

SOCIALIST APPEAL

ORGAN OF WORKERS INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE
FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

VOL. 5, No. 15.

MID-JULY, 1943.

TWOPENCE.

DURHAM MINERS STRIKE THREE PITS OUT

BY ANN KEEN

1,300 MINERS HAVE BEEN OUT ON STRIKE OFF AND ON FOR THE LAST THREE WEEKS FROM THE BUSTY, OSWALD AND THOMAS PITS. NEGOTIATIONS HAD BEEN GOING ON FOR SOME TIME BEFORE THE WHITSUN HOLIDAYS FOR INCREASES IN THE PUTTERS' SCORE PRICES.

SECOND FRONT WILL NOT END FASCISM

THE INVASION OF SICILY MARKS A NEW STAGE IN THE WAR. IT BEGINS THE OFFENSIVE OF ANGLO-AMERICAN IMPERIALISM AGAINST THEIR GERMAN-ITALIAN RIVALS TO DESTROY THEIR HEGEMONY IN EUROPE AND CRIPPLE THEM AS COMPETITORS ON THE WORLD MARKET.

BUT AS THE CAPITALIST PRESS IS CONSTANTLY WARNING, AND AS CHURCHILL ADMITTED IN HIS LAST SPEECH, VERY HEAVY SLAUGHTER WOULD HAVE TO BE ENDURED BY THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN SOLDIERS, BEFORE THE ANGLO-AMERICAN IMPERIALISTS WILL BE ENABLED TO GAIN A MASTERY OF THE EUROPEAN CONTINENT.

Both the German Nazis and the Italian Fascists are making desperate back-to-the-wall appeals to the population of Italy and Germany to resist to the utmost as the prospect of defeat looms ahead. With the victories and heroic resistance of the Soviet Union against the onslaught of the German imperialists, the German masses have become completely disillusioned with the Nazis. Ten years of fascism with all the miseries that it has meant to the German people, have left their mark on the minds of the German workers and soldiers. In the case of Italy the position is, if anything, even more developed. After 20 years of fascism, the full rottenness, corruption and degeneracy of Mussolini's regime has been laid bare for all to see.

of the regime, bitter and stronger opposition has been mounting with growing vigour and strength. And in Occupied Europe itself from the Ukraine to France, the hatred of the invader has been growing more intense and only waits for the slightest relaxation of the grip of the Nazis to burst forth in an uprising with the force of a pent-up volcano.

But statements of the Anglo-American Imperialist Governments show that they do not have and do not expect to get the support of the peoples of either Italy or Germany. In fact they expect invasion would see the Italians lining up behind Mussolini in a desperate attempt at resistance. If the Allies were fighting a real war against fascism they could win and obtain the support of the Axis workers and soldiers who have been groaning under the yoke of totalitarian oppression.

The aim of Anglo-American imperialism is not at all to rid Europe of the horror of fascism but to cripple their rivals and replace Axis domination and occupation of Europe by that of Britain and America. Far from seeing the rumbles of revolt in Germany and Italy as a factor to be utilised to the fullest extent as a means of securing the downfall of fascism by the efforts of the German and Italian workers themselves, the British and American capitalists merely regard this as a means to the military overthrow of their rivals, and even look upon it

The masses in both Italy and Germany are in a state of ferment and growing opposition towards the regimes which have brought nothing but disaster, misery and suffering to them. Particularly in Italy, strikes and minor uprisings are taking place among the workers, peasants and soldiers. In turn, Milan and other areas mass strikes have taken place. In the towns of the Ruhr, among the sailors at Kiel and the soldiers in the army, and also in the Italian navy and army, mutinies have been reported in the British press. The Nazi and Fascist gangsters have replied to this nascent rebellion with reprisals, executions and redoubled repressions. But despite the savage and merciless terror against all opponents

with fear and alarm because of the consequences it would have. Far from appealing to the German and Italian workers to overthrow their oppressors and those responsible for organising and financing the fascists—the monopoly capitalists of Italy and Germany—they are refusing to differentiate between the workers and the fascists, between the slaves and the slave-owners. Far from preparing to strike at the roots of fascism, by striking at the ruling class, they are preparing to prop up and support as quislings the

Continued on page 4.

1,500 R.O.F. WORKERS STILL OUT

The strike of 1,500 at — Yorks R.O.F. reported in the last issue of the "Socialist Appeal," and which commenced on June 18th, is still in progress. A delegate from the strikers, Bro. Hepple, whose victimisation was the cause of the dispute, addressed a meeting of London militants on Sunday 11th July at the Holborn Hall. He reported that the R.O.F. management still refused to re-instate him pending an inquiry....In view of this a further meeting of the workers decided unanimously to continue the strike.

Apparently the R.O.F. authorities are not very much concerned about the production that is wasted as long as the militant is out of the factory.

The London meeting expressed its solidarity with the strikers and a collection was made towards the strike fund. The workers in this factory are determined to continue to resist the attack upon their rights and not to return to work until the victimised comrade has been reinstated. In view of the length of time the workers have been out—more than four weeks at the time of writing—funds are greatly needed.

On the Tuesday, after the Monday holiday the men went to work but decided to call a lightning strike in order to hasten the proceedings for increases. As a result of this there was a complete stoppage in the pits.

Immediately the men went out on strike Mr. Tunny and Mr. Gilliland of the Durham Miners Association visited Hedley Hall, Craghead, and addressed the strikers. The men were persuaded, on the plea of immediate negotiations to return to work the following day.

In order to placate the miners, a meeting was called on the day of the men's return to work consisting of lodge officials, representatives of the putters, and the colliery manager. The manager offered 8d. a score for the Oswald and Thomas Pits and 3d. a score at the Busty Pit along with other small concessions. This offer was considered unsatisfactory and was unanimously turned down by the men and the lodge officials. The men came out on strike again.

On the day the men came out for the second time that week a meeting was held and addressed by two officials of the Ministry of Fuel and Power. A decision to return to work was once again arrived at on the promise of immediate arbitration. At this meeting an urgency committee was elected and the meeting took place at the Coal Trade Hall in Newcastle on the 20th June.

Present at the meeting were 3 representatives of the owners and Mr. Hornsby, Regional Controller of the Ministry of Fuel and Power. From the D.M.A. were Mr. James Gilliland, Mr. E. Moore and Mr. Joe Swan, together with some local branch officials. Some representatives of the putters were also present.

At this meeting the same offer was made to the putters as had previously been made by the manager. A dead-

lock was reached at the meeting and the lodge officials and putters representative did not agree on one single point with the employers and returned to Craghead to report to the miners. Their decision was unanimously endorsed by the miners.

Subsequently it was discovered that two of the D.M.A. officials had signed an agreement accepting the miserable increase offered by the owners. Immediately the miners struck work again, and a meeting was called for Sunday 4th to challenge the legality of the agreement, and the right of the D.M.A. officials to adopt the dictatorial powers of signing an agreement when the "urgency committee" was not unanimous in its decision. The men claim that constitutionally it is not within the powers of the D.M.A. agents to sign any agreement, whilst acting on an "urgency committee," unless that committee is unanimous in its decision to accept or reject offers and claims.

Mr. Hornsby was persuaded to attend this meeting and the D.M.A. officials were also asked to be present. These latter gentlemen, however, did not see fit to put in an appearance.

In the face of very strong solidarity from the miners Mr. Hornsby attempted to split their ranks by threatening to have them called up into the Forces. The reaction to this threat was that the miners became more determined than ever and voted unanimously to continue strike action. The following morning 86 of the young miners volunteered for the forces, some even volunteering for submarine service. Ten of these lads were accepted as rear gunners, the rest being rejected.

The miners think that the D.M.A. officials in signing the agreement have prevented their case from going to arbitration which they believe would have been the next step towards realising their claims. The agents of the D.M.A. have refused to open discussions with the Craghead miners about their actions in signing the agreement, until the miners return to the pits.

The miners decided that at this stage they have no alternative but to return to work on Monday 12th July on the same basis upon which they first walked out. They are solid in their resolve to carry on a relentless struggle against the powers assumed by their leaders. They still retain the perspective of taking their case to a tribunal, after they have dealt with the D.M.A. agents.

The miners have come to realise by cruel experience that these officials with life-time jobs no longer represent their interests. They have realised the need to rout them out of their cushy jobs and re-elect fresh militants as Agents of the D.M.A. In this struggle they will try to gain the support of every lodge in the country, to determine their rights on an "urgency committee" and to revise the present status of D.M.A. officials. The miners feel that the only guarantee against a repetition of the present state of affairs is to re-elect their agents once in every two or three years instead of allowing them to hold life-time jobs.

One lesson has been learned. Miners cannot go into action against the boss for their rights if their leaders sabotage their efforts and refuse to answer for, or discuss their misdeeds with the miners. The workers still retain hope in arbitration tribunals, but from these tribunals they will get no more concessions than were granted by the manager. Only by independent class action can they succeed in winning their demands.

APOLOGY

With reference to the article on the Transport Strike in Sheffield published in the May issue of the "Socialist Appeal" it has been drawn to our notice by Mr. Scott of the T.&G.W.U. that certain inaccuracies were contained therein.

The statement to Mr. Scott in the Sheffield "Star" that the strike would fizzle out was corrected on the following day. Unfortunately, we have not seen the disclaimer and in view of the "Star's" withdrawal, we also withdraw and apologise.

We have also to point out that our statement that Mr. Scott had resigned was due to a misunderstanding. It is not the case that Mr. Scott resigned, and we unreservedly withdraw our statement and apologise to him for having made it.

WHO HELPS HITLER?

A Reply to 'Hitler's Agents Exposed'

Daily Worker

By JOCK HASTON

NO. 2001 SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1939 FINAL EDITION

PEACE OFFER TO EUROPE

Soviet-German Declaration On War In West

NEW EASTERN FRONTIERS FIXED

AN OFFER OF IMMEDIATE PEACE TO THE WESTERN WORLD—ON THE BASIS OF THE PEACE ALREADY ESTABLISHED IN EAST EUROPE—WAS MADE YESTERDAY BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNION OF SOCIALIST SOVIET REPUBLICS.

With this offer, the German Government associated itself. In a joint communique the two Governments yesterday declared that—
"The German Government and the Government of the U.S.S.R. having, by a Treaty signed today, finally settled the questions arising from the dissolution of the Polish State, and thereby created a firm foundation for a lasting peace in Eastern Europe, they in mutual agreement express the opinion that the liquidation of the present war between Germany on the one hand and Great Britain and France on the other would meet the interests of all nations.
"Therefore both Governments will direct their common efforts, if necessary, in accordance with their Treaty Powers, in order to attain this aim as early as possible.

STALIN AND HITLER ISSUED JOINT PEACE STATEMENT AFTER HITLER'S RAPE OF POLAND.

The Communist Party has recently published a pamphlet entitled 'Hitler's Agents Exposed' from the pen of one John Mahon. This pamphlet consists of a 20 page attack against the "Socialist Appeal" and runs true to the frame-up pattern and technique which is such a familiar feature of Stalinist "literature" directed against the revolutionary socialists.

This pamphlet is significant only because it demonstrates a new phase in the history of the British Stalinist relations with the Trotskyist movement; because it emphasises the advances being made by the "Socialist Appeal" not only in the ranks of the organised and advanced workers in the Labour and trade union movement—but also in the ranks of the British Stalinist Party itself.

In the past the British C.P. could ignore the programme of the

Trotskyists. The Mahons simply churned out a series of lies and slanders. By this means they hoped to frighten workers away from our tendency and isolate us in the labour movement. Eighteen months ago they flooded the factories with thousands of leaflets "Clear Out Hitler's Agents." Thousands more local leaflets were printed by District Committees and local branches of the Party based on the central leaflet. This was followed by W. Wainwright's pamphlet of the same name, which was so full of slanders and historical falsifications that even the Stalinist workers could not stomach it. When the "Socialist Appeal" published an offer of £10 to any Communist Party member who could prove that the so-called quotations from the Trotskyist press were not forgeries, or that there were less than five lies in any single page of Wainwright's pamphlet, nobody collected the £10. Wainwright's pamphlet acted as a boomerang.

Today the situation is different. The Stalinist workers are being faced with the Trotskyist Programme. Hundreds of C.P. members are becoming critical of the party line and find themselves in agreement with the Trotskyist programme in one aspect or another. Hence the need for this pamphlet which purports to "examine" the programme of the "Socialist Appeal" and claims to give an "objective" answer.

Mahon sets out to "prove" that the policy of the "Socialist Appeal" coincides with the policy of Hitler and indeed that our policy is directed by the Goebbels radio station "Workers Challenge."

This filthy slander runs true to the familiar technique of all reaction: the Mensheviks and "Black Hundreds" (fascists) in Russia during the revolution of 1917 accused Lenin and Trotsky of being agents of the foreign

TYNE WELDERS STRIKE SUPPORTED

21 Welders have been out on strike now for 7 weeks at a Tyne shipyard.

A few months ago a new foreman, Mr. Fellows, was brought on to the job and his methods of working made it impossible for the workers on piece work to realise even the normal hourly rate (known as the lieu rate) paid to the Welders which is 2/4d. an hour.

When the difference between the wages they received on piece work and the wages they could have earned on time work became so marked that at times skilled journey men walked out with £3 15s. to £4 while training dilutees were receiving £4 9s., the workers began to protest strongly. They sent deputation after deputation to the management demanding that they be paid for the number of hours they had worked at the lieu rate.

The management refused to entertain this demand and referred the workers to the Employers Federation. The workers pointed out to the manager that under the E.W.O. they were entitled to at least 47 hours at 2/4d. which is £5 9. 8d. a week. But the management's reply each time was to refer the men to the Employers Federation.

The workers felt that the way they were being treated was a direct contravention of the E.W.O. That the boss was entirely in the wrong, and that their only possible action was to file a strike notice. This they did through one of the workers who was not the Shop Steward. Immediately

the lodging allowance payable to some of the workers was stopped, showing quite plainly that the notice had been received. On the technical ground however that the Shop Steward had not filed the strike notice and that "officially" they knew of no strike the management induced the National Service Officer to prefer charges against the workers under the E.W.O.

This is a test case and involves not only the workers of the Tyneside but all workers working in establishments scheduled under the E.W.O. in Great Britain.

These 21 welders are leading the struggle against the reactionary Employers Federation. The magnificent response the strikers have and are receiving in answer to their appeal for financial assistance, in spite of the fact that rumours have been put about, to the effect that the workers have gone back to work, demonstrates the solidarity and support that they are getting from the workers in all the shipyards on the Tyneside.

Among the strikers are discharged soldiers who took part in the retreat from Dunkirk. These workers are experiencing already the "gratitude" of the bosses for having fought for their interests. Throughout the yard there is a general distrust of the management caused by the fact that the yard had previously been closed down and

Continued on page 2.

Continued on Back page.