

A Plague on both your Houses!

"I AM NOT A TRAITOR TO MY PARTY" - BEVIN



BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WORKING CLASS ?

THAT politicians are just place hunters is frequently pointed out by Anarchists, and demonstrated by the politicians themselves. They may give the appearance of being a "happy family" during wartime, when the propaganda to be served up to the workers demands an appearance of "national unity"; but the minute the war seems likely to end, and a general election is in sight, one finds an ugly campaign of backchat and credit-seeking breaking out. Why? Because a General election is like musical chairs; when the music stops everyone has to try and get a seat, and there aren't enough seats for everyone. So the devil takes the hindmost, few things being so depressing as a politician out of office, compelled to fall back on such devices as writing his Memoirs.

War Commentary has unfailingly pointed out, whenever the Labour Party leaders in the Cabinet have lent themselves to some particularly servile piece of dirty work against the workers on behalf of the Tories,

that they needn't expect any gratitude. In politics there's no such word. When the Tories have used the Labour leaders to get to the top of the ladder, they will turn round and kick them in the teeth. This is what is already beginning to happen—for example, in the exchange of pleasantries recently between Brendan Bracken and Ernest Bevin. So important did the *Evening Standard* consider this little skirmish that it placed it in headlines on its front page, to take precedence over even such events as the Allied advance into Germany.

The ground they chose to have their battle on is interesting. Bevin accused the Tories of having got in at the last election—1935—on a disarmament ticket, and then immediately repudiating it. He accused them, quite rightly, of having pursued a policy of appeasement with the dictators. The Tories cannot deny the charge, so Brendan Bracken, Conservative mouth-piece, replies in classical political vein, "what about you?" The Labour Party op-

posed re-armament, and discounted the likelihood of war. And any way, Trade Union leaders are monopolists too. Two blacks make a white for purposes of fooling the working class during the war; but when an election is in the offing the pot must denounce the kettle. Both sections in that uneasy partnership of political parties, who both want undivided power (and the jobs that go with it) are anxious to claim that they were all-wise, all-seeing, etc. enough to expect the war and take all the necessary measures of preparation; that when war came, but for them (whichever they are), the war would have been lost, and so on and so on. Trying to fool all of the people all the time.

What About Fighting Fascism?

Hatred for Hitler, revulsion from the crimes of Nazism, undivided support for anti-Fascist forces abroad; our leaders always were animated by these noble motives—if we were to believe what they say now.

Unfortunately history has a different tale to tell. The Conservatives supported Hitler and Mussolini, helped them to achieve power, helped them to retain power by winking at their multiple aggressions. And not Hitler and Mussolini only, but a host of lesser dictators as well, not to mention Sir John Simon's and Mr. Amery's work of propaganda on behalf of the Japanese, or the more or less open recognition of General Franco. The Labour Party bleated about "collective security"—as if such were possible in the jungle which is capitalist com-

petition—and the League of Nations—just as if this were not an instrument to serve British and French Imperialism. What did their anti-Fascism amount to, when they supported Leon Blum's Non-Intervention betrayal on the grounds that to send arms to Spain would "precipitate war"? And when it became clear that Hitler and Mussolini were openly and deliberately using Spain as a testing out ground for their armed forces, and ensuring positions for use during the coming war—did the Labour Party change their attitude then? No.

(continued on p. 4.)

'Beware of the Phoney'

To The Editor:
"War Commentary—For Anarchism"

Let me tell you the way it is with me Ed. Then you will see that Life can be easy and Life can be hard. It all depends whether you are up there or down here. Five years ago I should have said Up here or down there but that was five years ago. Since then there has been button-polishing, marching there and back, loading and unloading, writing, checking all the grounds you can possibly think of, and now I'm down here.

It's been for nothing too. Except to fetch me down from up there down here. I never thought, never imagined that would have done this to me—humility and meekness. But it did.

You see Ed I used to be a snob. I was young. I believed You are you and I am I and somehow or other we deserve the same treatment. Equality of Opportunity they called it—the Socialists I mean. But I was a snob just the same. And a middle-class snob which is worse less justified. We believed, us, bank-clerk, student, civil servant, that they, them, factory-worker, bricklayer, farm-labourer were unfortunate, could not believe in the solidarity of the workers. As far as we believed at all that is more often we didn't believe anything at all. You see Ed, we were snobs and all was right with our world. Fine.

Until the war. Then there was a great noise and out of all the clamour we remember hearing words like Volunteer, Duty, National Service. Maybe there was something inside of me saying Beware Beware of the Phoney. It is there all around you and you can't always see it, but you must feel it, you must, you must, however strong the opposite magnet. The opposite magnet is a Phoney and you must beware. Inside of me there was something and it said to me Beware of the Phoney.

I had to stand in front of 5 gentlemen, and tell them about this Phoney. But that wasn't so easy. When it came to words it wasn't so easy. The Phoney was something you felt not something you talked about, and talking about the Phoney was meaningless. Also it got you nowhere. So these 5 gentlemen said to me: All this talk of yours (they said); it's only what we think really, so why should you be a special case. They were right I'm sure. Let me give them the credit for being right. I'm sure they thought the same. But they didn't feel, I know they didn't feel, because if

they'd felt the same as I felt they would never have sent me to my death.

I died Ed, a mean and horrible death. That opposite magnet was too strong for me and I was caught between its arms, its horrible inhuman, phoney arms. But don't get me quite wrong, I was caught, yet I struggled, am struggling, shall struggle. Struggling you see with death. Life after death? Well, that's no new idea.

Funny thing about new ideas, Ed. They don't seem like new ideas but just as if you had known about them all the time and were waiting for someone, something to come and make you shout out: Oh yes, of course, that's the way it is.

That's the way it was with me and you, Ed. With me and your idea I mean. Your idea about no government and workers being free and every-thing rosy. Your idea about Anarchism. It came upon me and there I was thinking: That is what I have felt all along; although I didn't think it I know that's what I meant when I said to the 5 gentlemen: Your war is a Phoney. That's what I meant all the time.

Only I didn't understand about Power. Not then. But now after 5 years of marching and singing and sighing and dying and all the other gerunds, I do know about it. I know that Power is not safe, not for you and me, Ed. I know that meekness and humility only are strong, that Power destroys its own strength. I know that the world was top-heavy with its Power, has fallen from its perch and cracked.

The cracks are not deep and will be filled in—that's what I feel. The Phoney will come along and talk blah, blah, blah, and the cracks will be filled in. Just like that. But that way it won't hold together, not that way. You and I, Ed, we've got to stop them coming along, and talking and filling in the cracks. Yes we've got to stop the glib, slick tongues and empty guarantees and blind faith and belief in Phonies. Up to there I'm with you; the Phonies must be shown. But at Revolution Corner I get off. I get off not because I'm afraid of the crash but because I think you'll find you're only going round in a circle. The scenery will become monotonous.

Maybe it's the snob in me. Maybe I haven't weighed up the workers. Maybe I'm wrong but I don't think I'm more than 50 per cent. wrong. You might say: The workers are not a stupid set of dullards. They know what they want and they are going on strike until they get it. If necessary they are going to fight until they get it. Sure that's fine if they know what they want. But do they know? Did the Russians know? Or if they did know why didn't they get it? What went wrong?

I write to friends Ed—critics, socialists not snobs you understand, but humanists. What do they say? Oh yes, they say, it's all right, it's fine this anarchism, it's logic and so on but there's one thing you're overlooking—you can't change Human Nature. But they are wrong there. You can change Human Nature. You have, meaning one has. One has seen Human Nature change from horrified reluctance to callous indifference all in 5 years. And that only shows one change. Oh yes, you can change human nature all right.

So now we'll ask again. What went wrong? What made the Russians go round in a circle, miss the direction? They didn't change Human Nature. And that you must do first. It's no good going on strike against corruption, beginning a revolution, coming out afterwards with blood on your hands. By aping your enemy you debase, corrupt yourself. No that's no good. Because you're in for the same familiar landscape all over again. Blood and money. Money and Power.

Your anarchism, Ed, just think about it. It's a complete way of life and it doesn't ever include blood and Power and men becoming savages. With your brain justify murder, killing, violence—yes perhaps, but always with your heart feel the wrongness the immorality. Don't just look at ends. Means are important too. Ends and Means. Means and Ends. And Means to such basically humane Ends must be basically humane. Humanist Pacifist. Non-Violent.

In other words Anarchism equals Pacifism? Yes, I think so—more or less. Militant Pacifism call it—pacifism with a kick. Anyway without a kick, Life stops being Living, stops being artistic.

Now do you see what I meant Ed by: Life can be easy and Life can be hard. Before the cataclysm Life was easy with gaiety and motor-trips and then in a flash life became hard and the world's troubles became our troubles. It needn't have been so but conscience or feeling or sensibility said it should be so. And now life will always be hard; but it will be vital. Therefore creative, artistic.

Also one hopes it will be humanist. This isn't a quarrel with you, merely a statement of doubt, that is a shared doubt. What we want to say is: Look before you leap. Look, in other words, for the real Cause of Heart before you go the way of Russia. Live your anarchism as means and end. Show your way to be the right way. The only right way. Change of shape of the world's heart to the shape of your heart. Difficult because some are shaped like swastikas and others like hammers and sickles, some like eagles and others like unicorns. Some unfortunately are made of stone, but many you will find to be plastic. These you must find, teach, send out in the strange places, must find, teach, send out in the strange places, as Confucius taught and Christ sent out his disciples.

You believe in Anarchism, Ed. You believe in good. Therefore you believe in God. You're religious, and so you must respect the spirit of the religious, and so you must respect the spirit of the religious, Confucius. You owe it to your disciples. Also to everybody. Don't slip up be-cause you have a new Way of Life to offer the world.

FROM DON LEWIS DYER, HEAGE DERBYSHIRE 4/2/46.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

THE TECHNOCRAT'S DILEMMA

COAL MINING. REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE. H.M.S.O. 1/-.

THE coal industry is, in several ways, the key industry of capitalism. It furnished the basic raw material on which capitalist industry was enabled to grow up in the industrial revolution, and still, even in these days of increasing electrification of industry, provides either directly or indirectly the principal motive power of almost every factory as well as the means of heating or lighting, in the form of gas, electricity or coal itself, almost every house in the country. It provides power for the greater part of our transport facilities, and is the most important raw material of many industries, including plastics, dyes, fuel oil, and a number of important ersatz products.

For these reasons it was also the first industry to react in widespread dereliction to the various crises inherent in the nature of a capitalism which has expanded beyond the capacity of its markets. This resulted in an element of uncertainty in the coal industry which led the capitalists to make sure of their money by spending as little as they could in modernising capital equipment and methods of working, and thus coal mining has become the classic industry to illustrate the tendency of capitalism to hinder the course of scientific and empirical improvements and deliberately to neglect inventions which make for safer or less laborious production, on the ground that they will interfere with immediate profits. Lastly, partly because of the factors already mentioned, and partly because of the particularly brutal forms of exploitation used by the coal owners in an industry which they knew no man would enter if he could find a better, the struggle between the employers and the workers has assumed a fiercer, more open and more sustained nature than in any other industry in the country—to such an extent that a dispute in the coal industry led to the great General Strike of 1926, which shook the foundations of British capitalism and gave the Labour leaders the opportunity for their first great betrayal of the working class.

Coal, therefore, is bound up intimately with the whole economic and social structure of modern society, and until some form of power is evolved or utilised in this country which will obviate the need for mining it, any kind of society that can be envisaged will be concerned with the methods of its production and the effect which it will have on other industries and on the social pattern in general.

Therefore, it is significant, but not surprising, that at a time when the structure of capitalism appears to be changing its character from private enterprise to something approaching the technocratic managerialism envisaged by Burnham, we should be presented by an elaborate and government-sponsored report by a group of technicians on the present conditions and desirable changes in the coal industry.

The result is a remarkable document, in which we find men who are at present executive officials in some of the largest collieries, sitting in technical judgment on the coal industry and condemning it without reservation. The contradiction is made all the more extreme, because the signatories do not seem to realise, or do not wish to realise, that the defects in mining are the results of capitalist organisation, and that any rationalisations they propose to carry out will be of an efficacy strictly limited in relation to the fluctuating standards of capitalist production.

THE TECHNICIAN'S PART

Nevertheless, the criticisms are, in most cases, intrinsically valid, and, where purely technical matters are concerned, the recommendations seem usually to be sound. Industrial technicians are, of course, subject to necessary limitations of outlook. Technicians have a function in industry; considered objectively, they are workers who can make a sound theoretical contribution to production, and whose specialised scientific knowledge is necessary in any form of work which has become more complex than ordinary handicrafts. Unfortunately, the tendency in modern industry is for the technicians to detach themselves from the other workers and to assume executive functions, to

become a necessary part of the managerial power group which reproduces in each place of work the characteristic hierarchy of the modern economic and political institution. As the tendency towards managerialism increases, this detachment of the technician will also increase, and his connection with executive power will become stronger. The technician is thus dangerous when he is cut off from the workers, because his technical knowledge makes him of peculiar value to the capitalists and managers for the achievement of their own purposes. Under these conditions the technician naturally seeks to increase his own power and indispensability by keeping the workers ignorant of the theoretical and scientific basis of the work in which they are engaged, by reducing their functions to detached mechanical processes and keeping in his own hand the co-ordination of these single functions. This process is, in the long run, detrimental to industry, because the technician himself becomes detached from the practical functions of the industry in which he is engaged, and from the empirical knowledge which has been brought into alliance with scientific theory by all the great inventors of the past. Thus, it is common to encounter young engineers, bred in university and drawing office experience, whose theoretical knowledge has been excellent, but whose schemes in practice have often revealed the kind of faults which would have been obvious to any worker who had a lengthy practical experience of the functioning of his industry.

These limitations, however, hardly effect the technical sections of the report under review, which are based on the collection of statistics and practical experience from the coal industries of various parts of the world, and whose evidence, probably in spite of the natural prejudices of the reporters, results in a tremendous indictment of the British coal mining industry, which, in comparison with similar continental mining in Holland and the Ruhr, is wastefully out-of-date in its methods, and, while providing worse conditions for the miners, results in a man-shift production of coal of 23½ cwt. as against 36 cwt. in Holland under similar conditions of mining but modernised equipment and better working conditions. The backward nature of the British coal industry is further illustrated by the fact that while between 1925 and 1936 the man-shift production of coal increased in Holland by 118 per cent., in England it increased only by 14 per cent.

In order to improve the coal industry the committee recommends widespread changes, and where there are merely technical they are to be approved almost unreservedly. The mechanisation of coal getting, loading and underground transport, the replanning of underground communications to facilitate transport, the electrification of mines wherever this is possible, are all excellent things in themselves. But they are wholly good in a social sense only if they do not result in a worsening of conditions for the miners. Here we have to consider two aspects of the question.

MINING IN FREEDOM

What is the attitude we should adopt to mining as it might be in a free society? Mining is a dangerous and irksome employment, and the first object of the members of a free society would be to reduce such employments to the minimum. In such circumstances we should endeavour as far as is possible to eliminate the need for the use of coal. It could be greatly reduced by the use of other forms of power, such as water, wind and tide power for the making of electricity. As for the various industrial raw materials which come from coal, it would be desirable to substitute these as far as possible by materials gained by some less unpleasant process. If they could not all be obtained without the use of coal, then it would be the duty of the members of society to consider whether such materials were indispensable, whether it would not be better to carry out some simplification of living in order to eliminate the need for materials gained by dangerous or unhealthy processes. If it were found that the need for a certain amount of coal mining existed, then it should be performed in such a way as to involve the least possible heavy labour, and for this process improve-

ments of the kind suggested by the report would be a mere commencement. In such a society the reduction in the amount of labour used would not result in unemployment—which makes the mechanical device such a bogey to workers under capitalism—because each man would receive goods not according to his labour but according to his needs, and the greatly reduced amount of labour would be so divided as to provide leisure for everybody.

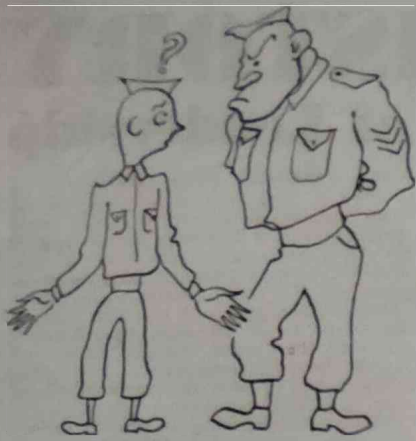
"IMPROVEMENTS" UNDER CAPITALISM

In a capitalist society, however, the position is not so simple. The introduction of mechanical devices in the pits is certain to result in a recurrence of unemployment among miners, because it is not at all likely that the consumption of coal will increase in this country after the war, and rationalisation will mean a higher individual output and thus fewer men. This will result in a recurrence of the situation that existed before the present war. There will be a great pool of mine labour from which the owners will be able to take their pick, and on whom they will be able to impose their own conditions. On the other hand the decrease in purchasing power among the workers will contribute in producing the next cycle of capitalist crisis, and thus play its part in creating the conditions in which it would be necessary for the country to go to war again in order to save the ruling class from its economic dilemma.

These facts are realised, at least in part, by the technicians, who suggest a number of palliatives to decrease possible unemployment. It will be noticed that the principal of these, the insisting on the training of young men until a much later age than at present before they are allowed to go underground will be to the advantage of the owners by providing more efficient workers, and will result ironically, in a further reduction in the labour requirements. They realise also, that the situation will increase their own power, and for this reason they are insisting on a substantial change in the relationship between the owners and the workers, deftly trying to shift some of the blame for the state of the coal industry on to the miners for their independence and demanding 'proper discipline' in the mines, without which, they assert, there 'can be no real efficiency, particularly in a highly mechanised industry.' They go on to say, 'There must be trade union discipline as well. The lightning strike must not take place if there is to be any chance of true and lasting unity and co-operation between management and mineworkers.' The kind of unity these technicians obviously envisage is that between the slave and his master, the efficiency they desire is that inadequate form produced by fear, which is the principal element in all external discipline. The fact that they look to the trade unions to help them in setting up their industrial dictatorship is significant and not unexpected, in view of the treacherous actions of the union leaders during recent disputes in the coalfields.

The changing of conditions in any industry under capitalism is at best a partial improvement which will always result in some compensating disadvantage. Permanent benefit to the community will only come from improvements which are the result of a balanced social outlook, and which spring up in a society where men's actions are not restricted by conceptions based on the profits of certain individuals. This report speaks of the 'curious and ancient' customs to which miners adhere in their own protection. It would be more appropriate to point out that the great fault of the opinions of the technicians who prepared this report is that they are bounded by a reverence for the 'curious and ancient' custom of capitalism, whose existence will make all their efforts turn like the Dead Sea Fruit into additional factors in the misery of the workers. Only when the mines are owned and, where it is necessary that they should continue, operated freely by the mine workers in the interests of the community, will any improvements yield their full potential benefit.

A FOOLISH QUESTION



"You are charged," said the Company Commander next day, "with insubordination. You have heard the evidence. Have you anything to say?"

"Yes Sir," said Private Conscript. "I only wanted to know what we are fighting the war for."

"You want to know why we are fighting the war, do you?" said the Company Commander trying to be sympathetic. "But surely you know we are fighting for freedom!"

"What freedom, Sir?" asked Private Conscript.

"Er... hum... er..." Case dismissed," said the Company Commander all bothered.

"Right Turn, Quick March, left-right, left-right, left-right, right-turn, left-right, Halt!"

ONCE upon a time there was a young fellow who was very clever at mending aeroplane and motor car engines and had worked on them for a number of years, so they decided to call him up.

Well, when he went for his medical, he was foolish enough to tell them what a lot he knew about engines, so they decided to put him in the Army instead of the R.A.F.; and he was made into a soldier. Once in the Army, however, he became a serious problem for the higher-ups, because they found out that he knew something about cooking as well as engineering, and they had a very difficult job to decide whether to put him into the Medical Corps or the Infantry, since these were the only jobs they could think of in which they were sure he would be unhappy. You see, the Army had to keep to its traditions of putting men where they are least suited, so after long discussions among the brass-hats, they put him in the Infantry, and poor Private Conscript found himself marching up and down to orders and doing all sorts of useless silly things that were designed to crush his individuality and give him a fear of authority.

It came to pass that one fine day before Private Conscript's brain had gone quite stagnant, he got an idea, which of course is quite the wrong sort of thing for a soldier to get, and he decided to ask what the war was all about.

"Please Corporal," he said, "can you tell me why we are fighting this war?"

"Don't be daft!" said the Corporal, "every-one knows we've got to fight, so get on with polishing your brasses. Remember you nearly got on a charge last week for not polishing the back of one of your buttons!"

"Please Sergeant," said Private Conscript standing stiffly to attention with all his brasses shining two hours later, "can you tell me why we are fighting this war?"

"What!" yelled the Sergeant Major. "Wants to know why we are fighting the war, does he? Put him on a charge for insubordination—asking foolish questions."

"Very funny thing," said the pompous old General when he was chatting with the Prime Minister in his Club a few days later. "I heard of a case of a soldier asking why he was fighting the war, while I was on this inspection tour. The fellow actually wanted to know why we are fighting. It takes me laugh!"

"What!" said the Prime Minister sitting up suddenly. "Somebody not know why they are fighting—a soldier?"

"Yes, why?" asked the General a little surprised.

"After all the money we've spent on propaganda about 'Freedom' and all the trouble we have been to to get Hitler built up. It's preposterous! Who was this man?"

"Just a cheap conscript," said the General. "One of the Colonels told me about it."

"We'll find out who it was," said the Prime Minister angrily. "The man's a danger to the realm. Think what would happen if everyone asked that question? Think what it would mean to the Arms industry and our Shares? Have the man arrested and put in prison under 18B. If people can't swallow our propaganda and start asking questions, they deserve to be locked up. They'll be spoiling our war by refusing to fight if we let this go on! They will have us broke! Have him locked up at once."

So poor Private Conscript was taken out of the Army and locked up in prison, and while his comrades went off to the front and got shot to bits, he lived unhappily ever after.



Dismiss!" said the Sergeant Major, and Private Conscript picked up his cap and went off.

"Bai-Jove!" said the Company Commander in the Officer's Mess that evening. "Had an extraordinary case before me to-day—Private soldier wanting to know what the war was about—had the cheek to ask 'What Freedom?' when I told him. The very ignorance of these animals..."

"Ho-ho-ho!" laughed the Colonel, "I must tell the General that one when he comes. He likes a good joke, Ho-ho-ho..." and all the officers laughed because they thought they had better laugh because the Colonel thought it a good joke.

R.L.



Letters to the Editors

To whom it may concern

Dear Comrades,
In view of recent scurrilous attacks made on the characters of our comrades of the Freedom Press, we, the Glasgow Group of the Anarchist Federation feel obliged to make public the following statement:

The statements made by Tom Brown regarding the actions of the Freedom Press comrades are quite unwarranted—a fact which must be clearly recognised by Brown as he ourselves in view of the circumstances in which he and ourselves had access to the information which he claims was withheld.

We further wish to affirm our complete solidarity with our comrades of Freedom Press who have always shown themselves to be of unquestionable integrity in the past, and who face a threat of incarceration for their working class militancy at the present time. We ask all anarchists and sincere lovers of freedom to join us in the fight to defend our comrades.

Glasgow Anarchist Federation.

The following comrades wish to associate themselves with the above statement of the Glasgow Anarchist Federation: Mat Kavanagh, Ron Avery, Charles Harding, P. Edsall, George Woodcock, Jack Wade, Lilian Wolfe, Tom Earley, S. Watson Taylor, Albert Meltzer, Philip Sansom, Frederick Lohr, Laurie Hissam, Preston Clements, Robert Blum.

Protests against the unwarranted attack on the comrades of Freedom Press have also been expressed by comrades in Cornwall, Exeter, Plymouth, Bristol and Oxford.

B.B.C. FOR TRIAL ?

DEAR COMRADES,
Amongst the allegations raised at the preliminary hearings of the trial of our four comrades, a prominent one, I gather from War Commentary, is the alleged distribution of copies of War Commentary containing a description of the 1918 revolution in Germany and the formation of Soldiers' and Workers' Councils at that time.

Naturally, one cannot comment on this, and one presumes the court will decide whether or not this is "disaffection" within the meaning of the law. However, it is interesting to note that the B.B.C. German News Service has not only described the events in 1918 also, but has pointed out that Soldiers' and Workers' Councils are being formed at the present time on similar lines, only a few weeks after the case was first heard.

If the four comrades should find Lindley Fraser queuing up for his place in the dock, ask them to tell him from me his programme's lousy.

Yours fraternally,
K. A. B.

Anarchism after Disillusionment

Although I agree without reservation that Anarchism is both desirable and workable, there appears to be a great difficulty in making others understand. I believe that this difficulty (which is not encountered when putting forth the Trotskyite programme) is due to the British workers not being at a sufficiently advanced stage of disillusionment in authoritarian systems.

I have reached the conclusion from the above that Trotskyism as a system of society is an inevitable part in the education—by bitter experience—of the masses.

Anarchism provides only for the downfall of capitalist society, the workers themselves being expected to build the new society from below.

Trotskyism on the other hand not only provides for the downfall of capitalist society but offers an interim, a ready-made structure of Soviet Socialist Government for the workers, to satisfy their craving for "authority without dictatorship".

This means that Anarchism will have to await disillusionment in Trotskyism. I hope I'm wrong!

C. (R.A.F.)

[Certainly our comrade is correct in assuming that not until the workers are disillusioned in authoritarian systems will there be any possibility of a mass anarchist movement. However, one does not want to become disillusioned if one has already a clear picture of political parties. Individuals already awakened to the role of political parties naturally seek to organise in such a way that the rest of the working-class will avoid the road to disillusionment. Disillusionment like hope is a good breakfast but a poor supper—all right to start with but not much to finish up on. The Trotskyists, or Bolsheviks, in Russia brought the proletarian dictatorship into being. This has existed for 23 years and ripened into Stalinism but is not finished yet. Disillusionment came long ago, but the dictatorship has prevented it having any effect. The only way in which the proletarian dictatorship can be overthrown is by another revolution. Obviously one might as well have the libertarian revolution in the first place... and the Russian workers did have a libertarian revolution that drove out the Tsar and established free Soviets. Then the Bolshevik Party came on the scene and seized power; their role being to dissolve the free Soviets and build a dictatorship. They did not destroy Tsarism—they let the workers do that while they "got inside the workers' ranks" and "permeated the mass movement with their cadres" in order to destroy the free society, and build instead the proletarian dictatorship.

The main point of our correspondent is, of course, that the Trotskyists endeavour to work out a programme which provides the workers with a leadership in a revolutionary situation. Hence their desire to be in on a mass movement, etc. It is at the point of a revolutionary situation when the Anarchists give a diametrically opposite programme to the Trotskyists. The Anarchists oppose leadership, reject government, and call for a free society, councils of workers at the point of production without their being fettered to a political party. The Trotskyists want all these admittedly spontaneous results of a revolutionary situation co-ordinated under their own leadership. That is where the clash comes and you get a "Kronstadt". If Anarchism is unsuccessful in the clash, and is defeated, then, as in Russia, it has to await disillusionment by preparing the way for another revolution. If the workers, on the other hand, choose the Anarchist approach of deciding their own destinies, the new society that they will already have created in embryo will ripen into a free society.—Eds.]

(Continued at foot of column 4)

A plague on both your houses!

(Continued from p. 2)

For when delegates came from Spain to urge the T.U.C. to use direct action to compel the government to send arms, they were refused. Neither Conservatives nor Labour bosses showed any concern for the struggle of the working class on the continent against Fascism. Words in plenty—but deeds? not on your life!

What About the Interests of British Workers?

The Conservatives are openly the party of the bosses. Only those who think that the master rules by "right", and that the worker "ought to know his place", think that their rule is "beneficial". But the Tories are not themselves the ruling class; they are the political party of the ruling class, the big property owners, and financiers, and they administer the country for the benefit, not of the population as a whole, but of this class. Under capitalism, where private property is "sacred" (that is to say where the workers have no property) society is administered in the interests of financiers, industrialists and large landowners.

But what about the Labour Party? They have now been in office three times. The first two occasions saw them just as imperialistic as their competitors. When out of office they excused their failure to alter the existing unjust pattern of society by whining that the captains of finance and industry had prevented them, had sabotaged their good intentions. What did they expect? The ruling class is there to rule, and the government—be it composed of Old Tories or of Trade Union leaders—is there to carry out the measures necessary for the ruling class well-being. If they don't serve these interests well enough, out they go! Ask Ramsay MacDonald!

The Labour leaders seem to have learned this lesson at least, for in their third period of office—in the wartime Coalition—they have showed an indecent willingness to serve. No work has been too dirty for

Anarchist Commentary

AACHEN — WHAT IS THE TRUTH ?

According to reports published in the Press, Aachen (Aix) in Germany was being run as a Nazi town by the Allied authorities. They appointed as Mayor a man who had been prominent in public life, a local lawyer, throughout the Nazi régime. He picked as local officials men who had been members of the Nazi Party—recently, owing to many criticisms, some of them had to resign. Correspondents have laid stress on how it seemed to be the same workers doing the dirty work for the Allied authorities as did it for the Nazis, whilst those who had

the soft jobs before became burgomasters and local officials, and faithfully interpreted the decrees of harshness.

The Nazis threatened that Allied Quislings would be shot at their desks, and the burgomaster of Aachen was shot at his home by three unknown men. Naturally, the London papers tell us it was the Gestapo (as usual, headlines say it was the Gestapo, while the text of the column says it may have been the Gestapo). Hence a good deal of pessimism as to the future of Germany. The papers did not then mention about the burgomaster's record, but merely said he had collaborated with the Allies. He may have been shot by his former masters, whom he deserted, as Count Ciano was—on the other hand, it is not possible he may have been shot by his consistent opponents?

FLOGGING FOR CRUELTY

Many cruelty to children cases have come to light recently, somewhat ironically in a world which bombs and starves them. How can one understand the mentality of this type of person? In the House of Lords debate, Lord Denham gave some very ghastly examples, and stated:

"All my life I have had a passionate abhorrence of cruelty. I ask the Government to amend the law, if necessary, so that in cases like that at Grimsby the punishment of flogging can be given to the guilty man."

"During the five years I was a barrister and went on the Midland circuit I had the most vivid recollections of hearing a judge of the High Court sentence a criminal to be flogged."

"When sentence was being delivered I have seen the old lag tremble and blanch with fear at the sentence. I advocate flogging for cruelty."

When the "do-gooders" who are so passionately opposed to cruelty have an identical approach with the offenders, the cases are not to be wondered at. It comes to the old question of belief in punishment. When this notion disappears from people's heads they will cease to make young children—or old lags—blanch with fear at reprisals for offences, and cruelty will cease.

I.L.P. CONFERENCE

The record of the recent I.L.P. Conference is, on the whole, even less inspiring than one might have expected from such an organisation. The I.L.P. is a political party, and for this very fact we do not imagine that it will ever be converted to anarchist ideas or methods which are the opposite of its own basic form and its objective of gaining political power. But even from a political party certain standards of realism in its approach to social problems are to be expected if it is to claim justifiably to be revolutionary. Whether a political party can in fact be revolutionary at all in a real social manner is a question on which we are in disagreement with the I.L.P., but it is difficult to see how a party can even claim to be revolutionary when by a majority its delegates decide to seek alliance with such a body as the Labour Party on the grounds that it is "the mass party of the British working-class". F. A. Ridley, who opposed affiliation, made a speech with which, so far as it concerns the Labour Party, we find ourselves in substantial agreement. To quote from the report of the conference:

"F. A. Ridley, speaking for the minority group on the N.A.C., referred to the statistics that the Labour Party was the mass

party of the British working-class and said that Social Democracy had been the mass party of the German working-class and it had been powerless to stop Fascism. Did anyone think that the British Labour Party would put up any more serious resistance to Hitler than German Social Democracy had done?"

"The history of the Labour Party, like that of other parties in this country, was of its capitulation to British Imperialism. Tracing the deterioration of the Labour Party and drawing attention to the fact that it was Labour Ministers in the Coalition Government who had instituted Defence Regulation 1A(a) and the recent action against the anarchists, Ridley added:

"If Keir Hardie could hear us to-day he would turn in his grave so violently as to solve the problem of perpetual motion."

It is difficult to see how the I.L.P., if it does accept affiliation to the Labour Party on the terms which Transport House is likely to demand, can find any justification for continued existence as an integral unit. Membership of such an organisation as the Labour Party means an effective submergence in all its follies and betrayals. Against the managed block votes of the Trades Unions the I.L.P., even if it wished to induce the Labour Party to pursue a progressive, let alone a revolutionary, policy, would find its efforts continually thwarted, and to pursue an independent policy within the Labour Party would be to invite expulsion or destruction. If the I.L.P. enters the Labour Party it will have to abandon every pretence at being revolutionary, and it will inevitably lose the genuine revolutionaries and even the conscientious liberals who remain within its ranks. As an influence of any value in the working class movement it would have achieved its final extinction.

The Connor case

DEAR COMRADES,

Convictions for drunkenness are mostly hypocritical (only a year or so ago the London magistrates most noted for convicting old women of drunkenness, fell downstairs at his home drunk and died); and continually Parliament jokes about drunkenness with Lady Astor, regardless of the fact that convictions often hurt the poor, especially the old, who cannot afford to treat it as a joke, like the rich). Nevertheless, they seldom exceed fourteen days for an old "offender". Had John Connor come up before a court at home for his "crime" of alleged drunkenness it is doubtful if (considering his record as a seaman and the fact that it was a first offence) he would have got more than five shillings fine. In Russia he has received a year's imprisonment.

Had this been inflicted on a British seaman in any other port—in any small or neutral country—the Foreign Office would have raised hell to get him out. Being Russia—powerful and an ally—it will think itself damned forward to "make representations".

All workers ought to rally to the defence of John Connor, who is having in advance a fore-taste of what life would be like for us if the taste of what life would be like for us if the Bolsheviks got into power here too. More power to the Glasgow Anarchists and to the elbow of the Glasgow Anarchists and to the elbow of the Glasgow Anarchists and to the elbow of the Glasgow Anarchists.

F. B. A.

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