

# **DIRECT ACTION**

PRICE ONE PENNY

## **No Peace in Europe ?**

### **I.W.M.A. Call to the Workers of the World**

Two world wars within thirty years: that is the result of the present world order. The European War has ended, but peace is by no means secure. On the contrary, new conflicts of clashing interests are being prepared between the victorious powers; conflicts that may produce new armed strife.

Permanent peace is less likely today than after the first World War, when it was thought that disarmament could be achieved by means of the slow reduction of militarism and the collaboration of states within the society of nations.

Today disarmament is not mentioned; instead the protection of peace by the armed might of the victorious powers is the topical slogan. This means prolonging the existence of militarism as an instrument for preserving national capitalist interests and eventually imperialistic expansion.

Lust and the appetite for power will continue to write history with blood, fire and steel. Militarism will obtain increasing influence on decisions of an international character.

This state of affairs is contrary to popular interests. Peace, not war, is the interest of the people.

For many centuries they have allowed politicians and governments to look after the maintenance of peace, with the result of an interminable series of wars. They have resigned themselves to be cannon-fodder for the governments. This must cease. The maintenance of peace must no longer be left to the organisers of wars. The people themselves must organise peace if they want it to be successful.

In the past it was hoped that the organised working-class would impede the governments from endangering peace by their unbounded appetite for power and greed for financial gain. But as the workers abandoned the theories of internationalism to indulge in nationalist politics, they destroyed the moral foundation which should have been the basis of their struggle against war.

The fraternisation of the people across all national frontiers and the co-operation between the workers of the world were betrayed in favour of collaboration with capitalist politicians against workers of other countries.

The anti-militarist tendency of the working-class movement of the world was abandoned. This produced the first failure of that movement in 1914, and again in 1939. At the end of the second World War the workers international movement must be reorganised on a real *internationalist* foundation. Fraternisation of the world's workers will be a strong factor in securing the peace of the future.

The working-class have no interest in war. But it cannot be said that the workers are blameless. In modern industrialised war there are 10 - 15 workers behind every soldier. War is made possible by their production and operation of the necessary machinery—arms, planes, tanks, explosives.

International organisation must end this. This is the workers' historical mission. They must refuse to continue to provide arms for the slaughter-house of modern war.

Our reorganised international must be the mainstay of the movement of popular resistance which will challenge with real power the manoeuvres of governments and politicians who are already preparing the next world war.

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# RED AND BLACK NOTEBOOK

One of the last acts of Bevin as Minister of Labour was to announce to the Commons the total of prosecutions of employers for breaking the Essential Works Order by refusing to reinstate wrongfully dismissed workers.

Of 63 employers so prosecuted, 47 were convicted, nine were dismissed under the Probation Act, on payment of costs, six cases were dismissed and one withdrawn. The heaviest penalty inflicted on any firm was a fine of £50 and 8 guineas costs.

No employer was sent to jail. Contrast this against the sentences inflicted on workers who broke the E.W.O. More than a thousand men and hundreds of women jailed, and don't forget, hundreds of employers escaped prosecution altogether.

## CO-OPS IN RUSSIA

Early this year the British Co-operative Union sent a delegation to Russia to study co-ops there. Recently the London Co-operative Society invited one of the delegates, Mr. R. A. Palmer, Gen. Sec. of the Co-operative Union, to address the L.C.S. members on his visit

Membership of Russian co-ops, he said, was voluntary, but one cannot be a member if living in town as all town shops are State owned. In the country villages, however, there is nowhere else to shop.

Mr. Palmer, who tried to justify the Bolshevization of the Russian co-ops, went on to say: "Officials, and particularly good workers, may purchase in a different shop from the ordinary workers. This is an aspect of the Soviet policy of rewarding those whose services to the community are of special value. At these shops 'off-the-ration goods can be bought at axorbitant prices, special workers, after five years service, were given a 10 per cent. discount." A storm of protest against such unfair distribution greeted this statement.

"Before the war dividend was paid on Co-operative purchase," Mr. Palmer had previously said, "but since then all dividends have automatically gone to pay for the war."

## EAT LESS FOOD

The cut in rations and the threat of further cuts were not made without psychological preparation by the Government. Atrocity propaganda was a good foundation for the cuts and directed public indignation away from the Government in good time.

There is only one way to prevent famine in Europe. Allow the farmers and peasants to return to their farms. Britain and the U.S.A. hold hundreds of thousands of Italian peasants

as prisoners of war. Britain, U.S.A. and Russia hold millions of German farmers. Russia has many millions of peasants in her army and looks like keeping most of them there, even though Germany is crushed.

Without the return of the farm workers to the land, famine and disease will sweep Europe and even this island will not escape.

## LONDON AIRCRAFT STRIKE

700 workers, labourers, storekeepers, chasers and inspectors employed by Handley Page Aircraft, London, struck work at 10 o'clock on Monday, May 28, for a wage increase. Forming a procession they marched the 400 yards length of the main shops as they quitted.

The fitters and riveters greeted them with cheers and a hammer tattoo. The workers not yet involved are loyal to the strikers and work is being quickly tied up.

## SLAVE LABOUR IN LONDON

The use of German prisoners of war at the rate of 3d. per hour on London building sites is watched with dismay by building workers faced by this formidable competition which is likely to grow. The abolition of Sunday work has made the London builders realise just how small their hourly rate is. Men from the North who have been sent to bomb damage jobs in London are finding it difficult to pay their way here and send money home.

A strike would be threatened by prison labour. Prisoners of war are not allowed to strike and no fraternisation is allowed.

## T.U. UNITY ON THE CONTINENT

In Belgium the Catholic unions have refused to join the new trade union organisation set up by the Socialist and Communist unions. Dutch Catholics have rejected a similar offer, but have, with the Belgian T.U.s, offered to collaborate on wage issue.

In Italy an approach to the Catholic unions by the trade unions, an offer sponsored by the Communists, has been blessed by the Pope and accepted. A single reformist trade union centre is to be set up. In contrast Italian Syndicalists continue their propaganda for Workers' Control in independence.

## WORKERS' CONTROL IN ITALY

In *Reynolds News* we read this tribute to the persistence of the propaganda for Workers' Control engaged in by Italian Syndicalists:

"Within one day of the Partisan rising which freed Milan the factories of this great industrial city were working again—under workers' control.

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## Spanish Syndicalist National Congress

Highly satisfactory news has just arrived from France of the results established during the Congress of the delegation of 35,000 Spanish anarcho-syndicalists held in Paris from May 1st onwards.

We shall give in detail all the more important resolutions adopted as soon as we receive them. For the present we can only reproduce a translation of the cablegram just received from our correspondent:

"Congress tasks closed great enthusiasm. Reformist proposals rejected immense majority. Resolved unanimously to ratify principles National Congresses. New national committee elected includes Germain Esgleas, Federica Montseny, Ruiz Elie. Several committees elected to determine essential points constructive work. Movement has centred itself right way. Details follow post. Yours fraternally, X."

## The Voice of Experience

Our comrade Federica Montseny, militant of our movement in Spain, has replied in the following terms in answer to a direct question:

"My experiences in a government in the very critical circumstances for the life of Spain (1936-37) have confirmed my original belief that:

"Partial intervention in the state, sharing with the other political sections of the community, the responsibility of the governmental direction of the country can only lead to the failure and discredit of a revolutionary movement.

"The complex and sinuous texture of political collaboration invalidates all revolutionary action, nullifies all efficiency. To be able to do anything profound, serious and of consequence 'from above', only the total control of power, would be the solution. That is to say dictatorship. And where would we go that way?"

"If we arrived at such a conclusion our reason to exist as libertarians would cease.

"But the C.N.T. and the libertarian movement which for a century past have stimulated and encouraged the Spanish working-class, strengthening and inspiring its class-consciousness, have a greater mission to achieve than the dispute for power. They are entrusted by the small, but confident nucleus of anarchists the world over to fulfil a momentous task—to bridge two stages of civilization through the only possible means—Social Revolution of the Workers."

## Swedish Syndicalists

The annual report for 1944 of our Swedish comrades of the Sveriges Arbetares Centralorganisation (SAC), has just been published. The organisation comprises 574 local branches with a total of 21,902 affiliated members, and the record of the year's activity is one of intense agitation and organisational work.

The SAC publishes two daily papers, "Arbetaren" and "Norriandsfolket", an industrial periodical "Travariindustriarbetaren" and a magazine entitled "Syndikalismen". The organisation has its own editorial house and printing premises.

The SAC is divided into 18 propaganda districts for agitation and organisational work. During 1944 the local organisations worked effectively for the betterment of wages and working conditions of the

members. Strike action was taken on 47 occasions.

With the end of the war our Swedish movement is widening its scope of activities and the prospect for the immediate future seems extremely promising.

## Syndicalist International

The National committee of the SAC held its Annual Conference in Stockholm between March 31st and April 6th. Amongst the questions in debate, one of the most important items was that of the reorganisation of our international (IWMA) which has maintained itself during the war years under great difficulties.

The text of the resolution adopted is as follows:

"The end is near of the bloody massacre of a world apparently mad, a world in which the oppressed peoples were forced to fight for their 'freedom and democracy'. But the people cannot be constantly driven to war to sacrifice their lives in military slaughter to be later thrown again into misery and enslavement. Freedom and democracy must become realities after the war, and this will only be brought about if the people take affairs into their own hands, establishing economic freedom which is the basis of all other liberties.

"The Syndicalist movement of the world was suppressed by violence and disintegrated by repression in this era of terror. The time has now arrived for reorganisation, for a new concentration of all elements of our movement in exile, persecuted and dispersed all over the world.

"We know that we shall face the resistance of the victorious powers. We know that, as ever, it will be a hard struggle, but we also know that anarcho-syndicalism has an historical mission to fulfil as the representative of the libertarian cause.

"We must establish immediately new contacts amongst syndicalist revolutionaries of other countries, and after the necessary work of reorganisation we must convene an international congress which, on the basis of the terrible experiences of the last decades, will fix the lines of action for the future activity of the anarcho-syndicalist movement internationally."

It is our task here, in Britain, to do our share in helping to rebuild our international of the revolutionary working-class.

## Anarchists in France

We've welcomed recently the first numbers of the new series of "Le Libertaire", the paper of our French comrades, founded 49 years ago by Louise Michel and Sebastian Faure in Paris.

It reappears now as the "Organe Federal du Mouvement Libertaire" into which the two traditional currents of anarchism that existed in the past in France—the Union Anarchiste (U.A.) and the Federation Anarchiste Francaise (F.A.F.), have amalgamated during the German occupation.

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Shop stewards, with factory liberation and agitation committees, started the process of reconstruction. The discipline and administrative capacity of these democrats now running the factories has been recognised by the Allied authorities.

The Allied administration, which expected a ruined country, has found a going concern, with a tolerable food situation and no unemployment."

SYNDICALIST

## No Peace in Europe ?

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To make this possible internationally, totalitarianism and state dictatorship must be liquidated wherever they exist. Freedom and the rights of man are the fundamental condition for world fraternisation. Where governments hold control of the press and speech they will abuse it to maintain national fanaticism which is one of the basic factors of war. Freedom of speech, of the press, of organisation and of assembly are part of these inalienable rights.

Free relationship between the workers of all countries must be our immediate objective. An end must be made of national prejudice which is opposed to international solidarity.

Workers! Comrades! Within thirty years we have had ten years of war. "Peace" has just come to the people of Europe. We must not permit another war. Let us revive the slogans of international solidarity. It is the workers who must lead the way.

**Down with all enmity between workers!**

**Liberty for all people and all races!**

**Long live the international fraternity of the workers!**

**Long live the struggle against militarism and nationalism!**

**An end to passive submission to State power which produces war!**

**Let this second world war be the last profanation of the human cause!**

International Working Men's Association,  
(Revolutionary Syndicalist International)  
Stockholm, May, 1945.

## Don Coventry

The A.F. regrets to record the death of Comrade Don Coventry, who was attached to our Kingston (Surrey) Group who have sent us the following tributes:

I have been told that "Young Donald Coventry" is dead.

Though I never met him I nevertheless knew him because he was clear-thinking, free-thinking, revolutionary. My "Don Coventry" is fine. Through our mutual friends his personality penetrated, to form a picture for me of an unusual young man. He had impressed all our associates without exception with his logic, his sense of justice and his humanism, I knew him for these things. What better?

That something has gone for good I am aware because they buried it only a few days ago. A few "well chosen words" were paid for and spoken and it was buried for all time in a hole in the ground. I understand that the body was eighteen years old when it ceased to function: that of late it had been a wasted, pain-wracked body. I am sorry, for I have both seen and experienced pain.

But they didn't really bury him you know.

Who could bury or by any other means destroy the qualities which went to make up my Don' Coventry? The words he spoke, the acts he performed, the sympathy and understanding which he radiated and the courage with which he carried his

## Stalin's Austrian Puppets

Stalin has announced the names of the puppet government he set up in Vienna. How reactionary and anti-working-class are his aims may be seen by an examination of the names of the new cabinet.

**Premier: Dr. Karl Renner.** Social Democrat, a sort of Austrian Jimmie Thomas. First Chancellor of the Austrian Republic, 1918. Then advocated the Anschluss union with Germany. Jailed for two months after Socialist rising in 1934. Welcomed Hitler's Anschluss of Austria and Germany in article in "Neues Wiener Tagblatt", April 4th, 1938. Allowed to go free by Germans. Aged 75.

**Minister of State: Leopold Kunschak.** Christian Socialist. Comrade of Dollfuss. Aged 80.

**Agriculture: Buchinger.** Christian Socialist. Involved in the great Bauern Bank scandal. Aged 65.

**Minister of Industry: Heinl.** Christian Socialist. Member of Dollfuss' Cabinet, but was expelled because of allegations of financial scandal. Aged 61.

**Public Works: Raab.** Christian Socialist. A Catholic trade unionist. Weak figure and dull speaker. Aged 60.

**Minister of State: Adolf Scherf.** Social Democrat. Unidentified.

**War Office: Lt.-Col. Winterer.** Social Democrat. One time organiser of the Schutzbund, Socialist Defence Corps.

**Finance: Herr Zimmermann.** Non-party. Unidentified.

**Justice: Herr Geroe.** Non-party. Previously State Prosecutor (Staatsanwalt).

**Minister of State: Johann Koplenik.** Communist. Went to Russia in 1932 and returned to Vienna about six weeks ago.

**Interior: Herr Horner.** Communist. Unidentified.  
**Education: Fischer.** Communist. Son of Colonel in Austrian army. A leader of Austrian C.P. which he represented in the Comintern. Member of Austrian Committee in Moscow, 1942-45. Has often spoken on Moscow radio. Acted as liaison between Russia and German officer prisoners of war.

The Ministers of State form an inner cabinet. "The Christian Socialists" have nothing to do with either Christianity or Socialism. They are the native Austrian Fascist Party—the party of Dollfuss and Seipel. The Christian Socialist Government set up a Fascist dictatorship in Austria in February 1934. They attacked the Socialist municipality of Vienna, fired upon the workers and used artillery against the council flats in Vienna, particularly the Karl Marx Hof, inhabited mainly by Socialist and trade union families.

It should be noted that Stalin heads his puppet Austrian government with Renner, author of the Anschluss, while Britain and the U.S.A. discuss carving Germany into tiny pocket states.

convictions and his pain. These things were "Young Donald Coventry", our comrade, and still are.

S.P.  
Kingston will miss Don. He saw the confusion of mental outlook caused by the reformists of all colours and did not have the painful process of discarding all one's previous political ideas.

As a revolutionary he lived and died. He hated capitalism, he loathed reformers. He was conscious that Parliament was a capitalist institution without soul or conscience. Who is prepared to carry on where he left off?

J.W.B.