

WORLD STARVATION NOW ADMITTED Not due to natural causes, but to the price system

IT IS no pleasure for those who have for months been warning against the danger of famine to say, "I told you so!" Starvation for millions of people is too grim a prospect. Nor is the fact that the United Nations have now recognized the palpable fact of mass hunger any guarantee that anything will be done about it.

Speaking at the UNO General Assembly on 13 February, Ernest Bevin stated that in the first six months of 1946 importing countries will require 17,000,000 tons of wheat and flour, whereas the expected supply is estimated at only 12,000,000 tons. He added that there were good reasons for thinking that "the deficit will be even larger than the 5,000,000 tons already mentioned."

To indicate the extent of the likely famine, Bevin declared: "We are dealing with 1,000,000,000 of the world population who in

to lay out again for the next season. The U.S. crop of last season was a record one. Common sense immediately tells one that this is singularly fortunate seeing that the crops in S. Africa and in India have been poor. But common sense and humanity are not the dominant factors in capitalist economy—the market is the only consideration. And a good crop means lowered prices. Consequently the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture has already suggested that crop quotas may have to be reduced next year to protect farm prices. In plain terms, this means that American farmers will be encouraged to produce less food this season. This advice was given when Europe was already starving, and in total disregard of the chronic famine conditions in India and China.

Why cannot the surplus food be given away free? Because if it were, the price of food

The State, however, through its spokesmen like Bevin, Byrnes, and all the rest of them, has to appear to concern itself with society as a whole; otherwise it would never continue to rule. But in fact of "this world wide food shortage, a problem that requires the energies of society as a whole to solve it, all that governments can do is to issue appeals to farmers to grow more food! Obviously if it were economically feasible for the farmers and peasants of the world to grow more food there would be no famine. If the poverty of the workers the world over permitted of it they would buy more food, and the very fact that they could buy, would provide the demand without which, under capitalism, no supply can be forthcoming.

It is useless for Bevin to imply that the causes of the famine are natural causes—the crop failures in South Africa and India. The



the next few months may be faced with famine . . . It is estimated that in Europe there are 40,000,000 people consuming an average of 1,506 calories a day. This is an average figure. Many millions are below it, and it is impossible to know the number of those who are hungry, in addition to the Far East. It must be a terrifically large figure."

We have pointed out for weeks now the plight of the people of Germany and Central Europe. Bidault and Wellington Koo pointed out to UNO the serious conditions in France and China respectively. There can now be no excuse; Bevin gives 1,000 millions—half the population of the world—as facing famine. For months Governments have been trying to cover up the starvation conditions which face workers almost everywhere. If they are forced to admit it now, we may be sure that they do not exaggerate the picture.

offered for sale would fall still further and the profits of the food producing industry would also fall still further. To protect the price of food—and this means to keep the price above that at which millions of people can afford to buy it—only two courses are open not to produce the food in "excess" in the first place, or to destroy the "surplus" by ploughing crops in, burning wheat, or throwing fish back into the sea. Prices are raised, and the producer is able to make a profit (often only enough to allow him to struggle through next season); but inevitably a large section of the population goes hungry.

United States have had a record crop for two years running now, and have ample reserves. We are always hearing about this "age of transport", about technical progress having established the efficient unity of the world, and so on. Under a rational system of economy crop failures in one part (even if they were due to natural, instead of largely economic causes) could be compensated by the plenty elsewhere.

WORLD SOLUTION

The capitalist press, both left and right, shows itself utterly incapable (unwilling) to realize the full extent of the problem. The Tory papers groan about ration cuts and make anti-Labour Party propaganda out of the situation. The working class of this country have been and still are undermanned. But there is no problem at all here comparable with that in Europe, or India, or China. Meanwhile, the Labour press seeks to excuse Bevin's complete failure to mention economic causes in his survey of world food conditions, by declaring that the people of this country are better fed now than they were before the war, and calling for a tightening of the belt. As if the cutting down on dried eggs in this country of 47 millions will make any difference to the lot of the 1,000 million whom Bevin says are facing famine!

GOVERNMENTS' FUTILE APPEALS

It is not the wickedness of individual capitalist producers which is at fault. Often the farmers and peasants live almost on starvation level. They are at the mercy of the market—of the capitalist mode of production. In India, it is exactly the peasants who provide the bulk of the starving population. Modern famines are not due to any "wickedness" on the part of the primary producers (though we would not say the same of the middlemen who hoard the much needed food until they can sell it at outrageous scarcity prices), they are inevitable symptoms of the market economy of to-day.

Governments understand the position alright; that's why they offer subsidies, why they enable restrictionism to be practised on the scale which makes famines possible. They are acting as one would expect them to act—in the interests of the big concerns involved. The State is the executive committee of the ruling class, and it is simply unrealistic to expect them to act in the interests of society as a whole. Indeed, it is not possible for anyone or any single group to act on behalf of society as a whole. Only the individuals who compose society can do that, by organizing themselves in such a way that they control economy directly.

INDIA AND MALAYA

In India it is officially estimated that there is a grain deficit of 3,000,000 tons, and there are no reserves. Indians are rationed to 1 lb. of grain a day, and are subsisting on 1,000 calories daily—just over one third of the 2,800 calories regarded by nutritionists as adequate to maintain health. Indians had the worst diet of any country in the world before the war; yet the News Chronicle states that their diet to-day provides half the calories they had in pre-war days. A repetition of the 1943 famine is expected.

In Malaya, the food situation is desperate, and the cost of living is anything from 5 to 20 times the pre-war level. The position of children was made worse at the beginning of the reconquest by the British, because an order from London suddenly cancelled the meals which had been given free in the native schools. Another factor which contributes to the starvation is the price of rubber. The Government, by arrangement with America, has fixed the price at 10d. per lb. At this price the growers cannot make a profit, and so "rubber cannot be produced". (Manchester Guardian, 10/2/46). The same source adds that "labour cannot be got at this price level. To give native labour even a bare livelihood it is agreed by all that wages must be three times the pre-war level." These observations give the key to the economic causes of the world famine.

CAPITALIST ECONOMICS THE CAUSE

The distinguishing feature of the capitalist system is that goods are produced in order to be sold. Production therefore depends on the existence of a market, and if there is no market, if people can't buy the goods, they won't be produced. Nowhere is this truer than in agriculture. The farmer or peasant has to lay out money and labour for months before he sells his product and recoups himself. Now if the workers in general are paid such poor wages that they cannot afford more than a dead minimum (and sometimes not even that) then the farmer doesn't produce more than a minimum of the food, for he will lose his outlay if the product can't be sold, or is left to be bought up by the government for less than cost.

Furthermore, if there is a bumper crop, the goods flood the market, the price falls, and many farmers are ruined just because the good crop has lowered prices below the level at which he can recover his outlay, and begin

There is blood on your hands Mr. Lawson!

THE cruel and idiotic policy of the British Government is driving the Spanish Antifascists interned at Chorley to take refuge in madness and suicide. On the 11th July, 1945, Agustin Soler committed suicide at Kirkham Camp. Since then two other Spaniards have gone insane. The most recent tragic case is that of Eustasio Bustos, aged 53 and belonging to the Spanish Libertarian Movement.

On Monday, 4th February E. Bustos disappeared from the camp. He left his money, his papers and all his other belongings behind. His comrades immediately feared that he had committed suicide; he had been ill for some time and the continued internment had driven him into a state of despair.

Nothing was heard of him for two weeks till he was found in Sunday, the 17th February, on the Anglezarck Moors in Lancashire, suffering from exposure and burnt feet. The burns were due to the fact that Bustos, obviously in a demented state, had set fire to his slippers in order to keep his feet warm. The authorities believe that he put his feet near the blaze and then lost consciousness and so got badly burnt.

He was taken to Chorley hospital suffering from starvation and shock as well as exposure and burnt feet. Bstos was found by a shepherd on a bleak stretch of the moors. He was lying among the rocks, semi-conscious. After his feet had been burnt he had lain in agony for several days. He had to be carried a mile by stretcher down the hillside.

His comrades went to see him at the hospital and brought him his guitar but he was too ill to be allowed visitors.

This is a new tragic episode is added to the pathetic story of the Spanish anti-fascists interned in England. Like his comrades, Bustos had escaped from Spain after the civil war; he had been interned by the Vichy Government and used as slave labour by the Germans. He was "liberated" by the Americans and handed over to the British authorities who kept him prisoner for over a year. Ten years of sufferings, of privations, of humiliations, of mental agony. Is it surprising that he should have gone insane, that he should have wanted to put an end to his life?

We charge the British Government, we charge Mr. Lawson with the crime of driving men to insanity and death. They cannot plead ignorance. In letters to the Press, in the

Industrial Notes AMERICAN T.U. BOSSES STRUGGLE FOR POWER

The American trade union movement has long been a field for the struggles of gigantic leaders with megalomaniac ambitions, and the most formidable of these has been John L. Lewis, once leader of the pseudo-radical C.I.O., and later of the American miners. The name of Phil Murray has lately seemed to obscure that of Lewis in the recent actions of the American unions, but a report by the "Daily Express" American correspondent (12/2/46) seems to indicate that Lewis is playing for a yet bigger game.

"All through the American strike wave," runs the report, "not a word has been heard from John L. Lewis, the union boss who led a mine strike nearly every year of the war. The reason: Lewis has other plans.

At the age of 66, he is plotting to become the most powerful man in America. His strategy is to unite disunited labour. His objective—15,000,000 workers to do his bidding.

He has already achieved the first step by taking his 500,000 miners back into the Right Wing American Federation of Labour. His next step will be to win control of the other big union body—the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

Then Mr. Lewis will have the job he has always wanted—president-maker. He expects to win votes for his man by getting higher wages for everyone.

But will Lewis get there? He is not the only American union leader with political ambitions, and there seems a general tendency for even those who appear militant in leading strikes to frame their policy in such a way as to find favour with the White House and thus advance along the path towards the ruling class elite already followed by the British union leaders. So John L. may find

there's more than a little competition for the job of political fabrier of American industry.

And he may also find that the American workers are getting wise to him and withdrawing their support from such careerist leaders and organisations. Already a revolutionary industrial organisation exists in America—the I.W.W. It was the vanguard of the American workers in the days before Lewis and his puppet organisations were every heard of, and it remains a continual challenge to reformist unionism and a nucleus around which may form a wide movement of workers' political fabrier of American industry.

On Monday, 11th February, trouble began again at the Merseyside docks, when ten thousand workers refused to do overtime and stopped work at 5 p.m.; there were 30 ships waiting to be loaded or unloaded. The reason for their action is that large numbers of experienced dockers are being dismissed as redundant, and that it would be better to reinstate them rather than to do continual overtime work. The dockers point out that, while they receive £1 18s. 0d. for their 8 hours' overtime, such a large part of this goes in income tax that it is not worth their while to carry it on, especially when other men are being thrown out of work.

The men have since returned, on the promise of a new system.

Laundry workers in Liverpool, Birkenhead and Stoke, to the number of several hundreds, have gone on strike over the exclusion of a wages increase from a tentative agreement between union and employers. It is expected that they will be followed by workers in London laundries.

LABOUR LAW AND ORDER

HOLLYWOOD could not have better staged the trial of the Trades Dispute Act than did the highly publicised politicians at Westminster.

The stage was very elaborately set for the political farce, produced to capture the appreciative applause from the mesmerised gallery. The set is intended to display the bitterest animosity between the Government and the Opposition over a reactionary law. The hero of the piece is supposed to be the Labour Party with the Tories cast as the villains. As a piece of public entertainment it stinks, but as a revelation of Maskelyne political illusion it succeeds. Bevin has thumped the box and roared his anger, and Hogg and Eden have risen to their roles in magnificent style.

The whole farce might have had a little more success had not Mr. Henderson Stewart, in his broadcast in the "Week in Westminster" series, revealed that although there may be considerable acrimony in the debate, in all his years in Parliament he did not remember such a feeling of friendliness behind the scenes.

Under the political glamour, which has drawn so many millions to tragedy, there is no basic disagreement between the Government and the Opposition. On all fundamental issues there is unanimity: unanimity on war, on finance, on constitution, on Law and Order and certainly on the matter of labour control. Should the Socialists and the Tories part company on all other issues (sic) all the records show that they can be trusted to form a coalition of tyranny to smash down any workers' revolt for emancipation.

Were it not for the fact that we have become accustomed to the sort of ballyhoo and trickery accompanying the repeal of this act, we would feel little more than utter disgust and anger that these politicians could dip their delicate hands into such a slimy period of workers' betrayal for a subject to use for self glorification and political advantage.

The history of the General Strike should be well enough known for the workers not to fall for the easy interpretation put forward in Reynolds News (3/2/46) in attributing the sole

responsibility for the "Blacklegs' Charter" to "the Baldwin government or an act of ignorance for the General Strike. Baldwin, egged on by Churchill and Birkenhead thought to seize the opportunity to cripple the Trades Unions and weaken the Labour Party."

The primary responsibility for this act clearly rests with the T.U.C. and the Labour bosses, who were guilty of the most flagrant betrayal that has continued right down through the following 19 years. The betrayal has been so complete, and the workers' established rights so subordinated to the careerism of the T.U. and Labour plutocracy that the implication seen by Reynolds News in the Trades Dispute Act is little more than a mild joke.

True it is that the Baldwin government placed the Act on the Statute Book, but the Tories did no more than confirm the duplicity of the T.U. officials and placate the capitalists.

The worker, living in his shabby surroundings, experiencing the effects of poverty and economic exploitation, born in suppression and reared in a home where the continual struggle for the wherewithal to live goes on unceasingly, cares little for the Statute Book and the Constitution when he engages in the battle for bread against the robbing ruling class. The fact that the Peers, and industrial Barons, with the T.U. officials and Cabinet Ministers receiving their huge salaries, discuss the illegality of strikes, leaves him pretty cold.

To the worker, the right to strike is as fundamental as his right to breathe. That right will be exercised when conditions drive him to action. It alters nothing that really matters in a dispute, that laws have been passed, or acts have been repealed. Poverty, sympathy or aggression cannot be made legal or illegal by the decision of the usurpers in Parliament. The false position of the politician is clearly revealed over the recent dock strike. Although the dockers broke scores of laws—all the peace-time legislation plus the much more stringent war laws—the lawyers and politicians did not dare bring any of these dockers before the courts, any more than the Tories, Liberals or Socialists would have risked using the Trades Dispute Act in any of the hundreds of strikes in the past 19 years. The workers can exist without the law, but the rulers cannot.

It is significant that the only occasion that the Trades Dispute Act was every used was by the man who thundered hypocritically against it the most. In 1943 Ernest Bevin used it against the powerless Trotskyists.

As the dockers made the government, the laws and the T.U.C. look ridiculous, so again in any industrial dispute the most that the Labour government and the T.U.C. could hope for would be to hide behind the army and strengthened police force, and smash down the workers under the fantastic constitution and legal system.

(continued on p. 4)

ANARCHIST MEETINGS IN
GLASGOW
at the
GROVE STADIUM
(Broadalbano Street)
at the junction of St. Vincent and
Argyll Street
EVERY SUNDAY, at 7 p.m.
EVERY WEDNESDAY at 8 p.m.
at the
P.P.U. ROOMS
48 Dundas Street
(Top floor)

THE LEVELLERS

a past struggle for freedom

Continued from last issue

Discontent In The Army

The discontent of the men was numerous. They were annoyed by the way in which most of them had been impressed into the army, and perhaps still more so by the irregular manner in which they had since been paid. As time went on, they also became steadily more deeply concerned with the autocratic nature of the new régime.

By 1644 desertions were becoming numerous, and trouble was also caused by the refusal of some units to serve beyond their home counties. The Parliamentary leaders thought they could save the situation by sending preachers into the ranks, but revivalist preaching was limited and transitory in its effect in comparison with the disappointments the soldiers were actually experiencing. The discontent of the soldiers and the inefficiency of most of the parliamentary leaders resulted in a series of disasters which was halted only after Cromwell and the Independents, the more radical wing of the bourgeoisie, ousted the aristocratic inefficients like Essex from command and formed a corps *d'élite* of middle-class cavalry, the Ironsides, who proved henceforth the dynamic force of the New Model Army and enabled Cromwell to win the decisive victories of Marston Moor in 1644 and Naseby in 1645.

The Independents differed from the Presbyterians in that they wished to replace a centralized church by self-governing congregations. In effect, they were just as ruthless and more efficient in their pursuit of exploitation and power, and just as hostile to the small tradesmen, peasants and wage-earning classes.

Thus Cromwell's victories, while they terminated the major struggle against the king's forces, did nothing to assuage the discontent within the army, which, indeed, came to a head at the end of hostilities when the men were still kept under arms, without pay which had been overdue for months.

Rise Of The Levellers

By 1645 the discontent both in the army and among the workers in the cities was beginning to find clear expression in the writings of a number of pamphleteers, like Lilburne, Overton, Walwyn, and a number of anonymous authors. Out of the activities of these writers and from the misery of the common soldiers arose eventually the Leveller movement, which for a time proved the great menace to the Cromwellian dictatorship.

The realization that the leaders did not intend to give the liberties they had promised was now becoming evident to all. Lilburne warned the people:

"Therefore look about you betimes and give not occasion to curse you, for making them slaves by your covetousness, cowardly baseness and faint-heartedness, that set up as one man and in a just and legal way call those to account that endeavour to destroy and betray your liberties and Freedoms."

In the year 1646, although the organised movement had still not taken shape, the Government already realised the dangers it faced, and attempted to deal with the more vocal representatives of popular discontent by imprisoning Lilburne and Overton. But this act merely had the effect of increasing the people's mass protests and causing a further flow of pamphlets and petitions which took an even more intransigent and accusing attitude towards Parliament. One of these, *A Remonstrance of Many Thousand Citizens*, says bluntly:

"Ye are rich and abound in goods and have need of nothing, but the afflictions of the poor, your hunger-starved brethren, you have no compassion for."

And Overton, in *A Defence against All Arbitrary Usurpations or Encroachments*, shows at length some consciousness of the class nature of society and the methods of government when he says:

"Such hath been the mysterious subtilty from generation to generation of those cunning usurpers whereby they have driven on their wicked designs of tyranny and arbitrary domination under the fair, specious, deceitfull pretences of Liberty and Freedom that the poore deceived people are even (in a manner) bestialized in their understandings, become so stupid and grossly ignorant of themselves and of their own natural immunities and strengths wherewith God by nature hath enriched them that they are even degenerated from being men."

The Agitators

In 1647 the movement of discontent moved towards a crisis, and the rank and file soldiers began to organize themselves into revolutionary forces. Their demands frightened parliament, which attempted to disband the army and send

large numbers of the soldiers to Ireland. The men refused to accept the government's terms, and began to create their own process of election by electing Agitators for each company, who acted as regimental committees and from whom the Council of Agitators was formed.

Cromwell was willing enough to use the army against Parliament, but he had no intention of letting the revolutionaries have their own way. However, he decided for the time being to compromise with them at least until his own position of power was consolidated. He recognized the Council of Agitators, but rendered it temporarily innocuous by incorporating it in a General Army Council which was packed with "safe" officers. When the Army Council, under the Leveller influence, went so far as to produce an "Agreement of the People", setting forward certain proposals rather similar to the demands of the Chartists, Cromwell carefully neglected its ratification. As a result of this a number of the more radical regiments mutinied at Ware, but Cromwell quickly suppressed the rising, and arrested and cashiered the soldiers who had agitated most actively for the Agreement.

At about the same time a series of debates was held at Putney in which the leading Grandees of the army, including Cromwell and Ireton, and a number of Leveller agitators, including Saxby and Rainborough, took a leading part. In these debates some remarkable speeches were made by the Agitators, which expressed bluntly the disillusionment of the men. Saxby, for instance, remarked:

"I confess many of us fought for those ends which, we since saw, were not those which caused us to go through difficulties and straits and to venture all in the ship with you. It had been good in you to have advertised us of it and I believe you would have had fewer under your command to control."

Rainborough was even more to the point.

"That I would faine know what the soldier hath bought for all this while? He hath bought to enslave himselfe to give power to some of riches, men of estates, to make him a perpetual slave."

That probably the most remarkable production of the time was a pamphlet entitled *The Levellers*, which described exhaustively how Parliament betrayed the common people.

"They promised liberty, but beheld slavery, they promised justice, but beheld oppression, they pleaded law, but have lost conscience; they pretended purity but beheld hypocrisy... To their privilege is our bondage, their power our pestilence, their rights our poverty, their law our curse, their smiles our safety, their frowns our ruin... And you poore Commons of England, unless you seriously and suddenly lay your condition to heart and as one man rise up for the vindicating of yourselves against those which have abused and daily endeavour to enslave you... know assuredly that you doe hammer out a life, liberties and estates of yourselves and posterities and when your sufferings bring you sorrow you may not happily find deliverers."

Food Riots In 1648

During 1648 there was repeated rioting in various parts of the country, and the living conditions of the people grew steadily worse, being aggravated by poor harvests in many parts. Within the army Cromwell's strong action caused a temporary setback to the radical influences, but the Levellers were still a menace in the ranks, and were developing their contacts with the navy, and, even more, with the townspeople and peasants.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

(To be concluded)

ANARCHISM AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

The following is the first part of an article which the great Italian Anarchist, Malatesta, contributed to *Freedom* in November 1907. Its analysis of the part Anarchists can play in the Labour movement is still valuable to-day, when workers are seriously concerned with the future of the Trade Unions as means of working class action. Indeed, Malatesta's views have been all too sadly confirmed by the history of the organized Labour Movement.

The question of the position to be taken in relation to the Labour movement is certainly one of the greatest importance to Anarchists.

In spite of lengthy discussions and of varied experiences, a complete accord has not yet been reached—perhaps because the question does not admit of a complete and permanent solution, owing to the different conditions and changing circumstances in which we carry on the struggle.

I believe, however, that our aim may suggest to us a criterion of conduct applicable to the different contingencies.

We desire the moral and material elevation of all men; we wish to achieve a revolution which will give to all liberty and well-being, and we are convinced that this cannot be done from above by force of law or decrees, but must be done by the conscious will and the direct action of those who desire it.

We need, then, more than any the conscious and voluntary co-operation of those who, suffering the most by the present social organisation, have the greatest interest in the Revolution.

Action Better Than Preaching

It does not suffice for us—though it is certainly useful and necessary—to elaborate an ideal as perfect as possible, and to form groups for propaganda and for revolutionary action. We must convert as far as possible the masses of the workers, because without them we can neither overthrow the existing society nor reconstruct a new one. And since to rise from the submissive state in which the great majority of the proletarians now vegetate, to a conception of Anarchism and a desire for its realization, is required an evolution which generally is not passed through under the sole influence of the propaganda; since the lessons derived from the facts of daily life are more efficacious than all doctrinaire preaching, it is for us to take an active part in the life of the masses, and to use all the means which circumstances permit to gradually awaken the spirit of revolt, and to show by these facts the path which leads to emancipation.

Amongst these means the Labour movement stands first, and we should be wrong to neglect it. In this movement we find numbers of workers who struggle for the amelioration of their conditions. They may be mistaken as to the aim they have in view and as to the means of attaining it, and in our view they generally are. But at least they no longer resign themselves to oppression nor regard it as just—they hope and they struggle. We can more easily arouse in them that feeling of solidarity towards their exploited fellow-workers and of hatred against exploitation which must lead to a definitive struggle for the abolition of all domination of man over man. We can induce them to claim more and more, and by means more and more energetic; and so we can train ourselves and others to the struggle, profiting by victories in order to exalt the power of union and of direct action, and bring forward greater claims, and profiting also by reverses in order to learn the necessity for more powerful means and for more radical solutions.

Again—and this is not its least advantage—the Labour movement can prepare those groups of technical workers who in the revolution will take upon themselves the organisation of production and exchange for the advantage of all, beyond and against all governmental power.

But with all these advantages the Labour movement has its drawbacks and its dangers, of which we ought to take account when it is a question of the position that we as Anarchists should take in it.

Tendency To Degenerate

Constant experience in all countries shows that Labour movements, which always commence as movements of protest and revolt, and are animated at the beginning by a broad spirit of progress and human fraternity, tend very soon to degenerate; and in proportion as they acquire strength, they become egoistic, conservative, occupied exclusively with interests immediate and restricted, and develop within themselves a bureaucracy which, as in all such cases, has no other object than to strengthen and aggrandise itself.

It is this condition of things that has induced many comrades to withdraw from the Trade Union movement, and even to combat it as something reactionary and injurious. But the result has been that our influence diminished accordingly, and the field was left free to those who wished to exploit the movement for personal or party interests that had nothing in common with the cause of the workers' emancipation. Very soon there were only organisations with a narrow spirit and fundamentally conservative of which the English Trade Unions are a type; or else Syndicates which, under the influence of politicians, most often "Socialist", were only electoral machines for the elevation into power of particular individuals.

Happily, other comrades thought that the Labour movement always held in itself a sound principle, and that rather than abandon it to the politicians, it would be well to undertake the task of bringing the unions once more to the work of achieving their original aim, and of gaining from them all the advantages they offer to the Anarchist cause. And they have succeeded

International News

BRAZIL

The anarcho-sindicalist movement is effectively working into the open in all towns and villages where they were previously confined or underground. According to reports we have received, they are working to make their influence bear upon the Trade Union movement. In São Paulo an anarcho-sindicalist *Revista* (*The Torch*) has been started, and in Rio de Janeiro *Arbeiter-Dreyer* (*Worker's Journal*) is now regularly issued. The editors of the latter are the old militants Oosthuis, the philosopher, M. Pary and R. Das Neves.

HOLLAND

The IWMA has recently published a report of the massive work realized by the comrades in their country during the Nazi domination. Among the anarchists who died for our ideals are Piet Zuydam, the secretary of the Anti-militarist International, Eikeboom, one of the most independent militants in the Workers' General Nederlandse Syndicalistisch Vakverbond, J. de Haan, and the great artist Lebaou. The comrades Albert de Jong, Tom Riet, Herman Groenkaas, Jaen de Jong and a few others also did their duty under the Germans and are now carrying on the job with renewed ardour.

FRANCE

Owing to the General Confederation of Labour's readiness to collaborate with the government, which Communist and Socialist imposed, the Revolutionary Syndicalists are being active in making prevail the only course of action worthy of the workers. Among the unions and militants of this revolutionary section the necessity is being discussed of detaching themselves from that central organisation which capitalism has entirely tamed. This is forcibly expressed by their organ *La Bataille Syndicaliste*. The French anarchists, after their fusion in a single organization, are growing constantly stronger with new contingents of comrades. Their periodical *La Libertaire* is issued each time with greater vigour and fighting spirit.

CHINA

After five years of isolation almost on the part of the comrades in China, now that the new systems in the old and cultured anarcho-sindicalist Luo-Chan-Bo has written in our French of *Galvao* *Pravda*. That the anarcho-sindicalist are active in China is shown by the fact that Luo-Chan-Bo is the secretary of a Chinese Federation.

Travaux Libéraux, Moscow.

FOR A LIBERTARIAN YOUTH INTERNATIONAL

The revolutionary and libertarian young people need an international of their own. It will have to be an international which, on the basis of a few clearly anti-state and anti-capitalist principles will have to be an international free from governments and party politics and interference, making room for the expression of the international necessities of revolutionary youth.

IWMA Press Service, Stockholm.

WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

Are we now to forget the honest resolutions brought to maturity in the years of oppression? Are the acts of honesty, of dignity and integrity in the resistance against the dictators to exhaust themselves on motivations for denunciation and in the founding of some new order of robbery? Will our own behaviour confirm that the passionate appeal to truth, justice and respect for the supreme dignity of human conscience always belongs to the oppressors and the persecuted? So recently set free from the hostile tyranny, are we going to bow in front of the so-called law according to which any popular movement begins as a liberation movement and ends in new forms of slavery? From victims of an era of arbitrary force shall we end by being in turn the persecutors?

Ignazio Silone, *Il Rivolgimento*, Rome, 22/3/45.

in creating, chiefly in France, a new movement which, under the name of "Revolutionary Syndicalism," seeks to organise the workers, independently of all bourgeois and political influence, to win their emancipation by the direct action of the slave-slaves against the masters.

That is a great step in advance; but we must not exaggerate its reach and imagine, as some comrades seem to do, that we shall realise Anarchism, as a matter of course, by the progressive development of Syndicalism. Every institution has a tendency to extend its functions, to perpetuate itself, and to become an end in itself. It is not surprising, then, if those who have initiated the movement, and take the most prominent part therein, fall into the habit of regarding Syndicalism as the equivalent of Anarchism, or at least as the supreme means, that in itself replaces all other means, for its realisation. But that makes it the more necessary to avoid the danger and to define well our position.

Syndicalism, in spite of all the declarations of its most ardent supporters, contains in itself, by the very nature of its function, the elements of degeneration which have corrupted Labour movements in the past. In effect, being a movement which proposes to defend the present interests of the workers, it must necessarily adapt itself to existing conditions, and take into consideration interests which come to the fore in society as it exists to-day.

Now, in so far as the interests of a section of the workers coincide with the interests of the whole class, Syndicalism is in itself a good school of solidarity; in so far as the interests of the workers of one country are the same as those of the workers in other countries, Syndicalism is a good means of furthering international brotherhood; in so far as the interests of the moment are not in contradiction with the interests of the future, Syndicalism is in itself a good preparation for the Revolution. But unfortunately this is not always so.

Harmony of interests, solidarity amongst all men, is the ideal to which we aspire, is the aim for which we struggle; but that is not the actual condition, no more between men of the same class than between those of different classes. The rule to-day is the antagonism and the interdependence of interests at the same time: the struggle of each against all and of all against each. And there can be no other condition in a society where, in consequence of the capitalist system of production—that is to say, production founded on monopoly of the means of production and organised internationally for the profit of individual employers—there are, as a rule, more hands than work to be done, and more mouths than bread to fill them.

Contradictions For The Individual

It is impossible to isolate oneself, whether as an individual, as a class, or as a nation, since the condition of each one depends more or less directly on the general conditions of the whole of humanity; and it is impossible to live in a true state of peace, because it is necessary to defend oneself, often even to attack, or perish.

Institutional Corruption

Thus one can see developing in all Unions, that have reached a certain position of influence, a tendency to assure, in accord with rather than against the masters, a privileged situation for themselves, and to create difficulties of entrance for new members, and for the admission of apprentices in the factories; a tendency to amass large funds that afterwards they are afraid of compromising; to seek the favour of public powers, to be absorbed, above all, in co-operation and mutual benefit schemes; and to become at last conservative elements in society.

After having stated this, it seems clear to me that the Syndicalist movement cannot replace the Anarchist movement, and that it can serve as a means of education and of revolutionary preparation only if it is acted on by the Anarchistic impulse, action, and criticism.

Anarchism Separate From Syndicalism

Anarchists, then, ought to abstain from identifying themselves with the Syndicalist movement, and to consider as an aim that which is but one of the means of attaining it: that of action that they can utilize. They should remain in the Syndicates as elements giving an onward impulse, and strive to make of them as much as possible instruments of combat in view of the Social Revolution. They should work to develop in the Syndicates all that which can augment its educative influence and its combativeness—the propaganda of ideas, the forcible strike, the spirit of proselytism, the distrust and hatred of the authorities and of the politicians, the practice of solidarity towards individuals and groups in conflict with the masters. They should combat all that which tends to render them egoistic, pacific, conservative,—professional pride and the narrow spirit of the corporate body, heavy contributions and the accumulation of invested capital, the service of benefits and of assurance, confidence in the good offices of the State, good relationship with masters, the appointment of bureaucratic officials, paid and permanent.

On these conditions the participation of Anarchists in the Labour movement will have good results, but only on these conditions.

These tactics will sometimes appear to be, and even may really be, hurtful to the immediate interests of some groups; but that does not matter when it is a question of the Anarchist cause,—that is to say, of the general and permanent interests of humanity. We certainly wish, while waiting for the Revolution, to wrest from Governments and from employers as much liberty and wellbeing as possible; but we would not compromise the future for some momentary advantages, which besides are often illusory or gained at the expense of other workers.

Let us beware of ourselves. The error of having abandoned the Labour movement has done an immense injury to Anarchism, but at least it leaves unaltered the distinctive character.

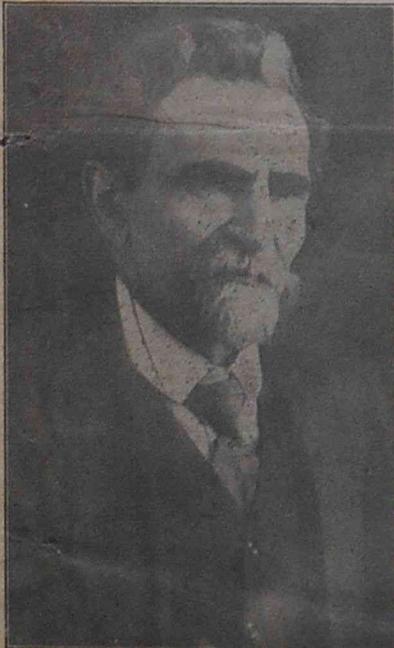
The error of confounding the Anarchist movement with Trade Unionism would be still more grave. That will happen to us which happened to the Social Democrats as soon as they went into the Parliamentary struggle. They gained in numerical force, but by becoming each day less Socialist. We also would become more numerous, but we should cease to be Anarchist.

E. MALATESTA.

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ERRICO MALATESTA

The Mines Nationalisation Bill

THE much heralded bill for the nationalisation of the coal mines passed its second reading in Parliament the other day and provided the House with the opportunity to stage a Parliamentary battle. The Press effectively splashed detailed accounts of the political clash that ensued, when, in a display of shadow boxing, the Tory opposition challenged the Government. It is for the moment the fact that the Tory challenge is completely exposed as a political sham, by the obvious delight of the big coal combines at the news that their industry is in the process of being taken over by the State, it is, I think, necessary to refute the Tory claim to being champions of freedom, the miners, the domestic consumer, and representatives of the nation's true interests in relation to coal.

At the risk of being suspected of belabouring the stinking carcass of the proverbial dead donkey, it should be sufficient to recall that, on the technical side alone, the majority of reports, inquiries and commissions on various aspects of the coal problem since 1914 have, beyond any shadow of doubt, condemned the Tory ideals of "enterprise, of private ownership and control of the mines."

It did not require the tragicomedy of a General Election to make known the views of the working class in this country, who have long desired the common ownership of all things, including the mines, a desire which has in fact been prevented from realisation by the suppression, frustration and diversion practiced by their Labour and T.U. "leaders."

The only really genuine consideration of, and effective opposition to, the Government's plan for Nationalisation of the pits, must come from within the ranks of the working class movement, whose true interests the Government, like the so-called Opposition, falsely claims to represent. This authentic criticism of the powers that be finds its expression in its clearest form in the viewpoint of Anarchism, which alone can establish a workers' case against state control. It is not surprising to find hostility among the miners, who are traditionally militant workers and independent thinkers, to the Nationalisation Bill. It is, therefore, as a miner attempting to interpret the confused and officially misled feelings of those who are, relatively speaking, most directly affected by the nationalisation of the coal industry, namely, the miners, that I wish to examine the proposals of the Government.

After many years of agitation by the miners for the rejection of private ownership and control, represented by the syndicalist miners' movement of 1912 (*See "The Mines: Next Steps" and "The Demand for the Mines for the Miners"*), the militant mine workers have now been led to believe by their politically aspiring Union bosses that through nationalisation there would come the realisation of the miners' age-old demand for Workers' control. Many miners are now beginning to see and point out that nothing could be further from the truth. In a prelude to the second reading of the Bill, the Minister of Fuel and Power, Shinwell, openly admitted in a speech given to a meeting of colliery and union representatives in Glasgow, on the 17th January, that "Nationalisation is not primarily to benefit the miner." This statement alone should serve as the miners' yardstick whereby they may measure the sincerity of the Labour leaders' promises for great benefits under nationalisation. What other section of the community is entitled to prior consideration in any scheme for the complete reorganisation of the mining industry, if not the miners who have given, and are giving and will give their very lives in hundreds yearly, during the course of their productive efforts? No, despite all the official soft soaping, it is apparent that the industrially martyred miner will continue to be sacrificed—in the past at the behest of colliery owners—now by State decree.

Turning to the Government's proposals, we learn that a National Coal Board is to be set up, that this Board will be made up solely of technicians, coal experts and specialists and will be empowered to deal with the whole of the industry. A tribunal will also be brought into being to decide upon "fair compensation for the colliery owners."

It is interesting to note the admission by the Labour spokesman that the scheme for nationalisation is based on the Reid Report. Officially known as the Coal Mining Report of the Technical Advisory Committee, this report may be described in a few sentences. First reviewing and condemning the past chaos in the mining industry, the committee recommended drastic changes in control and administration, and advocated the further mechanisation of the industry, the complete re-planning of underground haulages, etc., and where possible the electrification of pits. The Government has apparently adopted the report, which was originally intended as a recommendation to be applied under capitalism, to meet the needs and requirements of State Capitalism.

To the working miner this report is, because of its effort in trying to shift some of the blame for the state of the coal industry on to the miners and demanding "proper discipline" in the mines and trade unions, a classic example of the sorry condition of the technician cut off from the workers. This unhealthy divorce of technician and worker is created mainly by virtue of the technician's tendency towards managerialism, i.e. the assumption of executive functions and by this means becoming part and parcel of the controlling power, thus creating within the industry an "elite" governing body. In this detachment of technician and worker may be found the cause of countless everyday instances of technical schemes and improvements going astray, sometimes with disastrous effects, when put into practice in the pits.

The schemes, then, show faults which would have been obvious at a glance by one who had any practical experience in mining. In the implementation of the Reid Report it may be easily recognised that the Government has not "primarily" the interests of the miners in mind, when it announces its intention to speed up the large-scale mechanisation and mechanisation of the mines. The aims of the Government are to be concerned with the raising of the coal production level in order to meet the industrial needs of the country, so that the increased output of the factories may meet the demand for increased exports. All this, no doubt, is necessary, apart from other reasons, for the payment of interest and dividends on Government bonds issued as compensation to ex-shareholders of the nationalised industries.

The mining community to a man is opposed to compensating the colliery owners. Miners argue emphatically that the original capital invested in the industry has been repaid many times over at the expense of miners' lives and limbs. The existing means of production, pit plant, etc., are the accumulated proceeds of years of exploiting succeeding generations of miners and therefore rightly belong to the workers. Why, they ask, should they have to continue sweating blood, toiling to produce wealth that will primarily keep their late oppressors in parasitical idleness? If the workers are the sole means whereby wealth is created, then all wealth should be retained by the workers. Under nationalisation, the big coal combines are to get Government bonds which the Government, using all the means at its disposal, will ensure are honoured by keeping the miners and the rest of the workers hard at their toil. What, on the other hand, will the miners receive by way of benefits? Nothing but the time-honoured carrot dangling on the end of an ever-receding stick, promises of a rosier future, promises of better conditions to come. The Government hasten to cap their promises with the proviso that it all depends on increased production.

When we recall that the largest contributory factor in the decline of coal production is the shortage of miners and the inability of the industry to offset the yearly deficiency in numbers of workers by attracting sufficient newcomers to make up the loss resulting from deaths, disablement, illness and retirement, we are unable to perceive how new promises are to work the oracle in this respect. A large percentage of the existing miners are in fact so dissatisfied with the present day conditions that, it is officially admitted, if the Essential Works Order were lifted they would immediately seek other employment. It therefore seems most improbable that non-miners will find these same conditions any inducement to becoming miners.

The official dilemma reminds one of a dog chasing its own tail, for the better conditions depend upon increased production which in turn can only be obtained by a rapid intake of new men, who will obviously fail to be attracted by anything other than good conditions, high wages, etc., which brings us back to where we started. Miners know, only too well, that men will enter the pits either owing to attractive conditions, etc., or because the alternative to taking up mining is so awful that workers are virtually compelled to become miners.

Through the medium of the recently appointed highly salaried Mines Recruitment Officer, Noel Newcome, the Government calls for 100,000 men, immediately, to arrest the present downward trend in production. A yearly intake of 30,000 young lads, miners of the future, to replace the 50,000 miners leaving the pits, and a reduction of the latter figure by 20,000. Unless the Government possess the power to raise the dead, replace missing limbs, rejuvenate the aged and convince sufferers of silicosis, nystagmus and the many other miners' complaints that their disease is merely a figment of the imagination, we fail to see how the numbers of the last group can be reduced by as much as two fifths. It is to be suspected that the Government intends to come down hard on such "malingerers" by miners.

The figures quoted above, failing any improvement in the miners' working conditions, can, however, be met in the event of the existence of widespread unemployment or alternatively the re-introduction of industrial conscription. In view of the Government's partiality for compulsion there is every likelihood of their resorting to the latter method of recruiting men for this, the most arduous and dangerous of all occupations.

To sum up this examination of the Coal Mines Nationalisation Bill, we are convinced that, with such a measure coming into effect, the immediate result will be a rapid rise in the size of the bureaucracy, the industry becoming inundated with place-hunters, but few miners. There being no direct voice in the management of their industry for the miners, they will, as one man, soon expose the inadequacy of such a scheme and reject the same. Because of its very nature, and by reason of the methods used, the State will be unable to settle satisfactorily the problems of miners' conditions, the man-power position and the production question. State control, ministerial edicts, will not in themselves produce one pound of coal extra, but rather, if our knowledge of recent history is correct, tend to produce chaos and mismanagement, chronic abuses of dictatorial powers that will make those of the past appear small, and resultant misery for the workers.

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The Russian Elections

FOR the first time in eight years the Russian people have gone to the polls to elect a new Supreme Soviet of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. The Supreme Soviet consists of two Parliaments: The Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities and is elected every four years.

The Soviet of the Union has 656 seats and is elected on the basis of one deputy for every 300,000 of the population. The Soviet of Nationalities has 631 seats on the basis of twenty-five deputies from each constituent republic, irrespective of its size, eleven deputies from each autonomous republic, five deputies from each autonomous province and one deputy from each national region. Voting is by universal suffrage for all who have reached 18, "irrespective of sex, nationality, race, faith, social origin, property status or past activities". Candidates must be over 23.

The Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. elects a Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. composed of 37 members and endowed with great power. Theoretically the legislative power belongs to the Supreme Soviet but the Presidium has the right to issue decrees which have the power of law. The members of the Presidium cannot be removed by the Supreme Soviet but they have the right to dissolve the Supreme Soviet in case of an insoluble difference arising between the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities.

The Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. also appoints the highest executive and administrative organ of State Power: the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R. who deal with the international organisation of the country.

The term Supreme Soviet is highly misleading. It has nothing in common with the Soviets which were formed during the Russian revolution and were councils of workers' delegates (or peasants and soldiers) elected by a relatively small number of people and directly responsible to them. The deputies in the Soviet of the Union each represent something like three hundred thousand men and women and remain in office for four years. Not a very direct kind of representation!

What is the difference between the Russian parliamentary system and that of democratic countries? The main difference is that under the Soviet régime there are no opposition parties. The right to nominate candidates is reserved to official bodies that is to say, Communist Party organisations, trade unions, co-operatives, organisations of youth, cultural societies. The candidates who are not Communist Party members are described as non-party but they are in fact supporters of the Party. Stalin stressed the point, in his election broadcast on the 9th February, that non-party people were now united

with the Communists in one common team of Soviet citizens which forged the victory over their country's enemies.

"The only difference between them," said Stalin, "is that some belong to the party while others do not. But this is a formal difference" (italics ours).

Under the Soviet system there is no chance to choose between candidates representing two or more policies as there is only one Party in the State, the Communist Party.

The choice of the candidates is not left to the electors at the time of the election. Several candidates are nominated for each constituency and except in constituencies which have such illustrious candidates as Stalin, Molotov, Kalinin, Voroshilov, Zhukov, etc., a certain amount of discussion takes place before the solitary candidate is decided upon. Once he is chosen voting becomes a pure formality, the only way to express opposition to the candidate is to abstain from voting but as in the plebiscites organised in fascist countries, great care is taken to get a maximum of voters to the polls (one in the polls) in Georgia an old man of 113 went (one in the polls).

In a police state such as Russia it is probable that more than mere persuasion is used to ensure that the great majority of people fill in their ballot papers though, of course, propaganda is used on a big scale. It is aimed at giving the electors the illusion that they have power to pass judgment on the Communist Party. Stalin declared at the beginning of his speech: "The Communist Party of our country would be of little worth were it ready to accept the electors' verdict." Having a Party controlled Press and radio, having at its command the army, the police and millions of bureaucrats it would be very difficult indeed to understand why the Communist Party should be afraid of the electors' verdict.

No wonder Stalin's speech was "confident" (*Daily Worker*). He was spared the exhausting propaganda tours that politicians such as Churchill or Roosevelt had to undertake in order to secure re-election. Not for him the speeches on top of cars or standing in the rain, nor for him the last minute Press campaigns skillfully calculated to destroy weeks of propaganda work. Stalin's re-election was preceded by a unanimous concert of praises. *Pravda*, for example, paid this inspired tribute:

"It is indeed happiness, real happiness, to meet Comrade Stalin. If one translated the endless acclamations into the language of simple words they would read: 'We are proud that the greatest man of our day, the brilliant creator of victory, the saviour of civilisation, the leader of the peoples, belongs to us, to our country, to our people. We know and are deeply convinced that the greatest man of our time could not appear in any other country but ours!'"

And from Radio Khabarovsk (6/1/46): "Yesterday's pre-election meeting in the Stalin precinct of Moscow left one with an unforgettable and inspiring impression. It reflected with great power and sincerity the boundless love the people bear for their great leader, wise teacher and father, Comrade Stalin. 'Dear Comrades,' declared the woman worker A. A. Slobnov, 'it is the great fortune of our people that during the difficult years of the war it was Comrade Stalin, deputy of the entire people, who stood at the head of the state... Glory! Glory to our own J. V. Stalin.' These words are an expression of the innermost thoughts, feelings and hopes of the Soviet people."

When the votes were counted in Stalin's constituency in Moscow, it was found that 100 per cent of the voters had cast their votes for Stalin. Probably nobody dared to give Stalin the advice Kingsley Martin gave to Tito a few days before Yugoslavia's elections: "I hope you will get 75 per cent," said K. Martin, "if you get 90 per cent, it might be a good idea to destroy 25 per cent of your vote."

Stalin is different, of course, but 100 per cent does not sound very convincing, somehow. M. L. B.

Protest against Detention of Adolfo Caltabiano

On Sunday, the 10th February, a large crowd attended the open-air meeting in Hyde Park to protest against the police attacks on people selling literature outside the park gates, and to draw attention to the case of Adolfo Caltabiano, who has been certified as insane and incarcerated in Friarage Mental Hospital as the culmination of a whole series of police persecutions to which he had been subjected at Hyde Park during the preceding months (a full report of his case was given in the last issue of *Freedom*).

The meeting was addressed by representatives of all the organisations who have been concerned in the attacks on civil liberties at Hyde Park, and the audience was large and sympathetic. An interesting feature of the meeting was the large number of police officers present, of whom two industriously took down all the speeches in their notebooks.

By the time this note appears in print it will be two and a half months since Caltabiano was first arrested on the charges which led to his incarceration in Friarage Hospital. So far no efforts have been made by the authori-

ties, in spite of wide public protests, to do anything to rectify the manifest miscarriage of justice in this case. We need hardly point out that this event forms a most sinister precedent, since, if the authorities once get away with the shutting in a lunatic asylum of a man who has shown his steadfast opposition to and contempt for the police, they may decide to repeat it, and any sign of enthusiasm may be used as the excuse for detaining a militant worker on a plea of insanity.

Chuter Ede and his associates have made this monstrous attack on freedom a matter for laughter. The House of Commons amused itself over the deliberately distorted accounts of the incident to which it was treated. These facts only show more clearly the complete perfidy of the present administration and the insubstantiality of the concern for workers' freedom which they pretended to show when they were out of power.

Demand Caltabiano's immediate release and the public exposure of those who were responsible for the conspiracy against freedom involved in his incarceration!

Through the Press

DEMOCRACY AT WORK

The United States Embassy in Paris has given a plain hint to the Premier, M. Gouin, that a loan to France is highly improbable and that, in any case, Congress would hardly agree to financial assistance if the Government proceeds with its large-scale nationalisation programme. *Reynolds News*, 10/2/46.

According to the Atlantic Charter countries are, of course, entitled to choose their own régimes.

BOOKS BY THE YARD

LONDON's antiquarian booksellers, famous all over the world for their rare editions and their priceless illuminated manuscripts, are selling them under the counter and behind locked doors. It is a measure self-imposed by the booksellers as a protection against black market operators who have invaded the market.

Mr. Charles E. Harris, in whose shop in Marylebone High Street you can pay as much as £4,000 for a book, yesterday took me to his office on the first floor, shut the door and indignantly told me the whole story.

"The other day in a well known shop I was horrified to overhear one of these people, a loud voice saying he wanted to buy so many *cards*—*cards*—of books with tooled leather bindings. This man had just bought a new house and he had a lot of empty shelves that needed books. So he was buying books."

Non-Americans will pay no income tax; Congress will decide the position for Americans. Heads of sections will receive £350 a month if the present budget is approved, scaling down to £205 monthly for first-class staff and £130 for lower grade executives. Secretarial workers will receive slightly above normal American rates.

In most of these cases housing and family allowances will be paid in addition. *Evening Standard*, 5/2/46.

INDO-CHINESE GRIEVANCES

Here in brief are the main complaints of the Annames, who constitute about three-fourths of the population of Indo-China. Voting is restricted to French citizens, so a mere fraction of the people can take part in political affairs. Almost half of the entire budget goes to administrative expenses. Education of natives has been held back by the French practice of assigning places in the lycées to so many French students that Indo-Chinese are left a comparatively small number of educational opportunities. An economic step-up prevails that necessitates ever-increasing exports of produce in order to meet the budget, largely because more profits on these exports go not to the people, but to French investors.

There have been a series of questionable loan practices, among them the scheme concocted in 1922 by which natives were induced to invest meagre savings in government bonds, in a gamble that they might win prizes put up on a lottery basis—but which never more than two percent of the investors might win. But more than grievance behind the current agitation; there is a hope that if the struggle for freedom is kept alive, at least marked gains may be expected from the new French Government, with its general pro-labour and leftist complexion. *The New Leader*, U.S.A., 12/1/46.

POST-REVOLUTION MAJORITY

Russia's population is now 193,000,000, of whom 100,000,000 were born since the Revolution, according to official statistics. This includes the population of the new "autonomous" republics of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Karelo-Finnish SSR, and Moldavia. *The New Leader*, 26/2/46.

GOST OF TALK

A revised provisional Budget reducing the N.C.O.'s estimated expenditure for 1946 from \$24,978,000 to \$12,512,750 was submitted by the advisory group of experts at a meeting of the Administrative and Budget Committee last night. Estimated expenses of the secretariat, including salaries, are reduced from \$17,996,000 to \$16,510,000. *Manchester Guardian*, 6/2/46.

THE SUPREME SACRIFICE

Dublin Corporation on Monday decided by a majority to offer the freedom of the city to Mr. George Bernard Shaw. The motion was proposed by the veteran Labour leader Mr. Jim Larkin, son, who stated that in 1939, when Eire was beset by war dangers, Mr. Shaw proved his patriotism by being one of the first to go to the Eire High Commissioner's office in London and register as an Irish citizen. *Manchester Guardian*, 6/2/46.

USEFUL PRESENTS

Mr. Randolph Churchill's new enthusiasm for journalism is leading him into some strange reports. On Monday our Rome Correspondent noted that he had recently contributed two articles in praise of the Italian monarchy to a paper there called *Common Sense*. The subject, of course, is in the family tradition, but the choice of the paper was hardly fortunate. *Common Sense* is a new daily owned by Signor Giannini, the leader of the semi-Fascist "Common Man" movement—but no doubt the Italian market for such articles is a similar one. No, despite all the official soft soaping, it is apparent that the industrially martyred miner will continue to be sacrificed—in the past at the behest of colliery owners—now by State decree.

USELESS TOIL—AMEN!

Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, head man at the atom factory in Los Alamos, New Mexico, was quoted by the *Washington Daily News* last month as saying: "It is very difficult for a man to make his life's work the manufacturing of atom bombs when (a) he thinks they'll never be used, and (b) that they should never be used." *The Constitution Objector*, Jan. 16.

WHAT DID THE BRITISH DELEGATION SEE IN POLAND?

Several weeks ago a delegation of the British Socialist co-operative movement, including persons close to the present Labour Government, left London for Poland. Dispatches from Poznan soon brought the news that the Soviet commander of the airfield in Poznan arrested the prominent British guests and released them only after the British Government and the British Embassy in Warsaw intervened in their behalf.

Although the delegation covered a large part of Poland and although it has returned to Britain some time ago, it has not published a word by way of report on what it saw in Poland. In British parliamentary circles this mysterious silence of the delegation led to a great deal of speculation, so much that one of the Scottish dailies, *The Bulletin*, asked a member of the delegation, Robert Taylor, to write a report in Poland and for an explanation of the strange secrecy with regard to them.

Before his trip to Poland, Taylor had urged the Poles in England to go home as quickly as possible. Now, after his return from that country, he is of another opinion and states much deeper understanding of the situation from the viewpoint of those who at present deem it their duty to remain in exile.

There are many things, he said, which he would like

Anarchist Commentary

The U.N.O. Indonesian Farce

The farcical nature of the UNO conference was shown only too clearly on the Indonesian issue. The matter was brought up by the Ukrainian delegate, a stooge of the Russian government, obviously as a means of obtaining some kind of advantage over the British imperialists. No delegate of the Indonesians was allowed to speak, and the whole affair was treated in the most obvious manner as a diplomatic wrangle, since no-one tried in any way to establish the reality of the imperialist terrorism which had been perpetrated by British forces in Indonesia. In the end, the Ukrainian proposals were supported by Russia and Poland, and opposed by the rest of the Security Council, i.e. Britain, America and their client states. The whole matter was discussed and settled not with any regard to justice for the Indonesians, about whom it was obvious that neither side cared anything, but solely as a matter of diplomatic shuffling between two sets of imperialist powers. Once again we are shown quite clearly that the interests of the workers do not enter in any way into these wranglings of corrupt politicians.

Repression In Singapore

The series of acts of police repression in colonial and semi-colonial countries under British direct or indirect rule continues to grow as, with the end of the war, the peoples of these countries begin to demonstrate their feelings of independence. We have already told the story of these campaigns in Iraq and Egypt, and now comes news from Singapore of similar actions. On the fourth anniversary of the capture of the city by the Japanese the workers decided to demonstrate, and were attacked by the police near the SEAC headquarters. One demonstrator was killed and sixteen injured. In addition, the police have carried out raids on a number of opposition organisations, including the General Labour Union, the New Democratic Youth League, and the Malayan Communist Party. We have no particular sympathy for any of these bodies, but we regard their repression as a violent threat to the freedom of the rising movement of colonial independence which the authorities no doubt recognise equally well as a menace to their own domination.

Secret Trials In English Prisons

We have before drawn attention to the complete secrecy of the hearings, before visiting magistrates, of charges against prisoners accused of offences within gaols. A question in the House of Commons last week once again raised this matter, when a Labour M.P. drew attention to a case in which a number of young prisoners were sentenced to flogging by one of these secret courts at Cardiff prison. The Home Secretary admitted the fact, giving as the excuse, a statement that the prisoners had attacked an officer when he was in no position to defend himself. We would point out that prisoners never find it necessary to do anything against officers who have not already provoked them beyond patience, and would also ask how many prisoners have been beaten up by prison officers when they were in no position to defend themselves, and whether the officers in question were tried before secret prison courts? The whole prison system stinks, and such an institution as the secret trial of prisoners is only worse than the rest, merely because it illustrates more clearly how far a man is removed even from ordinary bourgeois concepts of justice and fair play once he has passed inside. The only solution, as we have repeated again and again, is to abolish and destroy the prisons.

All From The Tanners Of The Poor!

In our last issue we drew attention to the recent profits which had been made by the Woolworth combine. A few days ago it was revealed what the individual beneficiaries of

LABOUR LAW AND ORDER

Continued from page 1
Ernest Bevin stated in the debate last week that he was "as big a constitutionalist as any member on the other side (Tory) and I am fighting to remove the stigma that the Tory Party in 1927 put upon me."
The stigma to which Bevin refers is that he supported a criminal General Strike in 1926, and that he is really no criminal, any more than J. H. Thomas was a criminal at that time. But Bevin did not hesitate in January, 1927, to brand the strikers as criminals. At the T.U.C. special conference he said:
"You have to remember that the whole approach to the national strike is one of illegality."
Bevin was then marching in step with the body of J. H. Thomas as he now walks with Jimmy's soul.
In the middle of the strike Thomas, then General Secretary of the N.U.R., said:
"It was no use quibbling, it was no use pretending that an illegal act had not been done." (Weymouth, July, 1926).
This attempt to place the T.U. leaders in the clear both with the law and with the workers whom they betrayed shows the leadership was badly frightened that the issue would become constitutional.
"Under the circumstances prevailing during the General Strike, there was no half-way house between the ballot box and the machine gun." (C. T. Cramp, N.U.R., 18/8/1926).
The workers' leaders sold out to Baldwin and Churchill (spokesmen for the City) at the expense of the strikers, and we may now assume that Bevin and Co. have put themselves right in the eyes of the Tory Party and have cleared themselves at the Bar. If, in the process, they brand the miners and railwaymen as criminals, then it is only consistent with their whole black record.
Whatever the words (supported by liberal white-washers in the Daily Herald) of the Socialist politicians may be, their actions cannot be denied. In handling industrial strikes the government have been blatantly reactionary. The dockers held an unprintable opinion of the Labour bosses. The government is showing its determination to bring the workers to heel. Since the Socialists have held the high office there has been a regular procession of men, women and boys to labour under harsh labour laws.
Since 1927 industrial relations have undergone considerable change; the T.U.C. has become a crypto-state organisation, taking on a character in industry comparable to that of Scotland Yard in society. Citrus, recognizing that the Trades Dispute Act is completely redundant, tries to get through the Labour Press Service (2/1/46) that he thinks a break on a general strike is necessary.

these profits are likely to get, when Charles Homan Hubbard, one of the group of American capitalists who introduced Woolworths into England, left £1,888,813. We need hardly draw further attention either to the wages of the employees who earned this fortune, or the poverty of the working class budgets which often found it a squeeze to pay the Woolworth tanner—more often since the war the Woolworth half-crown or five bob.

The American Glasshouse Again.

The case of the American detention camp at Lichfield still continues with its scandalous revelations, and the speech of the defending counsel, reported in the *Evening Standard* (14/2/1946) was hardly less damaging than the accusations of the prosecutor.

He said that the camp was "staffed with psycho-neurotics and men with definite limitations of education", under officers who were "not very smart". He went on to state that "Everyone in the camp was a party to the rough programme meted out to the prisoners", and that when inspectors came round everyone conspired to cover up what went on.

"When these inspectors came they were taken to the senior officers' mess and filled with food and booze until the prisoners were out of the guardhouse and the place was working in a highly efficient manner."
No doubt all this is true—the statements of the earlier witnesses have proved it and more—but it seems very much as though the task of the defence is being not so much to say what can be said for the accused as to save the army system from blame. The accused men did frightful things to the soldiers under their control, but the ultimate guilt rests with the military authorities who put such men into the kind of work in which they will have the temptation to act sadiistically. The revelations of the Lichfield Camp, of Stakehill and of all the other glasshouses which have been brought up periodically for notice during the war should be used to condemn the whole system of military discipline of which the concentration camp is the natural culmination. Instead, the method of attacking individual men and exposing individual camps is used as a means of avoiding this general condemnation of the system, by appeasing popular disgust with a few scapegoats.

A New Police Story.

The Mexican authorities have found a new way of persuading all the people to put themselves into the card indexes. As part of the preparation for the presidential elections next July, the 5,000,000 electors are to have their thumb prints taken to prevent them from voting twice. This is indeed a likely story! It will be interesting to see what happens to these thumb prints—whether they are kept after the elections and whether they will be at the disposal of the police. So far, we in England have avoided this indignity, but, as was pointed out in the film review last issue, the F.B.I. have 100,000,000 finger prints in their files, so there is no reason to suppose that the day will not come when Inspector Whitehead and his friends will be going from door to door with the fingerprint pads.

The Struggle In India Is Intensified.

The struggle in India against the British imperialists and their American allies is increasing in intensity, and the latest news reports show widespread action on the part of the people, on a large and organised scale in Calcutta and to a less extent in other Indian towns. In Calcutta there have been widespread transport strikes, among bus, tram and taxi drivers, and the telephone services have been dislocated. The demonstrators have cut tram cables, burnt public buildings, factories and army vehicles, and resisted the attacks of the police and of soldiers with stones and other missiles. A convoy of the American army was attacked passing through the Calcutta streets, and a police convoy of high priority passengers going to Dum Dum airport was also attacked. In New Delhi an effigy of General Auchinleck was burned by demonstrators.

These riots in India began ostensibly over the question of the officers and men of the Japanese-sponsored Indian National Army. These men have been tried as traitors and, while we do not regard the tools of the Japanese with any better favour than the tools of the British, to class them in such a way is ridiculous, since the Indian's loyalty is to his fellow-men and not to the British Raj, and some at least of the members of the Indian National Army may have been sincerely convinced that the Japanese would bring independence to India. However, the question of the Indian National Army was only the spark which set off the great demonstrations of rebelliousness in the last weeks, and has already been submerged in the desire of the Indian masses to struggle against the British oppressors who have become doubly burdensome since the Indians have realised that, in spite of all promises, the Labour Government has made no effective move towards granting independence to their country.

It is reported that the Parliamentary delegation which has just returned from India is very strongly impressed with the strength of the movement towards independence among the Indians, a movement whose tempestuous nature indicates that it is already getting out of the reformist and moderating hands of the Congress leaders. The recent riots in Calcutta and Bombay have all the appearance of spontaneous revolutionary actions among the people, and we shall be unwise to accept the ostensible motives as being the only ones. Otherwise, while we are debating on the merits of the case of the Indian National Army men, we may find ourselves ignoring the possibilities of the most formidable revolutionary movement yet begun among the colonial peoples. The Calcutta riots, with their background of famine and police repression, may yet signal the beginning of the uprising of the subject peoples of the empire.

Meanwhile, let us remember that under a Labour Government a second Amritsar is being perpetrated, and that already some fifty men and women have been murdered by the guns of the Imperial police. A good beginning for all the fine things which the Indian people had innocently expected from a Labour triumph in England!

A Reader Writes on INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

There seems to be an urgent need in present day circumstances for a renewed positive approach to the question of revolutionary syndicalism. It has been said that *Freedom* appears to be mainly critical of all other movements and yet fails to put forward an alternative programme of action. There is an element of truth in this view-point. *Freedom* is a paper of revolutionary portent, and must inevitably and necessarily devote much effort to a critical analysis of the sordid defects of existing society, and in particular, to the hypocritical pretence of the political parties and their associates, the trade union bureaucrats, who deceive so many workers into believing that by tamely paying out subscriptions and political levies, everything will be easy. There are other aspects of the struggle for a people's freedom which must receive attention at the hands of the editors of *Freedom*. They are giving this attention and, in the circumstances, are doing it extremely well.

But, the fact is, *Freedom* must become a paper of the industrial workers, helping and inspiring the workers to build syndicalist organisations here in Britain.

It is possible to develop the idea of syndicalist organisation among British workers who are so steeped in the traditions of reformist trade-unionism? The answer in my opinion is, yes, it is possible to win approval of the basic idea of industrial organisation without bureaucratic domination of highly paid officials. Already, there is good reason to believe that the majority of trade unionists have very little faith in their trade union officials. Past movements promoted by rank and file trade-union members, have shown that the majority of ordinary members desire a more effective use of the organisations.

It has become increasingly necessary now to convince the workers that the leadership principle is a figment of the imagination, that the mis-called leaders invariably require forcing in a forward direction, and are therefore an encumbrance to progress.

The true role of the trade union official to-day, is that of an organisational dictator preventing the workers from making any economic demands, because such demands conflict with the political concepts of hierarchies. During the war, "it may now be told", the bureaucrats of the unions pledged themselves to prevent any strikes. They did this without any reference to the members, and of course, without any equivalent concessions from the government.

The general view among trade unionists at the present time is that they missed a good opportunity to improve their lot, and, incidentally, the lot of those who were taken from industry for the armed forces.

Now we are informed by the B.B.C. that the government and the T.U.C. are to meet in conference to discuss the necessity of maintaining wages stable, and devise way of preventing employers offering higher wages in a depleted labour market. All this, we are told, is to prevent inflation consequent upon high wages. It is becoming plain that, with the proved inability of the Labour Government to implement its programme and promises, the trade union officials will be more and more impelled to play

the role of dictators sabotaging every effort of the workers to maintain their living standards in the aftermath of war.

In the trade union journals, the line of propaganda is the necessity for sacrifice by organised labour, for higher productive levels, and so on. If sacrifice is now necessary, what are we to say of the official propaganda about post-war programmes which in certain cases included a 36-hour working week and substantial increases in wages?

The formulation of post-war programmes was propaganda to keep the workers smiling in the war machine, and it is expected that the workers will forget that line of propaganda and fall for another line of "sacrifice".

There is no way out of the existing chaos and political deception for the workers than a clean revolutionary break with the decadent order of things. It is within the power of a people to escape from wage-slavery and the dictatorship of politicians organised in a state. Syndicalist organisation aiming at the union of all manual and intellectual workers for the reorganisation of social life on the basis of Free Communism is essential.

Workers' control of industry is the aim of syndicalism as opposed to the specious theories of state nationalisation. Workers' control of industry is opposed by the trade union officials on the grounds that the workers are not competent to govern their industries. This was the view of the two sections of the N.U.R. when a resolution for workers' control was discussed at the annual meeting of the union.

An important question that must be faced in a practical approach to syndicalism as an alternative to trade unionism, is that of sickness benefits. It is the sickness benefits that must keep millions of workers paying into the unions. Yet it must be understood that workers have a much better method in mutual aid associations. By combining with their fellow workers in local mutual aid associations to pay sickness benefits when a member is unable to work, it is found that far better benefits can be paid than the trade unions can possibly offer, since their funds are depleted by the payment of extravagant salaries.

Let us see if we can get a flood of letters on this question of syndicalism, so that practical steps can be taken to bring the hope of a better future which must come by victorious industrial struggle.

C. W. ROOKE.

TANNER DEMANDS CLASS COLLABORATION

A prime example of class collaboration and action directly against the interests of the workers was given on the 14th February by representatives of the 35 Unions connected with the Engineering Industry. Led by Tanner, President of the A.E.U., they suggested the setting-up of an advisory board for the industry, consisting of equal numbers of employers and workers and presided over by an independent chairman. The functions of the board, according to the "News Chronicle", would be these:

1. To define the tasks and targets of the various sections of the industry so that the priorities between the home and export markets can be properly worked out and man-power and equipment adjusted accordingly in an orderly manner so that the nation gets the last ounce out of its efforts.
 2. To raise the efficiency of the industry.
 3. To reduce to a minimum the waste and misuse of skilled labour and machine capacity and to prevent the creation of local pools of unemployment and a return to the distressed areas!
- What seems to be worrying the trade union leaders is not the wages or conditions of the workers, but the fact that the industry is not sufficiently well organised to make profits for the employers or to turn out armaments for the government. There is no indication that the board will attempt to further the direct interests of the workers, and for that reason alone they should see that it does not concern them. In any case, the experience of such joint boards in the past has been that they always tend to do what the employers want, and that, by bringing them in direct contact with the owners, they hasten the corruption of a wider section of trade unionists. The workers have no interests in common with their exploiters, and therefore have nothing to gain and everything to lose by collaborating with them.

The latest move in the farm wages deadlock is that the Minister of Agriculture is putting forward tentative proposals of a graded scheme of wages for various types of agricultural workers. The one virtue of farming in the past has been that the workers have been very little divided by extreme differences in wages levels, and this has given them a certain solidarity at present which is making them resist any such proposals. They point out rightly that all farm jobs are equally important in the production of food, and that there should therefore be no discrimination between them. If other workers were to maintain this attitude of stressing the impossibility of assessing the importance of various jobs, and were to go forward united against the policy of paying rates, the working class movement would have gained in effectiveness. Different levels of wages do more to weaken the workers' cause by division than any direct attack by the owning classes could achieve.

FREEDOM DEFENCE COMMITTEE. Collection of signatures for Amnesty Demand ends on 28th February. Outstanding sheets should then be sent to:
17 St. George's Street, London, W.1.
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Philip Sansom Released!

Philip Sansom, who was sent to prison in January as the victim of a cat-and-mouse charge for failure to attend a medical examination, was released from Wormwood Scrubs Prison under a special order from the Home Secretary on the 11th February.

This release appears to be due entirely to the efforts of the Freedom Defence Committee, who gave the case wide publicity and exposed effectively the complete injustice of the prosecution. We regard it as a great moral triumph that the Government should thus have been forced to recognise the inadvisability of its persecutions and should have decided it necessary to withdraw on such a clear case of political discrimination.

But, although Philip Sansom has been released, there are others of our comrades in the working class movement who still remain imprisoned as victims of the vicious discrimination of the ruling class.

JOHN OLDAY

One of these is John Olday, who, having been removed from Stakehill, is now in Sowerby Bridge military detention camp undergoing the remainder of a two years' sentence for desertion, which he received last

year. John Olday, whose story we have told in previous issues of *Freedom* and *War Commentary*, has been a militant worker in the anarchist movement since the days of the workers' risings in Hamburg after the 1914-18 war. While many of the people who directed the second World War were still flirting with Hitler, John Olday was already a confirmed anti-Nazi, and during the early years of the Nazi regime he carried on extensive underground work against the oppressors. All this was known to the authorities and particularly to the Special Branch of Scotland Yard, but once he showed his recognition that the British ruling class were as much the enemies of the workers as the Nazis, they chose to apply their utmost persecution against him. On a charge of being in possession of a wrong identity card—an offence usually given a month's imprisonment—John Olday was sent to Brixton for a year. When his sentence there was completed, he was picked up by military escort and taken to a military prison compound at Prestatyn in North Wales, where he and the other prisoners awaiting court martial were treated with the utmost indignity. Eventually he was sentenced to two years' detention. The first part of this he served in the notorious camp of Stakehill. Throughout his long im-

prisonment, John Olday has preserved a fine spirit of confidence in the working class cause, and has inspired all those who have come into contact with him with a fresh sense of the need for struggle against injustice.

ALBERT MELTZER

Another of our comrades who is a victim of ruling class discrimination is Albert Meltzer, also undergoing a sentence of detention on a technical charge of desertion. Albert Meltzer is another militant who has been in the anarchist movement for the last ten years, and who has shown a great activity in working for the working class cause against the imperialist deceptions of Tory and Labour politicians.

We have obtained the release of Philip Sansom, but our work will be incomplete while these other good and steadfast comrades still remain behind prison bars as victims of the hatred which all governments show towards those who rebel against imperialist oppression and injustice. We demand their immediate release, and ask our readers to use every means at their disposal to bring their cases to the attention of others and to obtain rapid freedom for these and all the other victims of imperialist discrimination.

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