

# WAR COMMENTARY

## For Anarchism

Vol. 3, No. 14

MID-JUNE, 1942

Twopence

## **Militant Action by Miners**

**I**N the past fortnight more than 20,000 miners came out on strike in protest against the foul conditions and fantastically low wages justified by capitalists and trade union leaders alike, under the cloak of national emergency. This wave of strikes, embracing collieries in South Wales, Lancashire, Yorkshire and Staffordshire, is of tremendous significance at the present time. It shows two things most clearly. Firstly, that militant working-class action is not to be stifled by the entry of so-called workers' leaders into coalition with the capitalist class. Secondly, that the workers know where their interests lie, despite the efforts of the labour leaders to cloud the issue, and are prepared to over-ride their decisions, ignore their advice and risk considerable terms of imprisonment in defence of their rights.

### **Conditions in pits.**

It is particularly important to realise the prevailing conditions in the pits, for if such conditions exist and mine owners refuse to concede to the workers' demands when the whole question of coal is of vital importance to the capitalist war machine, it can easily be imagined how grim will be the miners position in the post-war years if capitalism is allowed to exist . . . At a colliery in the Rhondda valley, for example, where nearly a thousand pit boys took part in a mass protest rally against wages and conditions, it was revealed, among other things, that the average wage of a youth of 17 years, working all day underground, was less than £2 per week and that the work performed by the pit boys for this wage was in numerous cases the work of an adult, and included timber carrying, dumping and other particularly strenuous labour. And this is not in any way exceptional for the maxi-

mum wage of youths of 20 and 21 in the whole of Rhondda is no more than £2 5s. per week. Adult wages are equally fantastic all over the country; many miners are receiving no more than £3 per week and hundreds of thousands are paid under £4. And all this at a time when the miners are working at increased pressure and creating gigantic profits for the mine owners!

### **Mortality among miners.**

In addition the rate of mortality is particularly high. The latest figures show that between 1936 and 1941, over 51,000 men were killed in the pits, that is to say an average of about 10,000 a year. Injuries of a serious nature averaged close on 200,000 a year over the past four years. Many men are continually leaving the pits suffering from disease, and silicosis, a disease which predisposes a man to tuberculosis, is by no means uncommon in mining districts.

### **Government invites one in four youths to die in pits.**

The death rate among young miners is enormous. According to the figures published by the Miners Federation the death ratio among youths is one in four. Thousands of deaths in mining districts can be attributed to disease or injury from pit work in youth. It is particularly interesting to note in this connection, that as reported in "War Commentary" last fortnight, at an inquest of a 15 year-old boy who was killed in a Blackwood pit when the roof collapsed, the coroner remarked, "*It seems an awful pity that a child of 15, who should be at school—for that is all he really is—should be working underground.*" Yet it is a well-known fact that hundreds of boys just left school, are working underground; and that this is encouraged by the

Government itself is shown by the fact that the official bulletin on "Coal," issued by H.M. Stationery Office states: "More lasting remedies must be found for closing the gaps between normal entry into, and exit from, the industry by increasing the entry of boys and youths, and by checking the outflow of older men." The worthy coroner, it would seem, must put aside his humanitarian feelings in the realisation that the system which he upholds is perfectly prepared to employ boys "who should be at school" in the most arduous labour, if it is necessary in its struggle to defend its imperial interests!

**Labour and Communist Party Leaders advocate maintenance of conditions.**

But all the onus for this state of affairs must not fall on the heads of the mine owners and the capitalist interests in the Government. Bevin, Morrison, and the rest of the Labour leaders, both in and outside the Government must bear their share of the responsibility. The Labour Party offers no concrete solution to the present conditions, and every time a strike breaks out, the Government rushes Labour Party speakers down to the colliery in question to try and convince the miners that this is not the time for working-class action.

As might be expected, the role of the Communist Party is equally vicious. Everywhere Communist Party leaders are imploring the striking miners to return to work and to put up with the intolerable conditions. At a recent Young Communist League rally in London, a young miner made a pathetic speech regarding the activities of the C.P. in this direction.

Why should not the young miners protest against the wages and conditions which are being forced upon them, when one out of five of their number are dying as a direct result of such conditions? But the C.P. goes even further. Arthur Horner, prominent Statistician, writing in "Labour Monthly" (June, 1942), says: "It is certain before the war is ended, many sacrifices will be called for from the miners. I am sure that when the situation demands sacrifices . . . the miners will be ready to carry their fair share of the burden, ensuring that others do similarly." The striking miners think that they are already carrying far too heavy a burden; the Communist Party, however, would have them stumble on.

**Miners shout down C.P. spokesman.**

But that the miners have rather different ideas than Mr. Horner and his ilk, is shown by the hostility which the C.P. collaborators are receiving in the pits. Everywhere the party is treated with the contempt it deserves. At a mass protest meeting of pit-boys at Trealaw in the Rhondda, Jack Davies, so-called miners' representative did his best to convince the boys that their action was treacherous to working-class interests. He received a stormy reception, and was forced, amid boos and cat-calls to give up the struggle.

The miners can expect no assistance from the political Labour movement, the slave of the Capitalist war-lords. They must continue to rely on their strength, their own ideas, their own understanding of the class struggle if they wish to conquer. We send them greetings of solidarity.

**WE NEED FUNDS**

The response to our appeal has not been very good last month in spite of the fact that we had explained how much Freedom Press was in need of funds. The need is greater than ever. We are obliged to reprint almost all our pamphlets, as they are out of print, due to rapid sales. But it takes time before the money for literature sales comes in, and we must pay our printer and paper suppliers NOW.

We ask our readers to be prompt in renewing their subscriptions, and to settle their accounts for literature as soon as possible. That will help. But if they can send a contribution to the Press Fund it will help further. DO IT NOW!

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# Why Cripps?

**C**HURCHILL did not bring the people victories they hoped for. On the contrary, defeats are followed by more defeats. So when Cripps came back from Moscow people eagerly turned to him as the man who might change the face of the war. His popularity was short, and few are the people who now consider him a new Messiah.

Cripps' popularity was not due to a large mass following; he had been away from British politics for quite a long while and he had no party to support him. His popularity was due to the entry of Russia into the war and to the fact that in spite of all expectations Russia was still fighting Germany. Our alliance with Russia could not be attributed to Sir Stafford Cripps' diplomatic work, but rather to circumstances which forced the two countries to fight Germany. However, in the public mind Cripps was somehow the artisan of this alliance, and it was a clever move on the part of the Government to prevent him from retaining his independence, but instead tied him hand and foot to Churchill's Cabinet so that he would have to share both defeats and unpopularity.

It is obvious now that Cripps will not play any major role, but there are still a few people who believe that he will influence the Government in a Socialist way. The *Tribune*, for example, exhorts Cripps to *stand fast* to what they believe is his attitude regarding nationalisation of coal. "There are reports (characteristically everything is vague and mysterious when Cripps is concerned) to the effect that Sir Stafford Cripps and one or two others in the War Cabinet are prepared to make a stand on the principle of taking the industry out of the hands of the owners for the duration of the war and vesting it in the State as a national service."

Rumours are thus created round Cripps in order to revive his popularity or in order to give people new false hopes. What we know of Cripps, however, shows that he is not prepared to take a stand against the Government. Speaking at a Fabian Luncheon on the 29th of May, and as the Press had not been admitted, the enigmatic man let filter some of his thoughts. According to the *Evening Standard* diarist (who got the information from a person present), "Sir Stafford justified the electoral truce and declared that he could not conceive of any circumstances during the war in which anything resembling a general election could be held. "He was much concerned about 'maintaining' the fabric of

national unity,' and several times reiterated that the present Government was a Government of compromise. That being so, no fundamental changes of a revolutionary character could be expected, nor was it desirable that they should be pressed. Sir Stafford carried this theme into his prophecies for the future. When the war is ended the Lord Privy Seal hoped that the present developments in politics would result in a National Progressive Government. This Government should not insist on any 'ism.'" According to the report, the secretary of the Fabian Society, who was the chairman, looked worried, as he wants more Socialism now and more independence of the Labour movement from the Government. Stafford Cripps, who was going to revolutionise British politics and scare the Tories, who was going to tell the Government what the people wanted, "worries" the secretary of the Fabian Society as being too reactionary!

This should be a lesson to the people who are always so anxious to put their faith in one politician or another, to build up new gods in which hands they put their destinies so that they can avoid taking responsibilities upon themselves. People should have learned by now that personalities do not count, that all politicians from the Left or the Right are equally bad because they have to represent a system, a privileged class, and that to have a will of their own would mean to have to get out of the Government. Journalists, politicians, trade union officials encourage people in their worship of political gods, as they know that while workers rely on others they will not take matters into their own hands, and that is what they fear most. If Cripps stands against the mineowners or not, in the Government, this should not be the concern of the miners. They know the rights they have to defend, they must be prepared to defend them against all politicians, only hoping for the solidarity of other sections of the working class. The emancipation of the workers must be the task of the workers themselves.

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## Lanarkshire Miners

Rally to

**Wilson Park, Burnbank Cross,  
Sunday, 21st June, 6-30 p.m.**

Subject:

**Is Nationalisation the Remedy?**

Speakers:

**Eddie Shaw — Frank Leech,  
of the Anarchist Federation.**

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# Workers in Overalls and Workers in Uniform

To be effective, collective action by the workers must be supported by the solidarity of other sections of the working class. It is no good going on strike if the boss can immediately get a whole lot of other workers to scab on the strikers. In war-time there is no huge pool of semi-starved unemployed whom the employers can entice into playing the part of strike breakers, and the shortage of labour at the same time enhances the value of the workers' labour power. The employing class therefore resorts to anti-labour legislation making strikes illegal, and calls upon the treacherous union leaders to assist them by refusing to pay out strike benefit if the workers do decide to strike. The union leaders obediently declare all strikes during war-time as "unofficial."

In spite of all this loading of the dice against them the workers know perfectly well that the strike weapon is more effective than ever at times like the present when labour is scarce. And the Government's policy of keeping wages down while the cost of living continues to rise provides more and more grounds for militant strike action on the part of the workers. Employers and their Labour allies used to play on the anti-fascist enthusiasm of the workers by representing strikes as constituting "sabotage of the war effort"; but the employers manifestly greater concern for profits rather than for the defeat of Fascism, and their too obvious eagerness to use the "war effort" as an excuse for keeping wages down has exposed the repulsive hypocrisy of such claims. The fact that the hysterical cries of "playing Hitler's game" are now raised as well by the Communist Party against any workers who refuse to pave the way for local Fascism by giving up the class struggle for the duration, has only contributed to discredit the C.P. still further (if that is possible) in the eyes of the militant workers. With this increasing disillusion with "labour leaders," and the increasing disparity between wages and the cost of living, workers all over the country are attempting to enforce their demands more and more by strike action. Every day the Press carries news of another resort to the strike as a means of settling a dispute.

When the persuasive speeches of the Labour traitors fail to fool the men into giving up their position of advantage by returning to work, the Government threatens to send soldiers along to act as strike breakers, and this has usually proved successful. But soldiers are no less workers when they put on uniform, the sense of working-class solidarity is, from the Government's point of view, the Achilles' heel of a conscript army. If the soldiers refuse to regard strike breaking as part of their function, workers' solidarity has won a notable victory over state supported class tyranny.

News is filtering through that in the militant areas of Tyneside the soldiers are showing signs of refusal to act as scabs. The Newcastle Dockers are employed now by the Ministry of Labour, and so are State employees. Formerly they were guaranteed a minimum of 23s. per 8-hour shift. But the recent change to piece work resulted in a reduction of 5s.

to 6s. a shift, so the men went on strike against this cut in their wages. Fines of £5 each, plus 2s. costs were imposed on 158 men, but nothing definite has yet transpired about the payment of this monstrous imposition. Some of the men have stated that they would go to gaol rather than pay.

But the really significant thing about this strike is that when the Government brought in soldiers to scab, several of them, according to reports, refused to undertake the dirty work. No definite figures as to the number of these who refused are available, but it is said to have been as high as eighteen. Of course, such a refusal would mean a court martial and stoppage of all allowances, so that the soldier's family would be made to suffer as well for this defiance of discipline in the cause of working-class solidarity. In the circumstances, such action becomes heroic.

Such solidarity is a fundamental necessity to the workers' struggle against Fascism and class tyranny. The working class must set as its goal the abolition of the wage system and the taking over of the land and the factories and all the places of work, so that they may operate them for the benefit of all. The expropriation of the capitalist class, and the destruction of the State with all its means of oppression, from the money system to the violent organs of oppression represented by the police and the army, are essential pre-requisites for the achievement of the social revolution which shall free the forces of production to serve the interests of society as a whole. But to bring about the revolution, the workers must act together as a whole in solidarity. They will then find that the power of the ruling classes everywhere can quickly be brought to nought.

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BILL GAPE

# The Charity Racket

Bill Gape, the author of this article, is the organizer of the Tramps' Union, which for years has carried on the fight against the charity racket.

**A**FTER a trial lasting eleven days, the Rev. Harry Clapham, Vicar of St. Thomas's, Lambeth, was at the Old Bailey, sentenced to three years' penal servitude and ordered to pay £1,000 towards the costs of his prosecution. The charges in the main related to the mis-use of funds of his parish, and he was found guilty on all of the 21 points brought against him.

As the evidence was unfolded, this plausible and golden-tongued religious swindler showed up to be almost as deep-rooted in the "Charity Racket" as are many of his co-religionists who have the advantage of more "respectable" Churches and a more publicised "reputation" for the relief of the poor.

Notwithstanding the fact that this exploiter of the homeless poor was defended by that able K.C. and supporter of the Communist and Labour Alliance, D. N. Pritt, one more rat has been temporarily removed from the cess-pool of charity in London.

The sending of Clapham to prison will by no means stop or hinder the activities of the Charity Racketeers in London. So long as we have the London Labour Party in control of the London County Council and the Council persists in its policy of co-operating with "voluntary societies" in the relief of the poor, so long will the charity sharks be able to say, "We are working in close harmony with the L.C.C." and by that means will convince any mugs who think that the poverty problem can be solved by the distribution of cups of tea and slices of bread and dripping, that all is well and everything is above board.

It was admitted in evidence that Clapham did at times "relieve some poverty and distress" among the poor in Lambeth. This must be a surprise to many Labourites for this poverty must have existed almost on the front steps of the Headquarters of the London Labour Party and have we not heard so many times from that party that "Since Labour captured the Council there has been no need for any genuine person to be in need." It would appear now that Labour must reconsider its position or come to Lambeth and tell the people there that the recipients of Clapham's

relief were not genuine.

On the question of charity and the collection for charity, it might be well to remind the public that in 1938, a Bill was proposed in Parliament for the regulation of Charity Collections. A Joint Committee was set up to inquire into the matter and after hearing evidence from all over the country, the Committee agreed "That there is sufficient evidence of fraudulent house-to-house collection to justify the Bill."

The following is an interesting extract from the Minutes of Evidence of the Joint Committee (page 42). Lord Marley is questioning Mr. Astbury.

Lord Marley:

(420). I made a rough calculation that out of every £1 one subscribes—taking the whole of these things—the charity gets 3½d. Is that an exaggeration? I have not worked out the percentage of £1,100 to £12,556.

(421). It is less than £1,100? . . . Yes; and as I pointed out, there is on that £1,100 a second charge for administration of 100 per cent.

Lord Marley: Yes exactly.

On page 31, the following appears in the evidence of Mr. Attwood.

"The man admitted that the sole object in founding the Mission was to obtain a living; he collected on an average £9 per week and spent 8s. per week in providing free meals. The facts were reported to the Police who decided they had no grounds on which to prosecute."

Page 29. Mr. Robert Morrison is questioning Mr. Attwood.

Mr. Morrison:

(338). "Are you trying to convey to the Committee (I may be wrong) that a certain proportion of people who are doing these collections are perfectly innocent themselves and do not understand that they are taking part in a bonus organisation? . . . I think most of the collectors know that everything is not quite as it should be; that is proved by collectors breaking away from their existing organisations and starting organisations of their own. That we are continually coming up against."

Page 16. Extract from the evidence of Mr. Howell.

"The collectors were receiving 50 per cent. commission. The accounts of the Liverpool branch showed that from February to December, 1933, only £224 had been spent on charitable purposes out of £1,372 taken from the collectors. The figure of £1,372 was the amount paid over by the collec-

tors AFTER their commission had been deducted."

So long as the principle of Charity is accepted as a method of Relief, so long shall we have clergy and others seeking to exploit the principle for their personal gain; and so long as the Labour Party supports the principle of Charity, so long must it be charged with supporting the Charity Racket. The Communists are not free from this idea of Charity either, for how often have they taken collections from among the poor of a district so that the landlord's rent shall be paid in order to prevent for the time being a pending eviction?

The rôle of charity is understandable under authoritarianism, since it is based on the view that the State, the Church or the Rich have a responsibility towards the poor. To counteract such a view, we must work the harder to convey to people the concept that all members of society should benefit from the products of society. Free and equal access for all to the products of society is the right of all men; it is revolting that they should have to go cap in hand to those who live off the toil and sweat of the workers and beg for a little "charity." Anarchism is the only method by which charity and poverty can be abolished.

**I**N an article in our last issue (Mid-May) entitled "Parliamentary Politics," A.M. pointed out that the dissatisfaction with the Government which was being shown in the return of Independent candidates to Westminster at by-elections might well lead to the attempt to set up a new "non-party" political grouping. It is interesting therefore to read in the "News Chronicle" of May 15th that "the formation of a new political group of Independents, the People's Movement, backed by three M.P.s and a number of private citizens, was announced yesterday. The M.P.s are Mr. W. J. Brown, recently elected at Rugby, Capt. Cunningham-Reid (Con., St. Marylebone) and Mr. Edgar Granville (Ind., Eye), formerly a member of the Liberal National Party." As the workers get more and more disgusted and disillusioned with politics, these political speculators will endeavour to cash in on the discrediting of party politics under slogans of "cleaning up politics," "the need for a government of the people (!) above all party loyalties" etc., etc. In the general bankruptcy of politics, they will try to save something from the wreck. But the workers must see to it that the destruction of political machinery, the means whereby men dominate the lives of men, in a word—the State, is completely achieved. They must not be deluded by political adventurers into a mere change of masters, while the principle of domination of man over man is allowed to be steered through its war-time difficulties by so-called

# Women

**I**F the twenty-two women who came up before the first London women's tribunal in May only two appear to have registered their objection to military service on non-religious grounds; one was my own daughter who entered an ethical objection to war as the greatest of all evils, and who was struck off the register after her views had been grossly misrepresented by the bench, and the other was a girl who objected to fighting against people of her own blood, having a German mother and an Italian father; she too had her name removed from the register. Only two of the girls appear to have been given complete exemption, one a Salvation Army lass and the other a Four-Square Gospeller. (I say "appeared" in each instance because I was not present during the whole session, and must go by press reports for the time when I was not there.) Almost every religious sect seemed to be represented—the inevitable Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Methodists, Quakers, a great welter of religious objection, and only the two solitary voices to suggest that there might be other no less conscientious objections to co-operation with war in general and this war in particular. A little relief was afforded by a girl who objected on Christian principles without associating herself with any sect or denomination, and who in fact denounced the Church's support of the war. She was not merely struck off but got the bench "rattled" to the extent of creating something in the nature of a scene in court, winning herself a round of applause . . . and provoking Judge Hargreaves into threatening to clear the court . . .

This predominance of religious objection is disappointing, and it is significant. It means that women, whose resistance to war could be so powerful a factor, are for the most part politically unaware, no further advanced than P.P.U. pacifism. It is significant that it went against my daughter in court that she was not a member of any pacifist organisation. She is pretty certain to have been struck off the register even if she had been, but Mr. Swales, the hectoring trade-unionist member of the bench, thought fit to point to the fact that she was not a member of any such organisation as an indication of her lack of genuine "conscience." (A girl who had given up a good job to work at the P.P.U. headquarters for a nominal wage, however, was also held not to have a genuine conscience . . .)

Women C.O.'s have the same right of appeal as men, but to what extent the appellate tribunals will reverse or modify the decisions of the local tribunals has yet—as I write—to be demonstrated, as also has the number of women with spirit enough to appeal . . . and the number who, turned down by the appellate, will stay the course even unto prison. Four women to date have received prison sentences of a month each for refusing to take up war-work as directed. One, to my knowledge, having completed her sentence, has returned to her job and not so far been molested by the labour authorities. Whether the cat-and-mouse act will operate remains to be seen. The general feeling is that the authorities are "not too keen" on having women in prison for resistance to military and industrial conscription, as it might prove an unpopular line.

# and Conscription

by *Ethel Mannin*

It is utterly absurd, of course, and monstrously unjust that there is no recognition of conscientious objection to industrial conscription. A concession is made where the women objects to making munitions; she may be exempted from such work, but not from participation in other forms of war-production. As though a woman who had scruples about making shells could make tank or aeroplane parts with a clear conscience! Another "concession" is that women drafted into one of the Women's Services will not be required to deal in or serve "intoxicating liquor" if they express an objection to doing so . . .

The conscription net really closed round women with the Employment Control or Engagement Order which became effective from February 16th this year, and which makes it impossible for a woman between 20 and 31 to secure a job, or to change it when secured, without the permission of the labour exchange. The Order does not apply to a woman who has a child of under 14 living with her, or to those engaged in agriculture, nursing, midwifery, teaching, or the auxiliary services.) To secure a post it is not enough for her to be in possession of her unemployment and insurance cards, she must secure a card of permission—known, generally, as "the green card"—from the local labour exchange or women's conscription bureau, and no employer may legally employ a woman who cannot first bring him this green card. My 21-year-old daughter was obstructed by the local women's conscription bureau from taking up three secretarial posts she was recently offered; one on the grounds that it would not utilise her shorthand as well as her typing; the other two on the grounds that no woman registered as a C.O. may take up a post in a government department or an off-shoot of a government department. After being allowed to work for six weeks as shorthand-typist in a newspaper office, on the understanding that it was a purely temporary post, and her green card endorsed accordingly, she is now permitted to go as ward-maid and "porteress" in a maternity home—regardless of the fact that here she will use neither her shorthand nor her typing. And whilst refusing her the job in which she would not be able to use her shorthand, and refusing it her for that reason, they were urging her to join the Land Army!

Not, of course, that one should ever expect a logical attitude in any government department . . .

The latest development on the women's conscription front is a move by the Ministry of Labour to continue industrial conscription for women after the war, under the Essential Works Order. If this scheme gains support it means that women will not be able to leave the jobs into which they have been conscripted, nor take up jobs without Ministry of Labour permission. It is estimated that this Order, if it is effected, will affect two and a half million women. What Mr. Bevin does not seem to be allowing for is the temper of the people at the end of the war. People may be fooled by Emergency Powers during war-time, but when there is no emergency it may well be a different story. If women do stand for it they will deserve nothing better.

Married women are exempt under the National Services Act, that is to say cannot be conscripted for the services, but are still liable to be directed to take up war-work, and are required to register under the Registration for Employment Order, and this, although it is not commonly realised, also applies to women with a child of under 14 living with them; they are "liable to be directed" at least to part-time work. Failure to register involves a penalty of up to two years' imprisonment.

Whether women not prepared to co-operate in Mr. Churchill's war, and without the right to register their objection, should or should not register is a matter for personal decision. It may be argued that registration is not the best point of resistance, that it is a mere technicality not worth risking a prison sentence for; and it is quite a reasonable argument. There is also the case for refusing to register, under the principle of total resistance to conscription. That women have no right of conscientious objection to industrial conscription certainly strengthens the case for refusing to register.

Women in the mass are a great deal too sheep-like. There is altogether too much of the attitude of "you've got to" and "they'll make you." Given courage "They" cannot make you do anything. The girl who caused the scene at the first London women's tribunal declared, "I don't accept your decision. I'd rather go to prison." It is that impassioned spirit of freedom of which there is so appallingly little in this country which prattles so much of freedom—whilst clamping on the manacles on personal liberty in all directions.

More than ever today we need women of the fighting spirit of the late Emma Goldman, of Clara Cole, of Hanna Sheehy Skeffington. Where are our women rebels against the coercion of the State? What we need is not a few outstanding women, but the spirit of resistance in the general mass of women, a feminine consciousness of woman's part in the general struggle for liberation from politicians and their state-controlled society. It may be that in the end, if the war goes on long enough, the conscription of women may belatedly awaken this consciousness.

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**C.O.'s. Reunion in aid of Anarchist Prisoner's Fund. All Comrades and friends invited.**

**CENTRAL HALLS,  
25, Bath Street, Glasgow,  
Friday, 26th June, at 8 p.m.**

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**Tickets, 2/-, from  
ANARCHIST BOOKSHOP, 127, George St.**

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## SECOND-HAND EYES WANTED.

"The Ministry of Pensions is searching for further stocks of artificial eyes. Over 10,000 have been issued since the war to men and women of the forces and to civilians injured in raids. One donor in Wales presented the Government with twenty-three new eyes, and when this became known second-hand ones poured in, mainly from widows of ex-Servicemen who had died since the end of the last war." ("Manchester Guardian," 6.6.42.)

May we suggest to the Ministry of Pensions that an appeal should be issued to the men and women with artificial eyes asking them to think of the future generations who will no doubt need more artificial eyes than this one if one is to assume that the next war will be conducted far more efficiently than this one. While widows of ex-Servicemen must have kept their husband's artificial eyes out for sentimental reasons the Ministry should make clear that future widows and widowers should carefully preserve artificial eyes as they may be needed for the victims of the next war to end wars. We hope the Ministry of Pensions will not lose this opportunity to give the public a proof of ministerial far-sightedness.

## MOSCOW'S FIFTH COLUMN.

The Dean of Canterbury, Dr. Hewlett Johnson, condemned a resolution put forward at the Convocation of Canterbury yesterday, saying:—

"I think the resolution will make a bad impression on M. Maisky, the Russian Ambassador.

"I met M. Maisky recently, and he was very anxious as to whether the Church of England, through its head, could not urge what Russia longs for in her extremity—an attack upon the Western Front." ("Daily Herald," 21.5.42.)

## THE PRICE OF SMOKE.

Soldiers in the army, miners earning less than four pounds a week, old pensioners having to live on 10s. a week can't afford a smoke, but profits made by tobacco manufacturers are good.

Imperial Tobacco made profits—after fees and taxation—of £7,971,241, 17 per cent. in 1941.

Alfred Dunhill, £41,557, 15½ per cent. in 1941, while in 1939 dividends were only 12 per cent.

Brewers and tobacco manufacturers make money while workers are told that they must do without such luxuries in war-time.

## RUSSIAN DISCIPLINE.

"If rigid self-discipline counts for anything in the war effort, Russia cannot lose.

That is the impression given by a British anti-aircraft officer who has just returned from a six-months' stay in the U.S.S.R.

The civilian in the factory, he says, is subject to the same ruthless discipline and efficiency as the soldier in the front line.

Careless talk simply does not exist. Everyone knows that a lapse would be drastically punished.

Four police branches control security measures. A close watch is kept on all foreigners. They take no chances.

Even a Russian officer must have a special pass to travel outside his regimental area.

British officers in Moscow and Kuibishev could move about the main streets where they were known.

But if they strayed into the suburbs they were stopped every few hundred yards and had their papers examined." ("News Chronicle," 6.6.42.)

## HOW TO PREVENT PEOPLE FROM USING THEIR MONEY.

"When Lord Kindersley says that the warship weeks were introduced especially to raise subscriptions from the larger investors, 'who were not coming along with their money as well as they should,' it is hard to follow the argument. The money for 'large' subscriptions would either have been invested in any case, or it would at any rate not have been spent in shops.

On the other hand, the work among small savers is undoubtedly of great national value. Since the savings campaign of this war began about £1,500,000,000 has been saved in amounts of less than £1,000 per head.

At present the campaign for small savings drains off money which, if it were spent in the shops, would intensify the shortage of goods and services. Immediately after the war the fact that people have acquired the saving habit or, perhaps, merely the fact that no one likes to break up a nice round sum may help to check a general rush to the empty shops that would make price control very difficult." (Financial Editor, "Manchester Guardian," 28.5.42.)

# Through

## FRIENDLY REMARK.

"Our allies can afford the casualties in men far better than the enemy . . ." ("Daily Express," 1.6.42.)

## MINISTER OF FUEL £5,000.

"Major Lloyd George as the new Minister of Fuel, Light and Power, is to be a Minister of Cabinet rank. That does not mean that he is in the Cabinet. But it does mean that his salary will be £5,000 a year, which is the 'standard rate' for Ministers of Cabinet status. As Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Food he had £1,500." ("Evening Standard.")

The Ministry of Fuel has not been formed yet and its tasks are still vague, but Major Lloyd George is sure of his £5,000 a year. Miners who get the coal at the risk of their lives and health are refused a minimum salary of £4 5s. a week, but thanks to their sweated labour, Major Lloyd George can be paid the nice sum of about a hundred pounds a week!

## LABOUR-VANSITTART ALLIANCE?

The Labour Party Conference resolution dealing with international affairs characteristically enough does not mention the question of Germany after the war. It was also interesting to see that no representatives of the German and Austrian socialist parties were invited to address the conference. This confirms what we said in the March issue of War Commentary "Vansittartism spreads to Labour leaders." Prominent leaders in the British labour movements have given their support to Walter Loeb, German socialist supporter of Lord Vansittart, their influence prevails in the Labour Party and prevents the expression of any Socialist attitude towards the German people.



## SHAREHOLDERS' PATRIOTISM

Shareholders have their way of celebrating the entry of a new country into the war for democracy. When Madagascar was liberated there was a boom on the stock market.

"Mexico's entry into the war brought further sharp rises in her Government bonds and railway securities. Brazilian stocks swung back into favour on the news that the Leopoldina Railway is to pay a full year's interest arrears on its debentures."

—*Daily Express*, 30.5.42.

## MORE TACT, PLEASE!

Sometimes the patriotic speeches made by Company directors at annual meetings, announcing dividends of 12 per cent. or more, seem rather out of place to the common man. The "Manchester Guardian," for example, has the unpleasant habit of publishing company reports on the same page as the list of airmen reported killed in action or missing, etc. Is it really necessary to display so cynically "what they are fighting for?"

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# the Press

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## PUBLIC SCHOOL BOYS FOR MINES?

In the House of Commons recently Mr. Grenfell stated that—

"The problem of ensuring a sufficient number of boys and youths for mining employment, including the question of apprenticeship, is now under consideration by an independent committee, under the Chairmanship of Sir John Forster.

"Mr. J. J. Davidson: Is the Minister considering making a recruiting appeal to the public schools and universities?

"Mr. Grenfell: I have not considered it."

## WHERE YOUR MONEY GOES

"The one-time sixpenny seats now cost 1s. 6d. The State now takes more. Entertainment tax has jumped from 25 per cent. to 33 per cent. on the cheaper prices and up to 40 per cent. on expensive seats. But in spite of the Chancellor's latest imposition the cinema owners will get a considerably increased income on the popular-priced seats.

"The Oxford Institute of Statistics has estimated that the increased Entertainments Duty will draw another £18 million mainly from the pockets of the lower-paid population. Half of this money will go to the Chancellor in the form of increased tax; the other nine million pounds will be increased revenue for the film trade in return for not a penny extra expense."

—*Tribune*, 5.6.42.

## SOLDIERS USED AS STRIKE BREAKERS.

"When several hundred dock labourers employed at a North-east Coast port went on strike yesterday soldiers were called in to discharge a certain cargo whose unloading was a matter of urgency.

The dispute is caused by dissatisfaction with the rates of pay. Although confined to one portion it was stated that other men have joined the strikers." ("Manchester Guardian," 20.5.42.)

## DIGNIFIED DUKE

"A long wooden hut in the old playing fields of Marlborough House, the home of the Regional Commissioner for Reading, serves as a canteen for his staff. High officials and low, clerks and bosses go there daily for lunch, which is served on a cafeteria system.

"Among the most recent lunchers, I am told, is the tall, distinguished-looking figure of the Duke of Marlborough in his uniform of captain in the Life Guards.

"The Duke is over six feet tall. I hear he carries his tray, knife, fork and spoon for a helping of joint and 'two veg.' with a quiet dignity. Then he sits with about 150 others at small tables."

Who said there was no democracy in this country?

## EASY EXPLANATION

The "Evening Standard" recently reported the case of Gertie, a railway carriage cleaner, who had stolen a wallet containing 21 pound notes which she found in a carriage. It was stated in court that—

"Her wages were £2 16s. 9d. a week; her husband's (a waiter) 30s. with tips; her daughter's (a typist) 30s.

"It is difficult to understand why you women do these things," sighed Mr. Marshall, the magistrate.

Mr. Marshall might have been less puzzled if he had to feed a family on such wages as those of Gertie's husband: thirty shillings (with tips) and her daughter, who earns thirty shillings as a typist.

## STRIKES IN 1942.

The "Ministry of Labour Gazette" (May), announces that there were 1,251 strikes in 1941—the highest record since 1932—involving 297,000 work people directly and 63,000 indirectly. The workers' totals are higher than in any year since 1937. However, the Gazette omits to mention the fact that 1941 witnessed a tremendous influx into industry, and proportionately it was one of the most peaceful industrial years.

Wage questions, as a whole, accounted for 749 disputes—three-fifths of the total figure—and for over one-half of the workpeople directly involved in such disputes.

The most important stoppages were those in which over 25,000 engineering and shipbuilding apprentices in Glasgow, Belfast, Barrow, and Manchester stopped work, between February and April, in support of claims for increases in wages (220,000 working days lost).

About 8,000 clerical and other workers came out on strike in the Welsh tin-plate industry, in March and April, arising out of the suspension of a clerk for alleged breach of discipline, and a claim for recognition of the trade union (67,000 working days lost).

## BAN MUST BE RAISED ON ALL NEWS-PAPERS.

"The War Office have amended their order dealing with the distribution of literature in protected establishments. This action follows representations by the T.U.C.

The order was so sweeping that even Government papers and Ministry of Information bulletins could not be issued without infringement.

This direction does not now apply to works notices or other instructions; publications by a trade union or employers' organisation; works magazines and bulletins issued by an approved authority." ("Evening Standard.")

# A Red and Black Notebook

## THE CONSERVATIVE BOLSHEVIKS GO THE BALLET.

Recently Mrs. Churchill and Mr. Maisky went to an Aid Russia ballet performance. As they entered the theatre, the audience shuffled to its feet in wrapt attention and the orchestra played "God Save the King" and the "International."

We don't mind them playing "Gawd Sive" to the Bolsheviks, but the "International" . . . Isn't it possible to find some more appropriate song, say, "Poor Old Joe."

## PREPARATION FOR A BLOOD BATH.

I have just read again the excellent anti-war novel "Right off the Map," by C. E. Montague (published by Penguins). Written in 1927, the novel is prophetic of the method used to produce a war psychology.

Two imaginary countries, Porto and Ria have a common frontier. Gold is found just over the frontier in Porto land, belonging to Bute, a millionaire. But Porto taxes gold two-thirds, Ria only one-third. So, a war must be fought to change the frontier.

"I see what Bute wants, but how's he going to get it?"

"By making other people want it too."

"What other people?"

"Public opinion. The people, you know."

"How can he make them?"

"Oh, by telling them they do already. See, if I look in a glass and saw myself foam at the mouth and get purple, shouldn't I think I was angry?"

"The glass is?"

"The mirror of public opinion, you know; the Press."

"Bute has bought up half the papers in Ria."

"It takes two, though," she said, "to get a fight."

"Two countries. But only one Bute. There is a company allied to Bute, as they call it. It owns half the papers in Porto."

So public opinion is set in motion, and large crowds appear in Ria's Trafalgar Square demanding war.

In 1935, the same idea was expressed by Dr. Couze in his lecture "The Psychology of War Preparation." Couze said the ruling class would engineer demonstrations from the Left, as the best means of influencing the workers. In 1937 and 1938, these demonstrations on the Rian model appeared crying "Stand by Austria" (or any other country which was fashionable) and demonstrations against German football teams. This was the first breakdown of the strong anti-war feeling of the workers.

## A NEW BLOOD BATH ?

Now the game is being repeated. Lord Beaverbrook sends telegrams to Communist meetings "I am a follower of Stalin" and his "Daily Express" urges its readers to attend the Communist "Second Front" demonstration in Trafalgar Square. Churchill pretends it is the voice of the people and he must listen. The voice in Trafalgar Square is the voice of the gods.

Churchill says: "Is it not far better that thousands of people should gather in Trafalgar Square demanding the most vehement and audacious attacks than that there should be weepings and wailings and peace agitations which in other lands and in other wars have often hampered the action and vigour of the Government?"

Thus is "public opinion" manufactured, but for what purpose? Is some new slaughter being planned?

## IT PAYS TO BE BIG.

For stealing two loaves of bread worth 8d., George James (40), Belvedere, Kent, was sentenced to one month's hard labour at Dartford. If this scale of charges were universally operated the Rev. Clapham would now be serving a sentence of 290,000 years!

## HOW TO WRITE A RUSSIAN VICTORY.

About the middle of May, the British Press shouted a great Russian advance on Kharkov. Within a few days we were reading headlines like this one of the "Daily Mirror" (16th May), "KHARKOV CITY STREETS NOW A BATTLEFIELD," "Russians have broken through the defences of Kharkov and are fighting in the streets of the big industrial city."

The advance continued until the following Wednesday when the "Evening Standard" headlines said "NAZIS FALLING BACK ON CITY OF KHARKOV." Steadily day by day the Russians continued to advance towards a city they were already in. After another week of advancing on Kharkov, even the Press became embarrassed and the victory was quietly put away to be replaced by a church scandal, a society wedding and Rommel's battle in Libya.

The British journalists should receive the Order of Lenin for their brilliant victories on the Eastern front.

## A DELEGATE FROM THE BOSS.

"The delegates throughout received a strong determination to prosecute the war to a successful conclusion." "The Ministry of Labour and National Service was represented at the Congress by Mr. George Tomlinson, M.P. In addition to Mr. Tomlinson, M.P., Congress was addressed by fraternal delegates from the Irish T.U.C., the Scottish Labour Party and Co-op. movement." (A.E.U. report of the Scottish Trades Union Congress.)

## THE DAILY WAIL.

"In a May Day Rally organised by the Leicester Labour Party, a resolution was passed calling for the lifting of the ban on the 'Waily Worker.'" (Daily Worker League campaign notes.)

Was this an accident?

## BIRDS OF A FEATHER FLOCK TOGETHER.

"Hornsey Branch have excellent relations with other parties in their borough. Captain Gammans, Conservative M.P. for Hornsey, recently responded to an invitation by the Party Branch Committee. He attended their meeting and discussed local and national problems with them. In the course of the evening, he agreed that the lifting of the ban on the 'Daily Worker' would do much to rouse and inspire the war workers and bring about a big increase in output." (London District Bulletin of the Communist Party.)

SYNDICALIST

OBSCENITY means, in its full definition, anything that strikes against man's innate sense of decency. But in practice it has come to have a much narrower meaning and to be applied almost exclusively to matters sexual and faecal. Nor is the measure any longer man's innate sense of decency, but rather the conventions of the religious or social environment in which the case is judged.

Thus, in common life, obscenity means the other man's dirty story, and in the courts of law and the palaces of bishops it means any open reference to the sexual or excretory acts. There is, according to modern convention, nothing obscene in a senile minister of the crown mouthing sadistic joy about what

merit as "The Tropic of Cancer," "Ulysses" and "Lady Chatterley's Lover." All are regarded, without discrimination, as undermining the particular morality which the social order requires of the people. But there is this fundamental difference, that while the works of Chase and Glinto at best provide some outlet for repressed minds warped by universal state education, the works of Lawrence, Miller and Joyce tend, where they are read with understanding, to assist the liberation of sexual impulses and ideas.

Here it may be well to note the way in which this "obscenity" in literature is treated, like everything else in modern society, on a class basis. The private soldier and the worker are denied both the childish books which may ease their repressed sex and the

## OBSCENITY by George Woodcock

the R.A.F. has done to the working people of the Continent. But a book like "The Body's Rapture," by Jules Romains, which describes sexual experience openly and beautifully, is forced to appear in a limited and private edition, while a crime book describing murders in their full horror can be printed in its tens of thousands and be sold on all the bookstalls of suburbia.

Now, after a period of comparative freedom of expression, the ant-eaters of morality are again pushing their long snouts in search of the obscene. An attack has been made by the authorities which is important in that it seems the prelude to a wider persecution. I refer to the prosecution of James Hadley Chase and Darcy Glinto, the authors of such famous paperbacks as "No Orchids for Miss Blandish" and "Lady Don't Turn Over."

I do not propose to defend these authors or their works on any literary ground, nor do I contend that their treatment of sex is anything but childish. I read some of these books from that form of curiosity which is miscalled a sense of duty, and found them very badly written and pornographically dull and adolescent. But I do not think they were in any way as anti-social as the murder stories which fill boys' magazines. Nor do I feel their existence was nearly as harmful as their suppression.

For in the moral circumstances which exist today books of this type provide a minor psychological valve for those whose sexual activities are repressed by peculiar war circumstances. Watching bookstalls, I have noticed that their most frequent purchasers are members of the forces. Once, even, I heard an aged general ask in quavering voice for "Twin Bedsteads." It would thus appear that the object of this action is to preserve the morals of the armed forces. This seems, to say the least, inconsistent when one remembers how the military authorities tried to make their soldiers assassins by nature in the notorious Hate Training, which excelled Nazi methods in its sheer sadistic brutality, and had to be abandoned because even the officers protested at its "unBritish" character.

In the eyes of the law the prurient treatment of sex in these paperbacks is put on a basis of equality with the sexual content of such works of undoubted literary

works of value which may open a way towards sexual freedom. But the rich and large sections of the educated middle class can obtain and read what they desire. Works which the authorities would not countenance in large editions can be published in limited or private editions. "Ulysses" is printed at two guineas—well beyond the workman's pocket. And in the days when there was access to the Continent, those with the money for a trip to Paris could smuggle back without difficulty the banned works of Lawrence and Henry Miller.

The forbidding of "dirty books" is no solution of the urge that buys them in hundreds of thousands. While men are educated in a manner that brings them to regard sex as a filthy thing to be indulged with a due sense of sin, while all the influences of home, school and society are such as to inhibit their whole emotional life, while men are forced by military regimentation to live under circumstances where no adequate sexual relationship is possible, it is surprising that the result is so mild as an enthusiasm for smut. A radical change in sexual education and the end of circumstances that twist sexual life form the only remedy.

But the restrictions on sex are a necessary part of the coercion applied by the modern state and are as fundamentally necessary to its existence as are any of its sanctions. The morality in whose name they are made is merely a manifestation of authority. Only with the social revolution, only with the free society based on no restriction but the voluntary restraint which prevents a man from harming his fellow, can a true and real sexual morality appear among men.

It would be foolish to attempt to formulate, now, a morality for the anarchist society. Such a morality must grow spontaneously from the social and economic freedom of that society. For we who are born into the present order, however free we may be intellectually, bear on our emotional faces the mark of the beast, and carry with us to the grave the scars of inhibitions of childhood and adolescence. Bakunin's life was marred by sexual maladjustment, and in the voice of a Lawrence even we can hear the frenzy of one who shouts through the bars of his own frustration. It is for our children to build sexual freedom out of the social freedom we can make for them.

# America at War

## Anti-Labour Measures in the U.S.A.

While Capitalist's profits are soaring and dollar-a-year men are feathering their nests the American Government has taken a few important steps in anti-labour legislation.

With the excuse of avoiding inflation the Government is discouraging any wage increases. When increases are granted they are not to be more than half the increase in the cost of living and be paid in war bonds!

As in this country the Government is taking steps to prevent workers in essential industries from changing their jobs for higher paid ones so as to keep wages down.

As in this country again men who are working in war factories cannot leave their job or they will be called up. In spite of Government assurances it is obvious that the rule may be used against strikers or even trade-union organisers as has already been the case.

Meanwhile the Labour Unions leaders, instead of defending the interests of the workers concern themselves with improving their lot. Philip Murray, President of the C.I.O., discontented with the £4,500 a year he was getting in that job, has become the president of the Steelworkers' Union at £5,000 a year!

### THE RICH GROW RICHER

"Enquiries made by the American Federation of Labour show that in 1941 net profits of private industry reached a record figure—better even than in the boom year of 1929. In the past year alone, they in-

creased by 26 per cent. following on an increase of 42 per cent. in 1939-40. Since the outbreak of war, profits in industry have thus increased by 68 per cent., wages in the same period rising only by 8 per cent." (I.F.T.U.)

Cost of living has gone up by 14 to 16 per cent., which is far more than the increase in wages. The poor grow poorer. . . .

### STRIKES HUMBUG

President Roosevelt in answer to an economist who "argued that Japan would not have committed her act of aggression, and the Philippines would not have been lost if the defence programme had not been weakened by the loss through strikes of 30,000,000 working days," remarked that if "there were no 'flu in America, they might already be in Berlin, as the working days lost through colds, etc., were more than double that figure." (I.F.T.U.)

Journalists please note . . . a few months ago one would have thought from the prominence given to strikes in the newspapers that the life of an American worker was one long holiday. Shouldn't also these figures move Mr. Roosevelt to some reflection? When he sent troops (with fixed bayonets) to break up strikes and to occupy factories he justified his measures by the danger to which the strikes were putting the nation, an argument which seems rather valueless in the light of the figures he quoted recently, *the post-war economy*. Many a monopolistic industry will come out of this war with its control enhanced.

## Dollar - a - Year Men Cost a Lot

(From Consumers Union Report)

Washington, D.C.—The rumpus caused by the resignation of Robert R. Guthrie from the War Production Board was a big break for consumers and the public generally. Big business and monopoly interests had been getting away with murder through the influence of its dollar-a-year representatives in the W.P.B.

The Truman Committee knew what was going on, but its hands were tied. It had strongly recommended in its January report the elimination of all dollar-a-year men, pointing out that they could not and did not put the public interest foremost when handling problems involving the companies from which they were drawing their pay.

But when Donald Nelson took over the W.P.B. he promised to clean up and pleaded with the Truman Committee to leave him alone and let him do his job. The Committee agreed to give him that chance. It didn't want to be put in the position of interfering.

When Guthrie resigned, charging interference from dollar-a-year men, Nelson invited the Truman Committee to investigate the charges. That opened up the whole question again. It was high time.

Guthrie's chief complaint was that dollar-a-year men were putting the interests of their industries ahead of the war conversion programme. There is plenty of evidence of that all the way from aluminum down to refrigerators. Some of it has been brought out by the Truman Committee, much of it isn't yet known outside the walls of the W.P.B.

But the dollar-a-year men have not only been protecting their industries against the inroads of war, but have been using the war, wherever possible, to

strengthen the position of their selfish interests in

There is evidence that much of this kind of finagling has been going on inside the chemical division of the W.P.B. The Senate Agriculture Committee is now investigating some of these charges. It reported to the Senate that "there seems to be a well planned attempt to control both synthetic alcohol and synthetic rubber production by representatives of the closely integrated manufacturing companies also interested in the petroleum field."

"In that connection," the Committee reported, "it is interesting to know that some of the men who are most potently in control of these activities in the War Production Board have been loaned for the purpose of service on this Board by the United States Industrial Alcohol Corporation."

Similar charges have come from the independent alcohol rectifiers, who charge that the big liquor distilleries are manipulating the situation so that they will come out of the war with a complete monopoly on the liquor supply.

In the past the independent rectifiers have competed to some extent with the big distilleries. But they have been dependent on the distilleries for their supplies of distilled spirits. Forced to turn part of their production over to war uses, the distillers have cut off the supplies of alcohol from the rectifiers.

Allocation of the distillery products for defence purposes is controlled by Matthew J. McNamara, executive vice-president of National Distillers, the biggest unit in the distilling industry. That's typical of the set-up in the W.P.B.

NATHAN ROBERTSON.

A NEW FREEDOM PRESS PUBLICATION

# *New Life to the Land*

**T**HAT this country is almost wholly dependent on foreign food supplies has been stated over and over again. Indeed, it was this fact more than any other which called forth so many books on the depressed state of British agriculture in the years immediately before the present war. Those among the agricultural experts who remembered the last war knew how close to disaster the intensive submarine campaign of 1917 had brought our food supplies. When, during the last decade, it became clearer every year that war must ultimately come, these people could look round and see British farming in an even worse state than in 1914; they immediately began to publish books and pamphlets outlining proposals for the regeneration of agriculture.

Many of these books were very enlightening. Their writers were experts on agriculture who could readily see that the land of Britain was as fertile as any other in Europe, and that the present low state of home production presents no great technical difficulties to solve. Their books make quite clear what technical steps are necessary—how the land is to be restored to the state of productivity which it maintained until the rural exodus of the last half of the nineteenth century, and the imports of cheap foodstuffs from abroad began the downward course which led to the unparalleled degree of depression in which the British farmer found himself in the years between the two Great Wars.

What the experts failed to do was to take any serious account of the causes which led to the decay of the land. Agriculture did not fall off because the British farmers lost the ability to farm or from chance. The collapse was due to economic and social factors, was inherent in the trend of world capitalism over the past sixty or seventy years. Having no social conceptions, no real grasp of the class antagonisms of which the decline of agriculture is but one expression, the experts offered solutions which were merely Utopian, and held out no promise of being realized.

George Woodcock's pamphlet, "New Life to the Land," is the only publication I have yet seen which goes to the root of the agricultural problem and so escapes this sense of unreality. He makes abundantly clear the effect of the expanding export trade in bringing in cheap agricultural products from abroad which undermined the market for home produce. The greatest obstacle which the British farmers have to overcome is the resistance which these all powerful vested interests maintain against an independent English agriculture.

Woodcock also amasses a body of evidence to dispose of the myth, so sedulously fostered by both the Right and the Left, that it is not possible to feed the present population from the soil of England. The value of such a belief to those whose interests are opposed to a revival of farming in this country is obvious. But the destruction of such a myth is still more important to those who wish to see the present class society superseded by a more just social order.

"To the revolutionary this question of the feeding of Britain is of peculiar importance. For, if adequate food can be produced only after an economic and social revolution, it is equally certain that a revolution cannot be maintained indefinitely unless it secures the provision of adequate food supplies. A country in revolt, even more than a country at war, must provide against a blockade of the most ruthless kind. Revolution without bread is doomed."

George Woodcock draws from his own experience as a landworker, but his pamphlet is not a technological treatise. As we have seen, there is no lack of awareness on the part of the agricultural experts as to the technical factors in the farming problem. The great merit of his essay lies in the clarity with which he sees the problem as a whole, and the stress he lays on its social aspects.

In order that society should derive full benefit from agriculture, it is necessary that the land shall be the common property of the whole of society and that it be worked by those fitted to do so for the general good of society as a whole. Only in such a way can agricultural wealth be made free for all by the unhindered application of labour to the soil. Woodcock clearly demonstrates the social forces which at present prevent the full exploitation of the soil by society, and so is able to indicate the lines along which the struggle in the fields must take place. In his final sections he discusses the form of organization of the land workers which will be effective in bringing about the desirable changes in English farming.

The social aspects of agriculture have been entirely neglected by political groupings of the Left. This neglect is partly due to the insignificance of the rural population for electoral purposes, but chiefly to the fact that Marxists, with their conception of the industrial proletariat alone playing the messianic role of liberating society, despite the "backward" land workers. Nevertheless, the starvation which has attended so many revolutionary upheavals in the last 25 years, shows where this neglect leads to. The anarchists alone have shown a full awareness of the importance of the landworker, and George Woodcock's pamphlet provides a brilliant discussion of the problem applied to this country.

J. H.

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GEORGE WOODCOCK

## *New Life to the Land*

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6d. (postage 1d.)

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# A New Penguin Reprint

Thirteen Stories by R. B. Cunningham-Grahame

**O**F the half-forgotten figures of the Victorian literary scene, one of the most interesting as a writer and of the most rebellious as a person was R. B. Cunningham-Grahame. "Don Roberto" was, like Bakunin, one of those rare noblemen in whom aristocracy manifests itself as a spiritual quality of revolt from authority, oppression and uniformity. Throughout his life he fought what he called "the desolation of imperfect progress," the ugliness and misery broken upon the world by social systems motivated by greed. In youth he fled from industrial Britain to those undeveloped lands where, in the 1870's, men could still lead, albeit hardly, individual and anarchic lives away from the tyranny of centralised government. His own free spirit enabled him to mix as equal among such men, and he lived successfully as Gaucho on the Pampas, as rancher in Texas and

as fencing master in Mexico.

Back in England in his maturity, he applied himself to encouraging the spirit of revolt that marked the rise of working class consciousness in the 1880's. He was an associate of Morris in the early Socialist movement. He served imprisonment for his part in the riot in Trafalgar Square in 1886. But probably the most Quixotic of all his expeditions was that of Westminster, where for six years he maintained a lone and futile battle against reaction and class interest.

His writing has the virility of his nature and its simplicity is embellished just sufficiently to express his essential and colourful eccentricity. At its best it describes or is based on the experiences of his crowded life. His journeys into imagination seem, indeed, pallid and dull beside the warmth and life of his descriptions of experienced incidents. Essentially, he was the artist as reporter of experience rather than as recorder of fantasy.

Thus, in the present volume of stories, those are best which are most nearly autobiographical, and the best of all is the long story of a horse-selling journey in South America, "Cruz Alta," which seems very thinly veiled autobiography. In that free, abundant Latin America of the nineteenth century, where the necessities were plentiful for all and government insecure and scanty, "Don Roberto" found his most congenial environment. Now, the independent Gauchos with whom he rode the Pampas are extinct as a type and their free life is dead. In its place the Americanism of "imperfect progress" straddles the plains with barbed wire, and Anglo-Yankee capital dictates the tempo of Argentinian life. Cunningham-Grahame more than any other leaves a clear picture of that free way of life which has been dead for half a century of imperialist exploitation.

George Woodcock

## AMERICAN SEAMEN DENOUNCE C.P. TACTICS.

"The stooges of Joseph Dzugashwilli, better known as 'Holy Joe,' who before June 22nd, 1941, were fanfaring that the 'Yanks Are Not Coming' are now ready to sell the seamen down the river to prove their consistent patriotism. But their only stumbling block is the militancy of the I.W.W., S.U.P., and S.I.U. seamen. So the Stalin dupes have arranged a slanderous trial against S.U.P. secretary, Harry Lundberg, charging him with spending \$150,000.00 of the union's money for goons and strong-armed men. Thus far, this, as all other commy accusations, has been proved a lot of bunk; but the comrats will be sorry for starting this because 'people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.'

"Why isn't shore leave allowed to commy crews in Russian ports while other crews are allowed this leave? Is it because the party is afraid that the good stooges will be disillusioned once they see the worker's paradise?"

"The life-saving gear on merchant ships is as old as the shipping business itself. Modern inventions penetrated all fields equipment to save a dirty old merchant's sailor's life, is not-money worthy. The result is the same useless century-old cork life-jacket. There are, however, some up-to-date life-saving suits being used by the Norwegians. To get these would mean spending money on the part of John-shipowner and direct action on the part of the seamen to force owners to buy the same.

"The slogans of direct action though, would interfere with the Curran-skies and the 'Yanks are coming' policy of the Commies to keep 'em sailing."

"WHY?" April, 1942.

## ARMANDO BORGI OUT ON \$5,000 BAIL.

New York.—Armando Borghi, anti-fascist militant, former secretary of the Italian Syndicalist Union, has been released from Ellis Island on \$5,000 bail. The bail asked for fascist sympathisers is only \$500. Furthermore, Borghi was interned for over three months before bail could even be considered.

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## AFTER the DEBATE

## Anarchism v. Socialism

THE Conway Hall was absolutely packed and people had to stand in the gangways at the debate between Bill Gape, representing the Anarchist Movement, and Sam Cash, representing the Socialist Party of Great Britain, which took place on the 31st of May.

The debate could, however, have been more satisfactory if the real issue between free socialism obtained through the direct action of the workers and State socialism obtained through Parliamentary methods had been discussed. Bill Gape tried in vain to keep the discussion on theoretical grounds and gave a good exposition of the anarchist attitude towards capitalism, war and the class struggle. The socialist speaker insisted, however, in treating the Conway Hall audience as an Hyde Park crowd and tried to maintain its attention and amuse it by rather worn out jokes regarding the anarchists or by profound consideration like this one "We, too, like the anarchists, object to the law; but the law objects to you" this being used as a proof of the futility of opposing the law, and of the necessity "to get control of it." If Cash was unable to put up a theoretical case against anarchism he endeavoured, however, to destroy his opponent's case by resorting to the old arguments that it is impossible to find two anarchists who think the same . . . forgetting that the fact that certain people call themselves anarchists means that they have all something in common, i.e., the desire to build up a society without a State as the name anarchy implies. People who looked at our literature table on leaving the hall and saw it covered with our recent publications and pamphlets all produced by the associated work of anarchists in this country must have realised that this was a proof of the ability of the anarchists in this country to organise themselves and to work in complete accord. The fact that in Spain the anarcho-syndicalists had an organization of two millions is another proof against his argument.

The other accusations Bill Gape had to face was that anarchists are bomb throwers, who have praised in the past the assassination of capitalists and dictators. Nothing was spared to paint the anarchists in really dark colours and the S.P.G.B. members in the audience must have felt rather uncomfortable at the idea of anarchists, their pockets bulging with revolvers and bombs, sitting perhaps next to them. Anarchists in the audience were thoroughly amused; they felt that at a time when the governments of all countries are covering the earth with 1,000 pound bombs, mines, land mines, and when they advocate sabotage and individual assassination, the little home-made bombs of the anarchists, directed not against innocent workers, women and children, but against factory owners responsible for the death of many workers, against the degenerate Russian tsars or the blood thirsty Spanish archbishops, or more recently against the dictator of the Italian people cannot be used as a means of scaring the people any longer.

The socialists have always been fond of putting people on their guard against the anarchists who sacrifice their lives in order to suppress the exploiters and the oppressors of the people, but they are apt to forget that the real enemies of the people are those

who send them on the battlefield to die by the million, who expose them to bomb and gas attacks; it is for them that they should reserve their investives.

Cash, incidentally, rather contradicted his statement about the anarchists being bomb throwers when he accused us a few minutes afterwards of being Christian pacifists (this will be news to many of our readers!).

The socialist speaker refused to consider the possibility of direct action on the part of the workers. He said that the S.P.G.B. could not expose their members to the consequences of direct action as "it was impossible for them to keep their wives and children." This is the argument the reformists have always used in order to justify their unwillingness to fight and their lack of courage. It is for the good of their wives and children as well as for that of their fellow men that workers should be prepared to take part in the struggle. What has present society to offer them except bombing, misery and starvation? Are workers going to be submitted to those like sheep or are they going to try to prevent it even at the risk of having to do momentary sacrifices? No working class victory has been achieved without a hard struggle having to be fought against the master class in which a few fall for the freedom and happiness of the others.

Sam Cash, during the debate, challenged us to explain how we "could seize the army without getting control of Parliament." We cannot deal with such a question in a short report but Bill Gape's answer was adequate enough. "The army," he said, *is composed of men, who just like those who are in the S.P.G.B. or in the anarchist movement are able to think and decide where their interests lie and what their attitude towards the working class struggle should be. It is for them and not for us to decide what they must do, it is up to them to choose their mode of action and organisation and not for us to try and take control over them.*" On this question as on that of syndicalism which came up at the end of the debate, Bill Gape put up a practical and realist case while the S.P.G.B. speaker remained in the metaphysical realm of politics.

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## Bevin Corner

### SPHINX BEVIN.

During the sit-down strike which has taken place in the first week of June at a North-West factory Mr. Bevin sent a telegram which, far from solving matters, added confusion to the dispute.

The men had asked for the dismissal or transference from the factory of a foreman against whom they had grievances and declared that they would do no work until their demand was met. They stood or sat at their benches ready to start on receipt of the management's undertaking to remove the foreman.

During the day they were told that Mr. Bevin had replied to their telegram to him asking for their demand to be met. Mr. Bevin's message was: "No obstacle must stand in the way of a resumption of work," and the wording of it has caused some speculation among employers and employed alike. On the men's side the word "obstacle" is taken to mean the foreman, and they point out that his removal would mean an immediate resumption of work. The management on the other hand, look upon the "sit down" attitude of the men as the obstacle.

Mr. Bevin's telegram may be considered quite an amusing riddle and it is probable that he did not mean the workers or the management to find a solution for it, but he merely wanted to avoid taking sides in the dispute and like a good politician wash his

hands of it. This should teach the workers not to ask guidance to the sphinxes of Trade-unionism or politics but to discuss their problems themselves at their factory meetings, devise the methods of struggle to adopt and stick by them till their claims are won. This is the only way they will impose their will. The "labour leaders" will always be on the side of the boss and when they will not dare to do so openly they will only throw riddles to the workers like so many red herrings.

### WORKERS ARE ALWAYS WRONG . . .

But employers have been found wrong twice since the Essential Work Order has been put into effect. One employer has been bound over under the Probation of Offenders Act, the other was convicted and fined 10 pounds and 5 guineas cost.

On the other hand proceedings have been brought against 308 employees, result: 289 convictions with penalties from 10s. to 30 pounds and sentences of imprisonment from 14 days to 6 months.

### A FREE NATION.

Mr. Bevin said in the House recently that 22,000,000 out of a total of 33,300,000 people between the ages of 14 and 64 were now mobilised in the Armed Forces, Civil Defence and Industry. This figure did not take into account part-time and voluntary workers, married women with domestic ties, private domestic servants, schoolchildren and students over 14, the sick, the blind and the disabled, who would amount to another 2,000,000.

## AFTER ONE YEAR'S ALLIANCE

### FRIEND OR FOE?

Low, the cartoonist, at the time of the German-Russian pact drew an amusing cartoon showing Hitler and Stalin walking arm in arm but in his free hand each carried a revolver hidden behind their backs. We would never suggest that the alliance between Britain and Russia could be described in a similar way . . . but some labour M.P.s are not as tactful as we are in that respect! Mr. James Walker, M.P., at the Labour Party Conference speaking on the lifting of the ban on the "Daily Worker" remarked that at the time of Dunkirk that paper was denouncing the war as a capitalists' war, and he added: "How do we know if things change in the East they will not do the same thing again?" Now it is obvious that the "Daily Worker" could only change its policy again if Russia abandoned

the struggle for "democracy," and she can do that only by concluding a separate peace and a new pact with Hitler. That such thoughts should enter the mind of a Labour M.P. is rather disturbing. Mr. Walker is, by the way, in favour of retaining the ban on the "Daily Worker." We suggest to Mr. Walker that this is a very unwise position. If the "Daily Worker" continues to be banned there will be no files of the paper to prove its pro-war, pro-Churchill, pro-Tory attitude! Will not that suit the C.P. leaders very well when the change in policy foreseen by Mr. Walker takes place?

### UNTRUSTWORTHY BEDFELLOW

That Stalin should be taken out for a walk only when one is well armed is also the opinion of Mr. Harold Nicholson, M.P., ex-parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Information. He obviously does not discard the possibility of Stalin being bribed by Hitler's offers when

"He writes in the 'Spectator': 'We must remember that Hitler (who has small regard for the property or independence of others), is in a position if necessary to offer rich rewards in return for an Eastern peace.

'He could promise to give her, if he wins, not the Straits only, but the Persian Gulf and the whole empire of India. What counter-offer could the United Nations oppose to such extreme generosity?'

'He goes on to argue from this that we should not put all our eggs in the Russian basket.'

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