

WAR. For Anarchism COMMENTARY

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TWOPENCE

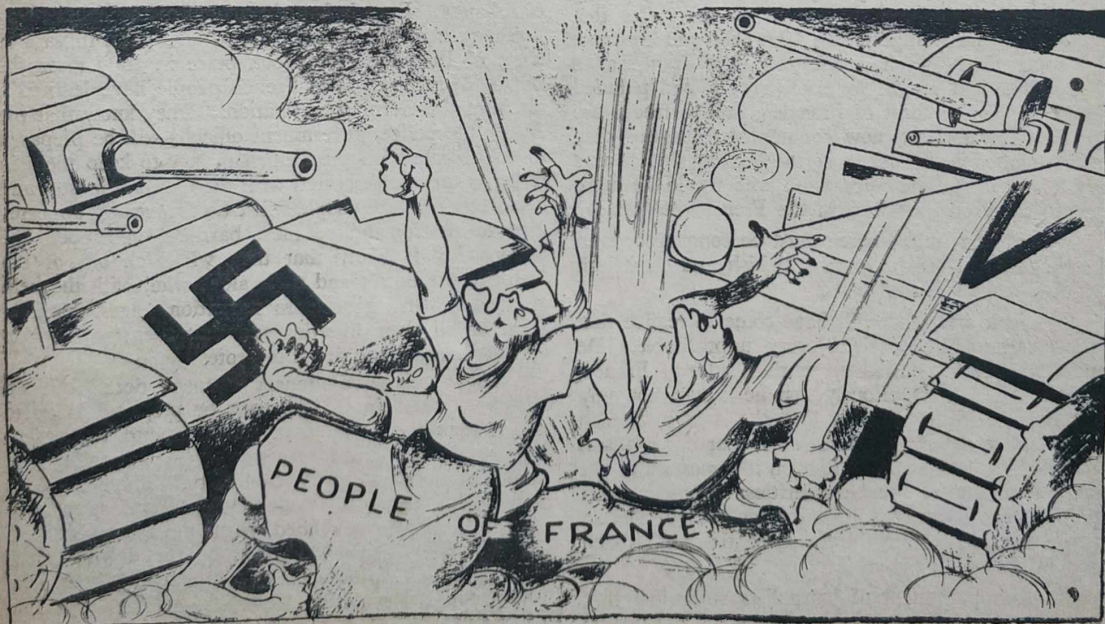
Shall France be Free ?

THE INVASION OF FRANCE — euphemistically called “the liberation of France”—continues, bringing destruction and suffering to the French people. The French have not showered that delirious welcome upon the invading troops, that we were led to expect by Government propaganda. Journalists have expressed their astonishment at seeing that British and American troops were not received with cheers and flowers. It is difficult to understand why the inhabitants of Normandy should be grateful to the invading armies. The invasion means destruction of their homes, of their fields and their cattle, it means bombing both by Allied and German planes. One has to read a few of the descriptions of the destroyed villages in the Press, to understand the anguish of the people at the arrival

of the Allied troops. This is how the *Evening Standard* correspondent describes two French villages:

“Valognes is a sea of wreckage . . . there is no building unhit, and most are now mere gaping holes where American block-busters landed. There is one portion of the Rue Carnot, one of the principal streets, where there is no street any more—just a series of great bomb craters, some as much as 15 ft. deep and 30 ft. wide.

Tilly-sur-Seulles. . . is dead, literally killed in the war. Tilly is shattered. Nothing moves except an occasional sapper removing mines. All the buildings have been unroofed and the walls are blown out . . . At the main corner I met an officer of the Civil Affairs branch of the Army looking dolefully



about, 'I'm here to administer to the civilians, but I can't find any to administer to', he complained".

Up to now only villages and small towns have been taken but from the reports of the siege of Cherbourg it is obvious that big centres will be equally mercilessly destroyed. Not only the inhabitants of the part of France conquered by the Allies but the whole of the French people will feel resentful at being made the victims of a war they did not want. Numerous reports both from underground and neutral sources show that the French strongly objected to the bombing they were submitted to by Allied planes. Far from waving to Allied pilots, far from feeling gratitude for the destruction carried on or even looking upon the bombing as a necessary evil the French people reacted against it. The Resistance Movement, which cannot be accused of wanting to collaborate with the Germans declared that the bombing of towns caused unnecessary suffering to the civilian population and that, given material and ammunition, they could have done as much damage to the German war machine, with practically no loss of life.

It must be obvious to anyone by now, and in particular to the French, that the Allies do not wish to owe their victory to the revolt of the French people. Arms were denied to the fighters of the Maquis in spite of the Algiers Government appeal and Eisenhower's message on D-Day can only be interpreted as a stay-put order. Though praises are given to the French Internal Forces, as the Resistance Movement is now called, very little practical help is given to it. Further facts prove this point. De Gaulle is obviously kept in the background. He only stayed in Normandy a very short time and he was allowed to go only after that symbol of British imperialism Churchill and the man who some time ago had declared that France as a great nation had ceased to exist, Smuts, had paraded themselves on the coast of France. French troops are used in Italy and are now conquering Elba but they are not landed in France. If the war in France was truly a war of national liberation who would be more fitted to carry on the job than the French themselves?

It is evident that France must be conquered, even in spite of the French, so that British and American capitalists can share the spoils.

Roosevelt and Churchill have come to realize that all this talk of liberation is very unprofitable. De Gaulle, whom they puffed up as the leader of France, has taken his role so seriously that he is now not only determined to lead France but the whole French Empire and to defend it against any other imperialism. De Gaulle also creates difficulties on the question of the military franc and of French securities. Roosevelt and Churchill must think that it would have been easier to treat France like Italy and deal with a French Badoglio once victory is achieved.

The disappointment of journalists at finding that

their stories of starvation which they have been selling to the public for the last few years, were not true would be comical if the emphasis given to the good conditions found in Normandy did not make one suspect that it is part of a campaign to create hostility between British and French people. It is significant that the Right-wing newspapers are those who have made most of the alleged hostility shown by the French and of the comfortable conditions in which they are said to be living.

The issuing of 80,000 million francs worth of notes, printed in America, is an interesting feature of the campaign. There is no mention on either side of them of the French Republic (does America favour a Monarchy?) or of what authority is responsible for the circulation or guarantee of the notes. The circulation of this paper money will cause inflation with its attendant rise in prices, which will hit the workers the hardest. The Germans are also reported to have flooded the area with exactly similar notes, thereby increasing the inflatory process. It is interesting to recall that in the French revolution of 1789-1793, a similar thing took place. "Vast quantities of assignats (paper-money) were issued by the Convention in 1794. Furthermore, the Princes, and above all, 'the Count d'Artois' had set up in England a manufactory of assignats, resembling in all respects those which had been issued by the so-called National Convention," (Kropotkin, *The Great French Revolution*). This took place under Pitt's conservative government which was intent on crushing the Revolution.

Whatever the plans to dominate France manufactured in London, Washington and even Algiers, one can expect the French people to take their fate into their own hands. Even before the arrival of the Allies revolutionary movements are likely to take place in various parts of France as they took place in Italy after the fall of Mussolini. The French people have learned a lot from the German occupation. They know that the Army, the police, government officials will be prepared to collaborate with the British master to keep them in order as they collaborated with the German master and it is likely that the people will take the earliest opportunity to destroy police files, barracks and open the prisons. It is likely that they will kick out of the factories the bosses and their aides who, with the help of the Germans, gave them starvation wages, deprived them of all their liberties and sent them to work to Germany when they dared to protest.

When this revolutionary upsurge does begin in France, workers in Britain must be prepared to go to the assistance of their class-brothers, and to prevent British and American reaction from strangling the French workers' struggle for liberty. There must be no bombing of French revolutionary centres, as those of northern Italy were bombed, when the Italian workers revolted. Class solidarity must be the driving force of all workers' efforts to uphold and maintain the coming Social Revolution.

ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

THE FLYING BOMB

THE German propagandists, by their ridiculous stories of the effect of flying bomb raids on London, have played into the hands of the British government propagandists, who, by showing how exaggerated the German propaganda reports appear, have managed the more effectively to write down the actual effects of the attacks.

From reading the British press, one would imagine that only an odd flying bomb here and there gets through and causes a small amount of damage, and the repeated stories of success in bringing down the machines must lead people outside the bombed areas to imagine that the damage caused is really infinitesimally small. However, although admittedly the operation of the bomb must make it relatively easy to destroy in clear weather, the actual number which get through is by no means small, and people living in the affected areas do not share the easy confidence of Herbert Morrison or the B.B.C.

As can easily be seen from considering the rapid evolution of other weapons of war, the flying bomb in its present stage may well be only the beginning of a whole series of increasingly dangerous destructive devices, which will cease to be used only when the war ends—an event which can most surely be achieved by the united direct action of the workers of the world, acting across frontiers and racial barriers.

Meanwhile, regarded objectively, the flying bomb does not seem to us much more immoral than the means of destruction used by the allies. The results of war are always tragic and evil, unproductive and unjust, and there can be no nice discrimination between methods. The Americans boast of the use of flamethrowers—a type of weapon whose barbarity cannot be exceeded—on the second front, and the Allied air forces use as little discrimination in bombing the civilian populations of France, Italy, Austria, Germany, as is used by the brainless flying bomb in attacking England. The real reason why the British have not used the flying bomb is that, at its present stage, the distance from the English coast to the large towns of Germany is too great for it to be used efficiently against them.

THE DECLINE OF THE EMPIRE

EVER since its creation as a dominion, Canada has been consistently the most reactionary part of the British Empire. The dual party system of Conservatives and Liberals never represented a real division of ideas. The two parties correspond roughly to Republicans and Democrats in the U.S.A., and just as the reactionary South supported the pseudo-left Democrats of the U.S.A., so the reactionary Catholic interests of Quebec support the pseudo-left Liberals of Canada. Any kind of revolutionary working class activity has in the past met with little encouragement and much persecution—indeed, the anti-labour activities of the Canadian authorities have been, if anything, more violent than those of the United States. Up to the war such an attitude met with little real opposition among the people, and the dual party system remained unchallenged.

The events of the war have, however, led to a rapid breaking down of the traditional conservatism of the Canadians, and a new spirit of discontent and social unrest has shown itself in the shift in the political alignment, by the sudden emergency of the Canadian Commonwealth Federation as a powerful rival of the older parties. Firstly, in the Ontario provincial elections the C.C.F. completely defeated the liberals and became the official opposition with only two seats less than the Conservative government. Now, in Saskatchewan, a primarily farming province, they have achieved even more sensational results, gaining 44 out of the 51 seats in the Legislature—for which the Conservatives failed to gain even a single seat.

Obviously, we do not regard the C.C.F. or its accession to power as being of any value to the workers. This group is just like any other Labour Party group, and will betray its followers at the earliest opportunity. But the important fact about the situation is the mood of discontent and disillusionment which must have arisen in Canada to cause so rapid a breaking down of the traditional ways of political life. The C.C.F. happened to be there as a ready organised body to cash in on this discontent, just as the Labour Parties in Australia and New Zealand have done in the past. But the examples of how the labour leaders in these other dominions have betrayed the workers and, in the present war, enacted or approved the most repressive legislation, should have warned the Canadian people of the folly of putting their trust in politicians, whatever their label. When all these labour parties in the dominions are themselves exposed to the discontent of the workers, it may be hoped that a real revolutionary movement will arise which will unseat the local ruling classes and cause that breakup of the British Empire which is necessary for the success of a world revolution.

TRIAL OF A NEGRO

IN THE last issue of *War Commentary* we published the report of the trial of a Negro for rape. Although the report appeared in full only in the *Tribune* and *War Commentary*, it was mentioned in certain other papers, and there was widespread indignation at the way in which the case had been conducted. The League of Coloured Peoples intervened, and a petition organised in the Bath area received the signatures of 33,000 people. As a result of this agitation, General Eisenhower has seen that such cases of racial injustice do not help to decrease the unpopularity of the American Army in Britain, and has found it discreet to make a gesture of magnanimity and order a retrial of the case. This move has succeeded in silencing into rapt admiration even some of the most violent protesters. The *Tribune*, for instance, says:

"General Dwight E. Eisenhower possesses many of the attributes of true greatness. Among these not the

SPANISH REVOLUTION ANNIVERSARY

19th JULY 1936 - 1944

PUBLIC MEETING

at the
HOLBORN HALL
Grays Inn Road.

on
SUNDAY, JULY 23rd, AT 6 p.m.
Anarchist Federation of Britain and C.N.T.
(Spanish Revolutionary Union)

Speakers:

J. GARCIA PRADAS (C.N.T.)
TOM BROWN (A.F.B.)
J. DELSO DE MIGUEL (C.N.T.)
KEN HAWKES (A.F.B.)

Chairman: **MAT KAVANAGH**

"Our Path is Struggle — Our Will is Freedom"

least is a sense of pity and a quick sympathy with anyone suffering from injustice."

We, however, do not echo this rather sickly adulation. To us it is obvious that Eisenhower is a man of political shrewdness who calculates the effect his actions will have, and who realised that by making such a step he could silence his critics and even gain a quite unjustified increase in popularity. If there had been no agitation, we doubt if he would have taken such a step. Meanwhile, we await the retrial to see whether the real injustice will be rectified. A mere reprieve from the death sentence to a life imprisonment will be no justice whatever.

At the same time the rule of savagery and racial injustice continues, and in the *Evening Standard* of the 16th June it was reported that three more coloured American soldiers have received life sentences for rape.

UNDERGRADUATES SCARE DUCE

would in no circumstances fight for King and Country—that he concluded Britain could be counted out and took Italy over to Germany's side." This, declared Lord Mottistone in the House of Lords (21/6/44) was the opinion of Winston Churchill, and added that he had the Prime Minister's permission to quote him. Who would have guessed that undergraduates could wield such power in world decisions?

Most people had forgotten the incident—but not our watchful Prime Minister. It was in 1933 that these Oxford boys of ages between 18 and 22 debated the issue, and decided on the above resolution. Winston Churchill was so incensed that he sent his son Randolph down to Oxford the following week to demand that the shameful resolution be expunged from the Union's minutes. But the undergraduates refused to be dictated to by discredited politicians and their constituency-seeking sons, and Randolph left Oxford with his tail between his legs. Most of the undergraduates who voted for the 'pacifist' resolution are now fighting for their King and country.

What gives Lord Mottistone's declaration its piquancy is this revelation about Mussolini. Just fancy, if the callow Oxford boys had defeated the infamous resolution, we might have had Musso fighting on our side. He might have taken his place among the Democratic, Peace-loving nations against totalitarian tyranny; Abyssinia, Spain and Albania notwithstanding. Truly, history hangs by a hair!

CHILDREN MUST KNOW THEIR DUTY

ing every child his duty to the State, these mad follies will not be perpetrated again. *The first thing for the child and adolescent to be taught is his duty to the State.*" This succinct remark might be taken by Alfred Rosenberg or Dr. Goebbels as epitomizing Nazi and Fascist educational policy—it has been reiterated over and over again in Germany since 1933. Lord Mottistone, however did not acknowledge his sources, except to say that such a doctrine is taught in Russia. He gained his point in the debate however, for Lord Selborne, the Minister for Economic Warfare promised that the Minister of Education would "include in the regulation that he made a requirement ensuring the simple teaching that it was the right and duty of the citizen to defend his native land."

The citizen, unfortunately, does not have any native land, or any land at all, for that matter; it is all owned by the landlords who exact rent from the citizen for the privilege of putting it to social use. Nevertheless, the kids are now to be taught that it is their first duty to defend the landlords' land. If they do that, the future Mussolinis will be on our side next time.

"MUSSOLINI was so affected by the Oxford University Union resolution of 1933—that they

HOBSON'S CHOICE

IT HAS now been announced that the fortunate people of Britain are once again going to be able to buy wireless sets—strictly utility, of course. But the listener to one of these sets will not be able to enjoy the old pre-war pleasure of wandering round the ether and picking up programmes from any station in the world. On the contrary, his choice will be restricted as closely as possible to what the Government wants him to hear—according to the official reports the sets "cover only the medium wave bands (200 to 560 metres) and a very simple type of tuning scale is used, on which Home and Forces programmes are indicated by name". In other words, it will be made as difficult as possible for the listener to hear anything other than what the government wants him to hear. The idea, of course, is not original—it is merely another detail in which our regimented life in this country is being brought into line with that in Nazi Germany.

DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE

R. L. STEVENSON'S story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is reckoned among the improbable horrors of the imagination. Let us, however, imagine something even more horrible—a man who combines the functions of a calculating and paid thug and a doctor who patches up people from the effects of thuggery. Most people would doubt the possibility of such consummate duplicity. Yet this kind of thing is practiced regularly among capitalists during the present war. A blatant instance is that of Imperial Chemical Industries, who have recently published an advertisement in which they give themselves praise for making various first-aid preparations for use against the effects of war, including anti-gas ointment. Yet at the same time I.C.I. are making materials which cause these very injuries, including high explosives and poison gas. Capitalist hypocrisy is certainly on a magnificent scale! What could be more ironical than for the makers of mustard gas to advertise to its victims the antidote for it!

ANARCHY OR CHAOS

By GEORGE WOODCOCK

This book is a restatement in contemporary terms of the social philosophy of anarchism, and an advocacy of that philosophy as a solution of modern social problems and as the only real alternative to the totalitarian systems which dominate almost every country in the world today. The opening chapters contain a brief analysis of the contemporary social scene, and show that the fundamental problem is the reconciliation of freedom with the organisation necessary for the ample provision of the material necessities of life. The remainder of the book is concerned with the exposition of anarchism as the only system of social theory which makes possible any true reconciliation of these objectives.

This is the first comprehensive introduction to anarchism to be published in this country.

124 pages.

2s. 6d. (postage 3d.)

FREEDOM PRESS, 27 Belsize Rd., London, N.W6

BLOOD

WHEN THE BRITISH ARMY was being evacuated from Dunkirk in 1940, Churchill promised the workers of Britain, civilian and Forces alike, "blood and tears, toil and sweat". To-day, just four later, he is carrying out his promise to the full. The new imperialist venture, which he and Roosevelt have caused to be launched on the northern shores of France, should ensure rivers of blood, a flood of tears, unending and back-breaking toil, and bucketsful of sweat—all this the price that the workers are being *compelled* to pay in the interests of Anglo-American capitalism. After the first delirious joy at the increased slaughter-rate had died down in the national dailies, the newspaper correspondents began to appear in a more sober and grimmer light.

From the *News of the World*, June 11, we read under the headline "Beach of Hell", "The first 24 hours on this beach were a vivid nightmare of torn bodies, exploding mines, sinking barges, bursting shells—of blood and filth and death. Whole bodies were blasted through the air by the ferocious German artillery fire. Many men, hurled out of their assault boats by the artillery bursts, died in the water. Some reached the beach and crawled a few yards over the egg-shaped rocks before they were hit . . . There is plenty of evidence of the intensity of the fight. They still fish an American boy out of the water every now and then . . . Once in a while, you see a little mound of sand with a bayonet stuck at the head, and a helmet hanging on the bayonet. The only way you can tell whether it is a German or an American grave is by the helmet." Workers all, fighting and dying in their respective *masters'* interests. What futility! What insanity!

All the reports coming in from various sources are in the same vein—German, French, British, American men and boys, all being destroyed in a welter of blood and filth *the responsibility of which can be directly laid upon the shoulders of all the governments engaged in making war.*

What of the home front? What are the gallant profiteers, financiers, and politicians doing—all those who cheer so loudly from the touchlines? Are they sacrificing all for the cause of "liberation". The *Reynolds News*, of June 11, reveals the truth of the situation. Under the headline "CITY GAMBLERS REAPED THEIR D-DAY DIVIDENDS", we have the following: "While the warriors of the Free Nations were storming the beaches, dropping perilously from the skies; sweating, bleeding, and dying . . . City gamblers staged a grand celebration of their own. 'German Bonds Rise,'—'French Rails Close Below Best'. From Tuesday morning onwards, these were

the headlines that reflected the City's reaction to the Second Front. While brave men died, the gamblers reaped their rich D-Day dividends.

French Rail Bonds, Nord 6%, rose from 69 to 73, on Tuesday and touched 76 on Wednesday. Buying carried the bonds of all the other European nations to sharply higher levels, too. *Enemy securities—German and Japanese alike—were no exception.* The biggest rake-offs were made in the German range. Potash 7% started at £32 10s. and climbed steadily to close at £39 10s. on Friday. A speculator picking up a hun-

MONEY

dred on Tuesday morning could sell on Friday, and pocket a clear profit of between £600 and £700—without laying out a single penny. And this profit would be tax free—yes, tax-free! The reason? This sort of thing is called 'capital appreciation'."

This is the motive force behind the war—the drive for PROFIT. While workers are compelled to give their blood and tears, toil and sweat, financiers and capitalists make their fortunes out of the slaughter. The prospect of a long war only makes them rub their hands with glee, because they know that that will mean *higher profits!* Here are some of a few Press cuttings to illustrate this.

"With the prospects of a long war, markets yesterday resumed their excited advance. Wheat, maize, cotton, lard, sugar and cocoa were the chief gains among commodities."

Times, 3/12/39.

"Wall Street interprets the speech as meaning a long war. Stocks rose almost to the highest levels of the year."

Daily Sketch, 26/12/39.

"Though few believe seriously in the possibility of an early settlement, the prospect of a peace offensive brought a fairly heavy decline in home rails and some of the arms shares."

Daily Express, 26/3/40.

"More tanks mean greater oil consumption. This fact is being exploited to the full by gamblers in oil shares on the Stock Exchange."

City Editor in the *Daily Herald*, 3/12/41.

"Tipping the shares of The Associated Cement, and The London Brick Co., *The Financial News* explains that it does so on the grounds that such companies obtain good post-war orders if bombing develops nicely."

Daily Worker, 16/10/39.

"The attack on Sicily is bringing substantial profits to stock market gamblers, who bought enemy bonds earlier this year on the prospect that the nearer the Axis came to defeat, the higher would its securities rise. Some of them paid around £17 for £100 bonds of the Italian 5% 1862 Loan. Yesterday they could sell those bonds at about £30, so they have nearly doubled their money . . . Tokyo bonds, despite the American threat to lay the city flat have brought buyers nearly 50% profit by soaring from £11 10s. to £16 10s."

Daily Express, 21/7/43.

"When Mussolini fell, the stock market fell too."

This curious reaction apparently was due to fears of speculators that the end of the war would bring a collapse in the wartime's unnatural boom."

Daily Express, 12/8/43.

"More than £6,000,000 dropped into the laps of share holders of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. yesterday when the shares jumped 6/3d. on the news that the 1942 dividend is to be brought up to 20% against only 7½% for 1941."

Daily Express, 13/8/43.

"Speculators no longer 'fear' a speedy end to the war, and the activities are responsible for a boom on the Egyptian Stock Exchange. Since Friday, prices have risen by about 15%. General Smuts's statement that the war will not finish before the end of 1944 and Mr. Casey's warning that the opening of the Mediterranean does not mean the arrival of goods for Egyptian civilians. preceded the new wave of speculation."

Daily Express, 31/8/43.

"'Peace fears' tightened their grip on the markets yesterday—the natural result of Kiev and all that. Iron and steel and aviation shares showed appreciable losses, and even gilt-edged were dull."

News Chronicle, 9/11/43.

"A prominent broker remarked yesterday, 'Nothing but a piece of really bad news will do the markets any lasting good'."

City Editor, *News Chronicle*, 11/11/43.

Here then is the evidence of our charges that the war is an imperialist struggle fought for control of markets, raw materials and labour, for the making of gigantic profits from the slaughter of the world's working-class. In order that capitalism may live, workers must die in their millions. The battle cry of the capitalist class is "Long live capitalism! Death to the workers!" It is a case of "Profits for the parasites!

Sacrifices for the suckers". Whoever wins the military battles, it is certain that the workers on both sides will lose, unless they forge the revolutionary weapons with which to overthrow capitalism and war.

BILL BROWN

We must remind you..

Appeals for the Press Fund are not very popular with the Editors of "War Commentary". They are often pushed out of the paper altogether with the excuse that there is no space for them. It is understandable that our comrades should feel reluctant to give up some of the valuable space of "War Commentary" to talk to our readers of money, financial troubles and responsibilities with the usual appeal at the end to their better self and their spirit of sacrifice. A cartoon or an article would prove much more interesting and enjoyable. But to leave out appeals from the paper is a very short term policy; without the Press Fund "War Commentary" would not be able to make ends meet and would have to come out less often or reduce its number of pages. It would be better, of course, if there was no need for appeals and our comrades and friends sent us their help regularly without any need to be reminded about it but experience shows that they are apt to forget and that they need our call to spur them on the right path.

This is shown by the question of SOLIDARITY TICKETS. Though payments for the tickets should all have been made by now, a great number of our readers have failed to pay up. We would like to be able to present "War Commentary" with the money from the solidarity drive as soon as possible, so please send us right away the money for the tickets you have sold and don't forget that though we take back unsold books we don't like it, and try to send us as many empty covers as possible with a big postal order or cheque.

FRIENDS OF FREEDOM PRESS.

FREEDOM BOOKSHOP 132 Cheltenham Road, Bristol

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

Cromwell and Communism	E. Bernstein 10/6
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Crime and Custom in Savage Society	Malinowski 8/6
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The Sayings of Lao Tzu	3/6
The Russian Enigma	A. Ciliga 1/6
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Trotsky Protests Too Much	E. Goldman 2d.

Don't forget to include postage:

- For books up to 1/- send 2d. postage.
- For books between 1/- and 3/- send 3d. postage.
- For books between 3/- and 8/- send 5d. postage.
- For books between 8/- and 15/- send 7d. postage.

DOWN TO HIS LAST MILLION

A man who died worth nearly a million and a quarter pounds referred in his will to "the crushing burden of taxation."

He was Mr. Peter Yates, Preston, head of Yates Brothers and Co., wine merchants, who when he died last April, aged 89, left £1,248,131 13s. 3d. The duty paid is £649,233.

He left £5,000 (if not already given) to the Wine and Spirit Trades Benevolent Society, and stated he left no other charitable bequests, having regard to what he had given in his lifetime and the crushing burden of taxation he had had to bear and the crippling duties payable after his death.

News Chronicle, 12/6/44.

"Poor fellow, drink did for him"—we should have thought quite well.

BEVIN SOWS THE WIND

PRACTICALLY EVERY DAY now, in local and national newspapers, there appear cases of youths who have refused to obey directions to the mines and who stoically prefer prison to that ill-famed occupation.

But what of the others? Those who have, according to Bevin, "loyally accepted the position" and who, were we foolish enough to believe the hacks of the capitalist press (including the *Daily "Worker"*) are really quite happy, at their new job. Actually, the situation both at the training centres and at the pits where the trainees are working, is vastly different to what the gentlemen of the press would have the public believe. Feeling amongst the "Bevin boys" might be compared to that of a boiling cauldron, which at any moment may overflow on the many exploiters, both great and small, connected with the mining industry.

Although at the government "training" centres the "Bevin boys" are shown special films by government bureaucrats depicting the kind of conditions (always very good) to be expected at the collieries, the trainees receive a rude awakening when they arrive at those places. To take for example the Cannock Chase mining area, it will be found that there is an almost complete lack of the equipment and facilities promised at the training centres, such as canteens, pit-head baths up to date medical equipment, a doctor or trained medical man in attendance, etc. Also for all the newspaper claptrap about mechanising the mines, underground work remains, in this area at any rate, a question of sheer hard graft. Another unpleasant fact is that many of the mines are full of water, and have very low roads, so much so that it is impossible to wear the safety helmets with which trainees are so kindly provided by the government. Also, accidents, many of them fatal, take place frequently, even among old experienced miners. As one of the latter remarked to me, "It's simply a question of neglect, sheer neglect." A case in point is where trainees are employed in removing timber from disused seams in order to save money, at a risk to the trainees' safety. (But not to the mine-owners. War or no war, bad conditions or not, whatever the risk in men's lives, costs must be kept low and profits high).

If one talks to any of the many human wrecks who populate the district one gets to know the truth. What tales they have to tell, of their best mates killed in the falls, of the years of unemployment when they were lucky if they got a job at 10/- a week, of their sons whom they will never allow to go down the pit! But the true heroines are the proletarian women such as the girl who told me how after 36 years work her father had been fatally injured down the pit, his widow received a miserable compensation grant of £150 instead of the £1,000 due. Her brother, once hand-

some, was recently terribly deformed by a fall of coal. Such is the price of coal in human suffering. When I asked this girl what she thought about the Press talk about "agitators", she replied contemptuously that strikes were caused not by agitators but by the filthy meanness of the coal-owners towards men like her father and her brother.

The average Bevin boy under 21, if he works a full week (which many do not) should receive £3 pay. From this is deducted approximately the following:

Wages before stoppage	...	...	...	3	0	0
STOPPAGES:						
Employment and National Health Insurance				1	9	
Levy	...	...	...	2	7	
Baths	...	...	...			4
Soap	...	...	...			5
Laundry	...	...	...	2	6	
Clothes allowance	...	...	...	2	0	
Board at Hostel	...	...	...	1	5	0
Supper at hostel per week	...	...	...			6
Snack at pit per week	...	...	...			6
P.A.Y.E. income tax	...	...	...			6
Red Cross and Hospital	...	...	...			6
Endowment Insurance	...	...	...			2
						10
				£2	16	5
Final total left	...	...	...			3
						7

After this they are expected to pay their fare home, all out of 3/7d. It can well be imagined how much the "happy Bevin boys" have to make themselves happy with! To quote but one case. A lad from near Shrewsbury, finding himself broke towards the end of the first week's work (Bevin boys are expected to exist on a miserable subsistence grant of 24/6d. for a fortnight) approached the local Labour Exchange to help him out. They however, being after the heart of Gauleiter Bevin himself, refused to do so. With no money to pay his fare home, he set out to walk it, and having done 21 miles, was finally helped out through the sympathy of a railway worker who gave him his fare for the remaining ten miles. An excellent example of class solidarity and mutual aid!

Both among the miners (who are very sympathetic) and among the trainees there is an increasing realisation of the fact pointed out by *War Commentary* that the Ballot scheme is nothing but a means of finding cheap labour for the coal-owners.

But a strong minority of the "Bevin boys" are beginning to realise the power of organisation, and are hitting back with all the weapons they can, whether it be the ca'-canny, by open refusal to work, or by agitation for mass action. However, a strong fight must also be waged against the wide-spread cynicism of their fellows, and when this is won, Bevin will really find that he has "sown the wind but reaped the whirlwind."

VIVIAN BIRD.

GOTT MITT UNS! RUSSIAN VERSION

Speeches of Allied leaders are fully reported in the Russian Press: President Roosevelt's prayer makes a rather startling appearance in *Pravda*, but the King's speech is not reported.

Demian Bedney, the veteran Bolshevik poet, greets the Allies in *Red Star* with a verse of which this is a rough translation:—

Scarce has Rome fallen, a glorious milestone,

When, on the verge of France, we see

Brave men cut a wide swathe of combat

Nor fear the barrier of the sea.

Now let us quote the Ancients' valedictory:—

"Forward, good friends, God grant you victory."

The Observer, 11/6/44.

WHERE YOUR MONEY GOES

"I am indebted to Helen Worden, society editor of the *New York World Telegram* and contributor to the *American Mercury*, for the following up-to-the-minute information on the Duchess of Windsor, about whom Miss Worden is an expert.

The Duchess, according to Miss Worden, has complete sets of blue sapphires, rubies, emeralds, diamonds, topaz, onyx, and turquoise, one for each day in the week.

Her gem collection is appraised at 1,000,000 dollars.

Next to the jewels, in value, is her collection of furs—full length ermine, sable, mink, and silver-fox coats, short ermine, sable, mink and silver-fox jackets, and many capes and neckpieces.

Says Miss Worden: 'The Duchess has often said she didn't think a woman in her position should wear a dress more than once.'

During her recent visit to New York she bought 14 outfits from Mainbocher, six costumes from Valentina, five suits from Saks, Fifth Avenue, a dozen sports things from Hattie Carnegie, and between 20 and 30 hats from various shops.

Her purchases averaged 100 dresses a year. Most of them cost about £60 each, but some as much as £120. One evening gown cost nearly £200. All her lingerie is hand made.

The *Mercury* piece is pretty devastating, though the author admits that the Duchess is doing a great deal of welfare work in Nassau and paid for the erection of two Child Welfare clinics. However, she says the Duke settled 1,500,000 dollars on her at the time of their marriage."

Daily Mail, 24/5/44.

FIGHTING FOR DEMOCRACY?

Negroes are flocking into the armed services in such numbers that they will soon represent 10.4 per cent. of the United States Army.

Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson revealed this today when he said that before long the total Negro personnel in the Army will reach 709,280, compared with 6,245,720 whites.

Half of the Negroes are already overseas, Mr. Stimson said, and 32 per cent. are combat or combat support troops.

News Chronicle, 20/4/44.

There is no sign that the increase in the number of Negroes fighting in the name of democracy qualifies them as ordinary human beings.

CAPITALISM AT WORK

The General Motors Co. is expected to set up a car and plane plant in Venezuela with an initial capital of a million dollars (£250,000).—*Reuter. Evening News, 11/5/44.*

We shall soon learn that Venezuela is of international importance and one of the best Allies of Democracy.

WAR AIM AT LAST!

War and peace seemed to merge for a moment, in the view of a colleague, as he talked to repatriated prisoners of war gazing again on their native land at a rural station.

"How green the countryside is," they all said. Was it not green in Germany they were asked. "Not that sort of green," they retorted with some indignation.

An agriculturist said to me that what our men really fight for is the appearance of the countryside.

William Barkley in Daily Express, 20/6/44.

Through

ARE THEY REALLY NECESSARY?

America's rationing chief, Chester Bowles, told Congress to-day how he eliminated red tape from his department.

Glen Mowitt, official red tape cutter, prowled around the office late at night with a wheelbarrow. Into this he dumped a typewriter when there seemed to be too many of them and files when they did not look well used.

Then set sat back to await events. To his amazement, said Bowles, nothing happened.

Daily Express, 17/6/44.

If he'd piled the Government clerks, officials and Ministers into the barrow, too, as well as the entire apparatus of government and capitalism, life would still have continued.

AFTER THE WAR . . .

Wing-Comdr. Sir Eric Hodsoll, Inspector-General of Civil Defence, told civil defence workers at Wimbledon last night that he thought the A.R.P. organisation would be kept in being after the war.

"It won't involve such duties as you are doing now," he said, "but it might be something on the lines of the old Territorial Army, so many hours' training during the year."

News Chronicle, 15/6/44.

So many wartime regulations and organisation are going to be kept up after the war that we shan't know the war has ended.

FEMALE SNOOPERS ON THE WARPATH

Thirty women, between 30 and 57, to-day enrolled in the East Suffolk Women Volunteer Police Patrol, which has been formed by the Chief Constable of the County, working in co-operation with the Diocesan Moral Welfare Association.

They will patrol towns and villages in twos, and these are some of their "duties":

Directing traffic at busy points.

Listening to what men are saying to women whom they stop in the streets.

Watching for cases of immorality, then rushing off to bring a policeman.

Listening in public-houses and other public places to what people are talking about, with a view to preventing careless talk.

Informing mothers that their daughters have been seen in a country lane with soldiers.

In Ipswich, the county town, the new patrols were being referred to to-day as a "corps of busybodies."

Star, 31/5/44.

RUSSIANS ARE NICE

Mr. Eric Johnston, president of the American Chamber of Commerce, who is visiting Russia, stated to-day: "Mr. Mikoyan, Soviet Foreign Trade Commissar, has authorised me to quote him for the following:— 'The Soviet Union wishes to purchase from the United States enormous quantities of goods after the war on terms mutually advantageous to both countries. The sum will run into many billions of dollars'."

Manchester Guardian, 21/6/44.

the Press

MINERS PROSECUTED

Robert Sinnatt, a drawer from the Eastfield district of Harthill, was fined £4 in Hamilton Sheriff Court yesterday on pleading guilty to impeding work in Calderhead Colliery, Shotts, on March 31, contrary to the Essential Work Order.

The Fiscal remarked that miners were working very irregularly in the Shotts area, as there seemed to be a strike every other day in the district.

Glasgow Herald, 8/6/44.

Lieutenant Colonel Sir Thomas Moore (C.—Ayr Burgh) asked the Minister of Labour how many strikes had taken place and in what industries since June 6 (D-Day).

Mr. Bevin replied that in the fortnight beginning June 6, in industries other than coalmining, apart from one stoppage which ended on that date, there were nine stoppages which began and ended during the period after lasting one, two, or three days, and five stoppages which began during the period and were still unsettled at the end. Rather more than 1,000 workers were involved in the total. Six of the stoppages were concerned with a claim for wages, seven were due to sympathy with a worker who had been dismissed or suspended or had a wages grievance, and one was concerned with the manning of a job. Inquiry regarding coalmining should be addressed to the Minister of Fuel and Power.

Manchester Guardian, 23/6/44.

HOLIDAYS AT ROME

If you go into an hotel like the Excelsior which is open to Allied officers and civilians only you will find the scum of Rome who regret the days of corruption and power because now in order to live they are being forced to spend capital they extorted from the people.

They obviously feared the arrival of the forces dedicated to the smashing of Fascism for they were not much in evidence the first few days.

But gradually as they realise that anyone with money to spend has little or nothing to fear from the Allies—except possibly a little more noise at dinner than usual—they are creeping out of their holes and paddling back to the smart bars or restaurants of the city and speaking English for all the world as though they were not speaking German last week.

True, but sad, the Allied authorities here seem anxious not to tread on their corns.

Even the head of the notorious Italian Africa Police, more hated, more violent even than the Republican Fascists, is now working for us because he came and offered his services and it seemed wiser to use his knowledge than to lock him up.

Philip Jordan, war correspondent,
News Chronicle, 12/6/44.

STRIKES SINCE D-DAY

Five hundred and fifty men employed at Calderhead Collieries Nos. 3 and 4, Shotts, owned by the Shotts Iron Company Ltd., came out on strike yesterday morning following a meeting at the pit-head. The men allege that a section of the miners who decided to go home on Monday morning, because of a grievance, were kept in the pit bottom by the management, and not allowed up the pit until 2.30 p.m.

Glasgow Herald, 7/6/44.

★

Miners at the Easter Gartshire Colliery and the Moss-water Mine, Eastern Dumbartonshire, who were on strike last week, are again idle over a grievance regarding the wages for "muckers," who clear up the waste in connection with coal-cutting machines. Five hundred men are involved in the stoppage.

Glasgow Herald, 8/6/44.

★

The unofficial strike at Frances Colliery, Dysart, belonging to the Fife Coal Company, ended last night. After appeals had been made by Mr. Peter Henderson, disputes secretary, and Mr. Peter Ness, secretary of the Fife Miners' Union, and Mr. Abe Moffat, president of the Scottish Mineworkers' Federation, the men agreed to return to work pending negotiations on the wage dispute. The strike, which began on Thursday night, involved about 800 men.

Glasgow Herald, 12/6/44.

★

After being addressed by Mr. J. A. Hall, president of the Yorkshire Mineworkers' Association, 250 miners at Upton Colliery who came out on strike on the afternoon of D-Day and threw 250 by-workers idle decided at a meeting yesterday to go back to work to-day. The remaining 2,000 men at the pit had refused to join the strike, which has caused 10,000 tons of coal to be lost.

The dispute arose over the refusal of the management to allow miners in the south district of the Barnsley seam to walk out of the pit at the end of their shift on a haulage road on which two men were killed and four injured by runaway tubs on June 2. The road is 450 yards long and has a gradient of one in five. The alternative road which the management had insisted that the men should use has no tubs running on it, is 350 yards long, and has a gradient of one in three. The men complained that the gradient was too exhausting after they had been working hard at the coal face. Mr. Hall undertook to interview the management and see if anything could be done to make the road easier for the men.

The management has issued summonses against the 250 strikers for breach of contract and is claiming £10 damages from each man. The case will be heard at Pontefract on Saturday.

Manchester Guardian, 19/6/44.

★

In the first case of its kind three miners were ordered at Gateshead yesterday to pay damages suffered by the colliery-owners caused by absenteeism.

Mr. F. Lambert, prosecuting, said that under a new procedure now operating in Durham county a board had been formed that might impose on absentees a fine of £1, which was refunded six weeks later if they worked well. This system favoured the men more than the employers, but the three men would not conform to it. Accordingly, they were summoned under the Employers and Workmen Act, 1875.

One of the defendants was ordered to pay £3 and the other two £2 7s. 6d. each.

Manchester Guardian, 23/6/44.

From the Ranks

THE LETTERS OF soldiers sent to *War Commentary* make interesting reading.

One of our correspondents writes: "During the past few months I have been agreeably surprised to find a number of people who like myself have been disgusted with conservative and left-wing parties alike, and have told me that they are anarchist in sentiment."

Another correspondent writes:

"The raw recruits here, whose ages average 18 and who are mostly natives of the North of England, take no interest in the war and their main worry is leave. It's the men who have done a few years service who think on the right lines, I notice, and realise these rookies will think the same as time goes by.

"I believe the anarchist movement will grow in this country, and one big reason will be the workers getting wise to the political working-class parties' behaviour since this blood-bath started."

Characteristic of the mood of many is the attitude of an Eighth Army man who recently witnessed a police officer moving on one of the Hyde Park sellers of *War Commentary*. The soldier approached the policeman moving her on, and said, "This is the freedom we are supposed to be fighting for. I'm bloody fed-up with this country. There are plenty of people out there who feel the same way as I do . . . when we come back we mean to finish the job our fathers left undone!"

The same spirit is shown in the following passage from one of our readers in the Forces.

"The soldier is sick of the prolongation of the war. He wishes to see it concluded and a successful invasion will bring to an end the fear of domination by the Nazis. He knows that this is no progressive war, but feels capable of dealing with any post-war domestic troubles if need be by force of arms."

Eighth Army men recently posted into a unit of one of our correspondents, have according to their own stories refused to take part in the invasion on the grounds that they had done their share of fighting and it ought now to be the turn of the millions to go first who so far had been kept in this country.

The refusal may or may not have political aspects, but even if its basic character is protest against specific grievances, the fact that such a protest action could take place is significant. At the same time a soldier wrote to us saying that:

"The — Regiment stationed near — have been placed under our guard. Before the armed guard was put on by another regiment, sixty of them went absent without leave." In this particular instance we were told by a member of the unit detailed for guard duties, that slogans were chalked all over the place:

"No leave—no second front."

From another source comes this letter:

"Rumour had it over 'Bush Radio' that a certain regiment had gone on strike with the slogan 'No leave—no second front.' This rumour I found on enquiry based on the fact that a score or more soldiers had made a simultaneous absence owing to some regimental attempt to break this group whose solidarity in the past had been frowned upon (to say the least) by the powers-that-be, and who did not wish to be separated. However, the truth of this report is not essential. The rumour drifted on leaving behind excited discussion, the majority (70% it is said) siding instinctively in sympathy. Their opinions were "That is what is needed here". Others dissented for the reason that the Second Front was of primary importance, and leave was not. This attitude was the only opposition to strikes recently—those directly concerned with miners, transport workers, etc., having grown up amid poverty and feeling it keenly too, putting the strike first; others argued that this was the wrong time to strike.

Soldiers have expressed on more than one occasion their sympathy with the strikers at home, at a time when the government-tied press was sneering at them as traitors. Apparently they do not only sympathise and recognise that the strikers are fighting also for their interests, but take themselves direct and indirect action. One soldier writes that in his unit production in the workshops has dropped about 50%. Two of our comrades on leave have reported that the rank-and-file of their units is systematically using the go-slow tactic, in spite of the desperate speed-up cries of their N.C.O.'s.

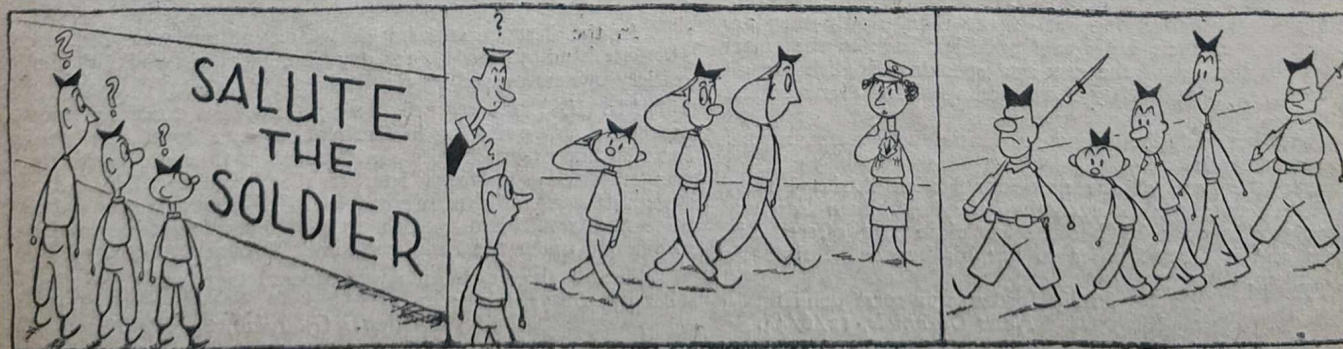
"Since this company was formed in 1940," writes a correspondent, "We have twice taken strike action, with success on both occasions. Subsequent to these disturbances (particularly the last one), Inter-company postings of 'trouble makers' occurred which could not be put down to coincidence. The undoubtedly weakened unity, but under given conditions similar incidents would probably occur."

We are not surprised to learn from many of our comrades that they are considered marked men, who must be isolated, posted out of the way. In a democratic army, fighting for freedom of thought and expression, there is only one place for men whose enthusiasm for freedom spreads a seed that may spread among the rank-and-file—the glass-house!

★ ★ ★

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HOW WARS END

THE RANK AND FILE of the present army are soldiers only in a technical sense. As civilians in uniform, they have little in common with the background and interests of the professional soldier, and the attempt to pervert their mentalities by keeping them politically inert and isolated from civilian life and affairs has obviously had little effect. None of the official propaganda has turned their lukewarm morale into red-hot enthusiasm, nor has it succeeded in removing the prevalent and chronic discontent with practical grievances in particular and with the political results of the war situation in general.

The so-called 'political indifference', of which one hears so many complaints, presents itself rather as a refusal based on sound instinctive mistrust to be led into the support of party opportunists. On the other hand, soldiers have shown recently definite signs of sympathy with workers who have struck spontaneously against practical grievances and in defiance of their 'legal' party and Trade Union leaders.

None of the anti-war movements has yet attempted to convert discontent in the forces by reinforcing grievances with political ideas, and the Government's policy towards them is based on the assumption that legality restricts their activity and prevents them, far more efficiently than suppression, from fanning the fires of discontent. The rapid redress of particular grievances is another preventive method to stifle rebellious impulses.

But the long strain of war deepens disillusionment and discontent, and this process, which can decisively weaken the morale even of a victorious army—may force the government to risk drastic steps against revolutionary movements—even though their activities, as the events of the last war clearly demonstrated, do not cause general discontent.

The growth of discontent can only be avoided by removing its fundamental causes. With the continuance of war the latent unrest, when it has reached its climax, will explode at the touch of almost any outside event. History provides no instance of any pre-arrangement of such an explosion by a revolutionary leadership. All they could do was to gain control of the spontaneous insurrectionary movement and give it a positive political aim.

The army breakup in Russia was unrelated to any political aim or revolutionary party. It was a spontaneous and general protest against war, suffering and oppression. Only after the old army had fallen to pieces did active revolutionary organisation begin. Neither before nor during the initial stages of the breakup did any revolutionary leadership exist, nor did political organisations show themselves competent to take over the immediate control. The telling slogans of the Bolsheviks, mostly borrowed from the Social Revolutionaries and Anarchists, in which the soldier found his own feelings expressed and which at the same time offered him advantages if he joined the revolution, were propagated after the general breakup had taken place and popular opposition to the prolongation of the war had become clearly apparent.

The first timed and planned mutiny of the German sailors at Wilhelmshaven (1917) did not lead to a general rising, but in 1918, after the failure of the March offensive when discontent had spread everywhere, the spontaneous mutiny at Kiel became the signal for a general rising.

Mutinies and risings are the inevitable spontaneous actions by which the people protest and revolt against whomsoever they hold responsible for their sufferings. Their impetus is in proportion to the suffering endured. Revolutionaries and their propaganda cannot make insurrections,

though they can turn their energy into a constructive revolutionary purpose.

In October 1916 Ludendorff received the first reports of unrest in the German army. The disgust of the workers with the pro-war policy of the German Labour Party and Trade Unions, gave new strength to the left. In Russia the authorities were alarmed by the reports of disloyalty, and the high rate of desertions. At the same time, however, there was little open indiscipline in the British Army. "The mentality of the British soldier was corroded, his mind doped with propagandic poison of German atrocities, such as employment of gas in action, violation of French women and the 'official murder of Nurse Cavell', and this brought out the brutelike bestiality necessary for victory, the carefully cultivated process of 'seeing red'." (Brigadier General Crozier in *A Brass Hat in No-Man's-Land*).

Crozier goes on to describe how men were led into a shattering upheaval of barrage and machine-gun fire by their officers who died with them; the survivors drifted back and were hunted again into action by other officers detailed to control the employment of reserves. Line officers became "battle police", driving back at revolver point men who were lagging or retiring, and even firing and killing them.

But Russia had to pass out first and then Germany to collapse, the demobilisation to be delayed, the discontented British soldier to be faced with the possibility of being sent against Soviet Russia, before there was open revolt.

Spontaneous mutinies occurred in many places in November 1918. The soldiers went on strike, refused to obey orders, demonstrated in thousands, receiving the sympathy of the population. They demanded demobilisation, release and indemnity of imprisoned mutineers, chose their own councils and delegates, left troop trains and ships bound for abroad, seized lorries and went down to demonstrate their protests and demands at Whitehall.

Mutinies cannot be engineered—they must spring from certain conditions which favour them. What, then, are these conditions?

The German Admiral Scheer in a secret document describing the Wilhelmshaven mutiny wrote, "In very many documents, even those emanating from well-intentioned and impartial persons, the following criticism is to be found: the officers live well and let their crews suffer from privation.

In the Wilhelmshaven mutiny a few revolutionaries inside the navy were bound in a tight secret group. They carried out propaganda which was intended to unite the scattered forces determined to carry the struggle to a well-prepared and timed mutiny, which they hoped would touch off a political insurrection. It failed, because the mood of the nation at that time was not sufficiently revolutionary.

André Marty in *La Revolte de la Mer Noire*, confirms Admiral Scheer's statement that the most potent irritant to arouse feelings was the difference in conditions between officers and men.

"... nerve racking monotony, incessant repair work, maintenance work, alterations to the ship, alternating with drill, fatigues of all kinds, among them the loathed coaling, came on top of each other. The food was usually uneatable. Leave ashore was given once or twice a week. Small punishments, confinement on board, held sailors on ships for months on end, the shore being only half a mile away... And while the sailors suffered, tired out, nerve-worn and hungry, they saw a few yards from them officers living well, spending their afternoons ashore

in the company of their families or of demi-mondaines."

The *Daily Herald* (11/1/1919) wrote, concerning the mutinies in the British Navy and Army after the armistice of November, 1918:—

"Bitter resentment was felt at the easy conditions of the officers as compared with those of the men. Another cause of trouble about which I heard on every hand, was the poorness of the food."

The balance drawn from all mutinies in the past will show clearly that the chief causes of mutinies are—antagonism against the officers, hatred of arbitrary discipline, discontent at bad conditions, poor food, low pay and little leave. Without the existence of these fundamental causes, no agitation or propaganda can excite mutiny.

The ruling class, especially that of Germany, learnt from the mutinies of the last war. They altered the relationship between officers and men from the basis of class hierarchy and created a certain comradeship based on the idea of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Traditional Prussian discipline was replaced by a new spirit of *Wehrsport*. Food, pay and conditions were improved. Thus the Nazis succeeded in creating a morale which they thought would not only be proof against 'red' ideology, but would also withstand the devastating effects of modern mechanical warfare.

But with the appearance of disillusionment the first desertions and mutinies occurred (Norway and Africa). The mass desertions of the Italians also affected the German morale. Strikes and attempts at mutiny occurred not only on board the battleships but also on small craft (strike of the

U boats at Kiel).

The conclusion offers itself that the morale of an army need not necessarily suffer seriously from the mere existence of internal grievances, discomfort, strain of warfare, military defeat, and the influence of seditions propaganda, but that it will break down as soon as disillusionment and the feeling of frustration become general.

Then the citizen soldier will break down sooner than the professional soldier. His social sensitiveness, which relates him to his class, will lead him to the same conclusion as that expressed by Bonar Law in the House of Commons in 1914—"If it is a question only of disorder, the Army, I am sure, will obey you, but if it is really a question of civil war, soldiers are citizens like the rest of us."

At the end of the last war Sir Henry Wilson had to admit that an unpopular order could not be given to the troops, since discipline was a thing of the past. The French authorities also, warned by the serious disaffection among units sent to the Black Sea to support White Russia, dared not engage their troops on unpopular enterprises.

If the British ruling class nourishes any hopes of establishing a military dictatorship with the support of an officer corps, whose interests would naturally be on the side of the counter revolution to defend property and privilege, and counting on their politically reliable units and their mechanised weapons, they might find history repeating itself—that, as in Russia, even the most 'reliable' units, which at first inflicted losses on the demonstrating workers, will eventually unite and fraternise with the people.

Nor can the ruling class any longer rely on their big guns, which so often in the past defeated insurrections, for the weapons which yesterday were exclusively in the hands of professionals tied to the ruling class, and whose mere presentation had a paralysing effect on the unarmed workers, will be at the disposal of workers in uniform, well experienced in their use.

"The very means whereby this war is waged," wrote Major General Fuller recently, "both economic and military, must hasten the process of world revolution . . . Demobilisation will flood the country with millions of militarily minded men . . . Will they, once again, be content to sell bootlaces in the gutter?"

Our answer is, that they will not.

MICHAEL PETERSON

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DANGER OF EPIDEMICS

"There is a graver risk of virulent disease in Europe after this war than after any other war, unless steps are taken to prevent it," said Dr. H. B. Morgan, M.P., medical adviser to the T.U.C., in London yesterday.

Addressing a conference convened by the Fabian International Bureau and the Socialist Medical Association, he urged that medical supplies and a pool of trained medical personnel should be organised now for relief work.

"I see no evidence," he said, "that any steps have been taken to establish a pool of trained medical personnel to be ready at certain points with a reserve of medicine and curative remedies."

The Observer, 25/6/44.

DEMOCRACY

R.A.F. policemen were the first to settle into first-class seats of a long-distance train due to leave Paddington.

Soon passengers filled every other first-class seat, and many women were obliged to stand.

The R.A.F. policemen, still sitting and smoking cigarettes, explained that they were acting under orders—keeping the seats for the wives of high-ranking officers.

Shortly before departure time these women arrived and settled in the seats, kept for them by the policemen.

Daily Mail, 22/6/44.

THE HOUSE OF FEAR

THE TWO PREVIOUS articles on prison conditions have reviewed the main material conditions of life, dealing with food, clothing, shelter, work, sanitary conditions and medical treatment, and the conclusion reached has been that the system aims merely at keeping the prisoner alive, and no more. We should now examine the prison discipline, and the attempt, if any, which is made to reform the prisoner from crime.

When a man goes to prison he loses his personality completely, and becomes instead a number. He loses all his rights, even down to being prevented from speaking to anyone except at specified times. So long as he behaves himself he receives normal treatment, that is the ordinary diet, associated work, letters and visits at the specified times, he can talk when on exercise and generally fits into the prison life without any official notice taken of him. If he continues to be a good boy, after four weeks he eats his meals in the dining hall with other prisoners, and can earn money for the work done in the shop and thus can buy tobacco. After twelve weeks have gone by the prisoner gets an hour's recreation in the evening, when he can chat with his pals inside, play games, listen to the wireless (generally only the news), or stroll in a particular area of the grounds.

These are not rights, but privileges which depend on good behaviour and which can be lost for any offence. The other most important privilege is remission. When the prisoner enters with, say, a twelve month's sentence, his release date is shown on his card as eight months after the date of sentence, the other four months being remitted. This remission of a third of the sentence is dependent on good behaviour.

There is a whole host of prison rules which determine what a prisoner may or may not do, and it seems reasonable to expect that he should be able to see a complete list. But there is provided in the cell only a very short summary list, giving only the most essential rules. When a man asked the governor for permission to have a complete list (published by H.M. Stationery Office) he was refused, even though he was willing to pay for the list himself. The result is that many prisoners can quite easily break a rule that they don't even know exists, and similarly can go without certain privileges through ignorance of them.

In order to obtain any variation in the normal routine or any small additional privileges, a personal application to the governor is necessary. Say a man wants to study in his cell, and wishes to obtain a notebook and pencil for that purpose. He must make application to an orderly at dinner-time who writes the particulars in a book. During the next morning he is called out of the workshop and taken to a hall, where he stands waiting, silent, for anything between half-an-hour and an hour. By the time the governor arrives it is dinner-time, and the prisoner makes his request, which is granted or refused. If it is refused, quite often no reason is given; or if it is a complaint then the governor says he will "see into it". The next day the man will receive his note book and pencil if they have been allowed.

The fact that the applications are not taken until dinner-time means that the prisoner must have a cold dinner on that day. Add to this the extreme tediousness of the whole process of making application and it will be seen why many men do not avail themselves of it. From the point of view of efficiency only it is entirely ridiculous that such an elaborate system should be necessary for such trivial matters.

Prison Justice

The same sort of procedure is taken when a man is accused of breaking a rule or refusing an order. When the offence occurs the man is placed "on report", his particulars are taken down and he is locked up in his cell. The next morning the doctor examines him to see if he is fit to receive punishment. After this he is taken to the governor, and the officer in question makes his charge against the prisoner. Then the accused is asked if he has anything to say, after which the punishment is awarded by the governor. During the proceedings the prisoner is not allowed to call any witness, it is his word against that of the officer. Naturally, prison officers never lie, and if a man is accused of something the governor has merely to fix the punishment. Under the circumstances this is bound to happen, the prestige of the prison staff is at stake and if the governor admitted that a particular officer had made a mistake or was in the wrong then in the future that officer would find it difficult to control the men under him.

The punishments awarded are mainly restricted diet, confinement to cell and loss of remission. Punishment for a minor offence might be awarded like this: three days No. 1 diet, fourteen days "off stage", and three days remission lost. Punishment diet is of two kinds, No. 1 means an eight ounce loaf of dry bread three times a day, with water. No. 2 diet is the same except that cold porridge and cold potatoes are given for dinner. There are limits as to how much punishment diet can be given at once, for instance not more than fifteen days of No. 1. Also when No. 1 is given the man must not be without ordinary diet for more than three days. It works out, therefore, that the man does three days on bread and water, then three days on ordinary diet, and so on for fifteen days. The result is that he actually does only nine days on bread and water, but don't think this is any sort of picnic, especially in mid winter when even the ordinary prison diet does not keep out the cold. When on punishment the prisoner is confined to his cell and is let out only for an hour's exercise per day. Also his cell furniture is removed until the night-time so that he cannot make himself comfortable. In addition his library books and visits and letters can be taken away.

Loss of stage means that the prisoner loses the privilege of using the dining hall and the hour's recreation in the evening for the time specified, quite a serious punishment for a prisoner who does not like his own company and who needs social contact. Probably the most serious punishment is the loss of remission. From the first day the time is counted and suddenly to be confronted by even only an additional day in prison means more than words can convey. I have seen a man who was half-way through his sentence in tears because he lost one day's remission. He was no weakling, but was a soldier of about fifty who had been in the army nearly all his life.

Prison Officers

Most of the prison officers are ex-servicemen, and the whole system is run on semi-military lines. The majority are known as "screws" and do most of the disciplinary work, and also act as instructors in the workshops. They are all of working class origin, and vary greatly in their attitude towards the prisoners. A minority are decent men who are fair and lenient in their dealings with prisoners; this type is honest and will not engage in the very extreme racketeering which pervades the whole system. On the other extreme one finds inhuman monsters who terrorise the part of the prison they are in. One generally finds that these are the most

dishonest of the lot, they will supply forbidden things to prisoners at exorbitant prices; their strictness is a cover for their illegal trafficking. Between these two groups stand all varieties and combinations of qualities and faults. However, it is possible to get to know most of the officers one has dealings with during a length of time, and as soon as some sort of personal contact is made things become slightly easier. But this process cannot reach the stage of friendship; always the screw has to maintain his standing as an officer, and the prisoner is constantly reminded of his own position.

The next stage of promotion for the officer is to Principal Officer. The P.O. wears gold braid on his cap and an ornamental uniform. Above this the uniformed officer can rise to be a Chief Officer, and the C.O. wears even more gold braid and ornamentation. Over all the uniformed officers are civilians, such as the Medical Officer, the Governor and his deputy, the Production Manager and so on. This pyramid of power works like any other, the governor worries the C.O., the C.O. worries the P.O., the P.O. worries the ordinary screw. And naturally the butt for the whole system is the ordinary prisoner.

The Prison Gestapo

Recently there has been introduced a method of giving extra privileges to a few prisoners, who are called leaders and wear a distinguishing mark, such as a red band on the sleeve. These are supposed to be trusted prisoners, and are allowed to walk about the prison by themselves and also to conduct small parties of ordinary prisoners. Thus their original function was something like a messenger boy, and the type of prisoner who got this job was generally a crawler. But now in Wormwood Scrubs they have been given additional duties. Each leader is in charge of one table of ten men in the dining hall, and these ten men occupy adjacent cells. The leader is supposed to see that order is kept on his table and that his men keep their cells clean and generally behave themselves. In order to encourage the right spirit of submission to the system competitions are held and points awarded for good behaviour, cleanliness and success in competitive games. Cigarettes are offered as a prize to the winners. The leaders are encouraged to keep their men up to scratch and to report them to an officer if they don't behave.

The effect of this is that the prison is riddled with likely spies, who because of their privileged position will be willing to do anything for the officials. There is a considerable amount of solidarity amongst prisoners, they suffer under the same oppression and show considerable concern if someone gets into trouble. But this leader principle is directed at breaking up this solidarity and towards the easier running of the prison by the screws. It is easy to see that if conditions grew very bad, and mutiny became likely, that the leaders would be used to get the prisoners to accept the worst conditions that could be enforced.

Thus discipline is maintained mostly through the operation of fear, generally a suppressed fear, but at the same time an effective weapon for the system to use. The position of the prisoner is very similar to that of a subject of a Fascist state. He is isolated against the bureaucracy and is prevented from joining with any of his fellow prisoners to better his conditions. It is significant that if one makes a complaint it must be a personal complaint and not on behalf of anyone else. If one claimed to speak for other prisoners then an accusation of incitement to mutiny would probably follow, and mutiny is about the worst prison offence there is.

Graft in Prison

In order to complete the picture of the relationship between prisoners and screws we must examine the extensive system of graft. The amount of tobacco which a prisoner can buy with his earnings is minute, a very lucky man might get ten Woodbines or half an ounce of black shag per week,

the average is three to five Woodbines or about a quarter ounce of shag. This is only sufficient to whet the appetite, and it is well known that certain screws will supply tobacco, but at a price. If a prisoner can get, say, a pound into the hands of a screw then he will receive ten shilling's worth of tobacco. Besides tobacco, food and drink is also supplied in this way, but to a less degree. The tobacco thus obtained is not only useful for smoking, but becomes currency in prison. A cigarette will buy extra food, better library books, more soap or toilet paper, all of which are distributed by prisoners. The mean attitude which the bureaucracy takes towards the prisoners' requirements thus results in all sorts of abuses. The officers become corrupted and open to bribery, the relatives of prisoners pay exorbitantly for these extra illegal comforts, and within the prison there results unequal distribution of food and general envy towards those who receive illegal tobacco. This form of graft is the most common, but there also exists plain bribery in order to get a privileged job and easy conditions. It is obviously impossible to bring evidence of this sort of thing, but I have talked to a man who says that in the first six months of 1943 he spent at least £500 in bribes to officers. He was a prosperous business man, and was able to buy his minor comforts. Even in prison money speaks.

After looking at the material conditions, we had to come to the conclusion that they were extremely inadequate, and this brief review of the discipline brings the same result. There is no attempt to reform the prisoner by any means. One cannot take seriously the crude religious doctrines preached in the chapel, they never seem to have any effect on anyone. There are practically no educational facilities, if you want to study something you have to do it by yourself. And there is no attempt to encourage men's constructive and social instincts, their lives are reduced to the barest essentials. Of course, to the Anarchist, there is no solution to the problem of crime without a change in the system of society. We realise that crime is a result of the property relations in society, so long as poverty, unemployment and war exist then people will rob and kill. And we are entitled to ask at the present time who are the criminals? Who causes the most suffering to the world? And we are sure that the answer is not the prison population, but the madmen in the governments of the world and the madmen on the stock exchanges. The free society will remove the causes of war, unemployment, poverty and crime.

JACK WADE

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- | | |
|-----------|--|
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| | Revolutionary Theatre |
| 7th JULY | Tom Brown |
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ERICH MUEHSAM

TEN YEARS AGO this month there died in Oranienburg Concentration Camp an Anarchist who had epitomised for the German Workers their struggle against the old reaction, by then brutalised and crystallised into open terror by the Nazis.

This man, Erich Muehsam, is to-day recognised as one of the most impressive anti-fascist martyrs upon whom the Nazis vented their spite, and the manner in which he faced the last years earned for him the respect and admiration of those who before had been his most bitter enemies. The worth of this appreciation can be well judged if one realises the back-biting and corruption which pervade political circles.

Practically all that is known of Erich Muehsam by the British workers has come, paradoxically enough, through the Communist Party. But although he worked in the organisation known as the "Red Aid" for helping political prisoners, in which there was a majority of Communists, he always denied that he was a Communist. He said that he "could not live in a Communist State, which is not a society of free men, but bound together by intolerable forces." And although he was attacked by the Communists for his libertarian views, they have, since his death, tried to cover up the fact that he was an Anarchist by labelling him merely anti-fascist (as at the London Exhibition "Our Allies inside Germany"). For instance the Communist papers *Moscow* and *Das Wort*, in speaking of his literary work refer to his poems and writings as only upon war and revolution. Thus they seek to take for themselves the credit for Muehsam's life-long revolutionary struggle. It is because of this that we wish to clear up the controversy that still rages around Muehsam's name.

As a revolutionary Muehsam knew the effect of the continuous betrayals and failures of the working class through the degeneration of the Communist movement and the incapability of the so-called "workers' leaders". He saw the murder by *Feme** of Luxembourg, Liebknecht, Levene, Joyischer, Landauer and many others and finally the overwhelming of the workers by the brutal counter-revolution of the old reaction behind the Nazis. He was continually appealing to the workers to open their eyes to the rotten intrigue and corruption going on around them, and when the huge labour organisation finally collapsed, Muehsam knew that the full force of reaction would be directed at him. For he was not merely one of many; he was at the head of the Black List, being regarded as the chief exponent of the extreme left.

Muehsam was first influenced towards Anarchism when as a young man he contacted Landauer, who in 1908 had founded the Socialist League and was publishing (at his own expense and by great sacrifice) the fortnightly paper *Socialist*.

In 1911, inspired by Landauer, young Muehsam started his own paper, *Kain*, an anti-militarist journal for humanity, in which he continually propagated the system of workers' councils, localised and federated. By 1912 his new anti-militaristic poems had started the era of anti-war poetry, and when the Great War broke out, although all the other poets either remained silent or became pro-war, Muehsam remained fiercely on the offensive against the militarists. He was, however, soon arrested and taken into "protective custody", which meant that he was continually guarded and kept in a restricted area. In spite of this he managed throughout the war to maintain and extend contacts in Germany, Switzerland, Poland, Austria, and even deep into the Ukraine.

One of his outstanding achievements was his work among the *Lumpenproletariat*, that section of the poor re-

*Secret counter-revolutionary organisation responsible for the murder of thousands of militants.

garded by Marxists as of no use to the workers' movements—a drag on the respectable proletariat! Muehsam went out of his way to help these social outcasts, saying, "One should not go to the people in order to rule them, or lead them, or preach at them, but in order to help them to overcome their justified mistrust, to unite with them and help them to bring out their own will!" Particularly he began to organise two professions which had maintained the traditions of their guilds from the Middle Ages. These were the *Fliesenlayer*, the ornamental tile-layers, and the *Hamburger Zimmerleute*, the carpenters, who were very fine and militant workers, and who would travel around in their picturesque costume, working freely, always in demand because of their skill but never allowing themselves to be tied to any master. They were all tough fighters and displayed fine solidarity with Muehsam in his later struggles. They organised themselves as syndicates and for mutual aid, but the Nazis, of course, saw the danger in this organisation and the Gestapo set out to smash them. As late as 1939, however, they had not been stamped out.

Muehsam played a decisive part in the uprisings in Munich during the 1918 Revolution. The fruits of his continual teaching of the system of workers' and peasants' councils was to be seen when the peasants arose and, having formed their own councils, came into Munich demanding the division of the land and the taking of control. The soldiers', sailors' and workers' councils had already held their congress in Berlin, but this of course was not recognised as responsible by the British Government, who demanded a central government, just as now in Italy. This central government was formed by the Labour (Social Democratic) Party, with the reactionary Nationalists, Conservatives and Liberals, and had a Labour Minister of Defence, Noske. By this time, through bold and inspired action on the part of Cenci, Muehsam's wife, the Munich revolt had spread to the soliders, who were fraternising with the workers.

The answer the new Weimar Republic gave the workers of Munich was the despatch of Noske with a force of 500,000 men with tanks, flame-throwers and planes, which overwhelmed the ill-equipped rebels. This happened in other parts of the country, with the same result. Altogether Noske, the Labour minister, was responsible for the massacre of 15,000 workers.

Muehsam was condemned for his part in this rising to 15 years' imprisonment, but through the continuous agitation on his behalf by many outstanding writers he was released in 1925, after 6 years. He immediately threw himself again into the revolutionary struggle, beginning a new paper, *Fanal*, attacking not only the old ruling class but also the new leader class which was springing up.

When the Nazis seized power he was living in poverty in the Britz district of Berlin. His house was alone in never showing the Swastika flag, and was the house where those hunted by the police could find refuge. He starved himself to help others and keep *Fanal* going. Before long, of course, the Gestapo came for him and, after 5 weeks in Moabit prison he was transferred to Brandenburg Concentration Camp, where his torment began. This was intensified after he was moved to Oranienburg Camp. Here he was mercilessly beaten, his beard was torn out, and he was tortured to force him to sing the "Horst Wessel" song, but he defiantly sang the "Internationale". They tried to drive him to suicide by their cruelties, to discredit him in the eyes of the workers who loved and respected him. But they failed.

For by his tenacity and defiance he forced the Nazis to do to him what they did to so many others: they killed him and hanged his body in the lavatory of the camp, where he was "found" on July 9th, 1934.

PHILLIP

Class Justice

TROTSKYISTS JAILED

THE TRIAL OF the four members of the Revolutionary Communist Party (Trotskyists) has ended. The trial was preceded by a violent press campaign which took for granted their guilt and did everything possible to prejudice their case. The evidence on which they have been convicted is of the flimsiest nature, and the prosecution was evidently unable to prove that they were trouble makers and creators of strikes, as the press had tried to prove.

The Newcastle strike was caused by the Government's attitude towards the apprentices who had been directed into the mines, although previously a guarantee had been given that apprentices under 20 would not be called. William Landells, an apprentice, told in evidence how Heaton Lee and Ann Keen had given help in preparing a letter to Ernest Bevin. The letter demanded that the direction of J. R. Lowery under the ballot scheme should be withdrawn, and that legislation should be introduced to give all apprentices unconditional exemption from the Mines Ballot Scheme, whatever their industrial group. This letter gave notice to strike after three weeks if the demands were not met. This letter was signed by James William Davey for the Tyne Apprentices Guild. Help was also given by Jock Haston in the preparation of three leaflets issued by the Guild, but Haston pointed out in evidence:—

"It was my opinion that the apprentices should publicly state that if the mines were nationalised and operated under workers' control, they would allow themselves to be drafted to the pits. But that they were not prepared to allow themselves to be drafted down the mines to produce coal for private profit. But so hostile were the apprentices to this idea that it was entirely rejected, as you can see from the published leaflet, demonstrating clearly that it was their ideas contained in the leaflets. What was for me a very important political propaganda question was rejected by the apprentices."

This was confirmed by the evidence of J. W. Davey, who said:—

"The apprentices first met to discuss the Bevin Ballot Scheme before the four defendants appeared on the scene. It was the general view that there would be a strike. The leaflets produced as evidence against the accused represented his (Davey's) views. His view was that nationalisation would solve the coal problem . . . Our object was to prevent apprentices being conscripted for the mines at any price. That was our view without the intervention of the four accused. None of the defendants ever addressed a public meeting advocating a strike. At all meetings where the strike

was discussed, none of the four were present."

The position of the Trotskyists in the strike is thus seen to be that they gave assistance to the apprentices who had already decided that they would go on strike if their demands were not met. And James Lloyd, an apprentice said that Tearse gave advice on organisation, suggesting the formation of Picket, Flying Squad, Financial, Propaganda and Hardship Committees. But Lloyd said that if he had never met Tearse there would still have been a strike, and that anyone could have given the advice which Tearse gave.

The result of the trial was that all four were found not guilty of conspiracy to act in furtherance of the strike and not guilty of conspiring to incite the apprentices to declare an illegal strike. All four were found guilty of aiding and abetting Davey to act in furtherance of the strike, while Lee, Tearse and Haston were found guilty of acting in furtherance of the strike. The sentences were Rawling Tearse and Heaton Lee twelve months imprisonment, Jock Haston six months imprisonment and Ann Keen thirteen days imprisonment. An appeal is going forward on the grounds that the interpretation of "furthering a strike" used in the case is the opposite of the ruling given by the House of Lords, 1909.

We have always made clear our differences from the Trotskyists, but we readily extend our solidarity to them in this class persecution, and we warn the workers that this is but the prelude to the onslaught on workers' liberty which the capitalist class will make. The only effective way in which this Fascist legislation can be combatted is the organisation of the workers to overthrow the capitalist system and to introduce the classless society.



E. SHAW GETS TWELVE MONTHS

Our Glasgow comrade Eddie Shaw has maintained a consistent anti-militarist stand throughout the present war as readers of *War Commentary* will have seen from the number of times he has been in court. He appeared again on Tuesday, June 27th for refusing medical examination for the Forces, and was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment. He has not commenced to serve his term as he is awaiting an appeal to the High Court.

Comrade Shaw is one of our best-known speakers in Scotland and for a number of years has been one of our most active workers in the movement. We send our fraternal greetings to him in this new development in his struggle against the State.

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