

# WAR COMMENTARY

## For Anarchism

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TWOPENCE.

## *The New African Empire*

"Colonel Oliver Stanley, Colonial Secretary, declared in Oxford last night that the administration of the British Colonies must continue to be the sole responsibility of Britain.

'I give no support,' he said, 'to a theory that it would be for the benefit of any colony, or the world as a whole, that it should be administered by some international body.

I can think of nothing more likely in practice to break down, and less likely to lead to the steady development of the territory.

Apart from these considerations, suggestions for international administration ignore the real feelings of the people concerned'."

*Daily Express*, 6/3/43.

Just exactly how much the British Government thinks of "the real feelings of the people concerned", or of the benefit of the Colonies, is revealed by a further statement: "They (the Colonies) are, and must remain, predominantly agricultural." In other words, the technical development of the Colonies must be hindered in order that they shall be a dumping ground for British manufactures and a source of cheap food (and basis of low wages) for Britain. At the same time British agriculture will decline to its pre-war stagnation, or worse, and the land-workers will swell the overcrowded ranks of the factory-workers.

It is well to enquire who is the rival claimant to the British Empire so often referred to by Government spokesmen. The vague occasional references to international control cannot be taken seriously. A body able to exercise that control does not exist, nor is it possible to create it. The long dead League of Nations was nothing but the joint office of the two big imperialist powers, Britain and France. The Ministerial warnings must be directed at some existing body, some State, some group of capitalist interests. When we examine the sombre reality of capitalist international relations, it is not difficult to find claimants to the title deeds of empire. Of these the chief is America. With Germany, Italy and Japan defeated, the United States of America would be the only rival to Britain in the exploitation

of the colonial and semi-colonial areas of the world. The only rival, but a most dangerous competitor. Behind the blarney of "democratic nations," "English speaking countries," and "Anglo-Saxon" something or other, is the bitter reality of international competition of two great capitalist rivals, British and Yankee imperialisms.

U.S.A. is no longer a stay-at-home, self-sufficient nation. No matter how great the resources and potentialities of a country, the nature of capitalism is to expand abroad. To manufacture cheap goods and dump them on other lands, to back up the dumping with financial pressure, political intrigue and, finally, armed force, that is the character of capitalism, British, German, Japanese, or American. As the world market shrinks and the machines of the competitors multiply the competition becomes more and more a political and military conflict. Beneath the Yankee-British conflict against Germany lies the conflict of Yankee finance capital imperialism against British capitalism, and all the other irreconcilable conflicts of capitalism. While in the Pacific theatre of war, and to some extent in the European conflict, U.S.A. and Britain appear to be united, yet in South and Central America and in the British dominions the keenest competition is revealed.

Long ago the U.S.A. claimed, obviously against Britain, as well as the South Americans, the sole right to exploit all of the Americas. This is how a prominent Yankee capitalist expresses it:

"The reorganisation and proper development of Mexico would afford an outlet for our capital and energies for some time to come. And while I think we should try in every way to maintain the friendship of our neighbours to the South, I think we should also make it clearly understood that no government in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean South American countries will be tolerated unless it is friendly to the United States and that, if necessary, we are prepared to use force to obtain that object."

*General Wood, head of Sears, Roebuck, largest mail order firm in the world. 4/10/40.*

Yankee imperialism is on the march and its entry into the war indicates, not an addition to the forces of Democracy in some sort of theological struggle against fascism, but a determination to win markets and financial colonies and to let no power stand in its way. Here is another capitalist to give evidence; Dr. Virgil Jordan, president of the National Industrial Conference Board:

"Whatever the outcome of the war, America has embarked upon a career of imperialism, both in world affairs and in every other aspect of her life, with all the opportunities, responsibilities, and perils which that implies. This war inevitably involves a vast revolution in the balance of political and economic power, not only internationally but internally. Even though, by our aid, England should emerge from the struggle without defeat, she will be so impoverished economically and crippled in prestige that it is improbable she will be able to resume and maintain the dominant position in world affairs which she has occupied so long. At best England will become a junior partner in a new Anglo-Saxon imperialism, in which the economic resources and the military and naval strength of the United States will be the centre of gravity. Southward in our hemisphere and westward in the Pacific the path of Empire takes its way, and in modern terms of economic power as well as political prestige, the sceptre passes to the United States."

*Addressing the convention of the  
Investment Bankers' Association  
of America, 10/12/40.*

But we like best of all the nutshell statement to the Press of the terse Wendell Willkie: "After the war the capital of the world will be Berlin or Washington. I want it to be Washington." To this we shall add only the thought of Henry Luce (publisher of *Time*, *Fortune*, *Life* and backer of the *March of Time* films).

"The twentieth century must be to a significant degree an American century . . . Great Britain is perfectly willing that the U.S.A. should assume the role of senior partner."

*Life, 17/2/41.*

America marches on its imperialist path. The British are forced to sell their holdings in American industry. In Latin America Yankee Imperialism openly conflicts against its British rival in the trade-war. The Latin states are being "persuaded" into the Yankee military and naval system; the U.S. armed forces turn southwards. In Europe and North Africa the U.S. government prepares its own puppet governments against the British de Gaulles. American naval, military and air bases appear all over the world. American canned propaganda on a scale undreamed of by Dr. Goebbels prepares the minds of populations. American shipping, led by Kaiser, prepares to oust British ships from world trade, particularly the South American coastal trade. The strongest card of Britain; the monopoly of tin and rubber, is lost to Japan. But the most dangerous feature of American expansion is its attempt to con-

trol the world's food supply. While the agricultural resources of Europe and Asia are being disrupted, the U.S.A. is hoarding food supplies and attempting to monopolise the agricultural surplus of South America. Whoever controls the food supplies of starving post-war Europe (and this applies to Russia) will be able to determine the sort of government Europe gets.

However we are not so naive as to believe that the British ruling class will submit to all this without a struggle. British rulers are not so blunt in their statements as their American fellows. Time has mellowed them. Their statements are more guarded and more cunning. They have many tricks up their sleeves.

Whatever the result of the present war it can bring no lasting hope of peace or security to the war-weary peoples. So long as capitalism exists there must be trade expansion, commercial rivalry, political intrigue and open war. Before one world war ends the shoots of at least one other appear above ground. War follows war. For the workers to support their respective masters in one world blood bath after another solves nothing, even temporarily. To end war and fascism, to ensure peace and security, we must end capitalism. The common ownership of the means of production under workers' control and the development of production for use instead of for sale would end the trade wars. Without commercial rivalry there would be no modern war. Wars are fought for economic and not ideological ends. But whoever wins the economic war the workers lose. Not for them the fruits of Empire, not for them the oil wells or gold mines. Not for them the plums of trade agreements. Only the dole queue or unremitting labour; only the constant struggle to make ends meet. If we engage in war it is not the trade war to decide which set of masters shall have the best of the bargains; it shall be the class war to end capitalism and all the rivalry, misery and bloodshed it causes.

## GLASGOW MEETINGS

### CENTRAL HALLS, 25 Bath Street

Every Sunday, 7 p.m.

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OPEN-AIR MEETINGS, weather permitting:

Brunswick Street, every Sunday, at 3.30 p.m.

Gaol Square, Paisley, every Sunday at 4 p.m.

DISCUSSION CIRCLE. Every Monday at 8 p.m., at  
127 George Street, Glasgow, C.I.

# ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

## PRISONERS IN SPAIN

THE Tribune for March 5th publishes figures for the prison population of Spain under Franco taken from a statement recently issued by the Joint Anti-Fascist Committee in New York. They state that "at a conservative estimate there are not less than one million, while a million and a half would probably be nearer the mark."

"In Madrid area prisons alone 200,000 political 'criminals', including 17,000 women, are imprisoned. The same number are jailed in the Barcelona area and in the Basque country. There is to-day not one town in Spain, however small, without its gaol overcrowded with political prisoners. In the prison of Elche at Alicante 12,000 juveniles and children are held . . . If Spain had the population of Britain there would be a corresponding figure of about two and a half million political prisoners."

These figures are almost certainly not exaggerated. In the first few weeks after Franco's victory, he executed 35,000 people in Madrid, 25,000 in Barcelona, and 15,000 in Valencia, while more than a million were thrown into prison or concentration camps (Charles Duff, *A Key to Victory: Spain*, 1940).

What is the lot of these men and women who fought so tenaciously against Fascism for three years, and have now had four years of Franco's "unfading generosity"? If they escape the firing squad or the garrote, they are forced to work as slaves under the law of Redemption by Labour. They are hired out by the State to business concerns. "Each day's work of a prisoner reduces in half the time of his sentence, which means that his total penalty is reduced by exactly half. From the salary that the prisoner receives, two pesetas a day are reserved for his wife and one more for each child under fifteen years of age, or for each invalid child, 50 centimos are handed to the prisoner and 35 centimos are reserved for his food. The rest is retained by the State for the prisoner's support. The prisoner who works helps his family, keeps himself, and means at the same time an effective saving for the state . . ." (Duff: pp. 79-80).

This is the regime that the British and American governments are so careful to try and keep in with.

## COMMUNISTS AND FRANCO

Franco and the Vatican. The new party line has caused a crisis in the Spanish C.P. because they are instructed to envisage the suppression of the article in the Republican Constitution regarding the separation of Church and State, and must consider the Catholic Church as the State Church in Spain. At the same time Juan Comorera, the former C.P. chief in Catalonia, who took an active part as Minister of Food in destroying the collectives established by the revolutionary workers and peasants in 1936, is now advocating collaboration with Franco supporters in Mexico. As a result three communist deputies, Vidal Munoz, Zapata Vela, and Garigazaturia have resigned from the C.P.

Not content with destroying the revolution, and assassinating the revolutionists during the war against Franco, these murdering henchmen of Stalin are not ashamed to advocate soft-peddling the struggle against him abroad, while those who fought in the anti-fascist

struggle in Spain languish as prison slaves in Franco's gaols and concentration camps. It is not surprising that even their own party members cannot stomach such vile, unprincipled treachery as this.

## ROYALISTS IN ALGERIA

WE have devoted considerable space in past issues of *War Commentary* to the exposure of the activities of Fascists and reactionaries in North Africa and the way in which the Allies have connived at the establishment of a reactionary and authoritarian government in Algiers. In such machinations it would have been surprising not to have detected the hand of one or both of the rival groups of French Royalists, and a statement by the de Gaullist, Professor Rene Capitant, who has just returned from Algiers, quoted in the *News Chronicle* on the 19th February, gives some idea of the role of the Royalists in recent events.

"Following the murder of Darlan, the Monarchists plotted against the de Gaullists, by means of forged documents and denunciations, with the result that a number of them, including distinguished police officials, were arrested."

At the request of the Allies, who became alarmed by all these fantastic stories, General Giraud had an inquiry made by independent magistrates, and after a few weeks all the prisoners—about 15—were released.

The Monarchist plot was to work in the following manner: After the murder of Darlan—for which a boy of 20 paid with his life—the Imperial Council, a Darlan foundation, was to meet and elect the Comte de Paris (Pretender to the French throne who happened to be near Algiers) as High Commissioner or as 'provisional President of the Republic'.

The idea was that after victory the 'provisional President would have been plebiscited in France as King Henri VI . . .

General Giraud has never hidden his Royalist tendencies, but he is a man of great loyalty, and I prefer to believe that he was kept in the dark."

These revelations contradict Eden's recent attitude in the House of Commons, when he treated with levity the question of an M.P. regarding the possibility of a royalist restoration in North Africa. If Capitant's statements are true, then the British Government must either have been more badly informed than it usually is, or must have had some reason for concealing the true state of affairs in North Africa. That such a plot could have reached so great a proportion without the knowledge of a royalist in Giraud's position is indeed unlikely, and Giraud certainly cannot be entirely exonerated from complicity in the arrests of de Gaullists and Republicans. As an interesting sidelight on this matter we would point out that the *Daily Worker* has supported Giraud throughout. No doubt they would have supported with equal vigour the reversal of 1789 by the restoration of the Count of Paris.

## NO PROFITEERING THIS WAR!

THIS, we have been told time and time again, is a war in which there is no profiteering. Yet in every form of production we find that prices have risen out of all relation to costs, and, where price control has been established, it has been at such a level as to ensure a considerably greater profit to

manufacturer, middleman and retailer than would have been possible in the days of peace. Goods may be scarcer, but the increase in price certainly makes up for the decrease in quantity.

These facts are particularly evident in the food trade, where controls have been established in all cases at prices considerably higher than those which obtained in pre-war times. The rationalisation of the food industry which is in progress at the present time also militates in favour of the capitalists interested in food distribution. Many small shops, particularly those in side streets which were convenient for the housewife who did not wish to walk to the main road, have been closed down, and their trade has been diverted to the larger shops. Delivery of goods has been drastically curtailed, with the result that the distributor has to pay less in wages and in transport expenses. Even before the reduction in bread and milk deliveries, it was estimated that some 25,000,000 gallons of petrol and the running costs on 34,000 delivery vehicles had been saved. All this money has gone into the pockets of the capitalists who remain in the food trade after the small shopkeepers have been liquidated. The additional profit accruing through these savings in labour and transport must be considerable, yet there is no talk of reducing prices to the consumer; or even of compensating the small shopkeepers who have been forced to close down. The food industry, of course, is just one instance of the way in which the war militates in favour of the moneyed class to the exclusion of others. The workers are given increases in wages which are rendered ineffective by the enhanced prices they have to pay for food and other necessities, while the capitalists use the war as an excuse for cutting down overheads and so gathering back into their pockets the extra money given nominally to the workers.

## GANDHI'S FAST

GANDHI'S 21-day "capacity fast" is now at an end, and it leaves the political situation in India where it was before. In his letter to the Viceroy dated January 29th, Gandhi had declared that it was his wish "not to fast unto death, but to survive the ordeal of the feat if God so wills," and stated that he intended to take fruit juices throughout as he was no longer able to exist on merely water and salts. The force of a hunger strike, however, is exactly that it saddles the government with the responsibility for the death of the striker if it refuses to make the concessions demanded, and it is the fear of this responsibility which provides the striker with his power. That it is a very real power is shown by the fact that even the Soviet authorities have been made to give in, in some cases, by hunger strikes.

But by stating beforehand that he did not intend to fast to death, Gandhi deprived himself of this power. The Viceroy still described the fast as "political blackmail", though it is difficult to see with what justification, and the Government of India could simply sit back and refuse to make any concessions with comparative safety. The fast became no more than an individual gesture.

## THE FAMINE IN INDIA

ALTHOUGH such gestures may have value as propaganda, Gandhi's fast has been given tremendous publicity by the capitalist press, and has served to distract attention from the much more serious question of famine in which thousands of Indian workers and peasants actually are dying.

Professor Gangulee in a recently issued pamphlet has pointed out the confusion in official statements about the food situation in India. As late as January 21st, 1934, L. S. Amery, the Secretary of State for India was declaring that "with care and proper distribution there should be enough to go round, and there is no cause for alarm". A week later he said "There is no famine, and no widespread prevalence of acute shortage." The Commerce Member to the Government of India on the other hand describes the situation as "truly serious", adding that "the difficulties are most acute in Bombay city and province . . . Bijapur has been declared a famine area." The correspondents of the *Manchester Guardian*, the *News Chronicle*, and the *New Statesman and Nation* have all described famine conditions, soaring food prices, and food riots.

Gangulee quotes a British administrator of 25 years ago stating that the masses of Indians live at a level incompatible with health, and adds evidence from more recent observers which shows that near-famine is a permanent condition in India. In such a situation, the government continues to export food from India, and has only promised to stop this export after March; at the same time it refuses to organize distribution schemes on the grounds that such action would be an unwarranted interference with the autonomy of local administrations.

Gangulee's otherwise valuable pamphlet unfortunately gives the impression that India's potential food production is insufficient to sustain the population. Actually, of course, the Indian peasant is prevented from fully exploiting the land because of the exactions of the landlords and moneylenders and tax gatherers by whom he is enslaved. Meanwhile the agricultural depressions of the last fifteen years have made it necessary for him to produce the most saleable rather than the most nutrient crops. With food production thus tied to the vicissitudes of the market, it is not surprising that when food becomes even scarcer than usual, all the price rackets and black markets come into play and make the ghastly situation even worse. The government of course refuses to take steps to interfere with the economic system of sale and exchange which both produces and exacerbates the famine. Thus the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent wrote that "Price control has proved ineffective against hoarders of wheat in the Punjab. The Commerce Member who has charge of the Food Department admits the difficulty of adopting stern measures against hoarders in view of the political situation, and the black market flourishes everywhere including Delhi, though Police do not hesitate to arrest retail shopkeepers who commit offences". In a word, the government does nothing about the promoters of the famine, because it requires their political support, and instead attacks the middlemen who are partly victims of these same promoters, as a sop to propaganda.

After stating that Indian food production is insufficient to maintain the population, it is rather absurd to find Gangulee urging the formation of a "People's Government" as the remedy. India's food situation—that of chronic famine punctuated by acute starvation with thousands of deaths, and millions of shortened lives—demands that the soil of India be exploited by men who have freed themselves and their fellows from the strangling hand and cruel exactions of landlords, moneylenders and State tax officials. Nothing less than complete freedom will solve India's food problems. Meanwhile the immediate situation demonstrates once more the cruelty and indifference of the British administration in India.

# "Who'll Do the

THE "BRAINS TRUST" recently discussed the "profit motive" and the incentive to harder work. A number of points of view were put forward, ranging from the theory that money is the goal and the measure of success in life to the opinion that interest in one's job is the main incentive and not profit. This view was held by Dr. Malcolm Sargent, the conductor, who stated that he would continue to conduct even without remuneration. He added that he could not imagine, however, how a man who cleans out the sewers could say the same thing about his job, and concluded that it must be economic necessity which prompted the sewerman to do such a job.

The *Evening News* like so many reactionary papers which have been temporarily "converted" to supporting the common man, so long as he continues to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the Capitalists, came out with an editorial comment on the subject:

"Dr. Malcolm Sargent said . . . that he could not imagine that a man working in a sewer could have any real interest in his job. To-day a man who knows the London sewermen retorts that they are not only interested in their job, but consider themselves rather better than their fellow workmen.

The doctor, in his ivory tower, seems rather remote from ordinary human nature. Men have an infinite capacity for taking an interest in things which may look dull to the outsider. A lot of the world's work would not be done at all—much to the doctor's inconvenience—if they had not. There is a pardonable warmth in the remark by the sewermen's champion that these men would probably regard Dr. Sargent's work as of secondary importance to the nation."

The question is an interesting one because it raises once more the age old objection to Anarchism: "Who will do the dirty work?" and the amazing thing is that the *Evening News* does not see in it an objection since it maintains that the sewermen are interested in their work! But we are not prepared to accept this view however tempting it may be, because it does not square with actual facts. The main interest as far as unskilled workers are concerned is the size of their wage packet at the end of the week, and is, in our opinion a most understandable reaction.

But the *Evening News* has given its own interpretation to Sargent's statement, for he did not say that his work as a conductor was more important than that of a sewerman; he said it was more interesting, and that as such he did not require any material incentive to make him conduct. Few people will deny that conducting an orchestra is a more interesting occupation than cleaning out a sewer, but none (save perhaps the Editor of the *Evening News* who may even give up his armchair job to work in the sewers) will admit that a whole working life is spent in semi darkness, dampness, and in a foul atmosphere and in slime, is a lot to be envied.

In an Anarchist Society the problem of "unpleasant work" will not arise. Our definition of "unpleasant work" which (a) has no point, (b) involves long hours of mental stagnation and quasi-automatic action on the part of the worker and (c) is performed as an alternative to starvation.

For socially conscious men and women all occupation of the mind and body must have some justification. And for them it is sufficient to know that their work is beneficial both to themselves and their fellow beings in order to make it worthwhile. Take the case of a labourer who works a 60 hour week digging trenches week in week out (e.g. drainage on an aerodrome). He is "slow working," and seizes every opportunity to "lean on his shovel" when the ganger's back is turned. The same man will devote hours during his evenings digging up his back garden, will not lean on his shovel and requires no ganger to stand over him to see that he does the work. Why? Surely the answer is that he looks upon his first job as an economic necessity, an alternative to starvation.

## Dirty Work?"

But digging up his garden properly and watching that work rewarded by good crops gives *purpose* to the digging. Some critics may argue that it is the profit system coming into it again, but a moment's thought should dispel such a suggestion. The cash value of the produce of that labourer's garden is infinitesimal compared with the hours of work put into producing the crops. It is the pleasure derived in experimenting with nature, of growing perfect crops that justify the long hours spent in the garden. But to come back to our proposition. We say that most men and women in an anarchist society will be prepared to do their share of the work which is now called unpleasant because they realize its importance to the well-being of the community.

Much work is undoubtedly unpleasant to-day because of its monotony brought about by long hours. In an Anarchist society instead of a minority of the people being engaged in productive work as is the case to-day the opposite will be the case, with the result that the number of hours each man or woman will be expected to work will be but a fraction of the hours of work they now put in. The unpleasant work will be further reduced since science will be used to assist and not to destroy mankind.

The brains which to-day are able to produce machines which will fly at 450 m.p.h.; the brains which made it possible to synchronise the firing of a gun through the airscrew of a plane without shooting it off; the brains which have made it possible for naval guns to fire only when the ship is on an even keel and at objectives invisible to the naked eye, and hit them . . . well, these brains, in the new society should find no difficulty in finding a way of cleaning out sewers with special pumps, of mass-producing washing machines and potato peelers for every housewife, and of harnessing the potential energy on the surface of our planet and eliminating as far as possible the necessity of millions of men daily risking their lives crawling on their bellies, thousands of feet in the bowels of the earth.

Thus monotonous work will be reduced to but a few hours a week, and dangerous work all but eliminated. More time will then be devoted to the art of living, to education and interesting work.

In an Anarchist society production will be for use, and first consideration will be obviously given to producing the necessities of life so that freedom from want will be a fact and not just a promise with slender chances of realization as it is to-day under capitalism.

V. R.

# HOW NAZISM CAME TO POWER

by Tom Brown

NEWSPAPER AND LEFT periodicals reviewing the rise of Nazi power have chosen the year 1933 as their starting-point. No understanding of the contemporary German power is possible if we end our research by going back to January 1933, the date when Adolf Hitler became Chancellor. Our starting point must be the winter of 1918-19. In the fifth winter of war the German workers, led by the factory strikers and the revolting sailors of the High Sea Fleet, called an end to the long, meaningless bloodshed and misery of war. Streaming from the factories and the docks towards Berlin they swept aside the Imperial Government. Overnight the House of Hohenzollern had fallen and the Kaiser was fleeing to Holland. Power was in the hands of the workers. In the factories and towns workers' committees, in the Fleet sailors' committees, in the Army soldiers' councils. From every factory chimney fluttered the flag of the revolutionary workers, while through the streets marched the armed patrols of the revolutionary guard.

Nor did the German Revolution suffer from isolation as did the Spanish Revolution. The German came at the end of a world war, not before as did the Spanish. Throughout the world the war-weary workers, peasants and soldiers welcomed the uprising. The Russian masses had already risen; Austria and Hungary joined the revolt; there were large-scale mutinies in the French Army and Navy; demobilisation riots in the British Army; throughout the world, strikes and peasant uprisings. In this world revolt Germany stood in the midst of a molten Europe, a nation of 70 millions, centre of the Continent's traffic system, the most resourceful and highly technical of all European countries. What power could challenge the German revolutionary workers if they remained true to themselves?

The power which shattered the Revolution and cleared the way for Hitler came from within the Labour Movement. Alas! The workers, when they downed tools and took up arms did not shed all of their old illusions. Their new born faith in themselves was too young and undeveloped to destroy the old myths of self-degradation and self-mistrust. The great majority of the organised workers of Germany were members or followers of the party of Marx, the Social Democratic Party. True, the party had supported that very war against which the workers were revolting, but the left wing had opposed the war and formed the Independent Socialist Party. This party, which was followed by the majority of the most conscious revolutionaries, at the most critical time rejoined the Social Democratic majority and thus helped to delude the masses.

Power coming to the leaders of Marxism, they immediately prepared the way for the counter-revolution. The Workers' and Soldiers' councils were legalised by the Reichstag and the government, and thus by patronage lost their independence and soon withered. A new parliamentary regime was set up on the very best bourgeois model. It was truly the most democratic in the world, but, as the Anarchists of Germany and the world had always declared, parliamentary democracy serves only to hide the dictatorship of capital.

Simultaneously with the founding of the Weimar Constitution came the counter-revolutionary terror of the Social-Democrat Government against the workers. Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and others were taken prisoner by the agents of the Social Democrats and battered to death by pistol butts by soldiers of the Reichswehr. Thousands of workers were shot and imprisoned and their organisations broken. This was done in the name of the old socialist cry "You must have a strong Social-Democrat Government to guard against counter-revolution." But while the revolution was being suppressed the old *Junker* and capitalist classes and their power were nurtured by the Socialists. Capital and the vast estates of the Prussian Lords were guarded, as was the property of the Kaiser. While Socialists sat in the Reichstag and the Government, Conservatives became judges and condemned revolutionary workers. Prussian *Junkers* and other reactionaries commanded the Army and Navy, while the Black Reichswehr, the "illegal" army of the reaction, remained unmolested and was even armed and subsidised by the Socialist Government.

In this fertile social soil Hitler planted the seed of Naziism. In 1919 in the back room of a Munich beer-house he joined the Party as the seventh member. A poor beginning, but Hitler was shrewd, he understood Marxists. He had profound faith in their cowardice, corruption, love of power, and in the Marxists' war of mutual extermination. Unfortunately his faith was well-founded.

Naturally the Left of the Socialist movement was not content to watch quietly the betrayal of the Revolution, but the wily Lenin knew the potentialities of the German situation. The agents and resources of the Moscow Government and the great prestige of the Russian Revolution brought the Socialist Left into the influence of Bolshevism. In Germany the Bolshevik wing of Marxism could be no more revolutionary than the traditional Social-Democratic wing. Coming from the same ancestry it valued the quest for political power before social principles. To gain power—allegedly to initiate

Socialism—it was ready to discard any Socialist principles it has possessed.

But the German Left-wing, now the Communist Party of Germany, was further shackled by chains which even the old Marxists had never worn—allegiance to a foreign power. From its earliest days the K.P.D. was the pliant tool of the Russian Government. While, during the post-war years of unrest the various Socialist-Coalition governments of Germany and the Social-Democratic police were slaughtering strikers and revolutionaries, the Communist Government of Russia maintained most friendly relations with whatever German Government existed at the time. Valuing alliance with the Government more than friendship with the workers, the powers in Moscow used the German Communist Party to hold back the Revolution which was developing in the early twenties. Outstanding is the year 1923 when, at the direct orders of Moscow, the K.P.D. called off the insurrection except in Hamburg. There, owing to typical Communist inefficiency, the order was never cancelled; the Communists went to the barricades alone in all Germany and were massacred by the Social-democratic police.

The dreary years of Socialist power and Communist politics, ranging from *barrikadenphilosophie* to the mildest of reformism; the years of Marxist domestic strife and intolerance were used by Hitler to build his Party brick by brick. But the work was slow; in 1928 the Nazi Party had gained only 800,000 votes and twelve deputies to the Reichstag. The world economic crisis of the early thirties gave to Hitler his greatest opportunity. In the General Election of 1930 the Nazi Party polled 6,400,000 votes and gained 106 seats.

In the face of this rapidly growing peril the Marxists intensified their war of mutual extermination. The Communists formed a series of alliances with the Nazis. In strikes, in elections and in the breaking up of Socialist meetings. In the organised hooliganism which was the most obvious expression of German politics of those years, it was often impossible to distinguish the Communist *Rotfront* and the Nazi *Sturm-Abteilung*; the grey-shirted and khaki-shirted ruffians—twin sons of one evil mother. The most public expression of the alliance of Communists and Nazis was made in August, 1931. Then the rapidly growing Nazi Party attempted to gain power, first in Prussia—which is more than half of Germany—and then in the rest of the country. The Nazis decided to use the Weimar Constitution which allowed a certain proportion of voters to obtain a *volksentscheid*, a peoples' vote or referendum demanding the dissolution of the Government. In Prussia, which had a Labour Government, they succeeded with the help of the K.P.D. in forcing a referendum. When the day to decide for the Labour

Government or for the Nazis came, the Communist Party of Germany went to the polling booths and voted for the Nazi referendum and urged the workers to support it.

Now the Nazi power was rising; at the election of July 1932 the Nazi Party gained 13,700,000 votes. The Marxists saw the danger, but hung on to their old illusions. "Yes, the Nazis will gain the power", said the Communist leader Remmele in the Reichstag, "but six months later they will fall. After the Nazis will come our turn." Ten years of Nazi power have passed and the only turn of the German Communists has been the concentration camp or the soldier's grave on the Eastern Front. Fools!

The Social-Democrats were as bad in a different manner. Supporting the candidature of Hindenburg as President against that of Hitler, in the name of anti-Fascism, they gave power to the old *Junker*. Having gained power for himself, Hindenburg, a little later, sent for Hitler and made him Chancellor. Too often anti-fascism is the next step to fascism. In January, 1933, Hitler gained power, but with the support of less than half the population of Germany. The Socialists still held wonderfully strategic positions. Their trade unions controlled power, transport, communications and all heavy industries; the police, armed with rifles, automatics, machine-guns, gas and armoured cars, and numerically almost equal to the Reichswehr, was more than 90 per cent. Socialist. The unity of the Socialists and Communists with the revolutionary minority and the adoption of a revolutionary policy might have broken the then ramshackle power of Hitler. But no general strike, no insurrection occurred. German Marxism had been rotted by its own power politics. It just "withered away" but not in the manner Marx and Engels hoped for.

The Communists did not resist. Moscow gave the orders and Moscow wanted an alliance with Nazi Germany. The Social-Democratic leaders only asked Hitler to continue their state pensions. The great German Marxist movement collapsed overnight. As many of the leaders as could fled to Paris and West Hampstead to await the opportunity of fighting Hitler—with their mouths, by the courtesy of the B.B.C.

The rise of Nazism in Germany teaches us the futility of political action as a means of working-class emancipation. Only by the workers' committees and workers' militias—and by loyalty to the revolutionary idea can they be free of fascism, hunger and war. The way of power politics—whether parliamentary democracy or the so-called "dictatorship of the proletariat", is the way to death. Neither Socialism nor its horrid twin offspring Bolshevism and National-Socialism is our choice, but Freedom—that is Anarchism.

## "NATURE CURE"

*Sunday Dispatch* headline:

FASTING MAY DO MR. GANDHI A LOT  
OF GOOD.

"It is no disrespect to him to suggest that he may have a second object in view. He wants, of course, and quite naturally, being the Hindu leader, to bring pressure on the Viceroy; but he may also be thinking of his health.

Various ailments are liable to affect a man of his age, and he may consider that fasting is a good way of curing the high blood pressure from which he suffered some years ago."

The author of the article is Major F. Yeats-Brown who is described as "an authority on India and its peoples". It would be interesting to know on which "authority" Major Yeats-Brown bases his views on fasting as Lord Woolton might be interested in them. It would settle the problem of the relative merits of carrots, potatoes and bread, if nothing else.

## THANK YOU MR. FRANCO!

"Mr. Carlton Hayes, United States Ambassador to Spain, addressing the United States Chamber of Commerce in Spain declared:

'As long as war lasts and is kept away from Spanish lands the United States stands ready to continue and extend any help it can to Spain, which itself is doing so much, with such obvious success, to develop a peace and economy that can and will carry this country safely into the future period of world peace'."

*Manchester Guardian*, 27/2/43.

## ASK MORRISON TO RESIGN

"The appointment of Mr. E. Blanchard Christie, 24-years-old conscientious objector, Oxford graduate, and fencing Blue, as A.R.P. organiser and training officer for Stafford, at a salary of £400 a year, has caused a storm among the local wardens.

One group of wardens have declared they will not take orders from Mr. Christie, nor work with him.

A resolution passed by the wardens was yesterday sent to the heads of the Civil Defence service in the town. They are now considering the matter."

*Sunday Dispatch*, 28/2/43.

## WHOSE HEADACHE?

"Aspirins are giving Hitler a severe headache.

They form one of Germany's biggest selling lines in the Balkans, where they are bartered for foodstuffs.

And they are now to be offered to the Turks as part payment for the 45,000 tons of chrome which Turkey agreed to supply in exchange for armaments."

*Reynolds News*, 28/2/43.

It's the workers who get a headache trying to understand why the Turks, who are supposed to be our friends, sell chrome, "a vital war mineral", to Germany. It might be a good idea if *we* get some of the aspirins.

## WHILE CHINA STARVES

"INGENUITY. Argentina, which has long had a corn surplus and has found it necessary at times to feed tons of the grain to furnaces instead of livestock or humans (thanks to wartime interruption to the export trade) has devised a new method which promises to be helpful. Underground silos, requiring no wire or other precious materials as do ordinary silos, are being constructed to hold shelled corn. Sixteen of these experimental silos at Córdoba were recently opened to see how the stored grain was faring, and the corn was found in fine condition. This discovery means a great deal to the welfare of thousands."

*Worldover Press*.

How ingenious this would seem to the starving Chinese it is difficult to say.

# Through

## C.O.'s DEFINED

"Lord Elibank said that the Duke of Bedford's speeches were directed to what he frankly called helping the enemy.

His speech to-day had been devoted to trying to assist section of community to evade their civic duties.

'The Duke of Bedford's attitude towards this war is one that every patriotic man and woman deeply resents and I might almost say despises,' Lord Elibank added.

It would seem that conscientious objectors were trying to create a position for themselves by which they would have a fully-fledged Beveridge scheme of their own without responsibility.

'They wish to be the pampered darlings of the community,' he said.

'From the cradle to the grave they would bear no responsibility. Like the lily of the field, they would toil not, neither would they spin'."

*Evening Standard*, 2/3/43.

In fairness to the C.O.'s we would like to remind Lord Elibank that unlike the lily of the field C.O.'s sew mail bags in Wormwood Scrubs.

## "DEMOCRACY" IN AMERICA

"Five anti-strike measures, some carrying treason and 'work or fight' clauses, have been introduced in Congress.

All provided for Government seizure of plants where production was interrupted by strikes or other causes.

The House Naval Committee have arranged to start hearings on 'work or fight' legislation, aimed at halting absenteeism among civilian employees in navy yards, stations and plants operated by naval contractors and sub-contractors."

*Evening Standard*, 2/3/43.

## THERE AIN'T NO JUSTICE

"Margaret Stapleton, a 69-year-old charwoman, was at London Sessions to-day sentenced to 15 months' hard labour for stealing five pairs of stockings and three pairs of socks from a stores."

*Evening Standard*, 2/3/43.

## REBELS?

"Mr. Herbert Morrison moves relentlessly towards his unknown political destination. He was wholly admirable yesterday (during the Beveridge debate). Nothing could have been fairer than his attitude towards Sir Kingsley and Sir John. He was eager to pay tribute to their work.

He did not trail his coat. He gave no opening or no encouragement to the rebels, and avoided any jousting.

In fact, by the end, the Labour Party seemed thoroughly miserable. Never was a rebellion carried out with so little fervour. When Mr. Greenwood rose to announce that the revolt was on, he did so as if announcing the death of an esteemed relative."

*Evening Standard, 19/2/43.*

# the Press

## COLOUR BAR IN U.S.A.

"Virginia is a great state, but its proximity to the national capital precipitates certain problems and creates anomalous situations. For while Washington hotels often practice Jim Crowism, vehicles crossing into Virginia, crowded with war workers, are obliged by state law to segregate the races. This commentator one evening not long ago was on a bus bound for Alexandria, across the Potomac, when an incident took place that might explain why some Negroes don't believe that in the fight for democracy they are getting a square deal. Negroes are supposed to fill up the buses from the rear, whites from the front. A sensitive, cultured coloured woman, when the bus started, found a seat next to the rear; no white person wanted it. But as crowds began to enter along the route, a white woman came in the front, pushed back, found no seats. The driver went back, compelled the coloured woman to give her seat to the white woman. I noted we were just passing the Lincoln Memorial."

*Worldover Press.*

## NORTH AFRICAN PARADISE

"All is well in Africa.

One is now allowed to be a Jew. This does not mean that a Jew becomes a Frenchman again: one shouldn't ask too much! But if he is an officer, he is allowed to remain one; later on they will see if he has the right to live for France; for the time being he is allowed to die for her: it's a concession all the same.

The prisons are still full, of course. But, between ourselves, can one govern without prisons?"

*La Marseillaise, 21/2/43.*

## STARVING CHINA

"Thousands of Chinese who left Honan province owing to one of the worst famines in Chinese modern times have perished in their quest for food.

Refugees fleeing to Shansi province have been driven by hunger to sell children, especially girls, for food all along the trails of the famine-stricken province. Many watched their children die, and thousands died from eating the roots and barks of poisonous trees."

*Manchester Guardian, 2/2/43.*

## DEAN JOINS "DAILY WORKER"

"I am proud to announce that the Dean of Canterbury has agreed to join the Editorial Board of the *Daily Worker*," said William Rust, giving his report on the work of the paper.

In his speech the Dean of Canterbury said:

"I was not born in the proper way. I was not born with a working-class spoon in my mouth. I have had to earn my freedom, and you have given me this afternoon a certificate which I value beyond words."

"A former Dean of Canterbury whom I just knew, was leader writer for *The Times* newspaper, and he was very proud of it. But he was not half as proud as I am to be connected with the *Daily Worker*, the spearhead of the spearhead movement of this country, the working-class movement."

"I have been reminded this afternoon of a fact of which I am always conscious. That the leader of the religious faith which I profess was the leader of the Labour movement in the early days in the Roman Empire."

"I also remember that he was a great worker for peace."

Hear, hear! If Christ were alive to-day he would no doubt be on the Editorial Board of the *Daily Worker* and work for peace by advocating a second front!

## HOW STATISTICS LIE

"The view that there has been a large increase in the real net income of the workers since the war is not supported by the facts."

It has been recognised for some time that under war conditions the Ministry of Labour's cost of living index has become increasingly unsatisfactory. This is pointed out and a new estimate made in the *Oxford Bulletin of Statistics* (12.12.42). The main deficiencies at the moment are two: 'on the one hand, subsidies have been mainly applied to foods which are included in the index, and particularly, it appears, to foods which are overweighted in comparison with their relative importance in general expenditure. On the other hand, indirect taxes have been imposed on tobacco and drink which are not adequately represented in the index.' It is calculated that if the subsidies were applied to all foods equally the rise in food prices since the war would be shown as 27½ per cent. instead of the 15 per cent. shown by the index.

Beer is not covered by the index at all, and tobacco has only a weight of 1 per cent., so that a rise of 37 per cent. in tobacco prices in April, 1942, caused a rise of only ½ per cent. in the cost of living index. If beer and tobacco are given the importance in the index which they actually have in the expenditure of working-class families, the rise of 100 per cent. in tobacco and 80 per cent. in beer prices since the war, together with some very minor corrections for clothing prices, would raise the whole cost-of-living index to 40 per cent. above pre-war at October, 1942, compared with 28 per cent. shown by the official index. 'It may be added that the revised index which has here been estimated makes no allowance for the effects of rationing in restricting the consumer's freedom of choice, although this should properly be allowed for in any comparisons of real income.'

*Labour Research, Feb. 1943.*

## "CONTRADICTIONS"

"While labour is growing scarce in the chief war industries there is severe unemployment in New York City. In the clothing trades alone 400,000 are jobless. Such contradictions are typical of the present stage of the United States war effort."

Financial Editor, *Manchester Guardian, 2/2/43.*

## Pages of Revolutionary History

# THE PARIS COMMUNE

## Part IV

### The Aftermath

IN THE SUBJUGATION of the Commune the vain little scholar Thiers and his Bonapartist and Royalist generals proved as efficient in massacre as any of their competitors since Tarmurlaine. Certainly no single slaughter in the Third Reich of Germany has equalled that which ushered in the Third Republic of France.

Even before the entry into Paris, many of the Commune's supporters were killed by the Versailles, particularly deserters from the line regiments, who were shot on capture. But as the battle reached Paris itself the tempo of slaughter increased until, when the centre of Paris was being bitterly contested, almost every prisoner taken by the Government troops was shot immediately.

When the fighting finished, a police terror was established, and as many fighters for the Commune as could be discovered were arrested. A craze for informing took hold of the vindictive bourgeoisie, and many quite innocent people disappeared into the prisons merely because somebody owed them a grudge. Within the prisons and barracks the summary shootings continued. At one alone, La Roquette, 1,900 men were shot in two days. As to the total number of those killed by the Government troops, MacMahon, their commander, admitted it to be 14,000, and Appert, another of the generals, went as high as 17,000. Both of these estimates are, however, to be regarded as erring on the low side, and it is probable that the slaughter was nearer 30,000.

Some 38,000 prisoners were retained in prisons in Paris and at Versailles, awaiting trial by the 26 military courts which were set up for the purpose. The following description of the conditions they endured is taken not from a pro-Communist source, but from the reactionary English historian, Thomas March:

"The treatment accorded, after making all reasonable allowances, was inconsiderate to an extreme degree. The camp at Satory, near Versailles, to which in the first instance the prisoners were taken, had not proper accommodation for so large a number. Prisoners were herded together in masses, overshadowed not only by armed men, but by guns and mitrailleuses. The slightest sign of mutiny was quelled by death: subordination and obedience were enforced with the severest rigour, while humanitarian notions were completely disregarded. When, in the month of June, batches of prisoners were removed from Satory to pontoons in various ports, the removal was effected by similar brutality of method; in fact, these human beings were treated even worse than cattle would have been."

After detentions reaching up to five months under such brutal conditions, all but 12,500 were released because no charge could be found against them. Some 10,000 were finally condemned—270 to death, more than seven thousand to transportation, the rest to varying terms of imprisonment.

One of the most sensational trials was that of Louise Michel, the Anarchist school teacher who had taken an active part in the street fighting in Montmartre. She took

a defiant attitude throughout, and challenged her judges with the words:

"You must cut me off from society! You have been told to do so: the Public Prosecutor is right! Since it seems that every heart that beats for liberty has the right only to a lump of lead, I demand my share! If you let me live, I shall not cease calling for vengeance. If you are not cowards, kill me!"

She was sentenced to transportation, and went with the thousands of other prisoners to the Pacific island of New Caledonia. Many died on the way in the vile prison ships, many more in the tropical climate of their new home. The rest suffered there until 1880, when the great demonstrations of the Parisian workers on Whitsunday frightened the Chamber into granting an amnesty.

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By  
**George Woodcock**

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Many thousands more escaped into exile, in England, Belgium and Switzerland, and some of the Swiss exiles, including Malon, Pindy and the brothers Reclus, associated themselves with the Anarchist watchmakers of the Jura.

In France the Commune was followed by a violent reaction which lasted a decade and continued in a modified form even after that. The International was prohibited, and all forms of working class activity were suppressed with utmost severity. It was from the experiences of their underground activity during this period that the French workers rose again with renewed vigour in the 1880's, this time not under the dead political revolutionary concepts of the Jacobins, but under the true ideas of the social revolution which found expression in the Syndicalist movement.

\* \* \*

In considering the Commune, it is necessary to dissociate the rising of the people from the Commune itself, which was the political machine that erected itself on the ground cleared by the rising. The rising of the Parisians on the 18th March was a true revolution of the people, spontaneous and not dependent on leaders, rising from a simultaneous realisation on the part of the workers of Paris that their liberties could only be maintained by such an action. Thus the revolution was in itself a true workers' revolution, and therefore potentially a social revolution. That it did not become a social revolution was due to the fact that the workers had still not shed their faith in political revolutionaries, and allowed themselves to be led by men who believed that the revolution could be achieved by governmental means.

For the Commune was a Government, in that it was based throughout on authority, an authority moreover which tended to grow more severe as the peril of the Commune became increasingly desperate. The Marxists have endeavoured to show that the Commune replaced the State by something different. In *The State and Revolution*, for instance, Lenin says "Here we have an example of the transformation of quantity into quality: democracy, carried to its logical conclusion, is transformed from capitalist democracy into proletarian democracy, from the

State (that is, a special force for the suppression of a particular class) into something which is in reality no longer a State."

But, in fact, the Commune in its development showed, rapidly and on a diminished scale, the development of the State as it has grown more slowly in the countries of Europe. In that ten weeks the Commune went through all the embryonic stages, from the early days when it acted as a democracy to the later days when it acted, through the Committee of Public Safety, as a dictatorial oligarchy. In order to preserve itself it had to endeavour to increase its power daily, until finally its main object became, like that of other governments, the maintenance of power. When, eventually, the Commune gave up power and left the struggle to the people, it ceased to exist. Fundamentally, like all governments, it was an instrument of power.

The preceding articles have shown how inefficiently the Commune government carried on the hostilities against Versailles. Shut up in their offices, the revolutionaries lost all idea of the realities of the struggle and failed to support in any effective way the men who were attempting to save Paris from the Versailles government.

But, if the Commune was inefficient as a military organ, it was equally so as a social revolutionary body. Here again the Marxists have made great play on the revolutionary nature of the Commune, and for this purpose have shown in an exaggerated light the few reformist measures taken by the Commune. They have, as was to be expected, indulged in deliberate distortion to create this impression.

In *The Civil War in France*, Marx states: "From the members of the Commune down, public service was to be discharged at the wage rate of a working man. All privileges and representation allowances attached to the high offices of State disappeared along with the offices themselves." In fact the maximum salary of officials of the Commune was fixed at 6,000 francs (£250 in English money of 1871), while the average yearly earnings of a skilled artisan in Paris at that time were 1,560 francs (£65). In other words, the members of the Commune actually received *four times* the wage rate of a skilled worker!

Again, Marx asserted of the Commune, "The majority of its members were naturally working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class." In fact, a comparatively small minority were workers, and the rest were middle-class journalists and politicians who can only be regarded as representing the working class in the same way as similar people 'represent' the workers in Social Democratic parties and Trade Unions. In fact, the Commune, although at first it was supported by all the workers, was a petit-bourgeois body in the same way as the English Labour Party, supported by a large body of workers, has been petit-bourgeois in practice.

The lack of any real revolutionary vision on the part of the members of the Commune is shown in their attitude to established interests. In particular, they treated the Bank of France with the greatest respect, asking from it only what they needed for bare day-to-day requirements and attempting in no way to destroy this symbol of reactionary society or to use its whole resources for such vital revolutionary purposes as propaganda among the

French provinces. Again, the one really social decree of the Commune, that concerning the appropriation of abandoned workshops and their operation by co-operative organisations of the workers, was so timid that it had little revolutionary importance. It implied no attack on the institutions of capital generally, as was shown by the fact that it was applied only to the property of absent owners and even then contemplated an indemnity after the end of hostilities.

It is possible that the Commune was in any case doomed to failure, for, even if it had achieved any success against Versailles it would have had to face an immediate assault on the part of the great German army which occupied the northern and eastern sides of Paris. Even in those circumstances, however, failure was by no means a certainty, had the people of Paris carried through the social revolution and succeeded in rousing the workers and peasants of the rest of France to support them in their revolutionary struggle against both French and German enemies.

As it was, however, defeat was a certainty, for in using military and governmental methods the Commune was fighting a better adapted enemy on his own ground. As in Spain, the revolution was destroyed from within even before its external enemies entered Paris. Unlike the people who sabotaged the Spanish revolution, the members of the Commune for the most part acted with the best of intentions, but their actions had in the event the same effect.

The lesson of the Commune is the lesson of all revolutions up to now, that no revolution can succeed and survive if it uses the institution of government. It is only in the free action of the workers, destroying in entirety the institutions of the authoritarian and propertied society and establishing in their place the voluntary co-operation of the social revolution and the direct action of revolutionary struggle, that the state can be defeated and the free society established on its ruins.

## OPEN LECTURE-DISCUSSIONS

*Every Sunday evening at 7 p.m.*

**KINGSTON TRADES AND LABOUR CLUB**  
Grange Road (Back of G.P.O.)

21st March **T. W. BROWN**  
"Science and Society"

28th March  
Open Discussion on General Policy

4th April.  
1st Open Air Meeting  
nr. Kingston War Memorial,  
in Church Street, at 6 p.m.

ANARCHIST ESPERANTISTS are asked to communicate with Peter Ecker, 18, Mount Street, Breaston, Derbyshire.

## Behind the Slogans

THE PRESENT DISPUTE between the Soviet Government and the Polish waxworks cabinet only brings into the open a situation that has existed under the surface ever since the entry of Russia into the war. The unexpected appearance of these two old antagonists, the Russian and Polish ruling classes, on the same side of the fence resulted in a pact between Stalin and Sikorski, in which the Russians agreed to the restoration of the Polish state after the war. Now, however, the thieves are falling out as to how much land each shall govern and just how many Poles, Ukrainians and White Russians shall be ground under the heel of the Polish aristocracy and the Bolshevik bureaucracy respectively. The Russians wish to see a Poland bounded by the Curzon line, i.e., they wish to retain, after it has been reconquered from Germany, that portion of Poland which they filched during

vitch of deliberate co-operation with the Axis in an attempt to exterminate the guerillas who have Russian support.

Whatever the rights or wrongs of these accusations, one thing emerges as certain, and that is the latent rivalry between the western governments and the Russian state regarding the Balkans. The western plutocracies wish to make the Balkans once again into an economic and political dependency, while Russia, besides having dreams of a Communist Pan-Slavist empire, wishes to gain control of the Balkans in order to protect her strategic flank and to establish a base in the Mediterranean. The Chetniks and the Partisans are just the puppets in this clash of interests between two powers who are nominally fighting side by side.

Anti-Russian feeling is displayed in an even more open form on yet another section of the Allied front. In a recent debate in the South African assembly a motion was brought forward for the expulsion of Soviet consular

# THE UNITED NATIONS

the German invasion of 1939. The Poles, on the other hand, will not agree to any such truncation of the Poland, with its subject Ukrainians and White Russians, which existed before the war. The Poles accuse the Russian government of breaking the agreement by making many of the western Poles Russian citizens. The Russians, on the other hand, assert that Poles equipped by them have refused to fight on the Russian front and that Polish newspapers in London have adopted an anti-Russian attitude.

Some such squabble was only to be expected. The agreement between the two ruling classes was a patent piece of hypocrisy when one remembers, on the one hand, the danger to the Russian Government of a strong Polish state, and, on the other, the imperialist ambitions which the aristocratic clique have always held for Poland. Polish officers in England—and most of the Polish army seems to consist of officers—make no secret of their hope that Russia may be so weakened at the end of the war that a strong and imperialist Polish state will be able to rise on its frontier and, incidentally, swallow a good slice of its territory. And there is no doubt that they represent the ideas of the Polish ruling class in general, than which there is none more unanimous in its stupidity and reaction.

It is not only in Poland that Russia's interests clash with those of her allies. In the Balkans, which have been the fruitful ground for centuries of political quarrels, a situation of acute antagonism seems to be developing between the protégées of the Soviet Government and those of the Anglo-American bloc. The western Allies support General Michailovitch and his Chetnik army, and the Russians support other parties of guerillas who are detached from and antagonistic to Michailovitch. The British Ambassador to the Yugoslav government, speaking at an Overseas League lunch on the 25th February, praised General Michailovitch's achievements, and asserted that the Germans were trying to spread dissension among the Yugoslavs by importing 'bands of terrorists who had formerly been exiled and were let loose now to commit atrocities'. Presumably these are the guerillas who are in competition with Michailovitch.

The Russians, on the other hand, accuse Michailo-

officials and the banning of the Communist Party in South Africa. The motion was defeated, but the minority was significantly strong, amounting to exactly 40 per cent. of the votes cast. This incident is yet another sign of the strength of the separatist and pro-Nazi tendencies within South Africa. The South African ruling class has evidently not yet learnt the value of a Communist Party as a means of attacking the workers. No doubt, like their Boer ancestors, they still put their faith in the whip.

But it is not only between Russia and the Western Allies that antagonism shows itself and demonstrates the existence of conflicting interests. There are many grounds of disagreement between Britain and the United States, of which the most recent is the dispute over the control of airways after the war. This dispute, of course, only continues the dissension demonstrated by differing policies in North Africa, by American attacks on British policy in India, etc. Just as the English and the Russians are already preparing to contest the hegemony of Europe, so England and America are preparing for the great struggle for colonies and client nations to provide markets after the war.

The United Nations are, in fact, united only in the intention of their ruling classes to squeeze as much as they can from the workers. It is only when the people become equally united in their resistance that they will overthrow a form of society that breeds an endless series of wars, engendered of the contradictions of government and the internecine struggles among the various groups of governors.

L. T. C.

★

## CAPITALIST CO-OPERATION

"Readers of Latin American newspapers know that, besides headaches over newsprint shortages, publishers generally have feared disaster because of a natural drop in advertising by United States firms. They have taken heart at learning that, as a step toward good will and future commercial relations, American companies are planning to spend from ten to fifteen millions of dollars in an effort to keep advertising somewhere near the normal point."

Worldover Press.

# COMRADES GAOLED

Our Gloucester comrade, Tom Carlile has been sentenced to nine months' hard labour for refusing medical examination under the National Service (Armed Forces) Act.

Comrade Carlile did not register for Military Service when required to do so in 1940 but was provisionally registered as a C.O. by the Minister of Labour. He refused to attend a tribunal, sending a statement to the authorities repudiating the authority of the state and opposing the principle of conscription. He was, of course, placed on the Military Register, and following on his refusal of three medical notices, was summoned to appear at Gloucester Police Court on February 12th. He ignored the summons and was arrested.

On his formal refusal of examination the case was transferred to the Gloucester City Quarter Sessions where he appeared before a jury on Tuesday, February 23rd, and refused to plead guilty or not guilty. Passing sentence the Recorder said: "The whole machinery would go to pieces if this kind of thing were encouraged"—thereby expressing the ruling class fear of direct action.

★

Our Lanarkshire comrade, John Cerracher, was recently sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for refusing to attend a medical examination, and is now in Barlinnie prison. He has a wife and three children.

## ANARCHIST WOMAN AGAINST CONSCRIPTION

Our comrade, Elizabeth Earley, appeared at Clerkenwell Police Court on the 3rd March, charged with failing to comply with a Ministry of Labour order to attend an interview relating to war work. Comrade Earley attempted to make a statement of her opposition to war and the State, but was interrupted by the magistrate, who remanded her in custody for a fortnight 'to think it over'. Comrade Earley protested, unavailingly, that she had already made up her mind and wished the case to be settled.

She was taken to Holloway Prison. There she found, among other discomforts inflicted on remand prisoners who are not yet presumed to be guilty, that although the regulations provide for them to receive meals from outside, there was a conspiracy among local caterers, who refused to send food into the prison.

On the 8th March, after representations had been made of the unfairness of the procedure, she was released, and appeared again on the 9th. Comrade Earley again refused to attend the interview, because its purpose was to decide not whether she should work, but what work she should do. She took this course because of the unfair treatment of women. She did not register and since then had not co-operated with the authorities in any way, nor did she intend to do so. She was unwilling to compromise by doing humanitarian work or even by continuing her present work if the authorities instructed her to do so. The magistrate remarked 'Do you defy the Law?' and Comrade Earley replied that she did so because the law was unjust. She was sentenced to two months' imprisonment.

We express our solidarity with all these comrades in their struggle against authority and the State.

## Press Fund

FEBRUARY, 1943.

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Stroud: L.G.W.	1	0	0	Rochester: B.A.H.	2 0
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Clacton: S.C.		4	0	Breaston: A.W.	5 0
London: V.T.	1	0	0	Cromer: S.S.	2 0
Nottingham: C.W.R.	2	0	0	Kingston: T.W.B.	1 0 0
Gloucester: A.E.S.		1	6	London: Park	
Ware: E.B.		2	0	Sympathisers	1 10
London: F.C.D.		1	0	Total February	£28 7 9
London: V.R.	5	0	0		
N. York: E.L.		10	0	Prev. acknow.	£42 1 5
Fordingbridge: A.J.		14	0	Total to date	£70 9 2
B'ham: W.P.F.		4	0		

## TRADE UNIONISM OR SYNDICALISM 24 pp. 3d.

By

TOM BROWN

War Commentary readers are already familiar with Tom Brown's clear, straightforward articles. This pamphlet deals with the present union organisation, and contrasts with it the syndicalist methods of workers' organisation.

## NEW LIFE TO THE LAND

By

GEORGE WOODCOCK

32 pp. 6d.

This is not just another pamphlet. Its information and arguments are of importance to all concerned with agriculture. This is a sincere job of work, approached scientifically; it will repay a careful study and then it should not be put too far away.

*Douglas Rogers in the "Tribunal"*

FREEDOM PRESS, 27 Belsize Road,  
London, N.W.6.

## ***Business is Business***

**LORD WOOLWORTHINGTON**, chain store magnate and director of fifty odd companies, with his ten podgy fingers in every pie, stale or otherwise, and now controlling distribution for the ship of State, is sitting relaxed in his easy chair, pipe in mouth and feet extended towards the blaze in the hearth, reading by the aid of a shaded table lamp. On the opposite side of the fire sits Julian, his son, about twelve years old, home for a short holiday from school. Julian, glancing idly at some of his father's discarded newspapers, looks up inquiringly and asks:

**Julian:** Daddy, isn't four years' imprisonment rather a long time to give a person for being careless at work?

**Lord W.:** Careless! Nothing less than downright sabotage! Those workers must be taught a lesson—it's the only thing they understand.

**Julian:** What's sabotage, daddy?

**Lord W.:** Downright, deliberate carelessness. Endangering other people's lives, and hindering the war effort.

**Julian:** Oh, yes, I know what you mean. Like those contractors who built the air raid shelters with sand instead of cement, so that they fell down and had to be put up again. Or like those mine owners who are having men endanger their lives and waste their labour and time digging up stones instead of coal, because they want to keep the best seams until after the war, to make bigger profits—and at the same time send to jail any man who happens to oversleep in the morning.

**Lord W.:** No, no, son! That was merely in the way of business.

**Julian:** Well, father, if the contractors and coal owners are not saboteurs, what about the people who manufactured helmets for 10½d. and sold them for 17½d., when they were no stronger than ordinary bowler hats? Or the manufacturer of corn flakes in America who toasted peanut shells and passed them off to the public as real corn flakes?

**Lord W.:** Tut, Tut, Julian, can't you understand that was a good business transaction, nothing more, nothing less.

*(Julian scans through a newspaper for a few minutes).*

**Julian:** Daddy, are they shooting real traitors in the Tower of London?

**Lord W.:** Yes, and a good riddance too! Too easy an end for 'em!

**Julian:** What is a traitor, daddy?

**Lord W. (helping himself to a liberal whisky and soda):** A traitor, son, is someone so degraded that he sells to the enemy his country's secrets about weapons, shipping, troop movements, or helps the enemy in any way.

**Julian:** Like Mr. Bevin when he spoke in Glasgow just before the big blitz in which thousands were killed and said on the wireless that the Clyde was Britain's chief port? Or like the Government when it allowed arms to be sent to the Japanese, which probably helped to kill our boys at Singapore and left our army at home ill equipped when Hitler was threatening to invade?

**Lord W. (drawing heavily at his cigar):** Julian, I've told you about business. If the Japanese want arms and can pay, then we must sell, or we would be out of business. And then where would we be? Look how we fortified the Dardanelles in the last war for the Turks, and sold goods to Germany *via* Copenhagen! Look how the Nazis have helped the Turks in this war by building their submarines and arms factories, and how Russia helped Germany when Stalin and Hitler were exchanging birthday cards after the pact—and so gave the Germans a hand to murder Russians. It's business, my lad!

**Julian:** It seems complicated. Is it true that before an aeroplane can be flown or a gun made, nickel is required? And is it true that Canada produces 85 per cent. of the world's output of nickel and the British Empire as a whole 95 per cent.?

**Lord W.:** Where Hitler gets his probable 30 per cent. of nickel is none of our business.

*(Silence reigns for a while).*

**Julian:** When is Mr. Churchill going to attack Spain?

**Lord W.:** What nonsense is this? Can't you give me any peace? Attack General Franco! Who ever heard of such a thing?

**Julian:** But, daddy, isn't General Franco a fascist?

**Lord W.:** I believe his views are inclined that way.

**Julian:** Well, it says in this paper that Mr. Churchill will never rest until he has driven the last fascist out of North Africa. How will he get the Spanish fascists out of Morocco without attacking them?

**Lord W.:** Get to your bed before I attack you!

**James Dick**

### **LECTURES**

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**7.0 p.m.**

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**JOHN HEWETSON**

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## Book Review

# BRITAIN Can Feed Herself

BRITAIN CAN FEED HERSELF.

by George R. Pollitt.

Macmillan. — 3/6

HALF A CENTURY ago Peter Kropotkin demonstrated, in his *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, the possibility of growing on the soil of this country, sufficient food to provide the people of England with a standard of living far higher than that enjoyed by the workers of his time. His efforts, however, had little effect on the political indifference towards home agriculture which has persisted since then among so-called progressive circles. The right wing political economists have, naturally, scouted the idea of self-sufficiency in food because it is in the interests of the imperialist capitalism of our day for large imports of food and raw materials to balance the exports of manufactured goods and provide interests on the loans invested in undeveloped foreign and colonial countries. The left wing have consented to the perpetuation of this deceit because they have retained the idea that it is both possible and desirable for Britain to remain the workshop of the world.

The economic development of the former dependent countries during the present century has, however, dissipated any substance there ever was in these contentions. It becomes increasingly obvious that in the world after the war there will be no great markets for British manufactured goods in other parts of the world, and that Britain, whatever her political aspect, will be forced to adopt some method of so increasing the productivity of British soil that it will be possible to feed the people without reliance on imports. It is the failure to adjust itself to such conditions that will probably be one of the prime causes of the collapse of capitalism—if it survives into the post-war world. The majority of the political economists, however, still carry

on under the illusion that in some way or another the import-export system can be maintained, and for this reason fail to adjust their prejudices against the adequate production of food in this country.

It is inevitable that in the near future Britain will have to live on the food she can grow within her own shores. In the unlikely event of some form of capitalism surviving, it will be a shrunken and restricted form which will have little or no export trade with which to buy food. If there is an isolated revolution in this country, it will have to be able to survive a blockade until the neighbouring countries take a revolutionary course. If there is a world revolution, the temporary confusion of adjustment will make supplies from abroad precarious and probably scarce.

Unless, then, Britain can feed herself, the people of this country face the not-very-distant prospect of famine and decimation by starvation and the epidemics that will follow it. Even the revolution cannot save them from that fate unless it is able so to change the manner of food production that adequate supplies can be assured.

This radical change in agricultural production is possible, given an equally radical improvement in agricultural practice in accordance with the development of research which has taken place over the last fifty years. Such a change has, indeed, already taken place in the small countries on the western fringe of Europe which lived by the export of food and whose vested interests found it profitable to encourage, rather than restrict agricultural development. Belgium, with a more dense population than Britain, was exporting food before the war, besides growing enough for home consumption.

A number of the more disinterested bourgeois scientists and practitioners in farming have written

books which prove, from a technical point of view, these possibilities. Among them is Professor R. G. Stapledon, the leading expert in the country, and David Lloyd George, who has learnt from his own extensive experience in running a farm.

The latest addition to this group is G. P. Pollitt (no connection with any firm of the same name) who has recently published a clearly written brochure setting out the arguments proving the agricultural possibilities of this country. Pollitt has had experience of farming, and what is equally important, is a research chemist. Also, significantly, he is a director of Imperial Chemical Industries, a firm which would probably profit more by an intensified agriculture, through the sale of fertilisers, than by an extension of the export system.

His book is very informative, and gives valuable detailed information showing how he has reached his conclusions. Using a dietary rather higher than that which served the average British citizen during the years previous to the war, he shows that, by using adequate methods of cultivation and gaining yields no higher than many good farmers obtain nowadays, the requisite amount of food can be obtained without reliance on imports.

It means bringing into cultivation all the land we have and farming it all as the better farmers farm their land to-day. It means bringing all ploughable land under an arable rotation, stocking it with more than double the head of livestock we have now, etc. . . .

The obvious criticism of these proposals is that they involve average crop yields over the whole of our farms considerably higher than the average yields we now obtain, and that the British farmer will not attain these yields. Against this, it can be shown that many farms already give these yields and even substantially higher ones . . .

One example which is typical of them all may be given here.

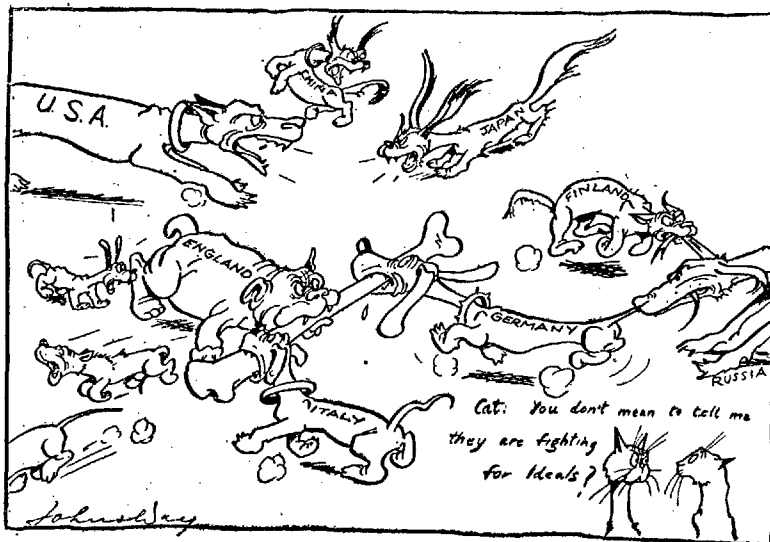
The average yield of wheat in Britain pre-war was 18.1 cwt. per acre. The maximum yield of the best-farmed and most suitable land was perhaps 40 cwt. The yield required for self-sufficiency (on the larger acreage proposed) is 25 cwt. There is very little land in England which, if drained, limed, slagged, dressed with ample farm-yard manure and top-dressed as required, will not easily reach this figure and the same considerations apply to the other yields taken as the basis of the figures in this book. . . .

There would appear to be no agricultural reason why Britain should not be able to produce on her own soil the whole of the essential foodstuffs her population requires, even on a dietary superior in nutritional value to that to which it was accustomed pre war!

There is no space to quote any of the interesting tables of figures used by Pollitt to prove his case, but the reader who acquires this book will find them useful in clarifying his views on this subject.

It is unfortunate, but understandable, that Pollitt does not think so clearly politically as he does agriculturally, and his book ends with the assumption that capitalism is capable of adjusting itself to selling to a home market only, and that capitalism is also capable of carrying out the revolution in agriculture which is necessary to obtain a full use of the land. But one can hardly expect a capitalist to blow the gaff on all the capitalist misconceptions!

G.W.



## “War for Ideals”

# AUSTRIAN WORKERS STRIKE

PRO-WAR PROPAGANDA in this country has made its appeal to the British workers on the grounds that whilst, admittedly, there are many flaws in our existing system (which will be rectified after the war!) unlike the Nazis, the Trade Unions in this country have not been suppressed, nor have their leaders been thrown into concentration camps. This is all very true. But one thing the Nazi system has not succeeded in doing is to break down the class system of the exploited on one side and the ex-

ploitors on the other, and so long as this barrier exists there will continue to be clashes between the workers and the ruling classes. A recent Reuter report confirms that the class struggle continues in Germany in spite of the repression. The report was published in the *Daily Mail* (12th Feb.) at the bottom of the page, without comment save the headline “Nazi Air Workers Strike”:

“A big strike three weeks ago at the Ostmark Aircraft factory near Vienna, won for the 60,000 workers higher wages and shorter hours. Work was interrupted only a few days.”

This is the most important item of news that has come from Germany for a long time for it indicates that the class struggle is stronger in the minds of the workers than all Hitler's and Goebbels' appeals in the name of the German Fatherland. As Ignazio Silone points out in his letter “What I Stand For” (published in the last issue of *War Commentary*) the idea that in countries where the means of expressing opinions are monopolised by the State, men can no longer think freely and boldly is completely false. Working class history during the past fifty years confirms these views, and this latest piece of news from Germany is further evidence.

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