

WAR *For Anarchism* COMMENTARY

Vol. 5, No. 18.

MID-JULY, 1944

TWOPENCE

REVOLUTION

Europe's Hope

JULY 14th IS A date of importance in revolutionary history, and it commemorates an event which has considerable bearing on present day events. On July 14th, 1789, the workers of Paris on their own initiative struck the first great blow against tyranny in the French Revolution. While the middle class leaders parleyed and bargained and temporized with the feudal absolutism of the French Court, the workers of Paris acted. They saw in the great fortified prison of the Bastille the symbol of reaction and authority, and they attacked and destroyed it with their own hands. And their action was spontaneous, it sprang from the revolutionary initiative of the workers.

It is time to contrast revolutionary methods of fighting reaction with the militaristic methods of the Allied Governments. For over a year now we have seen what has happened in Italy since those landings in Sicily which were hailed with such enthusiasm by many who thought they heralded the liberation of the Italian people from the yoke of Fascism. After a year we can assess the results of military methods of liberation.

That original enthusiasm has given place to disillusionment. The Allies have retained the services of many minor Fascist officials—people who were the direct instruments in enforcing the Fascist decrees. They have collaborated with the discredited house of Savoy and with reactionaries like Badoglio, men whose past links them indissolubly with Mussolini's régime. The Allies have forbidden strikes, kept wages down, and have made no serious attempts to prevent the disastrous rise in prices. In many respects Amgot has proved more onerous than the German occupation. If one sums it up dispassionately, one can only conclude that the allied Governments have proved a dismal failure as far as the fight against Fascism is concerned.

It is now clear, moreover, that the same weary business is to be enacted in France. The Allied Gov-

ernments know of but one way to fight Fascism—the use of unlimited military forces. Just as Pantelleria and Sicily were mercilessly bombed before being “liberated”, so a similar pounding has been meted out to the towns and villages of northern France. Even reformist papers have pointed out that there has been no attempt to assist the French partisans with arms or even with medical supplies. Instead, the Allies appoint General Koenig as their Commander-in-Chief, with Colonel Passy as his Chief of Staff. One would have thought that the partisans would have preferred to appoint their own chief, and they certainly would not wish to have anything to do with Colonel Passy, for he was the secretary of the French Ku Klux Klan organization, the “Cagoulards” or Hooded Men. By trying to foist on the partisans this reactionary leadership, the Allied Government can only detract from the spontaneous initiative which is the soul of guerilla fighting. It can only alienate revolutionary forces in France, and gives the lie to official protestations of sympathy for underground movements of revolt.

At no time has there been any attempt to enlist the aid of popular insurrectionary forces in France or Italy despite the widespread strikes and sabotage against the Fascists. At no time have they even done anything to encourage the spirit of revolt in occupied countries. Instead their actions are calculated to discourage the will to resistance and turn it into apathy.

Politicians on both sides have proclaimed this a war of liberation. They know the love of freedom which possesses the working class and they have sought to extract the last propaganda drop out of this feeling. But in the hard reality the struggle is fought out by sheer weight of military metal. Napoleon could declare that in war the importance of morale stood in relation to equipment as three to two; but to-day it is not the inspiration of ideals but the massing of armaments that has become the decisive factor. The whole

course of the war can be seen to bear this out. In the first years it was the Nazis who (thanks to loans from the Bank of England and Wall street) were well prepared in materials. In the summer of 1940 the German mechanized forces seemed invincible. But as the British and American war industries were increasingly brought into play, the former supremacy of the Panzer Divisions and the Luftwaffe has been caught up with and surpassed. And with this development the tide of military fortunes has turned. But it has not brought freedom to "liberated" territory.

As their armaments increased the Allies dropped their appeals to the oppressed peoples of Europe to revolt, and have deliberately discouraged any insurrectionary initiative of the workers against Fascism. "Wait till we give the word" is their reiterated advice nowadays. Meanwhile the occupation which follows the Allied victories has brought only despair. Furthermore, the Allies not only retain most of the Fascist features in their administration of liberated territory, but their method of fighting Fascism has necessitated deepening reaction at home. The industrial organization of war production has tended in an increasingly totalitarian direction.

Yet in the days before the present war when governments everywhere were appeasing Fascism and even assisting the dictators in their economic difficulties, the first great blow against Fascism was struck by the workers. For it was not a government but the workers and peasants of Spain who delivered the first check to triumphant Fascism, and showed that it could be effectively fought. On July 19th, 1936, while the Spanish Government shilly-shallied with Franco, the workers employed direct revolutionary action. They seized a few arms from the gun shops, and undaunted by the terrific odds, set out to storm the barracks and other citadels of reaction. Against them was the greater part of the regular Army, well equipped by several months preparation for Franco's *coup d'état*. In materials the workers were under a tremendous handicap. Yet the spirit of men like Ascaso and Durruti, and the inspiration of revolutionary ideals enabled them to triumph just as the Paris workers had triumphed at the Bastille. Despite preparation, despite the modern arms supplied by Hitler and Mussolini, Franco's forces were driven back and the workers were masters of more than half Spain.

All their organization was inspired by the revolution; their militias in which leaders were elected by the men and were their equals; their collectivized factories and agriculture and transport. It was the creative spirit of free organization in those early months after July 1936 which gave the Spanish people the strength to fight back the superior material forces of Franco and his German and Italian backers.

Once more however the ineptitude of governments as defenders against Fascism became manifest. Instead of help from the "Freedom loving nations" the

Spanish workers got Non-Intervention. For all their example of heroism they had to fight on single-handed. Meanwhile the government which grew up in their midst in Spain itself began to hamper and curtail revolutionary initiative. No sooner had it succeeded in securing its power than it turned on the organizations which had been the backbone of anti-fascist resistance. It stifled the revolution and so led the workers to inevitable defeat.

It is understandable that governments should sabotage the revolutionary struggle, however successful, against Fascism. But the Spanish workers were also abandoned by the working class in other countries. Apart from the propaganda work of the Anarchists, the workers in general stood by and watched their Spanish comrades go down before the Franco terror.

Yet their final defeat cannot minimize the importance of their successes. Alone in the last ten years, the Spanish Revolution achieved success against Fascist reaction. The war has proved the failure of militarism, which instead of overthrowing Fascism imitates it, and casts new fetters on the peoples it claims to liberate. The fall of the Bastille, and still more the Spanish struggle proclaim the contrast, and point the way of hope, to the destruction of Fascist tyranny. The establishment of Freedom will come from the revolutionary initiative of the workers. It will not come from authoritarian measures which fetter that initiative, but from free organization which allows the spirit of revolution free play.

SPANISH REVOLUTION ANNIVERSARY

19th JULY 1936 - 1944

PUBLIC MEETING

at the
HOLBORN HALL
Grays Inn Road.

on

SUNDAY, JULY 23rd, AT 6 p.m.
Anarchist Federation of Britain and C.N.T.
(Spanish Revolutionary Union)

Speakers:

J. GARCIA PRADAS (C.N.T.)

TOM BROWN (A.F.B.)

J. DELSO DE MIGUEL (C.N.T.)

KEN HAWKES (A.F.B.)

Chairman: **MAT KAVANAGH**

"Our Path is Struggle — Our Will is Freedom"

ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

THE GENERAL STRIKE IN DENMARK

SELDOM since the war began has our attitude towards it been more strikingly confirmed by events than in the spectacular General Strike in

Denmark. Denmark did not go to war. Nevertheless the Danish masses, in spite of tyrannical suppression, have given Nazism one of its most severe defeats. After a long campaign of strikes and sabotage against the Hitler machine, in spite of appeals to maintain calm by the so-called anti-Nazi king, the workers declared a general strike against a culminating act of provocation by the German authorities.

Hitler had sent the notorious Schalburg Korps, the Nazi brigade of Danish bourgeois collaborationists officered by Germans, into Copenhagen. The workers demanded their withdrawal, from the capital at least. Naturally the authorities did not agree. They met acts of sabotage with mass execution. The general strike was declared and in Stockholm a few weeks after (July 3rd) it was announced that in twenty-two cities the strike was complete. The Nazis made concessions in withdrawing the curfew until midnight, restoring permission for train and street car services—in vain. They learned a lesson from the British imperialists and brought out the old brigade who can always be relied on in such an emergency:

"A new appeal to the workers to return, broadcast to-night, was sponsored by William Buhl, Chief of the Social Democratic Party, the leader of the Conservative Party, trade union leader Eiler Jensen, and the Chief Burgomaster.

"Jensen stated that no trade union functionaries had been arrested in the present conflict."

Daily Herald, 4/7/44.

Certainly no union flunkeys had been arrested—they were needed by the Nazis, just as our own parasites would have been. In this country they give as an excuse that "we must not embarrass the war effort against Nazism". They could hardly say that in Denmark, so instead they said "the appeal was made purely in Danish interests". But the Nazis gave them the radio. The appeal was given publicity in Europe, so that the revolutionary workers in occupied lands might get the benefit of the "leaders" in Denmark.

Nevertheless the strike went on! And what discredited Conservatives and Socialists alike was the fact that the strike beat Hitler. The Germans were forced to concede the demand. They took the Schalburg Korps off the streets. They confined them to barracks, and arranged to hide them in a country town in Zealand. They promised to take no reprisals.

For four years King Christian and his band of followers have warned the Danes against such action, for fear, they said, of the slaughter the Nazis would wreak. In the course of the Danish General Strike "it is estimated nearly 90 persons were killed and 600

wounded". A heavy toll, indeed, and yet considering the length of time it took, very little compared with the toll of life that would normally have been taken as hostages in that period by the occupation troops, and nothing compared with Air Raid slaughter outside "liberated" areas.

What will happen in the future we do not know. British agents are undoubtedly there intending to capitalise on the situation for ends not consistent with mass action. Russia has agents on the cheap—Communists—with the same ends.

But this strike has shown how even Nazi dictatorship can be brought to its knees by direct action from below. This has happened in a tiny country with no vast unpoliced territory where men may "take to the maquis", a land where the workers cannot escape the clutch of the conquerors, but where as everywhere they retain their industrial power. Were this course followed throughout Europe, with a revolutionary upsurge that fraternised with German soldiers against the Nazi ruling-class, a very different chapter would have been written in the history books. A revolutionary Britain could have given the lead, by example and radio and common exertion. Capitalist Britain acts as a brake on the struggle. If we intend to change the world from tyranny and war to freedom and peace we must be prepared to make the revolutionary changes at home that will bring light and aid to the struggle of our class-brothers everywhere.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN ITALY?

FRAGMENTS of information published in odd corners of the daily press help one to form some picture of the conditions in Italy under Allied rule. One thing emerges with certainty; the Allies are doing nothing whatever to encourage the Italian people to identify their new rulers with the desire for freedom. Philip Jordan, writing recently in the *News Chronicle*, states that "Even the head of the notorious Italian African Police, more hated, more violent even than the Republican Fascists, is now working for us because he came and offered his services and it seems wiser to use his knowledge than to lock him up." Presumably this refers to his police activity on behalf of Mussolini's régime—his knowledge of those who were antagonistic to Mussolini. It is encouraging to Italians to know that the Allies think it "wiser" to use this knowledge.

This incident is not however an isolated one. Throughout the Allies have signified their willingness to work with Fascist officials so long as they recognize their new masters. And their work for their new masters is, if anything, more reactionary than it was under the old. Alistair Forbes, in the *Daily Mail*—no enemy to reaction—remarks that "Few observers, official or unofficial, would deny that Southern Italy was worse

off under AMGOT than it had been under the German occupation”.

A soldier in Italy, in a letter to the *New Statesman* (1/7/44), gives a picture which shows that these admissions in the capitalist press are not overdrawn. He points out that whereas the Germans instituted a system of rationing which helped to keep the price of food within bounds, the Allies have no rationing system except for bread. He continues: “The following figures, in lire, are a comparison of prices: (i) in 1939, before rationing; (ii) in August, 1943, under a rationing system; (iii) present Black Market prices (it is practically impossible to obtain these commodities outside the Black Market):

	(i)	(ii)	(iii)
Olive Oil, per litre	5	15	180-240
Beans, per kilo	2	30	200
Potatoes, per kilo	3	5	40
Macaroni, per kilo	3	3	240
Meat, per kilo	14	70	300

With such prices as these, it is not surprising to hear that there is widespread semi-starvation, and that epidemics are difficult to control. One further example may show how concerned the Allied authorities are at these conditions. The Military Governor of Rome, Colonel Johnson, ordered a 15 per cent. wage increase for all civilians employed by the Allied armies in the capital. *This order, however, has been countermanded by General Alexander.* The *Daily Mail*, reporting the news in its issue of July 5th., says that: “Officials in the Rome area said the Allied Forces here are paying civilians less than the German Army paid them, and that the scale is below that fixed by the Fascist labour code.” Comment seems unnecessary.

THE BOSSES' FRIENDS

OF interest to all workers, particularly those who support the Trade Union Leaders, are several statements made recently by various T.U. “Fuehrers”. In a publication called *The T.U.C. in War-time*, the question of full employment is discussed by Sir Walter Citrine. “One of the things we must do as a nation, if we are to ensure full employment, is to regulate the flow of investment (!) . . . It is necessary to secure sufficient control over investment in order to ensure that the rate of gross investment is not subject to violent fluctuations.” Here, once more, is exposed the policy of labour leaders and T.U. bureaucrats. Co-operation with no opposition to Capitalism! These leaders are interested only in bolstering up, and supporting a class system, at a time when workers should be organising to overthrow it. No talk here of abolishing wage-slavery, and the bosses; only of how to safeguard and assist the capitalist class still further to exploit the workers.

Another straw in the wind is a proposal made by Mr. J. Benstead, General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, who said on the eve of the Union's national conference, “Provided that we can ensure an adequate minimum wage for all the workers

we represent, coupled with differential payment in proportion to the skill and responsibility exercised. I am sure the unions would be prepared to negotiate so as to secure stability and peace in the industry . . . It is imperative that in the reconstruction period after the war there shall be the maximum amount of industrial peace. *It will be the height of folly if after fighting the greatest battle in history we should go on to have an industrial battle of the home front.* Here we have it again—in return for selling the slaves at various prices to the capitalist, these labour fakers hope to retain their privileged position in the ruling class. They will betray the thousands of workers whose hard-earned bobs and tanners have gone to pay the union leaders fat salaries and expenses. And what have these leaders done for them? Merely led them up the garden path again and again.

One more item of news. According to the *News Chronicle*, July 4, “A Resolution condemning unofficial stoppages was passed by 148 votes to 20 yesterday at a conference in Glasgow of Scottish miners' delegates. The resolution declared that these strikes bring discredit to miners, play into the hands of the enemy, and jeopardise the lives of fighting men. It gives power to the executive committee of the National Union of Scottish Mineworkers to deal with elements taking part in these stoppages.” Not only will the leaders betray and sell the slaves but they will do all they can to make the slaves go quietly by resisting all attempts at striking. The leaders have scrambled out of the poverty-stricken conditions, up on to the backs of the toiling workers, and now they aspire to be the future Bevins and Morrisons, fulfilling the same functions as Ley in Germany, and Schvernick in U.S.S.R.—to boss and dictate to the workers from their comfortable positions. How much longer are workers going to continue to follow the illusion of being led into the promised land by labour leaders? Wake up, fellow slaves and look around you! The way to emancipate yourselves from the bonds of wage serfdom is to do the job yourselves. You, who do all the complicated work of production and distribution, can free yourselves for all time by your own organised efforts.

SURVIVING FEUDALISM

IT is not generally realised in this country how far, in spite of the changes in régime which have followed one another in Italy during the last century and a half—each with its own reformist or pseudo-revolutionary set of phrases—the old feudal class have retained, if not nominal power, at least the property rights which in the long run are more important to their owners. An article in the *New Statesman* of July 8, written by a New Zealand officer who had served in Southern Italy, gives some interesting information concerning the estates of a certain Marquis de Arruaga, the owner of ten prosperous farms in Apulia and Campania. The ancestors of this nobleman reached Italy

(continued on p. 10)

THE SPANISH SOCIAL REVOLUTION

THE MOST PROFOUND and lasting impression which the Spanish people have had of the Revolution of 1936 is the collectivisation of the land and industry which took place in the first months which followed the fascist rising.

The experiences of street fighting, church burning, militia life, bombing and food shortage will all have left their traces but the taking over of the factories, the work in common free from the interference of the bosses and degrading exploitation must have left a far more lasting impression. Too much importance cannot be attached to this aspect of the revolution both because workers in other countries can benefit from the experience of the Spanish workers and because when the Spanish workers rise again they are likely to adopt the same form of economic organisation which has given them such excellent results in the past.

The word collectivisation being often used nowadays in connection with the economic system of Russia, it is necessary to indicate that the collectivisation of the land and industry in Spain was of a completely different nature from that carried out by Stalin. Factories, fields, vineyards and orange groves were not collectivised by order of the Government. Workers and peasants were not faced with the prospect of joining a collective, going to prison or being shot. The collectivisation movement was a spontaneous one and for the first few months of the revolution it developed with very little interference from the State which merely contented itself with ratifying the action taken by the workers.

A. Souchy describes in a book, *Colectivizaciones* how the workers of Catalonia and other parts of Spain took control of the industries. When the fascist rising took place a great number of industrialists took refuge abroad or went into hiding. The workers had declared a general strike as a means to counteract the fascist offensive and it lasted for the eight days which followed the 19th of July 1936. Those days were occupied with street fighting, the clearing out of fascist elements hidden in the towns and villages and the sending of militia columns to the front line. The revolutionary forces were victorious in about half of Spain and workers' organisations decided to end the general strike. The workers went back to the shops, factories, garages which had been deserted by their owners who had either gone away or perished in the struggle, and found that they had a splendid opportunity to put into practice the principle of common ownership which they had been advocating and fighting for for many years.

This is how Souchy describes the movement:

"The collectivisation must not be understood as the realisation of a preconceived programme. It was spontaneous. However, one cannot deny the influence of anarchist ideas on this event. For many decades the Spanish anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists had considered the social transformation of Spain as their most important aim. In the meetings of the syndicates and groups, in newspapers and pamphlets the problem of the social revolution was continually discussed in a systematic way. What was to be done on the day following the victory of the proletariat? The apparatus of State power had to be abolished. The workers had to take charge themselves of the direction and administration of the enterprises; the syndicates had to control the economic life of the country. The federations of industry should direct production while the local federations should direct consumption. These were the ideas of the anarcho-syndicalists."

The Anarchist syndicates and groups did not lose time in putting these principles into practice, particularly where their influence was strongest—in Catalonia. The National Confederation of Labour (anarcho-syndicalist) started by organising the production and distribution of food. The people had to be fed first and popular restaurants were opened in every district where all those needing a meal could get one free.

The First Stage of Collectivization

Meanwhile in factories, workshops and stores the workers began to take control. They elected delegates who took charge of the administration. Though these men had often little theoretical knowledge they did their jobs and proved efficient organisers. Production was improved and wages went up. But soon the workers became aware that the mere seizing and running of the factories and the elimination of the capitalists was not enough, that more equality among the workers themselves had to be created. This is how Souchy describes the situation existing at the time:

"In the first phase of collectivisation the wages of the workers varied even within the same industry. As the collectivisation limited itself to abolishing the privileges of some capitalists or to eliminate the capitalist profit in a joint stock company, the workers became the exploiters themselves, replacing in fact the previous owners. The change produced a more just situation than before because the workers were able to get the fruit of their labour. But this system was neither socialist nor communist. Instead of one capitalist there was a kind of collective capitalism. While before there was only one owner of a factory or a café the collective proprietors were now the workers of the factory or the employees of the café. The employees in a prosperous café got better wages than those in a less prosperous one."

It was obvious to everyone that collectivisation could not stop in this phase which had given rise to new injustices. The workers went a step forward. The syndicates began to control the industries as a whole. For example the builders' syndicate in Barcelona put itself in charge of all the building jobs in the city. This was followed by a levelling of salaries in the building industry. But even this was unsatisfactory as workers in the richer industries still received better wages than workers in less prosperous industries.

Co-ordination Between Industries

The Spanish workers realised that they had to co-ordinate the various industries so that more flourishing industries could help the others. All the incomes of the various syndicates should be concentrated in a single pool which would distribute the funds equally amongst the various syndicates. This co-ordination was never completely achieved partly because the tasks of the war prevented the syndicates from devoting all their energies to the task of reconstruction and partly because the government soon began to tie the hands of the workers.

Co-ordination was however achieved between various syndicates and Souchy gives the example of the transport industry. The Bus Company in Barcelona which had been put under the workers' control had an excess of funds. With it they helped the Tramway Company which was not doing so well. Also when 4,000 taxi drivers were left without work through lack of petrol the Transport Syndicate went on paying their wages.

The Peasants Seize the Land

While the workers took possession of the factories the peasants collectivised the land. The Spanish peasants have for centuries tried to expropriate the landowners and to get back the land which, in many parts, they used to till in common for centuries in the past. Every time a revolt took place the peasants would seize the estates of the landowners and revive communal institutions for the organisation in common with the life of the village. The Anarchist movement tried to give a more definite shape to the aspirations of the Spanish peasantry. At the Congress of the C.N.T. in Madrid in June 1931 the collectivisation of the land was put forward as one of the most important aims of the rural workers. When the revolution took place these resolutions were carried out and not only was the land collectivised in most places but the industries attached to it.

We shall not deal with the peasants' collectives. Even bourgeois and Marxist writers willingly admit that the agricultural collectives were a great success but they hasten to assert that this proves that anarchism is only practicable in an agricultural, poorly developed country and that it would be a mistake to believe that the same results could be achieved in a modern, industrialised country.

Unhappily for them, facts don't at all back up their argument. Of all the provinces of Spain, Catalonia is the most industrialised; it contains varied and up-to-date factories which employ a large part of the population. Catalonia can stand comparison with the most industrialised parts of France, Italy or England and yet it was in Catalonia that collectivisation was most successful. Furthermore it achieved its best results not in agriculture where the existence of small holdings was not particularly favourable to collectivisation, but in industry.

The Workers Run the Country

There was hardly any industry in Catalonia which was not collectivised. The transport industry including railways, buses, tramways and the port of Barcelona; the textile industry grouping over 200,000 workers; the engineering factories producing cars, planes and war material; the food industry; the public services such as electricity, power and water were all put under workers' control.

The collectivisation decree issued by the Government on the 24th Oct., 1936, only declared obligatory the collectivisation of industrial and commercial enterprises which, on the 30th June, 1936, employed more than 100 workers as well as those which had been owned by fascists. But when the decree was published the collectivisation had already been carried out much further than that. Cafés and hotels though employing a relatively small number of workers had been collectivised; street vendors, hair-dressers and barbers, shop assistants and actors had all joined a syndicate and were administering in common the industry to which they belonged.

The two unions, the C.N.T. (anarcho-syndicalist) and the U.G.T. (socialist trade union) acted in common, but as the anarcho-syndicalists were, in Catalonia, far more powerful than the socialists and that they attached more importance to the revolutionary conquests of the revolution it was generally on the initiative of the C.N.T. that collectivisations were carried out.

Workers' Committees are Formed

The collectivisation of the Catalan railways was carried out a few days after the insurrection in a swift and efficient manner. On the 24th July the railway syndicates, belonging one to the C.N.T. the other to the U.G.T., met and decided unanimously to carry on the collectivisation of all the services of the General Company of Catalan Railways and to assume

the complete responsibility for its administration. Two kinds of workers' committees were set up. The Station Revolutionary Committees dealt with problems arising out of the civil war. They placed guards to defend the stations against any fascist attack, they carried out a check on all passengers, they prepared armoured trains which took the militiamen to the front line, they organised hospital trains for the wounded. These and many other immediate and vital tasks were carried on by the Station Revolutionary Committees with great enthusiasm and efficiency.

Other committees were formed to deal with the more permanent and technical aspects of the railways. Committees were set up to look after the workshops, the rolling stock, the permanent way, the welfare of the workers, etc. Though it cannot be claimed that trains ran to time, a feat that even the revolution could not achieve, they did run very efficiently under great difficulties.

The textile industry grouping 230,000 workers, of whom 170,000 belonged to the C.N.T. was also collectivised. The organisation of the textile industry under workers' control has been described in detail in a pamphlet issued during the Spanish Revolution, by Freedom Press, *Social Reconstruction in Spain*. In the engineering industry one can mention the Hispano-Suiza factory employing 1,400 workers which was collectivised by the C.N.T. and which immediately began to produce the material most needed for the revolutionary forces.

Success and Limitations

All the documents relating to the collectivisation both of the land and industry in Spain prove without the slightest doubt that the workers are entirely competent to run the economic life of a country. Wherever the workers took over, they eliminated inefficiency and waste, profiteering and parasitism, for their own benefit and that of the whole country.

Unfortunately the Spanish workers were not able to achieve the complete collectivisation of the country. They allowed small capitalists to carry on and these later proved to be a dangerous reactionary force. But it was the Government whom the workers had failed to overthrow which put the greatest obstacles in the way of the complete collectivisation of the country and which later, under the influence of right wing elements and of the Communists went as far as suppressing collectives and reintroducing competition and private capitalism.

The first step against the collectives was taken by the Catalan Government (Generalidad) in the middle of December, 1936. The food industry which had been so efficiently organised by the C.N.T. was put into the hands of the Communist Comorera who called back the small business men who sent the prices up and brought in the black market and waste.

If the Government had been abolished the Spanish workers would have been able rapidly to collectivise the whole country and abolish the wage system and all the inequalities attached to it. The power of reaction overcome them instead. But their attempts to build a society where workers will control the means of production and the goods for consumption will serve as an example in the future revolution not only to the working class of Spain but to the whole world.

M. L. B.

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**Comrades who have not  
settled for their Solidarity  
tickets please do so NOW!**



## Red & Black Notebook

THE AMALGAMATED ENGINEERING UNION has launched a campaign for a membership of one million. One million strong sounds good, but one million weak is more accurate if the members are only names in the book or contributions in the bank. The strength of a union is the consciousness and energy of its members, factors in decline in the A.E.U. The membership of the A.E.U. is now 923,210 (June 1944), but only a fraction of that membership takes even the slight part of voting its officials.

The union's *Monthly Journal* reports: "in the first ballot for delegates to the Trades Union Congress recently, the total votes cast only amounted to 65,888, which means that less than 8 per cent. of our membership used their vote. A similar unsatisfactory position exists in all the elections for Union officers."

At the time of amalgamation in 1920 the union had about 400,000 members, less than half the number of to-day, but the interest and energy of the members were about ten-fold greater than that of 1944.

### Rail Union's Post-war Plan

Like several other trade unions, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen has, by its Executive Committee, published a post-war plan for the industry it covers. Unlike most other unions, the A.S.L.E. & F. does not favour private ownership, but gives first favour to nationalisation, the old and now discarded principle of the Labour Party. However, this must not be mistaken for a leftward trend in this railway union for many influential rail shareholders favour nationalisation, which, by compensation, would replace their control of a declining industry by state guaranteed profits.

Further, most European countries, including the Fascist, have nationalised railways, and Winston Churchill 34 years ago, whilst Liberal candidate for Dundee, included a proposal for State railways in his election address.

The A.S.L.E. & F. plan proposes: (1) The State's representative should be the Minister of Transport responsible through the House of Commons to the country; (2) the Minister should appoint as his agent a chairman to preside over a National Control and Management Committee; (3) this Committee should consist of the chairman and eight others, four appointed by the Minister and four nominated by the railway trade unions, and it should have complete power in management of the industry and be responsible for selecting regional managers that may be necessary, these latter being responsible for carrying out all decisions of the Committee.

The unions' delegates would by this plan be ineffective if they took any other than the Government's viewpoint, for they would be outnumbered by 5 to 4. Control is to be from above—as now. The State Committee is to appoint

regional managers. Regional managers appoint departmental chiefs.

The A.S.L.E. & F. plan contemplates three stages in the industry's development; the return to pre-war *status quo*, the establishment of a public utility board, as the London Passenger Transport Board, and nationalisation. As to the L.P.T.B. model, all we say is, "Ask the London busmen and the bus queues."

### IAA Tightrope Walkers

Readers will have noted the tight rope walking and trapeze work of certain trade union leaders and bodies on the issue of the anti-strike decree IAA. Contempt was aroused by Jack Tanner's antics when he refrained from voting against the measure on the General Council of the Trades Union Congress and afterwards said he ought to have done so (the Communist Party line had, after a silence of three weeks, then appeared). But the prize ought to go to the Scottish Trades Union Congress.

"The new Defence Regulation IAA was made the subject of an emergency resolution, by which the Congress expressed its concern regarding the use to which this Regulation might be put, and called upon the General Council to pay particular attention to its operation."

### The Lamplighters

As a child I admired the work of the men who lit the street lamps on winter nights and economically returned to put them out in the morning as we walked to school. I have not the same admiration for the latest set of lamplighters and lampputterouters. The Communist Party (appropriately enough) has turned its attention to saving the bosses electricity bill and increasing our darkness.

Following the Government's regular calls to save light, the C.P. by its shop stewards and production committees is attempting to switch off a large number of lamps in the factories. The Communist *New Propellor* boasts of the success of these light savers. As most factory workers labour by electric light even in day time and as most factories are, even at the best of times, inadequately lit, the effect on the health and nerves of the workers will be easily understood.

Jolly good business for the opticians!

### Exploiting The Wounded

When the Second Front was a long way off, Communist speakers loved to shout about it. When it happened, they fell silent, but now they are seeking to exploit it in a new way. In a London aircraft factory of our acquaintance, Communist shop stewards proposed a factory collection for the Second Front wounded. Nothing much wrong with that but—the money was to be taken by certain persons and given direct to wounded men along with a little talk. The scheme was opposed by non C.P. stewards who declared that; the collection should go to *all* wounded irrespective of Front, no propaganda should be dished out with the ten bobs and in any case the Red Cross was a better means of distribution and would ensure a more equitable distribution, free from political party control.

SYNDICALIST.

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## RUSSIA LOOKS MORE AND MORE LIKE A FASCIST STATE

A decree increasing State aid to pregnant women, giving special money grants to families of three and more, and instituting special decorations and honours for the mothers of large families was issued yesterday by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

The decree is directed towards encouraging large families and strengthening the care of motherhood and childhood.

Families will on the birth of the third child get a lump sum grant of 1,300 roubles and a monthly allowance of 80 roubles.

The amount of these allowances and grants increases with each additional child until at the eleventh they reach 5,000 roubles lump-sum grant and 300 roubles a month allowance.

Mothers who have borne and brought up five or six children are awarded the "Motherhood Medal". With families of seven, eight or nine children, mothers get the third, second or first class of the order "Mothers' Glory." The title "Heroine Mother" is conferred on those who have borne and brought up ten children.

Unmarried mothers will receive a special allowance for children born after the promulgation of the new decree amounting to 100 roubles a month for one child, 150 roubles for two, and 200 roubles for three and more.

The decree fixes the rates of taxes on bachelors, spinsters and couples with one or two children. The tax applies to men between the ages of 20 and 50 and women between the ages of 20 and 45, and is in proportion to the income.

New regulations governing marriage and the family have been introduced.

The decree lays it down that only registered marriage entails the rights and duties of husband and wife—as provided for in the corresponding legal codes.

The existing right of a mother to start court proceedings for ascertaining the paternity of a child and for collecting money for maintenance of a child born out of registered wedlock is abolished.

Divorce proceedings are to be made public, with preliminary publication of a notice in the local newspapers.

The People's Courts must now take measures to bring about reconciliation between man and wife, and only after this can the Higher Courts, beginning at the City Courts, consider the dissolution of the marriage.

*Daily Worker, 10/7/44.*

The sanctity of marriage and the family! The virtue of bringing masses of children into the world! Mussolini discovered all this twenty years ago . . .

## PATRIOTISM WITHOUT TEARS

Patriotism, being based on emotion, has no place in the cold logic of the law.

The U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has restored the lost citizenship of John Albert Rossler, one-time German-American Bund leader, on the ground that "attachment to the principle of the constitution which the law exacts at naturalisation is not addressed to the heart. It demands not affection for, or even approval of, the democratic system of government but merely acceptance of the fundamental political habits and attitudes which here prevail."

*News Chronicle, 8/7/44.*

## BRISTOL AREA F.F.P. MEETINGS

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## CHRISTIAN FEELINGS

Mr. Churchill yesterday toured A.A. sites in Southern England. For more than six hours he saw the battle of the flying bomb.

Sir Frederick told the Premier that the battery had already shot down several bombs. As he shook hands with the men, Mr. Churchill said grimly, "It's a pity there were no Huns in them."

*Daily Express, 1/7/44.*

# Through

## "A NEW HABIT"

Mr. Thomas is almost ecstatic in forecasting a future for the Brains Trust idea, in television, in local government, even at Parliamentary elections. 'Whatever else they (his original four) may achieve', he says, 'they can always lay claim to having started a new habit. They made a nation think'. The only fitting answer to that would seem to be short, rude and Anglo-Saxon. The Brains Trust has introduced a large public to the pleasures of good conversation and to nearly everybody has been, and is, first-rate entertainment. But as for having initiated thought among the British people—shades of *The Pilgrim's Progress* and the Authorised Version, shades of Tom Paine and Will Cobbett, of the Mechanic's institutes and W. T. Stead—well, come off it, Mr. Thomas.

*The Listener, 28/6/44.*

## NEW FAMINE PROSPECTS

Grim food prospects for India in the coming months were forecast by 27 political leaders and industrialists in a joint statement issued to-day.

"Conditions of acute scarcity and malnutrition exist in most deficit areas, where the population lives on a margin of subsistence," the statement said. "A normal over-all deficiency in food supplies, coupled with the large increase in military demands and the certainty of a poor wheat crop, indicate grim prospects."

"We earnestly hope and pray that India may be spared the horrors of a second famine. Should the conditions of last year recur the responsibility will be that of the authorities in London."

*Manchester Guardian, 1/7/44.*

## POST-WAR FOLLY

Major Vyvyan Adams, will next Tuesday in the House of Commons ask Mr. Churchill whether, as a deterrent to any attempt by Germany to rearm after her defeat, he will propose to the United Nations that German territory be encircled by flying-bomb sites directed at German centres of population, so that immediate action may follow any infringement by her of the disarmament conditions to be dictated by the victorious powers.

*Evening Standard, 4/7/44.*

## BRIGHT PROSPECTS

I am encouraging manufacturers, by the offer of extra raw materials, to make more mouse-traps.—Mr. Dalton, President of the Board of Trade.

*Daily Express, 29/6/44.*

This ought to solve the unemployment problem for the Government!



## THE WAR IN CHINA

Pots, Chamber, plain.

Pots, Chamber, with Admiralty monogram in blue for hospital use.

Pots, Chamber, fluted, with royal cypher in gold, for Flag Officers only.

Pots, Chamber, round, rubber, lunatic.

*From the Admiralty Stores List.*

# the Press

## JIM CROWISM

The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People filed suit here in federal court to force the National Housing Agency to stop its refusal of public housing to qualified Negro applicants because of race or colour.

The suit comes on the heels of the revelation by the Detroit Housing Commission that there are eleven thousand Negro families which have requested public housing but which have not been accommodated. Charles Elgecomb, the commission's secretary-director, revealed that there is money available for many thousands of housing units for Negro war-workers, but that no sites have been found that would not arouse the kind of fight that raged over the Sojourner Truth project:

*The Call (U.S.A.), 10/3/44.*

## OUTDOING HITLER

A French business man and Rotarian, M. Marcel Ferel, who recently escaped from France, told members of the Birmingham Rotary Club yesterday: "As long as there is a German nation the civilised world will never live in peace. We must destroy the Pan-Germanic Empire and reconstitute the former duchies which existed before the Treaty of Frankfurt. Deport Germans to the countries which they have devastated and make them work there as slaves. Shoot all the Gestapo and murderers and then sterilise all the men and male children.

"Later, when the various duchies have proved themselves worthy of a place in the civilised world, the German women will inter-marry with other nationalities. From this, perhaps, will spring a united European civilisation."

*Manchester Guardian, 27/6/44.*

## "PEOPLE IN GLASS HOUSES"

Col. Sir Arthur Evans (Con., Cardiff, S.) asked the Secretary for War, in the Commons to-day, what action he proposed to take in regard to Lieut.-Col. Cyril Roche, late Irish Guards and now in Rome.

Sir James Grigg said that the military authorities concerned had been informed that Col. Roche had been known to be a confirmed admirer of Mussolini and at one time a paid propagandist on behalf of Italy.

They had been instructed to obtain all available information regarding his activities and to report what action had been taken.

*Star, 27/6/44.*

Evidently the objection is to the labourer being worthy of his hire, since many other lieutenant-colonels as well as other officers, M.P.s and even Prime Ministers, likewise were 'confirmed admirers of Mussolini' though they may have merely been unpaid propagandists on behalf of Italy.

## SALVEMINI AND THE COMRADES

The Hollywood Writers' Congress has been trying to pretend that it is not under the control of the Communists; but it might as well now drop the effort. It gave itself away completely in its dealings a few days ago with Professor Gaetano Salvemini of Harvard University. The Communists, of course, are now an ultra-conservative group whose policy runs parallel to that of the National Association of Manufacturers. They told Professor Salvemini that he could not fulfill a proposed lecture engagement with them unless "there is a definite assurance that you do not attack the United Nations or the policies of the United States as embodied in the Atlantic Charter and the Teheran agreement." Dr. Salvemini, as everyone knows, has long been a bitter critic of American State Department policy towards Italy, and even the Department has tacitly admitted that he was right, by changing that policy. Quite properly, he told the Hollywood Writers' Congress to go to hell. We do not know who are the members of this congress; but we do know that we would not trade Dr. Salvemini, who is one of the half-dozen most heroic figures, and most courageous anti-fascists, now living, for this whole job lot of comrades, squirming in their efforts to follow the party line.

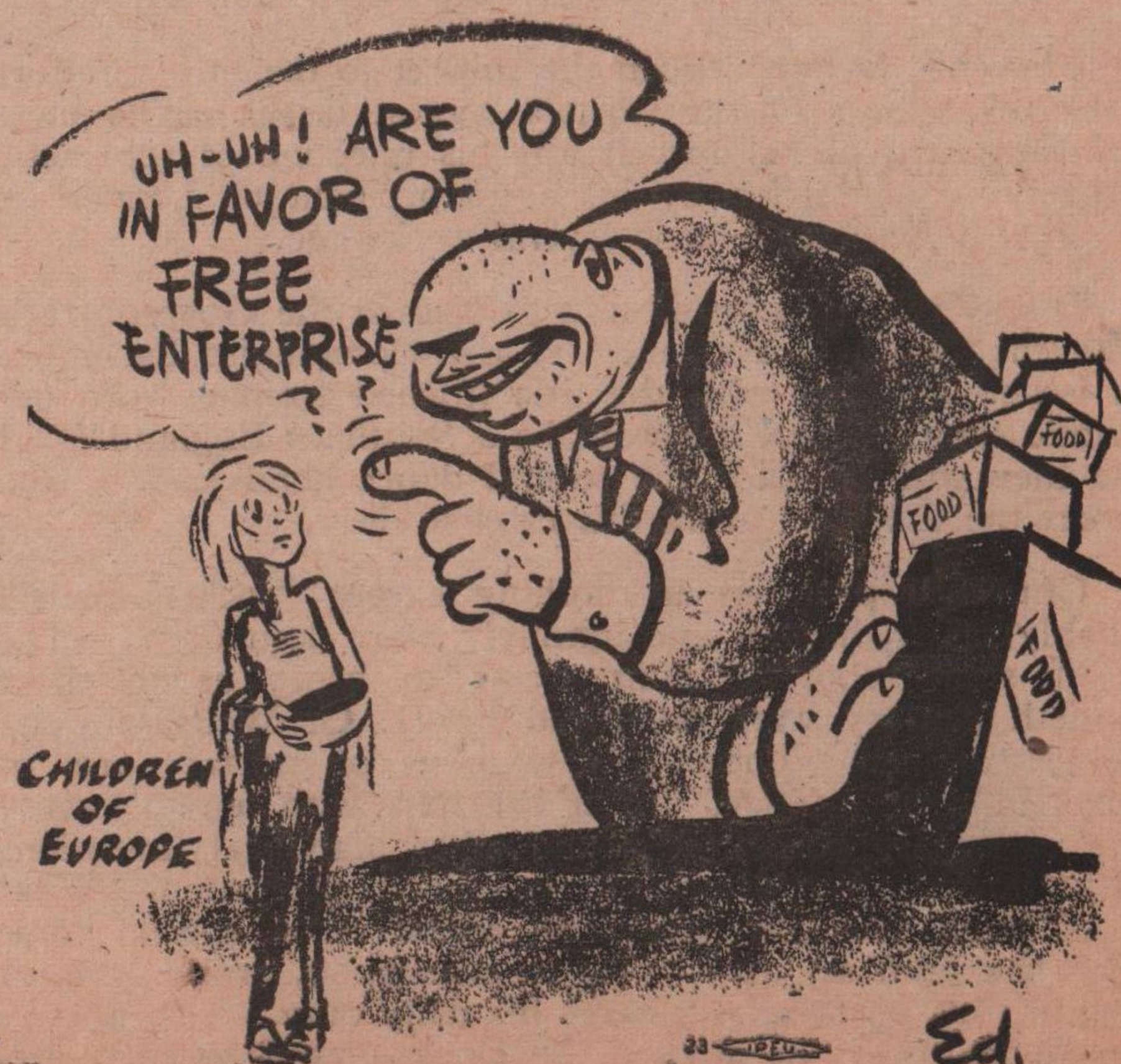
*The New Republic (U.S.A.) 1/5/44.*

## THEY USED TO CALL HIM "A REBEL"

"What we need in this country is a new industrial aristocracy of business men who care less for profit than they do about progressive ideas and a higher standard of living," said Mr. Shinwell, Labour M.P. for Seaham Harbour, speaking at Stockton yesterday.

*Daily Herald, 26/6/44.*

As Mr. Shinwell's advance to office becomes more plain, he drops his championship of the working-class against Churchill, to praise the Empire and now the middle-class business men who are the Fabian conception of a ruling-class.



Reproduced from *The Call*, Chicago.



## THE BOMBARDMENT OF LONDON

(Continued from p. 16)

signal. Experience has since exposed this latest Communist lunacy.

Another kind of kite hawk is the belligerent journalist who believes that the pen is mightier than the sword—and a damned sight safer.

John Gordon—"Kill the lot Gordon"—one of Beaverbrook's chief journalists, is easily the most bloodthirsty warrior who ever fought in Fleet Street. Gordon used to write every week in the *Sunday Express* an article—pretty nearly the same article each time—demanding more people be killed. After a rest (it was the readers who had the rest) he resumed his howls for blood, but this time he isn't content to shout for German blood, English too will do him. It is thought, plausibly enough, that bombing the German flying bomb bases will interfere with their attack on London and give the Londoners a few hours of rest. Said Mr. Churchill:

"All these sites were continuously bombed since last December. If it had not been for our bombing operations in France and Germany and counter preparations, the bombardment of London would, no doubt, have started perhaps six months earlier and on a very much heavier scale."

John doesn't like that sort of thing; in the Beaverbook press he cries:

"In my view the bombing of the launching platforms in France isn't the policy to produce the best results. The place for our bombs is not the Pas de Calais but Germany."

"Let us announce publicly night by night the names of six cities, towns and villages and tell the people in them that before the sun rises in the morning at least one of them will be dead beyond recovery."

"Why waste our block-busters on a few wasp's nests in France when we could tear Germany open with them?"

*Sunday Express, 2/7/44.*

## The Leader Speaks

Churchill has spoken on the subject to the little comfort of the inhabitants of the world's biggest target. The most significant item of his speech was his rejection of the tactic of the fabulous ostrich by his announcement of London as the target. A secret I knew several weeks ago.

It was rather mean of him to discard the Government's term "the South of England" as the Communist Party has just issued a leaflet with the title (filched from a worn out patriotic song) "There'll always be a Southern England!" I hope they will persuade the several dance band leaders who support the C.P. to feature this English ditty.

Churchill promises us nothing except "rocket shells", probably faster, heavier and infinitely more destructive. The use of such robot weapons seems to bring us to those twentieth century wars portrayed by H. G. Wells, all else is old fashioned. These new weapons of warfare are, of course, in their infancy. After the war, with ten to twenty years of uneasy peace, these and other diabolical inventions will be hurled against humanity in hideous perfection. What ray of hope does Mr. Churchill reveal? "A special committee has been set up". "As to evacuation, everyone must remain at his post and discharge his daily duty." He doesn't even advise us, as he advised the German workers of industrial cities, to leave the city and flee to the country.

It seems there is nothing for us but to put up with the winged death by day and at night, as Churchill suggests, find the best shelter we can and enjoy a well earned rest. I can guess a pretty good shelter to rest my weary skull in, but I further guess that Mr. Churchill may object to my company.

**TOM BROWN**

(Continued from p. 4)

with Gonsalvo de Cordaba, the 'Great Captain', in the early sixteenth century. Ever since, through the Napoleonic invasion, the *Risorgimento*, the constitutional monarchy, the Fascist régime, they have held their estates and exploited their peasants, and to-day, under the Anglo-American armies and Bonomi, their reign continues. Needless to say, the present Marquis never visits his estates. In normal times he lives in Paris and Rome—during the war he favours the neutral atmosphere of Zurich. The following extract from the article gives some idea of the revenues he draws from his distant lands:

"The ten Arruaga farms total something like 4,500 acres, of which the Masseria San Cataldo accounts of 904. It is given over to olive production and carries 12,000 trees. The olive is cropped every two years and a good tree will yield eight to ten hundredweights of fruit worth, in normal times, 100 lire (say, one pound sterling) per hundredweight. I calculated that, if an average tree produced four hundredweights per harvest this would give an annual production of 24,000 cwt. of olives for the whole farm, which represents a gross income of £24,000. What of production costs? First, labour. The nine workmen with their 600 lire per month (actually, they will have received less before the war), represent a charge of 65,000 lire or £650 per year. Then there are the olive pickers. In a normal year about 150 girls are employed for 100 days at 10 lire per day. Total: £1,500. With the salaries of *fattore* and *amministratore*, even reckoning these as a charge upon this single farm and not distributed over the several farms with which they are concerned, the annual wages bill could not be more than £3,500 to £4,000 in all. I found it harder to get information on cost of fertilisers and wear-and-tear on equipment and farm installations, but I reckoned they would not come to more than a couple of thousand pounds a year. I should say the Marquis would be unlucky if he did not clear £15,000 a year from this one farm. I should put the correct figure at nearer £20,000."

If we multiply by five, to reach the total acreage of the family farms, the total income of the absentee Marquis would come to round about £100,000 a year. As against this comfortable figure—with which life even in Zurich in wartime must be comparatively pleasant—the labourers who work the farm receive about 30 shillings a month, plus about 50 pounds of grain and two pints of oil for subsistence. This is the kind of social structure on which every Italian political régime has been based—and there is no likelihood that Bonomi or any other political figure will make any change. Unless the real Italian revolutionary movement is successful, the Marquis and hundreds like him will enjoy their modest six figure incomes as before, and their peasants will continue in miserable and illiterate poverty.



# The New Imperialism

SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED to imperialism. One finds repeated recognition of this fact in current writings. Current American imperialism, we are told, is "different;" we are also told that it is not imperialism at all, but a progressive force that will use "co-operative international planning" to achieve a post-war economy of abundance.

This type of logomachy is not new, nor, in the light of all they now subscribe to, is it surprising that it has caught up so many of the old intellectual leaders of liberals and the left. Yet I submit that it is an illuminating sidelight on the confusion of our times that it is precisely at the moment that imperialism has become most centralized, persuasive and all-pervading in our national life that many liberals and left wing leaders are hailing its demise.

The reason for this attitude is not far to seek. And to understand it fully, it would be useful to clear our minds once and for all of conventional patterns and what some one has called the "old single-track dogmas" concerning imperialism.

It is true that in recent years old-fashioned imperialism has been disintegrating, or failing that has become softened and much modified for the better. The Latin American countries have achieved formal political and (a measure of) economic independence, Ireland has finally gotten independence, the dominions of the British Empire are self-governing, the freedom of India is actually a distinct possibility. From these unquestionable facts, many liberals deduce (1) that the disintegration has been evolutionary, in response to democratic pressure, and connected somehow with "progress," "reform" and "gradualism"; and (2) that after victory in the war the disintegration will have been completed and the way paved for greater democracy, freedom and economic security of all the weaker nations and subject areas of the world. But the crucial questions are: one, *why* has the old imperialism been disintegrating? and two, *what* has taken its place?

It is obvious that the actual disappearance of imperialism would imply a fundamental change in the economic, political and social organization of our society. At last glance this had not taken place. Hence to answer the first question we must trace the degeneration of monopoly capitalism (of which the old imperialism is an organic part) during the period between the two wars of our generation. To answer the second question, we must understand that in the ruins of the old capitalism has arisen a new structure that, for want of a better name, we shall call "State capitalism," in which, in varying degree both at home and abroad, economic and political control has become centralized in the State apparatus.

In other words, we have this: *monopoly capitalism has revealed a progressive atrophy of many of its essential functions, imperialism being one of these functions; hence, as control of the imperialist process has slipped from the hands of private finance capital, imperialism per se has not disappeared; what has happened is that the function has been taken over more and more by the State.*

To find out what this new State-controlled imperialism is like requires a quick glance backward at the past history of our imperialist relations with the other Americans.

The old pattern of imperialism in Latin America is familiar enough; the starvation, misery, chaos and violence it brought have been catalogued repeatedly. Briefly, the bankers, industrialists and merchants of the various nations struggled among themselves for oil, mining and agricultural investments, for exploitation of the labour of depressed-standard-of-living natives, for a free and high hand in making loans, for a market for manufactured goods.

At a certain point of impasse in the economic struggle, the State power was called in to run interference through

diplomatic and foreign office channels and through the use of its battleships and armies. Sometimes this power was used against the natives of the weak but recalcitrant colonial or independent state, sometimes against the nationals of a rival power. The naked power pressure used on the eight Caribbean states in 1923 to sign treaties foregoing the "right of revolution" (later put forward as justification for the landing of marines in Nicaragua) is an example of the first type; the last war is an explosive example of the second.

The important thing to bear in mind is that at every point in this sequence it was the private capitalist who held the initiative, sought the overseas market, initiated loans, made foreign investments, summoned the State power to his aid when the economic struggle no longer sufficed, reaped the profits if his side emerged victor.

The imperialist drive of the United States among the ten independent countries of South America did not actually get under way until 1916-1918. Up to that time the great preponderance of our imperial interests had been in the Caribbean and Central American countries and in Mexico, where something over two billion dollars in direct investments had been made.

The outbreak of World War I, however, permitted us to move in on lands farther south, previously dominated chiefly by England and coveted since the turn of the century by imperial Germany. In 1913 the investments of U.S. banks and corporations in South America were estimated at only about \$175 million; at the close of 1930 these investments had swelled to well over three billion.

The trade curve also rose. In 1914 United States exports to South America were \$88 million, in 1918 \$294.5 million, in 1920 \$613 million and in 1929 \$537 million. *The 1929 figure represented about 29 percent of that continent's total imports for the year, the 1920 figure about 33 percent, and the 1918 figure about 25 percent. In 1914 the percentage had been 12.5!*

If this proved that imperialism, old style, could still reap profits from war by exploiting new foreign markets, a glimpse behind the figures will show (1) that after the last war finance capital emerged as the dominant factor in the imperialist process; and (2) that the same process that piled up profits was piling up grief for the Latin Americans and also piling up insoluble contradictions among the three types of American capitalist imperialist expansion in Hispanic-America, namely, trade, loans and capital investment.

The post-1918 period was a period of glut of both manufactured goods and raw materials. World prices collapsed; the result was the heavy losses of the 1920 deflation. For the United States this was a period of comparatively orderly readjustment; for most Latin American countries less well cushioned against such shocks, it was a plunge into chronic economic invalidism from which several did not recover until the very outbreak of this war.

Cuba is a good, if spectacular, example. Cuba saw the price of sugar nose-dive from 22½ cents on May 19, 1920, to 3¾ cents on December 13, 1920. *Colonos and centrales* could not pay off American bank loans, and from this time on, the story of American imperialism in Cuba became a bankers' story.

The economies of the other Hispanic-American countries were not as directly tied to the United States banking system as was the Cuban. Nevertheless, the story of American imperialism in these countries during the decade 1920-1930 was also substantially a bankers' story. For while American loans were financing reconstruction in Europe, thus creating a new demand for Latin American raw materials, they were also enhancing the buying power of the Latin American countries, whose purchases of consumer goods were held down by the low prices of primary products



as compared with manufactured goods.

This artificial closing of the gap was a double outrage on the Latin Americans, penalised first by the spread between the labour value of raw materials and the labour value of manufactured goods, sharply imposed by the industrial world; and then further impoverished by the necessity of paying high interest on bankers' loans; loans, moreover, made to dictators who in many cases spent the proceeds unwisely, passing on only the debts to the people.

The American capitalist whose interest in Latin America was selling goods was also caught in the noose of this contradiction. And here we see a classic example of the rivalry within the national framework of the three types of capitalism. Thus, in Latin America loans began as the hand-maiden but ended as the strangler of trade. During the bond-selling orgy of South American securities between 1920 and 1929, American investment bankers distributed South American government bonds aggregating a face value of \$1,600,000,000. The bankers' spread averaged about 5 points, or about \$320 million; incidental expenses such as bribes to Latin American officials, agents' fees, etc. amounted, at a conservative estimate, to another \$5 million; funding operations and consolidations of debt which provided another bankers' feast took roughly about \$200 million; so that the total proceeds for the South American countries on more than a billion and a half indebtedness was a little more than one billion dollars.

Fed by this, American trading companies did very well at first; Latin American imports from the United States nearly doubled between 1922 and 1929. However, initial profit was followed by collapse. Most of the issues went sour (approximately 68 percent of the South American bonds are still in partial or total default). And from 1930 to 1936, the piled-up obligations, on which Washington and the bankers demanded payment, prevented the resumption of anything resembling normal trade. The bankers loaded most of the loss on the individual American investors. *But the real loss was taken by the trading companies, who with vast accumulations of surplus products in the United States all through the post-1929 years, paid the cost of the loans many times over in the form of goods they were prevented from selling.*

Capital investment added its own set of contradictions. Argentine railways, Mexican copper, Bolivian tin, Colombian petroleum, Costa Rican bananas, Cuban sugar, Chilean nitrate, and Brazilian light and power all illustrate the point. Necessarily placing the emphasis not on social and economic progress essential for an expansion of the market for manufactured goods but rather on security of property and a cheap labour supply, capital investment aided the continuance in power of brutal feudal dictatorships. Siphoning out of the country enormous profits that should have been used to build schools, roads and health programmes, capital investment kept the countries of Latin America chained to the one-crop economies.

When the 1929 depression struck, the entire structure of American capitalist imperialism was shaken. Between 1929 and 1932, total United States trade with Latin America slid from \$911.5 million to \$198.5 million.

In other words, American capitalists lost every vestige of the commercial advantage gained during the World War. But this was not all. The more advanced Latin American countries seized the opportunity to break out of the one-way street which is the one-crop raw material system. Industrialization had already begun toward the close of the last war; beginning in the 1930's, economic nationalism and encouragement of native industry became rampant.

To consider only the industrialization among the four principal ABCP powers:

ARGENTINE in 1930 had only five spinning mills employing 4,000 persons; in 1937 there were 4,727 mills employing 77,000 workers. The total number of industrial establishments in the country to-day is nearly 50,000, employing

more than half a million workers out of a total population of 13,000,000. Argentine manufactures about one-third of its consumption of cotton goods, three-fifths of its linen, all of its shoes and woollen goods and most of its cement and tyres. Motor vehicles, radios, refrigerators and similar products are largely assembled in branch factories of American and British ownership which are part of an industrial "migration" that took place after 1936. On the other hand, the Argentine government, through its National Meat Board, has entered into direct competition with foreign-owned packing plants such as Swift, Armour, etc., and has greatly encouraged the processing of native foodstuffs (flour, sugar, etc.)

BRAZIL in 1920 had 13,300 industrial establishments, employing 275,000 workers; in 1935 she had over 58,000 industrial establishments, employing more than two million workers out of a total population of 48,000,000. Brazil now has some 600 textile mills, whose production of cloth rose from 760 million yards in 1927 to nearly two billion yards in 1940. Most of its industrial power is electric of hydraulic origin. In Sao Paulo, which has grown from a city of a few hundred thousand to one of over a million, it has one of the most highly industrialized cities of the world. Brazil to-day supplies the needs of its people in paints, cotton and woollen goods, nuts, bolts, screws, buttons and matches, and has growing industries in jute, cement, iron and steel and chemicals. As of 1941, the value of Brazil's industrial production surpassed that of agriculture by more than 20 percent (and Brazilian agriculture—although only 3 percent of the arable land is cultivated—produces the world's largest crop of coffee, second largest of cocoa, third largest of corn, fifth largest of cotton, fifth largest of sugar, seventh largest of meat and ninth largest of rice).

CHILE officially placed its industry at 100 for the 1927-1929 period; in 1936 the index stood at 146, and is probably much higher to-day. More than 30 percent of the country's gainfully employed are now in industrial activities. A broad program of State participation in export industries and public utilities was instituted in 1940. Chile is now supplying all of its domestic needs for woollen textiles, pharmaceutical and allied products, shoes and tannery products, cement, glassware, tobacco and products of wood. Her textile and jute mills are among the most modern in the world, and her industrial chemical and iron and steel industries are expanding rapidly, aided by the only considerable supply of coal in South America.

PERU, though less advanced along the road of industrialization than the countries mentioned above, nevertheless has clothing, shoes, cement, paint, aluminium ware, meat packing and furniture industries that supply a large proportion of domestic needs.

Hand in hand with industrialization has come the deliberate fostering of economic nationalism, whereby a whole series of entangling laws, codes and restrictions have for the first time put teeth into such nationalist slogans as "Mexico for the Mexicans" and "Brazil for the Brazilians." Tariffs, exchange controls, capital export taxes, import licenses, managed currencies, government encouragement of labour unions to harass foreign capital, differential freight rates, direct trade subsidies and special anti-foreign regulations limiting the transfer of profit out of the countries where they are amassed soon had the American investor and trader caught like flies on fly paper.

## ARTHUR PINCUS

We are reproducing the above article from the American magazine "Politics" (April 1944). We are not in complete agreement with the analysis of the author but the facts he brings forward should greatly help British readers to understand the involved South American problems. Although we have cut the article in parts it is still too long for this issue and we shall have to reproduce the later part in the August issue of War Commentary.



# HOUSES in a FREE SOCIETY

IN RECENT ARTICLES in *War Commentary* we have considered the faults, under the present social system, of housing and other features of the communal environment, and have shown that there is little possibility even of an approach to a physically and mentally satisfactory communal environment while that system continues. The surroundings in which men live, as well as the way in which they live, can become integrated and harmonious only when the discordant influences of exploitation and restrictions are removed. The frustration arising from an ugly, monotonous and unhealthy environment is only part of the general frustration which is inevitable in an acquisitive and authoritarian society. In every respect we can begin to live the well-balanced and fruitful life only when we live in a society free alike from convention and coercion. Only as they become free can men build the environment in which freedom will be developed and enjoyed. This article is, therefore, devoted to giving in outline some idea of the changes which would be effected in man's communal environment by the advent of an anarchist society.

The subject can be approached from two major directions. Firstly, we can describe the way in which the provision of housing and communal services will be organised. Secondly, we can suggest some of the features which the social environment is likely to assume as a result of this organisational work.

After a social revolution, the problem of providing some immediate improvement in the living conditions of the workers would have to be faced. As private property would have been abolished, all dwellings would become vested in the community. In each district communes would be formed to administer local affairs not directly concerned with industries, and these communes, or workers' councils, would take over the administration of all houses in the neighbourhood. It would be their business to make a survey of all accommodation, so that the large residential houses of the rich could be shared among those who lived in overcrowded slums. Areas like Mayfair, with a surplus of large mansions, could offer some of their accommodation to the people of working class districts.

This, however, would be a solution both incomplete and temporary. The rich men's houses of London and the provincial cities, the mansions of the country gentry, large as they may be in the aggregate, are certainly not sufficient to house all the workers who now live in unsatisfactory homes. Nor are houses of such a kind convertible into really satisfactory units for families who wish to live comfortably instead of ostentatiously. Such a measure, therefore, would be a partial and a very temporary solution of the problem of rehousing the workers.

Most of the workers, and eventually all of them, will have to be housed in new buildings of various kinds—either flats or individual small houses. The task, as the previous articles have shown, is an enormous one, involving the building of at least five million houses within a very short term of years. This would merely remove the overcrowding and bad housing which are admitted by the standards of more or less orthodox criticism within the present society. After this had been completed there would remain the even more formidable task of providing the rest of the workers with houses pleasant to live in and functionally complete to a far greater degree than the ugly and inconvenient cottages which are considered satisfactory to-day. In addition there would be the almost equally great task, intimately associated with the rebuilding of houses, or reconstructing the public utilities, such as streets, parks, water and electricity supplies, cleansing, etc., in such a way as to integrate them into a socially satisfying and unwholesome environment for living.

Great as these tasks appear, there is no reason why they

should not be completed within a relatively short number of years in a society that used all the potentialities of a scientifically mechanised industry in order to achieve a much greater rapidity of production than exists to-day. In making these statements I am not envisaging any sudden turning to Stakhanovite methods. On the contrary, if modern methods of unit construction were developed in a moderately imaginative manner, there is no doubt that the desirable increase in the rapidity of production could be achieved at the same time as a marked lessening of the labour necessary from the building workers.

The construction of new houses would be done by the syndicates of building workers, working in collaboration with the syndicates of factories producing construction units of various kinds. Included among the syndicates of building workers would be the architects and designers, who would no longer be hampered by the artificial division which in the past has divided the man who designs houses from the man who builds them. Design and practice would become once again closely integrated, as they were in the mediaeval periods of good architecture.

The syndicates of building workers would co-operate closely with the local communes, formed by the building workers on a residential basis to administer the affairs of districts, villages and towns. Each commune would decide how much land could be devoted to building and how many houses it required. It would also consult with workers from other communes who needed accommodation outside their own districts, or, if its own population were too great, arrange for those who wished to leave to be given homes in other districts. Similarly, country communes would maintain a proportion of houses for workers who wished to leave the towns for a short while.

The communes, having decided what accommodation they needed, would arrange with the building syndicates for the work to be done. The building syndicates would undertake all the constructional details, in their turn arranging with other syndicates for the manufacture and transport of the necessary materials. They would gain the opinion of occupants as to faults and possible improvements in design, and modify their practice accordingly. They would also carry out experiments in design on their own account, building trial houses which they would invite workers to use in order to test the practical value of new ideas in architecture or equipment.

The relations between the communes and the workers' syndicates would be similar with regard to the public utilities which complete the communal environment. Electrical workers, for instance, would undertake to supply the necessary current for the communes and for industrial plant and to provide the requisite electrical equipment.

It is impossible to give any definite picture of the type of housing which would be built in a free society. Many of the people who wish to help humanity to live decently are too fond of creating Utopias correct to the last details of life. But anarchists more than anyone else should realise that men are endlessly diverse in their tastes, and that a free society must increase this diversity. Therefore, in housing as in other things of life, the result of freedom is likely to be a great variety of forms, bound as little to the architectural clichés of, say, Le Corbusier as to those of the Gothic revival. It would be a very bad thing to try, like so many Utopian reformers, to swamp this beneficial diversity in an attempted uniformity of taste.

Nevertheless, certain general tendencies seem probable. The first is a changed attitude towards the town. When their work no longer ties them to one spot, many people will desire something different from the life of the great cities which have sprung from the administrative and industrial



centralism of the last century. In a society based on decentralisation and federalism in communal and industrial affairs, the practical justification of large cities will vanish, and many of the inhabitants will begin to desert these overgrown agglomerations. The result will be an increase in the population of the country districts and the smaller towns. It will also, no doubt, be desirable to build new cities, of limited dimensions, in order to avoid the growth of further bands of suburbs round existing cities. These new cities would be surrounded by country—nowhere should the fields be more than reasonable walking distance from the centre, and within their boundaries, as in the old mediaeval cities, there would be gardens and public lawns. In general, the new society will probably see a strong tendency for the country to become more thickly populated, and for the towns to become more ruralised. Even in the old cities, this is likely to take place as their populations shrink and old, useless buildings are pulled down and replaced by parks and gardens.

Dwellings will be built for health and pleasure. They will be so oriented and spaced as to receive the maximum sunlight. They will be constructed so as to admit plenty of fresh air and to make cleaning as simple as possible. They will make great provision for privacy—a need at present rarely catered for in working class families—and the elimination of external sound will be carefully achieved. They will be built away from through traffic roads, to avoid both the noise of such thoroughfares and their danger to children.

For the first time the social value of aesthetics in housing is likely to be fully realised. An ugly and monotonous environment can have harmful psychological effects and contribute to the most unhealthy frustrations. The endless by-law streets of Victorian England with their barracks-like terraces of identical houses, the grim tenements of Glasgow and London, the ribbon roads of the suburbs with their miserably designed lines of detached villas, represent patterns of housing which cannot reappear in a society that builds for health. Instead there should be houses pleasant and various in appearance, comfortable and healthy for living. Variety, of course, does not preclude harmony, and houses in towns should be designed so as to make a satisfying whole, while those in a rural environment should be built to contribute to rather than detract from the environment. A brief study of any good textbook of house design, such as F. R. S. Yorke's *The Modern House*, will show what can be done—for those who can afford it—in the way of aesthetically satisfying dwellings built by methods and materials now available. When craftsmanship and design are freed from economic necessity and direction, the possibility of building pleasant homes for everybody should be even greater.

One detail which has much importance in modern discussions of housing is the great controversy of flats *versus* houses. Many workers object to living in flats and wish to have individual houses. This attitude has two principal causes. The first is that working class flats are for the most part unsatisfactory. They give too little provision for privacy and are often crowded among other buildings which rob them of air and light, they usually have no lifts for the higher floors, and in general they give the feeling of a regimented rather than a communal life. The second is that under the property system of to-day there is a general tendency to desire a home of one's own, and this attitude is encouraged by the economic insecurity which gives an individual home the illusory air of a sanctuary against disaster. When, however, the worker can have a flat planned for comfort and privacy, in a block built to get air and light, and widely separated by gardens from other buildings, as well as containing within itself many of the communal facilities—restaurants, meeting halls, etc.—he would otherwise have to seek outside, his attitude might well be different. In any case, towns could be designed in such a way as to give scope

for both flats and single houses to be combined in a satisfying pattern.

Communal amenities will be planned to provide a completely integrated environment for the workers. Instead of the present suburbs spreading in shapeless masses from the centre, and integrated to no real local pattern of life, manageable and locally centred communities would arise, in which all the amenities of a full life would be provided. The aim of these comparatively small communities would be to ensure that everybody had within easy reach a reasonable service of schools, cinemas, meeting halls, libraries, theatres, restaurants, and the distribution depots which would replace shops. In this way each reasonably defined district would be able to develop a really vital life of its own, like the older *quartiers* of Paris or the mediaeval towns. Any tendency to centralisation would be countered by the local influences set up by such a plan of living, and from this great number of nuclei of activity there would arise a contrapuntal spirit of emulation which would result in a richness of life and culture similar to that of the other great periods of social decentralisation.

We seem to have approached subjects of discussion far removed from the question of slum clearance at which we started, yet the whole complex of communal life is so closely interlinked that it is impossible to discuss the kind of houses a man should inhabit without at least touching on the general communal structure of the society for which we strive.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

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# Letters to the Editors

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### ANTI-LABOUR LAWS VICTIMS DEFENCE COMMITTEE

Chairman: J. Maxton, M.P.

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The above Committee has been formed to defend the victims of Anti-Labour Laws such as the Trades Disputes Act, and Bevin's Regulation 1A(a). Already Roy Tarse, Jock Haston, Heaton Lee and Ann Keen have been convicted under the Trade Disputes Act. The judgment convicting them cuts at the root of the Trade Union movement. To appeal against this decision and thus to protect the democratic rights of the Trades Unions is the elementary duty of all Trade Unionists and other working class organisations. Funds are needed urgently to carry on the campaign. Rally support to the defence and send your donations to:—

W. G. COVE,  
c/o 318, Regents Park Road,  
London, N.3.

## THE GERMAN FLAG

*Is the Moscow German Committee, flying the Imperialist Black-White-Red Banner, a fairy tale, a lie or an established fact?*

German émigrés in Moscow created, in Summer 1943, a National "Free Germany" Committee. With the permission of the Soviet Government quite a lot of German prisoners of war, officers and other ranks joined this Committee. In my previous Circular Letters I have explained at length how very important such an organisation might be in helping to break up the German fighting front.

Strangely enough the Committee adopted from its very beginning the Black-White-Red banner of Imperial Germany as the ensign of a new "Free Germany". And even more strange has been the attitude of the London opposite number of the Moscow Free Germans—namely the "Free German Movement" in Great Britain. The London Free Germans have tried to hide from the Allies, and partly even from their own German members, the astounding spectacle of the Kaiser's flag flying over a new "Free" movement, and they went so far as to call this fact a fairy tale, or even a downright lie.

On May 11, the *Daily Worker* published an article about the Moscow Free Germans, written by a member of the London Movement. Some of the statements contained in this article

prompted me to write the following letter:—

"I would like to put forward that the President of the German Officers League (Deutscher Offiziersbund) in Moscow, the German General of the Artillery von Seydlitz made a public statement in Moscow on 20th of November 1943 in which he said: 'We adhere to the colours of the Free Germany Movement to Black-White-Red under which a new free Germany arise to honest reconstruction'.

"The former German M.P., Wilhelm Pieck, a member of the 'Free Germany' Committee in Moscow, who is a Communist and not a member of the German National People's Party, has published a complete agreement with General von Seydlitz in their newspaper *Free Germany* from Moscow. Pieck writes: 'In the colours Black-White-Red we Communists pay homage to the Reich which was founded under these colours and which Hitler now endeavours to destroy.'

"The German Officers League is a co-operative member of the 'Free Germany' Committee in Moscow and General von Seydlitz is deputy of the president of this Committee.

"What will the English People think about this whole business, when after the defeat of Hitler the 'Free Germans' want to build up a new Germany under the colour of Black-White-Red, the colour and the anti-democratic martial spirit of the former Kaiser Wilhelm II, and the German Junkers?"

The *Daily Worker* did not publish my letter. But the whole "Flag" question seems to me so important that I am now addressing myself to the public opinion.

I think the President of the Free Germans in Moscow should have approached the Government of the U.S.S.R. and should have warned them about the potential danger of German generals proposing to set free the German people under the colours of Imperial Germany. The President in question is no prisoner of war like the German Generals von Seydlitz and von Daniels; he is the well known German writer Erich Weinert, who took refuge in Moscow, because he was obliged to flee from Germany. Before 1933, he was one of the most popular poets and speakers, and he used to ridicule in excellent verses the German military clique, their uniforms and their colours Black-White-Red. Under these colours—which meant an oath of

allegiance to the Kaiser's Imperialistic tendencies of world conquest—Marshal von Hindenburg paraded, even as President of the German Republic. Weinert who knows the German mentality should have warned the Russians of the danger arising from the fact that Count Einsiedel, great grandson of Bismarck, was hoisting Wilhelm II's and Hindenburg's flag under the protection of the Soviet Union. Count Einsiedel organised manifestations under this flag in presence of delegates representing hundreds of thousands of German prisoners-of-war. His G.O.C., General von Seydlitz, gave a pledge that Germany should be freed and reconstructed under these colours. Neither the Count nor the General could have done this without the permission of their President—Erich Weinert. I suppose that Weinert acted in perfect good faith. Nevertheless the consequences may be disastrous to the cause of a real free Germany. The reactionary and imperialist colours Black-White-Red, symbol of oppression and German tendency of world conquest—must simply disappear!

OTTO LEHMANN-RUSSBUELDT,  
Founder of the German League  
for the Rights of Man.

(Lack of space has prevented us from reproducing the above letter in full.)

## INDIA'S FREEDOM

The Swaraj House notes with grave concert the refusal of Lord Wavell to see Mahatma Gandhi. This refusal once again brings to light the autocratic nature of the British rule in India.

Mahatma Gandhi's request to publish the correspondence and to see the Congress leaders for reviewing the political situation were moves which any honest and decent Government would have welcomed. The turning down of these requests clearly shows how much the Government is afraid of the truth and is interested in continuing the present deadlock.

Further it proves that it was the Government and not the Congress who was responsible for the crisis of August 1942.

The attention of the world is drawn to this action of the British Government, since freedom of India is not only a matter of urgent necessity to India and her peoples but for all the freedom-loving peoples of the world.

H. K. DAS-GUPTA,  
Hon. Sec.  
32, Percy Street,  
London, W.1.



# THE BOMBARDMENT OF LONDON

THE GOVERNMENT idiot who invented the term "beautiful bombs" must have felt a wave of æsthetic ecstasy sweep over him when the first of the German flying bombs struck London. The bombs are not only more devastating than the average bomb of previous raids on London, but the diabolical ingenuity of this invention arouses the imagination. Worst of all, the bombardment lasts, on and off, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Although the use of the new weapon by the Germans was anticipated by the Government, no preparation was made for the expected attack. New deep shelters, built a long while ago, give protection to less than one per cent. of the population of Greater London. Four years have passed since the first air raids on London, nearly five years since the war began and nearly six years since the war scare of the "Munich crisis", yet London still lacks sufficient surface shelters. It was possible to have completed enough deep shelters years ago. Instead we have had "London can take it" propaganda by persons who had retired to their country houses.

Nothing can dampen the cheerfulness of these optimists, an optimist being one who doesn't care what happens, so long as it doesn't happen to him. Scarcely less irritating than the whirr of the bombs in flight are the cheerful voices of the B.B.C., the apologia of Mr. Morrison and the press reports of the slight damage created by a ton of high explosive. I am almost kidded to expect one of these new weapons



to explode and shower us with confetti, paper streamers and toy balloons after the manner of those fabulous bombs and shells "made in Czechoslovakia" we read of in the early war days. From Mr. Churchill's estimate of the casualties it seems that one of these bombs is no more dangerous than a drunken motorist driving his Rolls Royce "flat out" to provide himself a few hours amusement.

## The Cry of the Vultures

Political kite hawks are quick to cash the present opportunity. In a London factory the Communists proposed a new warning system. The alert was to be sounded at the time of the outside sirens and the men and women continued work as at present. Then, if danger approached, the roof spotters sounded "imminent danger" but instead of going to the shelters as at present the workers continued their jobs. A third signal was proposed, a "crash signal", on hearing which the workers flopped on the floor or under bench or machine, for that meant the bomb was coming directly at the factory. Such a scheme carried out would mean a mass slaughter, not only by blast, but also from the glass, loose metal, scrap and tools which make a factory a death trap in aerial attack. Of course the shambles was to be organised in the name of the Second Front and all that.

What exposes the political character of this Communist showman's move is the well-known fact that aircraft and munition production is slack throughout the country and even the managements do not ask for such useless heroics. It is noteworthy that the meeting to discuss this scheme called by the Communist shop stewards during the lunch hour was abandoned three times because of the "imminent danger"

(Continued on p. 10)

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