

Letters



Soldiers' Views

Bridlington.

Dear Comrade,

If the feeling in the unit is any indication, the overwhelming majority in the forces are anti-Tory and pro-Labour.

This feeling shows itself during ABCA lectures. The other day the whole battalion was paraded for a lecture on the San Francisco Conference. The lecturer explained that unless a solution was reached over the Veto question, we might reverse to the old "balance of power" but believed that in spite of that there was "unity of purpose" among the nations and the problem of security would be solved.

The questions from the audience showed that the soldiers were less optimistic. When the lecturer mentioned the anti-Soviet propaganda that was growing in the USA and Britain someone asked: "Who is behind this," and he answered: "I wish I knew." Several answers came from the hall: "Vested interests," "Churchill and the Tories". And the lecturer replied: "Well if you believe that the Tories are responsible then you should vote against them." A chorus of shouts from the soldiers answered "That's just what we intend to do!"

There is also widespread discontent over the working of the election and the resulting disenfranchisement of thousands of servicemen.

There is no opportunity for the soldiers to take any active part in the election. K.R.R.'s (King's Rules and Regulations) state that no soldier shall take an active part in politics. Forces may attend political meetings but must not participate i.e. ask questions, speak etc. The only opportunity for organised political discussion are the ABCA lectures which in most units are usually the first items to be dropped off the training programme. If the authorities were really keen on allowing the soldiers the full use of democratic rights, these K.R.R.'s would be cut out and the forces given full political rights.

We are told that "there are no politics in the forces". The trouble is there are too much Tory politics and too little working class politics.

The article in the June "Socialist Appeal" on Burma was right to the point. We would welcome more frequent articles on the Far East War. The soldiers do not need convincing that the war in the Far East has nothing to do with democracy and everything to do with capitalist interests. No one is exactly enthusiastic over the prospect of going to the Far East. Not a single soldier's life should be forfeited. A lot of soldiers place their faith in the Labour Party saying: "If Labour gets into power maybe the war with Japan will be ended soon". These hopes will be shattered because the Labour leaders have pledged themselves to continue the capitalist policy in the Far East. The soldiers look to the organised ranks and file in the working class movement. Do not fail them.

Pte. H.

Dear Comrade,

Having defeated German imperialism, the British capitalists are trying to put the responsibility of Nazi crimes onto the German people. As part of this ruthless policy they have imposed the rigid non-fraternisation order not only as a punishment for the German people, but mainly to prevent the British worker in uniform from learning the true state of affairs by direct contact with the German workers.

The original "non-fraternisation" order said that "ogling with German women or girls is punishable." It now seems that the capitalists are finding it necessary to "relax" the ban owing to the enormous feeling which it has caused throughout the army and open violation of it. A few days ago we were given a speech by a colonel on non-fraternisation. Although he stressed that the "rules" are still strictly laid down, he "explained" that the actual meaning of the term "fraternisation" was "brotherly love." That any sexual relations with German women should be kept "strictly business." He made it clear this came directly from General Montgomery, that noble and devout Christian gentleman! Comment is unnecessary!

Fraternally,
Pte. Y

A Soldier on Non-Fraternisation

Germany, June, 1945.

Dear Comrade,

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Fraternally,
Pte. Y

From a Soldier in India

India, 24.6.45.

Dear Comrades,

I enclose some cuttings on the Indian situation. When I can read the papers I find that the nationalist press (at least some of it) is becoming more critical of the Wavell Plan. At one time they seemed ready to dive and accept it, but their attitude is changing. The gulf must be widening tremendously between the right and left in the country's political life on the Wavell Plan. Although out of touch I can faintly see the line up.

The following cutting will demonstrate to you the sell-out of the Indian Communist Party. It is taken from the "Free Press":

"A resolution expressing the opinion that the proposals made by Lord Wavell offer the Indian people an opportunity to take the reins of Government in their hands, if the Government in their hands, if the"

(Continued foot of next Column.)

Bevin Boys Oust Manager

Wimblebury, Staffs. 27/6/45.

Dear Comrade,

I am sure that the editors of the "Socialist Appeal" along with all militant workers will be pleased to know that the dispute at our hostel which the S.A. recently published has ended with victory for the Bevin Boys.

Following the general meeting that we held seven weeks ago, an attempt was made to entice the Bevin boys to rescind their previous decision that demanded the immediate resignation of the manager. The lads reaffirmed their demand that the manager goes.

The Residents Committee repeatedly demanded of Head Office that they investigate the state of affairs in the hostel. A meeting with the Regional Controllers did not materialise until five weeks after the revolt in the hostel. The Residents' Committee kept the lads informed all the while negotiations with Head Office were going on.

On VE Day the manager, thinking that he could use this as a means to smooth the trouble over, climbed down from his perch and asked a delegation of the Residents' Committee, who had previously cut off all negotiations with him, to meet him. In the letter he sent, he promised to do everything in his power to rectify all grievances in the hostel. Although we obtained a number of minor concessions we broke off negotiations once more.

The revolt broke out anew in the week beginning 17th June. The new trouble was over the steady deteriora-

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THE FUTURE OF THE TINPLATE INDUSTRY

BY ROY JENKINS

THE MARCH QUARTER ISSUE OF THE B.I.S.A.K.T.A. JOURNAL CONTAINS A STATEMENT WHICH SHOULD BE PARTICULARLY NOTED BY ALL WORKERS IN THE TINPLATE INDUSTRY. It is included in the Central Office report dealing with the state of trade, under the heading "Tinplate."

"The tinplate trade has been in the public eye a great deal since the last meeting. The merger of the R.T.'s group (Richard Thomas and Baldwin's Ltd. has created considerable attention particularly in South Wales and Monmouthshire. A provisional scheme has been approved by the Board of Trade for the erection of a hot mill rolling strip tinplate and sheet manufacture in cold reducing plants which may be situated in other districts. Three additional cold-reducing outfits similar to that already established at Ebbw Vale, would result in a total output of cold reduced tinplate of some 18,000,000 boxes per year. This would allow each of these plants 90,000 boxes per week and would not leave any considerable proportion for the hand-rolling process. Wherever these cold-reducing plants may be situated their operation will most certainly reduce the demand for tinplate workers to less than one half of the number employed in this section of the industry under the old method of hand rolling. Further, if electrolyte tinning proves successful, and is introduced into this country, the reduction will be much in excess of this estimate. The hot strip mill will also put out of use the tin bar rolling mills, as the hot strip mill can produce 15,000 tons per week of 16 gauge strip."

This does not paint a very hopeful picture for the tinplate worker whatever difficulties or successes it may portend for the steel magnates.

The tremendous advance in productivity made possible by the introduction of modern plant as at Ebbw Vale can be seen by even a slight examination of the position at this plant. Employing about 5,000, the plant comprises blast furnaces, Bessemer and Open Hearth furnaces, Blooming Mill, Hot Strip Mill, cold reducing plant, and a number of subsidiaries.

Output of the strip mill averages 12,000 tons per week, has reached a peak of 14,000 tons and could probably produce the 15,000 tons referred to in the above statement.

The cold reducing plant fed by the Hot Mill comprises sheet and tinplate mills. The tinplate output has reached a peak of 50,000 boxes per week, with 25 per cent of the tinning plant shut down, the rest working below full possible production. Sheet production averages 4,000-4,500 tons per week.

Consider these figures where 5,000 are employed. How many workers are needed to produce this output from old type plants? It should be remembered too, that Ebbw Vale is no longer a new plant and reports state that great improvements have been made in the more modern plants in the U.S.A. The improvements will undoubtedly be incorporated in any new strip mill built in this country. Already plans are complete and work has begun on the introduction of electrolytic tinning at Ebbw Vale, tinning in a continuous strip and not in individual plates as at present. This will result in an increased output with the same number of workers—or less!

B.I.S.A.K.T.A. refers to a production quota of 18,000,000 boxes. We can presume this to be a pre-war figure for the industry, the greater part of which was produced for export, with the out-dated, uneconomical plants. In the post-war competition, the British steel industry will have to compete with the tremendous American steel industry for the world's markets, an industry producing steel 25 per cent more cheaply—while paying double the wages received by British steel workers. In addition strip mills are projected in Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand—all pre-war markets likely to be post-war competitors.



"BUT WITH THE HOUSING SHORTAGE THIS IS THE BEST I CAN DO."

Congress and League forged a united stand was unanimously passed at a public meeting held under the auspices of the Bombay Committee of the Communist Party of India and the Bombay Girni Kamgar Union today. Mr. R. K. Bhogte presided.

LEAD FOR UNITY

The meeting also hoped that the leaders of the Congress and League would take into consideration the critical situation in the country and give a lead for unity and solution of the deadlock.

Mr. B. T. Randive explaining the Wavell plan, said that failure on the part of the Indians to seize this opportunity would mean only a triumph for the diehards and continuation of hunger and famine of the people. It was only through consultations and agreement that points of difference between the two parties concerning the new offer could be solved and national unity maintained.

You will see that B. Desai is in favour of the liquidation of Congress if acceptance of the Bengal Government's terms are O.K. and that "all prisoners convicted or detained for charges of arson, violence and destruction of property were to be dealt with as grave offenders against the law."

During March there were 35 industrial disputes in Bombay Province. The number of workpeople involved in these disputes was 20,439 and 47,190 working days were lost.

There is tremendous bitterness among the lads at being deprived of their vote in the general election. They are overwhelmingly for Labour.

Greetings,
Pte. T.

GLASGOW ENGINEERS FIGHT FOR 4s. 6d.

The chaotic position of the application of the 718 Award is well illustrated in Glasgow where about 50 per cent of the employers are refusing to pay it, with the result that only three quarters of the workers in the district have received any increase.

G. & J. Weirs is being regarded as a test case. For a fortnight after the announcement of the Award, negotiations continued with regard to its application in this factory. Finally, two days before the Tribunal met again to interpret the award, the management agreed to pay the increase, irrespective of any decision of the Tribunal.

The management paid the award for three weeks and then intimidated the workers on 31st May, that in a week's time payment of the Award would cease. Immediately, the shop stewards protested, in view of the guarantee given previously by the management. Negotiations then proceeded, which finally broke down. A mass meeting of 1,400 workers, held in the Kingsway Cinema, decided to place an embargo on all overtime and to limit piece-work earnings to 25 per cent.

On being given the decision of the meeting the management complained to the Shop Stewards that there had not been "sufficient time for negotiation", and asked for the postponement of the operation of the ban. The workers refused unless the Award continued to be paid. The management finally agreed to pay it for one week commencing June 11th.

On Sunday, 10th June, a mass meeting, called by the A.E.U. District Committee, demanded the payment of the Award to all workers and demonstrated their support for the Weir workers.

The decision of the Tribunal is being fought vigorously on the Clyde.

The smallness of the Award, and the discontent over its application underlines the necessity for engineering workers to cut themselves free from the entanglements of the arbitration machinery—the machinery of class collaboration—and to restore the independence of their organisations.

J. E. G.

TROTSKYISTS answer STALINISTS PUBLIC MEETING LESSER WORKMEN'S HALL TREDEGAR MONDAY, JULY 9th at 7 p.m. Speaker: John Lawrence.

Labour to Power on the following Programme

- Industrial and Economic Policy.**
1. Nationalisation of the land, mines, banks, transport and all big industry with compensation, as the prerequisite for a planned economy and the only means of ensuring full employment with adequate standards of living for the workers, and the operation of the means of production under control of workers committees.
 2. Confiscation of all war profits, all company books to be open for trade union inspection, control of production through workers' committees to end the chaos and mismanagement.
 3. Distribution of food, clothes and other consumers commodities under the control of committees of workers elected from the Co-ops, distributive trades, factories, housewives' committees, and small shopkeepers, and allocation of housing under the control of tenants' committees.
 4. A rising scale of wages to meet the increased cost of living with a guaranteed minimum; the rate for the job; and industrial rates for all members of the armed forces.
- Democratic Demands**
5. Repeal of the Essential Works Order, the Emergency Powers Act and all other anti-working class and strike-breaking legislation.
 6. Full electoral and democratic rights for all persons from the age of 18 years. Full democratic and political rights for the men and women in uniform.
 7. Immediate freedom and unconditional independence for India, Ireland and all the colonies of Britain; immediate withdrawal of British armed forces from these countries; full economic and military assistance to the Indian and colonial peoples to maintain their independence against all imperialist attack.
- Military Policy**
8. Clear out the reactionary, pro-fascist, and anti-labour officer caste in the armed forces; election of officers by the ranks.
 9. Establishment of military schools by the Trade Unions at the expense of the state for the training of workers-officers; arming of the workers under the control of workers' committees elected in the factories, unions and in the streets for the defence of the democratic rights of the workers.
- International Policy**
10. Against race hatred and discrimination of all forms (Vansittartism, Anti-Semitism, etc.); for the fraternisation and co-operation of workers and soldiers of all countries.
 11. Unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against all imperialist powers; dispatch of food and essential materials to the Soviet Union under the control of the Trade Unions and factory committees.
 12. A Socialist appeal to the workers of Germany, Europe, Japan, and the rest of the world, on the basis of this programme in Britain, to join the socialist struggle against Nazism, Fascism and all forms of capitalist oppression and for a Socialist United States of Europe and a Federation of Asiatic Soviet Socialist Republics.



During the past few months we have concentrated on an appeal for the Neath Bye-Election Fund. And knowing the limited resources of our worker-readers we relaxed the FIGHTING FUND appeal during that time.

The restricted circulation imposed on SOCIALIST APPEAL by paper restrictions makes it impossible for the income from sales to balance the cost of production. This, despite the fact that all journalistic and editorial services are given free. Unlike other papers, we have no revenue from advertisements.

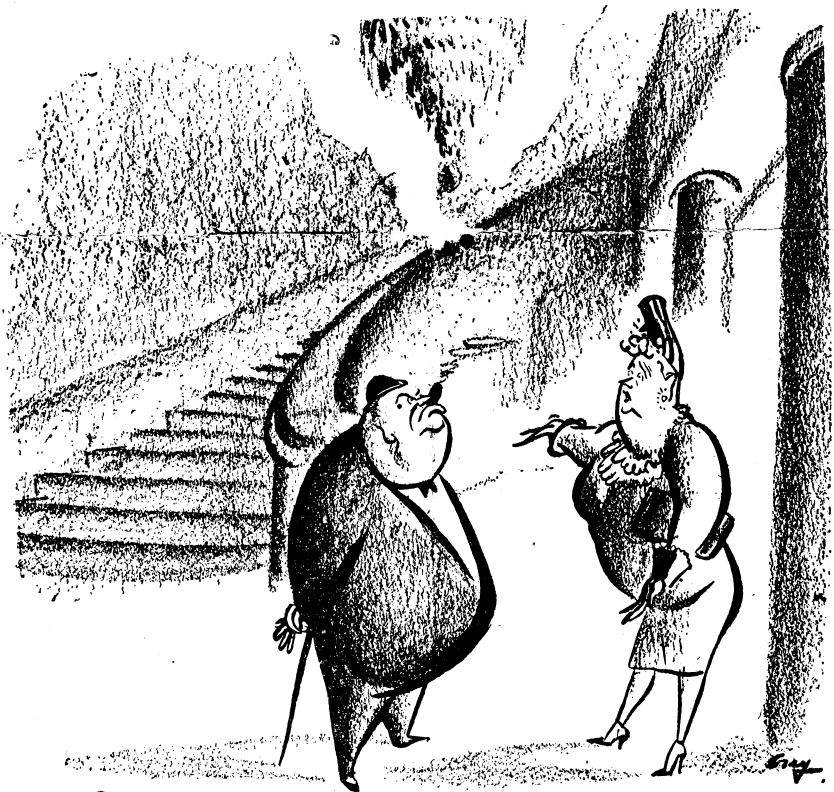
We are now compelled to make an urgent appeal for money. We have a large outstanding printers' bill which must be paid. Workers Readers! YOUR paper needs YOUR help. SOCIALIST APPEAL—the only advocate of revolutionary communism in Britain, depends on your support.

Send a regular donation to the FIGHTING FUND. Send for collecting cards. Take collections on the job, in the Trade Union and Shop Stewards meetings...

Get together with other readers of the paper to raise money for the FIGHTING FUND. Run rallies, dances, socials, and work out ways and means of building up the FIGHTING FUND.

Send all contributions to:
ANN KEEN, Business Manager, 246, Harrow Road, London, W.2.

READ The Death Agony of Capitalism AND THE TASKS OF THE WORKING CLASS BY Leon Trotsky THE PROGRAMME OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL



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IS THE BEST I CAN DO.”**

