

WAR *For Anarchism* COMMENTARY

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TWOPENCE

The Spanish Revolution 19th JULY 1936

A CERTAIN TYPE OF POLITICIAN, who disguised under a pretence of cynical neutrality the fascism they did not dare to avow openly, describes the Spanish Civil War in terms of the "Spanish character". The Spaniards, they declare, enjoy civil war; their struggle was a purely local, domestic affair; it could never happen here . . . and so on. The falsehood of all this was shown by the way in which the whole world took up the cudgels on behalf of one faction or the other as soon as hostilities began. The Spanish war, in fact, proved once again the internationalism of reaction as well as of revolution; that national boundaries are illusions, that there are no divisions between nations as such, but only between certain interests and other interests—irrespective of nations.

One of the primary lessons of the Spanish War was that "Democracy" is also an illusion. The so-called "democratic" forces in Spain had created the Republic in 1931, after the overthrow of Alfonso and his corrupt monarchy. But they had then ground down the workers in their turn, and had by their own feebleness allowed the Catholic-gangster-aristocrats to regain power. In the early months of 1936, the so-called "People's Front" of Socialists, Liberals and the numerically weak Communists gained a majority in the Cortes, together with Republican elements similar to Conservatives elsewhere, and Basque Catholic Nationalists. The Feudalists thereupon decided to stage a military adventure, and recapture power for the old gang. Such military *coups-d'etat* are not uncommon in history, and there was on the surface of things no reason why it should not have passed off unnoticed after a few months whether successful or a failure. But General Franco's putsch was raised from a mere palace revolution to an event of major significance in world history by

the nature of the opposition he encountered. When he struck his blow he was not confronted by the parliamentary opposition of the People's Front—on July 19th, it was nowhere to be seen; he faced instead the power of the Spanish Revolution, the anarchic force of workers and peasants acting on their own initiative.

The influence of Anarchist Syndicalism has always been predominant among the Spanish workers. In other countries, such as England, the democratic farce of a parliamentary opposition, and the toleration of "constitutional", legal methods of working class organization, deluded the workers into a long phase of "Labour Party" struggle—a phase not yet ended. But the Spanish masses were allowed to cherish no such illusions, even under the democratic Republic, and the revolutionary aims and libertarian character of the anarchist movement appealed to them as the most practical teaching for the achievement of their ideals. Reactionary repression did not create the mass following of Anarcho-Syndicalism in Spain, but it gave it a favourable soil.

Through years of struggle and suffering, in the teeth of the bloody tortures of Montjuich, and the full force of the inquisitorial Catholic-Monarchist government, the Spanish Anarchists maintained their revolutionary fight. The workers and peasants rallied to their cause, and the C.N.T., the anarchist syndicalist unions of Spain, became the organization of the mass of the workers. The Social Democratic U.G.T., although it was supported by all the left political parties, could not muster any similar following among the workers.

When Franco struck, he was confronted by the Spanish Revolution, which had raised its banners many times before, the last time as recently as

October 1934 in Asturias. The unarmed masses seized the arms of the fascist soldiery and fought back their opponents. In Barcelona, in Madrid, in a hundred towns, they stormed the barricades often armed with no more than mere knives. The progress of the Franco clique was rendered impossible by the General Strike declared against them.

Nor were the Spanish workers in any doubt as to what they were fighting for. They were fighting for the anarcho-syndicalist aims they had so long maintained. They took over the factories whence the owners had been evicted or had fled, they seized the land from which the landed proprietors had been suppressed or had escaped to Juan-les-Pins or Biarritz or Rome. And they worked them on their own behalf and on that of the working community. In short, they put into practice the regular programme of the C.N.T. of anarcho-syndicalism by direct workers' control.

It was this opposition that made the difference to Franco's rising. It became (to quote the Archbishop of Westminster) a "crusade"—a crusade against the infidel doctrines of liberty and social expropriation. And the whole pious band of pilgrims joined in; the Pope, Hitler, Mussolini, Samuel Hoare and Laval, the partners of the plot to share out Abyssinia, British Conservative M.P.s and American anti-labour millionaires. But for the revolution they would have dismissed Franco's putsch against the parliamentary Republic as not worth their time. But seeing the revolution, seeing Catalonia and Aragon already anarchist territory, the forces of reaction began to unite.

By a tacit conspiracy of silence, the work of the anarchist workers in Spain was not mentioned in the outside world. Apart from occasional liberal observers the concrete fact of the anarchist revolution in Spain was glossed over by the entire capitalist press, or mentioned only to frighten off any international working class support, the word "anarchist" being invested with all the time honoured blood curdling associations attached to it by the present day advocates of unrestricted bombing.

But more than anything, what disguised the true meaning of the Spanish Revolution from the working class outside Spain, was the lying deception about it practiced by the Liberal-C.P. coalition. It happened to suit the power politics of Joseph Stalin at that period to keep in with a bloc of "democratic" powers. Apart from the repercussions of revolution in Russia (where as little Spanish news as possible crept into the State controlled press), the workers' rising in Spain threatened the stability of capitalist France. Stalin therefore could not allow the Spanish workers to have arms in abundance, and the U.S.S.R. was the first power to sign the Non-Intervention Agreement. At the same time the glamour value of the Spanish struggle was fully exploited for the

Stalinist Unity campaign. The Labour and Liberal papers fell behind the Communist Party in acclaiming the decadent Spanish People's Front as the inspirer of the anti-Franco resistance.

The People's Front in Spain was not allowed to remain decadent. To it rallied the reactionary republicans, counter-revolutionaries who did not happen to be on Franco's side. Hand in hand with the Stalinists they regained power and built up again the Cabinet of the Republic. The Spanish workers were deluded into sending representatives in the name of "unity". Even the anarchists sacrificed their principles to this alleged "anti-fascist unity", and sent three representatives into this government. The event proved that the result of this policy was the sacrifice of the revolution. Step by step the treacherous Stalinists, using the few arms which Stalin sent for them to distribute *as it suited them* as a blackmailing lever, were able to hamstring the revolution, and break up the collectives and socialized industries.

Franco received direct military aid from Hitler and Mussolini. But let us not forget that his British supporters, some of whom, like Lord Croft are now in the British Government, enabled Hitler and Mussolini thereby to prepare for the Second World War, for their secondary purpose in assisting Franco was to test out their power in modern warfare. This direct aid from the Fascist powers, and also the "Non-Intervention" of Britain, France and Russia which winked at their intervention, turned the scales in his favour. He won and the clerical fascist state was set up. The parasites returned from exile to batten on the crushed masses. They inaugurated their "Redemption through Labour" laws—a fancy name for the slavery they built their luxury and power on. Shot, tortured, or imprisoned in Spanish slave camps or in infamous French and North African Concentration Camps (for only a lucky few succeeded in escaping overseas) the Spanish revolutionaries, the Anarchist Syndicalists, were defeated.

We do not despair, for we know that the Franco regime cannot last. The masses—so despised by these Christian Gentlemen—will one day rise and throw off the feudal fascist regime with greater force than before, now that they know what a great work of construction they cold-bloodedly destroyed. We do not think the clever politicians, the venomous Stalinists, or the cowardly liberals will regain favour with the Spanish workers. They have been exposed for ever as a stinking, rotting corpse. Unless some other illusion intervenes, nothing can stop the Spanish masses from their revolutionary course next time. The great Spanish Revolution of July 19th, 1936 was hidden from a large part of the world. We must make it widely known, that the workers of the world may follow in its steps—that the coming revolution may avoid its mistakes while copying its courage and social consciousness.

ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

INVASION OF SICILY INVASION tactics seem to have imitated the Pantelleria scheme exactly. Sicily is populated almost wholly by simple peasants who have hardly changed since their island was the theatre of that peculiarly bloody Peloponnesian war two thousand years ago. Yet Sicily has been subjected to the most brutal bombing ("a week of round the clock blitz" is the newspapers way of circumlocuting the horror) before the invasion started. As far as one can see, there seems to have been no attempt to enlist the anti-Fascist support of the inhabitants, any more than there was at Pantelleria and Lampedusa. Yet in Sicily it was exceptional to see anyone wearing the Fascist Party badge (the "bug" as it is colloquially termed in Italy). Mussolini seldom visited the island, which was notoriously indifferent to the pride of Empire. During the Abyssinian war Italians were called upon to supply gold by throwing their wedding rings into cauldrons placed in public squares. On the mainland almost all Italians wore the zinc substitute rings as an indication that they had patriotically given up their gold, but in Sicily one never saw a zinc ring.

Sicily has a revolutionary tradition extending from the Sicilian Vespers in the twelfth century down to Garibaldi in the last. Yet the British militarists can think of nothing better than to bomb them. How disastrous if Mussolini were to fall before a popular rising instead of British bayonets!

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FREE FRENCH?

LA MARSEILLAISE, a French de Gaullist paper published in London has been suppressed by the British Government. It has not been openly banned or its presses closed down like in a Fascist country. No, the democratic method consisted of withdrawing the paper supply. Of course, the Ministry of Information denied that the Paper Control was used as an instrument of censorship. De Gaullist newspapers have now the privilege to be suppressed both in France and in Britain, with the difference that in France they appear illegally, while this country, being a democracy, there is no illegal press. When a paper is suppressed it simply disappears.

As we pointed out in our last issue, the de Gaullist press though carrying on a campaign against Vichy, never attacked the policy of the Allies in North Africa. The last issue of *La Marseillaise* however, broke the rule. Pertinax, a well known French journalist and ex-correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* ventured to mention Washington's distrust of de Gaulle and to suggest that the present policy of the Allies may put France after this war in the position of Italy in 1919: in an inferior and recriminating position.

These criticisms were so mildly expressed and the attitude of Roosevelt's administration towards the Fighting French so well known that it makes the pretext for its suppression almost incredible.

The British and American governments have shown once more how impatient they are of the slightest criticism. They have shown also how willing they are to serve the Vichy elements. *La Marseillaise* was a lively, attractively produced paper which, with a circulation of 20,000 must have had a growing de Gaullist influence in this country and North Africa. It was more than Giraud and his Anglo-American acolytes could permit. Now the French are left with the daily *France* which is so empty, dull and stupid that it does not run any risk of being suppressed.

GENERAL SIKORSKI

THE Polish workers will have no regrets at General Sikorski's death. He was a determined upholder of the feudal, semi-fascist regime in Poland before the war, and anti-semitic into the bargain. Furthermore he was hob-nobbing with Stalin—banquets and toasts in the Kremlin, etc.—at the very moment when the latter was murdering Erlich and Alter, the Polish Socialists. Spain, incidentally, seems to be a disastrous spot for aerial Generals. Franco's pals General Sanjurjo and General Mola were both killed in air crashes in the peninsula.

The plane in which Sikorski was travelling contained another of Franco's supporters—Captain Victor Cazalet, M.P. During the Spanish war he was prominent as a "Friend of Nationalist Spain", that genial group who spent their time whitewashing the "Christian Gentleman" and his hangmen followers, justifying the Catholic Torquemadas, and the destruction of Guernica and Durango. Captain Cazalet described Franco as "the Leader of our cause to-day" (*Daily Herald*, 24/3/38). He was also a prominent member of the Spanish Children's Repatriation Committee, the object of which was to get the Basque children sent back to Spain and Franco's "justice". Captain Cazalet, M.P., if our memory serves us right, was also concerned in the White Intervention against the Russian Revolution. Even for Right Wing Conservatives he had a striking career of reaction. Decidedly we are not sorry to see him go.

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CAT-AND-MOUSE

WHEN the first conscription law, that instituting the militia, was brought into Parliament on the eve of the present war, there was much mealy-mouthed speechifying on the subject of conscientious objectors. Chamberlain referred in regretful tones to the mistake which had been made last time in trying to force men into a service which they were not prepared to undertake, and promised that never again would the British Government allow such practices to take place as had been perpetrated on the C.O's of 1916-19. Forgetting the fact that the very conscription act itself was a violation of Chamberlain's promise a few months earlier that conscription would never be introduced into England in peacetime, the liberal-minded took him at his word and welcomed the new era in which no more legal cats would have their cruel game with the conchy mice.

No sooner, however, did the tribunals begin to function than it was evident that it was impossible for them to assess sincerity and that prejudice rather than justice was the principle—or lack of principle—on which they worked. But the tribunals occasionally preserved some semblance of fairness, while the bureaucratic dictators who took charge of the rejected or conditionally exempted C.O's proved ruthless in the unfairness and persistence with which they harried their victims.

C.O's became a growing proportion of the prison population, and many of our comrades who have undergone sentences of six months or a year can give the lie to the myth that the C.O. is treated like a gentleman in this war, as also can those who have endured the slave gangs of the war agricultural committees.

Nor has the evil practice of repeated imprisonment, 'cat-and-mouse', ceased to exist. Many men have served several sentences, and we have information of two recent cases which serve as examples of the persistence with which some C.O's have been persecuted.

Stanley Hilton, of Rochdale, was refused exemption by his tribunals, and in September, 1940, was called up. He refused to obey orders, and has since served three court-martial sentences—one year's imprisonment, two years' detention (commuted to seven months) and two years' imprisonment. He has thus served in all nearly three years. Now he has again disobeyed orders and is awaiting a *fourth* court-martial. This is a case as flagrant as any of the last war.

The second case is that of George P. Elphick, of Lewes, who on June 9th was prosecuted for the *fifth* time for having refused to perform fire-watching duties. He has already served three terms of imprisonment for refusing to pay fines, and this time was sentenced to two months' imprisonment without the option of a fine. The Town Clerk, when accused of victimising Elphick, excused himself by saying that he was merely obeying orders. To any decent-minded man the obedience of orders involving such an injustice would be repugnant, and that such a case should have been brought and a sentence been imposed shows the moral degradation which their little sphere of power has produced on the people concerned.

C.O.'s apparently fare no better, and in some cases even worse, in the United States, as is shown by the following quotation from the New York anarchist journal *Why?*

"From the Danbury, Conn., Federal Prison comes word that the hunger-strike-for-freedom of conscientious objectors Stan Murphy and Lou Taylor continues in full force in its third month. The first C.O. story in many months to achieve nationwide publicity, the hunger strike pushes to the fore the rising discontent among the more than 6,000 objectors in camps and 1,000 in prisons over the generosity of the American government in isolating C.O.'s in forests and jails. While savage prison sentences continue to be meted out to objectors in federal courts all over the land, from California comes the news that a Jehovah's Witness has been court-martialled and sentenced to life imprisonment for refusal to salute the flag."

However, the man in the army is no better off than the C.O., as has been shown in several recent articles in *War Commentary* and one in this issue. The government gets you both ways. If you go into the army you may be beaten to death by paid thugs like Culliney and Salter. If you refuse to go in, your life may be made a misery by continual imprisonment, like that of Stanley Hilton. Unlike the King, the subject can never do anything but wrong.

AT IT AGAIN

TOM WINTRINGHAM (International Brigade and Home Guard) demands in an article in *Picture Post* (19/6/43) that Italian liberals, anarchists, communists, and socialists be allowed to "set up some sort of council of liberation, or to carry out propaganda for the freeing of their country". The chief propagandist for Italian "freedom" in this country is C. M. Franzero who, right up to Italy's entry into the war was a pro-Fascist journalist attached to one of Mussolini's papers. No doubt, if a puppet Italian government is set up in this country for the purpose of deluding the Italian people in the event of Mussolini's downfall, guys like Franzero will be at the head. The British government was wholly unmoved by the assassination of men like Matteotti, Sbardelotto, Schirru, and the brothers Rosselli. Wintringham's suggestion is that of a yes-man handing Proud-to-wear-a-Black-Shirt Churchill a peg to hang further hypocrisy on. We do not doubt that the suggestion will be warmly received by the Italian emigré politicians.

But as to the Italian anarchists, that is another matter. Our Italian comrades have everywhere been in the forefront of anti-Fascist struggle. They know that Fascism is only to be successfully fought by revolutionary struggle, and have everywhere opposed the imperialist war just as we have done.

NATIONAL SOCIALISM ONCE MORE

THE Communist Party held its 16th Congress in London on July 4th, the Congress being called in order to discuss the decision of the Executive Committee of the Communist International to dissolve the Comintern. In harmony with this decision of the Bosses in Moscow, a small but significant change was made: the Party formally transformed itself into the National Communist Party. (N.B.—Compare the National Syndicalism of Italian Fascism and Franco's Falange, and the National Socialism of Germany. Not forgetting, of course, Socialism-in-One-Country.)

ANARCHISM ● THEORY

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How Refugees Live in the **N. AFRICA LABOUR CAMPS**

The author of this article has arrived recently from Morocco where he spent some time in the labour camps he describes in this article. The conditions these men were living under shows that cruelty and sadism are not the monopoly of the German race as Government propaganda wants us to believe, but are the inevitable consequence of all instruments of repression.

When celebrating the anniversary of the Spanish revolution it is fitting to remember the treatment given to the Spanish refugees by the democratic governments, who put them in concentration camps and practically forced them into the Foreign Legion. Vichy merely followed in the footsteps of the Third Republic. Now that the democracies control North Africa the labour camps have not been abolished. The newspapers reported recently that while the Spanish Refugees wait for their passage to Mexico they are to work in the labour camps.

IF IN THIS article I describe the life of a few thousand men in the labour camps in North Africa, it is not so much in order to denounce the Vichy regime as to describe the methods used generally by the ruling class of France, a country where, in spite of the 'humanitarian' jargon of its writers and journalists, human values are completely despised.

The treatment inflicted on the Spanish refugees had already created a certain notoriety for the Third Republic. Vichy merely carried on the tradition.

When the war started in September 1939, refugees living in France joined the Foreign Legion. Some of them, when they arrived at Fort St. Jean at Marseilles, were greeted with the remark, 'You have come here to die; that is an honour.'

This is how France has treated the men who were going to have the honour of dying for her.

When the recruits of the Foreign Legion reached Sidi-bel-Abbes, their civilian clothes were taken, and the best were bought for a few francs by a second-hand dealer, who shared the large profits with the officers. The recruits were trained in various camps and then sent towards the South in long convoys, in the traditional manner of the Foreign Legion.

When the offensive started in May 1940, the Legion took part in the hardest battles. It was sent up to Narvik, and many of those who volunteered for that Expedition died in action.

The men who joined the Legion had signed a contract for the duration. When the armistice came they were demobilised, but not set free. The attentive government wished to assure their material and moral well-being.

To that end it created an organisation for slave traffic, which found a good reserve of man power among the ex-legionaries, many of which were skilled workers, engineers, lawyers, doctors. This organisation, called 'Industrial Production', distributed the men in various working camps in North

Africa, taking no account of their capabilities.

The Poles and Jews were sent to Berguent, the Spaniards to Bou-Arfa and Coloum Becher. They were employed in the construction of that expensive joke, the Trans-Saharan Railway, which had merely an advertisement value.

The 'Industrial Production' received 75-80 francs for each man it put at the disposal of private enterprises. It also provided equipment for the men and wardens for the camps. It spent about 15 francs a day on food and pay for each man.

Here is a description of the life of one of the best of these camps, Im-Fout, 50 miles from Casablanca, where they were building a dam across the River Oumer-Rebia.

Two hundred men, Russians, Poles and German anti-fascists, were employed there. They lived in almost uninhabitable huts. The walls were nests of bugs and cockroaches, and at night one was bitten by the insects and exasperated by the noise of the crickets. It was better to sleep outside. There were no mattresses; only two lousy blankets on the stony ground and a mantle to cover oneself.

At six in the morning the reveille was given by the explosions of dynamite by the Arab workers. Breakfast was distributed—a small piece of bread with jam or a sardine and a nameless lukewarm drink. After the ceremony of the flag the procession to the quarry started.

By eight o'clock conditions were already bad. The men worked in shorts under the biting sun, filling wagons with stones and pushing them to the stone-breaker. Lower down, on the side of the valley, the men working the concrete mixers were white with cement dust, which the sweat made into a plaster on their faces.

The length of the day's work varied. Sometimes it lasted only the morning, sometimes until 7 o'clock. The lunch was slight—transparent soup, turnips, peas, very little meat. The evening meal

was similar. The food varied little and the men were undernourished.

There was no shade in the valley. The rock was naked, and there were no trees in a radius of ten miles. On one of the slopes an Arab village was spread out, and some of the native girls distributed syphilis in the camp for a small fee.

The refugee workers were paid 2.50 francs a day, distributed fortnightly. They therefore received 45 francs at a time, which were immediately spent on wine, sold at a high price by the administration. Drinking was the only pleasure one had at Im-Fout.

The most determined men and those who had the best morale were the Spaniards. They were always preparing some evasion. They all aimed to embark illegally. It was strange how, as soon as a cargo was being prepared for America, the news reached the camp, and from Bou Arfa in South Morocco men travelled a hundred miles, hidden on wagons or walking resolutely along the railway track. When the ship at Casablanca was about to leave at least twenty men would try to get on board, in spite of the careful watch of the police. The majority were caught, but a few comrades have succeeded in escaping. Those who were caught were sent to a disciplinary camp south of Bou Arfa. There the work was exhausting and the prisoners got only a bowl of soup for their food.

Any pretext was good enough to justify the harshest punishments. One of the most refined tortures was called *la pelote*. Ninety pounds of stones in a bag were fixed to the shoulders of the punished man by two wires which cut into the flesh. He was obliged to run in circles, to lie on his stomach, to get up, to lie down again according to the orders of the sergeants.

Another torture was *The Grave*. The man lay in a ditch of his length and eight inches deep. A cloth was put over him which protected neither his head nor his feet. During the day he was exhausted by the heat, during the night he shivered, but he must not move. An armed *moghazin* (native guard) watched him, ready to fire.

From time to time a man was shot down for attempted escape. These measures were not exceptional. They were sometimes even applied in the labour camps, where men enjoyed relative freedom and were not watched by armed men. Dozens of men of all nationalities have died of exhaustion or have simply been shot without any reason.

The Committee of Industrial Production in Morocco steadily refused to give up these profitable workers. Each head of human cattle brought it 80 francs a day and cost almost nothing. No exploitation could have been more ruthless and cynical. In Morocco, where native labour is recruited by raffles in the cities these methods could not shock the population, with its colonial outlook.

The Committee of Industrial Production did not want to set free men who had obtained work in their own trades and who could have returned to a normal life. Employers who wished to use a foreigner because of his skill or for humanitarian reasons were discouraged by all the demands of 'Industrial Production'. They had to fill in endless forms, to provide properly ventilated living quarters, the most hygienic conditions, healthy food, etc. If, finally, all the conditions were fulfilled and the man was set free he had to pay 24 francs a day out of his wages to the 'Industrial Production' in order to repay the expenses incurred during his stay in the camp.

This regime was not altered on the arrival of the Americans. When the news of their landing reached the camps the workers downed tools. The more impatient escaped, thinking that freedom had returned. Everywhere camps were surrounded by *Moghazins* and the men resumed work under threats. The collaboration of Darlan with the allies reassured the organisers of the labour camps, who started to make pro-Allied speeches and to treat the refugees as 'fascists' and agents of Germany.

The most rebellious of the refugees were taken away from the camps and sent away; nothing more was heard of them. Those who escaped were found by the police and sent to the camp at Bou-Arfa, while the Americans remained indifferent and did not 'want to be mixed up in French internal politics'.

The Vichy functionaries remained in their posts and it is probable that they will not change their methods. Now they will be able to exploit German and Italian workers, and will find plenty of patriotic reasons to do so.

PUBLIC LECTURE-DISCUSSIONS

EVERY FRIDAY EVENING

7.30 p.m.

July 23rd. Geoffrey Pittock-Buss
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July 30th.
THE GERMAN NAVAL REVOLT AT
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COMMUNISTS' DISRUPTION

Among Bus Workers

IN THE PAST the C.P. has been the initiator of many break-away unions and minority movements. But at the present moment they are working to deliver the workers gagged and bound over to the most reactionary of the trade unions. The following document is an example of their way of going to work:

COMMUNIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN
LONDON DISTRICT COMMITTEE.

39 Clerkenwell Green, E.C.1. Clerkenwell 7404

To Branch Secretaries & Transport Group Leaders:
15th January 1943.

DEAR COMRADE,

re: *National Passenger Workers' Union.*

Within the last twelve months a certain number of members of the NPWU have applied for membership of the Party, and have been accepted, and in most cases some attempt has been made to convince these comrades of the necessity of them leaving the Break-Away Union and rejoining the T. & G.W.U. This has been successful up to a point, but there are still a few such members remaining mistakenly "loyal" to the NPWU and refusing to leave it. The Bureau has recently reviewed the position and has come to the following decision which has been endorsed by the Secretariat and must be operated in all Groups and branches.

(1) No member of the NPWU can be accepted into membership of the Party until they have definitely left that organization and rejoined the T. & G.W.U.

(2) All existing Party members who are still in the NPWU must be informed either collectively or in a personal interview that membership of that organization is no longer compatible with membership of the Party. The reasons for this must be made clear to them and a definite time limit must be fixed by which they must break with the NPWU and rejoin the T. & G.W.U. If they do not carry this through then they must be suspended from membership of the Party until they carry out this instruction. In no case can any comrade in the NPWU be retained in the Party after March 1st.

In one or two garages it may be possible to get a special meeting of the comrades concerned, at which a member of the Bureaus should be invited to attend. There is no reason why non-Party members of the NPWU should not also be invited to such a meeting. A statement of our case against the NPWU has already been circulated on two occasions to Groups, Branches, and Sub D.P.C.s, and we recommend you to refer back to this if you can trace it. To the arguments put forward there we should like to add the following:

1. While claiming to be non-political, it provides a base among the transport workers for all kinds of anti-working class organizations and policies, and its political line is expressed by statements about "the imperialist war", envisaging the LPTB as the main enemy of the transport workers, aided and abetted by the T. & G.W.U. and the Communists on the CBC.

2. It uses methods and issues statements calculated to deceive the workers in its attempts to win membership and still further to split the transport

workers, and in no respect can it advance their interests either individually or collectively, even on small matters like disciplinary cases, etc.

(3) Sections of the leadership of this "Union" are active members of the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

(4) Sections of the membership act as agents for *Socialist Appeal* and other Trotskyist literature, while others claim to be Anarcho-Syndicalist.

We have set ourselves the objective of finally smashing this organization before the end of 1943, and we ask your active co-operation in carrying through these instructions in respect of our Party membership and in organizing an active campaign against the NPWU through the Passenger Transport industry in your area.

Yours fraternally,
DISTRICT SECRETARIAT.

This document is interesting from many points of view. Our own attitude towards the NPWU was made clear two years ago, when we reprinted a resolution calling attention to the reformist nature of the Union and demanding a re-organization on class-war lines. This resolution was heavily defeated, and the NPWU remains a reformist wage bargaining counter, of no value to the revolutionary workers. We are therefore quite unmoved by the spectacle of the CP attack as such. Our object is to draw attention to some points underlying this instruction from the CP party bosses.

It provides an interesting example of "democratic centralism"; the Bureau reaches a decision which is endorsed by the District Secretariat; no discussion by mere members is required—it "must be operated in all Groups and Branches".

Again, it is gratifying to find that the CP are quite open about it. So the London Passenger Transport Board, the bosses, in fact, are *not* the chief enemy of their employees, the busmen. And it is satisfactory to have from the horse's mouth the implied admission that the CP and the T. & G. W. U. for whom they are campaigning so hard (Bevin's own union, it will be remembered) are "aiding and abetting" these same employers! It provides one more piece of evidence (scarcely needed in view of the loudness with which their actions speak) of the policy of the CP—Class Collaborationism, Mond-Turnerism, "Peace in Industry"; in short, the policy of yellow-bellied rats.

Finally the CP here declare themselves the enemy of workers initiative as expressed in Anarcho-Syndicalism. We point this out now, because when the revolutionary tide turns, we shall find the CP attempting to cash in on it by claiming that they have always been the partisans of independent working class action on the economic field, shouting that they have been syndicalists themselves all the time!

Conclusion: Rats will be Rats.

GLASSHOUSES

In the recent manslaughter trial arising from the death of a tubercular soldier at Chatham, one thing emerged very clearly. It is that N.C.O.'s who beat up men under detention are violating the Regulations and can be punished. But they are allowed to use physical force in "self defence".

Now what constitutes self-defence? And who is to judge which is the aggressor? If an N.C.O. strikes a man and says the prisoner struck him first, who is to decide the truth? There have been allegations that men are beaten up in their cells. It is all the more reason why single cells should be abolished. If a man is beaten up in the presence of other prisoners, there are witnesses. The trouble is that these witnesses will not speak, fearing the consequences. One of the witnesses in the Chatham case at first refused to give evidence, because he said he had been threatened.

Reynolds News, 4/7/43.

"RATS SHALL INHERIT THE HEARTH"

Tenants occupying several blocks of property adjoining Dumbarton-road, have organised a petition, copies of which have been sent to their Factor, Clydebank Town Council, the Ministry of Health in Edinburgh, and the Secretary of State for Scotland.

They demand that action be taken to rid them of a plague of rats which, they state, is making life unbearable and sleep impossible. A mass meeting will also be held to-day, at which further action will be discussed.

Children are becoming terrified and cannot sleep at night. Some of the bolder rats have even attacked grown-ups, and one man was badly bitten while asleep. The majority of householders now go to bed with broom handles and other "weapons" convenient to the reach.

News of the World, 20/6/43.

EMPIRE PROBLEMS

It is when the Empire is considered as a whole that the need of an increasing birthrate becomes imperative. A fourth of the world's surface is British, but we now refuse to people it. When I was in Canada I asked a legislator what population the Dominion could support; "120,000,000," he replied. And there are only 11,000,000 or so, though Canada is bigger than the United States. In Melbourne I asked the same question, and I was told that Australia, if developed, could support 50,000,000 instead of the 7,000,000 it now possesses. Australia's peril is now the fewness of its inhabitants. Instead of the 3,000,000 white inhabitants in South Africa there is room for 20,000,000. Kenya and Rhodesia are well-nigh empty.

Dr. Norman MacLean in "The Spectator", 2/7/43.

Of course, there may be several thousand of even several million "natives", who don't count.

RUSSIAN BLIMPS

Major-General Sinilov, commander of Moscow garrison, in an order demanding more "spit and polish" when Red Army men appear in public in the city, reveals a Russian saluting problem.

He says that recently he had to arrest a lieutenant who was carrying a large bundle in his right hand so that he could not salute superior officers.

In consequence the general orders that when walking out soldiers may only carry small parcels, and these must be in the left hand, leaving the right free for saluting.

Daily Express, 24/6/43.

NOT IN GERMANY

Foremen will be acting as sergeant-majors if an idea now being tried out in one factory at Indianapolis, U.S.A., is followed to its logical conclusion.

At the Marmon-Herrington works the Stars and Stripes is hoisted every morning, and a bugle sounds at the beginning and end of every shift.

Over the entrance is the slogan, "Through these gates march the soldiers of production," and the bugle sounds the mess call at the lunch break.

All the production lines have such famous names as Guadalcanal.

The workers, however, are not yet on soldiers' pay.

Glasgow Evening Times, 26/6/43.

Through

SOLDIERS USED AS SCABS

Four hundred soldiers of the British Pioneer Corps were drafted to Fleetwood, Lancs., to-day to land the many thousands of pounds worth of fish in the holds of trawlers that have been in dock since the week-end.

It is feared that much of the fish has gone bad.

Evening Standard, 29/6/43.

"EDUCATING" SOLDIERS

Professors and other learned people who lecture to members of the Services on non-military matters are usually exceedingly discreet. In case they should be tempted to be careless they receive the best of advice.

A revised version of the memorandum issued to them by the Central Advisory Council for Adult Education to H.M. Forces will doubtless help them a lot.

Of course there are some subjects which are definitely taboo. The lecturer must avoid, for instance:

Criticising the military operations, strategy and tactics pursued by our Forces and forecasting the outcome of these.

Criticising the Government's higher direction of the war.

Criticising Allied military operations, strategy and tactics and forecasting the outcome of these.

Raising the topic of conscientious objection to military service.

Saying anything prejudicial to mutual confidence and good will between officers and other ranks, or prejudicial to training.

And there must be no party politics.

"This," the memorandum is careful to explain, "is not because political advocacy is bad, but because it is not in place in educational work."

Evening Standard, 6/7/43.

WORKER DEFINED

In attempting to classify the species Worker, I am indebted to Mr. Samuel Courtauld for yet another definition of the working man. Speaking at the Oxford Management Conference last month, he said:—

"The workman is the most delicate, incomprehensible and important machine that exists, and needs more care than any other machine.

Yaffle in "Reynolds News", 4/7/43.

WHITEHALL KNOWS BEST

After a hostel for land girls had been built at a village near Evesham the discovery was made that there was no water supply for it, and so the hostel may have to close down abruptly to save the girls from perishing of thirst. "Unfortunately," sighs the chairman of the local council, "people in London do not take any notice of warnings given locally."

That cry from the heart comes from a good many places besides the Vale of Evesham. Our bureaucrats, sitting at their roll-top desks in Whitehall, turn the deafest of deaf ears to the voice of local common sense.

The Evening News, 29/6/43.

the Press

DOING OWN DIRTY WORK

A scheme permitting an investigating officer to visit Scottish collieries and, if necessary, to impose a "fine" not exceeding £1 on absentees was outlined at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Union of Scottish Mineworkers in Glasgow to-day.

In a statement to *The Evening Times*, Mr. Abe Moffat, president of the Union, said that the Scottish Executive had discussed the question of the sentences being imposed on miners who had absented themselves from work.

This new scheme, proposed by the Regional Controller, would not be compulsory, and if the men desired they could refuse to accept the "fine" imposed by the investigating officer, in which case they would have to go to Court.

Glasgow Evening Times, 22/6/43.

Moffat, of course, is a member of the C.P.

THRILL IN WORKERS' LIFE

As a reward for their ability to do that "little bit extra" in order to get the job done, nine Sheffield steelworkers have visited Ealing Film Studios. After presenting each of the actors with a silver pen-knife they watched actual shots being taken for the film (San Demetria—London).

Daily Worker, 9/7/43.

And to think that there are still workers who don't do more than their share!

GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDA

The Squander Bug—that symbolic tempter whom the housewife and others are perpetually advised to resist, is believed to be losing his power—by becoming a kind of national pet.

He is beginning to amuse housewives. Children are growing to love him. Husbands make jokes about him. Music-hall comedians use him to get laughs.

This tendency is so perturbing the authorities that the Squander Bug's character is to be changed.

Sunday Dispatch, 4/7/43.

THE BOSS' BEST FRIENDS

At the Communist Party Congress Sam Taylor, of South Yorkshire, got a big round of applause when he said that at his colliery not one moment's production had been lost through strike action.

Daily Worker, 5/7/43.

Workers' Diary—July

IT appeared recently in the House that up to a few weeks ago widows of deceased seamen had to pay 2/6d. to receive her husband's effects. The Ministry of War Transport has now arranged to return the effects to the next of kin free of charge.

★ ★ ★

200 dockers at Fleetwood have gone on strike in order to obtain permission to start work at 5 a.m. instead of midnight. They would be called to report for work at midnight 6 times a week.

★ ★ ★

AN order has been issued at a northern R.A.F. depot that no aircraft-woman or N.C.O. of the W.A.A.F may walk out with commissioned officers of the Navy, or R.A.F. without permission.

★ ★ ★

FOREMEN and stocktakers employed by Dorman Long Ltd., the Middlesbrough steel-producing firm, have decided to continue their strike until the firm is prepared to acknowledge the men's right to be represented in negotiations by a trade union.

★ ★ ★

HARRY POLLITT at the annual congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain asked that in every coming by-election, the selection of a suitable anti-Fascist candidate should be made by democratic conferences composed of Tory, Liberal, Labour and Communist Parties.

★ ★ ★

ABOUT 200 drivers and conductors, including some conductresses went on strike at Hanwell London Transport garage to protest against the transfer of some drivers to other garages.

★ ★ ★

ROOSEVELT was asked at a press conference if the United States was prepared to recognise the French Committee of National Liberation. His answer implied that the Allies did not consider such a step, as an independent France did not exist. He declared that there was only 5 per cent. of France outside the Metropolitan territory. The same argument has not been applied to foreign governments in London.

★ ★ ★

NEWSPAPERS report that it is estimated that of India's nearly 400,000,000 people, 125,000,000 are suffering from malnutrition, and food prices are 3 to 8 times above pre-war days.

Note.—Malnutrition is a newspaper euphemism for starvation.

★ ★ ★

300 Fleetwood fish dockers have come out on strike for the fifth time in four weeks. Since there was only a small amount of fish to unload, the dockers were ordered to unload the general cargo of a ship. They refused to do so.

BOUND VOLUMES

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LESSONS of the SPANISH Revolution

LITTLE HAS BEEN written about Spain and the lessons of the Revolution have still to be drawn. This is partly due to the fact that all left-wing parties, those who are more likely to seek in the Spanish experience lessons for their future struggles, have committed mistakes and compromised their principles. It is significant that the only book attempting to draw the lessons of the Spanish war has been written by a Trotskyist and there was no Trotskyist movement in Spain.

Another reason is that the work could best be done by Spaniards but it is a well known racial characteristic that they dislike writing about history, especially their own. To do them justice one has to remember that most of them are without documents or newspaper files, that many are not in a position to write in concentration camps or besieged by the difficulties of the exile. The Spanish anarchist militia organiser Cipriano Mera for example, who wrote extensive notes on his experiences during the revolution had those documents seized by the French authorities when he was trying to send them to America.

One can consider, of course, the *attitude* adopted by various parties towards Spain and the *opinions* expressed in articles and speeches.

For the Liberal and Leftists Spain was the first country in which the struggle between Fascism and Democracy broke out. They weep over the mistake of the non-intervention pact as they weep over Munich. They learn from Spain that no compromise can be made with fascism and that Hitler and Mussolini are not to be trusted. The lack of value of these conclusions is self-evident.

The Communists never draw lessons—they justify and praise their own actions and slander their opponents. The Trotskyists point out correctly that it was a mistake on the part of the revolutionary movements to maintain the bourgeois state but claim that the formation of a workers' state would have saved the revolution.

The Anarchists have not drawn the lessons in any co-ordinated way but it is apparent that some refuse to admit the mistakes made by the Spanish Anarchist Movement and therefore all the lessons they draw are one-sided. They put all the blame for the defeat on the attitude of the Communist Party and Russian Intervention but refuse to recognise that since the anarchists were the strongest



The Spanish peasant was the vanguard of the revolution.

force in Spain they should have prevented the C.P. from taking power.

Some Spanish, French and Italian Anarchists have pointed out some of the mistakes of the Spanish comrades particularly during the course of the revolution itself. The present war has prevented a deeper and more extensive study being made.

It is from an anarchist point of view and without being hampered by false loyalty or opportunist considerations, but also with modesty and comprehension that we should try to draw the lessons of the Spanish Revolution. I am convinced that our movement will be more demoralised and weakened by bling and uncritical admiration than by frank admission of past mistakes.

The most important and original part of the Anarchist doctrine is its opposition to the State and its conception of a society where all forms of repression and domination have disappeared. These ideas have been put to the test during the Spanish Revolution and it is important that we should consider them first. To do this we must first briefly consider the sequence of events during the Spanish revolution and war.

On the 18th and 19th of July, Franco's forces revolted in the whole of Spain. The revolt had been foreseen by everybody and workers' organizations had warned the Government and organized demonstrations to demand arms. The Government however, persisted in keeping its eyes shut and doing nothing. When Franco's forces began to take one town after the other, to seize barracks and municipal buildings, the only thing which was left for the people to do was to seize the few arms they could lay their hands on and resist the fascists. Workers' syndicates were the main organizers of the resistance. In Madrid and Barcelona columns of militia were formed and sent to the front in a few hours. They set up patrols to fight fascists in the rearguard and provided for the provisioning of the troops.

The Government did nothing. Cabinet Ministers spent their time trying to form a new Cabinet. There were three different ones in 24 hours. At last Azaña, the president of the Republic, succeeded in forming a cabinet, with Giral as prime minister, composed of liberal ministers who did not in the least represent the Spanish people.

But nobody, except for the few politicians concerned, worried about the Government. There was too much to be done to crush the fascists. The Madrid workers had to get rid of the hidden fascists who shot them from their windows; the Asturian miners were surrounding Oviedo and were sending 5,000 miners (experts in the use of dynamite) to the Madrid front; in Barcelona the C.N.T. and U.G.T. (anarchist and socialist trade-unions) were forming militias which, with Durruti at their head, started to liberate the province of Aragon from the fascists.

Each town, each village was concerned with its own problems. Priests, fascists, and landowners had to be executed, the land had to be collectivized, militias and workers' patrols had to be raised. Production had to be organized to suit the necessities of war. To do all this the workers and peasants did not wait for Government orders or advice. They did not even think of the Government of Madrid, they felt that decisions rested with them, they consulted one another in their syndicates and councils and acted according to the decisions taken in common.

The result was that the workers were victorious almost everywhere. When they failed it was more due to their lack of arms and tremendous military inferiority than their lack of enthusiasm or power of organization. Towns like Oviedo and Saragossa, strongholds of the Spanish revolutionary movements, remained in the hands of the fascists because they were garrison towns where Franco had accumulated arms and men.

In July 1936 the Government was powerless. It had no army at its disposal, the small part of the regular army which had remained faithful to the anti-fascists was amalgamated with the militia.

The police, composed of civil guards and assault guards, had been sent to the front. The assault guards (the police force created by the Republic) often volunteered to join the militia. The whole apparatus of Government bureaucracy had fallen to pieces, State officials were left without a job, everything was in the hands of workers' committees.

The Government was so powerless that it seems incredible that it should have survived at all. But it did survive, in spite of the anarchists' aversion to all kinds of governments, in spite of the people's distrust of a government which had always oppressed them and which had failed to protect them against the fascist revolt.

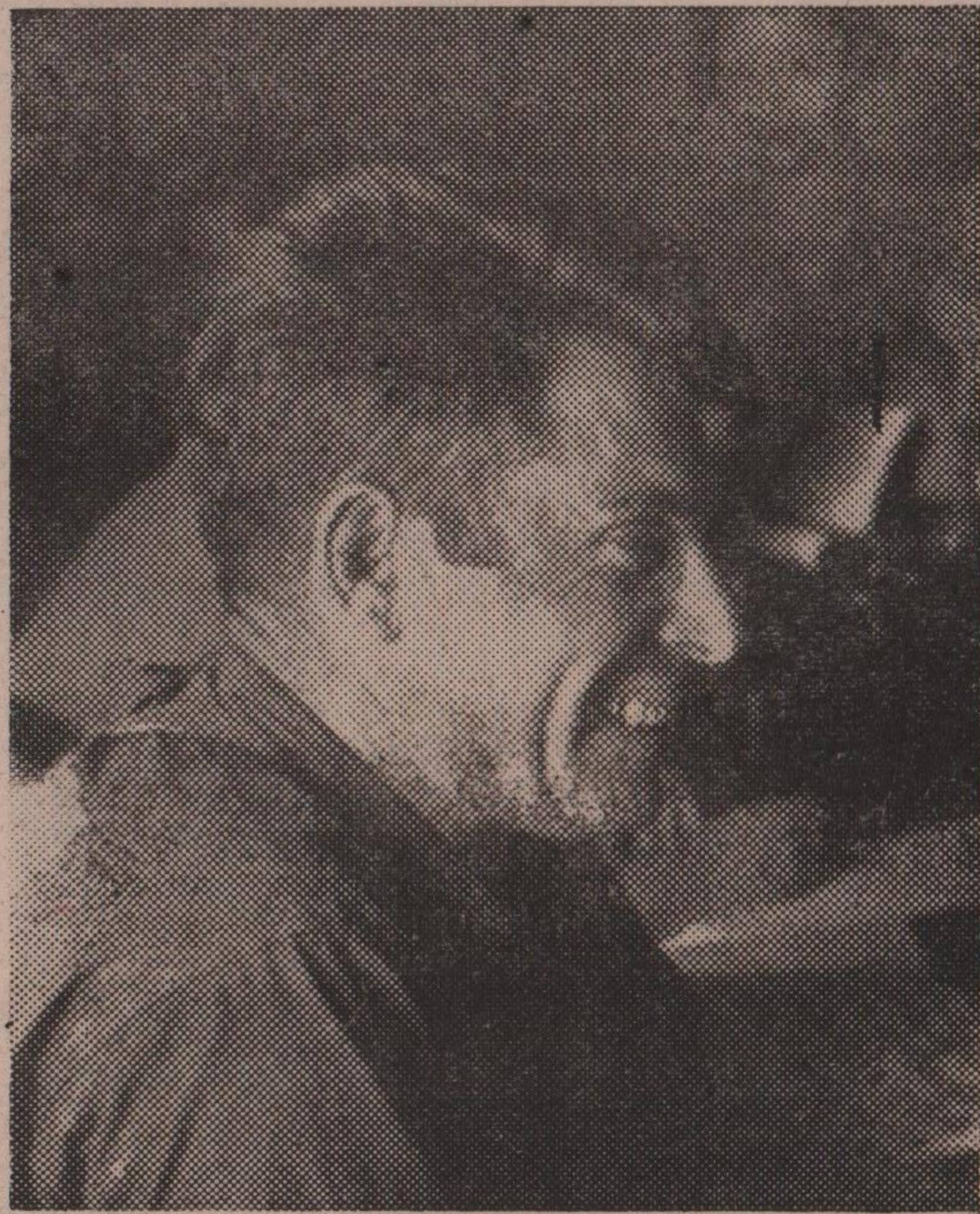
It survived because it was so weak that the people did not find it necessary to attack it. The politicians, the heads and leaders of the various organizations who were more directly faced with the problem of preserving or suppressing it decided that it was preferable to conserve the legal government. The reason was that the Spanish Revolutionists feared foreign intervention. They thought

that by keeping a legal government, by maintaining diplomatic relations with the democratic states and the League of Nations, they would be able to secure the non-intervention and perhaps the help of the Democracies. Many Spaniards were so ignorant of the reactionary nature of the British and French Governments that they naïvely believed that they would get support from them.

The Government was kept as a façade. As it had no army, no police at its disposal, the Anarchists thought that it could do no harm. But that façade was reinforced by 600 million dollars in gold of the Spanish reserve and which remained in the banks at the disposal of the Government. Just as at the time of the Paris Commune when the revolutionaries respected the property of the banks, the Spanish Anarchists failed to seize the gold reserves of the Government.

With the only arm it had at its disposal the Government started its struggle against the forces of the revolution, it used gold to blackmail them. It succeeded in wringing concessions in exchange for funds, it weakened the adversary by starving it of money. Catalonia, too revolutionary for the Madrid Government's taste, was prevented from buying material, necessary for war industries. It went further. It sabotaged the revolution by refusing to buy arms abroad. The Non-Intervention pact did not take place immediately after the revolution started. Up to the 9th of September the Government would have had plenty of time to buy arms. The Giral Government was in power for seven weeks and during that period it bought no arms for Spain. Even after the non-intervention pact it was possible to buy arms and planes in the European black market and in America, but most of the offers were turned down or merely used by unscrupulous buyers for their own benefit.

The Caballero Government formed on the 6th of September was more ambitious in its counter-revolutionary role. As it was a labour government it found its task easier than if it had been a reactionary one. It had a certain prestige among the masses, it did not include the



DURRUTI

Organiser of the anarchist militias on the Aragon front.

Anarchists but Caballero, boosted as the "Spanish Lenin" gave it a vaguely revolutionary tinge.

Caballero put his hopes in French and British democracy. He had therefore to present those two countries with a respectable, disciplined Spain, where the people were ruled by well educated politicians and not led by ardent, revolutionary workers and peasants.

Both the Madrid Government and the Catalan Generalidad started passing decrees limiting the collectivization of the land and industry, suppressing the Central Committee of Anti-fascist Militias, prohibiting the possession of arms by workers in the rear-guard, establishing censorship of the Press, etc., etc.

The bourgeois and reactionary elements started raising their heads. The Stalinists began to organize a series of attentats against the anarchist workers. Already in October 1936 anarchist militiamen were openly attacked and shot at by Communists in Valencia. These incidents were not taken seriously at the time because the Communists were still a small force but they demoralized the masses while they gave new strength to the enemies of the revolution.

On the military front the Government showed the greatest inefficiency. The fall of Toledo smelt of treason. The Aragon front was refused arms because it was manned by Anarchists of all nationalities. Great advances could have been made on that sector but the Communists did not want to lose a pretext to accuse the Anarchists for their lack of activity. In spite of great courage and sacrifices no progress was made for lack of arms and ammunition.

The only victory which took place during the Caballero Government was the defence of Madrid, *but it was not* organized by the Government which had fled to Valencia. It was organized, as on the 19th of July by the syndicates, under the proud slogan: "Long life to Madrid without a Government!"

In Barcelona the distribution of food (of major importance in a revolutionary period), was put in the hands of the Communist Comorera. He suppressed the co-ops which had done the job extremely efficiently and put it into the hands of small business men with the result that poor people starved while the black market prospered.

From September 1936 to May 1937 the Government gradually gathered strength and finally crushed the power of the workers during the May Days.

The Anarchists had been induced to join the Government in November 1936 and collaborated in the setting up of counter-revolutionary decrees. They often tried to put up some opposition, but the arms Russia sent were now used as a blackmail instead of gold. The Anarchist ministers gave in to the Socialists and Communists because of their fear of compromising the issue of the war. They hoped that the war would be won quickly and that they would be then able to regain the revolutionary conquests.

They failed to see that only by maintaining and extending those revolutionary conquests could the revolution and the war be won. They failed to see the danger of maintaining the bourgeois state in front of their revolutionary institutions. Sooner or later one had to rule the other out: the bourgeois government soon destroyed the revolutionary power of the workers.

As Kropotkin has demonstrated in his pamphlet *Revolutionary Government*, the bourgeois State if allowed to subsist for a time will gather round it the forces of reaction. It will strengthen itself and crush the workers. Kropotkin drew this lesson from the experience of the Commune; the Spaniards have to draw the same conclusion from their own bitter experience.

The empty shell of the State was soon occupied in Spain by power-seeking parties. The frail frame of Government institutions was used by the Communists to build a stronghold of reaction.

The peasants of Catalonia and Aragon had understood better than the "vanguard of the working class" how

important it was to destroy the representatives and symbols of government in their villages. They eliminated the mayor and his caciques, they burnt all government papers, they killed the lawyers and priests and burnt the churches, symbols of government oppression.

The result was paradoxical. While the minor representatives of the State were suppressed the old politicians, ministers and presidents were allowed to go on living and directing the political life of the nation. The peasants had not trusted petty government officials but the heads of the workers' organizations collaborated with old sly politicians like Azaña and Caballero, with men like Companys who had always imprisoned anarchists but who on the 19th of July put himself at the service of the Anarchist movement only to start suppressing anarchists a few months later.

The bourgeois Government not only instituted reaction at home but it was also unable to crush fascism outside. Negrin's government, which was formed after the May Days and which was baptised the "Government of Victory" has not a single victory to its credit. It preferred a fascist victory rather than let the revolution go its way. It tried to defeat Franco by achieving military superiority, by negotiations with foreign powers. But it refused to use the real weapon of the workers: revolution. Complete revolution which would have given more courage to the Spanish masses in Republican Spain, which would have inspired the people under Franco's yoke and awakened the population of the countries surrounding Spain.

Instead, the Government supported the bourgeoisie and thereby weakened the anti-fascist struggle. The enthusiasm of the Spanish masses was due to the fact that they were defending their revolutionary conquests. If those were taken away their incentive to fight was therefore diminished. Furthermore the bourgeoisie was a doubtful ally which on more than one occasion went over to Franco.

Outside Spain the alliance with the French and British democracies proved fatal to the revolution and war. Non-Intervention was a farce, which served Hitler's and Mussolini's purposes admirably.

Spain gained nothing from that alliance but lost a wonderful opportunity of winning support among the working class abroad for fear of displeasing the "democratic" governments.

It was again the fear of antagonizing France and Britain which prevented the Spaniards from declaring Morocco's independence and helping the Arabs to revolt.

If the Spanish revolutionaries had carried on fully the revolution they would have completely abolished the Government in July 1936. The "democracies" would have certainly broken all diplomatic relations with Spain and there would have been no question of "loyalists" but only of bloodthirsty reds.

The Spanish people would then have had to rely entirely on the solidarity of the International proletariat to avoid a war of intervention or other hostile steps on the part of foreign powers. But wouldn't it have been better to rely on the contagious power of the revolution than on the Edens, Blums and Stalins who were bound to betray them?

It is possible that the international proletariat gagged and suppressed in fascist countries, doped by Left-wing leaders in the democratic countries would not have responded to the appeal of the Spanish workers and would have allowed foreign intervention to crush the revolution. But it is possible too, that the example of the Spanish Revolution would have roused the European working class into action resulting in the overthrow of Popular Front and Fascist Governments alike, and the setting up of a new society which would have prevented the world from experiencing the misery and horror of the present war.

M. L. BERNERI

A Red and Black Notebook

"A Yorkshire signal lamp man, Mr. G. W. E. Crabtree, of Sowerby Bridge, declared with force at the annual conference of the National Union of Railwaymen in Carlisle to-day that the Government should ban all non-essential civilian train travel during the war, and most delegates heartily agreed.

Mr. Crabtree declared: 'Railway stations are plastered with notices asking 'Is Your Journey Really Necessary?'

'It would be simple for the Government to drop these appeals and stop people from travelling unless they are on journeys which really are necessary.'

Daily Express, July 7, 1943.

That the trade unions and the Labour Party are willing to go further than the master class in the curtailment of enjoyment in the interest of an abstract State is so obvious as to need no labouring of the point. Already, most of the few good things of life previously enjoyed by the workers have vanished. Now, even the doubtful "pleasure" of travelling (which usually means an exiled worker returning to his home town) is attacked by these Dismal Jimmies. Perhaps they would introduce the home passport system of their Utopia, Russia, and force us to seek permission from authority if we wished to visit a neighbouring town.

A CHANGE OF MASTERS

"A change is as good as a rest," but only if it is a change. We have always warned workers against seeking a change of masters. Two years ago there began a spasmodic campaign for direct Government control, carried out in war factories by Socialists and Communists. At the time *War Commentary* warned the workers against supporting such illusions. In spite of warnings, the aircraft workers of Short Bros. Ltd., a little while ago, welcomed the seizure of the firm by the Government through the person of Sir Stafford Cripps.

Now the same workers, at a meeting organised by the Amalgamated Engineering Union, are protesting against the new Government management. Their conditions are worse, rather than better. It baffles us how anyone can believe that a Whitehall bureaucrat will be a more sympathetic master than a private capitalist. However, not all of these new managements are civil servants, some are just plain, ordinary capitalists. The theory of the State Control advocates, Socialists and Communists, appears to be that a capitalist as a private individual is a bad master, but the same capitalist armed with State power is a good master. As leading capitalists are directors of many companies, and of State concerns, we may see arise the following ridiculous situation; that the workers attack a certain capitalist in one factory, calling for State Control and in another factory support the same capitalist as a State agent. The beginning of wisdom for the Short Bros. aircraft workers is to learn that, not Master Control, but Workers' Control is the way to better conditions and freedom.

THE PIECEWORK JUNGLE

Piece work or payment-by-results was bitterly opposed by the trade unions for many generations, for obvious and very good reasons. At first, by working harder and introducing time-saving gadgets, the workers gain a slightly higher wage; the boss a much higher profit. Both sides are pleased. However, after a while piece times are reduced, the workers toil harder for less money, and their



second state is worse than the first. Even in wartime where, in a few places, piece or bonus rates have been maintained by the battling attitude of the workers, the system is unsatisfactory. Mate is set against mate in a battle of brothers, shoddy work replaces the craftsman's pride, and the urge and pace of the work saps all nervous energy. The increased wage is often illusory, and in any case reduces day earnings. Without bonus or piece work the ordinary day wage would be higher, for now the workers tolerate a low time rate because of the chance of making up on piece work.

Most unions have fought the system. The miners unsuccessfully. Most of the local pit strikes are caused by piece rate disputes, and the system is a chief cause of the rotten conditions of the miners. The dockers have resisted it in some ports, but not in others. The building trade workers have been largely successful in their fight against it. The engineers gave way during the last war, but in 1919 were able, for a while, to stop it. Afterwards, it was thrust upon them because of their organisational and tactical weakness.

Considering these things it is with bitter regret that we comment on the piece work resolution of the recent Amalgamated Engineering Union conference. The A.E.U. not only gives in to the piece work system, but actually welcomes it and advocates its extension. Admiration of Soviet Russia, where piece work is universal, helped the resolution.

THE BURLESQUE BOLSHEVIKS

Comic Cuts not having arrived this week, we looked to our old stand-by the Communist Party for our weekly amusement. We found it in a private circular issued by the "Main Shop leadership" of a Communist factory group in a North-West London aircraft factory. The circular regrets the decline of the group (we could tell them that most groups are declining), and chides the members for not attending meetings or paying dues, especially not paying dues.

Working themselves into an heroic fervour the "leadership" likens the payment of dues to the British Communist Party to the defence of Stalingrad.

"Stalingrad is destroyed, but the spirit of Stalingrad lives on . . . The spirit of our group still exists we feel sure."

So says the C.P. circular. We don't get the point.

The circular goes on. "You will not lose your life.* All we ask from you is the price of a packet of fags or a pint." Or a packet of Crisps?

SYNDICALIST.

*You bet.

★ ★ ★ ★ **A LETTER TO GEORGE** ★ ★ ★ ★

by Obadiah Hornbook, B.A.

SIRE,

You, Your Majesty, if I do not mistake you, are a person of intelligence. By the unique character of the position in which the identity of your parents and the defection of your brother have placed you, you are provided with an insight of more than ordinary acuity into the processes of government. Every measure is submitted to you for your signature. Every administrative action, progressive, reactionary, or tyrannical is taken in your name. When exhortation, publicity, subterfuge and the personal prestige of your First Minister have failed to secure acquiescence in a measure, a speech from yourself or from your wife goes a long way towards the desired object. It is true that your periods of impotence are prolonged, and that your activity, potent as its sentimental appeal may be, is sadly curtailed. But in these periods of contemplation, during which the affairs of the country and the Empire are conducted in your name Your Majesty must have been able to cultivate a remarkable power of philosophic reflection. It is upon the basis of this power, where I think I detect common ground between us, that I venture to address Your Majesty.

We are both gifted with moderate and serviceable intelligence. We are both the recipients of an expensive and select education. Although in my own case the peculiar circumstances of your upbringing were lacking, the backbone of privilege was, I pride myself, identical. It is impossible for me to credit that in appending your signature to the death-warrants of so many of your younger male subjects, and in scrutinising time and again the various faces of your Privy Council, you have not been overtaken by the same nausea and contempt which these measures and these faces inspire in myself. But it is not to offer you condolence upon the necessity of associating upon official terms with Sir John Simon, receiving into your house Lord Vansittart and Sir Archibald Sinclair; being obliged to depute your authority over your native subjects to Lord Swinton, and to remove the liberties of your subjects from the extremely capable hands of your Judges and transfer them to those of Mr. Morrison, that I write to you. It is to offer you co-operation upon the basis of the similarities between us which I have outlined.

We are both of us, Your Majesty, surrounded by knaves and by lunatics. In the direct entourage of Your Majesty, and in the public offices filled in Your Majesty's name, the former predominate, and under the propaganda conducted by them, many of your Majesty's subjects are rapidly becoming the latter. Humiliating as it must be to yourself and your lady to receive socially the installers of Franco, the jailers of India, the hoodwinkers of your armed forces and the future regulators of Europe, it is far more humiliating and far more dangerous to life and limb to be forced to acknowledge them as legislators and obey their legislation. There can be only one remedy. I invite Your Majesty to collaborate with me in the formation of a Free English Government.

The precedent is fully established. We should require only a friendly and credulous Power upon whose territory we might install ourselves. An appeal to An Taoiseach should provide us with a place of residence.

In establishing a "Free" Government as opposed to any other Government, it is not necessary to deceive the electorate or even to secure nomination. Free governments differ from all others in that they are self-appointed, they represent nobody, exercise no authority, and control no territory. The pleasures of Government, which Your Majesty has never been permitted to taste, are associated with a minimum of responsibility. The only subjects who are delivered over to such governments, for military service, internment, or employment, are those whom foresight or political necessity has compelled to take refuge overseas. I do most earnestly desire Your Majesty to consider the proposition. It might even be possible, if Your Majesty is unwilling to relinquish a London residence, to conduct the affairs of the Free British Government at home, and in England. Its illegal Press might well be maintained upon paper secured under Your Majesty's signature from Your Majesty's paper controller, as is much of the paper which Your Majesty's allies in this country employ at present in the abuse of one another and the vilification of Your Majesty's Jewish subjects. But whether you consent to establish your Free Government in Dublin, and from there advocate the humane blockading and bombardment of your present Capital, or whether remaining here you avail yourself of the facilities extended to other Free governments by Your Majesty's ministers, I beseech Your Majesty not to delay in establishing the movement. I can provide the necessary staff of sycophants and informers. If Your Majesty is in any doubt as to the methods and the technical apparatus to be employed, there are a hundred such governments in Your Majesty's own back yard, bodies of political opportunists and patriots who wait with the pertinacity of buzzards for the defeat of Germany, in order that they may descend upon the unfortunate public of Europe and with the support of Allied courts, Allied informers and Allied firing squads establish a personal ascendance compared with which the activities of the Carpet-Baggers would have been considered laudable. Study their methods, their actions, their personnel—the atrocity propaganda with which they popularise themselves and the feuds which they conduct: their persecution of progressives among their own nationals and their access to the reactionary ear of Your Majesty's government, and Your Majesty will no longer be in doubt as to the desirability of a Free English Government under the leadership of your humble and obedient subject,

OBADIAH HORNBOOK.

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How is it with the Empah?

by George Woodcock

"ARGUMENT OF EMPIRE". W. K. HANCOCK. Penguin Books. 9d.

"THE WHITE MAN'S DUTY". NANCY CUNARD AND GEORGE PADMORE. Hurricane Books. 9d.

The sensational collapse of British rule in the Eastern colonies, Malaya, Burma, Borneo, etc., amid the indifference and even pleasure of the colonial peoples has caused much heart searching among the politically minded, and even those who had previously appeared indifferent to imperial politics. Like old King George on his death bed to Honest Stan Baldwin, the bourgeoisie have been asking for 'some time now, 'How is it with the Empah?' The oracle's answer is enigmatic and not encouraging.

This concern with the health of the Empire has naturally set many amateur doctors about their diagnoses. The results, expressed in books, pamphlets, magazine and newspaper articles, vary from the conclusion that everything is right with the Empire to the conclusion that everything is wrong. Most, however, in the old spirit of English liberalism, suggest that some sort of quite unworkable compromise, such as reformist tinkering with colonial government, or the extension of dominion status in order to place the colonial peoples under the coloured instead of white masters.

Argument of Empire, by W. K. Hancock, puts forward the idea that the Empire, perhaps slightly liberalised in administration, is the best form of society for furthering the interests of the natives of the colonies. He envisages a very gradual policy of reform which would 'prepare for self government' by forming native bureaucracies and educating a governing class to become the parasites of the workers when their white masters move out. The reasoning on which he justifies the Empire can be judged from the following masterpiece of bad logic.

"There can be no freedom from want unless there is freedom from fear, no constructive economic enterprise except within the shelter of public peace. Public peace means the rule of law. The rule of law must have the backing of force. Force will not in the long run be effective unless it is rooted in consent. If the consent is wholehearted and constant, the force can be moderate in weight and mild in operation; this is how force operates within a constitutional state.

But if the consent is inconstant and weakly-rooted, the force will be burdensome in weight and violent in operation; this is how force operates in international society or in a state divided against itself."

Thus it will be seen that the author really envisages repression as the principle underlying imperial rule, and merely tells the subject that if he submits with a good grace the repression will be imposed more softly—by a policeman with a truncheon instead of one with a revolver. But to imagine that the use of force for the conducting of a society will produce any lasting benefit to the subject is to fly in the face of the evidence of the history of governmental societies. 'The love of exercising power has been found to be so universal, that no class of men who have possessed authority have been able to avoid abusing it.*' That the rulers of the British Empire should fail to conform to this law is, indeed, unlikely to the point of absurdity.

The author does all he can to whitewash the British colonial activities. For instance, he says that the natives of Malaya failed to resist the Japanese not because they had no use for the British, but because they had not the arms to resist. He does not reveal that the British did not arm the Malays because they feared the arms might be used against them. Nor does he explain why there were numerous fifth columnists in Malaya, or why numbers of the Burmese actually fought beside the Japanese in expelling the British from their country.

★

The other book under review, *The White Man's Duty*, by Nancy Cunard and George Padmore, gives information which refutes Hancock's contentions on certain points.

For instance, Hancock makes a great deal of the fact that in West Africa there is no *direct* exploitation by the whites and the land is almost all owned and cultivated by the natives. All this is true, but only because the Gold Coast is so unhealthy that it has become known in colonial annals as 'the white man's grave'. While the West African natives do in fact own

*H. T. Buckle, *History of Civilisation in England*.

the land and do not work for white planters as wage labourers, they are nonetheless exploited indirectly, but thoroughly.

With regard to the wage labourers of the Empire, I quoted figures for Ceylon, Mauritius and Malaya in "A Handful of Rice" in *July War Commentary*. The figures given by Padmore for West Africa show an equally bad state of affairs. In the Government coal mines surface workers get as low as 5/8d. a week, as against an estimated cost of living for a married man with two children of 9/-. In privately-owned tin mines regular workers get an average of 3/6d. a week, casual labour as low as 2/8d. a week. Women get even less.

But an even worse feature of British exploitation in Africa is the forced labour.

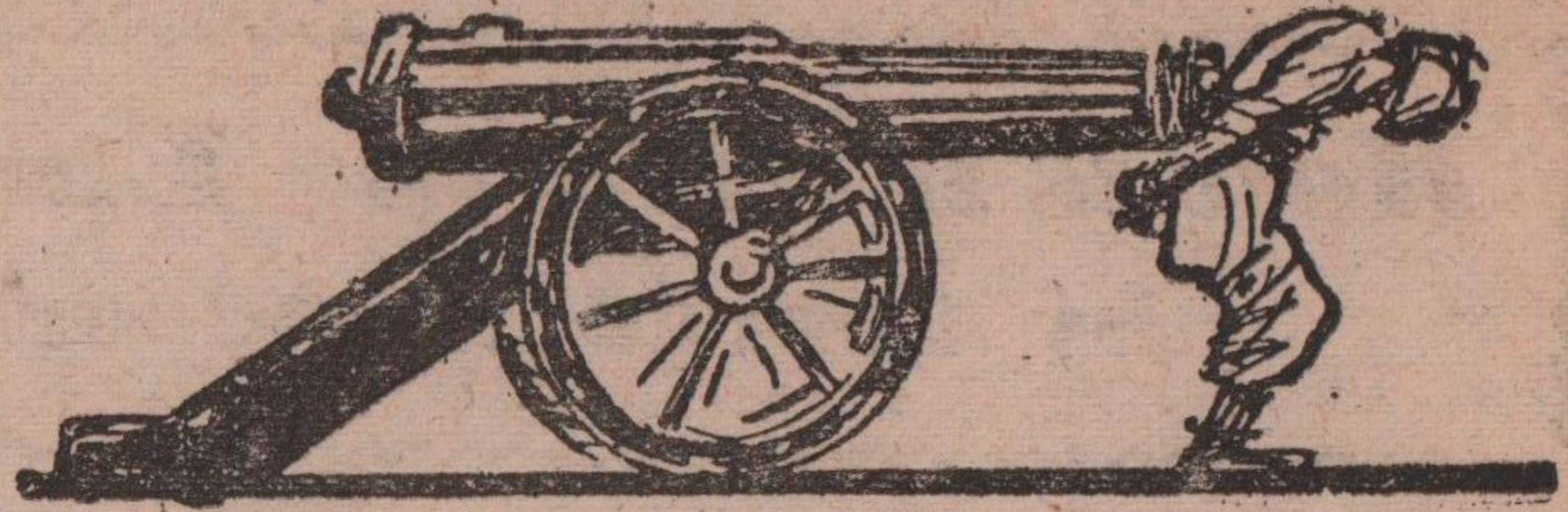
"In March, 1932, the Kenya Government, with the approval of the Colonial Office, legalised forced labour for plantation purposes, and in the East African colonies Colour Bar exists in practice. Africans between the ages of 16 and 55 are now liable to be called out for work on the white settlers' plantations in the Highlands for an average daily wage of 3½d. This may be implemented up to 7d. a day where rations are provided by the employer.

It is difficult to see any difference between this and the forced labour introduced by the Germans on the continent.

Padmore exposes the major defects of British rule and shows that only when this rule has been withdrawn will the native people of the colonies live reasonable lives, without poverty and enslavement. Where he fails is that he foresees this coming about by parliamentary means, which would only allow the more cunning educated negroes to take the place of the white exploiters and crawl to power on the backs of their fellow countrymen. The negro bureaucrats of Lagos have as little in common with the average tribesman as have the white officials. It would be far better to allow an organic form of free society to evolve out of the communal tribal institutions, which Padmore rather despises. In the hands of the British, it is true, tribal institutions have been degraded, through the policy of Indirect Rule, into a despotism of the chiefs supported by British power, but this has not completely broken the spirit of free communism at the basis of tribal life.

The major silliness of the pamphlet is, however, the idea that if they are given democratic institutions the colonial peoples will fight like hell for Britain. Is there a single sensible reason why they should?

C.P. CRUSHES INDIAN RIOTS



Daily Worker, July 3rd, makes the following announcement in a report from P. C. Joshi, the leader of the Indian C.P.:

"Communists and Muslim League members, acting together as 'People's Volunteers', have won permission from the Dacca magistrate to help in stopping riots incited by factional opposers of the local League Ministry.

"As members of the People's Defence Committee, representing all citizens of Dacca, they have been granted permission to hold public meetings and to send volunteers maintain 24-hour vigils, hold meetings and persuade hundreds of angry citizens to go home peacefully."

In effect this means that the Indian Communist Party has raised a force of auxiliary police to assist in putting down demonstrations against British Imperialism. In India the terroristic methods used by the British to keep the workers in subjection makes it a difficult and dangerous business to organize or even take part in a demonstration. In *War Commentary* for January 1942, we published a translation of an account in an Indian peasant paper *Zamin Ryot* on September 9th, 1941, which gave some inkling of what that terror is like. This occurred before the widespread demonstrations and disorders which swept across India last autumn. Since that time even the British repression has been tightened up. As we pointed out in our last issue, the appointment of General Wavell as Viceroy indicates that the Government of India foresees more trouble ahead. In its hour of need, British Imperialism looks about for new allies—and the Communists immediately come to its aid. Not content with merely acting as spies, informers, and provocateurs, the comrades must needs organize an active resistance-breaking force as well. And

knowing the methods employed by the C.P. elsewhere we can guess what brutalities lie behind the *Daily Worker's* phrase about "maintaining vigils" and "persuading angry citizens to go home peacefully".

The C.P. have shown themselves determined Bosses' men in this country. This new move in India (where their bludgeonings are sanctioned in advance by the magistrates, and they will have police protection) amounts to the recruiting of an anti-working class force similar to the Special Police hurriedly organized by the ruling class in the General Strike.

BUSMEN'S WAGE AWARD

WHAT IS THE meaning of the Busmen's Wage Award? Busmen must have been startled when the Bosses decided to make them a wage increase throughout the industry of 4/6d. a week. Particularly startled because the National Arbitration Board had already turned down their demand for a wage increase. "Something for Nothing, or the Employer as the Worker's Friend" is a title fit only for a fairy tale—it just doesn't work out like that in real life! So let us look the gift horse in the mouth.

In their original claim, the busmen demanded a wage advance and amelioration of their working conditions (how bad these are was shown in the article by "Busman" in the Mid-May *War Commentary*). The Bosses refused to make any concessions on the latter point. Later, at "arbitration" both claims were turned down flat. It seems likely that the bosses have picked on the figure of 4/6d. to bring the busworkers' into line with the recent award to the railwaymen, who also got 4/6d. But with this difference; the rail increase was made retrospective from April, while the busworkers' increase only comes into operation this week-end. You might think this was a small point, but it represents a saving for the employers of no less than 49/6d. per employee—an aggregate saving of £200,000 odd!

If the bosses give something it stands to sense they want something in exchange. Having brought the wage award on to a level with the railworkers', it may be that they will demand some sacrifice from the busmen comparable to one that the railwaymen already groan under. We can only speculate. The employers are very anxious to widen their powers under the Loan and Transfer Agreement. As the agreement stands at present, although busworkers can be moved about the country, they can't be moved very far from their homes. Our guess is that an attempt will be made to extend this so that busmen can be pushed around at the bosses' pleasure. Knowing employers and knowing the ways of the Transport and General Workers Union, we have no doubt they will fight hard to extract a good return (*i.e.* a worsening of busmen's working conditions) for their four-and-sixpenny bait! Passenger Transport workers should be on the look out, and see that they are not duped by any "Fair Play" cant which their employers may try and put across on them.

War Commentary

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