wooed by the Allied nations and had been used as a convenient neutral by the international armament and oil companies for supplying Germany with the materials of war! Previously, too, Italy's attack and subsequent victory over the Abyssinians had been recognised by the British Government. Now Abyssinia became one of those small nations who were about to be liberated by the British Bulldog! More confusion in the ranks!

Throughout the winter of 1940-41, the Balkan States were added to Germany's conquests, and then in June of 1941, came Germany's attack on Russia. Immediately, comrade Churchill rushed to the microphone to assure the workers that Russia was now "our friend and ally", and she would be helped in the way of food, planes and tanks. Forgetting conveniently his remarks quoted above, he stated at Sheffield on Nov. 8, 1941, his support of the Russian war effort, and referred to "that great warrior Stalin, and his valiant Russians". Talk about chameleon coats!!

America, in the meantime, had maintained diplomatic relations with the Vichy Government, and had refused to recognise the British puppet, De Gaulle. U.S.A. relations with Japan were very friendly, too, to the extent where American arms and oil magnates were quite prepared to supply arms and fuel to the Japanese war machine.

But came Dec. 7, 1941, with the news that Pearl Harbour had been bombed by the Japanese, and America's

friends now became her enemies—viz. Japan, Germany, Italy and Vichy France. Still more confusion!! The war dragged on for some months, with the loss of Burma, Malaya, Singapore, and other smaller choice dividend-paying concerns of the British Empire. Then came the U.S.-British landing in N. Africa, and once more was posed the question "Who is our enemy?" It was asked because Admiral Darlan, who happened "conveniently" to be in Algiers at the time, was adopted by the American Command as U.S. stooge to govern French North Africa.

The hoisting of pro-fascist Darlan into the seat of power caused much resentment among de Gaullist circles, and the world was startled to hear that he had been assassinated by a young French youth. Yet when this occurred Roosevelt stated "The cowardly assassination of Admiral Darlan is murder in the first degree. I hope speedy justice will overtake the murderer of Darlan." It did—the young Frenchman was shot three days later! Shot, for doing what the propaganda radio stations of the United Nations, urge upon the European working class against the Nazis.

The latest jig-saw puzzle in this game of "find our friends" is the invasion of Italy. Mussolini was kicked out, and Marshal Badoglio took over the reins of office. This is the man who began his actual war career against the Abyssinians in 1896, and has taken part in every fight in which Italy has engaged. This is the man who used mustard gas against Abyssinian resistance in 1935-6. This is the man who is now regarded as a "co-belligerent", and is working hand in glove with Eisenhower, and other military commanders in Italy. This is the man who informed Sir Ronald Campbell, British Ambassador in Lisbon, "that when Allied forces landed on the Italian mainland the Italian Government was prepared to turn its coat completely, switch sides, and join the United Nations in war against Germany" (*News Chronicle*, Sept. 13). On Sept. 20, this newly-born "democrat" had the impudence to make the following statement over the radio: "It is your absolute duty to fight on the side of the British and Americans, against the Germans, and against a few senseless Italians—no longer worthy of such a name—who put themselves at their command". He referred to "the British and Americans—old comrades in arms," and generally called on the Italians to sabotage and resist the German war machine! The predicament of the Italian workers is made plain by two decrees imposed on the same day. On Oct. 10, the Bari radio announced "Special military tribunals to be set up by Marshal Badoglio's Government in Italian regions liberated (?) by the Allied armies will try civilian as well as military offenders . . . Italian soldiers whose units have been disbanded, and who fail to report to the Italian and Anglo-American commanders will be considered deserters." The Rome radio said "Sentences under the new German decrees will be: (1) for helping escaping prisoners—death"!! An example of being between the devil and the deep blue sea!!

This exhaustive survey having failed to reveal our enemy, let us turn away from the military field, and examine the political and economic spheres of capitalist society. The worker finds himself daily beset by Tory and Labour bureaucrats and bosses. In the early morning, he is jerked out of his well earned slumbers by the shrill tones of his alarm clock which remind him that he has a clock to punch in an hour or so. Throughout the day he is watched over by bosses, foremen and overseers, who



keep careful watch on their masters' interests. Even when he leaves his factory or mine, he is still not free to spend the few precious hours remaining, as he likes. He is conscripted to firewatch on the premises that his master uses to exploit him in the day, or he is put into uniform, and used as a Home Guard. At the end of the week he is acutely aware that the Income Tax Dept. has gouged deep into his slim wage packet, even before he has had time to handle the money! The landlord, too, insists on being supported financially and his regular demand for rent, makes further inroads on the worker's wages. His wife is conscripted into the industrial machine; his elder sons and daughters are taken away into the military machine to be used as cannon fodder, at the Government's discretion. His younger children are impressed into Churchill's Youth Movements, where they are taught the gentle arts of murder and arson. If the worker serves in the Armed Forces, and is injured, he is paid a meagre allowance as a pension "for services rendered"—if he can get it! He is thoroughly regimented, dog-tagged, ticketed, docketed, labelled, and bracketed and by whom? Wicked Germans? Treacherous Japanese?

Anarchists were in the forefront of the fight against

Italian Fascism and German Nazism. They fought reaction on the continent while the rulers of Britain were applauding the "social achievements" of the fascists. Anarchists fought Franco from the first day to the last of the Spanish War. And they are still fighting him, while the British and American governments still seek friendly relations with him.

Always our programme has been the same: solidarity between workers of all lands against their common enemy, International Capitalism. British workers are exploited by British and international capital, not by German workers. And the German workers are not oppressed by their British fellow workers but by their Nazi bosses and bureaucrats.

Who is our enemy? It is the capitalist and his political henchmen, both in this country and abroad. And in this class war which we proclaim, the fight for the liberation of struggling and suffering workers and peasants throughout the world, our allies are the workers of all countries. Let us recognize the true enemy; let us join hands with the oppressed of all nations and throw off the oppressors for ever.

## Women fight for Men's Wage Rates

THE STRIKE INITIATED by women workers in a Glasgow engineering factory on October 29th, concerned a fundamental issue of wartime class struggle. To represent it as "merely" a fight for higher wages pure and simple is to misunderstand the points at issue completely. The Unions, the employers, the Shop Stewards, as well as Labour fakery like Pat Dollan, have all tried to pretend that the strike was "unnecessary" on the grounds that negotiating machinery exists for remedying such grievances. Negotiating machinery does exist—and that's about all that can be said, for the strike was called after 18 months "negotiation" had failed to make the slightest impression on the bosses or the government.

Under pressure from the workers the A.E.U., as long ago as May 1942, had come to an agreement with the Employers' Federation regarding women's wage rates. The purpose of the agreement was to bring women's wages into line with men's in order to safeguard the position of men who had been called up from industry into the Armed Forces. Clearly if women accept lower rates than men, they will be in competition with them when they return from the Forces.

In spite of this agreement women have been paid at lower rates than men ever since. During the 18 months that have elapsed, no less than five conferences have been held, without any advance in the position being achieved. Such "negotiating machinery" no doubt suits the bosses very well, but the workers can see that it is a complete swindle. They therefore gave twenty-one days notice of strike action. This threat of direct action made Bevin immediately set up a Court of Enquiry on September 15th last. The Negotiated Agreement reached by this Court of Enquiry presided over by Lord Wark was also unsatisfactory. Only a very small proportion of highly skilled women received equal rates with men, the majority receiving a rate of 29/- plus 22/- (i.e. £2 11s. od.)

The workers saw that such a rate violated the whole spirit of the original agreement, and while such rates are in force, women's labour still represents a threat to men's wage rates and even to their jobs after the war. Furthermore, the new rates had been arrived at by the Union leaders and the bosses, without the workers themselves being consulted.

On October 29th, therefore, the women at the Rolls Royce factory in Glasgow struck work. Next day they were joined by the women employees at two subsidiary factories, and shortly after that, the men also came out in sympathy with their demands, which they recognized as a defence of their own wage positions. In all, 24,000 workers were involved. The strikers demanded a rate of 37/- plus 20/- plus 13/6 (£3 10s. 6d.), which is the minimum male rate for machinists.

Between the workers and the employers stood two ranks of traitors to the working class struggle. The Union leaders, and the Shop Stewards—mostly Stalinists. The Union leaders admitted that the negotiated agreement they had made with the bosses was a wretched affair; but they nevertheless asked the workers to accept it, thereby imperilling the whole structure of men's wages as well as women's, and permitting a serious threat to be offered to the post war position of soldiers returning to industry. In effect, therefore, they are defending the boss. The Shop Stewards actually supported the agreement at first, but later on, under pressure from the workers, they changed their tune and put forward a claim for 34/- plus 22/- as a basis for negotiation, if the strikers went back to work. They thus offered a compromise between the employers and the workers. This middle rate is supported by the C.P. in the leaflets and other propaganda they have put out.

Meanwhile, the employers are content to sit back and let Bevin and the Union traitors handle the business. They know that their interests will be in safe hands! They therefore represent the strike as a domestic matter between the workers and their union. By accepting such an obviously unsatisfactory "solution" as the Court of Enquiry put forward, the Union Executive put the workers in a very bad position from a propaganda point of view. It became possible for the capitalist press to state that the workers had gone to arbitration and then refused to abide by the decisions reached by their own "leaders". So much the worse for the "leaders" who accepted the agreement without consulting the workers.

Faced with the forces of the Government, the Employers, the Unions, who can all rely on the Fifth Column in the workers' ranks provided by the Stalinist Shop

(continued on p. 14)



## ***A Red and Black Notebook***

# FASCIST TRENDS

WE HAVE, in this Notebook, often warned workers against seeking a change of masters by demanding State control of industry. We said this when Shorts' Aircraft workers demanded Government intervention. Shorts' workers themselves proved our statement by declaring, in union mass meeting, that their conditions were even worse under Cripps. We are only concerned with their wages and conditions, not with production, but even here the advocates of State control confess failure.

The shop stewards committee of Short Bros. have issued a statement on this issue which reads:

"Far from improving production the directors have failed to maintain the output obtained from October, 1942, until June this year.

"We are of the opinion that such obstacles as have been encountered are not a reasonable excuse for this failure," the statement continues.

"We welcomed the Government's action in regard to the factory. We still believe the Government was correct in principle, but unfortunate in its choice."

"State control has been proven a failure" they reason "Therefore State control is correct." Strange!

### **Echoes From Barrow**

The Barrow strike is still upsetting the A.E.U. The *A.E.U. Monthly Journal* says:

"At the time of writing, (at the time of printing the strike was settled) a stoppage of work is still in progress at Barrow, and it would not be in the best interests of the union to report all the facts in connection with this business."

"It would not be in the best interests of the union to report all the facts." Exactly!

Communist Wal Hannington, National Organiser of the A.E.U. has been sent to Huddersfield to bully the members there. When the E.C. of the union dictatorially suspended the Barrow District Committee for supporting the strike, the Huddersfield D.C. resigned in sympathy. Hannington's job is to set up a hand-picked scab committee in place of the democratically elected body.

His first attempt was made at the meeting of the Huddersfield 2nd Branch where he threatened the D.C. members with expulsion from the union. Members reminded Hannington of his and Tanner's A.E.U. activities while they were pushing the Minority Movement and how they too had been threatened by expulsion. They also replied to Hannington's bullying officialdom by using Hannington's words—spoken before he gained office. Blustering Wally retired, sadly deflated.

### **Fascism in the Labour Movement**

Trade unions are making their post-war plans for industry. Our readers are well aware that the Labour Party and the trade unions have abandoned even nationalisation and urge instead public utility corporations. How much akin these are to Fascism may be seen by a memorandum on post-war industry presented by the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives to the employers.

The report admits private ownership and urges co-operation between employers and unions. It suggests the creation of an Industrial Board composed of equal numbers of union and employers' representatives and a few other State appointed members with a State appointed chairman.

"It is proposed to endow the Board with responsibility for the general planning of the industry and the control of output for each undertaking, so as to ensure full and continuous employment for all engaged in the industry. The Board would exercise control of costs and prices by means of approved methods of standardisation and specialisation, and ensure the continuance of the production of utility footwear of the highest possible quality. Encouragement of research, investigation of international marketing possibilities and the development of export trade would be also the responsibility of the Board. It would be required to eliminate or establish control over monopoly interests within the industry, and determine the allocation of profits as between capital and industrial and other reserves. The institution of such marketing schemes will have to be undertaken by the Board to control the distribution of the industry's product and to bring retail costs into reasonable alignment with manufacturing costs. The scheme will give the Board, moreover, such other powers as may be necessary to ensure the complete efficiency of the industry, and the abolition of all forms of shoddy footwear and the formulation of a code of conduct for the industry."

### **The Italian Model**

We have before us the *Corporate State* by Benito Mussolini, published in Florence during 1938. Mussolini quotes the constitution of the Fascist Corporations. An equal number of workers' and employers' representatives, three State-appointed members (members of the Fascist Party of course) and a State appointed chairman. Private ownership continues, with some State interference. The aims and purpose of the corporations is exactly as set out for the "Industrial Board" of the N.U. of B. & S.O.

Fascism does not always wear a black shirt.

### **Clydeside Strike**

The Clydeside strike of 24,000 men and women to obtain the full rate of wages for women workers has been the cause of exciting times for trade union bureaucrats who were loudly booed when they ordered the strikers back to work.

The women are being paid much lower rates than the men, though trade union agreements declare for the same rates for men and women. The local agreement which gets around the the national agreement appears to be based upon a wangle which is becoming increasingly common in the engineering industry. Work is sub-divided until new operations are created which can be termed semi-skilled and new and lower rates are claimed for what was once acknowledged to be skilled work. So much for agreements with employers.

### **London Dockers' Strike**

The strike of London dockers against under payment for certain work was, according to the letter of trade agreement and dock practice, entirely justified. Nevertheless, the Communist *Daily Worker* came out against the strike, not against the agreement breaking employers.

"There is no justification for a strike" said the *Daily Worker* of 1/11/43. "Let them (the dockers) return to work."

But why call it the *Daily Worker*? *Daily Blackleg* would be more accurate.

SYNDICALIST.



Principles of Syndicalism IV

TOM BROWN

**THE END of the MONEY TRICK**

TWO FEATURES OF capitalism are essential to its existence—the wages system and a thorough and all reaching system of money relationships. Unfortunately men are now so used to living by money that they find it difficult to imagine life without it. Yet it should be obvious that no libertarian and equalitarian society could make use of money. Syndicalism, as well as ending the wages system, also aims at the destruction of money relationships.

Money, more than any other human product, has been the means of creating false values. We each know of persons who began by wanting money as the means to other ends, but who spent so much energy accumulating money they forgot their original aim and continued to live for money. For means become ends. Is it not obvious that the wealthy trade unions, which have collected hundreds of millions of pounds by the promise to pay strike and other benefits, are now capitalist investment trusts afraid of strikes which threaten their investments.

Socially too, money creates its illusions, giving a false notion of progress. We are always hearing of the great progress that is being made in the twentieth century, and the advance in workers' wages is often cited as example. Everyone knows, of course, that prices have advanced with, or before, wages. Yet, because the advance is gradual, such is the illusion of money, that few realise how small is the progress made.

A few days ago I listened to a conversation on soldiers' pay. All agreed that the private soldier of 1943 with his 2/6d. a day was immensely better off than the soldier of 1913 with his 1/- a day. True, prices were higher, nevertheless 2/6d. is considerably more than 1/-. Let us see. The soldier spends his half-a-crown on small pleasures and refreshments. We shall compare the cost of these now and thirty years ago.

	1913	1943
Cigarettes (Woodbines) per 10	2d.	10½d.
Matches, per doz. boxes	2d.	1/6d.
Beer, per pint	2d.	11d.
Cinemas and Music Halls (cheaper seats)	2d. to 4d.	1/- to 1/9d.

As to snacks, always important to barrack fed soldiers, in 1913 these cost a few coppers a time. Now, nothing could be more impudent than the prices of indifferent meals so often served to service men, especially in the West End. And in 1913 public houses usually supplied free counter snacks of cheese, biscuits and pickles, and often beef sandwiches. No, the advance of the soldiers' wage is just another example of the money illusion.

Money has developed out of all resemblance to that simple medium of exchange which our ancestors used to displace barter. Certainly it was more convenient than barter. But, whereas money once had a real *economic* value, a golden sovereign having twenty shillings worth of *economic* value, just as much as twenty shillings worth of shoes, now, money being paper and adulterated metal has no real value. Being economically worthless, it is potent as a deceiver of the workers, a source of illusions and false values, a hatcher of Beveridge plans.

Even at the paper money stage the monetary system does not halt its development. Now, big money transactions usually mean a new entry in another set of books. A big insurance company may subscribe £100,000,000 to a War Weapons Week without a dime leaving the bank. Yet it is to this book-keeping trick that we are slaves. By such manipulation they can (and are now so doing) cause inflation and gobble up the savings of the petty middle class or the more fortunate workers. By this method they may, and do, reduce to a fraction the obligations of the insurance companies and gain control of smaller businesses.

The so-called War Debt is the greatest of all money tricks. There is no real wealth except that which is produced by labour applied to natural resources. Now every gun used, every bullet fired, every bomb dropped, has been paid for by human labour. One cannot borrow human labour power from the future. In true economics there is no war debt. Yet, we owe thousands of millions for these products of labour, and our descendants to the end of time must continue to pay usury on them. The harder we, the workers, toil producing planes and tanks and guns, the more money we owe as the price of these our products. It's a great trick.

The development of the money system has also led to that creation of modern imperialism, international finance capital, to the investment of capital abroad and to the export of fluid capital, money, in the form of industrial loans. Putting it simply, an agent of certain industrialists goes to, say, a South American republic and points out to its rulers the country's need of a railway and his employers' fine products in that line. "Yes," reply the South Americans, "We like your railways, but we have no money to buy one." "That's all right," replies our super-commercial traveller, "we'll find that for you." A loan, with high discount and interest is floated on the London market and the South Americans buy the railways with borrowed money.

So far, so good, but interest has to be paid



and, as the finance capitalist is not content, as we often are, with pieces of printed paper, goods are exported to Britain to cover the money bills. As most of the goods will be agricultural products it should be obvious that British agriculture must suffer to allow the foreign products of the international finance capitalist system to be dumped on the market. This has led to a strange corruption of public taste. Even in peace time I have seen countrywomen returning from town with foreign machine skimmed milk and margarine from West Africa in their baskets!

A little while ago I picked up the menu in a London restaurant and was delighted to find spiced ham on the list. To me that meant the hams cooked in delicate spices, once so well known in Northern England. Of course I ordered the delicacy, but lo and behold it was just our old friend Spam! Pickled, yes in obnoxious chemicals. Oh! the odium of being pickled in sodium.

Eggs, which were once those lovely white and gold things from shells, are now powder from a carton. Just as good as the real thing. Official, M. of F. In a few years real eggs will be as strange to us as are bananas to war children and the taste of one will probably make us vomit. Still, exported capital and its system must have its return.

Great are the sacrifices that money demands. We have seen miners in Durham who, because they were out of work, shivered over the embers in their grates because they lacked the money to buy coal. Yet they sat above the richest seams in the country. We have seen textile and clothing workers in the West Riding without overcoats in winter because they had not the money to buy their own products. We know farm workers who have starved because unemployment meant they lacked the money to buy the food their labour might produce.

There is no economic wealth except that produced by labour applied to natural resources. Let the miners produce coal for their and their fellows' use, let the textile workers produce cloth and the farm workers food for societies' needs without regard

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Stewards, the strikers were badly placed. They have gone back to work, on the understanding that negotiation be resumed on the basis of the rate offered by the Shop Stewards' Committee. They have given up their only strong card, the withdrawal of their labour power, and it is very doubtful whether negotiation will yield them any more benefits than in the past.

Although the final outcome of this strike is likely to be abortive, the Glasgow women have drawn attention to a most important issue: Whether they are going to allow themselves to be used by the employing class as a weapon against the wages of men workers both now, and more especially after the war. As in other industries, women in engineering have shown themselves as alive to fundamental class issues, and as militant as the men. More power to their elbow!

to money relations. Only thus can we conquer unemployment without going to war.

We know that it is hard for men who have always lived in a money society to imagine a life based upon natural principles, but consider, had we been born into different circumstances it would be just as difficult to imagine life with money. I suppose most of our readers saw the film *Mutiny on the Bounty*. They will recall a certain incident in the film. The mutineers having landed in Tahiti are welcomed by the natives who give them food, drink, and huts to live in. A pleasant life in return for a little labour. Christian, the rebel leader, wishing to show his gratitude gives the native chief a large coin, a piece of English money. The chief, puzzled, asks its purpose. Christian explains that in England all food is stored in shops and to obtain it one tenders money. "And if you have no money?" asks the chief. "Then you get no food," replies Christian.

"What is wrong in England," asks the old chief. "Is there not plenty of fish, plenty of bread fruit, plenty of chickens?" "Oh, yes," replies the seaman, "Plenty of fish, plenty of bread fruit, plenty of chickens." "And if you have no money you starve?" returns the native. "Yes, you starve," is the reply. The old chief considers awhile, then shakes his head and says, "I think I stay in Tahiti."

Poor savage! Entirely without education of course.

(In the next issue of War Commentary we shall outline the Syndicalist method of distribution, without the money and wages systems.)

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# LONDON DOCKERS' STRIKE

THE LONDON DOCKERS' strike which involved several thousand men and lasted a week was caused by direct provocation on the part of the employers. They suddenly stopped the payment of danger money which they had been paying for a considerable time to dockers whenever the ships they were unloading contained dangerous material such as ammunition. In such cases a flag is hoisted on the ship and all workers connected with the unloading receive danger money. The dockers have now been deprived of it, but the seamen and other workers on the ship continue to receive it. The dockers had other important grievances. They have not been receiving any extra rations as heavy workers, canteens are non-existent or unsatisfactory, their complaints regarding questions of piece rates, wages, transfer have been dealt with with great delay and inefficiency.

All these grievances brought the men out on strike. It started at the docks where the danger money was stopped, but other docks which had no claim to danger money because of the non-dangerous nature of the goods handled came out in sympathy.

It is important to note that the piece rates in London docks are lower than in other ports. The average rate for loading and unloading is 1s. 8d. per ton, while in Cardiff it is 2s. 6d. for unloading and as high as 5s. for loading. The guaranteed week is 16s. 6d. less than in other districts.

The dockers belong either to the Transport and General Workers' Union or to the National Amalgamated Union of Stevedores and Dockers. Officials belonging to both Unions advised the men to go back as, they said, there was no possibility of negotiation as long as they stayed out. The employers had given the men no warning when they stopped paying danger money, but according to T.U. officials and C.P. leaders *the men should give a warning.*

As usual the C.P. issued a leaflet asking the men to go back. They did not dare to call the dockers fascist agents as the provocation of the employers was too obvious but they advised the men to rely on arbitration. What arbitration has done for the workers has been shown in hundreds of cases where their claims were rejected and months lost in negotiations which brought them no improvement in wages or conditions. It was not surprising therefore that for a week the London dockers rejected the advice of their leaders to go back to work. It is not because they have any illusion about their T.U. leaders or the negotiation machinery that they have gone back but because the use of troops reduced the strike to a deadlock.

The troops were called in as soon as the strike started. Officially this was to unload essential car-

goes, but on the last day of the strike they were used in docks where non-essential material was unloaded. Most of the soldiers were dockers themselves, many having even worked in the same docks before joining the army, but they were now doing the same job at the same place for 2/6d. a day and acting as unwilling blacklegs into the bargain.

It becomes more and more obvious that the use of the army during strikes represents a serious danger for the workers. While the Government would be unable to replace by troops a great number of workers doing skilled work in big factories, in the case of comparatively small strikes the use of troops allow the Government to wait long enough to demoralise the workers and see their savings dwindle away (since no strikes are recognised by the Union, no strike benefit is paid).

This is a danger which has to be faced and prepared against. As in the case of the dockers, the Government can form and has, indeed, already formed, specialised corps which are used for military purposes but can also be used to defeat industrial unrest. There are two ways by which the workers can defeat Army blacklegging. Either the workers extend the strike to the whole industry and thus make it impossible for the Government to replace them all; or they must appeal to the soldiers and make them realise that they are acting against the interests of their fellow workers and in the long run against their own interests. Judging from the sympathetic attitude of the soldiers towards the dockers this should not be difficult.

None of these steps were taken during the Thames dockers' strike. No attempt seems to have been made to get in touch with dockers in other towns. The majority of the dockers did not even know that the Bristol dockers were on strike at the same time and for similar reasons.

The lack of information was due to the fact that the strikers did not seem to have a properly organised strike committee. This made it difficult for them to keep in touch with dockers in other areas and to keep informed other sections of the working class as to the reasons of the strike. It is a fact that strikes always get very unfair reports in the capitalist Press and it should be the job of the strike committee to see that those unfavourable reports are counteracted to a certain extent in the working-class papers. But anyone who has any experience of reporting strikes knows that it is very difficult to get reliable information about it from the strikers themselves. One of the first jobs of the strike committee should be to issue a statement for the Press. It would be easy then for working class papers to expose the lies of the Capitalist Press.

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These criticisms apart the London dockers have shown a great deal of independent and rebellious spirit during the strike. They have refused to obey their Trade Union leaders who urged them to go back, not hesitating to use dishonest means to get them back. Trade Union officials told the Surrey dock workers for example that the workers at the Albert docks had already gone back to work and that there was no longer any point in maintaining a sympathy strike when this was completely untrue. Dockers were very indignant at the compromising attitude of their trade union leaders and realized how hopeless it is to rely on the constitutional machinery in order to defend their rights. The future events will no doubt confirm them in their opinion and it is to be hoped that they will once again choose the path of direct action which will win them concrete victories over the capitalist class.

### BRISTOL DOCK STRIKE

A small strike occurred last week in the Avonmouth docks and ended in a victory for the dockers.

Our correspondent writes: The unloading of the ships in the Avonmouth docks is done by about four different firms of stevedores. One of these firms unloading a particular ship introduced, what the men considered to be a dangerous method of packing goods. This happened on the Thursday, the workers protested throughout the day to no avail. At tea time the men ceased work and refused to work overtime. They intimated that they would not commence work until the question of loading had been settled. On Friday and Saturday the men on this particular job remained out, the trade union working all out for a settlement persuaded the men on the Sunday shift to commence work for a trial of the new method in the presence of the bigwigs. The outcome was that the management climbed down and had to withdraw the new arrangements. One of the dockers told our correspondent: "While the workers should not appear to be unreasonable in their demands, it was generally recognised in the yard that the time was now ripe and opportune for the pressing of just demands."

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## Two Months to go

The proceeds from our Conway Hall Social have been largely responsible in placing the Press Fund in a healthy position. We only need £82 to reach our £500 by the end of the year. Two months to raise this sum is not a big effort if all the comrades and friends will do their share. So, comrades, don't put it off. Send us your contributions now. Meanwhile our thanks to those comrades who have supported the fund during September and October.

### PRESS FUND September 1943

£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.		
Mansfield: J.L.	2	0	Claygate: E.R.	1	0		
Seattle: M.B. £1,			S. Harrow: R.H.		6		
J.D. 10/-	1	10	0	London: T.K.	4	0	
Cockermouth: R.H.	4	0	London: Park				
Breaston: A.W.	5	0	Sympathisers	2	3		
Tottenham: W.B.	3	0	Mountain Ash: G.R.	5	0		
Tun. Wells: S.G.H.	4	0	Birmingham: H.T.	3	3		
London: F.C.	5	0	Hanwell: Anon.		7		
Kingston: T.W.B.	1	0	0	Breaston: A.W.	5	0	
Kingston: G.E.			Guildford: B.W.M.	6	9		
(per J.B.)	10	0	Dukinfield: J.McP.	1	0		
E. Molesey: J.B.	1	0	0	Newmarket: D.E.	4	0	
London: E.G.	10	0	London: A.M.		5	0	
Argyll: K.B.	3	10	London: G.W.	5	0	0	
London: A.M.	2	0	London: M.L.B.	5	0	0	
Evesham: F.B.R.	2	0	London: Social*	48	14	8	
Ipswich: W.D.	2	0					
N. York: N.J.P.	2	19	3	Total for Sept.	£76	11	9
Chessington: D.M.W.	2	0					
Plaistow: F.E.F.	2	0	Previously				
Leeds: D.P.	3	0	acknowledged	£301	13	1	
Rochester: B.A.H.	2	0	TOTAL to end of				
Brackley: C.E.	4	0	September	£378	4	10	
Manchester: N.L.	2	0	*Proceeds of Social organ-				
Penwith: T.F.G.V.	4	0	ised by the London Friends				
Burnley: J.F.	1	0	of Freedom Press Fund and				
Whiteway: P.P.	2	6	held at Conway Hall, Sept.				
Walthamstow: W.F.H.	1	6	25th. This amount includes				
London: F.C.D.	2	0	the following amounts sent				
London: L.G.W.	6	0	to us by well wishers who				
Blackburn: C.W.	2	6	could not be present.				
Burslem: H.B.	1	6	W.A.J. 2/6, E.W.P. 10/-,				
Gateshead: G.W.T.	2	6	B.T. 2/-, W.H.T. 2/-, L.B. 3/-,				
Gateshead: J.E.S.	2	6	R.R. 2/-, M.J., 1/-, V.T. 28/-,				
London: A.M.	11	3	W.S. 26/-, G.S. £1, McC.				
Minneapolis: E.S.	19	9	4/-, F.D. 6/-, B.C. 10/-,				
Earlstown: J.B.	3	4	D.J.M. 1/-.				
B'ham: Sympathisers			Note: A number of friends				
per C.H.	5	0	still have to settle with us				
London: Proceeds			for tickets. May we again				
Spanish film show	2	15	6	ask them to do so as soon			
				as possible.			

### BIRMINGHAM F.F.P.

A Friends of Freedom Press group is now functioning in Birmingham, and comrades and sympathisers are asked to communicate with B. C. Lewis, 26 King's Road, New Oscott, Birmingham, 23, for details of group meetings and other activities.

### N.W. LONDON F.F.P.

Weekly meetings of the N.W. London F.F.P. are held on Tuesdays at 27 Belsize Road, London, N.W.6. commencing at 7 p.m....Friends and sympathisers are cordially invited to attend.

### COMRADES PLEASE NOTE

Roy L. Jenkins of 39 West Hill, Tredegar, Mon. would like to get in touch with friends and sympathisers in the district with a view to forming a Friends of Freedom Press Group.