

# WAR COMMENTARY

# For Anarchism

For all who believe in the

## FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

A Mass Meeting will be held in the Large HOLBORN HALL, Gray's Inn Road, on SUNDAY, APRIL 12th AT 6.45 p.m.

Full particulars in the next issue of "WAR COMMENTARY"

Comrades and Friends! Keep this date open and tell your friends about it!

FREEDOM PRESS DEFENCE COMMITTEE LONDON.

Vol. 6, No. 11.

24th MARCH, 1945.

Fortnightly, 2d.

# WHAT IS ANARCHISM?

Since the arrest of the four London Anarchists we have received a very large number of enquiries from members of the public who are anxious to have a short statement on the meaning of Anarchism. The article we reproduce below was written by George Woodcock and first published in *War Commentary* in May 1943. We consider it to be one of the clearest short statements on Anarchism available and do not apologize for reprinting it at the present time. We are proposing to issue this article in leaflet form and details will be given in the next issue of *War Commentary*.

TO MANY ENGLISH people anarchism remains what it has been represented by the ruling classes of the world since, seventy years ago, Michael Bakunin first lit the fire of social revolution across the skies of Europe—a creed of terror and destruction, of chaos and fratricidal social strife.

To the ruling classes it is indeed a creed of terror and destruction, for its success means the end of their world, the end of ease for the few at the cost of misery for the many, the end of privilege and exploitation, of the empire of money and greed.

But, as Michael Bakunin said, "the urge to destroy is also a creative urge." And in the destruction of the present form of society, the anarchists envisage not the empire of chaos, but the growth of an integrated society of free co-operation, where equality will become real, where oppression and exploitation will be abolished, where men will live in peace and trust in a society based on justice and mutual aid between individuals, and where human life, freed from the fetter of poverty and oppression, of government and property, will develop with a freedom and richness such as has only been approached spasmodically at the most vital periods of the world's history.

We will take it that no sincere man has any fundamental objection to our aim as stated in such general terms. Almost every person concerned with political thought will agree that such a form of society is desirable, and the attraction which the concept of freedom has for the majority of the people of every nation in the world is shown by the way in which our rulers use it continually in order to induce their subjects to fight in the interests of their respective imperialisms. Even the political parties, communists and socialists, which base their methods on principles of authority diametrically opposite to those of anarchism, at the same time claim as their ultimate objective the anarchist society where the state will mysteriously have withered away of its own accord.

These political gentry, however, pay only a token adherence to the concept of a free society. Their whole technique is, in fact based on a seizure of the machinery of authority and the replacement of the present exploiting class by a bureaucracy which will inherit its power and therefore its opportunities of privilege.

This process is entirely opposed to the concept of anarchism, and it is mere childishness to suppose that any class which has acquired power is likely to let it go again with any degree of ease. The state will never wither away. It must be destroyed at the roots.

### Practicability of Anarchism

The general objection to anarchism is, then, not on grounds of its undesirability, but on the grounds of its impracticability. A long period of education will be needed, it is asserted, before they can be trusted not to turn freedom into licence, and, therefore, human nature being what it is, justice and equality can only be given to men through the kindly supervision over their affairs by governmental means. The anarchists, on the other hand, claim that theirs is the only means of achieving a just and equal society, that government is an institution that will of necessity breed privilege and inequality, and that insofar as it is true to say that men are at present unsocial beings, they are made so not by their innate characteristics, but by the fact that their natural aptitude towards mutual aid and co-operation for the fulfilment of common ends has been warped by the imposition of a system based on coercion and deceit—which are and must always be the two corner stones of authority.

Let us examine the causes which are responsible for injustice and misery of contemporary society. They are, briefly, the institutions of property and government—the economic exploitation and political domination of the many by the few.

### The Class Society

Human society to-day—and this is true no less of countries that have remained semi-feudal or have become pseudo-socialist than of the plutocratic empires of the West—is divided into two classes, those who control the means of production and reap the profits from their exploitation, and the workers who operate the means of production for the smallest wage their exploiters dare to pay them. Between these two classes there is no interest in common, and the rivalry between them is inevitable so long as the exploitation of man by man is allowed to continue.

The anarchist therefore recognises the class struggle as an inevitable feature of present-day society, and also as a necessary factor in the suppression of the governmental society by the free society.

The system by which the control of the ownership of the means of production and distribution is vested in the hands of a few is anti-social, not only from the fact that it causes some men to enjoy plenty while the majority live at or a little above starvation level, but also because it results in a retardation of the exploitation of the resources of nature and an artificial depression of the level of social life. The difference in the standard of human life which would result from a free and equal distribution of the present products of the land and of industry is small in comparison with the vast increase in production which would become available, concurrently with a great increase in leisure, if the means afforded by modern science to improve production, both on the land and in the workshops, were used to their full extent. The interests of private ownership, however, forbid the full use of scientific knowledge in this respect, and thus the miserably paid efforts of the worker are largely wasted on unproductive toil.

### The State

But the system of property cannot be dissociated from the State, which began and has always existed as an instrument for the protection of the ruling class control over property. The state is the coercive superstructure on a property society which maintains, through its weapons of force, such as parliament, the police and the army, the domination and prosperity of the governing class against the exploited workers. The socialists pretend that if private property is abolished, if capitalism and landlordism are ended, then it will be possible to create an equitable society by governmental means, through the institution of the State. The anarchist, however, sees in the State the principal enemy of the working class. Even where private capitalism and landlordism are destroyed, as in Russia, the continued existence of the state preserves the institution of property.

The means of production may theoretically become vested in the hands of the workers, but while the state remains they will in practice be controlled by the ruling bureaucracy, who will become the *de facto* possessing class. The fact that the new ruling class may have come from the workers will make no difference, for their situation will force them to assume the role of an exploiting class. In order to maintain their position, they will have to use power. "Power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely." (These are not the words of an anarchist but the melancholy conclusion of a Victorian liberal after a lifetime studying the development of human institutions.) Power gives privilege, the privileges conferred by control of the goods of society, and it is proved by the verdict of history that men who have privileges do not lightly relinquish them or fail to make use of them for their own ends.

To-day the State is assuming a more dangerous and powerful form than ever before. In every country power is passing steadily into the hands of the growing bureaucratic class founded by the needs of the state. Political and economic control are coalescing into one body, so that the state and its ruling class can maintain more efficiently their control and exploitation.

It is clear, then, that if men are to become free and are to enjoy anything approaching a complete development of their faculties, the state must be abolished, together with the system of property, and other means of exploitation, such as the wages system, which are contingent to it.

### Making the Free Society

In the place of the state the anarchists advocate the establishment of a society in which the principle of organisation would be not the government of men, but the administration of economic resources by means of the voluntary co-operation of the workers.

In order to overthrow the present society and to establish the new one, we advocate the method of syndicalism, by which is meant the organisation of the workers in syndicates or unions on an industrial basis, at their places of work. Syndicates differ from ordinary trade unions in that they are organised not primarily for the securing of reformist amelioration of conditions under capitalism, but for carrying out the social revolution by means of economic action—although they support in every way the day-to-day struggle of the workers both as a means of weakening the ruling class and in order to educate the workers in the tactics of the class struggle. The syndicates, moreover, differ from the trade unions in the fact that instead of being centralised organisations with governing bureaucracies, they are federations of freely connected

groups of workers organised in the various factories of each industry.

In the present form of society the role of the syndicate is to prepare the workers for the revolution. Revolution cannot be made, as Bakunin pointed out, but preparations can be made so that when they occur the workers realise what action to take in order to secure the successful overthrow of the state and the establishment of a free society.

In the preparation of the class struggle the anarchists reject all reformist or parliamentary methods, which merely play into the hands of the ruling class and lead to fatal class collaboration. The revolution may be maintained and won only by the direct action of the workers themselves in the economic field where they hold the decisive power. In the revolution the syndicates will be the organisations by which the workers will carry out the social general strike, seize the factories, farms and railways, and expel the property owners and the representatives of the state.

### Structure of Anarchy

After the revolution, the syndicates will serve as the basis for the building of the new society. The industries will be run by the workers themselves, each factory by the men and women who work there, each farm by the farm workers. (Continued on p. 4, col. 1.)

## Industrial News

- On the 16th March a strike took place at an engineering works in Ealing because the workers refused to sign a form giving reasons why they are late for work.
- Hundreds of workers took part in an unofficial sit-down strike at Boulton Paul Aircraft Company, Wolverhampton. The dispute which started on the 9th March was in protest of the meals served in the factory canteen.
- A strike of stage crews following a dispute between two unions both claiming to represent a group of 78 decorators has paralysed most of the big Hollywood studios. More than 15,000 cinema workers from labourers to prominent film stars were idle.
- There is great unrest among Belgian miners. A local strike in the Fiemalles pithead threatened to bring out all the coalminers in the entire Liege Basin mines. The strike began over the dismissal of one miner but there is general discontent among miners over food rations which, the miners say, are smaller than during the German occupation.
- Four American women trade unionists touring Britain have met many employers and managing directors but hardly any workers. Mrs. Julie O'Connor Parker of the American Federation of Electrical workers told a reporter that she had only met one shop stewards' committee during her tour of Britain.
- Unemployment is spreading in France. There were 405,000 totally unemployed in France on February 15, 158,000 of them in Paris declared M. Parodi, French Minister of Labour recently. Many more are only part-time workers.
- According to the latest Ministry of Labour returns the total number of workers organised in unions was at the beginning of the year some 8.1 million. The figure is almost equivalent to the record total of 8.3 million organised workers in 1920.

## To Our Readers

A number of articles and reviews have been squeezed out of the present issue owing to the space taken up by the reports of the Court proceedings in which our four comrades have been involved. We feel that readers will agree with us that it was essential to give the reports in full as that it was essential to give the nature of the case that was possible from the garbled, one-sided reports that appeared in the National Press.

## FOUR LONDON ANARCHISTS COMMITTED FOR TRIAL AT OLD BAILEY

Our four London comrades appeared for the third time before the Magistrate at Marylebone, Friday last, 16th March, when further evidence was heard. The prosecution's case and the examination of witnesses the previous week (March 9th) are reported in full on page 4.

Witnesses representing the landlords at Belzize Road and Whitechapel High Street, as well as the Registry of Business Names and the Ministry of Labour were called to formally corroborate the question of tenancy of the Freedom Press, Express Printers, etc., the Ministry of Labour official stating that Mrs. Richards was registered as being employed by the Express Printers as manageress whose employment included "reading and passing of all printed matter in connection with her employment."

Inspector Gordon Hoare of the Special Branch was then called into the witness box. He described his visit to and search of Dr. Hewetson's premises. "I found a considerable number of documents of all sorts—he said—including one copy of the circular letter of 25th October, 1944, and one copy only completed on one side." On the 30th December he searched Philip Sansom's premises where he took possession of 19 completed copies of the circular letter and fourteen empty envelopes all addressed to members of the Armed Forces.

### Professional Notes Taken

Cross examined by Mr. Rutledge, Inspector Hoare said that the main object of his search was to look for copies of *War Commentary* and the circular as well as anything else which might bear on the case in hand. He admitted that there were probably notes about Dr. Hewetson's patients among the documents taken away but explained this fact by saying that he wanted to cause Dr. Hewetson the least amount of inconvenience and that had he examined the documents properly then it would have meant keeping Dr. Hewetson up all night. He admitted however that some of the documents were taken from Dr. Hewetson's person and that he did examine some of them but took them away just the same. They were returned to him eventually. He further agreed that some of the notes taken from Dr. Hewetson might not have had any bearing on the case.

Regarding his visit to Sansom's studio Insp. Hoare cross-examined said that the former was not present when he searched his studio, and was not able to say when Sansom was last in the studio.

Inspector Whitehead was the next witness called. He visited Belzize Road where he saw Vernon Richards, Mrs. Richards and other people there. He searched the premises taking away a large quantity of literature, pamphlets, etc., among them 20 copies of the circular letter of the 25th October, 1944. "I showed them to Richards—Inspector Whitehead continued—and said 'This appears to be an incomplete circular letter to your subscribers.' I pointed to a ROYAL typewriter which was on the premises and said 'Was it prepared on that machine?' Richards said 'Quite probably but we use several machines so I could not say definitely.' I said 'What exactly is your connection with the Freedom Press?' He said 'As you saw when you came in, we all help here but I call myself the Secretary.'

### Subscribers in The Forces

I found also a list of members of the Forces with the words 'Mid-Nov.' sent on the left hand top corner." There was 95 names of members of the services in this list, 18 from Non-Combatant units, the remainder from the fighting services. He also found a list of 102 names of service men on stencils which were contained in a metal receptacle. Inspector Whitehead also referred to the key which fitted Sansom's studio door and to an alleged statement made by Sansom to him on January 16th, with reference to the letters found at his studio "It is obvious, if you found them, that I took them there. I have duplicated similar letters for the Freedom Press that I cannot identify these particular ones. I used to do a certain amount of dispatching for the Freedom Press and probably these are a few of the circular letters left over. I do not know who addressed the envelopes to soldiers but they must have also been left over, like the letters. I despatched a number of circular letters to soldiers from the studios on behalf of Freedom Press up to the time I left the address. As far as I can remember that was on the 6th November, 1944. I cannot type and expect that the circular letter dated the 25th October 1944 was prepared at No. 27 Belzize Road."

### Whitehead Cross Examined

Cross examined by Mr. Rutledge, Inspector Whitehead admitted that none of the defendants were present in the library when the circular letters were found at Belzize Road. They were duplicated on one side only but he was of the opinion that they were fit for publication.

On the question of the lists of soldiers' addresses, he imagined that the 95 names were of subscribers to *War Commentary*. Further questioned by Mr. Rutledge, Inspector Whitehead admitted that the names on the lists and those on the stencils were practically identical. Mr. Rutledge then suggested that the names on the stencils were of subscribers. Inspector Whitehead said "The inference is that they are all subscribers but I do not know it."

The object of the search was to find evidence of offences against No. 39a of the Defence Regulations, to take away any literature appertaining to that object said Inspector Whitehead in answer to Mr. Rutledge, and admitted that he had taken away copies of *YOUR CHILD AND BEAUTY* and *A CHILD OF OUR TIME*. "They had nothing to do with this charge."

Inspector Whitehead denied keeping the account books of the Express Printers for seven weeks. "It was six weeks before the last was returned (smiles in court)."

Questioned by Mr. Rutledge about a protest letter signed by a number of soldiers, Inspector Whitehead said he did not recall a letter signed by 80 soldiers, but when Mr. Rutledge pointed out that it was signed by 18 soldiers, Inspector Whitehead admitted that he might have seen such a letter. This letter was produced later by Inspector Whitehead, though earlier he had stated that "the defence has a complete list of all things taken, and I do not think it is on that list."

Of the search at Express Printers, Inspector Whitehead admitted that all he took was a list of telephone numbers—mostly tradesmen, and a set of cartoon proofs as well as a number of cartoons in book form.

No further witnesses were called by the Prosecution. Mr. Rutledge for the defence submitted that there was no case to answer. The accused comrades pleaded not guilty and reserved their defence.

They appeared for the fourth time at Marylebone on Friday, March 23rd, when they were committed for trial at the next sessions at the Old Bailey which begin on April 17th.

## GLASGOW FREEDOM DEFENCE COMMITTEE

DEMONSTRATION FOR FREEDOM OF OPINION TO BE HELD IN THE COSMO CINEMA Sunday, 22nd April, at 6.30 p.m. PROMINENT SPEAKERS

## FREEDOM PRESS DEFENCE COMMITTEE

17 St. George's Street (2nd floor) Hanover Square, London, W.1.

Chairman: HERBERT READ  
Vice Chairmen: FENNER BROCKWAY & PATRICK FIGGIS  
Secretary: ETHEL MANNIN  
Treasurer: S. WATSON TAYLOR

This Committee has been formed with the following main objectives:  
1. To defend the four anarchists arrested and charged under Defence Regulation 39A.  
2. To protest against any attacks upon the freedom of speech and publication.  
3. To organize a Defence Fund to cover the legal expenses of the accused and the Committee's own expenses.

We appeal to all comrades and readers of "War Commentary" as well as to all who believe in the freedom of speech and publication to lend their financial support so that the work of the Committee may go forward. During these difficult years the four accused comrades have given all their energies to the cause of Freedom. The least we can do is to rally to their defence now that Authority has attacked them. Send your contributions to the Treasurer and make all Cheques and P.O.s payable to:

"FREEDOM PRESS DEFENCE COMMITTEE"

WAR COMMENTARY

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Churchill Snubs T.U.C.

The relationship of the T.U.C. to the Tory bosses was once again illuminated this week over the question of amending the Trade Disputes Act. Citrine asked to be allowed to come and discuss the matter with Churchill on behalf of the T.U.C. Churchill told him—in a letter—that “although I am always glad to see you, I do not think that there would be sufficient reason to put you to the trouble of coming to see me on this matter.” A not over-polite way of saying “don’t waste my time”!

This reply of Churchill’s is especially interesting because it comes a very few weeks after Citrine had shown how faithful he is to the interests of the ruling class by that masterpiece of one-sided reporting, his report on Greece. He acts like a servile lackey and Churchill treats him as such.

This is all the more interesting in the light of Chamberlain’s promise at the beginning of the war that if the trade unions played their part in the national effort (i.e. the interests of the bosses) the question of amending the Trade Disputes Act would be very favourably considered by the Government when the war ended. The very terms of this promise are so slighting that one wonders that the T.U.C. could swallow the insult. But now Churchill comes forward to tell them that even though they have been good boys they aren’t going to get the prize!

The Conservatives have got the Trade Union officials sized up. At the Conservative Conference one member declared that “the trade union movement has grown into a vested interest”, and added that “the trouble with the Trade Unions is that they are looked upon as stepping stones for ambitious politicians to get into parliament.” The Tories realize—how could they fail to, in view of the attitude of the T.U. officials to strikes and compulsory labour measures?—that the interests of the T.U. leadership are bound up with the interests of the employers and the State. Hence the T.U.C. cannot really oppose the ruling class, and their attitude to the Trade Disputes Act shows it. The Tories naturally treat such half-hearted “opponents” with contempt.

In the autumn of 1943 the Civil Service Clerical Association, the Inland Revenue Staffs Association and the Union of Postal Workers—all unions of government employees—decided to defy the ban which the Trade Disputes Act imposes on them, by applying for affiliation with the T.U.C. The T.U.C. decided to make an issue out of it and accepted the affiliation. But when the Government showed itself ready to take up the challenge and fight it out, the T.U.C. withdrew the affiliation of these unions on a promise that the matter would be discussed with the Prime Minister. Since then Churchill has not found time, however, for such a discussion, and has now kicked Citrine in the face when he asks for the promise (of discussion only, be it remembered) to be redeemed.

The very next year the Government arrested four Trotskyists and charged them with offences under this same Trades Disputes Act. Did the T.U.C. protest, or support the four accused? Of course not; instead they obediently sanctioned the Government’s new Defence Regulation 1AA, which actually goes further than the no-strike clauses in the Trade Disputes Act. The T.U.C. thus showed that they by no means want the Act repealed; they only want certain clauses amended. The anti-strike clauses actually strengthen the hands of the T.U. official as far as controlling the rank and file goes, and they are all in favour of these. (D. N. Pritt, the Stalinist lawyer, also argued that there was no need for 1AA because the Trades Disputes Act already adequately covered the ground!). What the T.U.C. want eliminated are the clauses which forbid government employees to affiliate to the T.U.C. With the present prospect of an ever increasing number of government employees and petty bureaucrats, the T.U.C. looks hungrily at these employees and is most anxious that they should receive dues from them. They are anxious to completely monopolize the dues-paying capacity of the workers, and at the same time entrench themselves still further in the State machinery.

The Tories on the other hand want to retain these clauses as a bargaining counter, and also to keep the T.U.C. in the servile position which they voluntarily adopted at the beginning of the war. They have no scruples about repudiating promises made to their T.U. stooges, and openly rebuff them.

Yet the T.U.C. invited Churchill to address the World Trade Union Conference. Well well . . .

Planning for Freedom

During the war years the air has been full of talk by all sorts of political groups as to the prospects for post-war planning. The Government itself has headed the throng, and has been followed by Liberals, Labourites and “Progressives” who have issued sheaves and sheaves of plans, recommendations and proposals for all kinds of human activity, ranging from the re-organisation of industry to the layout of towns and cities. The attitude of anarchists to industry has been made clear a number of times in the pages of *War Commentary* and elsewhere, it is the purpose of this article to attempt to at least start discussion on the connection between town planning and a free society.

In the minds of most people the idea of town planning is linked up immediately with governmental control, a plan which is produced by some obscure expert and which is enforced by a busy-body ministerial official, and generally some new form of dictatorship leaving even less freedom to the individual. This is due to the fact that practically all the proposals for the re-planning of towns and cities have come in the form of recommendations for future government legislation, and that the town-planning experts themselves have suggested that nationalisation of at least the land is necessary if any plan is to be effective. Thus it is broadly true to say that the kind of society which would suit the requirements of town planning experts is some form of state socialism or a kind of “Beveridge” reformed capitalism.

The objections which anarchists hold against such a form of society have been expressed a number of times, our objection to state control does not mean that we must reject also the idea itself of town-planning. If we examine what it is that town-planning sets out to do we shall then be able to see how far this links up with the anarchist proposals for social organisation.

The town-planning movement came into being because at the end of the last century a number of people saw the conditions which large towns forced upon their inhabitants and especially

upon the working class. The slums of the East End, of Glasgow and of the towns of the Industrial North are still one of the worst of the indignities which capitalism imposes on the workers, and apart from the squalour and misery which they cause it became obvious that slums and badly laid out cities are inefficient even from the point of view of the capitalists themselves. It is possible to see two influences at work in the town planning movement, one a middle-class concern for the conditions of living of the workers and a desire to alleviate their suffering, the other a realisation that present day cities are extremely inefficient and that they need drastic re-planning to bring them up to the standards required by modern capitalism. Naturally, since anarchists view social questions from a class position, their attitude to town planning must also be conditioned by such considerations as working class emancipation and the control of industry by the workers themselves. The attempts of middle class reformers are rejected on the grounds that no amount of reforms can put an end to the exploitation of the workers, and consideration for the efficiency of capitalist society can have no place at all in an anarchist attitude.

But at the same time, it must be admitted that a vast amount of useful information has been collected by the people who have been associated with the town-planning movement, which it is necessary to take into account. Starting with Howard, many advocates of planning have produced overwhelming evidence to condemn the existing method—or lack of method—in town building. This evidence covers a number of different subjects, such as the actual design of the house to give the best possible living conditions, the relationship of buildings to open spaces to provide the maximum of air, light and sun, the layout of roads and streets to give speed to traffic and at the same time safety to walkers. Within a town which has been properly planned the position of factories has to be determined so that they do not clash with residential districts and so that they are at the same time within easy reach of railways and main

roads, and moreover there has to be a certain balance achieved between the number and size of factories, the size of the resident population, and the farms around the town.

Perhaps the most significant tendency amongst town planners is a realisation of the necessity for decentralisation as a way to cope with the rapid impersonal growth of the modern city. Indeed the best examples of town planning which have so far been achieved have been along the lines of garden cities where an entirely new town has been created. An example in this country is Welwyn Garden City, a new town with its own new industries, set in the agricultural lands of Hertfordshire. In this town there are no slums or tenement buildings, all the houses have their own gardens, there are adequate open spaces for children to play in, the factories are at the north-eastern end of the town so that any smoke does not get carried into people’s houses. The open country is not more than ten minutes walk from any part of the town, and the nearest other town is about four miles away. Compared with a London Borough, say Paddington, Welwyn is a ideal. But when one lives in Welwyn for a little while one realises that it bears the marks of class society even in its layout. The town is divided into two parts by the railway line, which becomes the class barrier. To the west of the railway lie the shopping centre, the Council offices, the cinema, and the houses of the middle class. To the east are the factories and the workers houses. Even more than many old towns which grew up over a period of time, Welwyn is a class town, the boundaries are set and for all to see.

In such a short article as this it is impossible to set forth a fully reasoned case, the best that can be done is to give indications for future argument. But it is possible to say what are the good tendencies in the town planning movement and to show in what way they can be achieved by anarchist principles of organisation. The attempt of the garden city idea to deal with the overgrowth industrial town by means of decentralisation is the only way in which an anar-

chist society could deal with a similar problem. And at the same time it is only by the adoption of the anarchist form of society that any attempt to thoroughly re-plan the cities which are now crashing about our ears can be successful.

What we object to is not the idea of planning itself, it is the misuse of the possibilities of planning by the ruling class to bolster up their own position in society, and the attempt to use it by any new ruling class which may try to emerge in the years to come. We know that the workers themselves are capable of taking over and running industry on their own account, an undertaking which requires skill and foresight, but above all a familiarity with the actual job to be done. There is no reason why they cannot in the same way attempt and achieve the re-planning of the physical environment that surrounds them as well as running the means of production.

JACK WADE.

Little Known English Anarchists—3

IT IS AN irony of fate that Frank Kitz should be classed among the little known, for few men were so well endowed with those qualities that make for greatness and are deserving of fame. I remember hearing one of the best orators in the movement saying that “John Burns (then in the flood-tide of his popularity) was not up to Kitz’s ankles in intelligence.” He was an orator in the full sense of the word. He could play on every chord of the human heart, using cold logic, bitter sarcasm, or fervent emotion. He knew instinctively how to handle his audience and always knew the right weapons to use. At our big meetings Kitz was always one of the speakers, and Kropotkin would cheerfully run the risk of missing his train rather than miss hearing him speak.

The late Bruce Glasier, in his book “William Morris and the early days of the Socialist Movement”, writes of Kitz as a genial Bohemian with revolutionary tendencies, and doubts if he was really an Anarchist. To those of us who were comrades of Frank Kitz—as Glasier was, too—this is simply ridiculous. Is it because Glasier became a renegade from his “revolutionary tendencies” while Kitz remained true to his? History is a complete refutation of such a statement; one lived for the moment, the other lived on it.

When a young man, after serving his apprenticeship as a dyer, Kitz went on tramp into the provinces, following out the old custom of establishing himself as a journeyman by working at his trade, and wherever possible preaching the doctrines of revolutionary socialism. On his road back to London, he stayed at Oxford where Professor Thorold Rogers, then a don at the university, took the chair for him at one of his meetings and welcomed him as the last of the socialists. The Owenist socialists were almost extinct and the new conception of free revolutionary socialism was just being born.

Back in London, Kitz was soon busy among the various small groups of working class revo-

lutionaries known as the “Labour Emancipation League”, which was afterwards affiliated to the Democratic Federation (later the Social Democratic Federation). Kitz keenly resented the invasion of the movement by the middle class element, and often said that “As the movement grew in extent, it lost in depth.” He lived to see its rapid and complete deterioration as the

politicians took possession.

Kitz worked as a dyer for William Morris at Merton, and Morris would have none but really competent workers. Morris would work with him at times, for he believed in being able to do any work that was being done by his employees. When the split occurred in the Socialist League and Morris resigned the editorship of the *Commonweal*, he suggested Kitz with Mowbray as joint editors. Kitz held this post (unpaid) for a good while.

In 1881, the Anarchist Johann Most took refuge from Bismarck’s Germany in this country, and published his famous paper *Freiheit* (Freedom) in German for secret circulation in Germany. Most’s first prosecution and imprisonment here was for an article on the “Phonix Park Murder”. Later *Freiheit* was suppressed and Most sent to prison again. Kitz convened a committee of which he was secretary, and they brought out an English edition of the paper with Kitz as editor. It was sold on the streets and especially outside the Old Bailey whilst the trial was on, a challenge which the authorities preferred to ignore, sensing the indignation that was growing among the public at the unjust sentence and at a prosecution promoted to please the German government. Kitz was helped in his

efforts by Kropotkin and other well known comrades of a generation which has passed away.

Frank Kitz devoted himself largely to open-air propaganda, and was in constant demand both in London and in the provincial towns. He believed that whilst open-air meetings were the best and easiest method of making contacts with the workers, it was always necessary to give them something to think over when by themselves,

FRANK KITZ

and to this end, he and some comrades purchased a small hand press and issued a large number of leaflets. These dealt with the topics of the day from an anarchist standpoint.

With the help of Sam Mainwaring he pioneered open-air propaganda in South Wales, Kitz speaking in English and Mainwaring in Welsh. The tour was a great success and was followed by a tour of Mainwaring and Tarrida del Marmol, who founded a group of Spanish Anarchists in Cardiff.

Professor Okey, in his “Garland of Memories” pays a fine tribute to Frank Kitz’s abilities and courage, in which all who knew him will join. As speaker and writer he was always ready to join in any efforts for the spread of Anarchism. He did his work in a day when the Anarchist was regarded as a bomb thrower and an assassin, and when hostility to our ideas was the rule. We have lived down that day, and it is largely due to the effective work of these little-known Anarchists that it is so. They sowed the seed, and it has taken root; the gathering of the harvest is the task for the workers of to-morrow. Victory is for those who march forward to the Future in the same spirit as the old pioneers.

MAT KAVANAGH.

A Libertarian Community

IN the undeveloped Russia of the nineteenth century, historical tendencies which had taken four or five centuries to mature in Western Europe were often telescoped into as many decades, and it was possible to see subversive religious groups, of the types which flourished in England during the seventeenth century, co-existing with modern social revolutionary movements.

While in Western Europe religious dissent and social unrest, which were united in the revolutionary movements of the Anabaptists and the Diggers, had long separated into distinct channels, in Russia of the 1890’s they were still in some instances united. This was largely due to the close relationship between the Czar and the orthodox Church, which made a rebellion against the church almost automatically a rebellion against the State.

This religious rebellion reached its highest level in the anarchist theories of Tolstoy and in the anti-militarist resistance practiced by the Tolstoyans and by certain dissenting movements among the peasants.

Of these peasant movements the most considerable was that of the Doukhobors. This sect was founded in Russia during the seventeenth century, on a primitive Christian basis. The Doukhobors opposed the hierarchies of Czarism and of the orthodox church, advocated the community of land and property, and opposed war.

They were subjected to continuous persecutions from the Church and the State until, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the vigour of their early beliefs had declined, and they tended to accept a compromise with the society around them.

In 1890, however, there was a sudden revival of the old Doukhobor beliefs, stimulated by one of their leaders, Peter Verigen, who had come into contact with Tolstoy’s teaching and had realised their identity with his own beliefs. Verigen was exiled to Siberia, where he stayed for fifteen years, but the movement which he had started gained momentum, and once again the Doukhobors began to proclaim their resistance to the Czar, to the Orthodox Church and to war. The authorities were alarmed by the actions of the Doukhobors, whom they feared would influence the other peasants in Russia, and sent the Cossacks to try and terrorise them into submission. There followed a period of the most steadfast resistance. Hundreds of the Doukhobors, both young and old, were murdered, thousands were beaten, and many of the women were raped by the soldiers. But they continued to refuse their allegiance to the Church or the Czar, and the young men refused to go into the army.

In the end, those of the Doukhobors who were not killed, imprisoned or sent to Siberia, had proved themselves such a

nuisance to the Russian government that Tolstoy had no difficulty in obtaining permission for the majority of them to emigrate to Canada.

In Saskatchewan they were given land by the government, and assured that they would not be required to act against their principles. At the end of seven years, however, the Saskatchewan government went back on its promise, and required the Doukhobors to give up their communal cultivation, to divide and fence their lands into individual portions, to swear allegiance to the King and become Canadian citizens. The alternative was the confiscation of their lands. The Doukhobors refused to accede to these terms, which represented the very conditions they had left Russia to avoid, and all but two thousand of them left their holdings, on which they had put in years of hard labour, and moved into the mountain valleys of British Columbia, to start once again to break down the hard, uncultivated soil.

Here they planted orchards and started a co-operative jam factory. But they were not left long in peace, for the British Columbian Government tried to force them to send their children to state schools. The Doukhobors refused, and a further period of struggle ensued. At one time nine hundred Doukhobors were kept in Piers Island prison for three years, but the government was beaten in the end. During this dispute the Doukhobors used a novel method of protest. If they were arrested, they would take off their clothes and go naked. Sometimes, when one Doukhobor was arrested, five or six hundred naked Doukhobors would appear and demand to share his suffering. Demonstrations of naked Doukhobors even marched in protest through the streets of Vancouver. The method was effective and the embarrassed authorities decided to leave the Doukhobors alone. The Doukhobors also refused to register births, deaths and marriages. At one time the police used to plough up Doukhobor cemeteries to look for new graves, but in the end they gave in on this point as well.

During the 1914-18 war the Doukhobors refused to register or to accept military service, and again maintained their resistance. Between the two wars a proportion of the Doukhobors have been corrupted by bourgeois standards and have compromised with surrounding society. Nevertheless, a great number have still maintained their principles, and, out of 17,500 Doukhobors in Canada, 2,500 men of military age have refused to go into the army or to accept any alternative Service. Among the older people many have refused to pay taxes. A number have been sent to prison, where some of the younger men were tied to the bars and beaten. But in this war the authorities have tried to use indirect economic methods, rather than such direct

methods as imprisonment. Knowing from past experience that Doukhobors cannot be bullied into submission, they are now trying to starve them into conformity. Farmers and business men are fined for employing Doukhobors, and in the towns Doukhobors are forbidden to sell their produce.

Once again, the Doukhobors have managed to maintain their resistance. This was largely because they have retained a peasant status, and still practice common ownership and common work in many of their settlements, particularly among their most uncompromising section, the Sons of Freedom. This has rendered them to a great extent self-subsistent, and given their economic basis a resiliency which has largely nullified the efforts of the government to convert them by removing their outside sources of income. Even where individual Doukhobors or groups of Doukhobors have suffered from this discrimination, they have been enabled to carry on by the mutual aid practiced among the members of the movement.

It is the measure of the success of the Doukhobors’ struggles, that a great number of them still live in settlements run on anarchist communist lines, having no internal rules and ignoring successfully the external laws, sharing work and produce, and putting into active practice the principle of “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.”

We may not agree with the theological ideas on which the Doukhobors base their actions, but they deserve our sympathetic attention because their life in Canada has been a living example of the practicability of anarchist communities, while the persistence of their long struggle against the Church, the State and war merits our admiration and support.

Meanwhile, in Stalin’s Russia, the remainder of the Doukhobors who stayed behind and survived the Czarist pogroms, have shared in the persecutions which have been meted out to all minorities who choose to persist in their disagreement with the standard ways of life and thought demanded by the Kremlin authorities. Many have been shot. The survivors, who have steadfastly refused to give up their attitude of non-co-operation with the State and militarism, are scattered among the various prisons and concentration camps of Russia and Serbia. Their position—who suffered so much for their opposition to Czarist authority, should once again be hunted down, slaughtered and imprisoned—is in itself sufficient condemnation of the tyranny which has replaced every feature of Czarism with an even worse evil.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

(For a number of the facts in this article I am indebted to an essay by the Tolstoyan, Ammon Hennacy, in the American anarchist quarterly, *Retort*.)

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Forces Corner

Repetition of 1918?

A comrade who fought in the war of 1914 to 1918 warns the soldier of to-day against being gulled by the smooth promises of the politicians.

The Government of to-day are preparing for the General Election that is to follow the cessation of hostilities—and they are putting out the same stuff as they did in 1918...

nition of the fact. I cannot think of what these men went through. I have been there at the door of the furnace and witnessed it...

But remember what they did in fact come back to despite all Lloyd George's and Churchill's flowery promises—Unemployment, misery, hunger.

So it is plain enough to see how the politicians whom you trusted have lied, deceived, and fought behind your backs.

"OLD TIMER."

For how far will this gratuity go? Most of you will want to make homes, and you will then find yourself pounced upon by those sharks who will offer you so-called bargains...

These were the exact words of Winston Churchill on November 9th, 1918. And he was followed by the gent with the flowing white hair, the one-time "pacifist" Lloyd George...

In Praise of Attlee

The Daily Herald recently quoted Brendan Bracken as saying: "If you ever want to have a colleague who never doubts and who never repents, turn to Mr. Attlee."

BRITAIN'S COAL

THIS book is of some importance to those wishing to acquire a more detailed account of the underlying causes of the present coal crisis.

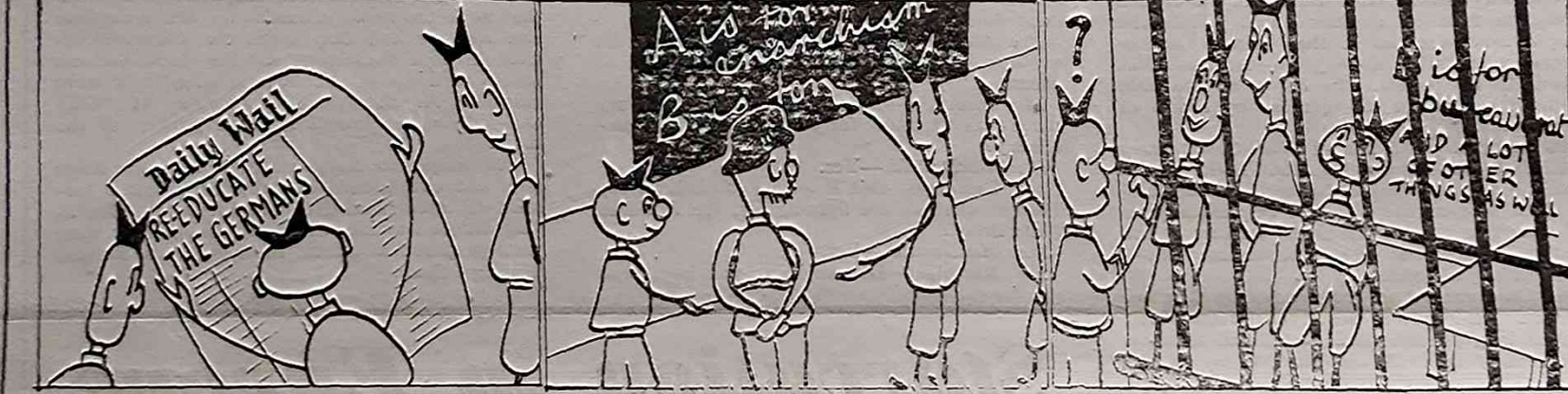
Dealing with the successive causes of the coal crisis, the Foster Committee Report, July 1942, is quoted as a terrible indictment of the whole organisation and record of the industry since the last war.

WAR COMMENTARY

is offered to members of the Services at special rates. 1 year, 1s. post free 6 months, 6d. post free

have been either about local wage matters or against penalties imposed by State machinery". On this issue, however, Margot Heinemann naively discloses the strike-breaking tactics of Will Lawther, etc., and the (then) Mineworkers' Federation.

do we find? That all the regional controllers were "amateur coal-men", for they consisted of a company director, a lawyer, an ex-Labour M.P., the Chairman of the Central Price Regulation Committee, a Trades Union official, a County Council Clerk, a railway goods manager and an ex-technical adviser to a Regional Commissioner.



"IGNORANCE NO EXCUSE"

When evidence was being given about ration books in a case at the Old Bailey to-day, the Common Sergeant, Mr. H. L. Beazley, asked Mr. H. J. Hamblen, prosecuting counsel, "Have you seen a ration book?"

REMAND HOMES

Mr. Morrison, replying to Adml. Sir William James (Cons.), said that at the end of January 888 boys and girls were reported to be in remand homes awaiting vacancies in approved schools and 60 boys and 33 girls reported to be awaiting vacancies on bail.

A NICE ENGLISH FAMILY

"We live bombs here. We have had bombs for breakfast, bombs for lunch, bombs for tea and dinner for six years now. We breathe bombs and dream about bombs."

Through the Press

INDUSTRIAL ETHICS

An Imperial Chemical Industries worker sends me the information that a large poster now appears on the walls of his works building demanding "Aid for China, the first victim of aggression."

ALL THIS AND BEVIN TOO

Service men and women who have not found a job by the time their 56 days' release leave has expired will be directed to posts by the Ministry of Labour.

THERE AIN'T NO JUSTICE

Inspector Wheat, of the West End Central police station, was commended by Mr. J. B. Sandbach, K.C., at the Marlborough-street court to-day, for securing the arrest of an Army deserter who had been using the discharge papers of a man now lying dangerously ill in hospital.

NO E.W.O. FOR HIM

The Duke of Windsor said to-day that three reasons prompted his resignation as Governor of the Bahamas—restlessness, the press of business interests abroad, and the near end of the European war.

LAPSE INTO HONESTY

Secretary of State Stettinius is still red-faced over the gaffe he made at Mexico City, when he said in a speech: "The United States looks upon Mexico as a country which we are proud to call our own."

BRAZIL WITHDRAWS

MEXICO CITY, Sunday.—The Brazilian delegate at the Inter-American Conference has pledged Brazil to amend her constitution to include the right to strike.

SAME METHODS

The American Government is under no obligation to redeem "invasion money," the Treasury Department announces. Invasion currency, it is explained, is issued under the authority of the Government of the country in which it is disbursed and becomes part of that country's currency.

WE DIDN'T SAY IT

A friend of mine in the R.A.F. tells me that he has been requested to ascertain the political views of the crews under him. Apparently the Air Ministry is very anxious to know their political bent before they send them overseas with the Army—or shall I say Air Force.

N.A.A.F.I. MYSTERY

Where do all the NAAFI profits go? NAAFI has told William Hickey, of the Daily Express, instead of spending profits for the benefit of Servicemen, NAAFI admits that some commanding officers refuse to spend the money this way, and buy Savings Certificates, or put the money into post-war funds instead.

SLAVE LABOUR FOR RUSSIA

Outstanding snag in British-American-Russian negotiations is the implacable Soviet demand for postwar German labour.

SOLDIERS GET THE "BEST"

Dartmoor, Britain's blakest and most notorious prison, is to be closed as a civilian prison after June.

POLICE ETERNAL

Life in Cologne now, under the Allied Military Government.

LIBERTY, FRATERNITY . . . EQUALITY!

The last time I saw Paris was in October. The living conditions were bad. To-day they are infinitely worse.

OUR WAR

Fires were started in the Emperor of Japan's palace by the biggest-ever raid by Super-Fortresses on Tokyo, said a Japanese broadcast. It blazed for 17 hours.

# ANARCHISTS ON DISAFFECTION CHARGES

## Search of Soldiers' Kits carried out under Instructions from Higher Authority, declare Prosecution Witnesses

Our four London comrades, Marie Louise Berneri (Richards), John Hewetson, Vernon Richards and Philip Sansom appeared for the second time in Marylebone Police Court on March 9th. Mr. Anthony Hawke appeared for the Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr. Gerald Rutledge of Smithdale Rutledge & Co. for the four comrades and Mr. Ivan Snell was the magistrate.

Mr. Hawke, prosecuting stated that all 4 defendants are involved in the charge of conspiracy to contravene Regulation 39 of the Defence Regulations, which, you will remember, is the regulation which makes it an offence to endeavour to spread disaffection among persons in H.M. Services, or having on one's possession documents whose dissemination might tend to do this. There are specific charges against Dr. Hewetson and Mr. & Mrs. Richards, of having in their possession such a document, and also with endeavouring to create disaffection. The charge against Mr. Sansom, the fourth defendant, only of having in his possession such a document.

Mr. Richards is the registered proprietor of a business called Express Printers—registered on 3rd December 1943 (quite a modern creation). Mrs. Richards is the manageress of that business—she so registered under the National Service Act.

Dr. Hewetson carries on a publishing business at 27 Belsize Road. He is the registered proprietor of that business—registered on 6th December 1943 for people called Freedom Press, publishers of *War Commentary*, printed by Express Printers. Described—no doubt rightly—as the official organ of the anarchist movement.

Mr. Hawke then quoted from the box which appeared in the top right hand corner of the front page of the November 11th issue of *War Commentary*, in which it is stated among other things that "we oppose all means of maintaining class-divided society, parliament, the legal system, the armed forces and the Church. All such matters are expressions of the State which only exists to protect the interests of the minority". Mr. Hawke went on, "Anybody is entitled to hold such opinions if they wish. It is not part of this case to attack in any way such opinions. They may possibly, for all I know, be the answer to all our problems. If it is sought by disseminating such opinions with the advice to persons in H.M. Services to hold on to their weapons to enforce those opinions on the community by violence if necessary, that does of course become objectionable, and that is the reason for these proceedings being brought."

### What is Anarchism?

*Continued from p. 1*

The factories in each industry will be organised into regional and national federations, for the purpose of co-ordinating production, and in order to co-ordinate the various industries there will be a general federation of industries. Distribution will be undertaken by syndicates of distributive workers, who will run the stores from which goods will be distributed to the people. Public services, like teaching and medicine, will be undertaken by the syndicates of teachers, doctors, nurses, etc., and such municipal services as are necessary will be undertaken by local communes, which will also be federated regionally and nationally in the same manner as the syndicates. None of the regional or national federations will be vested with any authority—they will be merely organisations for voluntary co-ordination and the transmission of information.

With the ending of a property society, the state and all its appendages will vanish. A free society where there are no vested interests will have no need of parliaments, codes of law, police, armies, etc., all of which are intended to preserve property rights. The workers themselves can be left to deal with any people who attempt to interfere with their liberties, once they have gained them.

Another consequence of the abolition of property will be the ending of the money and wages systems, which have been among the most effective means of oppressing the people in the past. Instead of money, goods will be distributed to people who need them, and there will be no attempt at the impossible task of assessing the quantity of food given out by the amount or quality of work done by the recipient. Once the increase in production has been expedited, the principle of "From each according to his means, to each according to his needs," will be applied.

### Evolution of Freedom

As anarchism is based on the belief in a continually evolving society, it is impossible to make any blue print for society once freedom has been achieved. The centralised, large-scale forms of industrial organisation will probably be followed by a great decentralisation of function and administration, a breaking into smaller functional and communal groups, and the break-up of the factory system, as well as a closer integration between town and country are likely. But first the revolution must be made and the present means of production taken over by the syndicates and developed by the workers.

This is a period when the old social forms are passing away, when forms of power are changing, when the State itself seems to be driving humanity towards the chaos of a new dark age of brutality and want. It is for the workers to use their power now to destroy authority and the property which it protects, and to erect in their place not another edifice of authority under the guise of "revolutionary government" or "workers' state," but the free society of anarchy, in which alone justice and equity can determine the lives of men and human society develop in freedom to a stage of plenty and happiness for all men which the developments of science and the resources of nature have made possible in the modern age.

### The Circular Letter

"It came to the notice of the authorities that certain documents were being circulated, and particularly a circular letter dated October 25th, 1944 which formed the subject of the charge. It is quite a long letter. I will refer to certain passages only." Mr. Hawke declared that this circular was addressed to "Dear Comrade" and advised recipients—quite properly—to attend lecture groups and discussion groups and said "Such discussion groups mentioned above may form the basis of future soldiers' councils. It is expected that an article will appear shortly in *W.C. on soldiers' and workers' councils*. One of the most important questions is that of the action of soldiers' councils in a revolutionary situation."

### The Police Raids

Enquiries were made, and on December 12th, certain addresses were visited in Belsize Road, Eton Place, Willow Road and Whitechapel High Street. Nothing of any importance was found at the last-named address. Inspector Whitehead visited Belsize Road and saw Mr. & Mrs. Richards. There was a large quantity of pamphlets and books there. Among them were 20 copies of the circular letter dated October 25th, 1944 and a list of members of the Forces with the words 'mid-Nov. sent' against them.

That clearly referred to the fact that the mid-November *War Commentary* had been sent to them. The police also found a key for the front door of 7, Camden Studios which had been occupied by Sansom. Two copies of the circular letter were found at the private address of Dr. Hewetson and a number of membership forms were found at Eton Place.

"It was stated in the circular letter—continued Mr. Hawke—that 'an article will appear shortly in *W.C. on soldiers' and workers' councils*'. I must refer you to issues of *War Commentary* which follow—found in such widely distributed places of military activity as Leamington, Derby and the Orkney Islands". Mr. Hawke stated that certain revolutionary potentialities were mentioned in an article in *War Commentary* entitled "People in Arms" with regard to France, Greece and Belgium and were inherent in the general situation. Part of it read "It is the duty of all anarchists to urge the workers everywhere, as Connolly did the Irish workers of the Citizen Army, to hold on to their arms. While the people have weapons in their hands Governments are weak". This suggests—continued Mr. Hawke to any person who has a rifle to hold on to it to enforce his opinions by means of that rifle."

Referring to the issue of *War Commentary* dated 25th November, 1944, Mr. Hawke quoted from the article "Workers Struggle in Belgium" in which it is stated: "We are emphatically on the other side, that of the armed workers. And we repeat again what we said in our last issue—'Hold on to your rifles!'".

He also referred to the articles by Michael Peterson "All Power to the Soviets" from which he read long extracts dealing with the situation in Germany in 1917, and the Mutiny in the Navy. This issue was found in several camps and seemed to be obviously, in the submission of the prosecution, for the purpose of causing disaffection. There were specific charges against Mr. & Mrs. Richards and Dr. Hewetson as being mainly responsible.

### The Case Against Sansom

Mr. Hawke then went on to deal with the prosecution's case against Philip Sansom. The police visited his studio on December 30th and found 30 copies of the circular letter. On January 16th Philip Sansom was taken by Inspector Whitehead to West Hampstead Police Station and shown the documents found at his flat. He was asked if he could explain how they came to be there. "He admitted sending out circulars to which I have called your attention".

These are the facts—continued Mr. Hawke and submitted that the case should be sent to the Central Criminal Court.

### Witnesses Called

The first witness to be called by the prosecution was Captain John Macauley, Pioneer Corps, The Castle, Lancaster.

Pros.—On December 13th last in the course of a kit inspection did you find in the kit of Pte. Taylor a copy of *War Commentary* dated 25th November 1944, 2 circular letters dated 25th October 1944, and *War Commentary* dated 1st November and 11th November?

Capt. Macauley.—I did.

Cross examined by Mr. Rutledge, witness stated that the search of the company's kit was conducted on instructions from higher authority. Taylor was not present when he searched his kit. It was a snap inspection following the search of the men's persons. He had to take away such documents as he was instructed. He was not instructed to take away copies of the *New Leader* and the *New Statesman*. Nor did he take away a bible or Mrs. Beeton's Cookery Book. He made the search in company with other officers. He did not receive instructions that Taylor was to be kept under observation. He had no report on any man. He reported his search on its conclusion. All the articles taken were retained and so far as he knew none had been returned. He further stated that the same procedure was gone through with Pte. Pontin.

Pte. Taylor was then called into the witness box and in answer to questions put to him by the Prosecution said that he had received both *War Commentary* and the Circular Letter from the Freedom Press. He subscribed to *War Commentary*.

Cross examined by Mr. Rutledge, Pte. Taylor stated that the issue of *War Commentary* referred to was the second he had received, but he had seen *War Commentary* several times. He was not invited to join; he joined on his own. On the 13th December his kit was inspected but he was not present at the time.

Mr. Rutledge.—Is there anything you have read in any issue of *War Commentary* or the circular letter which has affected your service as a soldier, or your discipline? (Mr. Hawke intervened at this point to object to the question, but the objection was not upheld by the magistrate.)

Pte. Taylor.—No. I am mainly interested in the Freedom Theatre.

Pte. Pontin was called and admitted to receiving *War Commentary* from the Freedom Press. Cross examined he said "I'm a subscriber to *War Commentary*. I have been for 1 year. I take it over a year. Nothing I have read in any issue or any circular letter from Freedom

Press has affected my service as a soldier. I have subscribed for some time to the *New Leader*."

The prosecution next called Lieut. Thos. Walter Wortley, Non Combatant Corps, Leamington to state that he had conducted a kit inspection and had found in the kit of Pte. MacDonald the circular letter in question. He also found in the kit of Pte. Ruby a copy of *War Commentary* dated 25th November. Cross examined he said "This search was not a snap inspection. It was made on instructions from higher authority. I was instructed to look for particular documents—the exhibit I have just seen and the circular letter. I took away another paper called the Bulletin. MacDonald and Ruby were present at the search of their respective kits."

Pte. MacDonald looked at the copy of the circular letter and said "I think I got that from the Freedom Press." He had read the issue of *War Commentary* in question. He had a friend called Ruby and thought that he had given his copy of that number of *War Commentary* to him.

### Joined of His Own Volition

Cross examined, Pte. MacDonald said that he had been a subscriber to *War Commentary* since May 1944 and joined of his own volition. He was present when his kit was searched. Several things were taken beside the circular letter including one or two Scottish papers, a copy of the *Scotts Socialist* and others, the titles of which he could not remember. "I've received *War Commentary* regularly up to the day of the search. 2 days after the search I was called to my C.O.'s office and asked to open a copy and hand it to him, which I did." Pte. MacDonald admitted to having been interviewed by Insp. Whitehead on 18th or 19th December.

Mr. Rutledge.—Do you remember any questions asked by Inspector Whitehead?

Pte. MacDonald.—Yes.

At this point the Magistrate intervened to question the necessity for such close questioning especially since this case would probably be sent on—"this Court is only a Clearing House," he said, but Mr. Rutledge asked to be allowed to carry on with the cross examination.

Mr. Rutledge to Pte. MacDonald.—Did Inspector Whitehead ask you if you believed that there should be officers in the army?

Pte. MacDonald.—Yes. I replied that I did not agree with the idea that there should not be officers.

Mr. Rutledge.—Did Inspector Whitehead say that it was 'in order' for you to read *War Commentary*?

Pte. MacDonald.—Yes.

Mr. Rutledge.—Did Inspector Whitehead say "That is what we are fighting for, 'the Freedom of the Press'?"

Pte. MacDonald.—Yes.

Mr. Rutledge.—Has anything you have read

in *War Commentary* affected your duty as a soldier?

Pte. MacDonald.—No.

Capt. Edward Davis, R.E., stationed in the Orkneys, stated that he found a copy of the circular letter and 3 issues of *War Commentary* in the kit of Sapper Ward. Cross-examined he said "I made the search on instructions from higher authority. I was told specifically what to look for—*War Commentaries* and any other article which appeared to be connected with it in relation to the Freedom Press. Ward was present. I was not instructed to take anything else. I did not take a book called *Revolutionary Portugal* or one called *The War in Spain* or one called *Behind the Spanish Barricades*. They were not taken away so far as I can recollect. They were looked at by Inspector Whitehead. I was present and so was Ward. In due course I made my report to higher authority."

Sapper Colin Ward was the next witness to be called by the prosecution. He confirmed having read the various documents which he said had been sent to him by the Freedom Press.

Cross examined he said that he saw Inspector Whitehead in the presence of his Commanding Officer. Inspector Whitehead asked him what made him first get in touch with the Freedom Press. "I said because my ideas were turning in the same direction as theirs—the ideas were there before I got in touch with Freedom Press."

In answer to a question by Mr. Rutledge Sapper Ward said "Nothing I have read in *War Commentary* or any article issued from Freedom Press has affected my duty as a soldier."

Re-examined by Mr. Hawke who asked: You say you held such views as expressed in *War Commentary* before being in touch with Freedom Press. Does that mean that everything you read met with your approval? Colin Ward answered "I wouldn't say categorically that everything I read in those articles had my approval."

It was then 11 p.m. and the magistrate adjourned the case until the following Friday, March 16th. Bail was again allowed for Mr. & Mrs. Richards and Dr. Hewetson. In Philip Sansom's case Inspector Whitehead objected to bail being allowed. On being asked for a reason Inspector Whitehead referred to a statement made to him on January 15th by Sansom when he is alleged to have told Inspector Whitehead that he would make it harder for him next time and since it had then taken the Inspector six weeks to find Sansom he did not think Sansom would turn up at the next hearing if it were granted. At this there were cries of "Oh! Oh!" from the crowded public gallery of the court.

The magistrate suggested two sureties in £500 each and two friends of the accused came forward to offer themselves in that sum. But as they declined to take the oath, though they were quite prepared to affirm, the Magistrate refused to accept them.

## Starvation in Europe

If we stress the sufferings of civil populations in this war, it is because, as Anarchists, we place ourselves on the side of the oppressed in society, the "common people" for whose welfare the politicians show no concern at all. We live in an age wherein the possibility of material riches is greater than ever before; but it is doubtful if misery and suffering have ever before reached such overwhelming proportions. Never before was the difference between governments' promises and their performance more glaring, the contrast between their declared aims and their actual deeds more shameless and hypocritical. All over the continent of Europe to-day (to say nothing of India, or China) the populations are stricken and desperate, while the governments of the great powers exhibit the inertia of indifference, and complacently allow individuals and groups, outraged by the sufferings inflicted by war upon their Allies, to make suggestions for relief (which they ignore); or impotent attempts at private relief (which they more or less openly obstruct). The plight of the people in France provides an illustration of this callous inaction.

### Starvation and Cold

Ever since D-day reports on the condition of the French people have been published in this country. During the German Occupation, of course, a servile press was only too anxious to publish the truth about food shortage. But after "liberation", too much sympathy with the French was evidently deemed unsuitable by our rulers, for numerous reports of the well-filled storehouses, healthy faces, etc., appeared in the press. Perhaps it is not a coincidence that these reports were issued at a time when the people of France, having driven out the occupation forces, were showing the greatest initiative, and therefore making difficult the reinstatement of a French government under de Gaulle. For government always requires an inert population whose only function is to obey the functionaries of the State. Be that as it may, the attempt to play down the food shortage in France has continued more or less till the present.

However, it is becoming clearer as more and more reports are brought back by observers from France, that there is a very serious shortage of food and also of fuel. A leading medical journal, the *Lancet*, for example, has recently published two articles on the subject. The writer points out that there are gross inequalities in the distribution of the available food and this is admitted in official publications. The prevalence of black market methods make it inevitable that those who have money are able to supplement their official rations. The increase in tuberculosis is spectacularly higher among children of workers than among professional men, civil servants, cultivators, etc. The *Lancet* writer declares that "the ordinary manual worker is in every respect worst off." He tells how because of the lack of fuel, the hospitals are overflowed with "old people suffering from cold, fatigue and respiratory affections."

Undoubtedly an important cause of the food shortage in France was the German Occupation. Enormous amounts of food were demanded both for the maintenance of the occupying army and for export to Germany. But with the driving out of the Nazi administration, these large amounts should have become available for the French people. No doubt the sabotage and destruction of lines of transport, etc., did some-

thing at first to diminish this benefit. No doubt liberating armies, no less than occupying ones, require to be fed. Nevertheless one would have expected that by now there would have been an amelioration in the plight of the French. Nothing of the kind has happened, however. "Since liberation," writes the *Lancet's* correspondent, "despite an improvement in the official ration, there has been a sudden deterioration in the condition of children of the poorer classes in Paris, of whom many have been found underweight. There has also been an increase of vitamin deficiencies at Marseilles."

This result comes as no surprise to those who have followed the fate of other liberated territories. Italy and Sicily are probably considerably worse off than France.

### Food Enough For All

France is ordinarily a food-producing country, with ability to feed the total population with ease. There can be no doubt at all that if the peasants had access to the land, they could increase production so as to overcome the present difficulties. But the de Gaulle government is pledged to maintain private property. Moreover, the peasant cannot get those products from the towns which he needs to carry on production without paying very high prices for them. This is the reason why they continue to sell their products on the black market just as they did during the German occupation, when such black market channels proved very useful to the Resistance Movement. Moreover, the inflation makes them distrustful of paper money.

But even if the money system did not dry up the free flow of goods, the lack of transport provides another source of food shortage in towns. This lack provides yet another brake on peasant production. What is the use of producing food if it is going to rot in the countryside for lack of transport? Meanwhile the State departments add typical bureaucratic incompetence and indifference. *Reynold's News'* foreign editor, David Raymond, just returned from France, reports (11/3/45): "I know of a case where lorry drivers who were going to the country and would be returning with empties, rang up the Paris Food administration offering to load up with butter on the return journey. They were told that Paris had no need of butter. This at a time when the capital had been without fats for six weeks!" (The *Lancet* correspondent writes also "that up to the day I left Paris, Jan. 29th, no fat of any kind had been issued in the ration of the Parisian since December.") David Raymond also speaks of truck loads of salt being washed away because "some bureaucrat ordered elsewhere the locomotive that was drawing the open trucks in which the salt was being consigned. That was when thousands of Parisians were having to eat unsalted food!"

Meanwhile, people in this country have realized the appalling plight of the French, and their immediate reaction is to want to help. There is enough food in this country to avoid actual starvation (malnutrition is another matter), so it is a natural instinct to want to mitigate the starvation in France by sharing. *Picture Post* recently published an article on the conditions in France and were immediately inundated with letters from people anxious to send a part of their rations to France. Enquiring into the possibility of getting something done, however, they came up against an official blank wall. "The attitude of the Ministry of Food," wrote their enquirer, "is that this is a matter for U.N.R.R.A."

## Review

### "The Struggle in the Factory: History of a Royal Ordnance Factory" by "Equity"

This new pamphlet issued in conjunction by the Anarchist Federation, Glasgow, and Freedom Press, London, is a very valuable contribution to our literature, being the story of the struggle taking place in a Dalmuir R.O.F. since the war, showing how the shop steward movement has grown and been betrayed, and how militancy has lifted its head against the attacks by the Government, the employing class, and the way in which the Communist Party has misled the issue.

The pamphlet will undoubtedly be of special and specific interest to those directly concerned with the problem, and as such, as a means of propaganda at the point of production, it serves a major purpose in laying the way to an anarcho-syndicalist organisation of workers at the place of work, which can introduce the workers to anarchism by pointing the examples from their day-to-day struggles, and thus creating conscious anarchists in the industrial field. Such work is useful because it is at the point of production where the workers are powerful, where they can resist the artificial authority imposed upon them, and have the means to create a new society based on use instead of profit.

Apart from its special appeal to Clydeside engineering workers, the pamphlet will be recognised by all in industry as giving a typical picture of the workers' struggle in any war-time factory, and as such will be in demand by all who strive to influence, by the shop stewards' movement or any other independent movement in industry, the workers in industry towards libertarian forms of organisation. Its message to the workers "Let us rely on our own strength, let us forge our own organisations, let us break with reformism and its decadent trade unions."

"The working class ... organising at the point of production, irrespective of craft or creed, must jealously guard and retain control of their own organisation. The Labour Party, Communist Party or other political group must be recognised for the knives and charlatans that they undoubtedly are"—is a message that will be echoed by the experiences of conscious militant workers in industry everywhere. It is greatly to be hoped that other workers will come forward, as "Equity" has done, and by their own experiences and knowledge give out that knowledge which will be at the root of the building of an anarcho-syndicalist movement upon the essential structure of industry.

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An official added that "we have no evidence that the people of Britain would be willing to give up any of their rations. I don't think they would." I asked whether, if it were proved that they were willing, the Ministry of Food would they release quantities of food in bulk. He said the question was hypothetical, and most of the food that will go to Europe will in any case come from the Americas. Certainly the Ministry of Food will not allow the sending of food, and seem to be afraid that, if sending is permitted, (1) there will be a feeling abroad that our rations in this country must be lavish if anything whatsoever can be spared, and (2) there might be a counter-campaign to raise rations here. These one encounters the typical bureaucratic preoccupation with trivialities and indifference to fundamental issues. The writer makes it clear that U.N.R.R.A. cannot do anything, and concludes that "clearly, almost nothing is being done." In our society, therefore, liberated, occupied the French (and all the other territories) will be or enemy territories for that matter) will be casually left to starve. Yet these people are workers, just like ourselves.

JOHN HEWETSON