

INSIDE BRITAIN'S WAR FACTORIES

The production conferences in the country's workshops. New spirit and efficiency. How the traitors and tricksters are being inspired by certain Washington senators.

London (by cable).

BY THE time you read this, delegates to the British Trades Union Congress will be preparing to leave for Edinburgh to attend their annual congress, which may prove of immediate and historic importance. The congress opens September 1, and it opens after six weeks of such an upheaval in British factories and in the trade union world as has not been seen for many years. As NEW MASSES readers know, for weeks I have been drawing attention to the fact that great and crucial developments of vital importance to the anti-Hitler war effort have been in progress in British factories. And in my opinion it is so important a fact that the American public should be fully informed about it.

This week, for the first time, this fact has broken into the British national press in a big way. The occasion was a sensational "production conference" in London, called by the National Council of Shop Stewards of Engineering and Allied Trades. As I have repeatedly pointed out in these dispatches, it is the shop stewards who have been taking the lead in the tremendous new movement within British war industry. As a matter of fact, the London conference was only one of many "production conferences" which have been either held or are about to be held in many industrial areas. In London itself there had already been a somewhat similar though rather smaller shop stewards' conference called by the former editorial board of the *London Daily Worker*. At the most recent conference 200 delegates from basic arms factories were present, representing approximately 200,000 key engineers. If you wanted to see the men who really make the wheels go around in Britain, here they were. If you wanted to see the muscles, as it were, of Britain's war effort, you had only to look around. And the striking thing is—coming simultaneously with Churchill's return and the resultant "activation" in high places to which I referred last week—that for the first time the press has been compelled to recognize this as something new and something big—very big. The *Financial News*, the leading City organ owned by Brendan Bracken, Minister of Information, reported on this conference as follows:

"The fact that a changed atmosphere has begun to sweep through the factories and workshops of the country in recent weeks is insufficiently appreciated, and it is to be hoped that the government departments concerned will take steps to obtain a full report of this and other evidences of the change. The entry into the war of Russia, with her large and effective land army, has brought about a transformation of military strategy. It is now becoming equally clear that the new situation demands a similar change in industrial strategy. The prospect of early victory held

The Grain the Nazis Wanted

Moscow (by cable).

ACCORDING to even the most moderate estimates, the state and collective farms of the USSR have grown more than 131,000,000 tons of grain this year. It may already be stated with every confidence that the high yields of 1937 will be left far behind. Testifying to this, are excellent yields that have been reported from the Kuban, Kazakhstan, and Stalingrad regions, the Voronezh region, and the Ukraine, Altai, and many other districts. The winter grain crops are equally good in the Moscow district and the Altai region. Corn crops are exceptionally good this year. High yields of sugar beets may be expected in most beet-growing districts. Potatoes are also maturing rapidly.

From an agricultural point of view, this year will be remembered for the peculiar course taken by the weather during the spring and early summer. Cold weather prevailed over a considerable part of the USSR not only during April, but also during May and the first part of June. Only early sowing regions—Central Asia, the North Caucasus, and the southern Ukraine—were able to complete planting before the advent of cold weather which retarded the development of crops even in these parts. Sowing was delayed in all other parts of the Soviet Union for ten, fifteen, and even twenty days.

Grave doubts prevailed in May and June regarding the ripening of the summer crops. Hot weather in July, however, did much to improve the situation. As a result, harvesting proceeded considerably earlier than formerly anticipated.

Grain harvesting is steadily moving northward. The first days of August saw reaping begin in many districts north of the Black Earth zone. Grain was already being gathered at the end of last month in the Gomel district, in Byelo-Russia, the Kuibyshev, Ckalov, and Gorky regions, in the Volga area, and in the Tatar republic. In the North it is reported that harvesting has begun in both the northern and southern parts of the Ivanovo region. A start on harvesting winter wheat was made in the Moscow region on August 4, on the fields of the Timiryazev Agricultural Academy. The rye harvesting began on August 3 in several regions of Altai in the East. Grain from the new crop is already being delivered to the state elevators. Rye is also being harvested in some parts along the Pacific coast.

It is gratifying to note that difficulties arising from wartime conditions have been successfully overcome in the countryside. Excellent crops are being harvested rapidly and without loss. Women are replacing tractor drivers and combine operators who left for the front. In the Stalingrad region alone, over 10,000 more women collective farmers have already learned to operate these machines. The urban population of the countryside is doing its bit to bring in the harvest. Workers, students, and housewives are working shoulder to shoulder with collective farmers and state farm workers.

Fieldwork is in progress from sunrise to sunset. As a result of this, heroic harvesting has been completed in many southern districts of the country much earlier than last year. All grain had been gathered in the Zaporozhye region, the southern Ukraine, and in Kuban, by August first. Crimea completed reaping two weeks earlier than last year. Determined to bring in the harvest in the shortest possible time, the collective farmers are employing all available equipment and power. The simplest machines and implements appear on fields everywhere side by side with combines. Crops reaped by ordinary machines are being bound immediately in sheaves, and threshers are working day and night. It should not be thought, however, that combines are not being used to the utmost. The proportion of combine harvesting has been particularly high, for example, in southern districts.

The task for the current autumn is to complete the harvest as rapidly and with as little loss as possible. All crops grown on the country's fields are being gathered in and stored in good time. The speedy, efficient harvesting of this year's excellent crops will undoubtedly play no small part in the destruction of the fascist invader.

I. V. YAKUSHKIN.

out by the possibility of a war against Hitler on two fronts seems to have wrought a transformation in the mood of the personnel of the industrial front. Speaker after speaker at the conference," the *Financial News* goes on to say, "made clear the workers' readiness to forego privileges, provided they were only given the opportunity, through more efficient workshop organization, to turn out more arms. Among the concrete proposals for contributions which the workers themselves could directly make to the war effort were: establishing a minimum basis of overtime working for every employee, collective discipline against bad timekeeping, and the elimination of inefficient workers, especially in key posts. . . . The whole conference concentrated on the vital issue of how to secure higher output particularly through more efficient management. . . . It was quite clear that the new spirit glowed most brightly in shops where trade unionism was strongest. . . . It would appear that a low level of trade union organization is now a positive deterrent to increased production."

One speaker at the conference, head of shop stewards in one of the biggest London war factories, said: "Today marks the end of an era, and the opening up of a new epoch. This meeting may be historic. On our deliberations here may depend the future of the British people. The lead for getting increased production has got to come from us, the men and women who are active in the workshops. The drive for production, decent food, adequate transport, and housing facilities, is our responsibility and privilege. This gathering will start something that will sweep the imagination of every worker in the country, surprise the employers and the government by its strength, and create hope again in the hearts of the people. It will help America to understand our determination and to give us her greater assistance."

Another shop steward in an equally key position declared: "When we come up against criminal mismanagement that reduces production by two-thirds and throws idle those skilled hands, we are angry. But anger is not enough. We must insist upon taking our rightful place as craftsmen alongside the employers in the management of industry. We know that we can double production."

Now those quotations pretty well sum up the new background against which the Trades Union Congress will be meeting in Edinburgh September 1. Whether the congress will fully and energetically reflect that great new spirit in workshops remains to be seen. It is a fact that the new demands for increased production, demands for better cooperation between workers and management, are coming above all from the most strongly organized factories. It is equally true that because these are factories wherein Communists are most active in the leadership of workers, there have been in the past somewhat uneasy relations between these shop stewards and some of the "old guard" of the Trades Union Congress and Transport

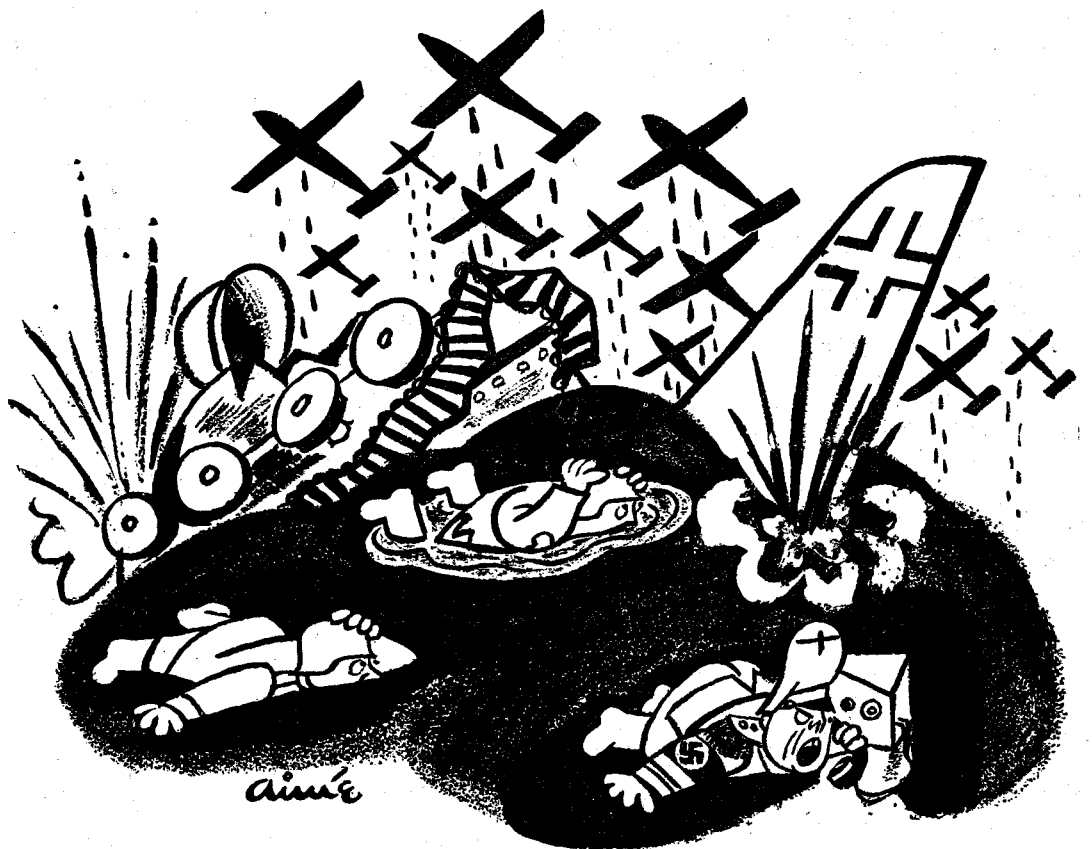
House. The thing that will be seen soon is just how fast the new spirit, the new urgency, the new realization of the immense dangers and equally immense possibilities ahead, can inspire the whole trade union movement. Sooner or later it will happen. But time is vital. The question is how long will it take? Part of the answer to that question will be heard at Edinburgh. It is clear that if the Edinburgh congress were really conducted in the spirit of the National Council of Shop Stewards Conference, the whole British war effort in the factories would take almost immediately a bound forward—a bound equivalent to a major military victory with incalculable effects upon the whole balance of the war.

MORE IMMEDIATELY it has to be understood that these developments are vital. Everything else depends upon them. No second front can be sustained, not even the British end of the new common front in Iran, without them. And of course the longer it takes to get production speeded up here, the longer it will take to batter down the opposition of the "Do nothing" and "Don't help Stalin" saboteurs of the people's war effort. Make no mistake. The extreme Right is active here. Only this week the magazine *Truth*, whose editor has just been publicly lashed in a British court of justice for anti-Semitism, and which has or had until very recently, fairly close connections with the central office of

the Conservative Party, has come out with a veiled appeal for a negotiated peace as an alternative to the maximum use of British forces in support of the Soviet Union.

It must be remarked that every traitor and trickster in the country is eagerly utilizing statements of certain senators in Washington who would rather see Hitler in Kiev and London, than support Roosevelt and Churchill and assist the Red Army. We see here the preposterous paradox of the men from the Middlewest and other grass roots of America who believe themselves the champions of the common people against plutocracy, now unconsciously allied with the most virulently reactionary aristocrats, landowners, and stock exchange swindlers in Europe, entangled in the political maneuvers of the great finance trust of Berlin, Essen, and Paris, plus their underground adherents in London. Churchill's speech is a guarantee that he and those who are with him—and there are mighty millions of them here—will stand against the British Quislings and all who seek to give them aid and comfort. And the shop stewards' conference is the guarantee that the Quislings will be discomfited. But speed and still more speed is still the central theme. When Herbert Morrison, British Home Secretary, himself admits that we are still not catching up fully on industrial production in German-occupied Europe, the gravity and the urgency of the situation must surely be clear to all.

CLAUDE COCKBURN.



"But listen, mein Fuehrer, we are on the road to Moscow!"

THE MEANING OF IRAN

Why the Anglo-Soviet armies moved. The extent of Nazi penetration. Significance of Molotov's note. The policy of Riza Shah. An editorial article.

THE joint Anglo-Soviet occupation of Iran is in the first place a terrific kick in the teeth for Adolph Hitler. It drives home the fact that he is now dealing with strong, tough-minded, realistic opponents, men who know from hard experience that if you mollycoddle the fascists, they invariably step on your face. The occupation of Iran represents the first concrete fulfillment of the Anglo-Soviet alliance of July 12. It was that alliance which restored the initiative to the anti-fascist world; last week's action in the Middle East highlights the fact that in the ruthless struggle which faces us, the anti-fascist forces are increasingly gaining the initiative whereas the fascist forces are losing it. Hitler is more and more compelled to face issues and situations created for him; he is less and less able, as in the bitter years gone by, to force the anti-fascist world on the defensive. Of course, the Soviets never relinquished the initiative in their own dealings with Hitler, and the secret of their foreign policy lay precisely in its firmness. But the point is that the USSR no longer stands alone.

The issue in Iran is simple, and ought not cause any of the confusion that accompanied, for example, the events in Finland a year and a half ago. Molotov's note to the Iranian minister, a classic for its straightforwardness and painstaking detail, tells the whole story. He names the names of German agents, who have made their way into "important official posts in over fifty Iranian departments" . . . to sow "unrest and disorders in Iran" . . . and "provoke Iran against the USSR." He gives the facts and dates of numerous attempts to smuggle arms into Baku, of espionage in Azerbaidjan, all of which "in the crudest and grossest manner trampled on the elementary requirements of respect for the sovereignty of Iran" and converted it into the scene of "preparations for a military attack on the USSR." When, after protests, the Iranian government declined to do anything in the matter, Britain and the Soviet Union took it upon themselves to do so.

Most impressive of all in Molotov's declaration is his emphasis on the historic friendship of the USSR and Iran. He gives all the details of how the Soviet government, from the outset, nullified the czarist concessions, returned control of telegraph and railway lines, the docks and banks belonging to czarist nationals to the Iranian government. Molotov emphasizes moreover that by Article Six of the Soviet-Persian non-aggression pact, the USSR always had the right "to take the necessary military measures in the interests of self-defense" should a "third party" endeavor to "convert the territory of Persia into a base for military hostilities against Russia." And if any assurances on this score were needed,

both the British and Soviet notes underline that the Allied troops would withdraw from Iran when the danger had passed.

A GLANCE at the map will show the strategic importance of Iran, bordering on India and the Indian Ocean on the one hand, and the Caspian and Soviet Caucasus on the other—with Turkey and the entire Arab littoral to the West. Obviously, the Nazi offensive into the Ukraine, as well as German negotiations with Turkey, underscore the growing possibility that Hitler might establish himself in between the Soviet oil fields and the wealthy oil reserves on Iranian soil. Hitler could gain a real pincer from the northern and southern shores of the Black Sea, and he might be able to fortify himself for a long war with the oil of Iraq, which produced some 27,000,000 barrels in 1940, and the oil of Iran, whose production exceeded 60,000,000 barrels. The proverbial ounce of prevention would save many pounds—and millions of rubles, not to mention lives later on. In the immediate and larger strategy of the war, it was a vital move.

Since February 1921, Iran has been governed by the strong hand of Riza Shah Pahlavi, once an officer in the czarist Cossack armies, who has emulated Kemal Ataturk to the west in his devotion to Iranian nationalism. Riza Shah, despite his own anti-Bolshevism, depended on the friendship of the USSR in trade and other matters in the early twenties, especially in his effort to get the British armed forces, which had occupied most of Persia, off his soil. He carried through many important reforms, guarded the sovereignty of his country jealously.

The British were a major factor in Iranian life, but the Germans had never reconciled themselves to the loss of their position in this strategic country. With the resurgence of German capitalism under Hitler, its businessmen became extremely active, and whereas in 1934 they had been supplying a third of Iran's imports, by 1940 they were supplying more than fifty percent. German bankers had acted as godfathers at the inauguration of the Iranian national bank; German instructors dominated the agricultural college at Teheran. German businessmen were able to offer their goods at lower prices than their competitors, the difference being paid by Hitler from the onerous tax burden on the German masses. The *Lufthansa* planes, with swastika under wing, made regular flights from Berlin to Athens to Rhodes to Bagdad, and stopped off at Teheran on the way to the Afghan capital, Kabul. And significantly enough, the chairman of the *Lufthansa* was Herr von Strauss, the same gentleman who headed the notorious Berlin-to-Bagdad rail-

way project thirty-five years ago. He became the vice president of the Reichstag under Hitler, and typifies the continuity of imperialist interest in Wilhelm's and Hitler's Reich.

But as in the Balkans, trade facilitated Nazi political strategy. And with every turbine, railway car, dredging machine, and textile loom Nazi agents disguised as technicians and engineers arrived at Iran. Some London figures place their number at 25,000, which is probably too high; the Iranian minister in Washington says that there were only six or seven hundred German nationals in Iran which is ridiculously low. There must have been thousands, worming their way into strategic administrative and economic positions, an alarming phenomenon in a country of some 15,000,000 tribesmen, peasants, artisans. Some two weeks ago, reports came of an attempted putsch against the Shah, inspired by Nazi agents in connivance with several disgruntled military chieftains. After repeated remonstrance, the USSR and Britain agreed that the Shah was balancing himself all too cleverly among opposing forces. These were no times for rope tricks.

WHAT ARE the implications and consequences of this development? At this writing, it is impossible to say whether there will be substantial resistance by the Iranian armies, what the Shah will do, or what the Nazis can accomplish by sabotage and intrigue. Irrespective of the military problems involved, some things are clear:

First, a physical contact has at last been created between Soviet and British armed forces. It is true of course that the British action appears qualified by the fact that they are defending their empire proper, and have not yet attacked Hitler on the continent where his energies would be most directly diverted. It has been suggested that this is a "common rear" rather than a "common front." Nevertheless, this association of British and Soviet troops is symbolic and of enduring importance.

Second, the railway line from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian now becomes a vital connecting artery of Soviet-British communications. In an early editorial, *NEW MASSES* pointed out that this rail line was perhaps the most feasible way of getting supplies from the British empire to the fighting fronts. Evidently President Roosevelt's decision to permit the direct flight of American planes via Africa to the Near East fits in with an Anglo-American general plan to get supplies up the Persian railway—American supplies as well as British.

Third, Hitler has now been blocked from the remaining sources of oil, unless he wishes to violate Turkish neutrality and divert huge

(Continued on page 21)