

# GERMAN WORKERS STIRRING

## British and Soviet Workers Must Show the Way

It is fashionable in the bourgeois press to depict the Germans as an undivided mass of barbarians and bloodthirsty monsters. In the pages of the *Times* and the *Telegraph* have appeared lengthy letters discussing what is to be done with the "Huns" after victory has been achieved. Churchill himself has spoken with relish of the period when the Germans will be brought to their knees and compelled to shout "Kamerad". Threats of fire and slaughter have been made to the German masses. The Kremlin leaders, flying in the face of the internationalist position of Lenin, have been playing Churchill's game and adding grist to the mill of Goebbels, with their propaganda about the spilling of "stinking Aryan blood" at the gates of Leningrad.

The British Labour leaders have faithfully reflected the attitude of the ruling class on this question; the Stalinists have gone even further in jingoism and chauvinism. In the latest issues of their papers the Communist Party talks about the "Boche". The whole official press, including that of the Stalinists, is attempting to place the responsibility for the monstrous crimes of Nazism on the shoulders of the German masses. The real situation in Germany and the reason for the paralysis of the German masses are deliberately obscured by both the ruling class press and the so-called representatives of the working class in the

Labour movement. But despite the entire barrage of lies, the real situation in Germany persists in breaking through in the press, despite the strenuous efforts to distort it before the British people.

We could give dozens of quotations from the capitalist press. Of these we shall choose one, which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* of August 2:

"In the first place, I would emphasise that what I feel has probably been pointed out before—that this war isn't with Germans a popular war—of course, every German feels that it must be won—or else it will be the end; that if they lose this war Germany will never again get the chance of coming back as a great nation. They foresee a Germany subdivided into provinces ruled over by British appointed committees."

The reports from American and Swiss journalists confirm the indifference and despair of the German people. Victories occasion no enthusiasm, they say, but are accepted with bitterness and resignation.

This estimate is confirmed by events in Germany this month. At a cinema in the Potsdammerplatz, a working class district in Berlin, the audience demonstrated against the Nazi film of the fighting on the Eastern Front. "Down with the war! We want no war films!" they shouted. The lights were put on and an S.S. man came on to the stage and

warned the audience to desist. But the demonstration continued when the film re-started. The S.S. was called in and fired on the audience, killing and wounding scores of them.

In Hamburg, at the burial of hundreds of air raid victims, 10,000 workers demonstrated against the war and again the S.S. had to be called in to "restore order". They fired on the crowd and many were killed. Both incidents have been reported in the British press.

These incidents testify to the fact that the revolutionary tradition of the German working class has not been destroyed by the Nazi terror. The German workers have a Marxist tradition of 75 years. They have the inspiration of the anti-war fight of Liebknecht and Luxemburg; the revolution of 1918, which following the example of the Russian revolution, overthrew the Kaiser, and was the real cause of the ending of the last war. It is to this tradition, a tradition of Socialist struggle that must be appealed, in order that Hitlerism will be destroyed by the forces of the German workers themselves.

When Hitler took power, he had not managed to gain the support of the basic mass of the German working class. 8,000,000 voted for the Social-Democrats and 6,000,000 for the Communist Party in 1932. It was only the betrayal of the Social-Democratic and Communist leader-

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Second, a clear explanation to the peoples of the Soviet Union, Germany and the world, of the real nature and causes of the war. Not the lying and meaningless statements of the capitalist politicians that it is due to the blood-thirst and megalomania of Adolph Hitler. But the simple truth that it is in the interests of finance capital and the preservation of the capitalist system. Above all, it is the duty of Stalin to clearly differentiate to the German workers between the war being fought by the Soviet Union and that being waged by capitalist Britain under Churchill.

Third, instead of the chauvinist appeal, an internationalist call to the German and European workers and soldiers for the extension of the socialist revolution to all Europe; this would be the only means of awakening the class solidarity of the once proud and mighty German working class.

## NECESSARY CONDITIONS FOR WORKERS' DEMOCRACY

Stalin and the Soviet bureaucracy will not and cannot make use of these revolutionary methods. Why? Workers have often asked us—"If you are in favour of the Soviet Union why do you attack the leaders in Russia?"

Russia is a workers' state because the land, mines, banks, factories, railways have been taken out of the hands of the capitalists and have been nationalised. That is why, in spite of all the crimes of Stalin, the Soviet Union must be defended by every class conscious worker to the fullest extent.

Lenin laid down certain conditions for the existence of a workers' state which can be summed up as follows:

1. All officials to be elected with right of recall through workers' Councils (Soviets).
2. The abolition of the standing army and its substitution by the armed people.
3. No official to receive a wage higher than that of a skilled worker.
4. Administrative posts to be filled gradually in rotation so that no permanent officialdom could be formed.

## WHAT IS THE "STALINIST BUREAUCRACY"?

But a similar process has taken place in Russia to that which took place in Britain. The trade union movement here was formed as a weapon of struggle against capitalism. But the officials—the Citrines and Bevins—gradually took over control and operated the trade unions in their own interests. Every trade unionist knows this from his own experience. But this does not mean to say we reject trade unionism. What it does mean is that we must conduct a struggle to get rid of the Citrines and Bevins, and the whole strata of bureaucrats in order to transform the trade unions into fighting instruments of the working class.

In Russia, likewise, because of the backward development of the country and the defeats of the world working class, power has been seized out of the hands of the workers by the officialdom, the bureaucracy. In this case the officials, not of a trade union, but of a state. The Russian government officials, managers, heads of industry, etcetera, are now utilising the workers' state in their own interests instead of those of the workers. All the conditions laid down by Lenin are being eradicated. The Soviets no longer exist. The officials are arbitrarily appointed and removed from above with the workers having no control over them. In place of the armed people, we have the old reactionary caste system restored in the army and the privileged officer strata. The law that the wages of officials do not exceed those of the skilled workers was abolished years ago.

This privileged caste defends its power and privileges against the working class, just as Morrison and his ilk do. To understand this is to understand the destruction of the entire Old Bolshevik Guard, the destruction of the rights of the working class, of the officer cadres of the Red Army when 90% of the General Staff were murdered and three quarters of the officers executed. The representative of this bureaucracy is Stalin, who has organised nothing but defeats for the workers.

## INTERNATIONALISM IS THE ONLY SALVATION

The victories under Lenin and Trotsky were obtained, not only by the response of the Allied and German working class to their international calls, but by relying on the democratic organisations of the workers. Lenin based his power on the workers, placed his trust on their initiative and self sacrifice, and made his first rule to tell the workers the truth. At every crisis in the wars of Intervention the Bolsheviks made an open, world wide appeal to the masses, never misinforming them or sowing illusions. But the incompetent and venal bureaucracy dare not do this. One of the principal factors in the demoralisation of the French nation was the vicious censorship. In Russia today we see the contempt and panic with which the bureaucracy regard the masses in an even more rigid stifling of news. According to the *News Chronicle* Moscow correspondent, the destruction of the Dniepnostroy Dam was not known to the masses of the people in the capital. The correspondent himself was not aware of it until he heard it on the British wireless.

## BRABAZON'S POLICY IS CHURCHILL'S POLICY

The acceptance by Stalin of the Atlantic Charter deception is a betrayal of the workers of Russia and the world. Churchill and Roosevelt are despatching carefully calculated aid to Russia. But behind the scenes the policy which Moore-Brabazon indiscreetly blurted out is the

policy of the ruling class. They wish to see the Soviet Union destroyed—but only after Germany has been sufficiently weakened to collapse under the offensive of Anglo-American imperialism. By relying on them, Stalin has placed the workers' state in the gravest danger of destruction. The capitalists will turn the flow of supplies on and off as suits them.

Under the most favourable conditions, the production of war materials within the Soviet Union is only half that of Germany and occupied Europe. But with the occupation of some of the main industrial areas of the USSR, this disparity is now even greater. From this point of view, apart from the superiority of German military technique and organisation, if Hitler retains the support of the German people and his armies and if the peoples in occupied Europe do not rise (and these two conditions are largely interdependent), the Russia is doomed.

Reliance upon the capitalist democracies means inevitable disaster. Churchill and Roosevelt are not out to smash fascism or defend the onquests of October. The ruling class is taking advantage of the sentiment among the workers for support of the Soviet Union for their own ends. That is what lies behind the "Tanks For Russia Week" which was launched by Beaverbrook. Every worker would like to see the greatest possible material support sent to the gallant defenders of the USSR. But while control of these supplies remains in the hands of the ruling class there is no guarantee that these will be sent when most needed, or even that they will be sent at all. To trust the promises of aid given by Mr. Moore-Brabazon and his ilk who control the government, would be suicidal.

## THE USSR WILL BE DEFENDED OUR WAY

Russia must be defended in spite of the fact that Stalin and the bureaucracy are in control, in the same way as we defend the trade unions from capitalist attack even though the Labour bureaucrats control them. The defeat of Russia would signal the most terrible set-back for the working class for the past two decades. Because of this, we dare not sow illusions among the workers. The only guarantee that real aid will be despatched to our Russian brothers in sufficient quantities to affect the issue of the great battles, is when the Shop Stewards and Trade Union Committees control the despatch of supplies.

The tasks of the British workers are clear: Full support for the fight of the Soviet Union against the onslaught of German imperialism. But to rally behind Churchill and the British ruling class would be to make certain the ultimate destruction of the Soviet Union and the victory of fascism. Only a workers' government in Britain could impel the German masses to overthrow Hitler and together with the Russian and British workers, establish a Socialist Europe.

E. GRANT.

# FOOD SCANDAL GROWS CONSUMERS MUST CONTROL

The story of Britain's food supplies and how they are distributed is one of the most scandalous stories of the war. It is a story of millionaire racketeers who are reaping a golden harvest at the expense of millions of hungry men and women, daily going short of essential foods; it is a story of red tape, muddle, and inefficiency in Government circles, which apart from issuing periodic threats and long-winded statements, do nothing whatsoever to ease the situation. The time has come for Britain's consumers to act.

## HOW THE BLACK MARKET WORKS

"If there were no black sheep, there would be no black market." This is Lord Woolton's explanation of the greatest ramp of modern times. The question that arises is, "who are the black sheep and who runs the black market?"

The market deals mainly in unrationed goods, which are subject to price control, because it is much more profitable for the seller to sell his goods illegally to those who can afford to pay high prices, than to sell them to the ordinary working class housewives who can barely afford the controlled amount. It is therefore the most fashionable and select hotels, clubs and restaurants, the wealthy proprietors of country mansions, specialising in week-end guzzling parties, who are the greatest customers of the "black market". Naturally the patrons of the high class eating houses and week-end "hunting and shooting" parties differ in bank-book stability from the soldiers, engineers and miners wives. The yellow press admits quite openly that the real "black sheep" are the people with the money.

Likewise the "black market" itself is no mere "Petticoat Lane" venture. For the enterprising speculator it is one of the greatest money making games of the war. The "Daily Herald" states that "Key men in the racketeering ring have been able to obtain supplies on which they aimed at making profits running into six figures". It is obvious that the type of individual who goes in for large transactions of this description is far different from the small-scale retailers who have been heavily fined for minor profiteering offences. Investigations have shown that large sums of money have been advanced by the banks for such activity. Of course the so-called "well informed" newspaper correspondents are united in proclaiming the banks' innocence, though it is difficult to understand how the banks were fooled into lending money for something they are supposed to know nothing about. Things just don't happen that way in the world of finance, and it is clear that the ring-leaders of the "black market" are men of money and not "tuppenny ha'penny Crooks". In other words the proprietors and customers of the black market are the rich and well-to-do and not the workers and small shopkeepers.

## A PROFITEERS' PARADISE.

Meanwhile profiteering continues on a vast scale. Sir Douglas McCraith, chairman of the North Midland Regional Food Investigation Price Committee has stated that he knew of cases where "a manufacturer sold cans of soup at 6/6 a dozen they reached a retail shopkeeper at 12/- a dozen and he sold them to the public at 14/6 a dozen. In between came seven middlemen, each of whom made a profit." For being so outspoken, he was openly rebuked by the government.

Carrots which last Autumn cost 8/1d. a cwt., are now being sold at 17/6. Yet production is three times greater than last year. Melons have been sold at £2

each and peaches at 5/-. Any housewife can spend hours giving similar examples.

## WORKERS GO HUNGRY

The people who suffer most from this notorious racket are naturally the working class. Heavy industrial workers, Old age pensioners and farm workers are existing on a starvation level whilst the rich idlers think nothing of spending a fiver on a meal. Mr. George Griffiths, M.P. has told the House of Commons that he knew a lad of 15 years of age working in the mines, who had got out of bed at 4.30 in the morning and went to work with nothing but "dry bread for his snap".

A Labour Party food investigator reports the following extract from remarks made by an old age pensioner. "The trouble is that we can't get sufficient food on our 34/- a week," said the old lady. "I'm too old to work," said her husband "and too frail to firewatch. I'd like to do something, but—well, I can't get enough food to build me up". Another gives extracts from remarks made by a farm labourer's wife. "He has bread and margarine before he leaves and takes bread and margarine sandwiches. Comes home for a cup of tea at half past four, more bread and jam and a suet pudding with jam in it if there is jam and potatoes. Doesn't sound much for a working man does it? But that's all he has some days."

"The meat lasts from Saturday till Wednesday, but the children don't have as much meat as they could do with."

"Gordon has to get most of it, otherwise he'd never be fit for his work." At this Gordon Dales' mouth set in a tight line. "That's true enough. And I hate . . . HATE . . . taking it from these children of mine."

## COMBINES ARE HAPPY

At the top stands the mighty combines. For them "everything in the garden is lovely". Mr. Herbert Davies, director of Lever Bros. and Unilever, and of British Oil and Cake Mills, is in charge of the business heads in charge of the Ministry of Food's distribution of oils, fats and margarine. His Company Lever Bros. (Unilever) show a record profit of £6,987,130 against £6,742,053 for 1939 and British Oil and Cake show profits of £720,373 for 1941. The workers in the distributive trades and combine employees are up in arms against this shameless plundering of the people.

## CONSUMERS MUST CONTROL

Why are such injustices taking place? The answer is simple. Because the nation's food supplies are controlled and managed by bankers and capitalists who are out to make as much profit as possible. The government represents their interests and not those of the working class and whilst it carries out isolated petty prosecutions, the real culprits always escape. The "black market" is not some sort of alien social disease, but a reflection of the rottenness and corruption of capitalism, and will continue no matter what prosecutions take place, because wherever easy money is to be made you will always find speculators.

The only way to remedy food shortage, the black market and profiteering is to take control out of the hands of the capitalists and their government agents and place the country's food supplies under the control of committees elected by housewives, distributive trade workers, small shopkeepers and factory workers. Already several big factory canteens have been taken over by the works committees and are being run with great success by the workers themselves.

To end the chaos and to assure equitable distribution, consumers must control.

G. HEALY.

## NOTICE OF MEETING

### 24th Anniversary of the RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

HOLBORN HALL

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9th

AT 6.30 P.M.

Doors Open at 6 p.m.

Leading Trotskyist Speakers

Auspices: Workers' International League Fourth International