

# For Anarchism

FOR WORKERS'

CONTROL OF

INDUSTRY

Vol. 6 No. 1.

1st NOVEMBER, 1944

Price 2d.

## THE BRITISH T.U.C. WANTS INDUSTRIAL CONSCRIPTION



The Trade Union Congress should be the most important event in the year for the working class. An organisation which has been built up by the workers and which claims to represent their interests, should at such a congress be planning the fight against the boss, the fight for shorter hours and better conditions, and finally the abolition of the capitalist system.

But what do we find at this year's T.U.C. The decisions reached can be of assistance only to the bosses, they cannot help the workers in their struggle. The most important results are that a resolution calling for a fight against the infamous IAA regulation has been defeated; Congress has declared itself in favour of the continuance of industrial conscription after the war, and that the peace to be forced on the German workers should be "hard".

Such opinions cannot be said to represent the feelings of the rank and file of the Trade Union movement. They are the words of those who have long ago abandoned any pretence at taking part in the industrial struggle, and who are only prepared to take part in the comfortable political game, advising the bosses how best to keep the workers down.

The Congress, opened with 725 delegates who were supposed to represent nearly seven million workers, and it is very interesting to note that Government departments and large industrial firms were represented in the visitors' seats.

terrorist action has ever brought anything but harm to the working-class.

Froelich, who we are sure would have taken a different view had he foreseen his own end, (murdered in a French concentration camp after the Nazi occupation).

While German comrades were risking their lives in a deadly underground struggle, Fineman and Oldenbuck from the I.F.F. admitted that they had been wrong all these years, and now agreed on the question of terror methods against the Nazis. But they were only willing to give their support on condition that the comrades inside Germany would commit themselves for espionage.

The C.P. were approached on behalf of their Communist comrades in Germany who had joined the German actionists, and they had nothing better to do than denounce, as they do the German—those who cry "Hold the provocation and Nazi spy, the comrade who undertook the task of begging for help! These men were actually included in the lists repeatedly applied in Germany where Communist workers together with Trotskyites and Anarchists were denounced by the C.P. to the Gestapo).

These are a few facts which throw light on the attitude of people who now denounce the German—those who cry "Hold the line!" The line is coming when they will have to give account for their deeds.

WILEY FREEMAN

**EDWARDS SPEAKS**  
Mr. Ebby Edwards, general secretary of the Mineworkers' Federation, was the president of this year's T.U.C. In his speech he supported the idea of helping to build up German working class organisations, but at the same time he advocated the economic control of Germany by withholding raw materials. The control over German industrialism will be carried out by capitalist governments, who will be interested in keeping down the German workers just as much as they want to keep down the British and American workers. So that any so-called working-class movement which the British and Americans allow to exist in Germany will be a tool in their hands to control the German workers. Ebby Edwards has long ago sold out the British working class to the bosses, can we expect him to behave any better to the German workers?

**SUPPORT FOR IAA**  
The prospect for the British workers is just about as bright. Edwards advocates, and the Congress agrees that industrial conscription must remain after the war. And Sir Walter Gifford in a statement in IAA said that the Government had an unanswerable case for this regulation; strikes are illegal in wartime so it should be illegal for persons to urge others to go on strike. Not a word about the filthy conditions which force workers to use the strike weapon, nor the open provocation of the workers by the bosses which leaves striking as the only solution. Gifford seems to be heading for the House of Lords, he is quite willing to justify the most blatantly anti-working class legislation that the government introduces.

The continuance of these two things—industrial conscription and IAA—both are useful to the bosses to keep down the workers and to maintain "industrial peace". Workers are still to be directed away from their homes into jobs

chosen by some labour exchange official, and are still to be threatened with imprisonment if they refuse to go. This means that workers can no longer sell their labour power to the highest bidder but must accept whatever they are offered.

Once on the job the influence of IAA is intended to restrict strike activity, for if it does not restrict it, strikers are not connected with the industry, but can be used against any worker who advocates a strike unless he does it, at an agreed meeting. The time which is coming is bound to intensify the old problems for the workers; problems of low wages, long hours, bad conditions, unemployment; problems for which neither the capitalists nor the government will be anxious to find an answer. And in this situation the workers will be faced with the T.U.C. which has committed itself to support the government's control of labour. But the sell-out of the T.U.C. does not mean that the struggle will not take place nor that the workers will be powerless to improve their lot.

What it does mean is that the workers will discover for themselves new forms of organisation in which they will be able to fight not only for better conditions of life under capitalism but also to transform society so that privileges in the midst of poverty no longer exist.

The broad outlines of such a movement are already clear. The rank and file must make the decisions to be taken and must control all officials of the movement. Persons with administrative tasks must be subject to recall, and must not be paid more than the average wage in the industry. The basis of the organisation must be to fight the bosses, and not to join hands with them against the workers. And the end to which such a revolutionary labour movement must be nationalisation of industry, means bigger and better bosses, but workers' control of industry.

## Why not go to Germany?

The T.U. has the shamelessness to declare the whole German people responsible and guilty for this war. By doing so, it condemns itself completely in the eyes of the international militant working-class.

The German Anarchists in this country appeal in the name of their own German Comrades, and the many Socialist and Communist Comrades, who were murdered in the torture chambers and concentration camps of the S.S.; in the name of Muehsam as well as in the name of men like the Communist André the pacifist (Dostoyevsky and Professor Theodore Lessing), in the name of the many tortured victims of the Hitler régime, we appeal to the International working-class, to join our declaration of solidarity with the oppressed workers of Germany, and to protest against the shame inflicted upon the members of the murdered and defenceless imprisoned comrades.

We remind the British workers of the hundred thousand German workers killed in the various instructions of the pre-Hitler epoch, fighting the war-mongers which grew rations of the disastrous collaboration of the Labour party. Surely the workers of Britain cannot allow anybody to dishonour their dead comrades who suffered humiliation, torture and death because of their opposition to Chauvinism, War and the death-bringing alliance with the class-enemy.

If the German T.U. members in this country permit, without protest, the insult to the revolutionary section of the working-class, they not only show a pitiful lack of dignity and absence of class-consciousness but admit, by their silence, their own profound guilt. We have repeatedly accused them, as do hundreds of thousands of German workers, of complete political failure and bankruptcy. Their silence now is only an involuntary confirmation of what we declare: that they are responsible for the coming to power of Hitler, and for the War, it is the last political leaders who represented the German Labour Parties and T.U.

They have deliberately prevented the militants in every struggle, from the only action which could have defeated the counter-revolution. Thus they have made possible the systematic slaughter of all revolutionaries.

The declaration of the T.U. is nothing but a manoeuvre to cover their own bad conscience. That they have the support of the majority of the rank and file, can only be noted as such; for the lack of international solidarity and action during the German Civil War period, is partly responsible for the collapse of the German institutions. In spite of these sad experiences and the

wisdoming of the lack of international solidarity for Spain, the German revolutionary section have carried their resistance on, only objecting to terror, while representatives of their T.U., Labour Party and I.L.P. were still directing to terror methods adopted by certain groups inside Germany.

While brave comrades, deprived of any help from abroad, were organizing resistance and while (shortly before the war) two attempts on the lives of Hitler and Goebbels were carried out—the comrades involved paying the supreme price for their unsuccessful action—men like Froelich (then in Paris) when informed, wring their hands in alarm. To the "young, hot-headed comrades" they sent persuasive messages, telling them:—"History lists your name. No

## STRIKERS RECALLED TO BOYS' RELEASE

While the union leaders were bagging and putting up a moral battle with the coal miners about a strike on the Yorkshire coalfield which was to start on the 15th, miners at the village of Sorehouse, near Nottingham, were in arms in defence of a fellow worker. Groups of miners held meetings in the main street with the result that on October 30th at 6 a.m., 1,400 miners from Sorehouse, Shalfleet and Nottingham went on strike because their fellow-trader, Clifford Harrison, aged 17, of 15, Street, Sorehouse, was sent to prison at Peterborough for two months for failing to comply with a direction to work underground. His case had been adjourned so he could reconsider his position, but when he again came before the magistrate it was only to reaffirm his stand. He said that he would never work for the Sorehouse pit because in that pit there were already two men to one job and he would only

miss it Sorehouse and surrounding villages say they object to Harrison being sent to

## HANDLEY PAGE STRIKE

Sixth action involving annual workers at Handley Page Aircraft, London, makers of the Halifax bomber, was reported in the last issue of *Work Commentary*. Following the occasion of that report the wages staff committee issued the following statement:

Miss A—Typist	11. 12. 6 per week
Miss B—Ergot	12. 0. 0 "
C—Clerk	12. 7. 6 "
Miss D—Clerk	11. 7. 6 "
Miss E—Scriber	12. 8. 7. 6 "
Miss F—Section	12. 8. 18. 0 "
	11 year's service.

**THE MANAGEMENT HAVE REFUSED TO SEEK IT**

Our report has a review of our wages so that we can earn enough to live on, was sent to us by Mr. Harrison, who said that they were refused to discuss the matter.

On Monday previous the whole department went on a strike to Mr. Harrison's satisfaction. We have now been given an increase of 2.60 per week, which has been considered a fair increase. We have been so organised by personal favouritism. If in fact for one management to think 2.60 per week will either satisfy us financially or be any demonstration of what we want. The only effect this move has had is to convince us that we cannot expect fair treatment unless we fight for it.

We think you will be interested in the following samples of basic wages in the new Department:

These are fair wages, or do you think we are entitled to something better? If you do we hope you will do what you can through means of the help and encouragement of our efforts.

**Wages Staff Committee.**  
The management refused to negotiate, the wages staff strike continued until November 20th. They were joined by the factory recall, and must not be paid more than the average wage in the industry. The basis of the organisation must be to fight the bosses, and not to join hands with them against the workers. And the end to which such a revolutionary labour movement must be nationalisation of industry, means bigger and better bosses, but workers' control of industry.

Let us again point out that we do not divide the difference in wages or standards from their fellow workers to be in shape. All black out or war, all should be organised into one factory committee. As a result of the strike we have the concern of all."

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## SOCIAL PATRIOTISM

In a recent issue of *Reynolds News*, one Karl Becker, himself a former Communist Reichstag deputy, denounced those who seek "to supply excuses for the inexcusable passivity of the German masses." The insolence of it! For one who is safely outside it all now to upbraid the "passivity" of the German workers, when practically every family in Germany has a relative who has suffered under the Gestapo's whip! And who is this Karl Becker? He was a German soldier in the last war, with no record in the revolutionary or anti-militarist struggle at the time, who was made a prisoner of war in Russia. Newly taught in Leninist strategy by the Bolsheviks, he came back to Germany during the German revolution, and offered to teach the militants who by their mutinies and struggles had brought down German Imperialism and helped to bring the imperialist war to an end. This is the man who denounces the workers he has left behind in Hitler Germany!

### STALINIST MUD-SLINGING

Meanwhile the Stalinists of Moscow are also preparing to besmirch those who defend their fellow-workers in Germany. For revolutionists everywhere know what the strength of reaction is; they also know that responsibility for war and war crimes do not lie with the workers, but with international capitalism and its power-political manoeuvres—whether of the City of London, Wall Street, Wilhelmstrasse or the Kremlin. The sufferings of the German people under Hitler has only increased the revolutionists' hatred of governmentalism and its horrible confederacy of brutality. They know that the war has added to the misery of the workers and the stranglehold of their rulers. International solidarity for them is more than a mere phrase to be mouthed at T.U. congresses; they feel the whole solidarity of the world working class against their rulers, be they Allied Democrats, or Hitler, Stalin, or Franco.

Stalin, by contrast, is himself tied up with Anglo-American capitalism; so he employs his well tried trick of accusing others of his own crimes. Both the Soviet economist, Eugene Varga, and one Karel Hoffman, who writes in *War and the Working Class*, express concern at the growth of monopoly cartels during the war. And they notice a "connection" between those who favour the great cartels and the campaign for "a soft peace with Germany". It is clear that they wish to smirch the revolutionary defenders of the brutally oppressed German workers with the brush of international capitalism.

### REVOLUTIONARY ANTI-FASCISM

Let us remind these Stalinists and smug Trade Union officials: When the revolutionary workers of Spain were fighting for the freedom of the whole working class of the world, the T.U.C. refused to sanction direct strike action to force the "Munichite" National Government to send arms to Spain. While the workers of France in 1940-41 were struggling to form their resistance bands against the Gestapo, Stalin was supplying Hitler with grain and oil. While the Nazis held down one half of the Polish workers and peasants, Stalin held down the other half.

The State, in whatever country it spreads its tentacles, has always fought down the workers' struggle for freedom. And it has been helped by its fellow-governments abroad—more perhaps by the British Government than any other. But the Anarchists, the revolutionists, have everywhere lent their strength to the fighters for freedom. We do not forget the struggles since 1933 against Hitler's Nazis; nor do we forget the terror raids on Hamburg in 1943. We do not brush aside the faint reports that come through from Sweden of uprisings—too often bloodily suppressed—of German workers. Only last week "industrial disturbances" were reported in the Ruhr and Rhineland. We shall continue to fight Fascism under whatever name it masquerades; and we shall continue to extend our solidarity to the German working class in their struggle, not only against Hitler, but against any military oppression which the Allied bosses aided by their "internationalist" friends among the Trade Union Officials may seek to foist on to them.

## T. W. Brown Defence Fund

As already reported, our comrade T. W. Brown, of Kingston, was sent to prison for fifteen months in September last for distributing leaflets. The defence, of course, cost money. At the Old Bailey, in a case of this kind, it is necessary to secure legal aid, for our comrade might otherwise have gone down for the fourteen years which the prosecutor threatened.

We are therefore appealing to comrades and sympathizers for £200 to cover the cost of defence. T. W. Brown was a fearless speaker, and he is a victim of the State's war on freedom of expression. He relies on the solidarity of comrades.

All contributions—marked "T. W. Brown Defence Fund"—should be sent to Freedom Press, 27 Belsize Road, London, N.W.6.

During periods of capitalist stability, of untrammelled ruling class power, initiative lies in the hands of the State and the dominant class it represents. But during revolutions this stability is upset. Revolutionary action might be defined as action in which the working class takes the initiative. How, then, when the workers are on the move, do they organize their actions? At all times, but especially during the present century, they have set up spontaneous Councils of workers, which undertake the immediate tasks of revolutionary action. Where the workers in a locality have decided on a certain line of action—say a strike, or the administration of an expropriated estate—they have entrusted the details of carrying it out to those comrades in whom they have most faith, and whom they deem best fitted to conduct the business. These constitute a Council or Soviet. But in entrusting affairs into the hands of the Council of Workers' Delegates, the workers are very far from relinquishing initiative entirely in their hands. Revolutionary action springs from the spontaneous energy of the people as a whole—hence its tremendous power. So the comrades who constitute the Council are there to carry out the wishes of the workers whose delegates they are. And as delegates, they are directly responsible to their comrades who appointed them. If they fail to carry out the wishes of these, they can be instantly recalled. Moreover, in the face of

SPONTANEOUS INSURRECTIONS are automatic mass reactions, the explosions of tense popular feeling, often set off by the merest spark. In such situations all that parties and groups have ever done, has been to try and gain the leadership. They have sought to organize and control the violence of the insurgent masses deliberately in order to secure power to themselves. History provides sufficient examples of how revolutionary situations have occurred and developed independently of the will of political groups and parties. The imminence of insurrection is often not even expected by the revolutionary leaders and committees. Thus the German Labour leaders in 1918 were unprepared for the Spartacus uprising, nor even the German I.L.P. and Spartacus group having a coherent plan of action ready. Instead they wasted their energies in endless discussions.

In the light of historical fact the myth of leadership melts away. Even the Bolshevik leader Kayuzov, quoted by Trotsky, confirmed the spontaneous, seemingly fortuitous character of the March Revolution in Petrograd in 1917. There was no organization or group behind it; the prominent "professionals" were either in exile or in prison. Lenin arrived in Russia in April, a month later; Trotsky in May. "The idea of going into the streets had long been ripening among the workers; only at the moment nobody imagined where it would lead."

While the advocates of political action try to direct the revolutionary impulses of the workers into the forms of parliament and State organization, the workers themselves realize from the outset of every insurrection the necessity of adopting the classical tactics of anarchy: the general strike, the destruction of the hated institutions and symbols of power, the disarmament of reactionary forces and police, fraternization with the soldiers, the arming of the people, the expropriation of land, factories, transport, and governmental stores, and finally, the creation of their own instrument of Social Revolution, the workers' Councils, on the basis of mutual co-operation and control from below.

### SOLDIERS COUNCILS DURING THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

We find soldiers Councils already during the French Revolution. They sprang up in every unit of the French Army and Navy, taking spontaneous direct action to remove unpopular regimental measures and costumes, refusing to recognize unpopular officers and in some cases arresting them, and taking the control of the regimental funds out of the hands of the often corrupt officers. These Councils of the rank-and-file were closely connected with the political societies and federations in Paris and other towns, from whom they received revolutionary pamphlets and news-sheets, and with whom they organized joint meetings.

This development in a syndicalist direction was prevented from

further progress by the National Assembly, which dissolved the Councils and brought the soldiers' Council movement under the control of the Jacobin clubs. The same thing was to happen in the Germany of 1918-19.

In the years before 1905 we find Social Revolutionaries and Bolsheviks in rivalry, seeking to gain influence and control over the rapidly growing industrial Councils movement. Both parties sent agitators into the industrial districts to contact sympathizers among the workers who were spontaneously and independently organizing themselves. Through their professional organizers, the parties gradually gained influence within the Councils, and began to try and bring the local struggles under centralized party control. The delegates to the first Council of workers' deputies thus represented not so much the federation of workers, but the cells of the parties within the industrial working class.

### COUNCILS AS INSTRUMENTS OF POLITICS

The spontaneous Councils have provided the impetus for the revolution, the workers' natural instrument of the Social Revolution. But they have so far been frustrated because the parties have succeeded in infiltrating them and turning them instead into instruments of politics. All revolutionary attempts have been frustrated in this way. The politicians who placed themselves at the top as self-styled leaders have manipulated and interfered with the revolutionary organizations of the workers; have gained their confidence by expressing revolutionary ideas in cleverly formulated slogans, and then, when once in power, have acted against the will of the masses.

The Bolshevik history books would have us believe that the events of October 1905 were chiefly organized and directed by the Bolshevik Party. But objective study of the facts shows that the first general strike was neither organized nor timed by any centre group, but was on the contrary the result of a series of spontaneous industrial strikes, begun by the Moscow railway workers, and direct action of the revolting peasants in seizing some of the large estates. The Council of working men's deputies, in which almost every party had its delegates, was not leading, but merely following, the impulses of the rebellious workers.

In a manifesto the purpose of the Council of working men's deputies (Soviet) was defined as being to organize and give direction during the General Strike and to act as representatives before the rest of society. Every factory and trade was invited to send delegates, one for every 500 men. But it was not this newly created organization of the parties which timed and organized the strike action. The second General Strike was once more a spontaneous solidarity strike of the industrial workers on behalf of the mutinous Kronstadt sailors, condemned to death by courts martial. Even after the Tsar's govern-

each new phase in the situation they must report back to the workers as a whole.

The Councils have thus been faithful instruments of the revolutionary workers. Unfortunately in every revolution of the past, the power of the Councils has been undermined by politicians who claim to represent the workers, and seek to centralize all initiative into their own hands. When they have succeeded in this aim, they have hampered and curtailed the work of the Councils in every possible way, so that the revolutionary initiative of the workers is strangled, and once more the previous position is re-established in which a small minority wielding political power holds the initiative. When this has happened, the counter-revolution has triumphed.

History is mainly written by politicians and their adherents. In the following articles, the workers councils, and the part they play in the social revolutionary events of the present century are outlined. It is a tragic and a heroic story; but it is one which the working class must learn and lay up in their hearts if the revolutions which will succeed this war are not to be betrayed into the hands of the politicians ("revolutionary" or otherwise) once more, and yet another period of reaction is to intervene before the Social Revolution is finally achieved.

ment had arrested the president of the Petrograd Council of Working Men's Deputies, and Moscow became the new centre of the Soviet, there was still no plan on the part of the Council to turn the strike movement into rebellion. The orders issued for the third General Strike were given only after the railway workers had collected arms and erected barricades on their own initiative. In short, the insurrection was launched by the people, without orders from the political groups. The credit in 1905 belongs to the initiative of the workers.

What are the lessons of 1917? Again the break up of the Tsarist régime in March was not controlled by any revolutionary political groups. And the Bolsheviks only sought to disintegrate the army when they realised that a well-disciplined army would be a dangerous counter-revolutionary force, whereas its break-up would place at their disposal a mass of armed peasants and workers, with whose aid they hoped to gain power. Nevertheless, the decline of army discipline was a sort of natural process long before the revolutionary left began to take a hand. Wholesale desertions, complete disregard of orders, attacks upon and even murders of unpopular officers, fraternization with the German troops, blank refusal to go into attack; these were spontaneous manifestations of revolutionary feeling.

### WORKERS MORE "LEFT" THAN LEADERS

During the revolution the workers showed more revolutionary insight than the "leaders". When the Provisional Government wanted to continue the war, they resisted. While the Right Social Revolutionaries and Mensheviks accepted a coalition with Kerensky, the masses demonstrated their discontent at the pro-war policy. When the front collapsed, 300,000 strikers spontaneously demonstrated with the demand "All Power to the Councils", and were crushed by reactionary troops. Once more, it was the masses who rose to defeat the Kornilov putsch. Even Lenin had to admit: "The country is a thousand times more Left than Chernov and Tseretelli, and a hundred times more Left than we are."

Accordingly, Lenin only took up the slogan "All Power to the Soviets", which he had formerly repudiated, when he saw that the revolutionary workers and peasants were losing faith in the Social Revolutionary leaders—formerly their party had been numerically the strongest. He hoped thereby to secure their support and thus gain a majority in the Soviet of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies. But, just as in 1905 this representative body was not an instrument of workers' revolution, but a weapon in the hands of the Bolsheviks.

Having gained power, Lenin cynically declared that the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies were only to be considered as organs of insurrection, as agents of revolutionary power; "Otherwise they are nothing but a vain plaything, and a fatal cause of apathy, indifference and deception of the masses." "We must fight against constitutionalism and the hopes founded on the Congress of Soviets."

## PAGES OF LABOUR HISTORY

# The Rail Strike of 1919

The first big labour dispute of the post-war period was the railway strike of September 1919. From the close of the first world war it was generally thought by the workers that the employing class would soon begin a general offensive against wages to reduce them to pre-war standards. When the railmen were attacked it seemed to the workers that this was the beginning of the looked-for offensive.

The employing class were unable to follow their usual strategy of attacking the miners first, for British export coal selling at £6 a ton yielded enormous profit. (In 1930 the price was 10s. a ton). So it seemed the railmen were to meet the first shock of the general battle. Anxiously, the workers followed events. If the railmen won, wage levels of all would be safe for a year or two. If the railmen lost, then all would suffer reductions.

In February 1919 the rail unions had opened negotiations with the Government (the railways were still under government war-time control) for the standardisation of wage rates. They sought to change war bonus to basic rate and to level up the many anomalies in the many different rates paid to persons in the one grade by the several companies. (It will be recalled that at that time there were many railway companies: two years later these were amalgamated into four main line companies).

The Government dragged on negotiations for more than six months, during which time, Lloyd George later revealed, they perfected their plans for a blackleg transport system, plans they later used during the General Strike. Negotiations were in the hands of the Minister of Transport, Sir Eric Geddes and the President of the Board of Trade, Sir Auckland Geddes; later the Prime Minister took the principal lead. The first stage of their plan was to divide the workers and fight the lower paid grades first. To this end they met the demands of the locomotive men, mainly organised in the Amalgamated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen. A few weeks later

the Government presented terms to the National Union of Railwaymen, representing the porters, guards, platelayers and the great mass of lower paid grades.

The terms were a declaration of war. Wage cuts ranging from 2s. to 16s. a week were to be imposed with a basic wage of 40s. a week for the lowest paid grades. The N.U.R. executive met on Wednesday, September 24 and ordered a strike to take place at midnight, Friday, September 26.

### THE FIGHT IS ON

From the time of the first news of the wage cuts it was clear that the railmen had the support of the working class. The locomotive men and their union the A.S.L.E. & F. refused to be tempted by the offer of better terms, and joined their less favoured fellow workers in their strike. Saturday morning revealed the strike to be almost 100 per cent. solid; few blackleg trains being run. Against this, the Government's blackleg transport plan seemed feeble.

But the strike breaking efforts of the State were not limited to replacing the withdrawn labour of the railmen. It was meant to be war. Lloyd George in leading the attack declared the strike to be an "Anarchist conspiracy". The Press let loose a flood of propaganda based upon its war propaganda, strikers taking the place of Germans as objects of hate. "Unconditional surrender," "the enemy" and "a fight to a finish" were favourite terms of the Press during that last week of September, in a campaign directed from Downing Street.

The Cabinet mobilised the Army against the strikers and advised the local authorities to organise a "Citizen Guard". War-time rationing was still in existence then and the strikers were threatened by a plan to cancel their ration books and so starve them and their families into submission.

Even more formidable was the Government's action, quite illegal, of ordering the stoppage of the week's wages due to the railmen. The N.U.R. was in a poor posi-

tion to pay strike benefit owing to so much of its funds being tied up in investments. Their bank balance, the Cabinet threatened to freeze. Only £3,000 in ready cash was to hand.

### SOLIDARITY

The Sunday following the first day of the strike was used to hold mass meetings of workers in every town throughout Britain. There was no mistaking the mood of the workers. They were enthusiastically with the strikers. Most bitter was their anger against the threat to blockade the railmen's families by the arbitrary use of ration books. Quickly the value of solidarity was revealed. The Co-operative Wholesale Society Bank cashed N.U.R. cheques to the value of £500,000 for strike benefit, while most of the local co-operative societies supplied food to the railmen in return for vouchers of local strike committees.

The vicious newspaper propaganda against the strikers was curbed by the threat of the London printers to strike unless the railmen's cause was given a show.

The transport workers, being members of the Triple Alliance, were eager to join the strike and this threat undoubtedly influenced the Government. It should be explained that the Triple Alliance was an agreement among the N.U.R., the Miners' Federation and the Transport Workers' Federation (a federation in many transport unions which later became the Transport and General Workers' Union) to support one another in time of strike. In the ranks of the workers determination that the railmen should win grew fast.

### COUNTER-OFFENSIVE

The N.U.R. did not allow the enemy an open field for his propaganda, instead they built their own propaganda machine and were soon setting the pace in a counter-attack. Advertisements setting out the strikers' case appeared daily in the newspapers, £2,000 a day being spent on these.

The N.U.R. entrusted most of its news service and similar publicity to the Labour Research Department which went to work with skill and enthusiasm. Circulars to organisations, posters, letters to local newspapers, daily bulletins poured from its offices. Whatever statement was made by the Government, was instantly answered by fact and argument. The work of the L.R.D. in the strike cannot be appreciated unless one

knows that at that time it was not the Communist Party outfit it now is. Originally, it was a body formed by the Fabian Society and later captured by the C.P., a few years after the latter's formation. But in 1919 it was a healthy body, given to sincere research. Most striking of all the propaganda used by the rail union was a nation-wide poster campaign which shouted their case from the hoardings, a campaign which cost several tens of thousands of pounds. Perhaps the best publicity of all was that produced by the unpaid labour of hundreds of open air speakers who day and night set up their platforms at street corners and market places. George Lansbury's *Daily Herald* too helped valiantly.

### SOLIDARITY SUCCEEDS

After a few days the strike grip was felt by commerce and industry. Factories and, more especially, steel works and mines began to close. At the end of the first week the Government capitulated. The strikers won. Agreement was reached on Sunday, October 5; no wage cut, wages stabilised, a wage advance for the lowest paid grade, no victimisation and immediate payment of the seized wages. The railmen had won by their determined stand and by the help given, and about to be given, them by other workers. The employing class and its government were not invincible; they could be defeated by the solidarity of the workers. The workers rejoiced at their victory. They believed that they had, for the present, prevented a general attack on wages, an attack which was not to be attempted again until nearly two years later.

Certain lessons stand out boldly from the history of this struggle. They are: That the workers must fight the State if they would protect their wages. The State is not above classes as Socialists would have us believe. It is an instrument of the employing class, used to maintain its exploitation of labour.

That the workers must reject the advice of persons like Pollitt who now call for a "progressive front" of labour and Liberals. The Government of 1919 was a coalition of Tories and Liberals, led by Liberal Lloyd George, sometime contributor to the *Daily Worker*, and progressive to the Communists. The two Geddes, also, were Liberals.

That, in spite of present-day wails by labour leaders that the workers cannot hope to succeed in a strike if opposed by the Government, the workers defeat the Government by strike action.

And the greatest lesson of all is that SOLIDARITY SUCCEEDS!

TOM BROWN.

# INDIAN WOMEN EMPLOYED UNDERGROUND IN MINES

## I.L.O. agreement ignored to increase production

GOVERNMENTS respect treaties, agreements and the like when it suits their convenience. We are told this by our Government with regard to Germany and of the fact that it is a waste of time to sign treaties with that country. What our Government does not admit is that Germany is not the only offender. For those who still believe in the sanctity of British politics and the value of a British pledge, we quote below from a recent session of the House (Hansard 12/10/44) in which questions were asked of Ministers about the breaking of certain labour agreements made by the Government of India.

Mr. Hynd asked the Minister of Labour whether he proposes to report to the governing body of the I.L.O. the non-observance by the Government of India of the convention concerning the employment of women underground, having regard to the provisions of Article 411 of the Constitution of the I.L.O. Mr. Bevin: No, Sir.

Mr. Hynd asked the Secretary of State for India whether he will now make representations to the Government of India to ensure the recognition of its obligations under the I.L.O. concerning the employment of women underground.

The Secretary of State for India (Mr. Amery): Six months after the loss on the employment of women had been lifted, the Government of India, in accordance with their undertaking reviewed the position. In spite of all the other measures taken to increase and produce it remains much below requirements and the situation is serious. The Government of India were therefore forced reluctantly to the decision that it was not practicable to re-impose the ban immediately. But the question is to be examined again very shortly.

An agreement should be binding on the parties to it whether it works in their favour or not. We take it that the ban on women working underground was arrived at as a result of pressure from all kinds of organizations throughout the world for reasons other than output and war needs. It is a reflection on the lack of humanity which characterizes all Governments that Ministers can so coolly say that women were virtually forced down the mines because we needed output, there is a shortage of manpower (how many millions died of starvation



in Bombay recently?) and this is the only way to solve the problem. But, as it to stress his complete indifference to the sufferings of others, this is how Mr. Amery answered an even more pertinent question: Dr. Edith Summerskill: Could the hon. gentleman now answer the question I asked him about a year ago—whether pregnant women are prohibited from going underground?

Mr. Amery: As a temporary measure, women are doing certain work underground in seams over six feet in height.

Mr. George Griffiths: Pregnant women? Dr. Summerskill: Will the Minister answer whether pregnant women are prohibited from going underground?

Mr. Amery: I think they are, but will make sure on the point.

Dr. Summerskill: It is absolutely disgraceful.

Mr. G. Griffiths: It is a crying shame.

It will be noticed that Mr. Amery had nearly a year's notice of the question yet he presumably did not think it important enough to look into. We shall watch Hansard to see whether the question is eventually answered.

Meanwhile, we would add that we have noticed no parliamentary or other outburst from the Labour benches against the use of women underground in the Russian mines. Yet it does exist and certain Communist leaders in this country have drawn public attention to the fact, naturally supporting such measures! (This is dealt with at length in the new Freedom Press pamphlet "Workers in Stalin's Russia"). Presumably our politicians will argue that since Russia refused to join in the I.L.O. discussions she is not tied to their agreements and therefore it is in order to send women down the mines!

V.R.

We have all heard it said that the masses will not fight except for material things, and hence must always be guided by mediocre ends and mediocre people. I believe, on the contrary, that the masses have rejected the leadership of the demagogues and the socialists because it was middling and muddling. If mediocrity were good enough for the masses, the Social Democrats would never have lost their influence over the German workers. It is precisely because the masses suffer from a feeling of mediocrity that they refuse to accept mediocre leaders. The Church was the hearts of the masses in the days when it offered them the holiest and most difficult aims. It lost its spiritual leadership when it became profane and conservative.

There is still another myth to be refuted. It is that in all countries where the means of expressing opinions are monopolized by the State, men can no longer think freely or boldly. But the truth is quite the contrary: that the greatest, the most audacious thoughts on liberty have come from nations where liberty had ceased to exist. The human mind will never let itself be transmuted into a machine. Human liberty and human dignity are conceptions that will never perish.

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27th OCTOBER: THE MEANING OF ANARCHISM by Tom Hawkes  
30th NOVEMBER: THE MEANING OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN GREAT BRITAIN by Ben Brown  
10th NOVEMBER: BY THE CHANGING OF THE GUARDS: AN ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHANGING OF THE GUARDS by Clifford Holden  
26th NOVEMBER: DAIRY FARMING IN ITALY TO-DAY by M. L. Berneri

A conservative M.P. (Sir Waldron Smithers) reported to the House of Commons on October 10th, that conditions for tuberculous patients in Kent were wholly inadequate. Despite the outlay of £45,000 by the Kent County Council, there had been an administrative breakdown, and TB patients are unable to get institutional treatment and are dying in their homes. Appalling conditions prevail at the clinic at Bromley; there are no beds and "accommodation for

lost patients to die from lack of institutional care because the state refuses to give hospital workers a living wage. Meanwhile, although the death rate from tuberculosis has declined, the number of new cases has increased from 34,000 in 1939 to 42,450 in 1943. It is reported (Daily Mail, 20/10/44) that the Ministry of Health "regards these figures without alarm". Yet in a munitions factory in the Manchester area, the percentage of TB

# Tuberculous Patients Left to die at Home

patients is most primitive". "The Medical Officer of Health," said Sir Waldron Smithers, "is heartbroken at the distress around him and his inability to help."

## GOVERNMENT'S EXCUSES

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health, Miss Horsburgh, gave us an excuse that "the real difficulty was that it was impossible to get nursing and domestic staff." She said that the death rate from tuberculosis was back to the 1938 level.

Why cannot nurses and domestic staff be obtained? Because the rates of pay are so abominably low. Nurses start at about £40 p.a. (unusually get £5 to £15 more), and live in under-occupied and antiquated discipline which reduces them to the level of irresponsible school girls. Wages for women who do domestic work are well known to be even worse. If the nursing and domestic staff who work in hospitals and clinics were raised to a human level, and their hours reduced so that they can live like human beings instead of mice, there would be no shortage. The government's excuse amounts to this: that they are permitting tubercu-

cases has jumped nearly 40 per cent. in the last six months. What is of great significance in these figures is that a large proportion of the new cases are young women in the 16-20 age group—that is to say exactly the group that was chiefly affected in the last war. According to the Daily Mail, the Ministry of Health when questioned on the incidence of tuberculosis in the factories, said: "We do not keep occupational records." That is a matter for the Ministry of Labour. So the old bureaucratic game of passing the buck, refusing to take responsibility or initiate any steps to remedy an evil, goes on. Meanwhile it must be remembered that the tuberculosis experience of the last war is being repeated in this. Although the TB figures fell consistently from about 3850 up to 1941, the recovery from the war increase was slow, and the 1943 level was not reached again till 1928. On account of the war, TB in this country marked time for 15 years. Now the same thing is happening. But—the Ministry of Health is not alarmed.

J.H.

# Syndicates NOW!

In spite of the many fine phrases mouthed at the T.U.C., workers know well enough on which side the Trade Unions will line up in the struggles coming between Capitalism and Labour. Britain's workers have learned by bitter experience that those who claim most noisily to represent their interests are the first to sell out to the bosses when rulers and ruled really get to grips.

It is high time, therefore, that we began to form those workers' organisations which are incorruptible; which, unlike the Trade Unions, cannot pass out of the control of the rank and file and which owe nothing to the opportunism of a handful of self-styled leaders, but all to the innate capability of the workers to manage their own affairs.

It is high time, too, that the workers of this country realised that their interests are identical with the interests of the workers of every other country. That there is one enemy of the working class and one enemy only, and that is the international ruling class. And in order to shake off the stranglehold our masters have upon us we must

organise, and organise NOW in a form which will enable us to take part with confidence in the coming struggles of the international working class.

For five years workers have been slaughtering workers. For five years we have allowed what little freedom peace-time capitalism granted us to be licked from us, piece by piece, until we find ourselves now in a condition of industrial slavery.

There is only one way to put an end to this. Only one way to kill this system which makes peace intolerable and war inevitable. That is by Social Revolution.

We must start now to build up the syndicates through which the workers will seize control of the factories, the mines and the land, so that not only will the revolution be paid and clothed but that we shall be able to pass straight into that condition of freedom and well-being which is denied us to-day.

Anarchy is our goal, Syndicalism is our means. We need syndicates NOW!  
SAM.

# Silone Returns to Italy

THIS Evening Standard 6/10/44 announced that Ignazio Silone, the author of Fontamara and Bread and Wine has returned to Italy.

I hear that Ignazio Silone, the great Italian anti-Fascist writer, has left his refuge in Switzerland for Rome.

Since 1942 he has been an exile; his writings have been among the most potent attacks on Fascism ever penned, and in the sphere of active anti-Fascist politics he has been, from Switzerland, an effective force. But his return to his own country will not be without political difficulties, despite the overthrow of Fascism. Silone is an "independent Communist," attached to no party. He is persona grata with neither the Communists nor the Liberals at Rome. We are not surprised to hear that Silone will not be popular among the scheming politicians of Rome. We remember what he wrote nearly two years ago in an article entitled "What I stand for" and which we reproduced in the March (1943) issue of War Commentary. The concluding sen-

tences deserve to be remembered on the occasion of his return to Italy.

The struggle between socialism and fascism will not be decided by war, the truth being that war is general, social nothing. It may well be that fascism will be conquered by force of arms, and nevertheless will develop in the victor states—perhaps even with a democratic or socialist mask, under the term of a "Red fascism." History is made by men, not by social determinisms, and I confess that I am not pessimistic.

In summing up, I stand for: (1) an integral federalism and (2) an ethical conception of socialism. Federalism is often recommended these days as a penalty for defeated nations. But it would not be a penalty; it would be a triumph for our cause. As for the ethical conception of socialism, it does not demand a new morality; there is no question of seeking a new justification for socialism; all we have to do is to recognize its true potentiality. A society develops when the classes that have been most over-hardened with hardships are recognized and judged at their true worth. I am proud of having given these hardships a new name, that of the *cafone*.

# CAPTAIN REFUSED TO FIGHT - COURT-MARTIALLED

The honour of his family and the fighting record of his brothers were among points put forward in his defence plea by Captain Douglas-Home, son of the Earl of Home, who has been court-martialled in Belgium.

A summary of his plea is published in the *Manchester Advertiser*. This paper had earlier published a letter said to be from Douglas-Home, saying he had refused to fight when ordered to do so at Le Havre.

Findings of the court-martial, before which he was charged with not obeying a lawful command, will be announced later, the War Office states.

In his plea Captain Home stated that it was solely political opinion which had prompted him to take the action upon which the charge against him was based.

On the question as to whether his action was prompted by cowardice, there were officers and men in his own regiment who would willingly march for his coolness in a dangerous situation in the past.

Daily Mirror, 19/10/44.

As reported in the last issue of War Commentary, Captain Douglas-Home refused to fight when ordered to attack Le Havre because as he said in a letter: "I could not bring myself to take part in an operation against troops who admittedly did not want to fight but whose commander... refused to accept unconditional surrender."

# "CORRECT" BEHAVIOUR—BY ORDER

A revolutionary list of rules for the behaviour of American Service men when on leave here has been issued by the U.S. Provost-Marshal in Sydney.

Firstly the men must not walk in the streets with their arms round girls, or hold a girl's hands, or carry their handbags. Secondly they must not stand at shop windows. Thirdly, they must not sit on the grass in parks at night, or sit on the grass with girls whose names are available. Fourthly, they must not drink in public places which are not available to the natives.

# THE LESSER EVIL

To vote for Roosevelt because one is afraid Dewey is, of course, the classic "lesser evil" choice which the Left has been making for a long time now and which, in my opinion, is largely responsible for the uninterrupted series of defeats it has suffered. It is the same choice which liberals have made in the present war: we are for the United Nations not because there is any positive progressive dynamism in their present leadership but because we are against Hitler. But why must one make this choice? It thinks get to a certain pitch of rottenness, and I think they have long since

# THE COMEDY OF ELECTIONS

Against the advice of his doctors and request of the Secret Service, President Roosevelt to-day drove in an open car through drizzling rain along 30 miles of New York streets, cheered and acclaimed by more than 3,000,000 people.

This was the President's answer to the smear-campaign against his health, to charges that he was too sick and tired to be viewed by the public.

Wearing almost a theatrical naval cloak and a battered stained Fedora hat, which he has worn in his three previous campaigns and regards as a mascot, Roosevelt waved and grinned at the rain-soaked crowd with all the bouncer and vigour of a man half his age.

Hundreds of G-men and 10,000 policemen guarded the route.

Spectators were barred from roads adjoining the route, which was patrolled by armed security agents, some of them carrying machine-guns.

Sunday Dispatch, 22/10/44.

# STEEL YOURSELF!

Mr. Ashton, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, commented: "I have been asked to give the cost of the war up to date. I must ask the House to steel itself before I give the figure."

Mr. Ashton glanced around and paused, and then announced the cost of the first five years of the war up to September 2, 1944, was: Twenty-three thousand eight hundred and ninety three million pounds.

Evening Standard, 20/10/44.

# NEGROES BEATEN UP

Danger of a race riot in Memphis, Tennessee, is reported by Morris Milgram, national secretary of the Workers Defence League, who charges that the failure of the police to apprehend thugs who have been beating up Negro leaders "suggests that re-



# THOSE SPIRITUAL LEADERS

The Ecclesiastical Commission has been one of Britain's biggest landlords since its foundation just over a century ago. Acts of Parliament gave it control of the vast Church estates all over the country.

To-day its agricultural land exceeds 260,000 acres. Its property in London—mostly residential—covers some 5000 acres. The annual rent-roll from its farmlands, which are divided into a host of small estates, is around £266,500.

Evening Standard, 6/10/44.



The Roman Catholic Hierarchy of England have approved of the bombing of France and the so-called "Church of Scotland" has approved of the bombing of Germany.

Does that mean that Christianity has left no permanent impression on the minds of men? Of course not! Catholics do not eat meat on Friday and Presbyterians do not whistle on the Sabbath!

Scott Socialist, 5th issue 1944.

# SOVIET UNION HONOURS CO-OPS ENEMY

Moscow officially announced last night the award of the Order of Suvorov, First Class, to Field-Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery.

Lord Beaverbrook and Mr. Oliver Lyttelton also receive this Order "for outstanding services in supplying the U.S.S.R. with war materials, and for the important role they have played in the struggle against the common enemy, Hitlerite Germany."

Daily Worker, 3/10/44.

Nothing is said of the outstanding services of Lord Beaverbrook in defending private enterprise and of the important role his papers have played in attacking the co-operative movement.

# Through the Press

## PROFILE OF BLOOD AND GUTS PATTON

Lieut. General George Patton Jr. set a new record for the distance between doghouse and popular acclaim. Before Aug. 15 it had been rumoured Patton was in France, but he was still remembered as the man who had once slapped a sick soldier. When it was revealed that Patton was in command of the U.S. Third Army, which had rampaged through Brittany and was now closing on Paris, the general immediately became a full-blown hero. Moral: the world loves how much had been forgotten about him, Patton was still the kind of man who said things like: "The way to fight Germans is to ram a bayonet into their belly buttons and flip 'em up and down" and "All you have to do with those Hunns is to drive them up one hill and kick them down another hill and kick them down another all the way to Berlin". But events last week seemed to indicate that a fire-and-brimstone fighter like General Patton was just what was needed to whip the faltering Germans.

Life (U.S.A.), 28/8/44.

## COST OF BUREAUCRACY

There are 33,600 officials engaged whole-time in the collection and administration of income tax, surtax, E.P.T., N.D.C. and War Damage contributions. They cost their victims about £11,200,000 a year in salaries, according to figures given by Sir John Anderson.

Daily Mirror, 19/10/44.

## CRIMINALS GO ON PRODUCING COAL

German miners near the small town of Richtersiech—just outside Aachen—which was captured by the Americans yesterday, came out of the mines to take a look at the invading forces.

For half an hour, while bullets were flying, they watched the Americans chasing the German soldiers out of the town.

Then they went back to the mines and started producing more coal just as if nothing had happened. Only this time the coal will be used by the Americans.

Daily Herald, 18/10/44.

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BEATINGS LIE WITH IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN MEMPHIS

Four Negro leaders were attacked recently, and in addition, Rev. Roy Love was menaced but managed to escape in his car before the thugs reached him. On June 13, Rev. Aron S. Gilmartin, W.D.L. chairman, wired the Department of Justice in Washington asking an "investigation of the beatings and apparent conspiracy of the Memphis police force against the civil rights of Negroes."

The Call, (U.S.A.), 7/7/44.

These are the Huns, the maniacs, the criminals whom the T.U. Congress wants to see punished in a ruthless way. They seem to be very much like the British miners whose only crime is to slave away for their bosses.

# Red and Black Notebook

## Waiting For A Bus

For four years the tired workers of Britain have left the factories at 5, 6, 7 or 8 o'clock, not to go straight home to a hot meal and a rest or entertainment, but to take their places on a long, weary, impatient bus queue. Londoners think their queue experiences the limit, queues being formed for every conceivable and inconceivable purpose, but bus waiting in provincial munition towns is now our national pastime. Especially irritating is the lot of the nightshift workers, for whom, most often, no provision is made. It is the common lot of night workers to be left to rot in bus queues until, like Lot's wife, they are turned into pillars of salt—or ice.

In the blitzed days of 1940 workers were ready to put up with this until they saw employers and officials riding one man to one car in vehicles each with an engine strong enough to drive a bus and each with his own private driver. Unless then to say that the shortage of buses from lack of petrol could not be helped.

## The Man-Power Stunt

With the return of darkness and bad weather the bus services appear to have deteriorated again, even more so in the provinces. Authority, no longer able to plead lack of petrol, is forced back upon its old alibi, shortage of man power. The Daily Express of October 21, 1944 gives the following dreary warning:

"Warning was given last night that the time-wasting and health-wrecking queues for buses and trams are likely to be even worse this winter, because existing services may have to be cut for lack of manpower. There may even be a breakdown of services throughout the country."

The cuts will come unless at least 4,000 more men and women are drafted to the industry as drivers, conductors and maintenance staff.

The figures were given last night by the Public Transport Association Incorporated, representing two-thirds of the operators in the country. They have been making a nation-wide survey. "One month ago bus and tram firms working 33,373 vehicles needed additional staffs numbering 1,229 drivers, 2,005 conductors and 1,227 maintenance men to operate the then existing schedule services."

But the position has become worse since then. The number of clippings and drivers directed to the industry by the Ministry of Labour in the last four weeks has not been sufficient to compensate for those called up.

The result is that the country has the buses and trams to run adequate winter services, but not the manpower. The operators have pleaded to the Ministry of War Transport and Ministry of Labour without effect. Now they say a breakdown in public road services is possible this winter. And they hold that responsibility for such a breakdown would rest on them."

## The Perfect Alibi

Government departments have long regarded "shortage of man power" as the perfect excuse for doing nothing, disregarding the fact that they are responsible for any shortage. So far the alibi has succeeded in covering governmental bureaucratic inefficiency, muddle and ignorance. Now the excuse must be wearing thin. Thousands of men and women are attending the vacancy counters of Labour Exchanges. Every day thousands are being dismissed from aircraft and munition factories. Every day small, and even large, engineering concerns are permanently closing down. Yet bureaucracy cannot find 4,000 men and women to retrieve the bus situation. To a coal problem this winter they add a transport problem. Only 4,000! We can find that number from one factory.

These workers are not lost when they are dismissed from the factories. The Labour Exchanges have them ticketed. Bureaucracy has the Essential Works Order and every possible device to move labour power—and yet it fails. Workers' Control of transport could not be guilty of such ignorance. Meanwhile the problem becomes worse, particularly in the Midlands, whence reports reaching War Commentary are confirmed by the Midland Regional Transport Commissioner who is able and willing to authorise improved bus services, if only the Ministry of Labour will allow him to release the idle vehicles.

## FREEDOM BOOKSHOP

132 Cheltenham Road, Bristol

Freedom Press publications advertised elsewhere in this issue also in stock. The following books are still available:

- WORKERS IN STALIN'S RUSSIA M. L. Berneri 1/-
- THE RUSSIAN PEASANT AND OTHER STUDIES (2 vols.) John Maynard 5/-
- TOLSTOI: AN APPROACH Junko Lavrin 7/6
- STARVATION IN EUROPE G. H. Bourne 8/-
- THE LOOM OF LANGUAGE Bodmer 15/-
- ARMIES AND THE ART OF REVOLUTION K. C. Chorley 12/6
- THE HISTORY OF THE IRISH CITIZEN ARMY R. M. Fox 6/-
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- SELECTIONS FROM THE WORKS OF GERARD WINSTANLEY 7/6
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Please add for postage on books as follows: Orders up to 1/- add 2d; postage 1/- to 3/- add 3d; 3/- to 8/- add 5d; 8/- to 15/- add 7d; over 15/- add 1/-.

## P.A.Y.E.

P.A.Y.E. translated officially as "pay as you earn", but interpreted by the workers as "pay all you earn", has now been in operation long enough for us to test our judgment on the matter. War Commentary opposed it from the beginning of the proposal. The boss never initiates anything for our good, but always for his own. Naturally, he would not be a boss if he did otherwise. Workers are now universally cursing P.A.Y.E. which defeats all their efforts to meet the rising cost of living by working for a little extra.

Let us not forget how, when the Government was making its psychological preparation for the new system, the Communists rallied to their aid and persuaded the handfuls of trade unionists who attend branch meetings to pass resolutions demanding P.A.Y.E. They've made the bed—we now all have to lie on it.

## The Vanguard Of The Working Class

Overheard in a Communist book shop: The Lady in Charge: "My dear! I've had such a terrible man in here to-day. Right off the Party Line. Wants strikes and all that sort of thing!"

SYNDICALIST.

# NOVEMBER MARTYRS

## NOVEMBER—MONTH OF BITTER MEMORIES

Red November, black November  
Bleak November, black and red;  
Hallowed month of labour's martyrs,  
Labour's heroes, labour's dead.

Labour's hope and wrath and sorrow—  
Red the promise, black the threat;  
Who are we not to remember?  
Who are we to dare forget?

Black and red the colours blended  
Black and red the pledge we made;  
Red, until the fight is ended;  
Black until the debt is paid.

R. C.  
(from the I.W.W. Song Book)

November, more than any other month, is the time when our movement remembers those whose lives have been lost in the struggle against oppression, against class-society. We recall their memories because their deaths show the fear in which revolutionary ideas are held by the ruling class throughout the world.

### 1887

Four anarchists, Parsons, Spies, Fischer and Engel were murdered by the State of Illinois on November 11th, 1887 in Chicago U.S.A. A fifth, Lingg, died of self-inflicted wounds while awaiting execution. Three others, Fielden, Schwab and Neebe had received long terms of imprisonment. All of them were framed-up by the state on the charge of inciting an unknown individual who had thrown a bomb during a police assault on a peaceful protest meeting held by workers at Haymarket Square during May of the previous year.

During the trial it was proved that none of the men had any connection with the bomb. Their crime, it was stated by the prosecution, was merely that they were anarchists. For that five were condemned to death, two to life-imprisonment and one to 15 years.

### 1915

Joe Hill's name lives as the writer of such working-class songs as "Pie in the Sky", "Scissor Bill", and "Casey Jones—the Union Scab." On November 18th, 1915, Joe Hill, a Swedish member of the I.W.W., was stood against the prison wall of Salt Lake, U.S.A., and shot. His songs, his phrases, had become part of the common language of the American workers. Because he was a rebel, an I.W.W., because his ability to express deep social philosophy in simple working-class terms was feared by the ruling-class he had to be killed. He had been convicted of murder on purely circumstantial evidence and although Wilson, then American president, appealed for clemency, he was murdered by the gunmen of American capital.

### 1916

The I.W.W. has a long list of martyrs. We remember the five fellow-workers who were shot on the boat *Verona* during the lumberjacks' strike at Everett, Washington, on November 5th, 1916. Their deaths were

# UNREST AMONG MINERS

In the July issue of *War Commentary* I ventured to predict that the youth in the mining industries would answer Bevin's crude and uncoincidental adoption of Nazi Labour Front methods by a fierce struggle which would merge with the century-old fight of the miners with the master-class. Events that occur every day—although only a fraction of them are reported in the capitalist press—reveal the wide and powerful extent of this assault on the unwieldy and hateful apparatus of the State which is being carried on by miners almost everywhere.

The "yellow press", though careful not to mention the word syndicalism, is continually bewailing the fact that no sooner has a wage increase occurred than the miners promptly ask for more. "Labour is unkind to Capital!" "A monstrous assault on the mine-owners profits!" screech the pen-pushing inebriates of Fleet Street. You see, unfortunately for these more and more miners are realizing that this war is not in the interests of the working class and see no reason why they should ruin their health to make the world safe for Fascism à la

Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin. Furthermore, should our "leaders" adopt the "stern methods" advocated by the press in order to crush the miners militancy, a further fall in coal production may be expected.

From the Anarchist point of view, by far the most interesting fact about the sharp and bitter strikes which continually break out in the mines is that they are nearly all spontaneous upheavals of the masses. The union leaders have come to be identified with the best representatives of the bosses' interests. Whenever a strike occurs it is always the Socialist and Communist stooges who, regardless of however just a man's grievances are, rush to inform them that they are "stabbing their mates in the Forces in the back".

In South Wales the hovels in which the miners are in many cases forced to live a while being exhorted to "defend your home" are sinking deeper and deeper into the earth. Our ruling classes callously promise them barracks before long!

From Scotland to Wales the struggle continues, a fight to the finish! It may not be long before miners everywhere join in the Social General Strike which will overthrow Capitalism and war forever and found the new world order in which "human justice will be substituted for divine justice."

VIVIAN BIRD.

## UPRISING IN ITALY

PARTISANS IN THE NORTH

Rome radio announced on October 5th that Italian partisans in Northern Italy were so active that the Germans feared a general revolt. A prolonged Railway Strike in Piedmont has been carried on, and strikes have also broken out in Milan. Meanwhile it is reported that in the town of Castell Maggiore, behind the Bologna lines, the population were so incensed at mass deportation to Germany, that 400 of them seized the town hall and burned the lists of those designated for Italy. Nor is it likely that these were all they burned.

TROOPS FIRE ON PALERMO CROWD

On Thursday, October 19th, workers in Palermo in Sicily demonstrated for better living conditions. Italian troops fired on them, killing 16 and wounding 104. The Italian government has issued an ambiguous statement obviously intended to confuse the issues for the general public. They said that "former employees of banks and taxation offices and groups of outsiders, egged on by elements which have not yet been reliably identified" engaged in a seditious demonstration and fired shots. The Italian Government also say (according to Reuters) that the local Committee of National Liberation immediately placed itself at the disposal of the authorities.

North or South, Italians are living under the armed repression of the State. Even the British and American Trade Union delegation to Italy reported that the social and economic conditions in liberated Italy are impossible to describe. The child death rate has doubled since the war. The delegation reported (27/9/44) that the quantity of food in insufficient to maintain even a minimum standard of health, the black market flourishes, and "there is no real basis for the social life of the population."

## GERMAN COMRADE'S STIRRING LECTURE

GERMAN WORKERS' STRUGGLE AGAINST HITLER

At Freedom Press rooms on Friday, October 13th, a German comrade spoke of the class struggles in Germany under Hitler. He stressed the fact that Germany was part of world capitalist economy, with its cartels and monopolies and need to dump export goods abroad. In this war-producing framework, the class struggle goes on all the time. Meanwhile the representatives of both Allied and Nazi groups had met round the tables of the Bank of International Settlements, even during the war, in order to portion out the dividends from international capitalist undertakings. The comrade spoke of the beatings in Hamburg, and gave estimated figures for the numbers in concentration camps. These were an eloquent testimony to the extent of the anti-Nazi resistance.

He stressed that since 1935, the struggle became increasingly a struggle for the workers on their own. The Social Democrats and Communists were discredited. Many rank and file members of these parties joined anti-parliamentary groups such as the Communist Workers party (not to be confused with the C.P.), or syndicalist and anarchist groups. Working class struggle in Germany had gone on for centuries against State and feudal repression, and this fact gave a "traditional" quality to the underground Press.

After reminding his hearers that the British Government had sold Hitler several hundred military planes "for police purposes" soon after he took power, the speaker declared that the resistance movement in Germany and Poland was probably more widespread than in any other capitalist country. He denounced the T.U.C. leaders who blamed the workers for Hitler's crimes, and pointed out that though fraternization between German and Allied soldiers was severely discouraged, Allied generals dine amicably with captured Nazi generals. When Citrine, in Canada, denied the German workers' right to organize, only two American Labour leaders protested. Questions and discussion followed.

caused by a gang of hoodlums hired for the occasion by the lumber barons. Needless to say, the murderers were never brought to "justice".

### 1919

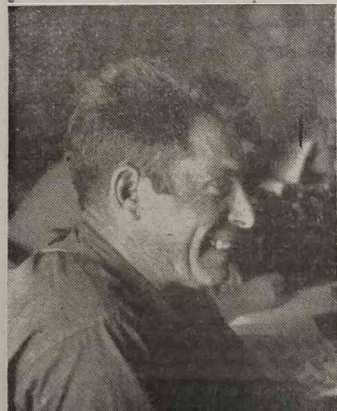
Wesley Everest, another "Wobbly" militant was mutilated and torn to death by the patriots of the American Legion on Armistice Day, 1919. He was seized during an attack by the "heroes" of the Legion on the I.W.W. hall at Centralia, Washington. His genitals were cut out, he was suspended beneath a river bridge by a rope, and watched by a crowd of the hangers-on and followers of Yankee imperialism, he was left to die in agony.

### 1927

In November, 1927, during the Colorado miners strike organised by the I.W.W., another attack was made on the workers. Strikers picketing a mine were fired upon, six miners being killed and scores of women and children wounded.

### 1936

November, 1936 will always be remembered by us as the month of the heroic defence of Madrid. During the fighting many anarchist and syndicalist comrades were killed; among them was Buenaventura Durruti. Shot in the back, Durruti fell in the struggle to which his whole life had been devoted. Since the first days of the

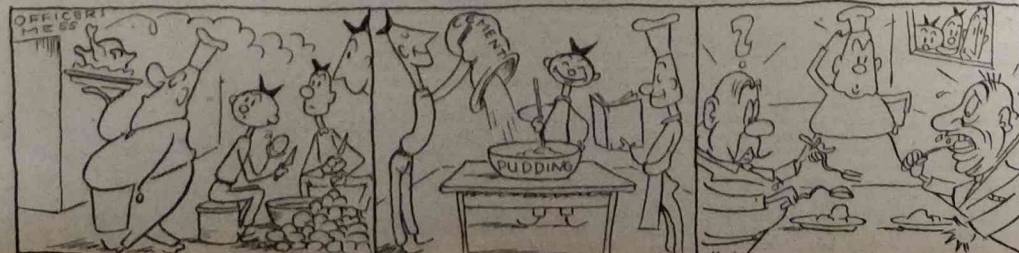


DURRUTI

Spanish revolution when he had left a sick bed to join the working-class forces on the barricades of Barcelona, Durruti had organised the anarchist columns on the Aragon front. When Madrid was threatened he marched with some thousands of Catalan anarchists to its defence, and in its defence he fell. His funeral in Barcelona was attended by the entire working-class population of the city. They paid tribute to him as an anarchist revolutionary whose aspirations and struggle had always been their own.

This is not meant to be a complete list of the November martyrs of the libertarian movement. But these examples speak for themselves. The ruling class fear of independent action by the workers themselves is as real to-day as it was when our comrades died on the scaffold in Chicago.

KEN HAWKES.



# HOW THE WORKER LIVES — IN RUSSIA —

An Important New Freedom Press Publication

"WORKERS IN STALIN'S RUSSIA" by M. L. Berneri. Freedom Press, 88 pp., 1/-

The Russian Revolution is as important an event in modern history as the Great French Revolution, and the influence it has exerted has been of comparable extent. For the working class it has an even greater significance, for the explicit aim of the leaders in Russia in 1917, and of the men and women who made the revolution a reality, was nothing less than the emancipation of the workers. The objective was therefore that for which the socialist movement of a whole century had struggled. The overthrow of capitalism and the conquest of freedom is still the principal preoccupation of the revolutionary movement all over the world, so that the social experiment in Russia, its methods and achievements, is of the greatest significance to all class-conscious workers. Clearly, fundamental issues hang on the correct assessment of the results of this experiment.

Unfortunately most people observe the Russian scene without concern for this broader problem. There are oceans of books on Russia—a recently compiled bibliography of them fills a good sized book; but most of them consider the problem from some special angle. Their authors are anxious to prove with the Russian material that Nationalism, or Religion, or a particular political party are right, or they describe special aspects of Russian life, such as the development of Industry or Agriculture or the Theatre. In nearly all these books the one thing which is ignored is too often the question that is the most important to a revolutionary understanding—How has the Revolution and the rule of the Bolshevik Party affected the lives of the workers in Russia?

M. L. Berneri's book sets out to answer this central question. After a balanced account of the difficulties which beset anyone seeking to discover the truth about Russian society, the main aspects of working class life are discussed. There are chapters on the Soviet system, the Trade Unions, Factories and Farms; accounts of the life of the industrial worker and the peasant; the Stakhanovite movement, conscripted labour, Justice, the position of women and of children, and the Red Army. Throughout the author makes use of sources drawn mainly from pro-Soviet writers like the Webbs, and the utterances of Bolshevik leaders and newspapers. She also draws on accounts of workers who have lived and worked for considerable periods in the U.S.S.R. The result is a balanced and sober account of the workers' conditions: free from the usual hysterical praise or denunciation.

At the same time the book is written from a definite standpoint, that of the Anarchist. For the Anarchist movement the Social Revolution has certain aims and is inspired by a definite vision of social life. Actual conditions in Russia as far as the workers and peasants are concerned, are not very different from capitalist countries, except that they are even poorer and enjoy even less liberty of expression or initiative. It is revolutionists who to-day are extremely critical of the results of the Bolshevik experiment, its admirers are to be found among intellectuals, managers, prominent churchmen, and Trade Union leaders. The Russian system has certain benefits for these classes. For the workers, still less for revolutionary fighters for the freedom of mankind, it has no place at all.

Short as it is, the amount of material contained in this booklet is immense, and it is all of direct relevance to the workers' struggle. It fulfils an important need, and still more, supplies some much needed clarity of thought on the problem of the revolution in general, and on the U.S.S.R. in particular. The author is to be congratulated on an excellent piece of work. In addition the production of the book is first class, and special mention should be made of the striking cover design by Philip. At one shilling this book is an absolute necessity in any militant worker's library.

ANARCHIST.

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