

The  
'New  
Order'  
in Britain

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# The 'New Order' in Britain

ON THE EVE of new and immeasurable extension of the war, the crisis of democracy and the working-class movement in Britain has now fully opened. War is a forcing house of all development, sharpens all contradictions, telescopes the evolution of years into months and days, shatters old and decaying social and political systems, states and empires, and in this sense, by its destructive role, at the cost of heavy human suffering, prepares the way for future revolutionary change. This is the long-range significance of imperialist war, which is the expression of the profound crisis of the dying capitalist system. But in its short-range effect imperialist war, because of its reactionary character, means an enormous strengthening of all reactionary forces. In a popular or democratic war, a war for national or social liberation, and not for maintenance of domination over other peoples, great democratic, social and cultural advances can be achieved even in the midst of war; the people are capable of great sacrifices, and can achieve miracles of organisation and heroism, because they are fighting in their own cause, and a heavy hand is laid on the big property owners and exploiters. This has been shown in the war of democratic Spain; it is being shown to-day in the Chinese national war, despite the serious sabotage of reactionary class interests within the national front; it was still more powerfully shown in the socialist wars of the Soviet Union which defeated the imperialist armies of intervention. But in imperialist war the reverse is the case.

## *War and Democracy*

THE internal development in a country at war depends on the character of the war and the class in control. It is not true, as the pacifists allege, that all war necessarily leads to the triumph of reaction. War organisation and war discipline of the strictest kind is not necessarily anti-democratic. It is important to lay this down at the outset, when we come to consider the present proposals for industrial conscription and other measures in Britain, in order to make clear that the militant working-class opposition to these measures, against industrial serfdom of the working masses to the profiteering trusts, or against a bastard "national unity" which covers enslavement to the financial oligarchy, is by no means an anarchist opposition to organisation and discipline, but, on the contrary, a most vital fight for the interests and future of the working class and people of this country.

## *Progressive and Reactionary Wars*

THE examples of the political role of Cromwell's army, or of Jacobin France, show how the ruthless needs of war, if it is a progressive democratic war, can hasten popular advance and strike heavy blows at wealth and privilege. The example of the Napoleonic wars, of the wars of Pitt and the British oligarchy against Napoleonic Europe (the favourite historical analogy of

Churchill, the *Times* and official spokesmen for the present war), which, conducted in the name of British "liberation" of Europe from a "tyrant," ended in monarchist restoration and the crushing weight of the Holy Alliance on Europe, and in Peterloo, the Six Acts and the police terrorism of Castlereagh for Britain, shows how a reactionary war intensifies reaction at home. The internal social and political situation of a country at war is thus inseparably connected with the character of the war; the two aspects cannot be taken in isolation; each reacts upon the other. If, therefore, it is necessary in the midst of the many wide new questions of the war opening out on the whole world front, to concentrate attention on the internal crisis in Britain, this by no means implies a separation of domestic questions from the wider issues of the war, whose advance is now bringing the sharpest problems for the British people. On the contrary, the internal crisis in Britain is a crucial expression of the present stage of the war, and its outcome will have the most far-reaching effect on the further development of the war.

### *Social and Political Effects of Imperialist Wars*

ONE of the sharpest tests of the imperialist character of a war, and disproof of the cant of a popular democratic war, is thus the character of the internal development which accompanies it. In an imperialist war, where monopoly capital rules, and where millions of propertyless men are compelled to fight for the power and possessions and world empires of their masters, reaction is invariably strengthened—up to the point where the contradictions grow too strong for it and the rising struggle opens out into a revolutionary situation. 1914-16 saw the strengthening of reaction in all the countries at war. But in the present war, at a far later stage of capitalism, at a more advanced stage of capitalist monopoly and decay, with sharper social and national contradictions, and after the working out of the technique of Fascism, this strengthening of reaction is more intense and more rapid. The concentration of capital is enormously accelerated at the expense of all smaller enterprises, producers and traders, as well as the wage-workers. The most powerful sections of monopoly capital entrench themselves in the State machine. In those imperialist states where the forms of parliamentary democracy and independent working-class organisation were still maintained, the ruling dominant representatives of the banks and trusts strive to use the war emergency in order to destroy democratic rights and to corrupt, paralyse and disrupt the labour movement. The consequences are reflected in a political transformation which—in the name of the fight for democracy against Fascism—destroys the basis of democracy and drives towards the Fascist type of war economy and social and political organisation. This process developed with extreme speed in France, which was already deeply rotted, economically, socially and politically, before the war began. It is now developing in Britain and preparing in the United States.

### *January Twenty-first, 1941*

WHAT is happening in Britain? There was never more need to estimate in the most objective and realist fashion the changes which are taking place and where they are leading; for the issues are the most serious in the whole experience of the working-class movement. The fateful day of January 21, 1941, constitutes a landmark whose significance will stand out the more as it recedes. The day which saw the suppression of the only independent non-governmental daily newspaper of the working class and democratic movement at the hands of a Labour Home Secretary saw also the announcement

by a Labour Minister of Labour of the plans for industrial conscription, by which the entire working population is to be legally tied to profit-making capitalist monopoly enterprise and disarmed of the weapons of self-defence. It was immediately followed next day by the announcement by a Tory Prime Minister, laying down the tasks for a Labour Minister of Reconstruction, of the plans for the continuance of "national unity" as in wartime for three years after the war. These three signals have been widely recognised as the signals of a "new order" now being actively prepared in Britain.

#### *What is Fascism?*

**Y**ET the full extent of the change that is being inaugurated in the whole social and political structure in this country is still only partially realised. The general terms "Fascism" or "Hitlerism" or "Nazism" have been of late so freely and indiscriminately bandied about by every type of political tendency and colour from right to left as a universal term of denunciation for anything to which it is desired to express opposition, that the plain, original, serious and scientific class meaning of these terms has become overlaid and hidden from general clearness. They have become emotional slogans to arouse passionate opposition; but the same thing needs only to be served up in a slightly different dress for it not to be recognised by many who are the most vehement in denouncing the name. Hence the mere affirmation that the measures now being introduced in this country are of a type to lead to full-blooded Fascism (not in contradiction to the war aims of the ruling class, but in accordance with their real war aims) by no means yet brings general conviction, clearness or alertness to the menace, because such affirmations will still be widely regarded as conventional propagandist exaggerations. Hence it is necessary to come much closer to the concrete facts of what is happening at present here and to relate these facts to the general principles and historical understanding and experience of Fascism or "National Socialism."

#### *How Fascism Comes*

**F**OR indeed we have considerable experience, for nearly twenty years now, of the crisis of democracy in country after country of Europe, the break-up of working-class rights and the coming of Fascism. We have in this country the advantage of these lessons, although that advantage will be a vain one if we do not use it. The experience of country after country has shown that the measures which directly destroy the basis of democracy and prepare the way for Fascism are always introduced first within the existing state forms (there never has been and never can be a Fascist "revolution," since revolution means the transference of power from one class to another, whereas Fascism is only a change in the form of the continuous bourgeois dictatorship, and is therefore always introduced under the protection of the higher military and official authorities—the "march on Rome" always takes place in a wagon-lit). Second, the same experience has shown that these measures are always first introduced *in the name of the fight against the menace of Fascism* ("Support Hindenburg to defeat Hitler"; "Support Dollfuss-Schuschnigg to defeat the Nazis"; "Support Daladier-Reynaud-Blum-Petain and shoot the Communists to save France from Hitlerism"; "Support Churchill-Bevin-Halifax and suppress the *Daily Worker* to save England from Hitlerism," etc.). Third, Fascism is always introduced with the aid of the reactionary leadership within the Labour movement, which disrupts and divides the Labour movement from within and directs its fire against the left, while entering into coalition with the political representatives of capitalist reaction. Fourth, Fascism always begins with the offensive against Communism, which, if not checked, is then rapidly extended to all sections of the left and so to the whole Labour movement.

### *The Classic Warning Signals*

ALL these symptoms are classic. And all these symptoms are now present in Britain. Indeed, it is incidentally worth noting, as a straw in the wind, that already within three weeks of the suppression of the *Daily Worker*, supposedly on the grounds of the denunciation of Communism as opposed to imperialist war, the Means Test debate in Parliament on February 13 has seen the Labour Front Bench applying the same technique of vituperation, previously reserved for Communists, against Left Labour M.P.'s who had sought in every way to demarcate themselves from the Communists, and whose only crime was to make a stand for the most elementary working-class interests on the basis of Labour Conference decisions and an unfulfilled Tory pledge, and who now find themselves denounced, in the same way as the Communists, as "wreckers" and "saboteurs." The wheel moves quickly.

### *Is Britain "Different" ?*

THERE is, therefore, on the face of it, a basis for raising sharply the issue, not as a rhetorical denunciation, but as an objective measurement of facts, that the same process which we have witnessed in country after country of Europe over twenty years, ending in the destruction of the working-class movement and democracy, in Italy, in Germany, in Austria, and most recently in France, has definitely begun here. Must it end the same way? The same blind, complacent apologetic cries that "it can't happen here," that "Britain is different," that there is "no parallel" with what happened in other countries, that the workers can "trust their leaders in the Government," that the measures are "temporary," that there are adequate "safeguards," are being repeated once again. If the course is the same, and is allowed to continue the same, only incurable self-deluders will assume that the outcome can be different. Must the same deadly history be repeated once again, this time in the classic country of capitalism with the oldest working-class movement? This is the most urgent question now before the working-class and democratic movement. Every other question—including the question of the defence of the freedom of the British people from foreign aggression, in the name of which the "sacrifices" are demanded—is bound up with the answer to this question.

### *Fascism and Imperialism*

IN order to judge this situation, it is necessary first to ask an elementary question. What is Fascism, "Hitlerism," or Nazism ("National Socialism")? These terms, as we have remarked above, have been worn so threadbare of late with use and misuse, including by politicians who have been in the past the greatest friends and admirers of their systems and now present themselves as champions for their overthrow, that their real meaning has been lost to sight. Fascism has become in common usage either a general term of abuse for every form of violence or reaction, or a general descriptive term for German and Italian imperialism, against which Anglo-American imperialism is conducting a conflict for the domination of the world. Hence the "fight against Fascism" is presented as identical with the fight of Anglo-American imperialism against German-Italian-Japanese imperialism. This is the little jugglery which leads to all the confusion and actually opens the way to the introduction of Fascism in the name of the fight against it. Such a confusion is only possible when the real meaning of Fascism is lost to sight. Fascism, in place of being seen in class terms, is identified with a specific imperialism, and behind the cover of this substitution the class enemy is able to deliver his offensive. In the

name of the "fight against Fascism" democracy is destroyed. In the name of "national defence" the leaders of the four hundred millions of India who seek to rid their country of the invader are thrown into prison by the apostles of "national defence."

### *What is "Totalitarianism" ?*

**F**ASCISM is not a general descriptive term for every form of violence and reaction. Tsarism was a violent and reactionary autocracy which suppressed the working-class movement and Liberalism; but Tsarism was not Fascism. British rule in India is a reactionary autocratic system which has provided many models of technique for subsequent imitation by Fascism, so much so that even a Gandhi can write not without reason that "the vast majority of the people of India make no distinction between Nazism and the double autocracy that rules India" (letter to the Viceroy of September 30, 1940). But British rule in India is not the same as Fascism. Still less useful are the descriptions of Fascism which define it in abstract terms of "dictatorship" and "totalitarianism" without class content. Socialism is an extremely "totalitarian" system in the sense of being a unified social and political organisation which completely finishes with the old Liberal free-trade "freedom of enterprise," "freedom of property," "freedom of contract," "freedom" to live on the labour of others, "freedom" to poison, deceive and rob the people, and all the rest of the individualist anarchy which conceals the real enslavement of the mass of the population. But Socialism is characterised by the abolition of classes, so that the so-called "totalitarian" system is only the expression of the social ownership and organisation of the means of production, which, by compelling all to participate equally in the labour of society, and enabling all to share in its fruits on the basis of their labour (finally, in Communist society, on the basis of needs alone), ends the exploitation of one section of society by another and provides the indispensable foundation for universal free and equal citizenship, for real freedom.

### *The Class Character of Fascism*

**F**ASCISM, on the other hand, seeks to combine the formally "unified" system of organisation, the replacement of Liberal capitalism by State monopolist control and organisation, with the maintenance of classes—the division of the population into the property-owning class, the owners of the big monopolist trusts, who live by their ownership, and the propertyless wage workers, the majority of the population (together with the fast-dwindling body of small proprietors, who are reduced, under State control and regulation, to conditions of enforced dependence on the trusts more and more comparable to the conditions of the wage-workers, or are directly displaced and reduced to the proletariat), who labour for the profit of the owning class. This attempted combination of the unified State organisation of economy and society (caricaturing Socialism—hence its self-description as "national Socialism" and all the "Socialist" claptrap) with the maintenance of classes is the essence of Fascism, from which all else follows. For of course the formally "unified" system, since it is based on capitalism, does not in fact resolve the contradictions of capitalism, but only seeks violently to overcome them. In the field of economy, the "unification" conceals the domination of the most powerful sections of monopoly capital over the weaker sections and over small property. In the social field the formal "abolition of the class struggle," since it is incapable of resolving the class struggle, which can only be resolved by the abolition of classes, finds its necessary expression in the attempted violent suppression of

the class struggle, that is, in the attempted violent suppression of the independent working-class movement and the destruction of democratic rights which provide the field for the legal organisation of the working class.

### *Main Characteristics of Fascism*

**F**ASCISM is thus a form of dictatorship of monopoly capital. It is a form appearing at a late stage in monopoly capitalist development, during the general crisis of capitalism, after the international working-class revolution has opened, when all the economic, social and political contradictions of capitalism have become extremely acute. It is a form characteristic of a high degree of monopoly capitalist concentration, and greatly accelerates further concentration. It is a form characteristic of an advanced stage of the class struggle, when the old Liberal (or, in the post-war form, Social Democratic) methods of deception of the workers and attempted conciliation of the class struggle no longer prove adequate for the maintenance of capitalist supremacy, and it becomes necessary for the capitalist dictatorship to proceed to open repressive measures and terrorist methods. Fascism promotes in the economic field the close fusion of the State machine with the banks and trusts. Corresponding to this narrowed economic dictatorship, Fascism re-moulds the forms of the State to reflect the open political domination of the ruling oligarchy, restricts the sphere of Parliament, and seeks to subject all forms of political expression and organisation to unified governmental control. To curb the class struggle, Fascism abolishes the right to strike, establishes state regulation of wages, prices and labour conditions, and replaces independent working-class organisation by the "corporate system" or "labour front," the joint organisation of the workers, employers and state representatives under the control of the dictatorship of monopoly capital. For propaganda purposes all these measures are covered up under social demagoguery about the "new type of (German, British, French, etc.) socialism," "social security," "community of interests," "national unity," "abolition of capitalist exploitation," "restriction of profits," "replacement of the profit motive by social service," "recognition of the rights of labour," etc.—all which is contrasted with the sinister disruptive aims of "Marxism" or "Communism," which is presented as the enemy underlying every form of opposition or independent expression. Corresponding to the expansionist imperialist aims of the dominant sections of monopoly capital, Fascism organises the entire society for war, and freely uses the mask of "national patriotism" (alongside "religion" and "spiritual regeneration") to conceal its aims, together with denunciations of "treachery" against all opposing forces. All these characteristics of Fascism are characteristics of the open, violent dictatorship of the most powerful, reactionary, chauvinist sections of monopoly capital.

### *Fascism and Inter-Imperialist Antagonisms*

**O**NCE this class character of Fascism is clearly and firmly understood, the fantastic and suicidal folly of seeing Fascism as the peculiar invention and system of one or another imperialist country, instead of as the common tendency towards which all monopoly capital increasingly drives, with varying degrees of success according to the relations of class forces within each country, becomes manifest. The driving force towards Fascism within each imperialist country is the ruling monopoly capitalist oligarchy within that country, and, in particular, the most reactionary sections of that oligarchy. The defence of the people against Fascism depends on the strength and independence of the working-class front, in unity with all democratic forces against monopoly capital.



The conditions of this struggle interact with the inter-imperialist antagonisms, which are always used by the monopoly capitalist rulers within each country for the furtherance of their internal aims; the whole experience of the years since 1931 has furnished especially rich lessons of this interaction.

### *How German Fascism Used Versailles*

**T**HUS in Germany Fascism utilised the national subjection and Versailles enslavement of the German people, consequent on the military defeat of 1918, for the purposes of its demagogic propaganda, in order to assist its advent to power; just as to-day it uses the threats of a super-Versailles and proclamations of war on the German people and dismemberment of Germany broadcast by a Duff-Cooper or a Vansittart in order to strengthen its hold and maintain "morale" (the "morale" of the sheep in the slaughterhouse). The military defeat of the German people in 1918 was the counterpart of the German Revolution, the reflection of the revolt of the German people against the imperialist war, which overthrew Kaiserism and came near to winning Socialism, but was robbed of its fruits, first, because of the role of German Social Democracy, and second, because the British and French working-class movements were then still too backward to be capable of fulfilling their part alongside the German and Russian workers and uniting with them to establish a Socialist Europe—hence all these tears and the more difficult problems we have to meet to-day.

### *Why Fascism Conquered in Germany*

**G**ERMAN Fascism utilised the military defeat of 1918 and the Versailles enslavement in order to discredit the German revolution and facilitate its own advent to power by promising to remedy the just national grievances of the German people and by falsely attributing all their social and economic sufferings to Versailles. But German Fascism did not come to power because of the military defeat of 1918 and Versailles. The immediate sequel of the military defeat saw the heaviest blows to German reaction that it has ever known. German Fascism came to power because of the disruption of the German working class by Social Democracy and its policy of coalition with capitalism and war on Communism. German Fascism came to power because the united revolutionary working-class leadership was lacking to show the German people the true path from their miseries by the overthrow of capitalism, and to lead the way to liberation from Versailles by the establishment of a strong Socialist Germany in unity with Socialist Russia, capable of throwing off the bonds of Versailles by its own strength and by the same international working-class solidarity which Socialist Russia had evoked, instead of through the path of a bloody war of revenge for new annexationist bandit aims only capable of bringing new sufferings for the German people. German Fascism came to power because Social Democracy in the final crisis refused the united working-class front and preferred the path of unity behind the Conservative leader, Hindenburg, who placed Hitler in power.

### *The Question of a New Versailles*

**S**IMILARLY with regard to the menace of a new Versailles. It is true that it would be a disaster for the German people to be overrun and dismembered and subjected to a new and even more terrible Versailles as threatened by their imperialist enemies, at whose hands they have already had such bitter experience of the consequences of defeat. But it does not follow from this that their path

forward lies through national unity behind Hitler as the only way to avert such a disaster. This would be only to seal their own enslavement. Their path forward lies still through their own independent class struggle and action to secure their own liberation, and then to strive, on the basis of international working-class solidarity and the international unity of the peoples, to secure that the peace which follows the war shall not be a new Versailles, but a just and democratic peace of the peoples.

### *The Lesson of France*

**I**N France Fascism utilised the war from the outset, in order to strike down democracy, suppress the Communist press and the Communist Party, disfranchise and imprison the working-class deputies, dissolve the democratically elected municipal councils, disrupt the trade unions and gag the press; and then utilised the subsequent military defeat, which it had systematically prepared and deliberately provoked and assisted, in order to complete its transformation of the State. But French Fascism did not come to power because of the military defeat. On the contrary, the military defeat followed the betrayal of French democracy to Fascism. The complete mystification of the French situation in the British press, and the attempt to reduce it to the dimensions of a tenth-rate scandalous chronicle or Oppenheim international spy romance, follows precisely because the real class basis of French Fascism cannot be admitted, and the Pétains, Weygands and Laval have to be treated as individual "Quislings" or hireling agents of a foreign conqueror, instead of as the political representatives of the decisive sections of the French bourgeoisie, pursuing a continuous, consistent and long-prepared line of policy, primarily devoted to the maintenance of their immediate class interests in a critical situation (the imperialist position of France having been already wrecked by British policy before the war began, and the internal situation taking precedence), and in foreign policy pursuing an anti-British "Pan-European" Franco-German collaborationist line which has always existed as a powerful alternative trend in French foreign policy. It is worth recalling at this moment, when so much nonsense is being written about "the collapse of France," as if it were a bolt from the blue arising only after the outbreak of war, that already in November, 1938, immediately following Munich, we wrote in these Notes that the effect of Munich and the policy of Daladier meant that "*the French bourgeoisie, to save their class power, have committed suicide as a Great Power.*"

### *Why Fascism Conquered in France*

**T**HE Pétains, Weygands, Bonnets, Laval, Chiappes and Ybarnegarays, the Comité des Forges, the Editors of the *Temps* and the *Journal* and the "great press," together with the infamous anti-democratic gutter press, the *Gringoires* and the like, and the network of organisations throughout the country, conspired continuously for years before this war broke out. It was years ago that Marshal Lyautey, the "hero" of France alongside Pétain and Weygand, declared openly that he felt infinitely closer to Hitler and his class allies in Germany than to French democracy. French Fascism, with the clamorous support, connivance and protection of official France and the "great press," of all the decisive sections of the French bourgeoisie with the exception of a handful of individual representatives, attempted coup after coup in the years preceding the war, through the Stavisky scandal, the 1934 march on Parliament, the Cagoulards, etc. But so long as the united working-class front and the People's Front was maintained, they were powerless to carry out their aims. Only when the united working-class front was broken by the betrayal of the

French "Socialist" Party, only when the French "Socialists," the Blums and Serols, united in a Coalition Government with French Conservatism and Fascism, with the Pétains and Ybarnegarays, to outlaw Communism, smash the trade unions and pass the Death Decree against Communists through a "Socialist" Minister of Justice, only then was French democracy broken. Only then the "hour" of French Fascism came, and French Fascism was able to come to power; and eighty-five French "Socialist" deputies completed their apostasy by voting for the Vichy "Constitution" of Pétain.

### *The Warning Lessons for Britain*

**T**O the question: How does Fascism come to power? How are great and powerful working-class movements destroyed? the answer is therefore clear, and two decades of experience are now behind it. Fascism comes to power only when working class unity is broken, when the independent class line of fight is abandoned, when the superior strength of the workers is sapped and destroyed by the agents of reaction at the head of the working-class organisations. Fascism comes to power when the reactionary leaders of the Labour movement, in the name of "national unity," combine in Coalition Governments with the leaders of Conservatism. Fascism comes to power when the reactionary leaders of the Labour movement unite with the leaders of Conservatism to destroy democracy, to suppress working-class and democratic rights, to disrupt the trade unions, to turn the fire on Communism, to suppress the Communist press. This is the lesson of history. Let the British working-class movement learn the lesson before it is too late.

### *Morrison Repeats the French and German Path*

**H**ERBERT MORRISON in his speech in Parliament on January 28 defending the suppression of the *Daily Worker* claimed that he had "learned the lessons" of Germany and France: "I have learned it, and I am applying in this office the lessons I have learned." This instrument of the present Government should endeavour to get someone to acquaint him with the elementary facts before he opens his mouth. He claims that the lesson he has learned is that in "the unfortunate German Republic under the Weimar Constitution decision in government was lacking and weak"; therefore Fascism conquered. In other words, the German Republic and German Social Democracy was "weak"—in dealing with Fascism; therefore he, Morrison, will be "strong"—in dealing with Communism. Unfortunately this is only "learning the lesson" parrot-fashion, to repeat exactly what they did. This is the exact boast that German Social Democracy made. German Social Democracy was very "strong"—in dealing with the Communists. It armed the White Guards to butcher them and hounded on the murder of Liebknecht and Luxembourg. That was infamous; but it was hardly "weak" and "lacking in decision." The German Social Democratic Government prohibited the May Day demonstration in 1929 and shot the workers who dared to demonstrate on May Day. No "weakness" there. Certainly German Social Democracy was at pains to release its Fascist prisoners. So has Herbert Morrison released the great part of the Fascist internees whom Anderson had arrested. As late as 1932 the Prussian Social Democratic Government of Braun and Severing boasted in a Memorandum to Hindenburg, to prove their "strong hand" in dealing with the left, that it could "prove with police statistics" that its police action "has caused more deaths on the left than on the right." The outcome of this kind of "strength" of Social Democracy is Germany to-day.

### *The Fate of the Wels and Leiparts*

UNDOUBTEDLY the German Social Democratic leadership thought that they would always be safe, so long as they faithfully served monopoly capital and dealt sternly with Communism. This may also be the secret dream of Transport House, which is confident that the "new order" in Britain can only operate through the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress as the necessary machinery for disciplining the workers and defeating Communism. But the examples of Germany and France are not encouraging even to these ignominious ambitions. Even after Hitler came to power, the German Social Democratic leaders vowed their loyalty to Hitler. German Social Democracy joined in the unanimous vote of confidence in the Hitler Government's resolution in the Reichstag in May, 1933. The German Trade Union Federation leadership offered Hitler the benefit of their unrivalled experience in dealing with labour problems. In vain. "The Leiparts and the Grassmanns," declared Dr. Ley with regard to the Trade Union Federation leadership, "may profess their devotion to Hitler; but they are better in prison." They were "better in prison," not because there was any doubt of their utter spinelessness and servility, but because, however much they might swear their devotion, they could not answer for the base of their organisations, where the honest class-conscious workers were; the organisations had to be broken, and therefore even the spineless leaders, vowing devotion to Fascism, were "better in prison." The Trades Union Congress General Council might ponder this lesson with advantage.

### *The Fate of Blum*

BLUM also proudly boasted to the Bournemouth Labour Party Conference in May, 1940, amid the enthusiastic plaudits of the right-wing bureaucrats, how "strong" he had been in dealing with the Communists, in expelling the elected Communist deputies from Parliament and imposing the Death Decree for Communists; "in a democracy there must be limits and restrictions"; these were necessary measures of a united people for dealing with "traitors" and "agents of a foreign Power." And the real traitors, who, from their places of power, even while he spoke the words, were planning their coup? They were his honoured colleagues whom he was assisting to jail the honest leaders of the working class and break up the working-class organisations. No hint of a danger from the Right in this "epoch-making" speech of the leader of French "Socialism" on May 15, 1940. Scarcely had he completed his speech and returned to France than he found himself in a Fascist prison placed under guard by those same honoured colleagues whom he had so proudly assisted to smash the working-class movement. From the inside of a Fascist prison Blum can contemplate the brilliant outcome of his statesmanship from those so few short years ago when he was at the head of the triumphant People's Front which held France at its feet. Perhaps even Attlee and Morrison might contemplate this lesson with advantage.

### *Britain's Slower Development*

WHAT then, is the conclusion that we should draw to judge the present situation in Britain in the light of this analysis? The crisis of democracy which has developed successively in the other leading countries of Europe has come last to Britain. Undoubtedly the rate of development has been—up to the present—slower, more ponderous, more leisurely, less far-reaching in this country. The light-hearted might jump to the conclusion that this means that the issues will never reach the same intensity here as in the Continental

countries, that Britain will continue to go its own gait, that Britain is basically "different," that there will be no "extremes," that the reactionary offensive will take milder forms and prove no more than a temporary wartime restriction of rights, as it is officially presented, to be rapidly followed by a restoration of the old order. But a more careful consideration of the reasons for this relatively slower development will leave little encouragement for these self-consoling delusions. There are solid reasons for this slower development, which is characteristic of the whole period of the capitalist decline in Britain. So, too, Britain long remained the citadel of free trade, the apparent anomaly and exception, in a world in which the general law of the tariff policy of imperialism had been long established for every other imperialist country. But the citadel fell in 1931.

### *Reasons in British Capitalist Structure*

THE structure of British capitalism took on its characteristic shape in the Liberal free trade nineteenth century era, the era of Britain's industrial world monopoly. The very conditions which led to the priority of British capitalism in this era led to its backwardness in the succeeding imperialist era. In technique and rate of development it fell behind its younger rivals. It was long observed that the process of trustification, and the fusion of banking with industry, advanced more slowly in Britain than in Germany or America. This slower development was associated with and reflected the special conditions of British capitalism, its privileged world position, its entrenched colonial monopoly and the consequent accumulated reserves at its disposal. This privileged world position had its political reflection in the Liberal system and tradition; the greater wealth and world spoliation made possible the first development here of the labour aristocracy, the basis of Liberal-Labourism; it provided the resources for the technique of concessions, of conciliating, buying off and corrupting the Labour movement rather than allowing the class struggle to reach to extremes. Hence the theories of exceptionalism of British politics, of British parliamentarianism, of the British Labour movement. Indeed, it was long argued that socialism and a political Labour movement, such as had developed on the Continent, could never develop in Britain. But this illusion was smashed already with the twentieth century.

### *British Capitalism and the Nazi Model*

THIS traditional character of the old British capitalism has vanished never to return. Its basis was steadily weakened since the beginning of the twentieth century, still more markedly since the war of 1914, and most rapidly since the world economic crisis. The trustification of British capitalism is now extremely high, and comparable to that of Germany or the United States. The present war has acted as a forcing house to hasten forward the development of state-organised monopoly capitalism, with the Industrial and Raw Material Controllers appointed from the largest combines in charge of every sphere. "The City has now taken over Whitehall. . . The Bank of England is probably more powerful in the financial affairs of this country than it has been for years." (*Evening Standard*, July 3, 1940.) The Lyttleton Plan for the compulsory concentration of industry and closing down of "non-essential" firms and plants is the latest stage of this process. The political forms of state emergency dictatorship and government by decree have now been fully established within the shell of inoperative democracy, suspended elections, the coalition of official parties and a unified and controlled press.

### *Industrial Conscription*

**A**t the same time the basis for concessions to the workers has been weakened. It was already heavily weakened since the world economic crisis. Under war conditions it has been replaced by the demand for a ruthless reduction of standards to meet the requirements of war economy and the restriction of consumption and imports. An adverse balance of trade of £660 million and a prospective budget deficit of £3,000 million leave little room for Liberalism. These economic requirements, at a time when the wartime demand for labour would normally place the highest bargaining power in the hands of the workers, make imperative in the eyes of monopoly capital the suspension of the free bargaining rights of the workers, the abolition of the right to strike, the increasing state regulation of wages and labour conditions, and the whole series of measures associated with industrial conscription; and, as the necessary counterpart of this, the smashing of all militant working-class activity and resistance, and the integration of trade union and labour organisation with capitalism and the State. Only the wilfully blind could fail to see how complete a transformation this means of the entire economic, social and political structure, in which, within the framework of continued monopoly capitalism, scarcely a stone is left standing of the old traditional Britain.

### *Post-War Plans*

**W**ARTIME monopoly capitalist organisation, economic and political, approximates more and more towards Fascist economic and political organisation, and indeed the spokesmen of capitalism now begin to refer without concealment, especially in the financial press, to the Nazi system as the model. But this transformation, although accelerated at a hurricane pace by the war, only continues and extends tendencies already implicit in pre-war capitalism, and is seen by the capitalists themselves in their wishful thinking as preparing the blue-print of organisation for post-war capitalism. As Bevin stated at Glasgow in December: "If we are driven to imitate any part of the Nazi regime, in the name of greater efficiency, it is going to be difficult to cut it out afterwards." The whole line of recent utterances; the stressing of the necessity for the continuance of the economic controls after the war; the speculations on "national unity" and on "agreed programme" after the war: all indicate how the current of ruling-class thought and of its Labour reflection see more and more consciously in the present forms of organisation, not merely a temporary wartime emergency, but the preparation of the forms of organisation of post-war capitalism, alike in relation to the stormy social and political conditions which are seen as following the war and in relation to the needs of the intensified economic war which is equally seen as following the war. Only the most complacent can therefore be contented to see in the present intensified dictatorship, emergency measures, destruction of democratic liberties and trade union rights, and increasing sacrifices demanded of the workers, merely a temporary wartime exigency, which can be turned on and off like a tap, and not the expression of the driving forces of modern monopoly capitalism, involving the whole future of the working class and democracy in this country.

### *"National Unity" After the War*

**O**F especial significance in this connection is the discussion of "national unity" after the war. Churchill's statement on January 22 was explicit, with regard to the tasks of the Minister of Reconstruction: first, that "it is not his task to make a new world . . . it is not his duty to set up a new order"

(*i.e.*, the reconstruction must be capitalist reconstruction, not socialist); and second, that for this purpose (*i.e.*, to save capitalism and defeat any post-war revolutionary surge or demand for socialism) there must be "the same kind of national unity" as in wartime for a minimum period of "about three years." This is the official Government programme, and has not been repudiated. On the contrary, it has been confirmed by every subsequent utterance. Since this proclamation blew into thin air all the pipe-dreams spread in the earlier period of the war by the Labour chauvinists about a wonderful new socialist world to arise miraculously out of the filth and mess of the war and the repudiation of the class struggle, it became necessary for the Labour Party leaders and the *Daily Herald* to issue statement after statement to appease the alarm of their followers. But every statement only confirmed the original programme.

### *The "Agreed Programme"*

**T**HUS Attlee at Oxford on January 24, after serving out the soothing syrup in the vaguest form ("After the war we shall again have those healthy differences of opinion which are the lifeblood of democracy; we shall have governments of various complexions facing Oppositions, as in the past"), proceeded to declare that "We have to find the greatest common measure of agreement between all parties, and there is much common ground. . . . I cannot prophesy what will happen after the war, but we are working out a basis on which we can agree." The Chairman of the Labour Party, James Walker, declared in an interview in *Reynolds' News* on February 9 that "I think it is premature at the moment to express dogmatic opinion either for or against collaboration after the war, because the question will be decided very largely by what is done during the war and on the circumstances prevailing when the war is finished." And the Political Correspondent of the *Daily Herald* explained on January 28 that "Nobody wants another khaki election. It is generally agreed that an interval is necessary in which the present Executive can steer us . . . There is obviously sufficient agreement to permit far-reaching planning for the technical job of swinging a war machine over to the tasks of peace." Thus an election after the war is to be delayed: that is, the present obsolete Parliament, with an overwhelming Tory majority, is to be continued: "the present Executive," that is, a dominantly Tory Government with Labour collaboration, is to continue in office; on this basis, of a Tory Government and Parliament, an "agreed programme," that is, a programme acceptable to a Tory majority, is to be carried out; this is to continue for "about three years" after the war. No wonder there is a crisis in the membership of the Labour Party.

### *Bevin's "New Order"*

**N**O less significant is the character of the talk about a "new order" in Britain now being put out by the major Labour Party and trade union leadership (as opposed to the small fry, who still peddle the old socialist promises). The new terminology takes on more and more the familiar Nazi shape, until almost every phrase can be paralleled from the Nazi programme and propaganda. Bevin declares that the aim must be "social security" and that profit must no longer be "the only motive" for production:—

"My war aims are summed up in the phrase: The motive of our life should be social security. . . . We have been taught that the only motive for production and enterprise is profit. . . . If profit

can be the only motive the natural corollary is economic disorder. . . . I suggest that at the end of this war, and indeed during the war, we accept Social Security as the main motive of all our national life. This does not mean that all profits or surpluses should be wiped out, but it does mean that the whole of your economy, finance, organisation, science and everything would be directed together to social security, not for a small middle class, or for those who may be mere possessors of property, but for the community as a whole. . . . What I am horrified at is a blind revolution." (Bevin at the Rotarian Club, November 20, 1940.)

To emphasise the protection of "profits" and "possessors of property" in the new Labour conception the *Daily Herald* added an editorial:—

"Mr. Bevin said last week that social security and not profit should be the motive of our national life.

"And Mr. Bevin is sharply rebuked by a Tory newspaper. He is told in a patronising tone that profit must go on playing a part in our lives, and that social security is already one of the objectives of political effort. But in that case why quarrel with Mr. Bevin, who admitted that all profit could not be abolished?" (*Daily Herald*, November 21, 1940.)

And Hamilton Fyfe pointed the moral:—

"Bevin has put himself at the head of all who, disregarding political parties, are uniting in the demand that we should make this reply to Hitler and show the world we have done with the Old Order and with profit as the only motive." (*Reynolds' News*, November 25, 1940.)

Actually, of course, these are the very words in which Hitler describes his "New Order" (rejection of profit as "the only motive").

### *Saving Capitalism*

CITRINE is bolder. In an interview to the *Daily Herald* he declares:—

"It will be a better Britain after this war. I cannot see, for instance, the railways going back to private ownership." (Sir Walter Citrine, in the *Daily Herald*, December 27, 1940.)

He further expresses the view that there ought not to be "masses of unemployed" any more (only the necessary industrial reserve army required by capitalism). Here Bevin is in agreement with him, when he declared in his broadcast on October 26, 1940, that "we will never tolerate again the masses of unemployed." This was in some contradiction to his previous recommendation of war savings to prepare for post-war unemployment:—

"When the boys are demobilised and the cannon have ceased to roar, there is bound to be a period while we are readjusting and re-equipping all our industries for peace-time production. What a grand thing it will be if all the little extras you get now you put on one side, and in the piping times of peace, when the enemies are defeated, you use it to maintain your standard of living. Unemployment pay won't be enough of itself, and these nest-eggs will be invaluable." (Bevin, broadcast, January 11, 1940.)



### *The Blessing of the Millionaires*

**G**REENWOOD is against "abject poverty" (a normal decent poverty is obviously suitable for the masses):—

"Britain after the war will not tolerate the tragic spectacle of abject poverty." (Greenwood, Empire broadcast, January, 1941.)

Morrison, inspired to daring thoughts at a Dorchester Hotel lunch, is in favour of the rich being as kind and sacrificing for the benefit of the poor after the war as they have been during the war; and his millionaire audience eagerly assented:—

"Morrison, elaborating the Bevin speech to the Rotarians, urged that the sacrifices of wartime, made willingly by the rich, should continue when peace came.

"It is significant that Lord Nuffield said to Lord Nathan, the Chairman, afterwards: 'I agree with every word of the speech—and I am a millionaire.'" (*Daily Herald*, December 12, 1940.)

### *Citrine Reassures the American Millionaires*

**L**EST there should still be any Rip Van Winkles who believe that the Labour Party stands theoretically for Socialism, Citrine has been at pains to reassure the timid American millionaires:—

"He deprecated as fantastic the idea of a great post-war social revolution in Great Britain, because the working classes were now getting so many of their objectives achieved." (Sir Walter Citrine at Toronto, *Times*, January 25, 1941.)

And again:—

"Sir Walter Citrine's tour has been a great success. . . . In particular, it has had a reassuring effect on those who feared that Britain was turning or would turn into a Socialistic State." (*Daily Telegraph*, January 29, 1941.)

The parody of Nazism from start to finish is so complete as to justify the bitterest jibe of all. That jibe was spoken by Hitler in his speech in January when he accused the Labour Party of stealing the Nazi programme. Hitler should know.

### *The Crisis is Serious*

**T**AKE the sum-total of these declarations (a sample spoonful from an ocean) of the "new order" in Britain as now seen and held up to the workers by the principal and most representative leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions. These declarations would be comic if they were not the declarations of men who hold in their hands the control, the almost despotic control, of the mass organisations of a great working-class movement, a movement with a long history and world responsibilities in the oldest country of capitalism, a movement stemming from Chartism, from the Tolpuddle martyrs, from men who gave their lives for the emancipation of the working class, and now faced with the greatest crisis in its history—for these organisations to be turned into a mockery for Tory masters and made the stepping-stones for the Fascist enslavement of the workers. Take these declarations and combine them into a theory, a system, a perspective—as clear as daylight and as shameless as treason. Combine that theory with their practice: the suppression of the only paper built by the pennies of the workers in order to give free

play for the lie-sheets of the millionaires ; the abolition of the right to strike ; the sledge-hammer blows of discipline against every militant working-class activity and organisation ; the flaunting wining and dining with the profiteers and protection of their profits. Yes ; the crisis of the working-class movement at the present point is serious ; the offensive of monopoly capital is serious. It is urgently necessary that every socialist and trade unionist should realise clearly what is happening and make a stand before it is too late, if they are not to see their organisations handed over to a capitalist totalitarian system, their rights and freedom destroyed in the name of the battle for freedom, and the "new order" finally blossoming in its full glory as the British version of "national socialism."

### *What Must Be Done*

A STAND needs to be made for the most elementary working-class and democratic rights as the condition for all further advance : for the independence of the working class and the effective democratic functioning of its organisations ; for the raising of the ban on the *Daily Worker* ; for the protection of trade union rights and conditions in all the present measures of industrial organisation ; for the protection of the rights of the shop stewards and their effective functioning against the various forms of open or veiled victimisation and interference. This stand needs to be combined with the fight for the protection of the standards of the people ; for the winning of the wage demands which have been put forward in the various industries ; and for a democratic organisation of food supplies in the interests of the working people in place of the present inequitable distribution in the interests of the big food combines and wealthy consumers. The argument that any stand for the rights and interests of the people against enslavement to the monopolists and profiteers is contrary to the needs of the defence of the people against foreign domination is a false argument which needs once and for all to be nailed to the counter and smashed ; for this is the type of argument by which Fascism establishes its domination. It is obvious that there is no one in the working-class or democratic movement who wishes to see the domination of the people of this country by foreign conquest ; only the most stupid, deliberate and malicious liars put forward this calumny. But the first condition for the real defence of the people is a powerful, united and independent working-class movement. Only a powerful, united and independent working-class movement, rallying and leading all sections of the people, can defend the people against all their enemies, equally against home Fascism or foreign enslavement. The Programme of the People's Convention has shown the way forward for the people of this country.

In this stand for elementary democratic rights against the capitalist totalitarian offensive the co-operation of the widest front of all working-class and democratic representatives and organisations, irrespective of their views on other issues, of all sections of the people, is the essential condition for victory. The present grave hour calls for the fullest and most active co-operation of all workers and democrats who are prepared to make a stand for the defence of the rights and interests of the people against the onslaught of the reactionary propertied and privileged interests. The victory of this onslaught is not inevitable. The struggle is still in front. On the outcome of this struggle much depends.

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