

WAR COMMENTARY

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Post War Britain

WITH the coming of the New Year our journalists and politicians have thought it fit to make good resolutions for...after the war. To make us swallow the hardships of the war more readily they talk to us about how much better everything will be afterwards. Mr. Attlee has not fallen into the mistake of his colleague Mr. Greenwood, who announced some time ago, without much tact, to say the least of it, that we may have 7 millions unemployed after the war and a situation worse than the hungry forties. Mr. Attlee's predictions were much more cheerful. He said at Oxford last week that he thought the post-war period would bring: adequate food for all, no idle rich, abolition of unemployment, greater equality. That's better than the hungry forties, but we wonder if people reading it will feel as reassured as all that. They have heard it all so many times before put in that vague kind of way. Adequate food...who is going to decide what adequate food is? According to Lord Woolton potatoes and carrots are the adequate food. No idle rich... Abolition of unemployment—, this time for the poor we suppose. That is not very re-

assuring either. After all Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin have abolished unemployment. Greater equality...one admires Mr. Attlee's modesty: in 1789 the French Revolutionaries asked for equality; he only asks for less inequality. Considering the present inequalities it is not really very much.

Animated, we believe by a similar good will, **Picture Post** brought out at the beginning of January a number especially dedicated to "**a plan for Britain.**"

To build up a new Britain we are told, imagination is required. But "**Picture Post**" contributors singularly lack it. All the slogans used by the political parties in their

electoral propaganda seem to have been put together. Work for all, minimum wages, allowances for children, all-in contributory schemes for social insurance, special forms of help from public assistance, etc. The New Britain sounds very much like the old. Workers are sick of hearing about allowances, insurances, public assistance—it reminds them of endless negotiations, of promises never fulfilled. They know that they only give them an illusion of security, while providing the

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ruling class with a means of keeping them quiet.

But who is going to guarantee work for all and minimum wages? Who is going to control the banks and private investments? The State. According to the planners of **Picture Post** capitalism does not need to be abolished but only controlled. But as the ruling class controls the State how is the State going to control effectively the capitalist ruling class?

The State was able to control the capitalist class in Germany because state-control was in the hands of the Nazi party which put the imperialist interest of the national economy as a whole before those of the private capitalists. Instead of being ruled by the capitalist class the German people are ruled by the Nazi party and its bureaucracy.

Let us suppose that the Labour Party, suddenly becoming dynamic, abandoned the role of faithful watch dog of capitalist interests and went against them; what would then happen? They would control the State and in order to control it have at their disposal a new privileged class probably composed of bureaucrats and technicians. How does the Soviet State maintain itself if not by its bureaucracy, police and red army?

Any regime where the working class population does not directly control the life of the country by its syndicates and communes, abolishing thus every kind of exploitation, is bound to create a privileged class embodied in the state. Nothing is more untrue than the notion of the State being the representative of the people. The State has always and will always exist to maintain the privilege of a small minority class to exploit the majority. This class in return supports the State.

When in order to appease the suspicions of the workers socialists talk of the measures the State will take against the capitalists they should remember Russia where capitalism has been abolished but exploitation remains. When to seduce them they talk of plans, beautiful houses, new roads, they should again remember Russia where modern working class houses are reserved for the members of the Party; they should remember Germany and Italy where holiday camps and modern schools are employed to teach the worship of the Duce and Fuehrer. When they are asked to give up class struggle and instead collaborate with the bosses they

should only think of the situation in which they find themselves now. Their socialist and Trade-Union leaders want them to believe that they can preserve their political rights and liberty even by renouncing methods of struggle in the industrial field. But how are workers going to make the State respect their rights? By petitions? or demonstrations? By elections every six or twelve years? No, their only weapon is in the factory—their labour power.

Let us prepare for the future society where there will be no State, whether it is called fascist or socialist, to impose its plan, but where the workers and peasants in their syndicates and communes will themselves build up their own world.

Freedom Bookshop

MAY we remind readers of "War Commentary" that **FREEDOM BOOKSHOP** (11a Red Lion Passage, Red Lion Square, W. C. 1.) is open daily from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. including Saturdays, and that we have a large selection of Anarchist and other literature on sale.

We should also be glad to draw attention to the fact that we cannot repeat the offers made in previous issues of "War Commentary" for new books at Bargain prices... Those readers who ordered copies have been supplied but now that our stocks of these books are exhausted we are unable to replace them as most of these titles were destroyed during the City fire recently. This fact has also prevented us from issuing our list of books and pamphlets, but this we hope to do at a later date.

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The Suppression of the "Daily Worker."

Although anticipated three days before by the "Sunday Express," the suppression of the "Daily Worker" was an exceedingly sudden manoeuvre on the part of the Home Secretary. In the House of Commons Herbert Morrison declared that proceedings were necessary in view of the "settled and continuous policy" of the "Daily Worker" and not because of any change in that policy. But if this were the case, it seems hardly necessary to have employed so drastic a measure as Defence Regulation 2D. The "Times" (22.1.41) supplies what is almost certainly the true explanation: "It is understood that the decision to proceed against the "Daily Worker" under Defence Regulation 2D was taken in order to secure speedy action. Had a prosecution been launched against the editor and the publisher, it would have been necessary to give an official warning to the newspaper, and then to wait for some weeks to observe whether 'systematic publication' was continued. If a conviction had followed, there might also have been an appeal to a higher court, and possibly to the House of Lords on a point of law, so that a delay of at least a month or two might have resulted." Moreover, in spite of a display of democratic cant, Herbert Morrison had no answer when Sir Richard Acland pointed out that Regulation 2D was only accepted by many members at the debate on the Emergency Powers Act on July 31st 1940 when the House was assured that this extreme regulation would only be used in the event of enemy action suddenly dislocating the ordinary procedure. But then, this promise was given more than six months ago.

Since it is not the "Daily Worker" that has changed its tone, the explanation for the sudden urgent necessity to suppress it must be sought in the changing needs of government policy. First it is to be noted that whereas the labour press was exceedingly bitter in its denunciation of the Communist Party, the conservative and liberal papers were quite sober about it—the "Daily Express" even voicing misgivings. The apparent seriousness attached by the Left to the claim that the Communist Party propaganda is "calculated to impede the

successful prosecution of the war," is all the more strange in the light of a recent enquiry held by the "Daily Express" into the effect of this propaganda. In Glasgow, all responsible officials, with the solitary exception of Lord Provost Dollan, were against interfering with the Communist Party.

It seems likely, therefore, that the Home Secretary was using his powers in a factional quarrel within the "Left." Further support for this view comes from two more considerations. First, it can hardly be a coincidence that at the same time as action was being taken against the "Daily Worker," the National Executive of the Labour Party were considering what disciplinary measures should be taken against those of their party colleagues who had taken part in the People's Convention. The second "coincidence" is to be found in Ernest Bevin's extensive plans for Industrial Conscription and control of Labour.

For a long time now—ever since the Popular Front days—it has been the endeavour of the Communists to build up a mass party; in effect, to supplant the Labour Party as the "leaders" of the organized labour movement in this country. Hence their concentration on "scandals" such as the lack of adequate protection against air raids, and their use of tactics like the popular front and the People's Convention. Meanwhile the Labour leaders have gullibly accepted from the Tories those ministerial posts which, under war conditions, are responsible for checking working class demands. Anderson contented himself with suppressing the insignificant British Union of Fascists, but it is left to Morrison to initiate the first serious move against the freedom of the Press and against opposition parties. The Labour Party are, in fact, doing the dirty work for the Conservatives, who can reap the benefits now, and evade the responsibility later if it suits them. The "Left" in the service of the Right.

Faced with the necessity to impose severe limitations on individual freedom and collective action in the form of industrial conscription (a measure, incidentally, which the Communists would unhesitatingly enforce if they were in power, just as they would abolish freedom of speech and press) the Labour Party would clearly have met considerable hostile criticism from the "Daily Worker." The Communist Party would

have gained considerable ground as the "defenders of the people's rights" and "leaders of organized labour" etc., etc. The suppression of Communist criticism, therefore, was an essential move for the Labour Leaders. It is they who compete with the Communists; hence their bitter attacks. The Right were relatively unconcerned about it all. They were, in a sense, outside the struggle, and were doubtless only too delighted to see the workers being again confused by another fight between their supposed leaders.

Political repression has thus gone hand in hand with the industrial repression euphemistically termed "organising the nation's man power." Is the repression likely to stop there? Faced with the choice of tolerating a political competitor, or abolishing a long established liberty, the British "Socialists" did not hesitate. The assault on political and individual freedom in France was also conducted by the "Socialist" Daladier, and also included the suppression of the French Communist Party. In the circumstances it was possible for Daladier to claim in justification that Russia was the ally of the enemy, and therefore the Kremlin's party in France could not be allowed to operate freely. Here of course it is difficult to say that, since it is hoped that Russia may yet be detached from Germany; but the same talk about impairing the national effort can be used, as in France, to suppress all but official propaganda. Ironically enough the "Daily Herald" took the view, at the time, that France fell because of the suppression of political liberty there. They do not seem to have taken this very much to heart!

But mere suppression of the "Daily Worker" will clearly not be sufficient to crush a rival. It seems, therefore, highly unlikely that this will remain an isolated incursion on political freedom. Industrial freedom is, already on paper, and largely in fact, a thing of the past. The lesson of France has indicated that such State interference in industry with its consequent abolition of hard-won political rights, does not, however, enhance a war effort, but instead demoralizes the workers. The sequel was inevitable. Persistence in such methods (and America is treading the same road) is only another indication of the essential class nature of the war, and the hollowness of its ideological pretensions.

JAPANESE MEA CULPA

PRINCE Konoye, Japanese Premier, startled the Budget session of the Japanese House to-day by asserting that the "China incident" was now in the fifth year without a sign of solution, and adding:

"This is neither the responsibility of the fighting services nor of any other persons. It is entirely my responsibility. Billions of yen have been spent and 100,000 officers and men been sacrificed, for which I must apologise to his Majesty and the people at large."

Prince Konnoye's assumption of responsibility apparently was intended to mollify the fighting services and quieten the people.—Associated Press.

(Evening Standard 28/1/41)

NO POWERS OVER RACING

MR. Herbert Morrison who was able to suppress the "Daily Worker" at a few hours notice has not as much power as one might imagine, at least in so far as hares are concerned. Being asked by Mr. Leach in the House the other day if he would consider preventing the promoters of the Waterloo Cup hare-coursing meetings holding their usual function, as it was not in the national interests to allow such gatherings, involving as they did great cruelty, wastage of national effort in trapping hares for sport and maintaining dogs on milk and other much-wanted human food.

Mr. Morrison replied that he regretted he had no power to intervene in the matter on the grounds suggested.

The political "leaders" of the working-class have played right into the hands of reaction, just as their opposite numbers in France did (not to mention the labour leaders in Italy, Germany, and Spain) All attacks on their liberty must be resolutely resisted by the working class. From the fate of the French workers, and from the subsequent trend of events in this country, they must learn to recognise where faith in political leaders and the rule of governments will lead them. It is to be hoped that they will profit from these lessons before it is too late.

J. H.

Trade Unionism or Syndicalism

by Tom Brown

THERE is not a socialist in the world today who can indicate with any degree of clearness how we can bring about the co-operative commonwealth except along the lines suggested by industrial organisation of the workers.

"Political institutions are not adapted to the administration of industry.—Only industrial organizations are adapted to the administration of a co-operative commonwealth that we are working for. Only the industrial form of organisation offers us even a theoretical constructive socialist programme. There is no constructive socialism except on the industrial field."

(James Connolly quoting from

"The Wage Slave").

The greatest weakness of the trade union is its lack of an ultimate aim, a supreme reason for existence. At its best its struggles for a higher wage or a shorter working day. (At its worst it gives up that struggle). But a struggling man usually has some aim. He intends to end his struggle victoriously by finally overcoming his enemy, not to keep the action going for ever and ever. So the ultimate aim of syndicalism is not a wage increase, but the abolition of the wage system. Every action by the syndicalist workers is a means to that end. Every strike is a training period, a skirmish before the social general strike. (Of course, some trade unions have a vague paragraph about socialism in the preambles of their rule books, but it does not affect their conduct, which cannot be other than conservative).

So the aim of the revolutionary Syndicalists in the stay-in strikes in France, Italy and elsewhere has always been to persuade the workers to keep on holding the factories and other plants, never to return them for promises.

The spontaneity of the movement can ensure its success. Railmen run trucks to the factory sidings. Bakers bake the strikers' bread. Telephonists transmit their messages. All syndicates are linked in mutual support.

THE FASCIST DANGER

The timid say, "If the workers control industry the employing-class will hire bands of Fascists to shoot the workers and regain the factories. Better to trust the ballot-box." How is it the ruling class has the power to bribe? They obtain their wealth from industry, and if they no longer control industry their source of profit dries, their accumulated paper money is worthless and their bank balances are unrealised. Their control of the press and other technical means of propaganda lost, they can no longer manufacture "public opinion."

"The Fascists will shoot and bayonet the workers," but who makes the rifles, bullets and bayonets — who handles them first?

Surely, the workers. Who must transport the Fascists and their supplies? Who feed them, supply their water, gas, power, every need of life? Always, the workers. In this modern, complicated society no power can exist without the co-operation of the workers. The power is in their hands.

It is often said that the Italian workers were turned out of the factories in the 1920 strike by the Italian Fascists. This is pure invention. During that strike the Fascists, the police and the authorities were helpless. The workers voluntarily vacated the factories in return for temporary gains. Mussolini, to win popularity, applauded their action. The Fascist seizure of power did not take place until 1922.

It is impossible to close this chapter without asking the Social-Democrats: if the workers are defenceless when they control factories, railways, ships, power stations and all the life-blood of society, how can they conquer when their only weapon is a slip of ballot-paper marked with a politician's name?

THE FRAMEWORK OF A NEW SOCIETY

Workers' control of industry by the Syndicalist method would be exercised industry by industry. Thus the engineering industry would be run by engineers, techni-

cians, mechanics, machinists and all others; the building trade by builders, the printing trade by printers and so on. Each factory, mill, mine or job would have its regular assembly of workers and its department and factory committees elected by the workers in that plant. All factories in one industry would be federated into a district industrial federation with a district council, such as the Midland Engineers Federation, or the Yorkshire Textile Federation.

All districts of each industry would be federated into a national federation until there were organisations of all the twenty-five or so industries. Delegates of the national industrial federations would form a National Council of Labour co-ordinating the whole economy of the country.

While all industry would be linked, each plant would have autonomy over its particular affairs, the general business of the industry being dealt with by the district or national committees. Control would be exercised from the bottom upwards. To prevent the divorce of committee-men from the masses it would be necessary to change the committee personnel at fairly frequent intervals. None would be the worse for a refresher course at the bench or machine. Also, the members of committees would be delegates, not representatives, as are Members of Parliament. They would be expected to interpret the views of their fellows, rather than expound their own pet fancies. Of course, they would be subject to recall. Those who elect should be able to cancel their choice. It is a right every employer claims.

WORKERS' CONTROL v STATE CONTROL

It is often asked, "but if you have an economic control instead of a political, who will run the hospitals?" Who but the health workers, doctors nurses and others are capable of running them? The politicians and lawyers? In the same way the schools would be managed by the teachers, who have studied education, not by successful grocers, publicans and estate agents. The State performs no useful function that could not be carried out by the syndicates.

Syndicalism has nothing in common with Nationalisation—that is State Capitalism. Under capitalism the workers do not own or control the means of production, so they are

forced to work for wages. Under state capitalism or nationalisation they do not control but work for wages and are exploited for profit. How does the Post Office obtain its huge profits but from the exploitation of its employees, in many cases very poorly paid?

Nationalisation brings no new liberty to the worker; instead he finds his life controlled by the bureaucracy. He cannot leave one employer to seek a higher bidder for his labour power. There is only one employer, the merciless state. There is no effective protest against the muddle, inefficiency or cruelty of a state bureaucracy. Every official denies his responsibility: it is some other official. The protester is handed from one official to another and back again until he drops from sheer exhaustion.

Parliament and Government are unsuited to the running of industry. A member of Parliament claims to represent all his constituents, who may be builders, weavers, engineers, miners or 'bus drivers, all of whom have different work problems. He just cannot do it. An engineer should be delegate of the engineers, a textile worker of the weavers. The managing of industry is a technical job, requiring special knowledge, but no provision for each industry is made in Parliament. It is possible, by a freak of chance, for Parliament to be composed entirely of retired generals or lawyers. The State was born to make and enforce laws protecting private property. Socialism is not a political system but an economic method and an economic system requires economic organisation.

A LESSON FROM SPAIN

Once it was possible for the dyspeptic cynic to say, "All that is a beautiful dream, but it isn't possible." We have now the example of the Spanish workers' collectivisation during the civil war of 1936-39. It proved the possibility and the regenerative power of workers' control of industry.

Upon the outbreak of the civil war many of the industries and most of the land were taken by the syndicates of workers and peasants and run with the greatest success. In Catalonia the railways were administered

ERIC GILL—ANARCHIST

A FEW days before he died, in a letter he wrote to me about my pamphlet *The Philosophy of Anarchism*, Eric Gill said: "I find it difficult to discover anything I don't agree with, and in spite of the appearance to the contrary I am really in complete agreement with you about the necessity of anarchism, the ultimate truth of it, and its immediate practicability as syndicalism."

Any hesitation I might have had in publishing what was a privately expressed opinion is dispelled by the publication of Gill's *Autobiography* (Cape. 12s. 6d.) In this sincere and noble book Gill makes quite clear that he was fundamentally an anarchist—that he was one of the many people who are anarchists in thought if not yet in name. That was already obvious in an essay on "Ownership and Industrialism" which appeared in his book *Sacred and Secular*, published a year ago (Dent. 7s. 6d)—an essay I would always recommend to people who want a first introduction to the principles of anarchism. In this latest and last book, Gill shows not only how he came to be an anarchist, but also how, with an integrity which I for one could only envy, he managed to live like one. As an exceptionally talented craftsman he was, perhaps, in an exceptionally favourable position: he had escaped from the capitalist treadmill, and could live more or less where he liked and how he liked. But that for him did not mean "escapism": he did not retreat to the Côte d'Azur or California, but made his "cell of good living" right here, "in the chaos of our world". For those who had the privilege of knowing him, his example was an inspiration, his home a blazing light in the darkness. "What I hope above all things is that I have done something towards re-integrating bed and board, the small farm and the workshop, the home and the school, earth and heaven." So he writes towards the end of his autobiography. His whole life was directed to such a "re-integration," and it is his life, and the philosophy upon which it is based, that will endure even longer than his art.

"My socialism was from the beginning a revolt against the intellectual degradation of the factory hands and the damned ugliness of all that capitalist-industrialism produced, and it was not primarily a revolt against the

cruelty and injustice of the possessing classes or against the misery of the poor. It was not so much the working class that concerned me as the working man—not so much what he got from working as what he did by working." This shows the early direction of Gill's political ideas: he was what I have

By Herbert Read

been accustomed to call an individualist, but in the letter already referred to, he wrote: "I think it would be good if you distinguished between the *individual*, as being the unit of a group whether of animate or inanimate nature, and the *person*. It is a primary doctrine of Christianity that men are unique persons. It is as persons that they are unique, whereas as individuals they may not be." It is a distinction which I accept—it is, indeed, a distinction fundamental to anarchism, and the basic reason for our rejection of all forms of collectivism and state capitalism. When Gill first entered the socialist movement, through the Fabian Society, he found that no one respected this distinction—the socialist movement "was not moved or led, still less could it be said to be inspired, by any ideas of man or man's life or of man's work other than those of the capitalist world against whose injustices and cruelties it was in revolt. . . . Socialism as a political movement is hardly more than an attempt to re-order the distribution of factory products and factory profits." The rest of Gill's political evolution should be followed in detail in his book, but in the end "it began to be clear that the hateful world of the man of business and its hateful cruelties would never be abolished by those who profited by them and that 'the mother of parliaments' was not an institution for righting wrongs (after all, it never had been) but one for the promotion and preservation of whatever seemed most profitable to owners of capital. And foreign politics was nothing but an extension of home politics on the same general principle." As these things became clear to Gill, "the hope of reform by parliamentary means began to recede proportionately."

Gill then concluded that "no merely political or economic rearrangement of the world was going to be effective to remove such horrors"—the horrors of capitalist society. The remedy he felt, must lie in the sphere of religion and morals. He became a Christian, a Christian who was always a thorn in the side of the Church. The root of the social evil was a moral evil—the desire of money—and to Gill it was elementary that all Christians should condemn this evil, or give up pretending to be followers of Christ. It seemed to him "incomparably more horrible that men of business should rule us and impose their foul point of view on the world than it would be if the whole race of men and women should rot their bodies with lechery and drunkenness.....What is truly monstrous and disruptive and corrupting to our life and virtue is that such persons should be our rulers—that they should have usurped the seats of kings, that their hideous teaching should have replaced the Gospel." His final position is summed up in this paragraph :

But one thing was clear: I must keep clear of **politics**—politics as the word is understood in our time and in what are called democratic countries. And I must keep clear of politicians—the gang of professional parliamentarians and town and county councillors. For in the first place politics is beyond me. Politics is like foreign languages—something outside my scope, something I can't do. Moreover I do not believe political arrangements and rearrangements are real. It is all a confused business of ramps and rackets—pretended quarrels and dishonest commercial schemings, having no relation to the real interests of peoples, neither to their spiritual nor their material welfare, and conducted upon no principles other than momentary self-interest. The prestige of parliament is an empty fraud and all its grandiose and clumsy procedure is more outworn and even less venerable than the ritual in Anglican Cathedrals. And politics is now a profession! Professionalism is a curse in any trade—the defence of anything, without due consideration of its goodness, on account of pecuniary interest or inertia. Public schools, the army, the law, architecture and, most frightful, the Church, all suffer from the curse of professionalism, though all these are served by trained and honestly devoted men. But politicians can make no such claim to our respect. It is not too much to say that they are trained to nothing but vote-catching, and that they are not and never have been anything but agents for the defence of monetary interests. Such was the origin of parliamentary representation, and such is its very soul. This is not the place for even the briefest outline of parliamentary history; it is only necessary to note that all its evils have been grossly augmented since the final and decisive victory of finance which the nineteenth century witnessed. There is now no hope of a reform of our society by parliamentary means.

In this sense of the word, all anarchists are resolved to keep clear of politics. But politics in another sense—the politics of preaching and propaganda, of thought and work—the politics which consists of trying "to make a cell of good living in the chaos of our world"—to such politics we must devote ourselves, and such is the politics which Gill practised with greater effect than he ever realised. He belonged to that rare company of **integral** socialists, whose lives are a consequence of their socialism, their socialism a consequence of their lives. He was the most honest man I have ever known, or am likely to know.

If you want to know more about Anarcho-Syndicalism you should read

Rudolf Rocker's **Anarcho - Syndicalism**

which is a simple, concise introduction to the subject.

In the chapter on Anarchism—Its Aims and Purposes, Rocker writes "Anarchists demand the abolition of all economic monopolies and the common ownership of the soil and other means of production, the use of which must be available to all without distinction; for personal and social freedom is conceivable only on the basis of equal economic advantages for everybody."

In subsequent chapters he deals with the development of the working class movements from the early 19th century up to the Social Revolution in Spain 1936, and a brief review of the activity of the Anarcho-Syndicalist movements throughout the world.

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“The Ignorance of the Many.”

IF it remains as true today as when first uttered, and there will be few who give thought to these matters to question it, that people always get the Government they deserve, then so much of the criticism and denunciation poured out upon the ruling bodies is so much waste of breath and serves no other purpose than to let off steam, leaving these Executive bodies representing exploiting interests that move more in the background safely in their seats, that is, on our backs. And how many of us have not found this exercise greatly to our liking? But Governments, well aware that the watchful and critical are so few, are little concerned about this blowing off steam, in fact they encourage it as a harmless vent, and carry on without any real challenge. Indeed, the liberty of Governments to do as they please so far as the large body of the people is concerned is assumed and rarely do they look upon themselves as servants of the community, but its masters, and giving out their orders for all to obey.

It was frequently said by our own tribe of politicians and pressmen that the outstanding qualities of the German people, even long before the dictatorship, were those of sheep and rabbits, always so ready and eager to obey orders from above. We expanded our chests. We were so different. We ordered ourselves about like free men. We go to it with a song! A truly pathetic exhibition, the more so as we almost persuade ourselves it is true. Let it be said at once that it is less the wickedness of Governments in turning the world upside down and more our own stupidity, indifference and neglect of affairs. And the effect of this today, is the spectacle of millions of people in different parts of the world dancing to the death tune called by their Governments, the merest handful in each country, and uniting in their common ruin.

OUR GREATEST ENEMY

“The ignorance of the many is the stock-in-trade of the few” and the greatest enemy we in Britain have to face is not the German war machine but our own official propaganda operating upon uninformed minds. And if our propaganda is so abundantly seasoned with the kind of humbug and hypocrisy that has made us a by-word amongst the Nations, it is perhaps not that we are inherently worse than others but because we are such practised hands, past-masters in justifying our outrages all over the World.

If it were at all possible to interest the plain man and woman in affairs, a first exercise in understanding would be to realise that in the present morally undeveloped condition of mankind that of all the moves on the international chess-board neither pacts, treaties, agreements, understandings, or what not, carry the smallest weight in the deciding of any particular question or dispute unless it happens to coincide with “vital interests”. It is these so-called vital interests (money interests) alone that count and these have no moral aim or purpose whatsoever. And as the vital interests of these different Governments (not peoples) are frequently in opposition to one another, the grounds of quarrel and the causes of war are here prepared. Each Government will at any time determine what are its vital interests with-

out regard whatever to any document it may have put its signature to, unless the particular piece of paper happens to support its present policy. It can always re-interpret any document. Eden, sometime before the war commenced boldly stated this, and it will be remembered that over the Altmark case and Norwegian rights in territorial waters, Chamberlain declared that international law would be as we interpreted it.

TERRITORIAL GAINS

Not very long ago, Herbert Samuel very lucidly explained for everybody's benefit the almost miraculous unfolding of things. He said: “We were by far the largest beneficiaries by the treaty of Versailles...We never expected it; it was not part of our war aim...No one enlisted to fight the Germans so as to annex or control German colonies. Yet somehow it happened and we must take these things into account”. This is almost a special revelation. Territories and gains fall into our lap due to some quite inexplicable and unknown process but as these things “just happen” it is our duty to shoulder the burden of taking charge of them. These philosophical profundities and historical curiosities do not earn us the contempt of continental peoples, but only envy that we should be such practised wizards and adepts in interpreting cosmic change, and themselves the merest bunglers and tyros.

Our declarations and solemn promises on that great occasion are too well-known to be repeated here. Suffice it to say we went to war with a Bible in one hand and the Sword in the other. We crusaded with a text on our lips and secret treaties in our pocket. We denounced the aggression of others and exalted our own. We scaled the heights of criminal cant.

The pages of history will hardly record a greater fraud perpetrated upon a credulous and believing people. Never was a more bare-faced and atrocious betrayal. After the briefest period of unreal prosperity, the broken threads of 1914 were picked up and ancient wrongs reasserted themselves with all their old vigor. The deadly parallel of excessive riches existing side by side with appalling poverty, was visible even to the blind. The dispossessed workers of Britain fought under the banner of freedom and the creation of a new world. Some idea of the rare and refreshing fruit that fell into their lap will be gleaned from the following, taken from a review of “Metropolitan Man”, a book published in 1937:

“One in every three Londoners dies in a workhouse or a rate aided hospital. The proportion of tuberculous milk is still as great as a quarter of a century ago. Five out of six London children are not adequately nourished; one in seven is verminous. Consumption deaths among young London women have increased by a quarter in 20 years. Some Londoners are certified every year as dying of starvation. The rapidly increasing rate of suicide—in every group of 13 dwellings in inner London there is someone who will kill himself.”

This is in the heart of the Empire; other parts reveal similar conditions.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

India was cheated with the rest. The League of Nations was just a platform for the two principal

victorious powers; others listened, bowed and acquiesced—or cleared out. The Peace treaty by its very terms destroyed at the outset what it was supposed to install. It was a "peace to end peace" and throughout a restless and troubled period of 20 years, the mine was being laid that was to explode in 1939.

We shout from the house-tops that Hitler is not to be trusted. But who can trust perfidious Albion, the conquerors not only of Germany, but of its own people?

Churchill, with prophetic vision, talks of the Victory Campaigns of 1943 and 1944. The Labour Leaders, raised to the rank of Olympians, graciously commend the spirit of the bombed areas and call for more sacrifices. We've had more than enough of this murderous folly. But merely to growl and grumble in private while giving the appearance of standing solidly behind our imperialists in the market place and workshop, is just sheer lunacy. Power is in our hands. When we have the consciousness of it firmly planted in our heads and decide to use it, then, and not before, will the nightmare of both War and capitalist peace come to an end and possible new worlds appear having some semblance of reality.

V. WILSON.

Now Ready!

Trade Unionism or Syndicalism ?

by Tom Brown

The course of the war has shown how the State has infringed former working class rights, and has brought the whole structure and methods of Trade Unionism under criticism from increasing circles of workers.

Tom Brown outlines the difference between Trade Unionism and Syndicalism. He shows how the militant workers can, even at this late stage, retrieve themselves from the morass into which they have been led. This pamphlet deserves a wide circulation and we urge all revolutionary workers to give it a wide circulation in streets, shops, factories and workshops.

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TRADE UNIONISM OR SYNDICALISM?

(continued from p. 6.)

by joint committees of the anarcho-syndicalist C. N. T. and the socialist trade union U. G. T. while in Barcelona the 'buses, trams and underground were taken over by the C. N. T. In Barcelona control was also exercised by syndicates of Health, Water, Gas, Amusements and many others. In other parts of Spain outstanding examples of socialisation were the textile industry of Alcoy, and the woodworking industry in Cuenca and other towns.

The most outstanding successes were in agriculture, where the big estates were taken by the landless peasants, and where most of the small peasants formed voluntary collectives. This resulted not only in betterment of the landworkers' economic position, but also in greater agricultural efficiency. Better seed and stock were selected, more machinery, such as tractors, were used, and general production increased. Schools were formed (each of the 500 collectives had its own school) and homes for the aged were founded. Doctors were sent to every village and clinics were organised by the Health Workers' Syndicate. Mutual aid took the place of "charity" and beggary.

THE REVOLUTION OF CONSTRUCTION

The opponents of Anarchism often tell us we cannot have Anarchism overnight. We know that well. Everything must be built up, but the time to start building is now. As previous societies decayed there developed within them the embryo of new forms of societies, so within capitalism we build the framework of socialism: the syndicates.

From every struggle and from our daily work we must learn how to run industries and services. We must develop the class-consciousness, the knowledge and self-confidence of the workers, until the embryonic society bursts the shell of capitalism. As the I. W. W. preamble put it: "By organising industrially we are forming the new society within the shell of the old."

Capitalism threatens to destroy society with itself, and the only force that can save humanity is the revolutionary workers. The Anarchists call the workers to the syndicalist revolution: **Revolution of Construction.**

AMERICAN IMPERIALISM versus GERMAN IMPERIALISM

WOODROW WILSON, in his message to Congress in 1917, said, "The world must be made safe for Democracy. America is privileged to shed her blood for the principles that gave her birth."

WALTER H. PAGE, U. S. Ambassador to Great Britain, in a cable to Wilson on March 5th, 1917, one month before America entered the war, said, "The pressure of the approaching crisis has gone beyond the ability of the Morgan Financial Agency. The only way of maintaining our pre-eminent trade position is by declaring war on Germany."

Now that President Roosevelt enters his third term and that the fever of the elections is over the United States can dedicate themselves wholeheartedly to their vast rearmament programme.

Those measures are apparently intended to prevent war just as war preparations were supposed to stop war in France and in England.

But when a country arms itself to the teeth, conscripts its men, organises its production according to war needs it is folly to hope that war will not follow.

The U. S. A. seems to come every day nearer the moment when they will be involved in conflict with German and Japanese imperialisms. If the struggle has not started yet it is because conflicting interests cause American indecision.

The situation is similar to that of Britain before the war. It was obvious that in the long run German imperialism would clash with the British. But the policy of democratic imperialism is always a short term policy.

A long term policy would mean sacrificing in part the immediate interests of the capitalists for the interests of capitalism as a whole. This was not done. That is why iron ore and machines were sent to Germany, loans were made which allowed them to rearm etc.

In the same way the interests of the capitalists in the U. S. pursuing a short term policy do not come into conflict with the interests of German imperialism.

England used to menace them to a much greater extent. That explains the indecision of American policy during the last few years and even now. In spite of the fact that Japan, for example, is considered as a potential enemy they have received from her ample supplies of oil and scrap iron. In spite of the sympathy for England a blockade of material going to Germany has not been made effective, as is

shown by the enormous increase of exports to neutral countries such as Russia for example.

Other examples could be given of American support for the German air industry (see "Left" for October 1940).

However the recent German victories oblige America to take a less immediately profitable, but, in the long run, wiser policy. They seem to realize now that an arrangement between German and American imperialisms is impossible. Germany will never conform to the rules of the imperialist game as England, for example, did. Its economic structure is too different from the American for a compromise to be made. Germany disregards the most fundamental rule—that of the respect due to gold. They discovered (they were forced to) that a nation, in order to gain the respect of the world, had less need of immense reserves of gold than of a powerful army and a centralized economy; that an efficient ministry of propaganda could obtain better results than a bank director with loans.

Such a conception cannot be too popular in a country which possesses about 80 per cent of the world's gold stock. The last world war had already increased considerably American gold reserves. From a debtor country it became the largest creditor in the whole world. Since the beginning of this war European gold has gone to increase these gold reserves still further. During the first seven months it increased by 11 per cent. On July 25th, it amounted to 20,400,000,000 dollars worth of monetary gold (Times) and this does not include the foreign gold put in safety in the U. S. A. What is to be done with that immense quantity of gold hoarded in the mountains of Kentucky? How can it be put into circulation again? Various

remedies have been proposed such as that of M. Van Zeeland, for the redistribution of gold. But this redistribution can only be made by credit and it would impose an unbearable burden on the countries which would have to accept it, i.e. those which have suffered most in the war. The economic situation of the European countries after the war will be such that they will have little enough products to exchange against American gold.

The Treasury secretary Mr. Morgenthau declared last year that the immense reserves of gold possessed by the U. S. will allow them to undertake the role which they ought to play in the reconstruction of the world, which must follow the mad destruction of the war. "Reconstruction" meaning investment of capital, it is obvious that the only solution for America would be to lend her gold and to make the whole world her debtors. But "reconstruction" could be markedly hampered by German competition. If Hitler dominates Europe gold will find no employment there, nor in the countries under German influence outside Europe where the method of barter employed in Central Europe would probably be adopted. If Japan follows in Germany's steps America will find it difficult to employ her gold and the world will run the risk of being overflowed with American gold watches in the same way as it has been with German aspirins!

The present rearmament programme will, however, thanks to the great expenses involved, partly solve the American problem by starting a redistribution of the gold reserves. At the same time it will provide America with the necessary military strength to allow her to help in the "reconstruction" of post-war world.

Diplomacy and propaganda are the other means used to increase her zone of influence. The first to fall under her protection are of course the countries of South America and Mexico. "Under the cover of the "good neighbour" policy and the "defence" of Latin-America against fascism, Uncle Sam is cracking the whip over Mexico, and the new Camacho régime there shows every sign of capitulation," says the American paper "The Call" (2nd Nov. 1940) and adds: "The whip being used over the backs of the Mexican people is the \$500,000,000 loan which is being dispensed in Latin-America through the U. S. Export-Import bank. Without settlement of the oil controversy on terms "satis-

factory" to American oil firms—which means reimbursements of those interests which have drained Mexico's resources for years—the State Department has made it clear that U. S. loans would not be forthcoming.

It is obvious however that the State Department interest with Mexico at the moment does not stop with its concern for the profits of American oil firms. The United States is exacting a political as well as a monetary price for its paternalism. The basic aim of the State Department is to force Avila Camacho (who is far more of an opportunist politician than Cardenas ever was) far to the right of the radical reform program instituted by Cardenas. Its real aim is to undermine the Mexican Revolution, making Mexico safe for American exploitation and a strong link in the American imperialist system. The finishing touches are expected to be put on this job when Camacho visits the United States shortly after the U. S. elections."

Another means of obtaining the surrender of Camacho was the boycott of Mexican oil. The U. S. government refused to buy the petrol of the American companies selling Mexican oil in spite of the fact that they were selling it at a cheaper price than the Standard Oil opponents of the Mexican government. Left without a market for its petrol the Mexican government had to make peace with the Standard Oil according to the terms dictated by it.

Intrigue was also used. After the elections the U. S. A. harboured Almazan the fascist candidate who pretended that the elections had been faked to its disadvantage. In the U. S. he proclaimed his right to the presidency and provoked sedition in Mexico. The American press exaggerated these reports so as to make out that Camacho régime was in danger. But when Camacho in fright gave in, all agitation ceased, Almazan renounced his aspirations and returned to Mexico the same day as Henry A. Wallace the American envoy arrived.

Employing methods similar to those that Germany used in order to arm itself against British Imperialism, America prepares itself to crush its rivals. The clash between the old form of imperialism represented by the United States and the new represented by Germany and Japan seems inevitable. Only the abandonment of both forms of imperialism can prevent it. Will the working class be able to impose it? M.L.B.

Books

"FOREVER FREEDOM" (Anthology in verse and prose compiled by Josiah C. Wedgwood, M.P. and Allan Nevins. Pelican Books, 6d.).

IT is impossible to be seriously annoyed with sentimental Josh. Wedgwood. He is a real 19th century liberal now amongst the social-democrats. The social-democratic belief in fighting the class struggle in every country bar their own is very similar to the attitude of the "Grand Old Man" of liberalism—Gladstone—whose heart bled for the Armenians and Bulgarians (as Turkish Imperialism was considered by him a menace) while supporting negro slavery in America. All the nineteenth century liberals felt sorry for the victims of oppression—abroad, or under an unfriendly government. Times haven't changed the reformists much. In this book Josh. Wedgwood brings us a compilation of sayings of champions of freedom (and others!) throughout the ages. We see sayings by Washington and Jefferson—in fifty years' time we may expect to see similar sayings by Gandhi and Nehru, who at the moment are conveniently ignored as a bit of a nuisance.

Still, not even the political bias of the compilers in favour of capitalist-democracy can dampen the quotations by pioneers of freedom, however severely annotated, e.g. Penguins are risking a prosecution by the modern "champions of freedom" in England under Section 2D of the E.P.A for publishing such quotations as Henry David Thoreau's "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience" (not for export to India?), Walter Savage Landor's "Tyrannicide," Wordsworth Dennis-thorpe's "If Brave Men had not resisted Authority," and Ralph Waldo Emerson's saying that "Good men must not obey the laws too well."

Then, the modern plea, "We yield our liberties to Churchill because we know he will return them" is rather answered by a quotation in this book, "The people never give up their liberties but under some delusion" (Edmund Burke), or Lord Chesterfield's "Let us consider that arbitrary power has seldom or never been introduced into any country at once. It must be introduced by slow degrees, and as it were step by step, lest the people should see its approach." It

began in 1939 with a call to "national service"...

It is a pity that amongst many fine songs of the English revolution Shelley's "To the Men of England" should have been omitted, but there is a good substitute in "The Song of the Wage Slave" by Ernest Charles Jones (1848) :

"The land it is the landlord's,
The trader's is the sea,
The ore the usurer's coffer fills—
But what remains for me?
The engine whirls for master's craft,
The steel shines to defend,
With labour's arms, what labour raised,
For labour's foe to spend..."

Also by the same Chartist poet ("The Song of the Lower Classes") :

"We're low, we're low—mere rabble, we know—
We're only the rank and file;
We're not too low to kill the foe,
But too low to share the spoil."

This is a good answer to the concluding quotation in the book—a call to arms by Winston Churchill!

No-one should miss reading this book. It contains many fine quotations from the early libertarians, many of them pioneers of anarchism. It is spoilt by the inclusion of reactionaries—Gladstone, Jefferson Davis, Asquith, Churchill etc.—natural enough in a book designed primarily as chauvinist propaganda (from the introduction). But of course this does not change the context of the genuine champions of freedom—exhortations to freedom, revolution, civil disobedience etc. Some of the quotations evidently came from a former anthology, "For Liberty," which is still available; but as a whole this collection is valuable.

A.M.

BLACK RECORD

IN this war against what are we fighting? Is the enemy the German race or is it Fascism? The question became urgent since Sir Robert Vansittart published as a pamphlet (Black Record, Hamish Hamilton 6d.) his broadcast talks addressed to Americans. A more whole-hearted hymn of hate has seldom been written in better English. Unfortunately it is more than an autobiographical confession. The author was the permanent head of the Foreign Office, and he is still "Chief Diplomatic Adviser to the British Government." His opinions have been placed before American citizens with the hall-mark of the B.B.C., and in due course they will reach the enemy, whose propagandists could desire no material better suited to their purpose. In the meanwhile, with all the rest of the world, we are left to conjecture with what aims in view our Government is fighting this war. On that mystery Sir Robert sheds no light. But he does try to deflect into the channel of racial hatred the emotions that

From Chile

should inspire us in this struggle. He has, moreover, his diagnosis of what has been wrong with Europe for a couple of generations—not the anarchy of rival national States, not the chaos of our planless economic life, not the power-lust of Fascism, but merely the congenital barbarism of the German race. From a settlement based in this mood on that diagnosis may our good genius guard us.

Sir Robert tells us, rather naively, that his repugnance towards everything German dates from his own experiences as a schoolboy in Prussia at the end of the last century. It was the period of the Jameson Raid and the Boer War, and Germans often voiced their disapproval with gross discourtesy. This led him to a highly selective study of German history over a period of two thousand years. He quotes Tacitus, forgetting that the Germans he described (on the whole with admiration) were as much our ancestors as Hitler's. He dwells on twelfth-century iniquities as still significant. Certainly the Teutonic knights suppressed a Slav language when they could, and ill-used the Jews. Our forefathers rooted out the Irish language and swept such Jews as survived out of this island. He dwells on von Trotha's brutal slaughter of the Herreros: has he ever read the record of the total extermination of the Tasmanian natives? He reminds us of Tilly's massacre at Magdeburg. Has he ever studied Cromwell's contemporary record in Ireland? Bismarck's three wars are a proper subject for reproach, if anything is to be gained by a retrospective wrangle. But even here he is grossly inaccurate. Bismarck did not "forge" the Ems despatch: what he did was to publish a summary of it, which made an unconciliatory document seem appreciably more offensive than in fact it was. Nor did Bismarck ever say that "all problems" must be solved by "blood and iron." That was his prescription for Germany's unification. By this emotional and unscientific treatment of history Sir Robert leads us to the conclusion that the Nazis are the authentic heirs of the German tradition "Nazism is not an aberration but an outcome." He will have it that Germans always were and still are savages, "butcher-birds" as he calls them, led by "envy, self-pity and cruelty," whose trade always was and always will be war—unless they should undergo, as a race, some magical process of "conversion". Nor will he allow any qualification: for him Bach and Beethoven, Kant and Goethe lived in vain. "To mankind as a whole Germans have brought nothing but misery in all its worst forms."

The extravagance of this tirade should be its own antidote. History is a deep quarry from which any amateur can draw his indictment of any great nation at will. German historians, better equipped than Sir Robert Vansittart, have done it many times at our expense. Without going back two thousand years, there are wars enough in our records. **Lebensraum** is a German word, but can the owners of a quarter of the earth treat the passion for expansion as an exclusively German vice? It was once fashionable to indict the French love of war and glory in much the same style. Germany had, after all, been over-run first by Louis XIV's generals and then by Napoleon, before in her turn she over-ran France. If Bismarck waged three wars, did not Louis Napoleon wage four? But such recrimination is as childish as it is mischievous.

The New Statesman and Nation 25/1/40

The C. G. T. (anarcho-syndicalist General Confederation of Workers) of Chile has asked the Continental American section of the I. W. M. A. to call a conference of its affiliated bodies in Spanish-speaking America to consider the situation created by the war. One far-reaching proposal has been made that, to counteract the growing forces of reaction, the movements in Chile, Uruguay, Argentina etc. should form one syndical movement cutting across the national frontiers. In calling for the conference, Gregorio Ortuzar, international secretary of the C. G. T. explains the position in South America and the attitude of the anarchists. We translate below the article as printed in "La Protesta" (Buenos Aires).

The economic conflict taking place in these countries between English and Yankee Imperialism on one hand, and the tyrants Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini on the other, has caused grave internal problems, which the American proletariat must face together.

The hundreds of millions of pounds sterling, and thousands of millions of dollars, invested by English and Yankee Imperialism, have given them power in banking, industrial and official circles. The governments of each one of the republics is in consequence subservient to these imperialisms, and must sacrifice the workers to them. There have been many massacres of workers perpetrated in these countries in obedience to the dictates of the Caesars of the dollar and the pound who are exploiting the natural riches of the continent, and the influence of Yankee Imperialism has brought us to the brink of war.

Yankee-English Imperialism has four rivals in Central and South America—Japan, Italy, Russia and Germany, who, if they have not equal economic interests, have identical plans of political penetration. From this point of view, the most dangerous are Germany and Russia.

The former has control of colonies of subjects, established in Chile and Brazil over a number of years, and who are active and numerous in Argentina, San Domingo and other Latin-American countries. Hitler wants to use them in order to displace Anglo-Yankee rule, and to realise his own plans of imperialist domination.

Russia has not, like Germany, colonies of subjects under its control, but it possesses certain political parties, calling themselves communists, which act in blind obedience to Stalin's order.

But Anglo-Yankee Imperialism as much as the fascist type, has powerful interests among the bourgeoisie and officials of the republic. These will choose between one or the other imperialism without any considerations other than those dictated by class ambition. The opinions and interests of the workers will not be taken into account.

The existence of the two currents existing in each country to serve one of the two imperialisms, in order to lead the workers to destruction, must be challenged by the anarcho-syndicalists and anarchists heading the workers in a movement against imperialist war. On the banners of the proletariat we must inscribe: "We will seize their arms by the butts and crush all imperialisms." Workers of America! Strengthen the revolutionary libertarian action of the Continental American Working Men's Associations!

Empire Expansion in Wartime

In September 1939, it seemed as though the British Empire had entered the war merely to defend its territorial possessions against the "land-hungry" fascist powers. The distinction between "have" or "satiated" world powers (Great Britain, France, and America) and "have-nots" (Germany, Italy, and Japan), together with the appeasement policy of making concessions in order to avoid involvement in war, had strengthened this impression. It seemed as if the war was a question of maintaining what was already held, rather than opportunity for further expansion.

This view, however, began to appear rather inadequate when the disasters suffered by allies and neutrals threw under the "protection" of the British Empire the overseas possessions of Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and France. One began to suspect that we should have to shoulder further additions to "our colonial burden."

Not much has appeared in the press so far about Iceland, but the "Times" has recently reported economic agreements with the Dutch East Indies, the French Cameroons, and the Belgian Congo, which suggest that, so far from being "satiated" the zest for British colonial expansion has by no means abated.

In a two-column article on 16th. January, the "Times" describes how, in the Dutch East Indies, "God Save the King" now accompanies the Dutch National Anthem, how portraits of the King and Queen hang side by side with Queen Wilhelmina's and how Winston Churchill is spoken of as "our leader." There followed a glowing account of the state of military preparedness in the Indies against possible aggression from Japan. More significant than these, however, appears the economic co-operation with Great Britain whereby the Ministry of Food is supplied with tea and sugar in exchange for Lancashire goods. For a monetary agreement covering British purchases in the Indies provides that the "goods need not be paid for until 2½ years after the end of the war, the money meanwhile being invested in Treasury Bonds, although wherever possible the Indies are drawing upon their sterling balances for purchases from within the British Empire." Meanwhile, "local industries are turning out shells and bombs, small arm ammunition and mines, which were formerly purchased overseas."

The "Times," unfortunately, does not state where the capital necessary for such industrial development is coming from. Economic co-operation in West Africa is even more close. According to the "Times" of 22nd. January, a Purchase agreement and a financial agreement were signed by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs on January 21st. Britain agreed to purchase from the Belgian Congo copper (126,000 metric tons), palm kernels and palm oil. These latter are "important for the maintenance of the prosperity of the Congo producers." A guarantee has been given that Customs duty shall not operate to place Congo commodities on a less favourable basis than British colonial produce. The Belgian Government has undertaken to "introduce trading with the enemy legislation and an export licensing system in the Congo, co-ordinated with the system

prevailing in British African territory." The Financial Agreement stabilized the Congolese franc at 176.625 to the £, and provides that after the Congo's own essential requirements have been met, and "such advances to the Belgian Government as may prove necessary" have been made, "the whole of the Congo gold production and foreign exchange is to be ceded to the Bank of England against payment in sterling." Finally a detachment of Belgian Congo troops is being drafted to the Sudan.

A similar economic agreement was reported between the British Government and General de Gaulle's Council of Defence, with regard to the French Cameroons, where the franc has also been stabilized at 176.625 to the £. The British "undertake to purchase the total output of cocoa, palm kernels, palm oil, groundnuts and benised from the French Cameroons, as well as nearly the whole production of coffee, and a large proportion of the production of bananas." (It will be remembered that the whole of last year's cocoa crop in British West Africa, and similarly the West Indian banana crop was bought by the British Government and destroyed). A separate agreement regarding timber is pending and a similar agreement relating to French Equatorial Africa is "almost ready for signature." The "Times" remarks that "the agreement will thus ensure a livelihood of all sections of the Territory's population." Such concern for the welfare of the population of a colony outside the British Empire is very remarkable! Indeed it might be said that the one-time Belgian and French West African colonies are now being treated just as if they WERE within the British Empire!

Sound Advice.

IT has been observed recently by cynics that disgruntled politicians who criticise a Government vigorously when out of office suddenly become gentle, docile and approving when they join it.

Socialists become conservative, conscientious objectors no longer conscientiously object; it may be, even, that a few Tories advocate renunciation of property for the common good. In small matters, the same Anti-inoculationists demand compulsory inoculation for all.

Rude people say this shows just how honest politicians are.

It doesn't prove so much. It merely illustrates the team spirit. It shows how difficult it is to get things done unless you depart from principles in doing them. A sort of mist, the fog of the Whitehall Departments, descends upon principles and blurs them. The subversive become safe.

Tip for avoiding revolutions—give all the revolutionaries jobs in the Government.

(Daily Mirror 23/1/40)

The Labour Leaders Fight for Freedom

THE last stages of industrial and civil Con-
scription are being completed by Bevin and
Morrison. Conscription for fire service, conscription
for women, forcible transfer of workers to
other industries and districts — all the offences
charged against the Nazis are being operated by the
Labour Leaders.

Examination of the schemes reveals the usual
snags. Workers are forbidden to leave their
employment, while employers lose the right of dis-
missal except for misconduct. Who decides what is
misconduct? ...The employer! Of course there is a
"right of appeal" to some sort of court. Woe to the
unhappy worker who becomes entangled in its
legalist web... Disappointment shall be his bitter lot.

The right to quit the job was taken from the arma-
ment workers last summer; it is now to be extended
to most industries. The sole purpose of it is to keep
down wages. No worker leaves his job to go big
game hunting or on a world cruise. He goes to
another job; he is not lost to industry, so there is no
need to compel him to work. The purpose of the
measure, in Mr. Bevin's statement, is to prevent
poaching of labour by rival employers offering higher
wages. Similarly there is no need to force men to
other localities. Free labour follows the work. In
London industry often less than half of the workers
are London born, the dialects of Wales, Tyneside,
Scotland and Ireland are heard above the Southern
tones. No Act of Parliament compelled the migra-
tion, they followed the wages, but very low wages
would not have brought them without compulsion.

Since the extension of industrial conscription last
summer real wages of armament workers in most

factories have fallen so that in many aircraft and
other plants workers are forced to work a seven
day week to gain a bare living wage, no work on
Sunday often meaning a shortage of necessities the
next week. One aircraft firm in North West London
uses this as a means of punishment. If a worker
oversleeps or loses half a day to do his shopping
he is not allowed to work at the weekend; a strong
punishment to ill paid men with rents of 20/- to
30/- per week. Add to this the factory worker's
sense of imprisonment and the further irritation of
some jack-in-office who takes advantage of Mr.
Bevin's laws to blow himself up like the frog in
the fable and strut about like a gauleiter.

It is not surprising to find the engineering factories
simmering with revolt, such revolts as broke out at
the London factory of the Handley Page aircraft
firm on January 14th and 15th. At 3 p.m. on the
14th two sections of the works staged a "sit down"
strike, by 3.30 p.m. the whole works had spontane-
ously supported the strike. The workers returned
on the morning of the 15th to resume the strike
taking possession of the canteen. At the meeting
held in the canteen the impossibility of winning a
struggle by leaving the factory and scattering to
their homes was recognised by the strikers. They
decided to resume work on the setting up of a Works
Conference (to discuss the complaints), to resume the
struggle in piecemeal fashion and to organise for
further action.

Mr. Bevin opening the debate on man power in the
House of Commons (21st Jan. 1941) said he expected
a great response to "wise leadership," an over-
whelming response which would surprise the
Dictators. It will surprise them—and everyone else.

From a Comrade

Dear Comrades:

About two months had passed since I wrote you
last. I hope that the terrible events that have
transpired have left you unharmed. It seems
almost disgraceful that we should be so comparatively
secure here while life is so uncertain there.

Examination of your press fund report does not
show the response you have a right to expect. I
cannot see how people expect a project to be carried
on if they fail to contribute a part, however small.
If a man is employed he must have some money he
can spare. Let him give up a few packs of cigarets
or other luxury if necessary. Or if he lacks work
then he must have time which he can contribute in
peddling the paper. There are any number of
solutions to the problem of helping if only there is a
will. I am afraid that people everywhere will have
to suffer a good deal more before we see a revival
of the spirit of say the Russian Revolution.

I am, therefore, sending you another five dollars
in the hope that you can continue your work of
putting out "War Commentary." If you cannot con-
tinue then there must be other phases of your work
that can use a little change.

Herbert Read's "The Philosophy of Anarchism"
which you so kindly sent me certainly left me non-
plussed for a while. At first I was inclined to think
that the writer was "tetched in the haid" as the
vernacular goes, when he suggests that we make a
religious approach to Anarchism. Yet, as the days
went on the idea kept revolving in my mind and
became more and more plausible. After all, the

emotions of sublimity, exaltation, enthusiasm, fervor,
devotion sacrifice, love of beauty are all tied up with
the religious impulse. And all of these are needed to
build a new order, There is also the fact that we
cannot appeal to most people on a purely intellectual
plane. To do so is to exclude the motive power from
an otherwise sound conception. Elementary psych-
ology indicates that while the mind is the rudder
the emotions constitute the engine. And how we
need that engine!

In this booklet Read shows a rare combination of
practicality and esthetic sensitiveness that I find
particularly gratifying. I trust that wide circulation
will be given the "Philosophy" throughout the
English speaking world it would help to dispel
many ridiculous notions that exist even in radical
circles.

Sincerely yours,
S. L. Solosy (New York)

Press Fund.

JANUARY, 1941

We have received this month the following sums
for which we thank our readers:

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