IT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED TO YOU

by Guy Aldred & John Wynn

Britain's 'Guantanamo Bay'
– a contemporary wartime account of how British citizens were arrested and imprisoned without trial, under 'Defence Regulation 18B'

It might

have happened

to you

An edited reprint of the original 1943 document published by Guy Aldred and John Wynn.

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Dedicated to all the victims of witch-hunts and mass hysteria, especially those who suffered from government servants "just carrying out orders from above". A special dedication to the victims of 18B and to the late John Wynn who compiled the original material under very difficult conditions and the late Guy Aldred –one of the few prepared to take an unpopular stand in wartime and oppose in-justice at great personal cost even though the victims were at the opposite end of the political spectrum to himself.

Foreword to the 2000 edition.

In 1841 Charles MacKay published a book titled "Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds". It is one of the few books published almost 160 years ago that is still in print today. It covers financial mania such as The South Sea Bubble and Tulip mania in Holland. More importantly it delves into political mania such as the Crusades and the Witch mania of the 16th-17th centuries. In the latter many thousands of innocent people were arrested on suspicion of witchcraft. Many arrests resulted from denunciations by neighbours and acquaintances. Once arrested, the accused had little chance of acquittal due to the prevailing mass hysteria and were usually judicially murdered by the most appalling and cruel methods. Many thousands perished in this early holocaust.

How little human nature has changed was illustrated in the early 1990's when a senior French official admitted that his government still retained several vaults full of letters, sent to the Gestapo by French citizens during World War II. The letters denounced friends and neighbours as resistance members or as being hostile to the German regime. They also resulted in the torture and death of many innocent people. The official remarked that publication of these archives would result in half the French popul-ation being tried for crimes against the other half.

I first came across "It might have happened to you" in the early 60's. I had a particular interest because my own father had been one of the victims. Even as a youngster I was appalled by the maltreatment of Britain's

own citizens during a war for freedom. Again it is suspected that many victims were denoun-ced by acquaintances with personal scores to settle. It is noteworthy that 55 years after the war ended the British government, which has had total access to all German archives since 1945, has been unable to publish a single document justifying its behaviour.

At the time of publication the full extent of the German atrocities in the Holocaust was unknown. In comparison British activities, while quite appalling by any civilized standards, were relatively mild. The excuse of the greater German evil has probably been one of the main reasons why no official British contrition has ever been expressed. However despite the appalling behaviour of the Japanese forces in Asia the US government has belatedly apolo-gized and paid compensation to its citizens of Japanese origin interned under similar legislation.

This publication does destroy the official British view that only the Germans had been evil enough to develop concentration camps. Many years later in South Africa I visited the very first of that evil mani-festation of the 20th. Century. In an eerie precursor of central Europe in the Second World War special groups of British troops roamed the countryside rounding up the local inhabitants and loading them into cattle trucks for transportation to the concentration camps. In this case Afrikaner women and children were kept in such appalling conditions that over 26,000 died (about 5% of the entire Afrikaner population). It created a hatred of Britain among the Afrikaner population that found at least part of its' expression in the policy of Apartheid.

Some time later I attended university in Glasgow and resided close by Guy Aldred. I always meant to look him up but the natural events of a student's life – wine, women, song and occasional studies took most of my time until I resolved to make the effort. Opening my paper that morning I discovered Guy had died the previous evening.

I kept IMHHTY for many years until it disappeared in one my moves across Africa. A piece of history was lost or so I thought. In the early 90's I made contact with one of the former detainees who provided me with a photocopy and I kept it until computer technology had developed far enough to allow scan-ning of the, by this time, yellowing and faded copy.

This version contains the original document with my minor edits. I have converted currency to modern equivalents, updated some of the more stilted and complex English, popular in the early part of the cen-tury and omitted a few parts that lack relevance in today's context. In all other respects it is unchanged.

Overall it gives a depressing picture of incompetence and vindictiveness that has become depressingly common in the twentieth century. Perhaps at the cusp of the new millennium we may hope that such events are now behind us.

Readers who are interested in a more dispassionate and scholarly overview of these events that benefits from historical hindsight should read the excellent treatment by Professor Brian Simpson, entitled “In the Highest Degree Odious” published by Oxford University Press.

Wm. G. Eaton

For the technically minded I used Xerox Textbridge to scan the original document and process the text into Word 2000.

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Investigation of Regulation 18B; its origin, relation to the constitution and operation; with first hand accounts of the suffering involved by those who have been arrested and interned under it. An enquiry made by J. Wynn, as a result of his own experience. Edited and arranged, without prejudice or malice by Guy A. Aldred. Printed and published at the Strickland Press, 104 George Street, Glasgow.

Publisher's Foreword And Apology.

This is a factual work and I wish to make my introduction as brief as possible. I have no sympathy with Fascism. I have no sympathy with the ideals, programmes, or policies of those who call themselves Fascist, or others with kindred views who call themselves by other names. That fact is well known. My record of Socialist and Freethought struggle since I joined the Freethought movement sometime in 1904 and the Socialist movement a year later evidence it. I have not recanted any of my Anarchist, Socialist or Freethought views. Those who helped me to produce this enquiry are Anarchists and Socialists also as their consistent record of Anarchist and Anti-Fascist activity proves. As an Anarchist I was appalled when I read of the treatment meted out to Anarchists in the United States in 1886-87; of the Anarchist persecution in Europe during the far from gay nineties; and of the treatment of Sacco and Vanzetti. I opposed all persecution and anti-constitutional conduct when the victims were Anarchists or Social-ists. I am opposed to it when the victims are alleged reactionaries. Our fore-fathers suffered in vain if rights of accusation, trial, of public indictment and public hearing are to be swept aside by fear and prejudice.

The question of 18B internments is one of principle touching the fundamental rights of the citizen to liberty unless convicted after a proper trial by a lawfully constituted tribunal, acting according to law. The principle is clear, notwithstanding the fact that some of the people concerned would mete out similar treatment to Socialists if they had the upper hand. This attitude of some of the victims renders the position difficult. It causes one to be watchful about any statements they may make. But this watchfulness becomes knavery and cowardice if one continues to accept the position of internment of people without charge or trial as a matter of course.

I do not know if all the statements made by the victims are true. I say that, without question, every statement ought to be investigated. I have no doubt of the fundamental wrong. But I am prepared to raise my voice alone if necessary, as I would do if the victims were Anarchists or Socialists. The Right of the Citizen is a social right that has no relation to the bias of opinion. It is inherent in human association and cannot be denied without harm to all mankind and without invasion of the sound civil principle of individual liberty.

I have practically no political sympathies with the individuals now interned, as individuals. Were they free I would be their opponent. But they are imprisoned without charge or trial. They are not tried because no charge can be brought against them. Many of them were soldiers and suffered in the first Great War, which I opposed, as did some members of His Majesty's Govern-ment. Under these circumstances, I dare to come forward, not as an apologist of their opinions, but as the defender of their civil rights. If they are traitors, indict them. If they are not traitors, release them. If they cannot be indicted, they ought to be restored to human liberty. In the name of John Hampden, Thomas Paine, Richard Carlile, and the host of my radical forbears, I demand their freedom.

By what right are our liberties denied and government by proscription accepted as the law of Britain?

Guy A. Aldred

Editor's Foreword.

I do not claim to be the author of this small literary effort and therefore should explain to the reader that it consists of a series of notes made by various persons interned (or detained) during the year 1942, which I made it my business to collect.

After cutting out extraneous matter and collating these notes I made it my personal business so far as its is in my power to verify to the final detail all the points raised and cases disclosed.

Some 20 or more subscribers have helped me in this work, many of whom are still interned under 18B whilst others are free, in the army or elsewhere but for fear of intimidation or retaliation have made me promise not to reveal their names until it is safe for it to be done.

I leave it, however, to the reader to ask himself if the facts ring true and if so will he allow the cry of those so unjustly treated by this regulation 18B to go unheard and unanswered.

"Vengeance or damages" is not asked for, but only "Justice" with what recompense rightly due.

As the notes were all made during 1942 some change in numbers and other circum-stances may have taken place by the time this appears in print. Some of the Chapters also revert into the present tense but it seemed a pity to destroy the verbatim wording of the individual writer by transposing to the past.

J. WYNN.

Coleshill, Birmingham,

May, 1943.

The English Constitution and 18B

(A Short Paper by a Distinguished University Professor, Philosopher and B.A. (Oxon)—himself still in detention.)

Dionysius the Areopagite wrote that—"He has set the bounds of nations according to His Angels." It is these Angels, each the genius of some race about to be unfolded, that are the founders of Constitutions.

Translated into terms of positive Sociology this means that a "Constitution" is something inherent in the character of the People or Nation—something anterior to the foundation of the State itself—-most emphatically not a matter of musty parchments, or of beggarly concessions wrested from reluctant tyrants and eventually codified by the theorists and politicians.

A "Constitution" therefore, is ratified or reduced to writing only when attempts have been made to sub-vert it. It is not erected by any legal fundament and it can be changed only when the Nationa1 Character degenerates and suffers alteration. "A man's Character is his fate" said Heraclitus of Ephesus. And this holds good also of a nation. So long as its character is main-tained inviolate, it is beyond the power of Prelate, Prince or Parliament, to destroy or to change its fundamental constitution. Of those ancient personal liberties irrevocably guaranteed by our British Constitution, which the King at his Coronation pledged himself to protect and to guard, it may therefore truly be asserted that they were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

As John Greenleaf Whittier, the American Quaker poet has shown

The rights and liberties affirmed by Magna Charta were deemed of such importance, in the XIVth Century, that the Bishops, twice a year, with tapers burning, and in their pontifical robes, pronounced in the presence of the King and the representatives of the Estates of England, the Greater Excommunication against the infringers of that instrument. The im-posing ceremony took place in the Great Hall of Westminster. A copy of the curse (anath-ema) as pronounced in 1253, declares that:

"By the authority of Almighty God and the Blessed Apostles and Martyrs and all the Saints in Heaven, all those who violate the English liberties, and secretly or openly, by deeds, word, or counsel, do make statutes, or observe them, being made against the liberties aforesaid, are accursed and sequestered from the Company of Heaven and the Sacraments of Holy Church."

Such is the doctrine of Constitutions traditional to this realm and people. And assuredly this is no mere matter of academic or historical interest for it provides the basis of current Conservative and Socialist, theory (alike rooted in the organic and corporate conceptions of Human Society) and it accords rigor-ously with the science of positive sociology. But with lettre de cachet contrivances, such as Regulation 18B it accords not at all.

Sir Henry Summer Maine, in his classic and authoritative work on Ancient Law, has pointed out that "the unit of an ancient society was the Family, of a modern society the individual." The Revolution of 1689 radically disrupted the age-long policy of this Realm; abolished the Royal Prerogative to issue and control the Nation's Exchequer; created the National Debt; put the people at the mercy of usurers and moneylenders; and set in motion that familiar political process which begins with Oligarchy and ends in Ochlocracy, or mob rule. Not at once, however, did the National Character manifest any profound deterioration - despite the transvaluation of

national values permanently achieved by Puritanism, finding triumphant expression in the despotic regime of Oliver Cromwell, an upstart dictator, who represented middle and trading class interests.

In the heyday of Whiggish Plutocracy, the political liberties of the people were reasserted and reinforced by Habeas Corpus and the Bill of Rights. Constant efforts were made under various ingenious pretexts, to circumvent and to frustrate these instruments, but they were defeated not by counter-revolution, but by the rude radicalism of artisans and labourers.

It was these elementary truths that prompted much conscien-tious opposition to the introduc-tion of large sections of Emergency Regulations. Some legislators found it hard to accept the belief that Parliament had authority to attack the fundamentals of the National Constitution at the supposed demand of a pass-ing moment in the life of the Nation, and a few more were sorely distressed by the wrong that might be wrought against innocent people by trespass against ancient Rights. In the great clamour of the time the voice of conscience was stilled or stilled; panic overcame reason and the Regulations passed into Law.

Now it was that the dissidents found balm for their minds in seeking ways to mitigate the two evils that had been effected. They pressed for safeguards against improper treatment of those who would be victimized by 18B. Much new support was also forthcoming for this new conscience move. An indication of some feeling in the House of Commons being given by Mr. D. M. Foot, when he said:

"We are imprisoning a man under this regulation, not because he has been tried and found guilty of any offence under the Law . . . . but simply because the Minister considers it desirable that he should be detained. I suppose that is what is meant by the posters, which tell us so frequently that our freedom is imperiled:" Hansard, October 1st, 1939).

The Legal Aspect of Regulation 18B

The foundation stone of British liberty was laid over seven hundred years ago when the momentous clauses safeguarding the freedom and property of every freeman in the country were set forth in the Great Charter. "No freeman," says Clause 7, " shall be taken or imprisoned or dispossessed of his tenement or be outlawed or exiled or any otherwise destroyed; nor will we go upon him nor send upon him unless by the lawful judgment of his peers or by the law of the land." Equally unequivocal is the following clause 8: "To none will we sell, to none will we deny or delay right or justice."

If the Home Secretary had, after careful consideration, determined to smash Clause 7 into as many frag-ments as possible under the sledgehammer of 18B, he could not have succeeded more completely. The detainee was in fact "taken" (frequently in handcuffs); was in fact "imprisoned" (in most eases more rigorously than the average convicted felon); was in fact "dispossessed of his tenement" (by the simple expedient of being denied earning power to maintain it); was in fact "exiled" (in the Isle of Man, at least one case, in Canada); and was "outlawed" (insofar as from first to last no legal aid was allowed him at his appearance before the Advisory Committee and finally his reputation, frequently his domestic happi-ness, his financial stability and his hope for a prosperous future was utterly "destroyed."

Equally shattering is the Home Secretary's destruction of Clause 8. In hundreds of cases men have begged to be tried by the law of the land, even in secret, before a legally consti-tuted court, with the "right" of facing their accusers, answering a specific charge, cross-examining witnesses, and knowing the evidence they were called upon to refute. All this was denied them. They were imprisoned weeks and months before receiving their reasons for detention, and before appearing in front of an Advisory Committee. Then, after further long delay, they were informed of the result of this hearing. From day to day, for months, and, in some cases, for years, men were kept in suspense to await justice.

Upon the foundation of the Great Charter, and in some respects even earlier was, throughout the years, built up the formidable edifice of English Common law, designed to safeguard the personal liberty of even the meanest

of the King's subjects. In the confirmatory charter Edward I directed that the funda-mental clauses of the Great Charter be allowed as the common law and "all judgments contrary to it were declared void."

Charles I after attempting to assert his pre-rogative of taxing without the consent of Parliament, and imprisoning without trial, was forced to consent to the Petition of Right, and, in the reign of his son, the Great Charter, elaborated by the Petition of Right, was perfected by the Habeas Corpus Act. At the revolution of 1688, and in the Act of Settlement, all these rights and, liberties were declared by the stat-ute to be "the birthright of the people of England according to the ancient doctrine of the common law."

Blackstone, our great jurist, writing 168 years ago, took particular pains to show how the fundamental articles of Magna Charta which could not be abrogated like ordinary statutes and had been perfected by the writ of Habeas Corpus, and by the Habeas Corpus Act of Charles II, the whole purpose of which, was in Blackstone's words—

"To ensure that no subject of England could be detained without cause or reason."

He continues with this pregnant observation

"Of great importance to the public is the preservation of this personal liberty; for if once it were left in the power of any magistrate to imprison arbitrarily whomever he or his officers thought proper (as in France it is daily practiced by the Crown) there would soon be an end to all other rights and immunities."

Elsewhere Blackstone exposes the fallacious argument put forward by some authorities that it is less dangerous to the commonweal to take away a man's life or property without accusation or trial than to imprison or intern him, maintaining that such gross and open acts of despotism must at once convey the alarm of tyranny throughout the kingdom. "But", says Blackstone, in words which today seem strangely prophetic— "confinement of the person by secretly hurrying him to gaol where his sufferings are un-known or forgotten, is a less public, less striking, and therefore a more dangerous engine of arbitrary government."

It must not be supposed that this formidable fortress designed to protect and safeguard the liberty of all citizens is a structure of rapid and haphazard growth. Throughout the centuries the foun-dation of Magna Charta has been built up brick by brick by generations of sound and conscien-tious lawyers. And the cement that binds together the stones of this 700 years old bulwark against arbitrary oppression of the subject, established out of blood, tears, toil, and sweat of men who put justice before all else, is the simple principle that no subject shall be imprisoned unless proved guilty of an offence."

By one stroke of panic legislation all this has been demolished: the foundation-stone of Magna Charta has been removed and the corner stones of the Bill of Rights and Habeas Corpus have crashed with it. All that now stands between any citizen and his secret and hurried incarceration in a gaol or prison camp is the incalculable whim of the Home Secretary.

The Defence Regulation 18B in Principle.

The Original Regulation 18B

The original Defence Regulation 18B (Statutory Rules and Orders, 1939, No. 978) was made by Order in Council on 1st September, 1939. It provided that certain restrictive orders, including a detention order, might be made against "any particular person" by the Secretary of State, " if satisfied" (for the defence of the realm, etc.) "that it is necessary so to do."

It also provided that a detained person might make objections to an advisory committee, appointed by the

Secretary of State himself, the advice of which the Secretary of State was not bound to accept, thus making him judge in his own cause.

Public apprehension was aroused by the arbitrary and far-reaching powers, which this Regulation gave to the Secretary of State (and, in practice, to unidentifiable officials). On 31st October 1939, a motion to annul the Order in Council was introduced in the House of Commons. In the debate, which followed, the Regulation was severely criticized from all quarters of the house. Only one Member besides Sir John Anderson, then Home Secretary defended it. Mr. Herbert Morrison, the present Home Secretary, in his attack upon the Regulations said (Parl. Debates, Vol. 352, cot. 1844):

"I am not going to use the argument usually put forward as a matter of courtesy that we do not believe the present Minister would be wicked but that we are afraid his successors might be. I think that a Minister is capable of being wicked when he has a body of regulations like this to administer."

Mr. Morrison ended his speech. By saying that he was "exceedingly apprehensive." That was the view of the Present Home Secretary. At the conclusion of the debate, Sir Samuel Hoare, then Lord Privy Seal, gave an assurance that amended Regulations would be introduced within two or three weeks, after general agreement had been reached with the critical Members. The House accepted this assurance, and the motion for the annulment of the Order in Council was with-drawn. This appeared to be a triumph of parliamentary rule over despotism.

The Amended Regulation 18B

The amended Regulation 18B was part of an Order made on 23rd. November, 1939 (S.R & 0.1939, No. 1681). Paragraph (1) of this amended Regulation is now as follows

"If the Secretary of State has reasonable cause to believe any person to be of hostile origin or asso-ciations or to have been recently concerned in acts prejudicial to the public safety or the defence of the realm or in the preparation or instigation of such acts and that by reason thereof it is necessary to exercise control over him, be may make an order against that person directing that he be detained."

An additional paragraph (1A), which was added by Order in Council on 22 May 1940 (S.R. & 0., 1940, No. 770), authorizes detention orders by the Secretary of State if he has reasonable cause to believe any person to be a member of, or to have furthered the objects of, any organisation as respects which the Secretary of State is satisfied that it comes into a category of dangerous organisations as specified in some detail in this paragraph of the Regulation.

Paragraphs (3), (4), (5) and (6) elaborate but do not materially alter the provisions for the appointment, by the Secretary of State himself, of an advisory committee, or com-mittees, to which persons detained may make representations, also for monthly reports to Parliament as to the number of persons dealt with under the Regulation and the action taken.

The Difference between the Regulations.

It is noticeable that the revised Regulation 18B unlike the original Regulation, does not authorize deten-tion orders against any particular person by the Secretary of State "if satisfied that it is necessary" for certain reasons. The revised Regulation states that the Secretary of State must have "reasonable cause to believe" certain specified facts concerning such person or that he has done certain specified things.

Why did Parliament agree?

It might appear to some that there is legally, a considerable difference between being " satisfied" as to some particular thing and having "reasonable cause to believe" some particular thing. No one can argue whether another person is, or is not, "satisfied " as to certain facts or necessities. The other person can maintain that he is satisfied, and that is the end of the matter. But it may seem to some that it is possible to argue whether another person has, or has not, "reasonable cause" to believe certain allegations, even if it is quite clear that the other person honestly believes himself to be reasonable. It is evident that Parliament took the view that the two ex-pressions meant something different. There was no motion that the revised Regulation 18B be annulled, although, apart from the alterations in the wording referred to, there was no important difference between the old and the new Regulations.

Actually the new Regulations were accepted without question, because, in the meantime, the war had gone badly for "the democracies," and the feeling of panic in the House and in the country had in-creased. The House of Commons was prepared to accept the Government's word that the alterations made in the wording were satisfactory. It was assumed that any person genuinely aggrieved by a detention order would be able to obtain ultimate redress by applying to the High Court for a writ of Habeas Corpus, which would lead to an investigation into the facts by an impar-tial and independent Court of Justice.

Habeas Corpus

In August, 1940 an application was made to a Divisional Court of the King's Bench for a writ of Habeas Corpus in respect of a British-born subject who has been detained under Defence Regulation 18B. In his affidavit, supporting this application, the individual denied the allegation, given as the reason for his detention. The affidavit of the Home Secretary, who opposed the issue of the writ, was to the effect that he had reasonable cause to believe the allegations because officials whom he deemed reliable had repor-ted them to him. Counsel for the Home Secretary urged that these officials must remain unidentified. The Court dismissed the application without hearing evidence about the facts in dispute; although the individual detained had been released by the Home Secretary shortly after the appeal had been entered.

After a sharp cleavage of opinion among the Law Lords engaged in the now famous, or infamous, Liversedge case it was unequivocally established that this whim of the Home Secre-tary cannot be questioned by any authority, and that he is answerable to no man for the reasonableness of his cause to believe that a detainee is an object of suspicion and therefore worthy of detention. Mr. Liversedge had issued a writ against Sir John Anderson, a former Home Secretary and Mr. Herbert Morrison, present Home Secretary, claiming a declaration that his detention was un-lawful and asking for damages for false imprisonment. His application for particulars of the grounds on which the Home Secretary believed him to be a person of hostile associations was refused, the court holding that "the onus does not lie on the Home Secretary to prove the facts which were considered to justify the order for detention."

It was against this refusal that Mr. Liversedge appealed to the Law Lords in September of 1941.

Lord Maugham, in conjunction with Lord MacMillan, Lord Wright and Lord Romer upheld the ruling of the Court of Appeal in giving judgment he said

"To my mind this is so clearly a matter for Executive discretion and nothing else that I cannot believe that those responsible for the Order in Council could have contemplated for a moment the possibility of the action of the Secretary of State's being subject to the discussion, criticism and control of a judge in a court of law."

The result of this dictum was that the Home Secretary was given a completely free hand to imprison whoever he wished "provided only" Lord Maugham adds, "that he acted in good faith."

A moment's reflection will convince anybody that since no one, least of all the unfortunate detainee, the victim,

has the power or right to question the Home Secretary's reason or grounds for arrest and deten-tion, it is beyond anyone's power to show whether the Home Secretary is acting in good faith or not.

The vigorous dissenting judgment of Lord Atkin in this case was only the forerunner of a spate of protests from thoughtful and farseeing members of the general public. He said:

"I view with apprehension the attitude of judges who on the mere question of construction, when face to face with claims involving the liberty of the subject, show themselves more Executive min-ded than the Executive. In this country amidst the clash of arms the laws are not silent. They may be changed but they speak the same language in war as in peace. It has always been one of the pillars of freedom, one of the principles of liberty for which on recent authority we are now fight-ing, that the judges are no respecters of persons, and stand between the subject and any attempted encroachment on his liberty by the Executive, alert to see that any coercive action is justified. In this case I have listened to arguments which might have been addressed acceptably to the Court of the King's Bench in the time of Charles I. I protest, even if alone, against the strained con-struction put upon words with the effect of giving unlimited power of imprisonment to the Minister."

Later in his judgment Lord Atkin again refers to the "strained construction" put upon words, scathingly saying that he knows of only one authority which might justify the suggested method of construction. He pro-ceeded with the following quotation from "Alice in Wonderland":

"When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in a rather scornful tone, "it means just what I choose

it to mean, neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master. . . that's all."

Lord Atkin concluded his judgment with the words:

"I am profoundly convinced that the Home Secretary had not been given an unconditional authority to detain and in my opinion the appeal ought to be allowed."

On the following day, and for many days afterwards, at first slowly and later in increasing numbers emi-nent men in the legal and political world began to offer confirmatory opinions. One may select at ran-dom from many writings and speeches to find typical opinions, weighty with misgivings and alarm at this generally unperceived filching away from the people of their ancient safeguards against oppression.

Mr. Gerald Gardiner, in a letter in the 'Times" (6/11/41) says:—

"The original regulation 18B conferred on the Home Secretary an absolute discretion to detain per-sons if he was "satisfied" of certain things. On October 31st, 1939, upon a motion in the House of Commons to assail the regulations, grave dissatisfac-tion was expressed in the House on the ground that the regulation left the liberty of the subject to the sole discretion of the Home Secret-ary. The Govern-ment thereupon withdrew the regulations and agreed to amend them to meet this and other objections, and on November 23rd, 1939 the regulations were amended, the new Regulation 18B providing that the Home Secretary could only detain if he has reasonable cause to "believe" those things of which previously he had only to be "satisfied." What is one to think of an Executive whose law officers now argue that the amended regulations mean, and must have inten-ded to mean, precisely the same as the regulation which was withdrawn?"

“It may be presumptuous for an ordinary lawyer to express a view upon the decision of the House of Lords, but as so distinguished a lawyer as Lord Maugham has thought your columns an appro-priate place in which to comment upon part of the speech of another member of the tribunal, it may be per-missible for a humble member of the Bar to follow his example and to say that in places where lawyers meet, the view being yesterday expressed by lawyers of all shades of opin-ion was one of admiration for, and gratitude to, Lord Atkin for his dissenting speech, the contents of which appear to some ordinary lawyers to be unanswerable.”

Another well-known lawyer, Mr. F. H. Hamilton, subscribed as follows:

“It is well to remember that we are fighting not only Hitler but the spirit of Hitlerism and that those who have noted during the last twenty years the increasing power of the Executive and its growing indepen-dence both of the Legislature and the Judica-ture, and the gradual deterioration of public opinion which has rendered possible these developments, may well ask themselves which in the long run is likely to prove the more pervasive enemy.” (Times, 15/11/41.)

And as a last example of the comment aroused by the Liversedge judgment here is part of a letter from Mr. P. E. Roberts, a high authority on Law and History, of Worcester College, Oxford:

“Parliament surely will not let the matter rest here. The Liberty of each one of us, it appears, lies at the mercy of a single minister, and his bare unsupported statement that he believes himself jus-tified, puts an end at once to all that elaborate machinery—once our national pride—created by the wisdom of ages to protect the rights of the individual. It may perhaps at least be permis-sible to observe that one can hardly conceive a more amazing paradox than that this should be the law in a country that is never weary of assuring the world that she is fighting for the liberty of the private man and for freedom of opinion. Lord Maugham resents comparison with the reign of Charles I. But that monarch never claimed wider powers than those exercised by Mr. Morrison, however different may have been his motive for their use, and, at any rate, the power of arbitrary imprison-ment was only claimed for the King and his Council, not for a single official.” (Times, 12/11/41.)

But Mr. Robert’s hope, and that of hundreds of bewildered victims of 18B, that “Parlia-ment will not let the matter rest,” was doomed to inevitable disappointment, for the simple reason that the threat of the uncontrolled power of the Home Secretary to imprison hung over Members of Parli-ament equally with the rest of the public, as Mr. P.C. Loftus, Member for Lowestoft, pointed out in this letter to the “Times” on November 15, 1941. He wrote

You conclude your leading article in today’s issue with the words—“the present Parliament has conceded powers in some respects exceeding what any Stuart claimed; but the safeguards against encroachment are secure in its own hands.” Are they really secure under all conceivable future contingencies? Is it not a case of ‘quis custodiet ipsos custodes’? The only check now left upon the power of the Executive to imprison indefinitely without trial any citizen, resides in the power of the unofficial rank and file members of all parties to criticize and control the actions of the Rome Secretary. They alone are his judges, but he is now given absolute power to im-prison any of these judges and critics. He may intern any Member of either House upon vague allegations without the House itself or any independent com-mittee thereof being allowed any information whatsoever as to whether or not there may be a prima face case for such detention.”

Another MP, Mr. E. Bennet, in a letter published in the same issue of the “ Times “ stresses Mr. Loftus’ protest as follows

“Many thoughtful men and women both inside and outside the House of Commons find it difficult to share Mr. Casswell’s conviction that ‘no order is made under regulation 18B except after very careful consideration of the reports submitted. The official statistics not only prove as Sir Irving Albery points out, that over 100 persons (the actual number was 128 up to the date of this letter) have been detained in prisons by the Minister against the decision of his own Advisory Commit-tee, but reveal another distur-bing fact. Up to July 31st, 1941, the cases of 1,566 detain-ees have been reviewed of whom no fewer than 811—more than 50 percent have been set at liberty. Think of the character and quality of the evidence on which the Home Secretary feels justified in

impris-oning 811 men and women who, after varying periods of detention are declared to be innocent."

"Could not the investigation which secures the release of British Citizens, imprisoned without charge or trial, be made before they are consigned for months to the cells of Brixton Gaol?"

These misgivings in the Press from numerous MPs were echoed inside the House on the several occasions when 18B came up for debate, but all Members, whatever their private opinions, gave vent to them in very guarded terms. This reluctance to pre-sent misgivings to an issue is probably due to the fact that one of the first victims to be seized and incarcerated by the Home Secretary was one of their own colleagues, Captain A. M. Ramsay, Member for Peebles.

Captain Ramsay's case is an awkward one to defend. His marked opposition to the Freethought move-ment, his somewhat notorious Anti-Semitism, and his belief in suppressing democratic opinions deprive him of radical sympathy. The fact remains that he has been treated disgrace-fully. There are offences known to Common Law as comforting or adhering to the enemy. If Captain Ramsay's views and con-duct left him open to these grave charges he ought to have been indicted.

The New York Times Company went so far as to put some of this venom into print and was sued for libel. Although Captain Ramsay technically won his case the hearing was made the occasion for one of the most vicious personal attacks ever made in a Court of Law. Among other things he was described as a "traitor and an associate of felons."

The case produced a notable outburst against 18B from Mr. St. John Field who, speaking as a lawyer referred to

"This most immoral, unjust and detestable regulation destroying every right Englishmen has won in the course of centuries The right to a fair trial is one of the undeniable rights of every English-man and I deny that war justifies injustice. This man was arrested without being told why; he was put in a common prison, and for three months subjected to the torture of solitary confinement of 20 hours out of 24 hours a day—a punishment never inflicted on the worst criminals. It is because Captain Ramsay was in the position of being detained under 18B that he must not leave this Court without sufficient damages to clear his character from the odious charge made against him."

Despite the justice and eloquence of Mr. St. John Field's submission, and despite the fact that he tech-nically won his case Captain Ramsay was awarded contemptuous damages of a farthing. He thus left the court with his character still further impugned. He went back to his timeless sentence at Brixton Prison where he remains to this day.

The Ramsay case again aroused grave misgivings in the minds of the more thoughtful section of the public. Even men of violently opposite views joined in urging that if only a half of what had been im-puted against him during the libel case be true then Captain Ramsay should be brought to trial. Though this demand arose as much from the desire to extract a "pound of flesh" from a guilty man, as from a desire to extend justice to an inno-cent, it was yet eminently reasonable. Here is a typical comment after the case, written by Stuart Campbell and published in the "Sunday Pictoria" on July 27, 1941:

"To lock up a man for his thoughts is a gross violation of British justice. For, carried to its logical conclusion, it means that no one who disagrees with the Government's methods is safe from the threat of prison. To be sure, we may accept Mr. Morrison's assurances that the Emergency Powers in the Defence Act conferred upon him are being used with the utmost discretion. But Mr. Morrison may not always hold the whip. We have had Cabinet Ministers in the past that have violently disagreed with the Prime Minister. Two years ago one of them might have made an excellent case for clapping Mr. Churchill into gaol simply because he clamoured for a real war effort. Let us watch the suspects by all means but let us give them a chance to prove later their innocence by working for the common cause. This country is not so well stocked with food that we can afford to feed it to several hundred freaks who are kept in idleness because somebody doesn't like the colour of their ties. It

should be part of Mr. Morrison's job to stop the waste by sorting out the traitors. Then the others can be made to earn their keep like the rest of us. If a couple of them let us down we shall at least have the satisfaction of knowing that we practised freedom while we're fighting for it."

To sum up, it is no exaggeration to say that no man who differs from his fellows in his opinion of the Government's policy and dares to voice that opinion is safe from sudden and secret arrest. When that arrest comes for him he will be hurriedly consigned to a common prison where he may stay for an indefinite period. His condition may or may not be, according to the disposition of his gaolers, better or worse than those for the habitual malefactor. At his Advisory Committee, per-haps three, perhaps six months afterwards he will be in that position once described by a learned judge as that of "a blind man searching in a dark room for a black cat that isn't there." He will be condemned or released on evidence he will not be allowed to hear, given by persons he will not be allowed to see or know, concerning a charge which will not be laid against him. All he will be able to do will be go on making a guess at the point of issue between himself and his inter-rogators, answer the tricky and searching questions put to him by some of the finest legal brains in the country with as much adequacy as his common-sense and education may permit, and advance any reasons which may occur to him as to why he should not he kept in prison for the remainder of his life. If his answers or affirmations satisfy his inquisitors, and if the Home Secretary in his sublime omnipotence does not counter the Advisory Committee's recommenda-tion, he may be set at liberty. After a month or more of suspense, waiting for a decision one way or the other, he is just as likely to he kept in durance as to be released, and he will thereupon continue his prison existence, prob-ably in exile. Meanwhile his dependents out-side may suffer indescribably by the loss of having a member of their family held as a potential danger to the State. In the fullness of time he may emerge, still not vindicated, ruined in reputation, possibly penniless, to sink or swim in a hostile and suspicious world torn asunder in its fight for freedom. No wretched malefactor on ticket-of-leave with a prison record was ever in a worse case.

The Present Position

(1) As matters now stand there is no judicial safeguard for the liberty of the subject against arbitrary acts of the executive. This may be a matter of small concern to those who have confidence in the present executive and its unidentifiable officials. But such people should remember that we are at war and app-roaching an economic crisis of the first magnitude. These conditions may produce considerable changes in the executive and its unidentifiable officials and lead to a situation in which arbitrary powers may be used against persons quite different from those who have been detained hitherto.

(2) The judgment of the Court of Appeal implies that the principle of Habeas Corpus has been abro-gated, as it was in 1914, without a specific enactment to that effect. It has been abrogated covertly, without the full knowledge and understanding of Parliament.

(3) It has now been shown that Regulation 18B extends the revolutionary change in the British Con-sti-tution attempted by the Defence Regulations in the first world war, and held valid at that time in the Court of King's Bench and the House of Lords. The Regulation has provided a more defi-nite and more clearly recognised and avowed loophole whereby the executive can evade the prin-ciple that ordinary citizens and members of the executive are absolutely equal before the King's Courts of Justice. This equality before the law has always been regarded as a fundamental right of British subjects and a bulwark of their freedom.

In Practice

The foregoing notes should give a general idea of the seriousness of Defence Regulation 18B in its effect upon the traditional rights of British subjects. The notes below indicate the degree of injustice suffered.

(1) When the Government was successfully challenged over the Defence Regulations in Parlia-ment on 3lst

October, 1939, there were only 35 persons detained under Defence Regulation 18B. Eleven months later, on 30th September 1940, the latest date for which figures are available, 1,628 persons had been arbitrarily detained and 247 persons as arbitrarily released. Some of those who have thus been detained are naturalized British subjects, some are aliens other than enemy aliens, but 853 are British-born subjects.

(2) The period between a detention being made and the person detained being given access to the ad-visory committee has been generally 3-4 months. During this period the person detained has not known the grounds on which the detention order has been made against him, or her.

(3) On 28th November, 1940, speaking in the House of Commons (Parl. Debates, Vol. 367, col. 324-5) Mr. Herbert Morrison, the Home Secretary, stated that a detained person is not necessarily given full information as to the reasons for his detention. He said that the committee is perfectly free to exercise its discretion in giving full information.

(4) Detained persons have not been granted legal representation before the committee (as is always given, for example, to persons charged with murder). At the meetings of this committee the prisoner is examined, but no evidence is given, so that there is no cross-examination, and the proceedings in no way resemble a judicial trial. (Pan. Debates, Vol. 363, col. 611.)

(5) In some cases, detained persons have had difficulty in communicating with and interviewing their solicitors and it is also alleged that by order of the Home Secretary, detained persons have not been permitted to communicate with their MPs (H.C. Paper 164, 9th October, 1940, page 18).

(6) The conditions of imprisonment of detained persons are unusually severe, seeing that they are neither charged with, nor convicted of, offences against the law; and it is also alleged that they are refused access to members of the board of prison visitors, as is authorized for remand and convict prisons (Section 2 of the Prison Act, 1898, and similar statutes).

(7) Defence Regulation 18B has been in-voked for the purpose of detaining a MP without charge or trial while Parliament is in session, thereby preventing him from discharging his duty to the elec-tors and depriving his constituents of Parliamentary represen-tation. The executive has sought to use the Regulation as a means of evading the principle of Parliamentary privilege. The contin-uance of Parliamentary government, and of our constitutional monarchy, demands a searching and impartial investigation of all the details of this particular detention order.

Conclusion

It may be argued in support of Defence Regulation 18B in its present form that it is, unfor-tunately, in-evitable because we are at war. All are agreed that, in time of war, the authorities must be empowered to act promptly in apprehending suspected enemy agents, but any special powers given to the executive for this purpose make it more important than ever —not less important—that there should be adequate safeguards against injustice

Citizens who are detained must be given effective opportunity of access to impartial and independent tribunals, where justice is administered under the recognized rules. Any argument of the executive that that such trials “would involve too many difficulties” must be an admis-sion of timidity, or of insin-cerity or else of incompetence in the civil and military departments concerned. There is no difficulty about trying spies and persons accused of sabotage by ordinary courts in war- time. The state of affairs brought about by Regulation 18B is totally at variance with the principles of justice, which we are fight-ing to uphold. For the credit of our cause it must be terminated forthwith. Abolishing 18B can do this simply and quickly.

Fifth Column Fever

When the flames of war spread across Europe; first over Poland, then Norway, and then in May, 1940, over the Low Countries and France; fleeing civilians brought with them terrible tales of traitors and spies operating against their own countrymen and helping, in various ways, the advance of the German armies. There were stories of German inspired telephone calls, purpor-ting to be official, giving regional commanding officers instructions, the carrying out of which led to disastrous consequences; there were stories of willful and deliberate neglect of necessary precautions, such as destruction of bridges in the path of the enemy advance; and stories of secret messages and information to aid the German troops, written under poster advertisements. A spate of these stories found their way into the British Press and with Hitler's armies just across the channel and invasion of these islands seemingly imminent a dis-turbing fear was widely manifest that these things might happen here. "Fifth Column Fever" was born.

On the morning of 9th April, 1940 when the resistance to the German invasion of Norway became futile, Major Quisling offered to form a government. The Wilhelmstrasse accepted his offer. Imme-diately a new word was added to the English language. "Quisling" became a synonym for "Traitor."

On May 10th, 1940, the Germans invaded the Low Countries. That there were thousands of German agents in Holland is probably true.

At 7.30 a.m. on May 28th, 1940, M. Paul Reynaud, the French Premier, delivered a broadcast speech informing the world that King Leopold II of the Belgians had surrendered to the Germans without previously informing the British and French High Commands of his intention to do so. By this action, said Reynaud, Leopold had left the Allied left flank completely exposed.

Mr. Churchill told the House of Commons that we should reserve judgment on King Leopold. Sub-sequently, in an action for libel against the "Daily Mirror," Admiral Sir Roger Keys, MP, proved that Leopold had given the Allies ample warning of his intentions and that the French had duly received his message. Later still the Free Belgian Government in London completely exonerated His Majesty from all charges of traitorous activity.

For many months General Gamelin, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces in France had been lauded by the press as the 'Twentieth Century Napoleon'. After the break-through at Sedan, he was dismissed and replaced by General Weygand. Without the slightest indication of embar-rassment the press performed a complete volte-face and presented Gamelin to the world as a useless and incompetent soldier. The Napoleon of April 1 became the Fifth Columnist of May.

So it was with Marshal Petain, the hero of Verdun, the Grand Old Man of France. When the Germans had taken Paris and were advancing towards the Loire, it was he who, at the age of 84, rallied a Government and sued for peace.

This was the chapter of events, which led up to a fifth column panic in Great Britain. How that panic was encouraged and exploited is now common knowledge. It swept the country like a fever, assuming such proportions that the Government found themselves, by public demand, expressed in newspaper agitations, charged with the task of guarding against the particular dangers envisaged. The effect of this clamour was the rushing through Parliament of an amend-ment to the now notorious Regulation 18B and a general round up under this and the previously existing Emergency Law. This new measure broad-ened the scope of the existing Regulations, under which relatively few detentions had been made. The precise terms of the amendment are as follows

> (1a) If the Secretary of State has reasonable cause to believe any person to have been or to be a member of, or to have been or to be active in the furtherance of the objects of, any such organisa-tion as is hereinafter mentioned, and that it is necessary to exercise control over him, he may make an order against that person directing that he be detained.
>
> The organisations here before referred to or any organisation as respects which the Secre-tary of

State is satisfied that either—

(a) The organisation is subject to foreign influence or control—or:

(b) The persons in control of the organisation have or have had associations with persons concerned in the government of, or sympathize with the system of government of, any power with which His Majesty is now at War, and in either case that there is danger of the use of the organisation for purposes prejudicial to the public safety, the defence of the realm, the main-tenance of public order, the efficient prosecution of any war in which His Majesty may be engaged, or the main-tenance of supplies or services essential to the life of the community."

Thus it will be seen that the Home Secretary upon whom all powers under the Statute devolved, could issue orders for detention under three heads. The first class is persons

"Of hostile origin or associations."

The second class is persons acting in fur-therance of the objects of an organisation which has been defined in the Regulation, and which is regarded, and was regarded, as a danger to the State.

The third class is persons

"recently concerned in acts prejudicial . . . . or in the preparation or instigation of such acts" By far the largest number of persons detained at the outset, fall into the second class.

Round-Up

An Account of the Arrest of Detainees held under Regulation 18B.

Section 18B (la) of the Defence Regulations was enacted on May 23rd, 1940. Immediately it became law police swooped on British Union's headquarters in Great Smith Street, SW1, and all persons enter-ing the building were closely examined even if only occupiers of, or callers at other offices in the same building. All those having business with British Union, even to the lad collecting soiled towels for laundry service, were detained for questioning. Casual purchasers of books, newspapers or cigar-ettes at the British Union shop were treated similarly and herded together in a small reception room to await interrogation.

British Union supporters make much of this raiding. This has happened often to Anarchists and Socialists in the past without comment or protest from Conservatives and Fascists.

During a hectic morning, while CID officers ransacked offices and examined credentials of individuals not in their list of "wanted" men and women (a list which included persons disassoc-iated from British Union for some years) several persons on the staff of the organisation were removed in police cars; men to Brixton Prison and women to Holloway Prison.

On the windows of the Ministry of Pensions office next door, Ministry of Information posters warned and exhorted—"Your Freedom is in Peril—Defend it with all your might." One young Fascist seems to have observed this stricture—evening newspapers pictured him resisting the policemen.

The same evening newspapers reported that police activity had not been confined to British Union's National Headquarters; Sir Oswald Mosley had been arrested at his house, John Beckett, Captain Ramsay, MP, and several others had been apprehended at their homes or place of business.

The Police moved into British Union's offices for a complete investigation of all files and correspon-dence. Scotland Yard and the Home Office stated that the organisation was free to continue its normal existence and that no restrictions were placed upon its newspaper "Action" and that the office would be available once more when the police had finished their "audit."

On May 27, 1940, Sir John Anderson in a circular to the Ministry of Health, said:

"No man will be penalised for the mere holding of opinions, however unpopular they may be."

On that very day, Sir John Anderson ordered the round-up of several hundred British Union members for their opinions. At this time, British Union was not proscribed and the official attitude was that political activities were legitimate.

Then on the weekend of, June 3rd, 1940 came the big police swoop. On and around that date homes were violated and ruthlessly torn apart by searchers who did not hesitate to wreak damage on private property. Letters and diaries, often of an intimate personal nature, were hungrily scanned and even impounded. Books were seized as evidence. An MP has told The House a case in which the police seized the works of John Stuart Mill (Hansard debate). It is perhaps only natural that the works of a great libertarian like Mill should be held in suspect by the agents of Regulation 18B. These happenings were incidentals in round-up of hundreds of men and women.

Where the central CID was responsible for the apprehension of detainees there were few com-plaints as to the manner in which they executed their task. Where local detectives and police handled affairs there is irrefutable evidence that many abuses occurred. Many cases can be proven of persons detained being treated with callous severity harsh as could be meted out to the most depraved criminals.

The following data are taken from signed statements of present and past detained:

Mr. A. B., a 33-year-old bank clerk of London was visited by detectives on July 3rd, 1940. After ques-tioning and a search of his property, and of all other residents of the house in which he was living he was escorted to Brixton Police Station. Both he and his mother were assured that he not under arrest, but that the Divisional Superintendent of the CID wished to interrogate him.

"At about five p.m.," writes Mr. B., "I was locked in a police cell which was improperly ventilated because sand bags were stacked against the window. . . . There was only a dim glimmer of artif-icial light, the lavatory flush was unworkable, and the emergency bell was out of order. I was given one blanket, a dirty one used by the police as a ground sheet during target practice. . . . I was allowed only two ten-minute exercise periods in 24 hours."

Mr. B. suffered these conditions for 14 days during which time no charge was preferred against him and no reasons for his detention supplied. On two occasions the police apparently forgot his existence and failed to supply him with food.

He was transferred from the police station to Brixton Prison, still without any reason given for his arrest, and it was not until the 22nd of November 1940, that he received a formal statement of the reasons for his detention at Ascot Camp.

Here is the statement of Mr. G. B. who the time of his arrest, was serving in the Royal Air Force. He had been a member of British Union in Shrewsbury, Salop.

"My wife and I were arrested on Saturday, 22nd, 1940. I told the police that my wife was expec-ting her first baby. We were taken to Shrewsbury Central Police Station. My wife complained bitterly about the cold as she

had only been supplied with two blankets. We were refused the right to see my sister to obtain a change of underwear. On the following Friday my wife com-plained that owing to a discharge she had been compelled to leave off her underwear. Her nerves were then in a very bad state. I asked to see the Chief Constable but the request was not granted. My wife was not attended by a doctor. On Saturday, June 29th, she was ringing the bell in her cell, and when I called to her she told me she had a hemorrhage. She continued ringing. I could not ring my bell as it had been disconnected when I demanded to see the Chief Constable. The Police finally called an ambulance and my wife was taken to Shropshire Council Hospital at Berrington."

"On Monday, July 1st, I was informed that I was to be taken to Liverpool Prison, and that my wife was to have an operation the next day for the removal of her baby. I requested permission to stay at Shrews-bury Prison until after the operation. This was refused. I was allowed to see her for 15 minutes in the presence of two detectives before I was taken to Liverpool Prison. On, July 2nd, my wife had her operation, and, though she was still weak, the police removed her to Hollo-way Prison on Saturday, July 6th, 1940. Her health has been bad ever since."

It is impossible for persons in G.B.'s position to appreciate the fact that this is the general way in which all persons arrested in Britain are treated by the police authorities. The reason is that the poor are sup-posed to be dirty in their habits of life, and this belief is reflected in the condition of police cells, prisons, workhouses, and asylums.

Mr. H. S. E. of Canterbury, was arrested on June 4th, 1940. He spent one night in Canterbury Police Station and was then taken to Maidstone prison where he was given a cell in a convict wing. The Prison Governor gave him to understand that he was remanded for seven days pending enquiries. For three days he was without books or papers and spent only one hour per day outside his cell. On the sixth day he was told that he would be taken to Court the next day. The following morning, a prison officer told him that the Canterbury Police "had nothing against him" and that he would be released. He was relea-sed at 8 a.m., and returned to his home at Canterbury. He called at the Police Station where property impounded at the time of his arrest was restored to him. Later a message was delivered to his home ask-ing that he should call at the Police station at 9 a.m. next morning. He duly reported as requested and was thereupon rearrested under Defence Regulation 18B.

The next is taken from a statement by D.J. I. of Bath, detained at Manchester:

"I was arrested at my place of work on Friday, June 21st, 1940, and taken to Mill Street Police Station. I was refused permission to visit my lodgings only five minutes walk away, in order to settle accounts with my landlady, obtain toilet necessities and change from working clothes. After several hours waiting in various offices I was locked up in a small, unclean cell where I remained for three days without change of clothing, adequate bedding, exercise, newspapers or contact with the outside world. I was allowed to leave the cell only three times in those three days, once each morning for a wash. The toilet stank and was flushed only from the outside; there was no toilet paper. My cell had no natural light, as the small window near the roof was covered on the outside by sand bags and it was necessary to have artificial light all the time. I was not allowed to have meals supplied from outside or to have any exercise."

"On the first afternoon of my detention in this cell a police officer, accompanied by three con-stables, in their shirt sleeves and a warden took me into the corridor where they subjected me to a form of third degree. I was insulted and threatened with physical violence in addition to being told that I was to be put up against a wall and shot. The officer also threatened to kick me. As I re-entered my cell he struck me on the head and used obscene language."

The appropriate comment on this statement is that the general state of cells in police stations in England is filthy and always has been so.

The statement of Mr. C. W. of Slough is the more interesting in that it refers to another case. He was arrested on June 4th, 1940, and writes:

"I was taken to Aylesbury and put into a cell. A few hours later I was informed that I was to be taken to Walton Gaol, Liverpool. There were four of us to go including an elderly man of my acquaintance. This man, Mr. P.T. was in a very low state of health. When handcuffs were pro-duced and placed on his wrists I at once objected to this treatment of a sick man, besides objec-ting on my own behalf. I was told to shut my mouth. We were taken to Bletchley Station in a very small van, together with six police constables. When Mr. P.T. complained about fumes he was told "it could be made worse for him." While waiting for the train he asked for water, which was only obtained after much argument. By this time my wrists were very swollen from the tightness of the handcuffs. When we arrived at Liverpool Mr. P.T. was in such a weak state that he had to be assisted from the train."

"At Walton Gaol we had to wait in the Reception Office for between two and three hours, and it was not until I demanded to see someone in authority that Mr. P.T. was taken into the Prison Hospital. This was the last I saw of him. Three weeks later I was informed that he had died."

Such treatment is much too common, and arises from the conditions of absolutism and secrecy. Reading, Gillingham and Liverpool cases are typical experiences.

It is unlawful to handcuff persons against whom no charges have been made or are intended to be made.

Mr. R. R. of Tottenham, testifies that he was interrogated by plain clothes officers in a small room in Tottenham Police Station. He says:

"One of them, Inspector Bishop, smacked me across the face and tried to inveigle me into giving pro-German answers to his questions. Eventually they told me they had no more questions and I could go. When I was half way along the corridor they called me back and said they had decided to detain me. I was taken through a yard, where police were practicing rifle shooting, and an officer told me 'If I had my way I would let these men put you against the wall and shoot you'. I was refused permission to send a telegram. I remained in the police cell nine days."

In many cases early treatment of detainees was precisely the same as that given to arrested criminals.

Mr. S. L. F. of Birmingham, writes:

"I had my finger prints and photograph taken at Birmingham Police Station. I was handcuffed and taken in a Black Maria to New Street Railway Station, where I was handcuffed to a plain-clothes detective in full public view. I remained handcuffed throughout the seven hour train journey to Liverpool for delivery to Walton Gaol."

Photographs and fingerprints were also taken in the case of Mr. D. W. M., 19 year old laboratory assistant, detained at Cardiff on June 16th, 1940, and lodged for seven days at Cardiff Police Station where he was not allowed to obtain cigarettes or newspapers or communicate with his parents.

The complaint against being handcuffed is repeated in many statements. A party of men from Sussex towns were handcuffed in pairs at Horsham Police Station and marched through the streets of the town to the railway station for their journey to Liverpool. Parties of men transferred from Brixton Prison to Walton Prison were handcuffed to one another.

Mr. R. F. W. of Wimbledon, says:

"I was transferred from Brixton Prison to Walton Gaol handcuffed to another prisoner. When using the toilet on the train we had to do so together."

In a journey from Gloucester to Walton Gaol, Mr. R. L. G. was warned: “If you try any funny business you will be shot.”

Mr. R. A. H. who was taken to Maidstone Prison was placed in Harcourt House Wing among convicted prisoners, although there was accommodation available among the remand prisoners. He says:

“I was in solitary confinement for 23 hours out of 24. This affected my nerves but the medical officer merely told me that I should have to put up with it. I was occasionally allowed out of my cell for longer periods on condition that I cleaned out closets after the convicts. After three weeks in Maidstone I was told that I was to be discharged, but outside the gates I was met by a police-man, detained under Regulation 18B and taken to Brixton Prison.

Mr. H. is one of several people against whom his mean and cruel deception of a release leading to further arrest has been practiced.

Mr. A. C. of Wolverhampton arrived at Walton Gaol, after a journey in handcuffs; he was put into a punishment cell with insufficient ventilation. His statement declares that he was almost suffocated during the night, and continues:

“The emergency bell in the cell was not working and I was unable to summon assistance. I was compelled to break some of the panes in the window to obtain air and the warder broke more the following morning, when the effects of the air upon me were obvious. It was admitted that I should never have been put into that cell.”

Cases where both husband and wife were arrested, separated, and lodged in different prisons without any communication over a period of weeks have their own poignant anxieties and distress, all too obvious to need amplification here. Where there have been children dependent upon them their sufferings have been greatly aggravated.

Mrs. C. of Liverpool, a householder, had already seen her eldest son, William, taken to Walton Gaol before the police came to arrest her. Her youngest son, aged 10 years, was at home at the time of her arrest, and she was given no opportunity to make provision for his safe keeping. The police assured her that the child would be returned to her when she reached her destination. This little lad, 10 years old, was actually subjected to a police interrogation, after which, instead of being returned to Mrs. C., who was then in Holloway prison, he was sent to an institution.

The only reason ever given for the arrest of the C’s. was their sympathy with the cause of British Union, a sympathy which they have declared at different times, and in less obtrusive fashion, with such men as the late Lord Rothermere, G. Ward Price, Wyndham Lewis, Beverly Nichols, Major General J. P. C. Fuller, Ezra Pound, Henry Williamson, Hugh Ross Williamson, and among others of the present House of Commons, Mr. Randolph Churchill, MP.

The callous treatment here recorded, no doubt, seems incredible to all those who sincerely believe that Command Paper 6162 provided effective safeguards for the welfare of detainees. Either the police deliberately ignored this Paper, or, as appears more likely in the light of detainees’ experience, they were totally unaware of its existence. Whichever explanation is correct there is shocking evidence of a culpable fault lying to someone’s blame.

The opposition displayed by all liberal minded MPs towards such repugnant emergency legislation as Regulation 18B, was to some extent dissipated by the belief that Command Paper 6162 would eliminate unnecessary harshness from its application.

If confidence in the efficacy of this safeguard is not shaken by reference to the cases already recorded, let your

mind dwell on the plight of the detainees arrested at Sheffield.

The account given hereafter is from a deposition given by Mr. R. B., 25 year old married man, whose "offence" was that he had been a member of British Union and had contested a Muni-cipal by election under the banner of the Mosley organisation. His statements regarding treat-ment fully supported by other detainees who shared his unhappy experiences. He writes:

"Officers escorted me to the Sheffield Central Police Station where all personal property, in-cluding my spectacles, on which I have to rely and excepting only the clothes I wore, were taken from me: I was permitted neither cigarettes nor my pipe. When I asked for these they were re-fused. I was put into a cell in which there were already three other British Union friends of mine Messrs. H. (a certificated schoolmaster who had been arrested and searched in front of his class of pupils), W and C."

"The cell, about 13 by 6 feet, was exceptionally stuffy, and its only window was boarded up. The only ventilation was by a small hatch in the cell door. Along the wall of one side of the cell was a broad wooden bench about three feet wide. In one corner of the cell was a water closet."

"During the police interrogation I asked for my spectacles to be restored to me, but they were not returned until immediately prior to my leaving the Police station."

"During the evening we applied for permission to contact a certain local Solicitor. The Station Sergeant refused both this and our request to see the Superintendent on the matter. We were told that we could have neither access to solicitor nor to the cigarettes or other property."

"Later in the evening two more British Union acquaintances, Messrs. S. and D. were put into our Cell. We were then six human beings in the close confine of that stuffy, little cage."

"We were each given two blankets and expected to settle down for the night. Five of us managed to huddle across one another on the wooden bench, but the sixth had to sleep on the floor with his head against the water closet. Despite our request for the glaring electric light to be dimmed, it remained on all night. This, with the oppressive atmosphere and the shouting of a drunk in an adjoining cell, made sleep impossible. Early next morning we received breakfast—this being a repetition of the previous evening's meal, two slices of bread and margarine and a mug of tea."

"Shortly after eight o'clock the cell door was again opened and presently we each had an iron cuff placed round one wrist. This cuff was threaded through a heavy steel chain and we were fastened together in threes. No reason was offered for this needless indignity and our protests were ig-nored. We were allowed to exercise along the corridor whilst chained in this fashion and so passed the morning."

"At about twelve o'clock our impounded personal articles were restored to us and we were taken downstairs and put into a police van with two policemen as warders. We then proceeded by road to Walton Gaol, Liverpool, where, at about two p.m., we were handed over to the Prison Authorities, and then, after nearly six hours the chains and shackles were removed."

This treatment was unlawful under Regulations.

So happened some of the arrests under Regu-lation 18B and though it be repeated that in many cases understanding of the detainees' position was demonstrated in considerate conduct by arresting officers, there are yet at least a dozen cases for every one cited here that reveal inhuman treatment of a kind popularly accredited to the Nazi Gestapo.

No measure that strips a citizen of his rights, tears him from his family and casts him into timeless

imprisonment can be interpreted without the imposition of gross harshness. By their very nature such measures must be punitive. But can any reason of State demand that a man charged with no offence, and at no time offering physical resistance against molestation, be paraded in manacles through the streets of his hometown? Can any conscience on earth be other than revolted that pregnant women should be flung into cold damp cells and denied access to articles of personal hygiene?

You have seen photographs of chained slaves in the Southern States of America—photographs which caused world wide resentment. Have you not drawn some satisfaction from the fact that, these things were remote from England? Have you not been comforted, perhaps self-righteously, because you feel that such things could not occur in our intelligent civilized country?

One of the questions often posed by the Home Office Advisory Committee before any release of detainees is recommended is: Has your detention made you feel any bitterness?

This is a most improper question and merely invites a false reply. Only the sense of power and hypocritical rejoicing in authority could prompt such a question.

Who goes there?

It is appropriate in a document of this nature that some attempt should be made to show who are the men held prisoner by Mr. Herbert Morrison.

What manner of men are they? What types do they represent? From what sphere of life do they come?

With a few notable exceptions the public does not know the victims of 18B. It is popular to think of them as toughs and hooligans, creatures without any normal traits, mercenary thugs lying in wait for the time when they may stab their country in the back. It is enough to say that they are Fascists and the average newspaper reader will visualize for himself a mob of low-browed, sub-human gorillas

The nastier and more popular, newspapers have fostered this particular illusion. The Home Secretary, for his part, has described many of the men and women as “nit-wits.” Taken all-in-all the public is given to understand that here are creatures different from the rest of their kind; therefore to be subjected to all kinds of gross indignity, degradation and misery without anyone’s conscience crying out in horror.

Very few people realise that Regulation 18B has drawn into its net a representative cross-section of the British public. Very few seem to understand that detainees are much the same as other citizens motiv-ated by the same human faiths, hopes, fears and aspirations. There would be a very different attitude to 18B if this matter was viewed in its true light—if each person considering the facts set down in this document pondered to himself: “There, but for the grace of God, go I.”

When Mr. Morrison picks out a group of citizens for detention, or when he decides that a man or woman must remain in captivity, he may he behaving with perfect sincerity to his own lights in saying—“These people are a potential danger to the State.” True, the wording of the Regulation requires that he must have “reasonable cause to believe” that his suspicions are well founded; but what may seem reasonable cause to Mr. Morrison may not seem so to—say—Lord Atkin. It is purely a matter of personal view-point in relation to certain known facts.

Mr. Morrison subscribes that he has reasonable cause to question the patriotism of people with certain ideas and political convictions. He does not publicly declare that political convictions have anything to do with the matter. Indeed, it would not look well if he did so because the bulk of the 18B detainees are people with

political convictions diametrically opposed to his own. Nevertheless he rightly points out that it is his duty to take that very factor into consideration.

It is quite logical that he should see such people as a menace to the State—at least, to the State as he wishes to see it constituted. It would be humanly impossible for him to free his outlook from his own deep-rooted convictions and he must therefore approach the subject influenced by personal bias. A man who has spent his life in politics cannot divorce himself from them.

Now if Mr. Morrison, as a Labour Leader, regards himself as a potential saviour of the State, as his political supporters obviously suppose him to he, and if Mr. Jones, Brown or Smith obstruct Mr. Morrison's progress to Power perhaps with Fascist heckling—then Mr. Morrison is justified in looking on Mr. Jones, Brown or Smith as opponents of State interests. "Misguided" perhaps; "nit-wits" perhaps, but opponents of State interests just the same.

It is a singular comment on the aptness of this line of reasoning that there are several detainees whose political experience has largely consisted of obstructing the Party to which Mr. Morrison belongs.

Well, Mr. Morrison is Home Secretary. His "reasonable cause to believe" has been the ticket to gaol for many citizens who count themselves loyal. Moreover, the highest Court in the land has decided that Mr. Morrison is omnipotent. He is accountable for his actions and beliefs to no man. A Home Secretary's personal opinions must inevitably bias his outlook on these and all other matters.

Suppose Mr. Willie Gallagher was Home Secretary; he might quite honestly credit himself with reason-able cause to believe, that all "die-hard" Conservatives are a potential danger to the State, and accordin-gly he might clap them all into detention. Mr. Shinwell might put Mr. Churchill under restraint. Earl Winterton might lock up Mr. Morrison himself. Quite seriously, nobody can count themselves fully safe against the operation of such an enactment as Regulation 18B.

Turn now to an examination of Mr. Morrison's "bag."

It is already known that one MP is included; and it is also known that one Baronet and his wife are still in prison. Less known are the Admirals, Colonels, Majors and other officers and many rankers, ex-servicemen of this and the last war, who have fallen to the Regulation. These men comprise about one-third of the purely British men in detention. There is one man who was formerly a central pivot of the Naval Intelligence Service. There are some of the earliest of the original RFC pilots; there are men who went through the ordeal of Dunkirk.

Two men who used a private vessel in a non-stop ferry service throughout the Dunkirk evacua-tion, and whose selfless, voluntary efforts rescued hundreds of soldiers, only returned from their exertions to be collected under 18B and passed into Walton Gaol.

Then there are a large number of men from company directors and factory owners to tech-nicians, skilled and unskilled, who could, if at liberty, be rendering valuable service to the nation's war effort. Capt. Marendez, the famous aeronautical expert, himself once in detention, subscribed in a newspaper inter-view after his release that:

"In his camp quite 40% of those detained were perfectly safe to be released, and also that he knew of 100 capable aircraft workers detained." -Sunday Express, 17th November 1940.

Capt. Marendez' case is by no means the only instance of the expert with valuable, and even unique knowledge, being forced to waste his time in detention under 18B.

Doctors, solicitors, chemists, school and college tutors, manufacturers, journalists, geologists, steel workers,

soldiers, pathologists, sailors, airmen, civil defence workers, laboratory techni-cians, farmers, labourers and pharmacists are all among the ingredients of the Anderson-Morrison 18B pie. These are men whom Morrison has described as “nit-wits” and the press has labelled “dupes”, “scum”, “rats”, “corner boys” and “traitors”. They represent a high average of British citizenship.

These are the men, be it well remembered, who, as is told in later pages, were hounded, chained, impris-oned in vile conditions, ill-fed, housed in the cages of beasts, held up to public opprobrium, brow-beaten, bludgeoned with questionings, denied normal recourse to justice, subjected to all manner of indignity and humiliation, insulted, impoverished, and trans-ported. These are the victims of Regulation 18B about whom, for whom, and by whom, this document is written.

Consider the opinion of 18B given by Mr. Herbert Morrison, then just MP, in the House of Commons on October, 1939. He said:

“I am not going to use the argument usually put forward as a matter of courtesy that we do not believe the present Minister would be wicked but that we are afraid that his Successor might be. I think that any Minister is capable of being wicked when he has a body of regulations like these to administer.” (Hansard, vol. 352. Col. 1846.)

Mr. Morrison was right. Subsequent events, including those over which he has had sole control, have amply proved his words.

The men who speak through this document are the victims of Sir John Anderson’s and Mr. Morrison’s administration of the regulation. Bear in mind that in slightly different circum-stances, perhaps with another Home Secretary, the victim might be you.

On Ex-Service Detainees

“A great many of the men under Reg. 18B served this country loyally and faithfully in the last war and many of them are decorated. Is anybody, any of those who, I believe, are primarily connected with this regulation, the Attorney General, the Lord President of the Council, or the Rt. Hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary justified without the most definite evidence in suspecting men who served this country in the last war and have been decorated for their valour in the field, and women too, merely because they happen to have had some association with principles which perhaps are not approved?”—Sir L. Albery (Hansard 867, No. 7, Col. 792).

High Court decisions arising out of the application of Regulation 18B have clearly defined that the onus of proof, in establishing innocence of any offence or offensive intent, rests on the detainee himself. Eminent Counsel have argued that this sets an impossible task.

In point of fact the only evidence the detainee can produce is evidence of credit. He can say, and in most cases he does say, “examine my personal record; the blamelessness of my past is my only evidence of good intent in the future.”

Nobody knows better than himself that this is a very incomplete defence, but lawyers endeavour-ing to represent detainee’s interests would like to know what other defence he can offer.

Where the inferred charge is one of disloyalty it is surely reasonable to suppose that the ex-Serviceman, particularly he who has volunteered for service, given years of devoted campaigning to his country and manifestly demonstrated his willingness to forfeit his own life in the national interest, should be least subject to suspicion. The ex-Serviceman, more than anybody else, is in a position to say my record shows my complete and unswerving loyalty

Unfortunately the Home Secretary, whose own record during 1914-1918 was that of an opponent of war, fails to recognize the validity of this plea. He seems to believe that a man can abandon his loyalty with the same facility as a politician repudiates his principles. Thus we find among detainees— Admirals, Commanders, Colonels, Majors, Captains, Squadron Leaders and so many other Officers and ex-rankers that, at one time, the ex-Service element in Ascot Camp made up more than one third of the pure British population. (They were approximately 100 in 280). Since then, after a long drawn out programme of releases, the percentage remaining in detention is not noticeably different.

It is matter of unpleasant record that certain of the camp military guards and personnel, usually reluctant conscripts or bumptious NCOs made a habitual practice of insulting officer detainees. This behaviour was most obnoxiously evident in dealings between a Provost Sergeant and Detainee –Lt. Col C. - a 63 year old Great War veteran. On one occasion this Sergeant shouted: “You can forget that Colonel business now— here you’re just C. to me.” Such calculated rudeness was an almost daily occurrence; and here is strong reason to believe that responsible officers of the camp guards at Ascot, Huyton, and Peel deliberately fostered it.

After leaving prisons for the relative freedom of prison camps ex-Service detainees met together regularly for discussion and organised themselves as a body for the purpose of making collective representations. In the course of discussion it was found that many men had been arrested while faithfully serving their units; some had been right through events culminating in the Dunkirk with-drawal. These men, arrested while in uniform, were forced to endure the added humiliation of wearing prison garb when lodged at the various gaols used for detainees. Uniforms were im-pounded and only restored immediately prior to transfer from prison.

In this connection there was a disgraceful incident during the removal from Walton Gaol to Ascot in July, 1940. When a party of 300 detainees were waiting at Lime Street Station, Liverpool, members of the military escort noticed that some of the men were wearing uniforms. With the approval of officers of the guard, and in full public view, these uniformed men were singled out and stripped of badges and buttons. Men who had volunteered to fight for King and Country were treated in this shameful way. They had been charged with no offence, neither had they been discharged from the Services. Their treatment was quite unlawful and actionable. Yet, who would have listened to their complaints?

At the Camps it seemed that the military officials felt, some discomfort in dealing with Service and ex-Servicemen, some of who were of senior rank to themselves. Detainee H. was appoin-ted a kind of liaison representative between the military and prisoners. His task was to voice the many legitimate grievances in the early days at Ascot Camp. So thoroughly did he perform this duty that he was expedit-iously removed to Brixton Prison; a treatment generally accorded to those regarded as an “unruly in-fluence in the camp.” Captain C. P-R. was similarly removed despite his strong protest. He was dragged along the ground to the gate, while the rest of the camp was kept back at the point of the bayonet. Captain P.-R. was then a sick man. Much later he was released into hospital.

It is interesting to recall some of the observations of those very few MPs who discussed the plight of detained ex-Servicemen or who have mentioned individual cases.

On Tuesday, December 10th, 1940, Mr. Stokes (Ipswich) said:

“150 gallant ex-Servicemen of the last war signed a petition to be tried by a proper Court as they had done nothing to be ashamed of. There are members of a military intelligence department, - one of whom seems to be held because knew too much about irregular dealings in oil in a partic-ular part of Europe. There are instances of serving soldiers being held and kept-waiting for months before knowing the reason for their detention.”— Hansard, Vol. - 367, No. 8, ‘Col. 835/6.

During the debate on Emergency Powers (Defence), Act 1939 (Continuance), on July 23rd, 1941, Mr. Pickthorn (Cambridge University) referred to

“An officer who held His Majesty’s Commission was arrested and kept in detention a year. He got no pay for the whole of that time. He came out. He had no registration card or a ration book. He could not seek civilian employ-ment because he held His Majesty’s Commission. He was not immediately re-employed by the War Office. Weeks passed, I believe he is still not posted. Four-teen to fifteen months must have passed since he was arrested and during the whole time it was impossible to earn a penny and it is not possible now. He is not allowed to fight for his country, nor to enter the civilian labour market. He is so to speak civilly dead.”

In the same debate Mr. Stokes said:

With regard to serving officers or men it has always been a matter of considerable surprise to me that they could be taken from their units and detained without being tried or sent before a Court Martial. I have the case of a young officer who was detained for six months, the only reason given for his deten-tion being that he was a member of British Union. He never was a member of British Union so the Home Secretary cannot have satisfied himself that it was necessary to exer-cise control. He cannot have done anything of the sort for the only reason given was that this officer was a member of British Union when he was not, so presumably the Home Secretary did nothing. This man was let out after six months. He has not been re-engaged by the Army, he is left alone, what is he to do?”

At Peel Camp, Isle of Man, the ex-Service section was at first headed by J.W and E. C. both officers and pilots of the Great War. Here the, first task was to take the strongest exception to Manx papers’ com-ments greeting the arrival of 18B detainees on the island. These are dealt with separately in the section of the document devoted to the Press and include such terms as “traitors,” “rats” and “skunks.”

From a representative group of 40 detainees at Peel, 18 men, between them, have given 114 years of military service; nearly seven years per head. These are the men whom the Manx press and sections of the National press, dare to stigmatize as traitors.

MPs as a whole appear to have shown themselves singularly unsympathetic to the plight of ex-service-men caught up in the net of the 18B regulations and probably 95 per cent of letters to MPs have been completely ignored or barely acknowledged with a standard form of printed card. But just as every rule is proved by an exception a few MPs out of whom R. R. Stokes, Commander Bower, and Sir A. Albery appear most prominent, have realized the deplor-able situation and have done their best to illustrate the position to the House.

Unfortunately many of their words of wisdom appear to have fallen on deaf ears. The percentage of ex-servicemen to the total interned has nearly always remained much the same—namely about one third of the all British section.

A primary protestation of ex-servicemen is against the fitness of Mr. Herbert Morrison as a person to judge their loyalty. When these men were fighting in bloody battles during 1914-1918, Mr. Morrison was an avowed Conscientious Objector. It is a bitter pill that he should be the man to now assess their loyalty. With all due respect to the Home Secretary these men believe, and are justified in their belief, that their loyalty has been proved in the face of more rigorous tests than are met in the House of Commons, in the Home Office, in the London County Council, or in the Labour Party Conference.

If military rewards count for anything many of these internees earned high awards for bravery on the field of battle. Now they are caged, reviled, and spat upon by their countrymen, because an ex-cons-cientious objector questions their patriotism. The onus of proving his innocence rests on the detainee. What greater proof could there be?

The Anglo-Italians

Those who know Soho, in London, or have dwelt in any of the great ports, or in almost any Scottish town, will have some knowledge of the little Italian communities there. Clinging together they form a close-knit, generally unobtrusive and extremely hard-working circle, easy to get on with and trouble-some to nobody. Through long residence here—often over several generations—accents have been lost entirely, or slurred over by the local accent, Cockney, Broad Lancashire, Welsh, Scotch, or what you will; and their sons and daughters, born here, show temperaments mellowed by some of our northern coldness. Good mixers (how dull our concerts in internment would have been without them!) they have assimilated better, perhaps, than any of our recent immigrants.

Many served in our forces during the last war and carry their medal ribbons with pride! And their sons followed suit in the present conflict, not reluctantly, but as naturally as does any Briton. Their outlook was perhaps best displayed when a party was sent from prison in Scotland to the York camp, and a military officer there asked for their nationality. They replied "British." He wrote down on his papers, "English," whereupon these alleged foreigners protested vigorously, claiming, as their accents pro-claimed that they were Scots!

Few of them knew anything about politics. If they followed the events of the last decade in Italy with interest, it was as say Mr. Smith of Ohio, whose family went over to the States a century ago, might feel his pulse stir sometimes when he heard news of the old town, somewhere in England, from which they sprang and which, in the boom years of the '20's he found time to visit. And when, in May, 1940, they heard of a round-up of British Fascists, they simply thought, along with the rest of the public, that it must be all right, that there couldn't be smoke without fire; they had come to respect British justice, to be proud of it.

Upon these people, also, the cold hand of 18B descended, around about June 10, 1940, bustling them into jails all over the country and later to internment.

The circumstances of arrest varied. Sometimes it came quietly and in a manner calculated to leave as little offence as possible; sometimes the opposite. Many were taken from the Forces and, deprived of their uniforms, had to wear prison clothing. At Aberdeen the Prison Governor had no idea what they were to wear, and for 24 hours they remained naked in their cells - the experience of A. G. and others.

Mr. G. of Liverpool was visited at his home. His wife was away tending a sick relative, and his two children were expected home from school in a few hours time. He was asked apologetically for per-mission to search his house, and then taken to the police station where, after much pre-varication, he was informed that he must stay in custody overnight. Permission to telegraph his wife, or to arrange for anybody to look after his children was refused. Not until 10 days later was he told that he was being detained under Regulation 18B.

Two old men over 80, many years naturalized, and both with sons in the British Army, remained in detention for 8 months. Two other men, invalids, were only released in time to die out of internment.

In Edinburgh a boy of 15 was locked up in jail, eight others were only a year older; twenty in all below the age of 18. All were released a few months later when the Authorities had recovered some of their mental balance and a little of their decency. In the same city, a professor of Italian at the University was arrested; a quiet man of reserved disposi-tion who had no fingers on either hand, and only with the utmost difficulty could handle the earthenware pot in which his prison food was served. It was a week before his plight was noticed and some assistance allowed and two months before he was freed.

Yes, you say, but there must have been some reason for arresting these people. But let us see.

A Liverpool man, whose family had been carrying on business here for 150 years and who was engaged in vital Government work which suffered badly during his internment, remained locked up for several months. His crime? He had married an Italian lady. The Tribunal, which even-tually examined him, asked, in all seriousness, "Why did you marry an Italian woman?"

A little school in Soho was raided and the books seized, and many old pupils rounded up, pre-sumably for having learned the Italian language. One youngster told in Brixton how, at the age of 12, his name was entered at this school, but he left it after a month's trial, and couldn't speak five words of the language, nor had he retained any contact with the Italian community.

Some had dual nationality, which means that they were born here of Italian parents and had not declared themselves at the appropriate age as having opted for full Italian nationality; they regarded themselves, as a matter of course, as British, willing to accept all the duties of a British subject. Others, through long residence here, had become naturalized, and had many relatives in the British Forces—one man for instance, had three brothers serving, and was awaiting his own call-up papers. Yet others were Italian only by name, having long lost touch with their connections abroad

Others were regarded more seriously, and received short shrift from the Advisory Committee when its sittings began after a delay of some four months.

A number of these had retained cultural interests with Italy or had visited it for short holidays. So with an Edinburgh man, an active Boy Scout officer of many years' standing: a senior officer in St. Mary's Cathedral, and an ARP Volunteer since September 1938. His sole offence was that on one isolated occasion, he agreed, without payment, to escort a party of boys from a poor Scottish quarter to a Sum-mer Camp in Italy. For that he is to be detained until the end of the war, a decision reached after a cursory examination lasting only 10 minutes. Five first-class testi-monials were not even read. Nine other men heard on the same day were before the Tribunal for periods ranging from 3 to 5 minutes.

Other victims, whilst in this country, had belonged to "Fascio" Clubs. It must be explained that Italian clubs of a social nature have existed here for many years, and with the advent of Mussolini simply changed their name to "Fascios." Their interests are limited to sport, and social gather-ings, members sometimes being given special facilities to visit Italian camps for brief holidays. The clubs enter foot-ball teams in local leagues just as any works or parish church may do, and have always been tolerated and often even assisted by the authorities here.

These men, of so many different types, were rounded up flung into jails and put at the mercy of hostile warders, whose attitude became human only after long contact had shown their charges to be just or-dinary decent human folk, and finally lodged in internment camps; and all that time when British sub-jects were being allowed to walk about freely in Italy, subject only to restriction of travel.

Many remain interned. Although the Home Secretary may some day make capital out of it, it is little wonder that after 18 months of internment, a large number of them decided that the advan-tage of British nationality, after all, was not worth the candle, and voluntarily petitioned to be removed to an Aliens camp where, at any rate, they would be looked after by the International Red Cross.

The Anglo-Germans

Naturally there were a number of Anglo-Germans arrested at the outbreak of war, some even a day or two before, and these, along with those detained during the ensuing few weeks underwent all the hard-ships of early prisoners, as outlined elsewhere, at Wandsworth and other prisons; a further round-up, notably in Lancashire and London, took place following the fall of the Low Countries, later detainees going to Brixton or Walton, and women to Holloway and then to Port Erin.

It is known that nine men detained under Regulation 18B were sent overseas, seven (one of whom lost his life), being on the ill-fated Arandora Star. True some of these may have only nominally been of British nationality, but all the same there seems to be a conflict here with Mr. Morrison's remark, at the time the Isle of Man Bill was under discussion, that prior to that date no British subjects had been sent abroad (in this connection there is also one Anglo-Italian) at Peel Camp, definitely of British Nation-ality, who was sent to an Italian Camp in the

Isle of Man before the Bill was submitted to Parliament.

The charges against these Anglo-Germans, mostly came under three headings: hostile origin; having lived in or been educated in Germany; or having retained connections with relatives or friends in Germany. The last charge always seems to us to be somewhat naive, since obviously anybody wishing to establish here with the object of turning traitor in war-time would make it a first task completely to dissociate himself from quarters likely to become suspect at times of crisis but it is not for us to teach Intelligence departments their job.

Altogether, a little over 100 were detained, some naturalised here, or the children of naturalised parents; others with one or both parents German, but born here and therefore had dual nationality. Most it might be said at the time of arrest had no strong political convictions one way or the other; bread and butter was in England and that earned their sympathies. If today, after years or more of internment, their opin-ions have crystallized into something very much against us, it is not difficult to understand,

There were hard cases. One man who spent months in prison or camps before release, was over 70. Another in the 60's, had just an eye operation before arrest, leaving him for the time being, in constant pain and nearly blind, so that as soon as the light became strong he had to be led around; men felt savage when they saw him endure agonies at Walton, because ointment to relieve his pain was not made available. He too, was let free after several months of internment.

Inevitably, too, there were queer cases or should we say queer charges. It is charged against a young man that his sister is detained. His sister's indictment bore the notation that her brother is also locked up. With such a deadlock there would seem no hope for either of them! Stranger still the instance of a naturalized German being charged that he "has always been closely associated with his Father (until death), mother and sisters, who are German citizens." A condition of affairs only remarkable reprehen-sible we should think to the blimp of blimps. His mother was arrested at same time on the charge that her son was under detention, but was set free after three weeks; the sisters were also released after an interval of 8 months; but the son, the only British subject amongst them remained behind barbed wire, although as recently as March 1939 the Home Office was so satisfied with him that it granted him naturalization papers.

Another young man is detained as being hostile origin, whilst his brother has been called up for the army and expects to be jailed for refusing service.

A few are ex-servicemen of the last war, and several were arrested out of the army.

Hearings before the Advisory Committee have generally been short and inclined to deal with matters quite extraneous to matters of loyalty. What was the object of pressing man for reasons why he had been living with a woman without having married her? This was a completely irrelevant question and never ought to have been put.

British Union Case

Mr. Watkins (Hackney Central): "They are guilty in varying degrees, and it rests with the Home Secretary to decide whether they are sufficient guilty to be detained."

Mr. Maxton (Glasgow, Bridgeton): "Of what are they guilty?' They are guilty, and so am I, and so is the Hon gentleman of……

Mr. Pickthorn: . . . . "Is it in order to say they are guilty?"

Mr. Maxton; "I agree that they are all guilty but the Hon. member is guilty, and I am guilty, and the Home Secretary is guilty of having political views." (Hansard, 21st July, 1942: Col. 1458/9

Of the original 1,769 people detained under Regulation 18B, the majority were persons of hostile origin, of Italian or German antecedents; a few, including suspected IRA members, were held because believed likely to commit acts prejudicial to the safety of the Realm or for hostile associations; and the rest were members or ex-members of organisations believed to be covered by the provisions of 18B (la). Into this latter class and forming the bulk of the pure British detainees, fell some 753 men and women held because of their connection with Sir Oswald Mosley's British Union. These persons were arrested subsequent to May 22nd, 1940, and were detained in Brixton, Walton, Stafford and Holloway Prisons during the following months. From time to time, men were released from this number, and the unfortunate remainder went through detention camps at Ascot, York and Huyton; with the exception of certain leading figures who have spent the whole time in Brixton Prison. At the time of writing, there are still 141 British Union cases in detention, at Brixton, Holloway, Peel and Port Erin.

As so large a proportion of 18B arrests fall into the British Union category, it is right and proper that some examination be made as to why this should be so. First then, observe in the official grounds for action against this body.

Regulation 18B (la) is worded as follows:

> (la) If the Secretary of State has reasonable cause to believe any person to have been a member of, or to have been or to be active in the furtherance of, any organisation as is hereinafter mentioned and that it necessary to exercise control over him, he make an order against that person directing that he be detained.
>
> The organisation hereinbefore referred to are any organisations with respects which the Secretary of State is satisfied that either

(a) The organisation is subject to foreign influence or control;

(b) The persons in control of the organisation have or have had associations with persons concerned in the government of, or sympathies with the system of government of, any power with which His Majesty is at war and in either case there is danger of the use of the organisation for purposes prejudicial to the public safety, the defence of the realm, the maintenance of public order, the efficient pro-secution of any war in which His Majesty may be engaged, or the maintenance of supplies or services essential to the life of the community.

That was the amendment to Defence Regulations that gave the Home Secretary power to act. It will be seen that in its broad essence it could have had very wide application. The Communist Party certainly could have been rounded up under these terms, and the Conservative Party has had leaders who "have had association with the government of Ger-many and Italy." Even the Labour Party could be condem-ned for possessing, prior to the war, a disarmament policy in a world fast arming to the teeth. This argument is not advanced lightly, or because of any belief that members of the parties named should have been detained. It merely demonstrates that to be victimized under 18B (la) an organisation had to be no more culpable than any of the generally respected parties of the State.

But it has since become quite clear, and Mr. Morrison has admitted the fact, that the new legislation was primarily designed to justify the detention of members of the British Union.

On certain of the forms issued in June and July, 1940, there is featured the following preamble:

2. The organisation known as British Union is subject to foreign influence.

3. That Oswald Ernald Mosley as one of the persons in control of the organisation, has or has had associations with persons concerned with the Government of Germany, a power with which His Majesty is at

war.

4. That the said Oswald Ernald Mosley, as one of the persons in control of British Union, and other persons in such control, have sympathies with the system of government in Germany, a power with which His Majesty is at war.

5. There is danger of the use of the organisation known as British Union for purposes pre-judic-ial to the public safety, the defence of the realm, the maintenance of public order, the efficient prosecu-tion of the war in which His Majesty is engaged or the maintenance of supplies or services essen-tial to the life of the community."

This was the formidable indictment against British Union. It fitted the terms of 18B (la) like a glove, and quite rightly so since it was "made to measure." It is a measure of justification of the Home Secret-ary's action, which should surely have been given widest publicity, if only to allay the wide-spread anxiety against in application of the regulation. Yet not only was this extra-ordinary list of allegations kept in shamefaced obscurity, but it was completely dropped from later forms of reasons for detention.

Now why was this weighty evidence cast aside and neglected. Why did this preamble fall out of use?

The main count in this indictment is the charge (2d):

"There is reasonable cause to believe that between the years 1932 and 1937 the organisation has been in receipt of monies from Italy."

It is possible to answer the charge by quoting an independent source, Mr. R. R. Stokes, speaking in the House on the 10th December 1940, said:

"In connection with British Union, I must say a word about the chief protagonist of that organisa-tion, Sir Oswald Mosley. I think it should be said, although I am not a sympathizer in any way with their point of view or their activities, he appeared before the Advisory Committee and the Committee invited his solicitors to help them in discovering whether or not any foreign money was coming into the organi-sation of British Union. After a most exhaustive search, in which all the banks joined, the Committee and solicitors had to admit that no foreign money of any kind was coming into that organisation." (Hansard, Vol. 387, No. 8, Col.s34.)

Most of the other charges relate to the person or personal activities of Sir Oswald Mosley himself. For the present it is enough to refer again to Mr. Stokes' speech of December 10th, 1940.

He then told the House:

"After sixteen hours cross examination, Mr. Norman Birkett indulged in this conversation with Sir Oswald Mosley, which I think ought to be quoted and put on record whatever one's feelings."

"Sir Oswald said to Mr. Norman Birkett: "There appear to be two grounds for detaining us. (1) A suggestion that, we are traitors and would take up arms and fight with the Germans if they 1anded and (2) that our propaganda undermines civilian morale. Mr. Norman Birkett replied: "Speaking for myself, you can entirely dismiss the first suggestion."

Mr. Stokes continued with the observation. It ought also to be remembered that many leading politi-cians, and many more good members of the democratic parties, had visited Germany before the war. Some of these visitors were officially welcomed by the German Government and had spoken with Hitler. A number openly praised the German system of Government, on their return to this country."

It might be pointed out that other politicians and even reputed statesmen visited Italy and praised Mussolini and Fascism. This reply applies especially to Mr. Winston Churchill.

To illustrate the war patriotism and loyalty of the internees, Mr. P. C. Loftus told the House of Commons of one man who was arrested for British Union activities. His story is as follows:

"He happened to own a motorboat and was on the Thames at the time of Dunkirk when the wireless appeal came over. He volunteered to go, and rescued about 450 men, his motorboat being fairly well plastered with machine gun bullets. On his return to England he was arrested." (Hansard, Vol. 373, No. 88, COI. 983.)

Men and women of this type ought not to be segregated from their fellows, thrown into gaols and prison camps and treated as worse than felons.

Although over one third of the detained fell under this BU category let it not be assumed for one moment that this work is written with a bias towards any political party or section of those detained. It is merely written to query the administration of English Justice to British citizens irrespective of the political or economic views, or their walk of life.

At first sight it was the wish of the Editor to answer in this chapter more fully the numerous charges bandied about concerning British Union, but it was finally decided to keep this document entirely non-political and thus purely factual.

Bearing this in mind it is hoped that the reader will regard anything herein referred to in connection with British Union as entirely sub-judice until such time as complete freedom of speech is restored.

Reasons For Detention

When the blow fell and the police appeared on hundreds of doorsteps, they were naturally asked the time-honoured question "By what authority?" In answer, there was produced a paper headed "Detention Order," in most cases purporting to be signed by the Home Secretary. Detainees-to-be were usually handed a carbon copy for retention. Since the "Reasons for Detention," which form the main subject of this chapter, normally closely follow the wording of the Detention Orders, the latter may be dismissed with the following remarks.

At least one of these alleged copies contains no date beyond the year 1940, and no indica-tion whatever of any signature - simply a blank space followed by the formula "One of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State."

In granting, in May, 1941, in a King's Bench Divisional Court, a writ of Habeas Corpus to Captain Bentinck-Budd, R.E., Mr. Justice Humphreys stated that:

"In the order under which Capt. Budd was detained there was nothing whatever about the neces-sity of exercising control over him. Further, when the police detained Capt. Budd, a document was presented to him as representing the authority for the detention. But that docu-ment was nothing like the original order. It wrongly alleged that Capt. Budd was said to be a person of hostile association, which never was alleged. It appears that Capt. Budd has been detained for 11 months on a document purporting to emanate from the Home Secretary which never emanated from him at all and was a worthless piece of paper."

Mr. Justice Singleton, in concurring added that that was not the first case that had come before the Court of late where there had been mistakes by the Home Office:

“When I see the complete mistake that has occurred here, and there is no explanation, I am lost in amazement.” (Manchester Guardian, 28/5/41.)

It is bad enough for an Englishman’s fortune and good name to fall victims to political chican-ery; what shall be said then at their being placed at the callous mercies of careless officialdom?

Then, in the House of Commons, on the 10th June, 1941, in reply to Miss Ward (Wallsend, U.), the Home Secretary (Mr. Herbert Morrison) said:

“In the case of Capt. C. H. Bentinck-Budd and certain others who were interned at the same time, there was an accidental irregularity in the documents served upon them at the time of their arrest. This irregularity occurred after my predecessor had taken the decision that the intern-ment of these people was necessary. A bad clerical mistake was made in that the document served upon the individuals whom the Home Secretary had decided to intern did not correspond with the order made by him. In view of the High Court decision, he ordered the immediate release of 12 other persons whose position was the same as that of Capt. Budd.” (Hansard, 10/6/41.)

Nevertheless, as will be discussed below both Captain Budd and eleven of the twelve other men were shortly afterwards detained again. (Times, 11/6/41).

One of the several forms of Detention Order customarily used’ opens with the words: “WHEREAS I have reasonable cause to believe (full name) . . . . to have been recently concerned in acts prejudicial to the public safety or the defence of the Realm.”

Imagine the feelings of a maybe talkative but quite patriotic citizen when greeted by the police with the words “We must ask you to come along with us,” and confronted with a document of this kind.

“Recently engaged in acts” . . . the words conjure up suggestions of the blowing up of bridges or sig-naling to the enemy; they inspire thoughts of the gallows or the firing quad. A different form of order expresses “reason-able cause to believe the suspect to have been recently concerned in the preparation or instigation of acts prejudicial,” etc. if anything, an even more terrifying formula; for it opens the way to the most unscrupulous and sinister distortion of the most innocent expressions; and words are plainly harder to disprove than deeds. In one case, the Regional Commissioner’s Detention Order (dated 20th September, 1940) was couched in the form:

“to have been recently concerned in preparation of acts”.

while that signed by the Home. Secretary on the 24th October, 1940, adds the words “ and instigation.”

A Detention Order, dated 22nd May, 1940, which must be one of the earliest of the 1940 batch, is worded as follows:

“Regulation 18B of the Defence (General) Regulations, 1939, having been amended by the inser-tion after paragraph (1) of the following paragraph:

(1A) If the Secretary of State has reasonable cause to believe any person to have been or to be a member of, or to have been or to be active in the furtherance of any organisation as is hereinafter mentioned and that it is necessary to exercise control over him, he may make an order against that person directing that he be detained.

The organisations hereinbefore referred to are an organisation as respects which the Secretary of State is satisfied that either

(a) the organisation is subject to foreign influence or control;

(b) the persons in control of the organisation have or have had associations with persons con-cerned in the government of, or sympathies with the system of government of, any power with which His Majesty is at war, and in either case that there is danger of the use of the organisation for purposes prejudicial to the public safety, the defence of the Realm, the maintenance of public order, the efficient prosecution of any war in which His Majesty may be engaged, or the main-tenance of supplies or services essential to the life of the community:

The Secretary of State in pursuance of the powers conferred on him by the above-mentioned regulation has made an order directing that YOU ……..be detained.

You will have an opportunity of making any representations you wish to the Secretary of State; and you have a right, whether or not you make such representations, to make your objections to an Advisory Committee appointed by the Secretary of State.

Under Secretary of State of the Home Dept., Home Office, Whitehall. 22nd May, 1940."

Two Bristol men received Detention Orders signed by the Regional Commissioner (No. 7 District, S.W.). The first of these men received the Home Secretary's Order about 60 days later in November, 1940—on his transfer to Ascot Camp; and the second about 24 days later in May, 1941

In prison or in concentration camp, many weeks passed before most detainees were granted what were described as "Reasons for Detention." Out of 15 cases among others examined the average time lag between arrest and delivery of "reasons" was 19 weeks; the shortest of these was 12 weeks; and the longest was 28 weeks. These all fall in the autumn of 1940 or the first two months of 1941. Between May and July, 1940, we find one case with seven weeks; in September and October, 1939, four weeks; and in 1941 eight weeks, six weeks and nineteen days. In view of these intervals of time, it is interesting to recall what the then Home Secretary, Sir John Anderson, stated in the house of Commons in a written answer on the 26th October, 1939 Sir John Anderson said:

"Now that the first batch of cases has been dealt with, it is anticipated that any persons who may in future be detained under this Regulation and may make objections will have their cases examined by the Advisory Committee within a few days from the receipt of the objections." (Hansard, Vol. 352, No. 188, 26th October, 1939.)"

The "Reasons for Detention" normally includes and recapitulates in the third person the alle-gations of the Detention Order and then goes on to add more specific allegations, though in some of these "more specific" is a good deal less than "specific." With occasional slight variations, the documents fall into five main types as follows:

(1) That the detainee is or has been a member of the organisation known as British Union or active in the furtherance of its objects."

(2) That the detainee is suspected of "having been recently engaged in the preparation or instigation of acts prejudicial to the public safety, etc.

(3) That the detainee is of hostile origin:

(4) hostile association; or

(5) That the detainee had both hostile origin and associations.

Here are specimens of each type of Reasons for Detention forms:

Reasons for the Order made under Defence Regulation 18B was made against you for the following reasons:

1. The Secretary of State has reasonable cause to believe that you have been a member of the organisation now known as British Union or have been active in the furtherance of its objects; and that it is necessary to exercise control over you.

Particulars.

You were at the time of your detention a member of British Union and active in the furtherance of the objects of the said organisation in your capacity as District Treasurer; by supporting public meetings and by distributing propaganda.

2. At the time of your detention, the Secretary of State had reasonable cause to believe that you had been or were a member of the British Union, which was an organisation of the kind referred to in Regulation 18B (IA); and by order dated 10th July, 1940, the Secretary of State directed that Regu-lation 18AA should apply to the organisation known as British Union and declared himself satisfied that the persons in control of the organisation have had sympathies with the system of government of a power with which His Majesty is at war, and that there is a danger of the use of the organisation for purposes prejudicial to the efficient prosecution of the war.

Type No. 2.—ACTS PREJUDICIAL.

Reasons for the Order made under Defence Regulation 18B in the case of

The Order was made against XXX because the Secretary of State had reasonable cause to believe that the said XXX had been concerned in acts prejudicial to the public safety or the defence of the Realm, and that it was necessary to exercise control over him.

(NOTE.—Some of these "Reasons for Detention" documents have the form "reasonable cause to believe to have been recently concerned."

Some include the words ". . . . concerned in the preparation or instigation of acts." Some are couched in the second person and some fall within two or all three of these categories.

Particulars.

1. The said XXX on or about the 20th June, 1940, while employed by Messrs Y & Z expressed doubts to a fellow workman on the justice of the British cause and the certainty of our ultimate victory.

2. On or about October 10th, 1940, stated to another workman that, in his opinion the British Empire was in as great danger from the USA as from Germany.

3. Has persistently engaged in the preparation and dissemination of false and misleading rumours.

4. Is sympathetic to Germany and the Nazi regime.

5. Is of doubtful loyalty to this country.

Type No. 3—HOSTILE ORIGIN.

Reasons for Order made under Defence Regulation 18B in the case of

The Order for the detention of the above-named was made because the Secretary of State had reasonable cause to believe him to be of hostile origin, and that it was necessary to exercise control over him.

Particulars.

1. The said XXX was born in YYY in this country of German parents who are at present living in Germany.
2. Lived in Germany from 1906 till 1936, when he returned to this country.
3. Has a brother serving in the German army.

4. Has stated his sympathies are with Germany.

Type No. 4—HOSTILE ASSOCIATION.

Reasons for the Order made under Defence Regulation 18B in the case of

1. The Order for the detention of the above-named was made because the Secretary of State had reasonable cause to believe him to have recently had hostile associations, and that it was necessary to exercise control over him.

Particulars.

1. The said XXX has visited Germany and Italy on various occasions, notably between 1930 and 1939.
2. Had lived in Florence from 1924 to 1928.
3. Is on familiar terms with prominent members of the Fascist and Nazi Parties.

4. Has taught Italian in the YYY School of Modern Languages.

Type No. 5—HOSTILE ORIGIN AND ASSOCIATION.

(Simply a combination of 3 and 4.)

One “Reasons for Detention” form combines Types 1 and 2 and was issued in Aug 1941; and another issued in June of the same year shows the Advisory Committee enclosed the reasons with a civilly-worded covering letter wherein occur the words:

“furnishes you with such particulars as in the opinion of the Chairman, sufficient to enable you to present your case to the Committee.”

In June and July, 1940, there were attached to all or most Type 1 Reasons for Detention the preamble and particulars relating to Oswald Mosley and the British Union. The preamble has been given in full.

In fairness to all detainees, and especially to those who belong to British Union, readers should be referred to Hansard, 367, No. 8, 10th December, 1940, Col. where he will see that a searching examin-ation of the books of British Union failed to reveal the least sign of any receipt of foreign money from abroad. He will also see that Sir Norman Birkett repudiated a suggestion that members of the British Union were traitors would take up

arms and fight with Germans if they invaded.

After receiving his “Reasons for Detention” the detained man goes, sooner or later, before an Advisory Committee. “Later” may be eight or nine weeks: sooner, two days (January, 1941) or one day. In general, there has been an interval of several days in which to think over “Reasons for Detention.” What light did the interview with the Committee throw on the “Reasons for Detention”?

Take the case of G. E. T. This man was detained on September 1st, 1939, two days before the outbreak of war and flung into Wandsworth Prison, on a “hostile association” order. The Advisory Committee however, before whom he appeared at beginning of October, showed as much interest in his British Union activities of which there had been no word on his Detention Order on his “Reasons for Deten-tion,” as in a subject that did appear on these forms.

November, 1939, T. was released; but in 1940, as soon as sub-section 18B (1A) had been inserted into the Defence Regulation he was detained again on a purely British Union Order.

When, in the following December he appeared a second time before the Committee. They seemed—he says—to do little more than bring up again all the material of his former interview including his alleged hostile associations.

It becomes plain to most detainees when meet the Committee that what these gentlemen on the other side of the table have before them is a great deal more, and very different material from that which appear on “Reasons for Detention” forms. To borrow a phrase from philosophy, one may say that the Reasons for Detention assent merely the exoteric doctrine, while the Committee have before them is an vast body of esoteric lore, but little of is revealed to the one man or woman who it mostly affects.

Summary

Objections to the forms of Reasons for Detention may be classified under several heads: false statement or implication, stupidity and carelessness. To take the first, a striking example of clerical error already been given in the ease of Captain Bentinck-Budd and twelve other men, and another is referred to here-after. Meanwhile, there are plenty more. When a lady is charged with “pro-British and anti-German sympathies” or a man with having been “born in 1904 and having married a woman in 1906,” or when a man aged 56 is stated to have been a member of the Ballila, the Italian Youth Movement founded at some time after 1922, then there can be no confidence in the care bestowed on work that may mean all the difference between internment and freedom. Of stupidity—or shall it be said, of that morbid, sus-picious, perverted ingenuity that seems to be characteristic of MI5 and Scotland Yard and perhaps all sniffers out?— the story of Mr. Shelmerdine’s Italian queen is a fine example. (It will be remembered that in the case referred to, sinister meaning was imputed to a note in which occurred the following passage: . . . destroy British queen, replace with Italian . . .“The simple explanation being that Mr. Shelmer-dine had been making notes on his hobby of bee keeping). Further example being found in charging naturalised subjects with “hostile associa-tions” because they associated with their own parents.

From all this it may be seen how little value these Reasons for Detention possess. Any stick will do to beat a dog; and, whatever may appear on “Reasons for Detention,” if the Home Secretary wishes to keep men in prison or behind barbed wire, as shown by the experience of G. E. Thomas and Capt Bentinck-Budd and his twelve companions, if he cannot do it in one way, then he may do it in another—without any consideration for essential rights and justice.

The Right To Petition

Denied access to all normal channels for seeking Justice, it was the natural impulse among detainees suddenly

imprisoned without any reasonable explanation, to desire at once to write or petition the Home Secretary or MPs to bring about their release.

With very few exceptions each person on entering prison, was informed that he had the right, and would be given ample opportunity, to make objections to his detention and to apply in writing to appear before a Home Office Advisory Committee. This committee, he was told, would investigate his case and make necessary recommendations to the Home Secretary. When arresting people known to them, Police intimated that, in their opinion, release would follow in a matter of a few days.

What happened in point of fact was as follows:

1 A time limit of ten days after arrest was set in which such application must be made.

2. On entering prison all writing materials, pens, pencils, and paper of any sort, were removed from prisoners and only limited writing facilities were made available.

3. No clear reason for detention was given and no specific charges were laid against them to which objection could be made.

4. No legal assistance or advice was usually procurable within the ten days. (In many cases applications to communicate with solicitors were flatly refused). There was no guidance as to what form objections should take.

In practice it was about the eighth day after arrest, and usually only after repeated applications, that the detainee was handed a single sheet of foolscap paper and, as a special concession, was lent a decrepit pen intended to serve an entire prison wing of some 200 cells, and a bottle containing more sediment than ink.

No paper was provided for making a rough draft or for keeping a copy of the application, a document of great importance to the detainee. Such copies had to be kept on a few sheets of tissue toilet paper.

MPs frequently found cause, in the individual cases brought to their notice to complain about the extra-ordinary time lag between arrest of a person and the appearance before a Committee. Three months was a moderate time of waiting; six months a commoner period: Thus detainees served a severe prison sen-tence before being given any real opportunity for personal expression.

In this period of waiting, when it seemed likely that requests to go before the Advisory Commit-tee were only a waste of time, there was a natural inclination to petition other quarters for attention. Prison Regu-lations entitle detainees to petition the Home Secretary on any subject, but with the proviso that a second petition could not be submitted while the first was awaiting an-swer. As it was frequently found that as long as six months elapsed before a reply was forth-coming, the right to petition the Home Secretary was thus restricted to twice in a year. Moreover in very many cases petitions received no reply at all and it is doubtful whether they ever reached the Home Office. A detainee E.W. at Ascot submitted a petition in August, 1940, which his solicitor later ascertained had never reached the Home Secretary.

As private writing materials gradually became available more and more detainees sought per-mission to petition their elected Parliamentary Representatives. It should be stressed that pens and ink were only permitted after much prevarication and unnecessary delay. It was then found that letters to MPs were not allowed.

As the result of agitation in the House of Commons this ban on letters to MPs was removed, but until December, 1940, the Home Secretary would not admit that the ban had existed. Answers to questions on the matter had produced shamefully evasive replies, the Government’s attitude being typified by that of Mr. Peake (Under-Secretary to the Home Office), on December 10th, when he said:

“There has never been a rule prohibiting persons detained in prisons from writing to MPs. The rules relating to correspondence have recently been relaxed and it is now open to all persons detained in prisons by Administrative order to communicate with Members of Parliaiment.” (Hansard Vol. 367, No. 8, Col. 786.)

Reading this statement literally and with knowledge of what had occurred it can only mean that the de-tainee was permitted to write to MPs from the time of his arrest. At the same time he was not permitted writing materials, nor was he permitted to dispatch any letters he succeeded in writing. That this is playing carelessly with essential privileges of already-wronged men and women is surely fully obvious.

When petitions to MPs became possible a new obstacle arose. The letters, issued as special letters and extra to the regulation two per week, were subjected to appalling postal delays, and were often so much mutilated by censors that their meaning and effectiveness were totally destroyed. It was as if a deliber-ate conspiracy existed to prevent truth of the circumstances and conditions of 18B detention from reach-ing the outside world.

Mr. R. R. Stokes said in the house on December 10th, 1940:

“I understand that until recently these people were prevented or certainly are not aware that they were permitted to do so—from writing to MPs. Whatever the Rt. Hon. Gentleman may say, I feel that must be so, for otherwise why should there suddenly have been this appalling spate of letters from internment camps, which I am sure most Hon. Members are receiving? Certainly the letters were stopped from various camps, the names of which I shall give the Rt. Hon. Gentleman.”

This comment followed the handing in at Ascot of a letter addressed to Mr. Stokes by detainee J. Wynn. The letter, handed in on September 28th, had not arrived on October 11th. In a letter of that date Mr. Stokes intimated to Mr. Wynn that he was taking up the matter up with the Home Secretary. He asked in for a copy of the original letter. The copy was duly handed to Major Veitch, Camp Commandant, on October 14, when Mr. Stokes’ letter was produced, but in spite of this the copy letter did not reach Mr. Stokes until October 29th

It was anticipated that after Mr. Peake’s statement of December 10th, 1940, letters of appeal from detainees to MPs would be safe from interference. This was not so, the military authorities still refused to accept letters if they contained information which they regarded as unpalatable.

1. A letter dated June 7th, 1941, addressed to Mr. Stokes, was stopped at M Camp, Isle of Man, because it contained the following sentence

“It is unsatisfactory that a proper accounts statement is never circulated, posted, or issued relative to the Camp benefit funds. It is disappointing that Canteen profits or a fixed proportion of same are not given to a Camp welfare fund, instead of irregular donations which may be only an extremely small percentage of the profits.”

Capt. Green of Military Intelligence initialed and red-penciled this paragraph as containing unsatisfac-tory insinuations. Yet the Canteen Sergeant was the subject of a Military Inquiry only a week or so later because of irregularities during his administration.

2. Letter dated January 1st, 1941, from detainee A. F. Ilett to Mr. Stokes, was stopped at York Camp by Capt. Craster, Military Intelligence, because it contained views non-scurrilous but critical of the Government.

3 Letter dated December 29th, 1940, from detainee F. Keller to Capt. S. Hammersley, was stopped at Ascot Camp by Capt. Collins, Military Intelligence, because it contained the following sentence

“with what is known as an indictment as though it were an advertising leaflet.”

The original letters, with the initials and markings of respective officers, are still retained.

Many more letters were refused on similarly trivial grounds and the great number of letters left unan-swered produced an impression that there was a convenient amount of “loss” in transit.

After the disturbance at Peel Camp in September, 1941, it was desired that Mr. Stokes should be put in possession of the full facts, but owing to the probability that the letter would be stopped by Military Intelligence authorities at the Camp, the details were compressed into an ordinary regulation 24 line letter that would not normally be examined in the camp but passed direct to the Censors at Liverpool. Even then the Censor deleted the words

“The immediate cause being the refusal of officers in charge to allow food to be taken to re-captured escapees after stating that they had been starved for two days.”

In answer to a further question in the house of Commons on October 23rd, 1941, Mr. Morrison said letters addressed by persons detained under Defence Regulation 18B to MPs are not, subject to deletion by the Censor.”

That, it might be imagined, settled the matter and gave the detainees complete freedom in their approaches to Members of the house. Yet it is found that on December 16th, 1941, Mr. Peake wrote to Mr. Stokes:

“The question whether additional letters to MPs may be allowed is one within the discretion of the prison governor.”

So that letters can still be banned at the discretion of the authorities, unless the detainee is willing to use one of his bi-weekly letters at the expense of business or domestic correspondence.

So much for the facilities for petitioning MPs, a facility once deemed highly valuable in the absence of any alternative medium for representation of detainee interests. Now it must he shown in the words of a Member of the house that even this privilege is ineffective.

Fit. Lieut. Boothby, speaking in the House on November 26th, 1941, is reported as saying:

“The Prime Minister said the other day that this House had some rights in the matter, and that Members could raise particular cases. Hon Members know well that there is one particular case, which I tried to raise, not only as a private Member but as a Minister, and I say it is a complete fallacy to suggest that any real power is exercised by Members of this House over the Executive. I was not informed as a Minister, I was not informed as a Member of the reasons for the detention of the person in whom I was interested and no Hon Member is informed by the Secretary of State, as is well known, of the reasons for detention. How, therefore, can they reach a decision? They hear the case of the man who is interned, but they do not hear the other side from the Rt. Hon. Gentleman, and so they cannot come to an unbiased conclusion. They have therefore no real power in the matter at all. One can talk about particular cases for 20 minutes at the end of a Sit-ting and as one Hon. Member says, it is probably not reported in the Press. And that is the end of the matter.” (Hansard Vol. 376, No. 7, Cols. 837/8.)

In the Commons on July 21st. 1942, Mr. Morrison gave, perhaps, his final word on the subject:

“This House is not a specific court of appeal. What the House must do is to keep a watch on the Home Secretary, to have a debate, to look out. For cases where in their judgment he has gone wrong, if they can get evidence that he has. I know the limitations of this House. I agree it is not altogether cricket, but I cannot help it.”

Not cricket! No, cricket is too English a game to be compared with cynical side-stepping like that.

The Advisory Committee.

Most people detained under Regulation 18B3 or any of its sub-sections have appeared, in the normal course of events, before an Advisory committee avowedly so that they may have an opportunity of answering the charges laid against them, officially termed the "reason for detention," and that the Committee may recommend to the home Secretary either release or further detention.

It is stressed that the Committee only recommends, and it has therefore, power to counsel but not to influence the Home Secretary.

Some days prior to appearing before the Committee, the person is given a statement setting out "reasons for detention." Representation by a solicitor or legal adviser is refused, even when the detainee is wil-ling to pay the cost. The proceedings are in camera.

Apart from this there are no apparent regulations as to the procedure of the Committee, which appears to be a matter for the direction of the Chairman alone. In practice it generally occurs that the detainee rep-lies to the statement of reasons for detention and is then questioned by the members of the commit-tee; or in some cases the questioning takes place first and the detainee is then asked if he wishes to make a statement. No witnesses are produced in support of the evidence on which the "reasons for detention" are based, nor is the source of such evidence disclosed. In many cases it has been received anony-mously by the Home Office or the Police, or is the product of investigators whose reward is possibly according to the quantity rather than the quality of their information - the evidence is not given on oath. In every case the onus is on the detainee to disprove, and not on his interrogators to prove, the allegations of pos-sibly nefarious intent.

The composition of the Committee (this does not refer to those Committees operating for con-sideration of "Alien Origin," etc.) is, with few exceptions, made up of legal and political person-alities. The Chair-man of the main Committee is Sir Norman Birkett, recently promoted to Judge-ship, Messrs. Morris, Mallon, Cockburn, K.C., Stuart-Bunning; Mrs. Low and others act, or have acted, either upon the main or the subsidiary Committees. Appointment to an Advisory Com-mittee is by the Home Secretary, who has, presumably, the power to terminate the appointment.

Mr. Morrison himself has some interesting things to say on the choice of personnel for the Committee. In time House of Commons on the 26th November 1941, he quoted Lord Finlay as saying:

"It seems obvious that no tribunal for investigat-ing whether circumstances of sus-picion exist warranting some restraint can be imagined which would he less appropriate than a court of Law."

Mr. Pethick-Lawrence went further:

"I do not believe that a Court of Law, well constituted, as it is to discuss questions of fact, is in the very least a suitable one to discuss questions of suspicion. When I was in India some ten years ago the Government there had put detainees in prison on suspicion and the Government wished members of the legal profession to go through the evidence and say whether it was evidence that entitled them to keep them in detention. The legal profession definitely refused to do so. They said that it was not part of their business, that it was entirely away from their proper duty and that they would not be parties to any procedure of that kind."

Both the Home Secretary and the Member for Edinburgh East were trying to explain why there should be no

recourse to normal Courts of Justice for 18B detainees. The point made is that persons arrested on suspicion only cannot be tried by a Court controlled by rules of evidence as the Court always would have to order release. This would defeat the purpose of internment. Morally, the point is bad and must lead to official lawlessness. It is no use to misunderstand the argument, as some of the Home Secret-ary's critics have done. Government by expediency decree, and suspicion is an end of civil rights.

That Advisory Committees, are composed of legal minded persons who by habit of thought and speech, face the detainee with a language he does not understand, is in itself a condem-nation of them.

Imagine the position of a man of no more than average general education, with no legal training, before the Advisory Committee. He has certainly spent several weeks in a prison cell under conditions that make the retention of decent personal appearance and self-confidence a question of the utmost difficulty. He may have been several months under such conditions. He is then taken into the immaculate and for-midable presence of some of the leading lawyers of this country, in a setting of awe inspiring, self-righteous and accusing authority. In such surroundings he is immediately and supremely ill at ease. He has come, no doubt, charged with a powerful case against his accusers, but to argue before such wits as have debated for hours the hair-line differences and subtleties of words, is a task demanding unusual confidence. The average man must feel and speak like an ignoramus before an encyclopaedist. It often happened that one of the first things said to the appellant was:

"Do you want this country to win the war?" Can any more stupid question be imagined? Would any-body, having gone to the trouble of requesting a hearing before the Committee answer in the negative?

The Home Secretary justifies his refusal to allow legal representation on the ground that some of the evi-dence cannot be made public for reasons of national security. Yet we have his assurance that it is placed before the Ad-visory Committee, which is composed of members of the legal profession? If it can be entrusted to some, why not to others? Trials in camera are not infrequent occurrences in wartime, and legal representation is allowed at these. To suggest that solicitors could not be trusted to keep secret the business of the Advisory Committee is an insult to the pro-fession as well as an absurdity.

Until and unless legal representatives are allowed to argue a detainee's case for him, he is under a dis-advantage that amounts to injustice and makes his appearance before Committee a matter of luck and a farce. Succinctly, the position is this: detained persons appear before a court composed of legal experts - those courts have none of the customary regulations concerning witnesses, admissibility of evidence and proceedings, which the experiences of centuries has shown to be necessary provision of true justice; there is no appeal to a higher court; there is no legal represen-tation of the person appearing; and even if a detainee satisfies the court that he should at liberty he has not necessarily secured freedom.

It was stressed in the first place that Committee could advise but not influence. Some interesting figures have been published recently in illustration of this point. In the House of Commons on the 26th November 1941, Mr. Morrison admitted that in 89 cases he had gone against the recom-mendations of the Advisory Committee. On this subject Ernest Evans (Member for the University of Wales) said:

"It was the Home Secretary himself who appointed this Committee. It would be insulting to suggest that he appointed a Committee in which he did not have confidence; he must have had confidence in the Committee that he appointed. It is important that he should have confidence in the Committee and, if I may say so, with respect it is equally important that the Committee should have confidence in him. In view of what is happening I don't think that the second of those applies. The second fault is that many members of the Committee—I think most of them, cer-tainly the chairman have had more experience of judging the value of evidence than the Home Secretary claims. The third fact is that the Advisory Committee devotes a great deal of time to the examination of every case coming before it. They sometimes devote days to the consideration of a case. I believe that they devote much more than the Home Secretary to every case, with all his other occupations, can hope to give."

Mr. Ernest Evans does not think that Committee can have confidence in the Home Secretary. Perhaps if he were not bound by Parliamentary chivalry he would have drawn the more obvious conclusion that it is the Home Secretary who has no confidence in the committee.

There are in fact only two possible explanations of the Home Secretary's disagreement with the Com-mittee. It is conceivable he sincerely holds the view that the few mites of personal attention he is able to each individual case is more likely to be productive of the correct decision than the hours of conside-ration given by the Committee in a spirit of judicial prodigality. But it is likely that he is advised, or compelled some other body which possesses evidentiary suspicion of which the Advisory Committee is kept in ignorance. This belief is supported by the experience of detainees that the decision that one would expect from the nature of proceedings at the Committee has been opposite to that made by the Home Secretary. Ernest Evans says:

"I can think of only two possible explanations. One is that the Home Secretary considers himself to be of such high mental calibre that he can shut down recommendations by people with much experience than he has in dealing with this thing. I do not think for a moment that that compelling thought in the mind of the Home Secretary. The second possible explanation is that he is being guided by somebody, a person or organisation or some department, whose views are not those of the Advisory Committee."

Certainly no one will accuse Mr. Morrison of such presumptuous insolence as to consider himself infallible where the highest brains can unite in being wrong. We can believe what commonsense makes obvious, the opinions of such bodies as the War Department, MI5, Scotland Yard, local police chiefs and such furtive and sinister bodies as the Swinton Committee ply the Home Secretary with advice and insistence, without reference to the Advisory Committee.

Many detainees who feel that they have satisfied the Advisory Committee that they are fit and proper persons to be at liberty are quite certain that not all the supposed evidence affecting their detention has been produced to them. This circumstance has led MPs to seek and obtain assurance on the point.

In the course of the debate on Emergency Powers (Defence) Act 1939 (Continuance) in the House of Commons on 23rd July, 1941, the following questions and answers were exchanged:

Mr. Stokes: "Will the Hon. Gentleman assure the House that the persons detained are themselves given full reasons for their detention?"

Mr. Peake: "That assurance, of course, has been given from this Box by my Rt. Hon. Friend and myself on many occasions, and it is invariably the practice of the Advisory Committee to put before these persons as explicitly as they can, all the facts which are known against them."

Earl Winterton: "Is the reason why they are being arrested made clear to them, or do they have to wait until they go before an Advisory Committee,"

Mr. Peake: "When he gets to the Advisory Committee every fact which can possibly be put to him is put to him by the chairman of the Committee at the hearing." (Hansard Vol. :373, Cols. 947/8.)

The Under-Secretary of State there gives categorical assurances, which at least 50% cent of the per-sons who have been before the Committees would strenuously deny. MPs were willfully misled and Mr. Morrison himself supplied a belated confession to this effect. Speaking on a proposed amendment to the Address on 26th November, 1941, he said:

"Of course, there is this to be said, that, although the Advisory Committee have the facts before them, it is not true, as he has been assured, that the Committee is without the facts that I have before me: it is also true that I have the wider knowledge acquired at the Home Office. I see the police reports and a good many of the

security reports and I sit at the War Cabinet frequently and, I see the Foreign Office telegrams."

If this statement means anything, it surely means that the Advisory Committee does not see police and security reports. On his own admission these reports influence the Home Sec-retary in setting aside recommendations for release of detainees. They are therefore vital evidence. This is an admission that Mr. Peake was quite positively misleading the House with his previous assur-ances. Both he and Mr. Morrison deceived MPs by adroit use of the word "facts" instead of "evidence." There may be very sound rea-sons for making a distinction between police reports and facts but the truth emerges that cer-tain vital evidence is withheld from Ad-visory Committees and consequently withheld from detainees themselves. Thus they have no opportunity at all for making explanations on most important features of their cases.

Some detainees convinced that they have not been accorded justice by the Advisory Committee system, and having the necessary wealth to engage in litigation, have challenged the legality of their detention in other Courts. Captain Bentinck-Budd secured a writ of Habeas Corpus against the Governor of Brixton Prison by proving to the Court that the allega-tions against him were patently absurd. In his case the Detention Order, signed by the Home Secretary, alleged that he was detained for " Hostile Origin or Associations." At the Committee hearing he was accused only of being a member of British Union and, as such, could only be held under Section 1a of Defence Regulation 18B. Shortly after his release he was detained on a new order.

By a Lords majority ruling in the case of "Liversedge v. Home Secretary & Another," it has been decid-ed that there is no appeal beyond the Committee and the Home Secretary. Either, or both of them, can come to a decision, which a High Court might think contrary to justice, but, by its own admission, the High Court cannot intervene. One is left wondering at the lack of elementary vigilance of the House of Commons in passing an enactment which is now being applied by the Executive in the opposite manner to that intended, and at the supineness of the House in its inability to rectify a mistake. The significance of the rewording of the Regulation was, at the time, taken for granted, without confirmation from the Government, by such members as were interested at all in the matter: and the Government appears to be open to an accusation of bad faith in having circumvented the will of the House by using words which were misleading.

And so, rebuffed by the law of the land, the detainee must turn back once again to face the Advisory Committee. A general rule appears now to be developing that individual cases shall be reviewed some-thing like a year or 18 months after the first hearing. In most cases the review includes a re-appearance before the Advisory Committee, although sometimes the Home Secretary sees fit to dispense with their recommendation, either releasing or further detaining without reference to them.

The first notification to the detainee that his case is to be re-considered is in the form of a letter, either from the Advisory Committee or from the Home Secretary. He is invited to make a statement in writing, giving not only any new facts which he thinks may have a bearing on his case, but also any new views of old facts which the passage of time may have brought about.

The wording of the letter suggests, immediately, either supreme foolishness or deeply hidden subtlety. Anyone can pretend to a change of opinion, in order to appear to the Committee as a person it would be safe to release. There is absolutely no way of deciding whether the professed change is genuine or not. It is doubtful whether the most indirect ques-tioning by the Committee is of any use in such a situation. Moreover, if a person's opinion has changed once, then it may very well do so a second time, perhaps after his release.

It is clear that the Committee must have something else to work on besides the views expressed in the detainee's statement, unless those views are of themselves enough to cause further detention. In every place where detainees are kept information is collected, from any who are willing to give it, con-cerning others. These informers known among detainees as "snoops" or "narks," provide a large part of the evidence, which is brought against those whose cases are being re-viewed. It appears that anyone who is sufficiently debased to concoct or collect hear-say either first, second, or third hand, can exchange such worthless information for an equally worth-less promise of release from the Military Intelligence Officer or his equivalent. Thus are the characters of detainees sold in a sort, of black in falsehood, either for spite or for the selfish ends of the

vendor? The number of detainees who are willing to sell their comrades is, fortunately, small, but nevertheless large enough to have caused momentous in-justices. That the Advisory Committee listens to such "evidence" and throws it in the face of the subject is a monstrous happening—yet there are few cases reviewed in which use is not made of information col-lected in this way. Accuracy and motives of such informers must come under the gravest suspicion.

Letter censors also supply information to the Committee. It is a com-mon practice for sentences or phrases, taken out of their original context in such a way as to suggest a meaning the writer did not intend, to be produced during a case review with a request for explanation. This sometimes occurs months after the letters were written and for-gotten.

The inaccuracy of the information in the hands of the committee cannot be overstressed. As in the case of the first hearing, no witnesses are produced and the source of evidence is not disclosed. No one is prepared to give it on oath. The detainee has no opportunity of calling witnesses to disprove anything alleged against him. He can protest at the falsehood in the evidence, but they may still influence the decision of the Committee or the Hon Secretary.

The evidence in the possession of the Committee, which first considers a case, is collected largely from malicious rumour-mongers and anonymous informers. The evidence before the Committees reviewing cases is often of a no more reputable nature and from no more trustworthy sources. It is not contended that such material is all that the authorities have to go on. No doubt in some cases much more substan-tial reasons exist for deciding whether or not a man should be released from detention. Nevertheless, the fact that such information is used at all, that it is accepted in the first place and purveyed by good-ness knows how many hands to the Advisory Committee, is enough to cast doubts upon the whole sys-tem. If Mr. Morrison has recourse to these tactics, it is no wonder that he refuses to allow the evid-ence to be heard in a Court of Law, or to disclose it to MPs. The only surprising thing is that members of the legal profession can be found who are willing to prostitute themselves to such purposes.

There seems only one possible explanation. It is that in many cases, the decision to release a person is made by the Home Secretary independently, without reference to the Committee, and therefore without reference to the detainee. In this decision the Home Secretary is possibly influenced by other factors, such as the demands of the diverse departments and organisations concerned in the safety of the country and of themselves. In any case the con-clusion can hardly be avoided that, the activities of the Advisory Committee provide, in the final analysis, only a front screen for the Home Secretary's decision.

The existence of the Committee gives the general public a comfortable sense of assurance that some effort is being made to comply with a high standard of justice in administering this emergency legis-lation. The effectiveness of the Committee makes it a sorry bluff. There were several detainees who have refused from the outset to recognize the legality their detention and to appear before a Committee. There are many more who have declined to go through the pantomime a second time, when their cases were due for revision.

Perhaps the clearest light was thrown on the whole of the Advisory Committee system by the detainee who wrote to the home Secretary that he did not wish to play the role of dormouse at another Mad-Hatters Tea Party.

Justice New Style

"The Advisory committee is in no sense a court of appeal or judicial tribunal. It is the creature of the Home Secretary." Commander Bower MP, 21/7/42.

What happened to a man called to meet an Advisory Committee. Originally, it meant a car journey from his prison in London to Burlington House, a mile or two away. After removal to internment, a 20 mile car ride to Burlington house, or, after the premises were damaged in an air raid, a short run to an Ascot hotel, to which the

hearings were transferred. Later on, men would go from Huyton by rail, in batches, to Brixton Prison, and thence once more, to Burlington House, whilst today, detainees going for their second or later hearings must travel from Peel to London, a boat and train journey of over 300 miles. Justice is getting further away than ever.

Finally he gets before the Committee - the arbiters of his fate. He finds before him, seated behind a large table (reminding one, inexplicably, of the Aunt Sallies at a fairground), two or three persons, sometimes including a woman. Also present are a woman secretary, and a shorthand writer.

So comes the questioning. Let us take, first of all, the original hearings and, as the cases are simpler, consider first the cases of Anglo-Germans (Anglo-Italians had separate Committees as a general rule).

The life history is run through, to check details and explain possible blanks, and also to check relation-ships with foreign firms or persons, in Britain or abroad. All foreign visits must he accounted for and their purpose explained.

It need not be emphasised that persons of dual nationality, or with one foreign parent, are in an insidious position instinctively, being born and brought up here, they look upon Britain as their homeland and yet at the back of their minds is a regard for that other country which bore one or both of their parents, which they have perhaps visited and come also to love, whose language they speak as fluently as they do English. They would look upon the idea of taking up arms against that other country, in a quarrel not personal to themselves with repugnance. We know that there are many now in Britain who, having lived here for one reason or another, are now willing to wage war on their land of birth but we cannot understand them. Neither do we feel inclined to insult and call “Quisling” men abroad who hold back when called upon by a foreign power to fight against their own fellow-countrymen.

It is possible that the Advisory Committee, too, has felt the weight of this argument, for it is not often that they have seen fit to ask such men point blank “Will you join the army if you are released?” (Many let out have been asked to join the Pioneers, but that is a non-combatant service). Generally the question has been: “What will you do if you are released?” The reply did not seem to matter much. One man who said he would probably give private music lessons, was told that the Police probably would not like that at all; but no explanation was given.

He might be asked: “How do you regard the German atrocities in Poland?” What answer was wanted was never fathomed. An attempt to please the Committee by saying how awful they were might he looked upon as bluff. If a man stood up for himself and said he wasn’t at all convinced about the stories, and wanted more proof, it was a black mark against him. If he lost his temper that told still more to his disadvantage.

As recorded elsewhere, an internee was asked: “Why did you marry a German woman?” We can cap that, however, with another case where one of these “Anglos” was asked: Why did you marry an English woman?” There may he some deep laid scheme behind such questions, but we cannot guess what it is. In his place, we would have been tempted to ask the Chairman: “Why did you marry your wife? This delving into quite irrelevant domestic matters was carried further than that, however, to an extent which can only be termed as offensive. What was the purport of cross-examining a man at length upon his having lived with a woman to whom he was not married; or pressing another for reasons why he should he “ carrying on” with two women at the same time? If the purpose of the Committees was to examine public morality that should have been made clear when they were appointed. If on the other hand it is believed by the Home Secretary that deviations from the moral code go hand in hand with spying and treachery, then he can never have realized that the ideal spy or “agent” is the man who keeps clear of all entanglements, rather than the one depicted, say, in the pages of Mr. Bruce-Lockhart.

So much for the Anglo-Germans. Now let us turn to the British political detainees.

Here, as regards political views, there was a clearer case. The detainee at some time, or still, subscribed to

some particular political beliefs, and something was probably known of his political activities.

Many stuck to their guns, stating their views, and asking where they had offended; a few of these were accepted as genuine, at once, and released if they had held no particular position in their movement. The rest were detained. Some others now denied, honestly or otherwise, that they retained the beliefs and said they were now willing to fall in line with the existing regime. It was then up to the Committee to form their conclusions as to the genuineness of the retraction.

The general line followed was to depict imaginary circumstances in which the country might find itself, and ask how the individual would face them. So came the question: "What would you do if" and so on.

Again, the atrocity stories would be trotted out: "Do you believe . . . ? "What do you think about ?" Sometimes the most far-fetched propaganda story was told just to test whether the man would, uncon-sciously or frankly express the doubts, which all reasonable men have, about such stuff.

Letters would be quoted or bits of conversation, dating back months or even years before, which a man had forgotten completely. What did he mean by this statement or that remark? Sometimes, with an effort, he could recall and explain them, name the informant and the circumstances under which they were uttered, throwing an entirely different light on the matter. But it was his word against that of a wit-ness he could not call to face him, and he could not tell if his account would be believed. The feeling of detainees was such that when, at Peel, they were able to play bowls, they preferred to speak of a ball having not "bias" but "Advisory Committee."

Photographs would be produced, seized perhaps at the man's house. One man indignantly remembers these questions:

Chairman: "Whose picture is this?"

Detainee: "Well, if you examine it, you will see a likeness to myself; it is my sister."

Chairman: "Oh yes, I see now. And does she share your political views?"

It is apparently not only abroad that one is expected to betray one's nearest relatives.

Notes, carefully compiled by police enquirers and others, were often so stupid that after one or two half-hearted enquiries the Chairman would strike his pencil through the rest of the matter. It was more difficult, however, to deal with anonymous letters which were often the primary cause of the detention and which the detainee was not able to see.

Letters from foreign friends were, of course, a special prize. Though the Government had been preach-ing on the need for foreign understanding ever since 1918, that one should have dared to have acquain-tances abroad seemed the final sin.

One man had corresponded with a German girl, who belonged to the Nazi Party and whom he knew when she was in service in London.

Chairman: "Did you not think it dangerous to be on friendly terms with a member of the Nazi Party."

Detainee: "In 1938?"

Chairman: "Yes, even in 1938."

Detainee: "Well, sir, there are many in this country even in high places, Lord Stamp for instance, who have been friendly with very important members of the Nazi Party, and they are not interned!"

The subject dropped suddenly, but it is certain that this simple friendship told against him.

There came second Committees, to those who would accept them (many have refused), usually twelve or eighteen months after the first. Here the attitude has somewhat changed, inasmuch as a man may declare he has still not changed his views and be set free. The chief questions now being: "What pros-pects have you of getting employment?" "Have you any private means?" (the most intimate details have been asked in some cases about holdings in private family concerns). "Do you intend carrying on further political activities?"

Such are the Committees and their Hearings. A bold few have refused from the outset, have anything to do with them and remained almost forgotten in internment. Yet perhaps they are right, for the whole thing seems like a mockery. We know of none who would not willingly face an open court, where he can face his accusers, question their evidence and examine their motives. Every legal device to block all court proceedings has been adopted. The innocence of these victims of 18B who have been forced to waste months and years of their lives in internment, in a country constantly crying of its Fight for Free-dom is revealed by the authorities avoidance of the limelight of publicity in any of these cases.

Treatment Of The Detainees

As the Defence Regulations called upon the Home Secretary to lay down the treatment and detention conditions for those detained and it should be noted that such persons were absolutely uncharged and likewise unconvicted of any offence; we see that about January 1940 Command Paper 6162 is issued.

Many authorities now admit that Walton Gaol was hardly a suitable place to confine such persons in and also that it was impossible to comply with the regulations therein.

On countless occasions it was brought to the notice of the Home Secretary that his regulations were not being carried out.

We leave it to the reader to judge -

(a) Whether any prison is a fit place to house uncharged and untried men for lengthy periods—some have now been in prison for over 3 years.

(b) To what extent, the instructions given in Command Paper 6162 were complied with or even attempted to be complied with.

It is not so much the regulations as to treatment that count but the spirit in which they are administered that makes all the difference between their being bearable or otherwise.

We suggest that however difficult the circumstances were, humane treatment could have been meted out; and anyhow it was on the assumption that these conditions of treatment were in point of fact being administered that Parliament consented to the addition of Regulation 18B (la) that so vastly increased the scope of the Act.

At last the Government moved to quieten criticism by issuing, in January 1940, some four months after the first arrests, a Command Paper setting out instructions regarding the treatment of 18B prisoners.

Command Paper 6162, is here set out in full:

DEFENCE REGULATIONS 18B.

Instructions issued by the Secretary of State with regard to the detention in Prison of persons detained in pursuance of Regulation 18B, January, 1940.

EMERGENCY POWERS (DEFENCE) ACT, 1939.

Comd.81 82.

(1) As persons detained in pursuance of Regula-tion 18B are so detained for custodial pur-poses only and not with any punitive purpose, the conditions of their confinement will be as little as possible oppressive, due regard being had to the necessity of ensuring safe cus-tody and maintaining good order and good behaviour.

(2) So far as possible persons detained in prison establishments will be accommodated in a part of Liverpool Prison which has been set apart for men so detained or in a part of Holloway Prison which has been set apart for women so detained. When such persons are detained in any other establishment, they will be kept apart from convicted prisoners.

(3) Food. A detained person who wishes to vary or supplement the meals provided may do so at his own expense or the expense of his friends, subject, however, to

(a) Any directions given on medical grounds by the medical officer;

(b) The same limitations upon the supply of alcoholic liquor as apply in the case of person: awaiting trial, viz. one pint of ale, stout, or cider, or ½ bottle of wine in each 24 hours;

(c) Such other limitations as may be necessary prevent luxury or waste.

(d) Inspection of all parcels sent into the prison.

(4) Clothing-—A detained person will be permitted to wear his own clothing and may arrange through his friends for necessary replacement of articles of attire.

(5) Visits—

(1) Subject to any instructions to the contrary given by the Secretary of State, at least one visit a week from a friend or relative will be permitted, and the Governor may allow addi-tional visits or visitors at his discretion.

(2) Visits by Counsel or solicitors in connection with a detained person’s affairs will be allowed at all reasonable times.

(3) Visits will be supervised in such a manner as the Prison Commissioners may determine, either generally, or in a particular case.

(6) Communications.

(1) A detained person will be allowed to write or receive letters subject to censorship.

(2) A detained person will be given full opportunities to make representations in writing to the Secretary of State regarding his case or treatment.

(7) Association—Detained persons will be allowed to associate with one another at labour, meals and recreation.

(8) Exercise, Recreation, Smoking.

(1) Provision will be made for regular outdoor exercise and for games and for recreation.

(2) Smoking will be allowed at exercise and recreation and in rooms except during the hours of associated labour.

(9) Labour.

(1) A detained person may be employed with his own consent on such useful and suitable work as can be provided. In that event he may receive payment in accordance with the scales fixed by the Prison Commissioners.

(10) Medical.—Medical attention will be provided but a detained person will be allowed, if he so desires, to be visited and treated at his own or his friend's expense, by a registered practitioner or dentist of his own selection.

(ii) Visiting Committee. Detained persons may make complaints to and be seen by members of the Prison Visiting Committee and the Visiting Committee will take cognizance of matters affecting the welfare and proper treatment of detained persons in the same way as they take cognizance of matters affecting prisoners.

(12) General.

(1) Subject to the foregoing paragraphs of these conditions of detention, the Prison Rules of 1933 will apply to detained persons as if they were prisoners awaiting trial.

(2) The privileges allowed by paragraphs 3, 5 (1), 6 (1), 7, 8, and 9 of the conditions of deten-tion will be regarded as privileges which are liable to forfeiture under Rules 57 and 58 of the aforesaid rules.

(3) (Applies to Scotland only.)

Home Office January 1940.

With the publication of this flimsy document the protagonists of liberal thought heaved a great sigh of relief. Injustice, they told them-selves, was sugar coated. Conscience went back to sleep.

Prison Conditions

Criticisms of conditions at Brixton, Stafford and Walton in mid 1940, might be explained away by the claim

that a state of great emergency existed when, in a short period, some entirely British, some only nom-inally so, and others of recent or distant alien origin, had to be rounded up and sorted out. It is not disputed that, especially at Brixton and Walton, the staffs were quite inadequate to handle the large influx during the period May-July 1940; that these staffs should have been augmented is a matter of elementary reasoning. But even this excuse has no validity in regard to the comparatively few persons involved before the mass arrests beginning with the arrests made two days before the declara-tion of war.

Arrests commenced under the original 18B regulations, and continued under the supposedly modified form later brought into effect as a result of widespread parliamentary disquiet. Those mainly concerned were persons charged with being of hostile origin or having had hostile associations.

As White Paper No. 6162 was not issued until early 1940, Prison Governors were left in complete ignorance, as to how those detained men were to be dealt with. This brought results which anybody with the slightest knowledge of our prison system can imagine.

Until 28th February 1940, detainees were kept at Wandsworth Prison, a local prison in which many of the inmates were “old lags” and where even remand prisoners were unknown. The treatment was more severe than in a remand or “unconvicted prisoners” establishment like Brixton.

During September/October 1939, detainees were housed in basement cells, which were damp and rid-dled with vermin. Cell windows were totally blocked with sandbags, from which a damp smell permeat-ed everywhere. The cells never saw daylight, the sole lighting coming from a 15-watt electric bulb set high in the ceiling and covered with a black-out hood. Reading, except at the risk of damage to the eye-sight (which definitely occurred in several cases) was therefore impossible. Smoking was not per-mitted, and only the ordinary prison was obtainable, permission to have the meals sent in from out side being refused. Under no circumstances was conversation allowed, nor could newspapers be ob-tained. Detain-ees were only allowed out of their cells for the purpose of emptying slops at 6.30 a.m. and again in the evening and for half-an hour during the early winter mornings for exercise, when they walked round a paved yard one behind the other in silence. They were locked up for the rest of the day. No communi-cation with the outside world was permitted, nor could detainees receive visits or consult their solicitors.

Possibly as a result of pressure from certain quarters, these harsh conditions were somewhat ameliorated in November 1939, although not in all cases. For instance:

A detainee brought into Wandsworth Prison early in December, 1939, was completely isolated from his fellow detainees, was subjected to continuous third-degree questioning: was refused permission to ac-quaint his parents of his whereabouts, was not allowed to see his solicitors, and was told the most damn-able untruths concerning his parents’ attitude towards him all in an attempt to lay false evidence against an organisation to which he belonged.

Seven detainees at Walton Prison during the three months from December 1939, to February 1940, were allowed only 20 minutes’ exercise daily, and were otherwise confined continually to their cells.

In November, however, detainees were now moved to better cells, similar to those used by ordinary convicts, and could now buy newspapers and, if they had funds, have meals sent in. They were now allowed four hours daily association, when smoking was permitted. Whilst actually not mixing with convicted prisoners, they met numbers of them, in the prison or prison grounds, and on some occasions the filthiest abuse was shouted at them, it being the general impression that they were German spies. This view even seems to have been shared by the warders at first, but the consequent hostile attitude later changed. The warders at Wandsworth did act as if they were in charge of human beings.

In November 1939, a number of detainees were transferred by motor coach to Walton. This journey merits description. Early in the morning the prisoners were handcuffed in twos and were not released for any purpose

whatsoever until arrival at the intermediate stopping place, Stafford Prison. "Lavatory Accommodation" consisted of an open prison pot, which spilt its contents on the floor from time to time; anybody wishing to relieve himself had to do so where he sat, still handcuffed, it being forbidden to leave one's seat in the coach.

At Stafford, the prison authorities said they had no warning of the coming of the new "guests," and that the prison had been out of regular use for many years. The cells provided were unheated and the only light came through a small window in the outer passage. They had not been occupied for years and were indescribably filthy.

The journey was resumed next day, Liverpool being finally reached at 11.30 a.m. when the prisoners were shut up for seven interminable hours in the notorious reception cells described elsewhere.

But the chief memory of Wandsworth concerns bugs. On one occasion the Governor was shown by a detainee, a haul of over 20 caught in his bed that morning; and the reply was "I know, but we have tried everything and cannot get rid of them." Yet in the House of Commons, in reply to a question, the Home Secretary angrily denied the existence of bugs in this prison; the comments of the warders in this connection were amusing and memorable but not printable.

Later transfers to Walton were made by train, and here again the prisoners were handcuffed in twos throughout the long journey, being led thus through Euston Station, surrounded by uniformed police and followed by curious crowds.

Finally came general removal to Walton. Now, it was thought, would come some improvement, and the Government Regulations will be carried out, but in fact conditions proved to be even worse. The pleas of emergency through numbers, cannot be set up, as only 25 people were involved in all. The attitude of the Prison staff, from the Governor downwards, was most hostile, prisoners being subjected to incred-ible insults from warders and even from principal officers. Some examples of the treatment:

a) In the freezing weather of January 1940, men on exercise were sharply reprimanded for putting their ungloved hands into their overcoat pockets, or for using the prison pillows (made of sackcloth) as a cushion on their chairs whilst sitting in solitary confinement for hours at a time.

b) Men subjected to unprintable insults were put in punishment cells on bread and water if they batted an eyelid, the charge being "dumb insolence."

c) Cells were so dark that one could only read by placing the chair on the table near the window, which was situated high in the wall. This was a punishable offence, as also was lying on the bed board after lunch, or at the others times during the day.

There were at least 18 hours of solitary confinement during the day, and such punitive treatment cannot. be explained away by short-age of staff, as only one warder was on duty whether the cell doors were unlocked or not.

The Government White Paper No. 6162 was issued early in 1940, but every effort was made to keep copies out of the hands of detainees. Copies sent through the post were confiscated.

Finally one man protested to the Governor that the regulations were not being carried out: to which the Governor said that he knew nothing of any such document. The detainee then produced a copy, which had been smuggled in, in a parcel and was assured that the Governor had never before seen such a document, which in any case would be impounded as detainees were not permitted to have it.

In mid-April, on a Sunday afternoon, detainees were told to have everything packed within ten minutes, and

were then moved to another wing, where the cells were found filthy beyond description, many foul-ed with pigeon excrement. Not until the following day were time and facilities given for cleaning. Here, for three weeks, there was solitary confinement for 23 hours a day, and then, after continued pro-tests, an extra hour's exercise was granted in the evening if circumstances permitted, meaning in prac-tice, about four times a week. As another great concession, men could, if they wished, sew mail-bags at their cell doorways at certain times of the day, and speak to their neighbours if these also chose to do the same work, as was not, always the case.

So much for the earlier detainees. Now let us examine conditions in prisons at the time of the mass detentions

Brixton

Brixton Prison in normal times is mainly used for the reception of Remand Prisoners, to whom special conditions and privileges have always been accorded, and detainees found from the outset that the whole establishment was very efficiently run. On the whole, the warders and officers were very fair in their treatment. Prison rules, however, are strictly laid down, and only gradually was modification secured, to meet the stipulations of White paper 6162, as all decisions had to be referred to the Governor who was extremely cautious regarding innovations.

When the general 18B round up began towards the end of May, 1940, the first arrivals were housed in F Wing which appears to have been disused for some considerable time and was found dirty and damp; furthermore, there were a number of cases of bug-infested cells. Efforts were promptly made to eliminate this evi1, but with only temporary success.

A matter for criticism was the long-drawn out process attending " reception." Prisoners arrived through-out the day and, having had names and particulars taken, were locked up for long periods, often running into several hours, in small reception cells, box-like affairs about the size of telephone kiosks. Even-tually released from these, there came a search (involving stripping to the skin, often in the sight of convicted prisoners, and a compulsory bath), and then prolonged further waiting for a farcically inade-quate medical examination, so that the cell was not reached until 10 p.m. or later. Such an ordeal for men suddenly arrested, without charges—some young, some up to 70 years of age—was most trying, and could surely have been curtailed.

It was at this prison that many were shocked at the wholesale arrests of young Anglo-Italians, many only l6 years of age, some arrested from school. No real discrimination seems to have been exercised; many could not speak a word of Italian, many had fathers or brothers serving in the British Army—one lad had four serving brothers.

After the general removals to Internment camps a certain number of men remained at Brixton on orders from the Home Office, and others were transferred to the prison for personal or other reasons. In connection with these an interesting development took place.

Until April, 1941, the ordinary prison rules and regulations were enforced, in spite of the existence of the Government White Paper No. 6162. This meant that:

(1) No evening association was allowed, all doors being shut at 4 p.m.

(2) Association at meals was not permitted. In practice no association took place other than at outside exercise periods.

(3) Detainees had sometimes been refused permission to see their legal advisers for a considerable period following their arrest.

(4) Generally no steps were taken to render the imprisonment non-punitive.

About April 1941, however, legal advice that the White Paper had legal effect was obtained and accor-dingly,

writs were applied for against the Prison Governors and others for breach of Statu-tory Regu-lations. Immediately a change of front became evident. Many concessions, previously been refused on the pre-sumption that it was against prison rules to grant them, suddenly became possible.

The belief, therefore, cannot be avoided, that the government never had any intention of applying White Paper 6162, until detainees themselves discovered, almost by accident, that its enforcement could be made the subject of public court proceedings.

Walton Gaol

In design and construction all prisons are much alike, and each cell in each prison is practically a replica of the next. They are not designed to provide home comforts, they are designed to be frankly punitive, and they successfully achieve that end. Regulation cell furnishings are standard. They are obviously calculated to provide the minimum of necessary comfort and are not intended to obviate hardship, which has never been considered incon-sistent with the general punitive purpose of prisons. The list is as follows

1 table, 1 chair, 1 wash-handstand, 1 wash-bowl, 1 water jug, 1 deck swab,

1 salt cellar, 1 bedboard, 1 mattress, 1 pillow, 2 sheets, 2 blankets,

1 dust pan, 1 bedspread, 1 chamber pot and lid 1 mat, 1 mirror, 1 slate and slate pencil.

Regulations also provide for the issue to each prisoner of the following items

1 hairbrush, 1 comb, 1 toothbrush, 1 shaving brush 1 towel, toothpowder,

1 metal plate, 1 mug, 1 tin knife.

The towel is changed each time the prisoner takes a bath.

These are the basic requirements, which the State considers necessary, and provides, for its felons during their term of punishment.

Another item, which by prison regulations should be in each cell, is a copy of the regulations themselves.

(More than fifty signed statements, from which the following data on Walton is compiled, testify to the facts here set down.)

That part of Walton Gaol used to accommo-date 18B detainees, comprising Wings A, B, C, D, E, F and G, with part of H, were mainly the old, and long disused, women’s section of the prison. Warders variously assessed the period of disuse at seven, ten and fifteen years. The indications suggested that the longer period was the most likely.

The Under Secretary of State categorically denied that the cells at Walton were dirty. It is not the pur-pose of this document to prove him a liar, but the plain facts leave only the alternative that he has been grossly misinformed and has taken no steps to cheek his information. It may interest Mr. Peake to know that there are prison officers who, are prepared to swear that no effort was made to clean up the accum-ulated filth of years prior to the arrival of the detainees. The dirt was absolutely undisturbed save by the roosting pigeons which had added their own quota of foulness to the stinking corruption of the place, and by the convicts who had slung into the cells the mis-cellaneous junk to serve as furniture.

“Not true that cells at Walton were dirty,” says Mr. Peake to members of the House; yet nearly every one of 700 detainees is willing to give a solemn oath that he was hustled into a cell that was literally encrusted with grime and excrement. The cumulative evidence is irrefut-able; it tells of windows ren-dered absolutely opaque, some of them welded immovably, with cement-hard coagulations of weat-hered grime; it tells of carpets of a slimy nature under a surface deposit of soot from the restarted primi-tive ventilation and heating system.

“It is true that some of the cells needed redecoration,” says Mr. Peake. His gift for understatement would be amusing had it not been used to mislead.

Under the topcoat of dust distemper was flaking off the damp be-dewed walls. Still visible were the bawdy scrawlings of those who lodged here long before the Great War. Ceilings, once white-washed, were dark as thick clouds. Windows of the old gas-light variety were smashed. Alarm bells were broken and in many cases unworkable, the whole was a decaying shambles, patently unfit for habitation.

Nor was it possible in the first weeks occupation to do anything to relieve these conditions. Water flung on the cell floors, produced a thick, fetid mud; impossible to it out properly as no brooms or other requirements were made available. Blankets, already unclean at the time of issue, trailed in oozy mess

Checked against the list of standard furnishings it is found that any detainees provided with more than half these basic requirements were exceptionally well equipped.

Mats were non-existent for detainees. Water bowls and complementary water jugs were extremely rare, and even where only the other item was provided it was usual chipped, battered and punctured as to be usable. Few, if any, cells contained table and washstand; one of these had to serve dual purposes.

Chairs, too, were rarities, and were substituted for by crude stools; - in some there was no provision of any seat.

This posed a nice problem. It was a regulation, sometimes enforced and sometimes not, according to the disposition of the warder on duty, that bedboards not be used between 7 a.m. and 4 p.m. Certain unfor-tunate detainees had to choose between perching themselves on table or wash-stand or pacing the floors of their cells. The alternative was to defy the rule, put down bedboard and mattress, and risk a spell of punishment.

As to the other items of cell equipment slate and slate-pencil were cultural requirements denied to detainees; mirrors not were available for several weeks, and then only to a fortunate few; and the other utensils for cell cleaning, as already mentioned, were not provided.

In circumstances where men are locked cells at 4 p.m. and their doors not again locked until 7 a.m. except under surly protest the night commode or chamber becomes a necessary item of furniture. Here at Walton the vessels provided were all of nursery type and hardly any of them had lids and many of them leaked badly. The reluctance to open doors after 4 p.m. thus made conditions even barbaric and animal-like; indeed one detainee who rang for his door to be opened when suffering a severe attack of diarrhea, was curtly “use the floor.”

Whether one feels abhorrence or approval towards such conditions is largely depends on one’s personal standards of decency. However it is hard to understand how even Sir John Anderson, Home Secretary of that time, could condone these happenings, unless one recalls this person’s record in India.

From the time of arrival at Walton detainees experienced a nightmare existence. The usual routine of prison reception was conducted so tardily that it spun out into a ceremony of inter-minable duration, involving each person in a waiting period of from two to seven hours in a box not much larger than a coffin and almost as airless. Built cheek to cheek in a long row these “reception cells” resembled a row of public lavatories. It left no room for movement of any type and the plank seats forced one to sit bolt upright. They contained no reading matter and offered no view outside. Once locked in, after a tiring journey of many hours with only a

sandwich to eat and nothing to drink, the detainees faced hours of hunger, thirst and severe mental and physical discomfort. It was a strain amounting to torture—and with no apparent reason behind it.

This particular spell of vicious maltreatment was ultimately concluded and the further formalities of a slap dash medical inspection followed. Very few of the detainees transferred from other prisons were given the customary bath on arrival, though some were made to strip and step in and out of an empty bath that it might be represented that the bath procedure had been followed.

By the time the medical inspection was over, all personal belongings had been impounded. Detainees were then given a mug of cocoa and a hunk of dry bread and locked away in the squalor of their cells. Next morning they found themselves without any of the necessary articles for personal hygiene and toilet. No combs, brushes, towels, soap or toilet paper were available.

The matter of personal cleanliness became a more pressing problem as days went by without their elementary needs being satisfied. It was a situation made the more infuriating because most men had toilet equipment in their impounded personal property but were denied access to it.

A week elapsed before even the most fortunate detainees were supplied with soap, and some had to wait considerably longer.

The total lack of proper toilet equipment enforced use of what communal facilities existed. They were not elaborate. On each 1anding of upwards of 20 cells there was a recess containing one sink and one lavatory. In the few minutes granted each morning for the "slopping-out" of chamber pots, the twenty or more detainees queued at this one sink to rinse themselves and their feeding vessels (drying had to be left to time), and, to use the one lavatory. More often than not this one lavatory was defective, and the unfortunate occupant of the cell next to the recess on the floor below suffered increased discomfort because stale urine seeped through ceiling and walls.

The great obstacles to physical cleanliness would have been to some degree mitigated had it been pos-sible to obtain frequent baths. Again prison organisation fell down so badly that it was over a month before many men were permitted their first bath and consequently over a month before they could obtain clean towels.

For the first several days at Walton Gaol, apart front the period of "slopping out," detainees were allowed out of their cells for only 1½ hours a day divided into an exercise in the prison yards morning and afternoon: in inclement weather this privilege was usually suspended.

The remaining 22 hours of each day were spent in solitary confinement without books, newspapers, cigarettes or tobacco, these not being allowed until later.

It is not easy to convey in words the stark horror of such an existence. To sit for hours on end without communion with others, and with absolutely nothing at all to engage mental or physical activity, pro-duces a hiatus of the mind, which threatens to overthrow reason. A natural reaction, when Bibles were distributed and resorted to for mental relief, was a temporary outbreak of religious mania in some cases.

The spells of cell confinement were only modified when arrangements were made for detainees to per-form convict labour by sewing of mailbags and hammocks. Men were blackmailed into doing these tasks rather than suffer the alternative solitude. That this "Associated labour" was but a miserable privi-lege is shown in the fact that prison officers counted conversation an offence at working times, and smo-king was prohibited. Nevertheless, so desolate was life at Walton that the opportunity for the reduction of solitary confine-ment to 20 hours a day was generally accepted.

Repeated applications for association in cells, for card playing or conversation, were firmly refused. The

objection given was that such an innovation might be conducive to the practice of sodomy. This impudent and insulting answer to a perfectly reasonable request, obviously con-sistent with the terms of Command Paper 6162, is rendered the more inexplicable in view of the fact that this form of association is a feature of detainees' life at Brixton Prison and has been indivisible from life at camps.

The inference can only be that the Governor at Brixton is more favourably disposed to un-natural sexuality, or, as is plainly more likely, he is not influenced by an unhealthy and indecent outlook and is a sane and reasonable man.

All other efforts by detainees at Walton to lighten their conditions with eminently practical reforms were rebuffed in the same way.

Arrangements for private purchases from outside sources were extremely haphazard, and only after several weeks had passed. Orders were placed one week and money was taken from detainees' accounts. Goods were delivered the next week, and usually found to be at variance with those ordered, with a discrepancy against the purchaser.

Parcels sent by friends outside were treated outrageously, and flung into an ever-mounting heap to await distribution. This distribution was conducted with such incredible inefficiency that there were many instances in which weeks elapsed between a parcel being received at the prison and being passed on to the detainee. In consequence of these maltreatments the contents of the parcels were smashed, and where perishable, rotten and polluting all other goods in close proximity. Remember that these parcels were often sent after great personal sacrifice on the part of the donor.

Other parcels sent to no individual, but addressed for members of an organisation, arrived in large numbers. The Governor deliberately withheld these and their ultimate fate is unknown.

These parcels and the goods purchased from outside sources were vitally necessary because of the disgusting quality and the dirtiness of the food served in this prison.

The foregoing is a general account of the conditions governing detention at Walton Gaol. It is not complete, nor does it include the extra hardships suffered in individual cases. It will be seen that the treatment of detainees was, in many directions, infinitely more harsh and the conditions more severe than those of convicted felons.

One other important point to note is that some slight amelioration of these conditions could be obtained by resort to heavy bribery of certain prison officers. (Names, dates and full circumstances to support this grave assertion are being retained for a future occasion). This expedient was only available to a very select few.

In the main, 18B detainees who passed through Walton suffered conditions, which are but mildly described by the word punitive. Those who still remain in captivity have at least the consolation that they have already experienced the utmost vileness to which they can be subjected.

Stafford Prison

From 27th July to 18th November, 1940.

At Stafford 18B prisoners were housed in that part of the prison known as the Crescent, which was built about 1864. The interior is a peculiar shape, so that, in the centre of the wing, prisoners could shake hands with one another from opposite sides of the upper landings, whilst at the ends the distance apart widens to about 12 yards.

For 120 prisoners there were but six WCs and the same number of cold water taps, from which latter had to be drawn all water for washing, etc. The only hot water available was what could be heated on one small gas ring on the ground floor, and there, in the evenings, a long queue had to form to make their tea, oxo and so forth. If the queue wase too long, only the first corners were successful; the time allow-ed being too short for all requirements.

Cell lighting was very poor, gas jets outside the cells throwing a feeble light through a very thick reinforced frosted glass square set low in an embrasure, so that reading was most difficult.

It was stated by warders that time wing had been unoccupied since 1918, and the first job on arrival was to scrub out the cells to make them habitable. So too, for reasons of health and comfort, had the scanty prison furniture to be scrubbed.

Of the prison staff, the Governor was in general conduct, typical of the best type of army officer and at first seemed quite reasonable. Unfortunately there were times when his temper caused him to punish men for the slightest offence. The chief officers were of the usual harsh, bullying type. On the other hand, the warders were not unfriendly and would even engage in conversation when they knew they were free from observation.

Punishments for infringements of prison rules designed to apply to convicts, comprised deprivation of all privileges such as smoking, receipt of food from outside, association with other prisoners and con-finement to cells for 23 hours in the day.

Up to the end of October the whole time, apart from 30 minutes morning and afternoon, when exercise was taken outside, was spent indoors. Many requests were made for permission to be outside—to have some work to do in the open air—but the excuse came that prison regulations allowed those two brief 30 minute spells and nothing more could be done; nor was anything done until late in October— when the lovely summer of 1940 had sped—and two squads were formed, one to dig and trench some grass land and the other for demolition work within the prison walls. Others worked indoors, some making mail-bags, and some on inside prison duties, such as cleaning and keeping tidy the prison landings. These jobs, together with exercise, gave about 5 hours per day out of the cells, and, after many applications, a further two hours were allowed in the evenings for association, cards and other table games; a vast improvement on the treatment during the first weeks, 22½ hours confinement but only part of the way towards “non-punitive” treatment as later understood and put into effect at Brixton and elsewhere.

During air raid alerts, all were locked in the cells and all lights extinguished. It is neither a pleasant experience nor an intelligent procedure.

As reports came through that in some cases, following the hearings before the Advisory Committee, further detention had been ordered, the individuals concerned were separated from the main body and moved to the extreme end of the wing and kept entirely apart, it being an offence to speak to them.

At last came news of a removal to an Internment Camp, giving rise to much joy, and much speculation as to which camp it would be, York or Ascot. The few belongings were packed in readiness for the move, which came on November 18th, on which morning, at 6 a.m. all had to move out to march to the station, where a train was waiting. The morning was wet and dark; many were soaked with rain whilst loading their luggage on to a coach. The way led through a churchyard, and it was so dark that the military escort could not properly see the prisoners, and found themselves falling over graves or coming to a full stop against tombstones; there was a re-count at the station, and the guards seemed relieved to find that none had got lost on the way.

The party arrived at York Camp late in the afternoon; much pleased to meet many old friends they had not seen since the dark days of Walton Prison. Here—strange are the workings of authority—they could also associate freely with those with whom it had been an offence to exchange even a word at Stafford.

Some mention might, be made of the Chapel at Stafford Prison. No doubt in years past it had been well cared for, as befitted a House of God, a corner amongst the stone walls, where a prisoner might, for a while be uplifted from the surrounding sordidness. Yet, as these prisoners found it, its condition was disgraceful and shocking. Birds had made their roosting place, and the seats allotted to the 18B detain-ees were encrusted with dirt and had to he carefully wiped before use. Almost as sickening, as in all the jails we have had described, was the atmosphere in which the "devotions" had to be carried on, with warders placed at various points where they could command a good view of their charges.

Not, on the whole, a pleasant experience. Yet, bad as it was, it was not to be compared with the scan-dalous conditions and treatment meted out at Walton.

The Blame

Now who was at fault in the matter of prison treatment?

It is plain that the blame lies between certain prison warders, the Home Office and the Home Secretary. The victims of this maltreatment, these indignities—some of whom are today broken in body and mind —were not hardened criminals. They were not prisoners of war—the International Red Cross would not have tolerated such a state of affairs. They were not proven traitors, or else they would long ago have been brought to trial. They were from all walks of life, from doctors to doorkeepers; British born and bred, naturalized British citizens, alien civilian and neutral subjects all untried and uncharged.

It could all have been different. With the first arrests in September 1939, a number of warders were sent from Brixton to Wandsworth to show the staff there how remand prisoners should be treated. Their presence was apparently resented and their advice ignored. For that, the whole Wandsworth Adminis-tration is to blame.

It could easily have been different. Prison Governors could have been given, and made to carry out special instructions, in regard to the men. Warders had to be on duty whether cell doors were locked or not, and the torture of prolonged solitary confinement could have been avoided, instead of parliamentary ques-tions being warded off by disarming misstatements and evasions, steps could have been taken to minimize or remove the vermin problem. Furthermore during removal from one gaol to another, elementary decencies could have been observed.

It could easily have been different had the home Office and the Home Secretary had the slightest desire to make it so.

Ascot Camp.

Apart front those in Stafford Prison, most of the 18B detainees were in Walton Prison by mid-July. The appalling conditions of that prison had been made sufficiently well-known to outside quarters and the visiting prison commissioner to lead the authorities to hasten the plans they had in mind for transfer to an internment camp. News of a forthcoming move soon circulated around the prison and after some days was confirmed, but no hint as to the destination was given. A natural consequence of this secrecy was the spread of disturbing rumours. Acute distress was caused by a persistent story that detainees were going to Canada. No complete denials could be obtained to rumours of this kind,

On the 30th July, 1940, warning was given of a move early the next day. Relief at leaving Walton was tempered by trepidation as to what lay ahead. After an early breakfast, detainees were marched down to the basement, where property was restored to them. They were then piled into coaches for the journey to Lime Street station. Armed troops lined the prison approaches and armed soldiers sat in each coach.

At the station were more armed troops, and under the gaze of a crowd of curious spectators the prisoners stood

about until two special trains were ready. There was one disgusting episode, referred to elsewhere and symptomatic of the prevailing Fifth Column fever—the stripping of military buttons and insignia from the tunics of men who had been arrested from the army.

Arriving at Ascot, the party was told off into groups of fifty, and after much delay was marched under an escort with fixed bayonets, along the road to the camp.

At the entrance stood a grim-faced reception party of camp NCOs, including a sergeant-major, who greeted many detainees with the remark that he would like to see them all shot, That seemed to be the general attitude on that day and for some little time afterwards.

There was no suggestion of haste and little of efficiency. On that blazing summer afternoon, after weeks of cell confinement, men were marched into a compound behind the camp buildings, there to stand for hours until the last group had arrived, then to be counted and re-counted endlessly until the officers were convinced (as was indeed the case) that one man had escaped during the journey and finally to undergo another farcical "medical examination" the only one that many had during the whole stay at the camp—wherein each group in turn stood stripped naked whilst a medical officer marched past them. Part of this examination took place in full view of the main road. Still the parade continued. Many fell to the ground, fainting from hunger and heat.

Eventually volunteer cooks were called for, for no food had been prepared, and after these had gone to the kitchen the rest marched inside for property examination. That over, men found their way to the various rooms which were to be their "homes" for the next six months.

It was late in the evening mat a scratch meal was forthcoming, and then, having filled palliasses in a milling throng around the single straw dump, most were glad to try to find sleep.

The camp lay some 1¾ miles south of Ascot, and was originally the winter quarters of a famous circus. The soil in that district is of light surface loam and sand, and the loam quickly wore away, so that dust and sand pervaded everywhere, presenting great difficulties in cleaning the extremely overcrowded huts. Two parallel barbed-wire entanglements surrounded the camp, sentries patrolling between them night and day. On three sides turrets had been erected between the wiring and from these Bren guns pointed towards the camp.

Having all been intended to house animals or circus equipment, the buildings were in no condition to house human beings. Accommodation comprised six main huts with three small annexes leading off. The two largest huts were used solely as dining and recreation rooms. All the floors were concrete, apart from the recreation room, which had board flooring over a sawdust ring. In addition, there were the cooks bunkhouse, kitchen, a small wood-built hut situated away from the main building, used as a hospital for the first months, until an old store was cleared in the main building and adapted for purpose.

During the summer months, 100 men lived in tents, these later being replaced by six Nissen huts. Over-crowding was chronic. With the erection of the hospital, all the sleeping accommodation was of dilapi-dated and dirty, tiered bunks. In three of the four main huts, approximate dimensions 70 feet by 25 feet military enforced a rule that there should be not, less than thirty bunks in each. On arrival, one of these huts held 30 bunks and had to house 97 people. The state of the atmosphere on a hot summer night after the doors had been locked needs little imagining, especially as "lavatories" consisted of one pail and a wall with runaway at the end of and forming part of the hut, and only cut off from the accommo-dation by a wooden partition which was an open archway 10 by 12 feet. The main hut, slightly larger in area than the worst in the camp, housing at peak 127 men. Owing to its peculiar con-struction—it was windowless with the only ventilation from skylights in the roof, which were, in most cases, fixtures not able to be opened—this became known as the "Altmark" hut.

In the kitchen, which was about 26 by 18 feet, there was inadequate accommodation and the equipment found was only sufficient for the preparation of food for about 150 persons, with at first 617 to be fed. It was with the greatest difficulty that the volunteer cooks could be prevailed to stick to heart-breaking task of preparing meals

such inadequate equipment, and for the few weeks only a bare mini-mum of food be produced from the rations provided. The food problem was aggravated because after weeks or some-times months, of prison life on diet, the detainees suddenly found themselves in a position to take plenty of open-air exercise, for which their bodies were craving, so day after day the one topic became food. (It is significant that, about a month before the camp was vacated, important alterations were made to the kitchen and much additional equipment added, although the numbers by that time had shrunk to about 450, a figure nearer to what the camp could reasonably accommodate).

The reader might sometimes wonder if the story of hardship is not perhaps, being stressed too much; whether, having due regard to the state of emergency existing allowances should not be made but two things stand out. Recognising that there was no justifiable grounds on which most of these detainees should been arrested at all, the Home Office had dreamed up strict rules to ensure that detention should be of a non-punitive nature to satisfy alarmed opinion in the House of Parliament. Many of the internees were middle-aged or elderly, some over 70 years of age, and were cripples or partly invalids, still suffer-ing from shock of arrest, worry over loss of business or employment, and unable over long periods to get in touch with wives and family of whom many had been left destitute. These as well as the healthy young Fascists pictured by the daily press, had undergone all rigours of prison and now found them-selves flung into a prison camp, where no prior arrangements had been made to receive them and had themselves to set up, by the patient process of trial and error, an organisation to see that there were car-ried out by volunteer labour the many unpleasant but necessary jobs; cleaning out lava-tories, cess-pools, grease traps and the like, which must be done to avoid a primitive camp becoming a house of disease. Their indescribable misery in first few weeks was only a little alleviated by a sometimes sym-pathetic but apparently help-less military staff who, as became clear with con-tinued contact, had no knowledge of the treatment stipulated by the Home Office, and who certainly never showed any attempt to carry out the Government regulations during the whole period of this camp.

In every direction was gross neglect of even the most elementary things required to make life endurable. For several weeks no issue was made of either soap or towels, and many were finally reduced to trying to “wash” face and hands with sand. Clothes were unwashed as well as the person; metal plates and bowls had to be scoured with sand and could not be wiped. No material being avail-able, not even the newspapers which had been found so useful in prison. In consequence, most men were soon eating from rusty plates. Eventually, small hand towels were on sale at an inflated price. (Nobody seemed to care; nobody could do anything about it).

In the first three weeks, no letters came and, though cards were issued on the lines of army field post-cards nobody knew whether these had reached their destination. Some of the newspapers had been screaming that wholesale deportation to Canada or elsewhere should be meted out, and there was horror abroad in the camp and nerves broken down with thoughts of relatives and dear ones, long with-out news, tortured with doubts as to what had happened and wondering whether the first intimation would be of another unfortunate tragedy like that of the “Arandora Star.” Permission to send reassuring tele-grams home was brusquely refused. Sometimes distraught wives arrived at the camp gates and were turned away because they had no permits to make visits. This regardless of the fact that nobody in the camp had been advised either that permits were necessary or where they could be obtained.

Such treatment was plain torture of men and women and in Britain, when the world was being called upon to rally to her cause of decency, and Liberty, and Justice.

When visits were eventually permitted, it seemed as if everything imaginable had been done to make them unpleasant and distressing. Along the centre of a small room was placed a trestle table, with chairs on either side. Visitors sat on one side, detainees on the other, sitting elbow to elbow, and, watching over them was a sergeant, whose rough handling of this humiliating situation caused constant pain. Later on, this situation improved, but by then many who had experienced one visit preferred to forego further similar indignities.

In every department the same hopeless muddle and cruelty. Boots and clothes falling to pieces and neither replacement nor facilities for repair; constant under-feeding so that exercise had voluntarily to be restricted; letters constantly being delayed or disappearing altogether. Parcels were permitted from relatives and friends

outside, but the “lucky” recipients were sometimes almost afraid to ask for them as most were damaged or spoilt beyond use, jam mixed with cigarettes, perishables in a rotting condition, as if they had been deliberately mistreated as part of the punishment. With nerves and body both suffer-ing, the proportion requiring medical attention grew. On arrival from Liverpool Prison, there were neither hospital nor first aid facilities. Sick men simply remained in their bunks, to be attended to there, amidst all the noise and bustle of a hundred men, by a Medical Officer and RAMC Corporal. After a week, a wooden hut, which at a pinch could house three men, was used, ventilated by windows which, when blacked out at night, blocked the only way in which air could enter. These conditions prevailed for seven or eight weeks. There were several doctors among the detainees and these did their best to alleviate suffering, but were cramped in their efforts by lack of authority or equipment. At the end of September, a larger and better equipped hospital was opened, but it was situated at the worst possible spot, its doors opening into the main corridor and facing the dining room entrance, where hun-dreds of hungry men assembled three times a day, so that the noise and its effect on the patients need not be described. No special facilities were provided for the preparation of food for sick men, who had to try and recoup on such rough cooking that their fellow detainees with limited equipment could provide. Detainees themselves attempted to organise a first aid corps, but this never progressed very far as supplies and equipment were refused by the military, and private efforts by some of the wealthier detainees secured only a few needs.

The result of the poor feeding and general had living conditions and of the earlier prison hard-ships were most noticeable during roll-calls, when numbers collapsed on parade. Here again was another instance of official inefficiency and stupidity, whereby 600 men sometimes stood for half-an-hour or more under a broiling sun, or, at other times, went straight from bed to stand with their broken boots in icy puddles, while being counted and re-counted and while the camp was being searched, it eventually being found in nearly every case that an incorrect count was due to the military’s own negligence. In many instances men supposed missing from roll-calls had been released or been moved to the hospital in Aldershot.

At no time during the seven months at Ascot was there any attempt by the military to keep records of the different sections within the camp (i.e., Anglo-German, Anglo-Italian, etc.) or of other circumstances, which were patently necessary for the running of the camp. Anything, which was done on those lines, had to be done by the detainees them-selves.

Ham Common

About the middle of 1940, there began to filter through to detainees in prison or in Ascot Camp mention of “Ham Common,” as a place where special interrogations were being carried out. Suddenly, without warning, one or more men would be told to pack their belongings and were loaded into cars or army vehicles and whipped off “into the blue,” to return a few weeks later pale, thinner and, in at least several cases, looking years older. In due course their story would come out, that they had been to Ham Common.

Actually, they referred to Latchmere house, a large country house of some 50 rooms standing in its own grounds on Ham Common and situated some 12 miles from London. In this house were carried out, by some unnamed agency, investigations regarding suspect aliens of many nationalities and selected 18B prisoners.

It is still true to say that the agency operating at Latchmere House is unknown because neither the Ad-visory Committee nor the Military Intelligence officers at either Peel or York Camps appeared to know anything about Ham Common or its investigations. Evidence was discussed at Ham Common of which the Advisory Committee professed to know nothing, although the Home Secretary has said that the Committee sees all the evidence and facts that come into his possession. It is believed that nowhere, save on one isolated occasion in the House of Commons has the place been publicly mentioned which from the facts available, is not altogether surprising.

Here are the facts as supplied by prisoners who were sent there. After being driven into the grounds and to the house entrance, the prisoners were escorted to an assem-bly room on the ground floor and taken from there, singly, before a reception officer. A quite un-necessarily thorough search of both person and property was then made, all correspon-dence and papers, even of a purely family nature, being taken away. Detainees were then

taken to the cells. The cells were small and furnished only with a bed, wooden chair and, in a few cases only, a chest of drawers. Windows were blocked so as to permit an aperture of only three or four inches, whilst wooden bars, interwoven with a barbed wire, formed an additional barrier to any attempt to escape. At night the windows were closed and locked and, as the doors were tight fitting, the air became stifling. In these cells solitary confinement lasted around 22½ hours of each day. Armed sentries guarded the grounds and guards with revolvers stood in the corridors.

Morning and evening an orderly officer entered the cells to enquire if there were any complaints. If there were, these were noted and frequently forgotten or ignored. Apart from that, there was not a word of conversation through-out the day.

Meals were scanty, inadequate to sustain proper strength. In quantity they were only about half the normal meagre prison diet. They were brought in by soldiers, or collected, when the cell door was duly unlocked, from the kitchen nearby; and if a few words were sometimes exchanged with the soldier it was in breach of the regulations. It was usually some ten days before the prisoners' accounts were unfrozen and limited extra food could be bought.

No newspapers were permitted and it would seem that correspondence inwards and outwards was destroyed, since letters were not delivered.

Exercise was taken during a half-hour period morning and afternoon, on a lawn outside the house. At first, British and foreign detainees exercised together, but later, after protest the British prisoners were allowed to exercise at different times. Here again, strict silence was enforced prisoners having to walk up and down the lawn apart from each other. Armed guards stood about the lawn, others paced back-wards and forwards outside the barbed wire perimeter, and yet more were seen looking out from various windows — in all about five guards for each man - a display of force quite incomprehensible unless it was to intimidate and weaken the mental resistance of the prisoners half an hour of such exercise and then back to the silence of the cell.

After a few days, association was allowed, two prisoners being allowed in a cell together for a few minutes, where they might engage in conversation. This association took place in cells in what was known as the hospital wing, and there are grounds for believing that the cells had been prepared before-hand and that microphones were concealed somewhere. One man states that he found wiring in the chimneypiece, and received three days punishment for so doing. Again, the temporary companion was often a stranger, sometimes a foreigner, and may have been a police agent.

After a week or fortnight of this treatment, when nerves were beginning to wear thin, each man was given a severe cross-examination. This might come at any time of the day or night—one man at least was awakened and interrogated in the early hours of the morning. Every attempt was made by brow-beating, threatening, cajoling and promising to extract admissions that might be used against the individual or the organisation to which he belonged. A favorite promise was that what was said at Ham Common would carry weight when the individual's case came before an Advisory Committee. Minute after minute, sometimes hour after hour, this pitiless accus-ing questioning went on, then finally the prisoner was taken back to his cell. Then, hours afterwards, the cell door was opened to admit an officer with supplementary question, or asking for a fresh account of some point which had arisen. In some cases, there came further prolonged interrogations in ended, it seems, to break down all reserve. But ingenuity was not exhausted. An officer suddenly burst into one man's cell to say a letter had just arrived giving news of an accident in which a relative had been seriously injured. The report was totally untrue and was apparently only another effort to induce to state of nervous breakdown in which the individual might be easily trapped into careless utterances.

Nerves began to crack. Mr. Compton Domville of London states:

"It was not long before my memory began to deteriorate. Certain periods of my life completely disappeared from my mind. Others who shared my experiences at Ham Common have since re-marked on similar symptoms in themselves. Even at the time I noticed in others a growing mental hypertension. One association

period I had I remember clearly. On entering the room, my com-panion started pacing up and down the room, excitedly uttering disjointed phrases and almost ig-noring my presence. I, together with others there, was able to consult the resident doctor. He stated to me plainly that the treatment was intended to produce a state of mental atrophy and unreserved loquacity."

So the treatment continued, day after day, until, after stays of three to five weeks, the prisoners received orders to pack within an hour, and were returned to their former places of detention.

Latchmere House seems to have fallen into disuse. One story, in fact, says that the house was destroyed in an air raid during 1941. But the facts remain and they are ugly ones, which nothing can obliterate.

Who was behind it? Not, apparently, the Home Office. The War Office, acting through Military Intelli-gence? The Swinton Committee, alleged to be answerable only to the Prime Minister? Detainees have no means of saying. But whoever it was, they seemed to have authority wider than the Advisory Committee, and may have had powers of recommendation regarding further detention or release even greater than those of the Home Secretary himself.

These are questions which demand an answer now, for the same mysterious OGPU (KGB) may still be working insidiously against the interests of other citizens.

York Racecourse Camp.

On November 1st, 1940, the personnel at York Racecourse Camp reached a total of 400 detainees, including parties from Ascot, Edinburgh, Stafford, Brixton and Walton.

The largest party traveled from Ascot was escorted by a specially picked company of "tough" Canadian soldiers who had been very specially informed that they were to escort a gang of dangerous prisoners of war, Fifth Columnists, traitors and "tough guys" supposed to be non-or anti-British. The first sign of this to the detainees was on leaving Ascot Camp for York.

On assembly at 7.30 a.m. at Ascot Camp, the detainees were checked out of the main camp on to a parade ground in batches of fifty, while alongside (though outside the barbed wire) the Canadian guards were receiving final instructions, and were made to demonstrate not only that they were loading their rifles, but that they would not hesitate to shoot on little or no provocation. The Camp Commandant made an address, which included a remark that many of the escort guard were "Mounties" who could shoot quick and straight and had been given orders to do so if necessary.

A number of shots were actually fired into the air, apparently as a warning, which, needless to say, creat-ed much resentment, as the party included many ex-service men of this and the last war. The detainees were finally marched off to the station, herded into a train, and told to remain in their seats and not to open windows or doors or try to communicate with other compartments. One or two, for lack of air, began to open windows, but quickly desisted and sat down with no little alarm following an inrush of a sergeant and/or corporal with revolver drawn and a soldier with rifle and bayonet pointed in a most threatening manner. Men were not allowed in the passages and could only visit the toilet singly after obtaining permission from an NCO.

After some time, some of the more venturesome inveigled one or more soldiers into conversation, and astonishment was expressed at finding the detainees to be British, not aliens. Thereafter the guards, apart from officers and NCOs, relaxed and allowed the detainees greater freedom of movement, and at York, when the Canadians handed over the party, many shouted "Goodbye and good luck!" They were replaced at York Station by the York Camp guard.

As though similarly prepared for toughs and traitors, these fresh troops met the detainees with surly looks of

contempt. Hand luggage, mainly comprising sandwiches, toothbrushes, towels, pajamas, etc., was taken away and thrown in a heap (nothing labeled) on the station platform. Between fixed bayo-nets, at an unreasonably fast pace and repeatedly told to “get in step” and keep the pace, despite the distress caused among the older men, the detainees marched three miles to the camp; their way taking them through the streets of York, where many residents recognised respected Yorkshiremen among these supposed traitors.

There was a severe but efficient reception at the camp, where there was a brisk search and regis-tration routine. Then a wild scramble to recover property from the dump of hand luggage. An issue of metal plates and mugs, knives, forks and spoons, all dirty, smelly and greasy or covered with paraffin, follow-ed this. After this detainees were sent to a stone-floored waiting room, a dismal disused “long bar” under the racecourse grandstand, ill-lit, damp and cold, unheated and without fires or stoves. Here they sat on forms, packed like sardines, to eat from what were supposed to be whitewood trestle tables but were in fact black and greasy.

Beds were allotted in either “huts” or “dens.” The “huts” comprised ex-booking offices and totalisator offices and were not too bad; each held 40-50 men. They were equipped with two stoves and folding metal beds; they were 8 to 10 feet high, 12 to 14 feet wide and 100 feet long, very draughty and other-wise badly ventilated. They were very damp except around the stoves. The dens were disgusting. They were glass-fronted sheds under the grandstand and moisture was constantly streaming down both the glass front and the other side formed by the under-side of the grandstand steps. The sole furniture was wooden two-tier bunks. No coat-hooks, lockers or cupboards were, available. Each den was 14 feet wide and about 60 feet long, with 60-80 men packed in each. No toilet rooms or lavatories were in-stalled and to get to the nearest convenience involved crossing an open yard of about 50 yards distance—not at a pleasant journey in the rains and snowstorms of that period. Being locked inside from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m., the 60-80 men in each “den” had, perforce, to use buckets for toilet purposes. The atmosphere of the places during such periods need not be described.

Early Ascot experiences in the matter of sparse rations were repeated here; though they were later con-siderably improved. Detainees’ rations have always been bare, but there was usually oatmeal for por-ridge, the one food most detainees appreciated. Only at York did they seem in danger of losing this oat-meal, as no issue was made on one occasion for successive days. This led them to believe this main-stay of their diet was to be cut and spirited protest was made and it was issued on the fourth day and continually after.

A fight for clothing begun at Ascot had to be begun over again, especially winter wear, which up to then had not been obtained, but despite promise after promise. Four weeks went by before even the most needy cases obtained essential boots, jackets or overcoats. Only the destitute as ascertained by a mili-tary instigated “means test” then catered for and others had to wait.

During the first period extra letters beyond the two issued weekly were very difficult to obtain and were frequently returned, sometimes four to six weeks later as “provocative and unsuitable.” This state of affairs was later eased and almost any “special letter allowed, but each had to be typed and submitted in quad-ruplicate. Very little stationery was issued and pens, ink, and clips had to be found by the detainees from whatever collective resources they possessed.

No outside work was available and the Government “payment” for work in the camp was the sum of 85p per week to cover cutting, shoe-repairing and tailoring for 400 men. Appeal was made to detainees with means and to outside friends for donations to a “Welfare Fund” from which 120 destitute camp workers were paid a weekly token for service. Work hours varied between four and eight per day—wages were from 9-20p. per week.

After the first month, the military authorities became much more considerate and understanding than at Ascot and some officers said openly that they thought detainees should receive at least some of the privileges enjoyed by previous alien refugee inhabitants of the camp.

A canteen, well stocked, though charging high prices, was provided, from which was promised 40% of the net

profits. Only a small portion of the monies thus due was received. Twelve months after the detainees vacated the camp the sum due, estimated to exceed £200, had not been handed over

Another valued privilege was permission to receive visitors in the canteen under conditions less reminis-cent of prison life, detainees sitting in any part of the room with visitors and both being allowed to con-verse with neighbouring detainees or their visitors (this much-valued concession has not been granted elsewhere before or since.)

Five detainees, one a qualified doctor, ran the camp hospital, but most supplies were inade-quate and had to be supplemented out of the camp funds. The authorities did not pay for these supplies although without them, outside professional assistance would have been essential.

All lavatories were dark and unlighted and toilet paper rarely issued—best issue for any one week was one roll for fifty men. All camp clothing materials were sparsely obtainable, and only after repeated requests. No capes, boots, shovels or litterbins were available. All drains were badly arranged and frequently choked up, and often remained for days on end until outside repairers came in. Detainees offers to carry out repair work was not accepted, and tools for such work not allowed.

No laundry was provided or possible (though the men improvised a semblance of one in a dark, unused toilet room) and drying facilities were absent.

Adequate accommodation, heating, lighting, equipment or other facili-ties were not available for education and entertainments until the last few days before leaving the camp, and then only after repeated requests.

Kitchen arrangements were dirty and inadequate. Cooking and vegetable cleaning had to be carried out in a dark lean-to hut until, after long delay, permission was obtained to build fresh accommodation. Compliments were afterwards paid for the good job made of the kitchen and its cleanliness and attractiveness; thus the 18B detainees left something of infinite value to future users of the camp.

In the last months at this camp, conditions vastly improved, so that detainees did appreciate that the “non-punitive” description of their incarceration was near to realization, and those who were at York during the last month or so will say that there at least they were treated like human beings.

There is, however, a sting in the tail. When leaving York to go to Huyton, detainees had their belong-ings rigorously searched, when very carefully treasured tinned and dried foods were confiscated, as well as recently issued articles of clothing (the latter under promise that new ones would be issued at Huyton) and, as stated before, over £200 carefully collected and hard-earned Welfare Funds, from inside and outside subscriptions and canteen profits, was not passed to their credit, either at Huyton or (up to the time of writing—February, 1942) at Peel.

Huyton

A “Penguin” booklet entitled “The Internment of Aliens” supplied a much fuller account of Huyton Internment Camp than can now be attempted. It told of misery so profound that many internees were driven to suicide. By chance, and their own determined efforts, 18B detainees were saved from the same degree of wretchedness suffered by the aliens who had gone that way before, but they still found Huyton a place of extreme discomfort, shockingly lacking in essential facilities and administered with gross ineptitude.

When, in March, 1941, advance parties arrived at the camp, they found utter chaos and unpreparedness so great that no effective efforts could be made to clear things up before the main parties arrived from Ascot and York. Bedding, discarded rags of clothing, scrapped pots and pans and junk of all kinds covered most of the open space in the camp, whilst inside the houses it seemed as if an army of wreckers had been at work. Electric

wiring had been slashed through and fittings wrenched from walls; water pipes supplied miniature cataracts from many punctures and drenched ceilings had fallen in; windows were smashed and cupboard doors and other wooden fittings had disappeared, presumably used as fuel.

Perhaps the best comment on the position was the finding after a few days' occupation of the camp of the dead body of one of the previous occupants hidden away under a pile of stretchers in the camp hospital. Officers gave the impression that they had known him to be missing, but only an increasingly unpleasant smell, and not their investigations, led to this discovery.

The camp consisted of four streets of new jerry-built council houses, the whole surrounded by a barbed wire fencing, surmounted by elevated sentry posts and patrolled by military guards. A four-acre recreation ground was separately wired off and available at certain restricted periods.

The houses, which varied in size, containing from four to seven rooms, were inadequately furnished with trestle tables, forms, a chair or two, and the requisite number of folding metal bedsteads. Straw-filled palliasses served as mattresses, but many were partly filled owing to misdistribution of the straw. Shortage of blankets meant that dirty remnants intended for blackout blinds had to be pressed into ser-vice. Cleaning materials, such as dusters and scouring powders, had to be bought by detainees out of their own funds.

The roadways were tarred, but because of the layout to get from one part of the camp to another often incurred a wide detour. Intervening spaces between the roads were at best barren, uneven wastes, and in wet weather soggy morasses. Around the kitchens and eating accommodation was, usually, a sea of mud, made passable only by liberal dumping of cinders and pathways of rotting duckboards.

The kitchens were appallingly primitive, a corrugated iron roof being slung across supporting posts, to cover a few near-scrap boilers. This strange erection had no walls, and the ovens were but slightly better protected from the weather. Many appeals had to be made, and much time elapsed, before new boilers were installed to replace the original burned out and rusted wrecks. These factors, coupled with severely limited rations, made for a state of affairs where men were literally near-starving, since, through sheer inadequacy of the available equip-ment, much food was spoiled, and rations reaching the internees were insufficient to satisfy a normal appetite.

At the outset, no facilities were provided to supplement the ordinary diet. One fact, which will testify to the prevailing conditions, is this: a detainee released at the time made it his first duty outside the camp to buy and send back a ton of potatoes for general distribution.

As eating accommodation was unlit, unheated army huts, incapable of seating more than a fraction of the camp population, it was always necessary for hundreds of men to trudge distances of up to half-a-mile in all weathers, fetching their meals from the kitchens to houses; thus it happened that all meals were usually cold before they could be eaten.

Some relief was provided when, after much unnecessary delay, a canteen was opened, selling strictly limited supplies of canned vegetables and fruits, milk, flour and cigarettes. The fortunate few possess-ing money and sufficient patience to queue for hours were somewhat aided by this development, but inflated prices were charged even for fixed-price proprietary brand goods—the bombardier in charge of the canteen even loaded "purchase tax" on goods such as foodstuffs well known to be tax-free. Most ordinary people in the camp, however, had to manage on miserably short commons, only grad-ually improved as the cookhouse workers strenuous efforts triumphed over enormous practical difficulties.

One should, note, that here, as in all other camps, the detainee was left to fend for himself. Having com-mitted a man to internment the Government apparently recognizes no responsibility to see that he is fed. Raw rations are dumped into camp and it is left at that; whether there are men in the camp capable of converting these rations into consumable food, or whether reasonable facilities exist to enable them to do so, is nobody's

business.

So tardy were the powers-that-be in acknowledging that, in preparing their own food and clearing their own quarters the detainees were taking a burden from the shoulders of their gaolers, that for some time at Huyton it was disputed by the military that some remunera-tion was due to detainees who undertook kitchen and other work involving many hours' work each day. Ultimately, the point was conceded and payment granted, the usual payment being 8p. per week! When outside working parties were permitted, their earnings were subject to a large deduction to subsidize this payment to camp workers.

Outside Work became available in this way. Very heavy air raids were taking place on Liverpool and volunteers were called for to assist in demolition and other somewhat dangerous work. About 100 vol-unteered, all with some building experience, and were to be paid by the Huyton Corporation at Trades Union rates of pay for building labourers. This gave hope to many that at least they would be able to send something substantial home, to help their destitute families. Authority stepped in, how-ever, and ruled that only half of their earnings should be credited to them, the balance to go towards a so-called Billeting Allowance, and towards token payments to inside workers. It is surely unique for prisoners to have to pay for their housing and keep.

Inefficiency was the watchword of military control and to make confusion more confounded the camp was overloaded with officers and NCOs, whose main occupation seemed to be to interfere with and obstruct one another.

Two Company Officers came into the camp, at irregular hours and not every day, to answer queries and hear complaints. Through them, application had to be made to see other officers, so that delays were prolonged, for without their "chit" it was impossible to gain touch with officers outside the camp wire. Illustrating the position is the case where a small list of paints, easily obtainable from any ironmonger or hardware dealer, was desired for the Concert Room—an army hut converted for this use by detainees themselves. The request was actually passed through 21 NCOs and officers before being satisfied.

Roll calls, during which the whole population of the camp, often including cookhouse staff, lined up in one of the roads or in the recreation field, were exhibitions of sheer stupidity. It seemed certain that, for some time, the correct roll was not known, so that sometimes, after the whole camp had been waiting in line for two or three hours, after they had been checked and re-checked by name, the count was still in dispute. In one case a man found himself included twice, once under his own name and again under his business name, and another name on the roll was that of a man released weeks before from Ascot. This foolish happening went on for weeks, until the commonsense system, practiced in all other house camps, of counting detainees before or inside their houses was adopted.

It is believed that the Intelligence Officers were responsible for the very strict conditions governing visits from relatives and friends for a period at this camp.

Inside the army hut where visits were held, two trestle tables were placed edge to edge to impose a separation of at least four feet between visitor and detainee. Detainees sat elbow to elbow down one side; visitors similarly, on the other. Intimate domestic matters and private business affairs had to be shouted across that table, each couple (together with children, who were not allowed to go to their fathers) trying to retain the thread of conversation amid this babel; while all the time, prowling to and fro, listening first to this conversation and then to that, moved an offensively mannered, sour-tongued Intelligence Officer. These were the delights of a visit, after prolonged separation, experienced by wives, families and friends, many of whom had traveled two hundred miles and more at expense they could ill-afford, for the bare half hour conversation allowed.

Such was life at Huyton; dull, depressing and oppressive. So it went on, building up resentment and bitterness which found its expression later on, following the move to the Isle of Man.

Holloway

“Where the weak sex were tortured.”

Holloway Prison has housed many strange inmates and through its gloomy, desolate passages and wings have passed not only the dregs of human society, but women now honoured through-out the world as pioneers and whose record of public service entitles them to the honours conferred upon them. Under the Vic-toria Tower in the Embank-ment Gardens at Westminster stands a statue to one such woman, unveiled with ceremony and solemn state by the Prime Minister of the day who paid the highest tribute to her integrity and patriotism. However in her Holloway days, nearly 20 years earlier she was denoun-ced and derided by another Prime Minister who imprisoned her and hundreds of her followers. Yet with this, and many other lessons before them governments never learn! They still commit the same follies, follow the same petty methods of political persecution and hatred until again the wheel turns a full circle and the world gazes upon them with contempt and ridicule. So in 1940 Holloway received a group of women drawn from every type and class of society, from youth to old age, who were to endure without charge or trial for months and years, that timeless detention which even the most degraded con-victed criminal is not called upon to endure.

Between, the two periods, however, the deterioration of the national character which had made it pos-sible to prostitute every known use of fair play, to violate the great principles upon which English Con-stitutional Law had been created throughout the long ages of the upward struggle for liberty, had been self-evident to all, who had watched the scene with discerning eyes. In the earlier imprisonments the women had challenged the existing laws, and were brought to trial in the Courts of Justice but in the later period their counterparts who had broken no law but were nevertheless refused the inalienable right of trial and without charge, were herded into prison cells, to linger under con-ditions and in an atmos-phere which were and are a disgrace to those responsible. Yet even in the earlier period the trials of those days brought to light the methods which an unscrupulous administration is prepared to employ against those who dare to challenge its corruption. In the great Conspiracy Trial at the Old Bailey in 1912, Counsel for the Defence the famous. Mr. Timothy Healy, K. C, addressing the Court said:

“I almost hesitate to call this a legal enquiry, I regard it, as a vindictive political act. It is not the women who are on trial. It is the system of Government that is on trial. It is, the method of rolling the dice by 54 counts in an indictment without saying to what any bit of evidence is attributable. The system is on trial, a system whereby every innocent act in public life is sought to be enmeshed in a conspiracy.”

Here is exactly the case against those who filled Holloway in 1940 with innocent and defence-less women. The ordinary channels of defence afforded to the lowest and most degraded criminals were damned up against them. They were stigmatized by imputation at least as traitors to their country, execrated by press and public without any opportunity or means to meet their castigators, without hope of release or relief, however exemplary their conduct. They were condemned to linger in prison, many for years, and some to be eventually deported and cut off from contact with their fellows for an indefin-ite and unknown period of time and treated accordingly by those into whose custody they had now been so ruthlessly handed.

What manner of women were these and how did they meet the disaster and tragedy that had come upon them? Of what manner were their gaolers and how did they deal with the situation that now faced them? Under what conditions did these women live out their unhappy days? What did they do and how did they pass the grim and long hours now assigned to them as an existence?

There were of course several categories. There were the alien women housed together in one wing with those of so-called hostile origin or association, among whom were self-confessed prostitutes, suspected drug runners, and even white slave traffickers. No distinction was drawn between such types and the normal family woman and young and innocent girls, some still in their teens. They were all the victims of the dreaded 18B Regulation! These had been interned from the summer and autumn of 1939 onward and were already fully established when, in May 1940, the political prisoners began to arrive. The first batch of political prisoners was small in number and was placed in B Wing, where for a few weeks they lived at first in close confinement, and

then in association until they were assigned to F Wing, which housed the influx which began in June 1940 and continued until the wing overflowed.

In both categories of course there were women of every class and type. Elderly women, middle-aged women, young girls, titled women, professional women, wage earners, working women, mothers torn from their tiny children, their homes ruined, their lives wrecked. Tragedy was all around and no one could look upon that scene without sensing the mental agony that enveloped them, collectively and individually. Yet they soon began to show a genius for adaptability to their strange surroundings by that astonishing quality possessed by those whose ideals and standards dominate their inner conscience.

Their courage and endurance must for all time remain an example unsurpassed in any period of our history. Many showed a nobility of character that won the gratitude of all who saw and knew them, and which eventually broke down the hostility of those who held them in their power. Who shall pay a fit-ting tribute to these women? What reward, when the hour comes to honor them, can measure their for-titude, dignity, and courage? Until that time those who lived and suffered with them are proud to have been allowed to bear with them the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune that met them on every side.

“Walls have ears” wrote an old lag. But everybody seems to be full of ears and in no other place on earth does rumour emerge and spread so quickly as in the inside of a prison. It was once said that the prisoners knew everything even before it happened. That, no doubt, is an exagger-ation but it is a fact everything is known so quickly in the prison cell that it often seems incomprehen-sible to the newcomer. This is the more remarkable since no officer ever speaks to a prisoner except on prison business and each habitually wears an expres-sion of complete detachment, which makes many of them resemble the wax figures of Madame Tussaud. Until one gets used to these women they seem like sub-human creat-ures from whom all human interest and feeling have been extracted. They are of course most afraid of their fellow officers, afraid to speak or give expression of any sort lest they be reported for some breach of discipline, and they behave as though some hidden eye were always upon them, for they know too that not only walls have ears, but eyes as well. The un-fortunate conditions under which they are com-pelled to work creates a vulgar in-solence, as a kind of protective armour against any approach and as time goes on they become aggres-sive and noisy, and many of course tyrannical and cruel. Their raucous voices seem to resound through the wings like a rasping saw and they appeared to take a peculiar delight in shouting on all and every occasion.

Yet the political prisoners soon grew to understand the position of these unfortunate women and with the exception of a very few were soon on good terms, at any rate with those officers who were regularly in charge of them. On their side these officers at first so antagonistic and un-pleasant, soon came to respect and recognize the position of the political prisoners and did all in their limited power to ease the situa-tion. Indeed nothing was more striking to a detached observer than the change of attitude wrought in the prison officer towards the detainee and it must he said here that it was the exemplary behaviour and con-stant cooperation of the political prisoners which brought about this change in the prison officer. By their bearing alone an attitude of respect and admiration took the place of the earlier attitude of insolence and intolerance. Today in Holloway the political prisoner’s lot is eased and softened because the ori-ginal political prisoners bore themselves with such patience and dignity, even in the most provocative circum-stances. Their conduct entirely disarmed their gaolers as it were and made life more tolerable for both the officer and the prisoner.

According to Command Paper 6162, the political prisoners were to be housed where certain treatment was to be accorded to them as to association and recreation in addition to other con-ditions in order that their detention should be custodial rather than punitive. It has now been brought to light that the prisons chosen were unsuitable to enable these recommendations to be carried or and in fact that it was impos-sible to carry them out in the existing circumstances. This however, was not true of Holloway and, so far as was possible, facilities were granted the women internees, which went some way towards making life more tolerable than in the men’s prisons.

Shortly after the first arrests, the Woman’s Commissioner visited Holloway and arrangements were made to transfer the early political arrivals to F. Wing, a larger and more commodious wing which had been used

previously by young delinquents. This wing had a large flagged hall running the length of the whole wing from which the cells opened off on each floor. It had a kitchen and scullery and seven baths; it also contained a room for recreation and games and long tables ran the length of the hall with forms and chairs where meals could be taken in association. When the first political internees were transferred to this wing they cleaned it and made it habitable and eventually they themselves organized and ran the wing of which a senior officer was in sole charge. And now began a life and existence strange beyond words to most of these who had to endure it!

The dreary sordidness of the whole scene defies all description; the dirt of Holloway seems peculiar to itself. It appears to ooze from the walls and the black stone floors of every cell and gives the impression that it is part and parcel of the place. The windows of the cells are begrimed with the dirt of ages and dust and fluff covers the floor, however often the broom is used. The cell becomes the home of every prisoner and most of the hours of her life in prison are spent within its narrow confines. All her posses-sions of the moment live with her—her clothes, her food, her toilet accessories. She washes, dresses, eats, sleeps and does everything else within the limit of its space. How to keep it tidy is a conundrum, how to keep it clean under such circumstances a miracle. The accumulation, which gradually gathers in every cell, baffles description and the least said about some of these the better, but many were gradually turned into living quarters character-istic of their occupants.

The prison food at Holloway was really horrible—there was no attempt to vary it nor to make it in any way palatable either in appearance or taste. It is prepared and cooked in the central kitchen of the prison and each wing carries its own food from kitchen to wing, whether that wing houses convicted prisoners or internees. In this way the internee constantly came in contact with the convicted women, all being lined up outside the kitchens to await their turn for the food for their particular wing.

Each wing organised its carriers for the week, a different set of carriers discharging these duties on each day. The carriers also had to carry the rubbish and waste from their wings and here the first conflict with the authorities and the political prisoners occurred. They were requested to sort the rubbish in addition to carrying it to the incinerators. They refused and very properly the authorities did not attempt to enforce such a de-grading rule upon the political women. The writer of this section was a political prisoner and there-fore lived in F. Wing most of the time and consequently writes with more knowledge of the life in that wing than of the other Wings. But it is a fact that attempts were made to enforce the sorting of the rubbish it in other wings and that those who refused were severely punished by solitary confine-ment in what was called the black cell, a terrible form of punishment which should long since have been banished from prison routine in a civilized country.

In general however, the internees gave full co-operation to the prison authorities and observed, as far as these were known to them, the existing regulations. Strict discipline was maintained and the attitude and treatment in this respect was precisely the same as that meted out to the convicted women, save that, at first in the case of the internee this attitude was one of marked antagonism, every opportunity being given to emphasize the contempt and suspicion with which they were regarded.

In extenuation it must he said that these prison officers have been trained solely to deal with convicted criminals. Their lives have been spent in an atmosphere of penal work and discipline and they cannot be expected to completely change this mental attitude to those placed in their custody, overnight.

Every effort had been made by the Government and press alike to bring those detained under Regulation 18B into discredit and the most fantastic stories appeared in the daily papers deliberately working up public opinion against these innocent people. One example of this is made clear in the following letter sent on behalf of the political prisoners of F. Wing to the Chief Woman Commissioner:

To The Chief Woman Commissioner

In an article which we here attach, in the “Daily Express” of August 3rd. purporting to represent the views of the Prison Officers’ Association, several false and misleading statements appear, which are obviously meant to

refer to members and sympathisers of the late British Union and which are pre-sented in such a way that they are calculated to stir up public feeling against those of us at present detained in this prison. This view is borne out by the fact that this same newspaper in common with others has for several days carried articles complaining bitterly of the conditions to which alien internees are subjected.

Before such charges we are at the moment helpless to defend ourselves and we have unanimously agreed to make an earnest appeal to you to help us against so grave an injustice. The position we here set out:

(1) So far from being accorded special privileges (which might have been expected in view of our nationality) we are detained in exactly the same conditions, as are those of alien and hostile origin in this prison.

(2) Those conditions are laid down by the authorities and to the best of our knowledge we have adhered strictly to every condition and rule laid upon us, being willing at all times to co-operate and assist the authorities to the utmost and realizing the difficulties that have been created by the present abnormal situation.

(3) To suggest as does this newspaper article that "the existing staff have to act as waiters and wait-resses to Fascist sympathizers detained under the Defence Regulations is utterly untrue." The duties of the staff have nothing whatever to do with us. The authorities lay them down and no officer has ever been asked to wait upon us. We do our own work, having organized it we hope to the satis-faction of those in charge of us; we carry our own food from kitchen to wing, we wait at table upon our-selves and wash up under a voluntarily organized system.

(4) As to visits, like every other detained person here we are strictly limited to one visit a week, to two letters outgoing and to the same number in-going, as are all other internees.

In this wing a large proportion of our people are so poor that no less than 34 have responded to the request by the authorities for prison labour in order that they may earn the 15p. per week which such labour is paid. We know nothing of bottles of champagne in this wing, most of us ordering only goods, which we can afford to supplement the prison diet.

(6) With reference to the increased work of the Prison Officers, we have recognized this from the beginning and by our conduct have tried to mitigate this so far as is in our power, but the truth lies in the fact that the extra burden is due to the increase in the prison population, the result of the Government's present policy.

We would finally point out that we are innocent both in law and in fact, no charge of any kind save that of a political nature ever having been made against us, no trial permitted us and no opportunity given to defend ourselves against those who are not only our political opponents but who in addition are our prosecutors, judge and jury. Hitherto political prisoners in this country have never been subject to the restrictions of convicted prisoners nor attacks of this nature from outside from which we are quite unable to protect ourselves. In the full belief that those who have watched our behaviour under what for us are very humiliating conditions, and in addition which we regard as utterly unjust and unfair will see that justice is done to us in this matter, we present to you this plea, knowing that it will not be made in vain nor turned aside by those who at the moment are in authority over us.

Signed on behalf of those in F. Wing.

To describe the personal tragedies that daily haunted the prison would be impossible, but they were ever present and the mental agony was felt everywhere.

Some women had been torn from their tiny children, having to leave them without time or opportunity to make arrangements for their well-being; some were penniless, ruined in a night, some had their hus-bands and sons arrested and for weeks could get no news as to where they had been taken or what was happening to them;

some were ill and totally unfit to be placed in such an atmosphere and there were even pregnant women, forced to face the horrible ordeal of arrest and imprisonment in circum-stances unprecedented. Complete lack of human sympathy was the routine attitude of their gaolers and that perhaps was the most fearful feature of these inhuman proceedings.

Some women had brought tiny children with them and a small baby lived in a dark damp cell for months with its unfortunate mother in F. Wing who, however hard she struggled to make the conditions decent, could not do so.

In other wings similar conditions pertained and the whole scene was one of desolation and misery for months on end. The cold and damp of the wings and the cells added to the dis-comfort and the wonder is that the bulk of the women were able to endure treatment and conditions of such a cruel and callous nature without a serious breakdown

Lest, however, it be thought that these conditions were deliberately created, it must be pointed out that as time went on, the conditions improved and gradually this amelioration was of a very marked charac-ter until now the ordeal is greatly lessened and the life at Holloway is less unen-durable. What is to be regretted is that these ameliorations were not introduced at the start of the whole unpleasant business.

Air-raids were of course a great anxiety, but the authorities had the good sense to order the cells to be unlocked at the sound of the siren and to allow association. Nevertheless women confined in a prison during such an ordeal had the extra anxiety of being away from their loved ones and of being in a con-stant state of fear as to what might be happening to them, for many hours had to pass before they could get news or information as to their safety.

One extraordinary example of how the normal ordinary person can accustom himself to the most grue-some surroundings may be given. One of the condemned cells in Holloway was discovered by some of the more curious and observant spirits amongst the internees. To the ordinary person such places repre-sent a feeling of awe and horror, to others a morbid if repelling interest—and so it was in Holloway, but gradually the morbid interest gave way to complete indifference, and the writer of this section, who at first regarded this dreadful spot with horror and dread came finally to live in the wing where it stood and in a cell almost adjoining it and to take her meals daily and for months outside the actual basement cell known as the drop, without the slightest apprehension or dread. In fact it was scarcely noticed or remembered by those who daily lived in close proximity to its grim walls, windows and doors. So does familiarity breed contempt, even in prison.

Port Erin

At 10.30 p.m. on the 16th June 1941, the first party of British women left Holloway Prison for the Isle of Man. The party consisted of 42 women and seven children, all of the latter under seven and two of them infants in arms.

Before leaving, group members who had money in their accounts were allowed to draw 50p. for expen-ses on the journey. Those without money set forth, penniless, neither were they provided with any food.

Army lorries were used for the journey to Euston Station and policewomen seemingly of a most uncouth and ignorant type escorted the women.

At Euston Station press photographers were well to the fore, rushing about trying to photograph the party. The police gave instructions that no photographs were to be taken, but by this time, of course, the attention of the large crowds on the platform had been focused on the 18B group and there was a general rush to stare at the party.

At about 5.30 the next morning Fleetwood was reached and here, after a long trudge, complete with luggage, through the town, a light breakfast (tea and margarine) was served.

After this came yet another walk through the town to a dilapidated hall — a most uncomfortable and primitive place—where the members of the party were expected to settle down for the six or seven hours which must elapse before the boat could be boarded. The police in charge, who were going out in turn for meals, were asked several times whether any food could be obtained, if only milk for children for whom no provision had been but, according to the police, nothing could be procured.

At last came the next move—on to the boat. The women were hustled below into a small saloon and there they had to stay until the boat arrived at Douglas. There were still no food to be had and although a few cups of tea were obtained and paid for by members of the party most of the tea had been spilt by stewards before it reached the saloon.

Most of the children were sick and the others were crying from hunger. Two of the older children had whooping cough and they coughed and vomited all the time, causing much anxiety to the mothers of the other children with whom they were shut in. Douglas was reached in the early evening and then came the worst part, of the whole unpleasant journey.

As in the case of the men sent to Peel, the Manx papers had done everything in their power to inflame public opinion against the detainees even before they reached the island. The time of their arrival had been published and the local inhabitants encouraged to make the trudge through the town as unpleasant as possible. The children were placed in a van waiting by the quay, but the rest of the party, by this time completely tired out and very hungry, had to walk by the longest route from the quay to the station. The streets were thronged with people, most of whom made abusive remarks. At Douglas Station, there were still more jeering crowds, but at last the party was aboard the train bound for Port Erin.

On arrival, they were taken into the station waiting room where much time was spent by a large number of people pouring over the lists to ascertain to which particular boarding houses the various members of the party had been allocated. By about 9.30—some 23 hours after leaving Holloway, during which time one very light meal had been provided—most detainees had reached their new “homes.”

The Port Erin camp, staffed by a group of civil servants, is a great improvement on Holloway Prison, but with a little organisation could be very greatly improved.

On admission to Holloway Prison there is no proper medical examination, but at least there is the farce of appearing before a doctor who asks “Are you well?” and occasionally, apparently to vary the formula, “Are you pregnant?” but in Port Erin even this formality is omitted. In its earlier days when the camp housed thousands of aliens and was crowded to such an extent that internees were sleeping two in a bed, on several occasions landladies had been considerably alarmed to find that some of their boarders were suffering from venereal disease.

Soon after arriving at Port Erin, it was found that several of the other children included in the 18B party had contracted whooping cough and one, an infant only a few months old, died a few months later from the complaint. Many of the local children also developed whooping cough.

Many of the 18B women had hoped that in Port Erin there would be work available which would enable them to earn a little money. They were soon disillusioned, however. There were many jobs in the var-ious administrative sections of the camp, but these were all filled by aliens, and it was generally believed that instructions had been given that 18Bs were not to be allowed to work, this despite the fact that they were at least as competent as the alien internees. One girl—a most capable worker—was offered dom-estic work, which she was most anxious to accept in order to send a little money to her mother, a widow whose three sons as well as this daughter had been interned. She was, however, refused permission to accept the employment.

There was a department known as the “Service Exchange” where orders were taken from local inhabi-tants for knitted garments. The civil servant in charge was a woman who knew nothing at all about knitting and who made a point of employing as her assistants aliens as ignorant as herself on the subject. There was constant friction and most people who offered their services, for the job for which remuner-ation was quite inadequate, soon gave up working for the Exchange, as the small amount earned was not worth all the trouble involved.

One or two of the younger detainees were offered work in a local potato crisp factory. They were to work for about forty-two hours a week for a wage of 75p. Out of this, however, they were com-pelled to pay 38p. towards their maintenance, 12p. to the Welfare Fund, the purpose of which fund remained a mystery to most detainees, and at least 8p. to provide a substitute to undertake the household duties which each detainee was forced to perform. This left a balance of 18p. per week for 42 hours work in a most unhealthy atmosphere.

There were no particular hardships in the camp, the degree of comfort of the individual detainee depend-ing on the particular boarding house in which she happened to be lodged. In some boar-ding houses the food was very poor whereas in others there were no grounds for complaint in this connection. The life is a very boring one with very little to employ one’s time and the delays in receiving correspondence (for a letter to take three weeks to arrive from England is not unusual) are so long that there is a feeling of being completely cut off from home and friends. For a month or so it can be endured, but when the months drag out into years, without even an occasional visit from friends or relations for most people, it becomes more and more depressing and cannot fail to have a bad effect on the physical and mental con-dition of the detainee,

The Isle of Man Detention Bill.

(This Bill enabled the Government to deport 18B detainees to the Isle of Man).

Many people outside the barbed wire detention camps were surprised at the indignation that the Bill aroused amongst detainees. They could not understand the fierce opposition, which, to the extent of their limited powers, detainees put up against the measure.

The general public probably reasoned along the following lines: “These people are going to be sent to a safe spot, where the conditions of internment will be less punitive, so why should they complain?” Such an outlook might be expected, for we live in an age where it has been regarded as normal to put personal advantage before community service; and this war whilst showing up many high lights of personal sacrifice and heroism, has also exposed dark places where self-seeking has run rampant.

The detainees did not want removal to a safe place. The British people among them resented depor-tation from their native land and wanted a fair hearing before their own people, an opportunity to prove their innocence of any treachery or traitorous intent, rather than to be tucked safely away out of sight, out of touch with their families and business affairs. Already, large numbers of them from Huyton camp, Liverpool had been constructing air raid shelters and carrying out demolition work after raids, when no other labour was available. They wanted to be of further assistance and local Government officials in Liverpool certainly regarded their removal with much misgiving.

Turn now to the Government and to consideration of their motives, They had not previously displayed an anxiety to improve conditions of detention although that now proved a useful argument, and useful too, perhaps, in establishing in the public mind that the men concerned were “traitors” enjoying ease and comfort in safe and beautiful surroundings.

Mr. Herbert Morrison, introducing the Bill on the 25th March 1941, said the transfer would make con-trol and supervision easier; and that modified and special arrangements would be made as to visits. Over a year later, there is still no sign of these “modified and special arrangements.”

Mr. R. R. Stokes, speaking on the same day, pointed out that the move would effectively cut off the detainees from their legal advisers, and that, indeed, has been the ease, since no Isle of Man solicitor is known who is in a position to act for the detainees in regard to 18B regulations, and the cost of having a solicitor travel over from the mainland, mean-ing at least two days away from his office, would be prohibitive. It is virtually impossible, having regard to the delays in correspondence (letters taking several days each way) to satisfactorily handle such matters through the post. That is surely adequate reply to those who claim that no legal rights have been lost through this deportation.

What Mr. Morrison did not admit either is that a further barrier has now been erected between the detainees and the Home Office— the Isle of Man Government—whose word seems to have become final in details of food, clothing and other supplies, supplying of canteen and otherwise. MPs have learned of these things only through letters from individual internees. The Home Secretary inferred that it was impossible and well-nigh unthinkable that the Manx Government should at any time dispute the direction of HM Government at Westminster; yet since that time in at least one matter (Conscription of Women) the House of Keys has flatly repudiated and challenged the dictates of the House of Commons. This can happen at any time that Manx authorities feel strongly enough to exercise their rights. It may happen at any time.

The main point, for the moment, is that this body of men, this bogey so long paraded before the public, is now safely out of the way, and can at any moment be cut off entirely from contact with relatives and legal advisers. Moreover, a more sinister thing has happened, in the creation of a precedent. In the House of Commons in July 1940, demands came from a number of Members that deportation to one of the Colonies, or to Canada, should be ordered. In spite of Government assurances, there is no certainty that at some future time, Parliament may not force through a Bill to authorize deportation to some more distant part of the world.

Home Office assurances are not a sufficient safeguard. The Home Secretary has most solemnly assured the House that no British subject has been deported to the Isle of Man prior to the introduction of the Isle of Man Detention Bill. This is totally untrue. There is still a man at Peel camp who was sent to the island long before the Isle of Man Detention Bill was passed. Not only this, but there is the ease of a British subject who was sent to Canada among alien internees. It is true that these were isolated cases, but even as such they show that scant attention has been paid to civil rights in such matters, and they are fair indication of the measure of confidence to which Government assurances are entitled.

Thus it will be seen that the Isle of Man Detention Bill was a bad measure in that it seriously affected detainees' interests; that it enabled an intermediary body, the Manx Government to exercise influence in detainees' affairs, and that it positively established a highly dangerous precedent and made it possible to outcast blameless citizens.

The Bill passed its third reading on the 3rd April 1941, and removal from Huyton to Peel, Isle of Man, began on the 12th May.

Military Administration.

Whenever the control of detainees' affairs has been left in the hands of military representatives the result has been confusion and muddle with much consequent discomfort and hardship falling to 18B prisoners. Outside of normal army routine the responsible officers have, almost without exception, displayed shameful incompetence, complete lack of understanding of their own and detainees' position, and an utter unrepentant slackness towards duties which were clearly theirs and the adequate performance of which was vitally necessary to general welfare. It was an injustice to those detained that they should have been passed over to the mercies of such men, and it was grossly unfair to the officers themselves that they should have been given tasks for which they were obviously unfitted. As if they had been haphazardly recruited from various walks of civilian life, without any reference to aptitude or suitability to the job in hand, they bungled their way along from one mistake to another, most of them them-selves resentful because they had joined the service as would-be fighting men only to find themselves appoin-ted gaolers to a collection of their fellow countrymen. This same resent-ment was all too evident in their permanent attitude of indifference to the tasks now allotted to

them.

To detail each irritation, each pettifogging stupidity, or even each major example of misadministration would be outside the scope of this present document, but in order to demon-strate the impossibility of detainees correcting the conduct of detention camps and counter-balancing military ineptitude it is necessary to explain how administration is organized, and to show instances of the manner in which the complaints of slackness and inefficiency have been insuperable barriers to the improvement of the detainees' conditions.

Theoretically all detention camps were given a measure of self government in that an internal detainee administration, comprised of a Camp Leader and staff, were made nominally responsible for the smooth running of the camps. Excellent as this idea would have been with enlightened application, it has fallen down badly because in practice the authority of the Camp Leader and his staff ends abruptly at the bar-bed wire, and all the efforts on the part of the detainees' represen-tatives met with rebuffs and obstruction from the military on whom they were dependent and to whom they were, perforce, subser-vient. Minor reforms, affecting such matters as camp cleanliness and meal service, could be and were, introduced by internal volunteer administration, but events proved that these offices were chiefly intend-ed to shift much of the "donkey work" from the shoulders of the military, to bottle-neck and narrow down a spate of complaints, all representations being ordered to pass through the camp office, and to "take the can back" and generally shoulder the responsi-bility for the shortcomings of the military.

A Camp Leader's lot under military jurisdiction was particularly unhappy; if he did not speak up for the legitimately disgruntled detainees, he was subject to the kicks of his comrades in misfor-tune, and if he did speak up in strong enough terms to capture the unwilling attention of the military officers he was likely to be sent back to a prison as an agitator and unruly influence in the camp.

Good fellows as some Camp Leaders un-doubtedly have been, the results they pro-duced could never be more than a reflection of the Camp Commandant's measure of co-operation. Where co-operation was non-existent, as in most detention camps, the Camp Leaders record is an unfair commentary on his organizing and administrative ability, and at no time was it in an way true to say that the conditions endured by detainees were due to their own lethargy or lack of zeal.

When the first 18B camp opened at Ascot, the Commandant, Major Veitch, addressed assembled detainees, the keynote of his harangue being the necessity for co-operation between detainee and military. The detainees who believed that it was made in good faith warmly applauded his speech. Major Veitch then asked the assembly to appoint a camp leader and accepted the strongly supported nomination of Mr. T.P. Moran. He further indicated his desire that detainee Lt. Hamer should assist Moran. These appointments were generally approved and an era of cooperation began. A few weeks later after Moran and Hamer had threatened drastic action in regard to certain major grievances both men were hurriedly transferred to Brixton gaol.

Since Command Paper 6162 refers expressly to conditions of detention in prison, it has never been clear if its terms were meant to apply to detention camps, but it is fair to assume that the spirit if not the letter of 6162 was for application wherever detainees were to be lodged. Yet at Ascot the military authorities had no official knowledge of the Command Paper and they would inaugurate no improvement until the Home Office had separately sanctioned action. Contact and cooperation between the military and the Home Office seemed so inadequate as to be non-existent. There were departments that played Box and Cox with each other on every subject. To every request or complaint submitted by the Camp Leader the same formula was returned. The procedure was as follows:

1 The Camp Leader registered his complaint.

2 The Camp Commandant agreed that the complaint was justified and that change was desirable, but pointed out that he had no authority in the matter and must approach the Home Office.

3 The Home Office acknowledged the reasonableness of the complaint, but explained they can do nothing without approaching the War Office, which controlled the camp and supplied the guard.

And so it went on with no department willing to accept responsibility and all of them passing the buck from one to another while the complaint itself received no attention and deplorable conditions prevailed.

The only time the military showed any punctilious regard for rules was in the application of their own regulations, which usually made for the acute discomfort of detainees. Supreme example of this was in the conduct of roll calls.

Ignoring the sane expedient of counting men in their appointed rooms, and so having an imme-diate check on the identity of any absentee, it was the military practice to herd out the entire camp personnel on to an open compound at 7 a.m. Here, often in a muddy morass, detainees stood in line while counted and recounted separately by a sergeant and an officer, who could rarely find agreement in their figures. This musical comedy routine was accompanied by an elaborate ceremonial involving a march on and off of guards with fixed bayonets, much grave saluting between officers and other ranks, and a mock solem-nity that made the whole procedure a travesty of military efficiency. Throughout this fantastic burles-que, often stretched out to as long as an hour's duration (at Huyton it sometimes lasted three hours), detainees were seriously expected to maintain a demeanor of respect!

Roll Call ended when the Junior Officer had reported "All correct" to his senior, and when the guard had been marched away, but then, like as not, some mistake would be discovered on the military side of the wire and the farce would be repeated over again.

Roll calls were at first held three times daily; later these were cut to twice per day. At Peel they are still taken twice each but under police control, with such efficiency and despatch that they give the minimum possible irritation,

It is important to note that these confusions on roll calls were quite unnecessary and were usually the result of military failure to keep proper records. There were several occasions when muddle was solely due to fact that men were supposed missing when they had been previously released or transferred.

There were many features of camp life for which military cooperation was an absolutely essential. This is particularly apparent in the conduct of such matters as "special" letter facilities, legal affairs, handling of detainee monies, and the receiving and sending petitions and other data relative to detainee cases.

At all camps other than Ascot it has been the practice for officers to make themselves available within the camp at certain fixed hours, for consultation on these matters. At Ascot a much more complicated system was employed. Anyone wishing to approach the military on any subject had to hand in a chit outlining the nature of his business, at the camp office before 9 am. After the military had been notified of all such requests a list would be returned to the camp setting out which officers would see which detainees, and at what time. The detainees must report at the gate at that time and wait in the open irres-pective of weather conditions, until it was indicated that the officer was ready to see them. The waiting period varied from half an hour to as much as five hours! There were even occasions when men anxious to conduct affairs vital to the well-being of their dependants outside were put off with the plea that such and such an officer was on leave. When the interviews were finally conceded, they were usually hand-led in a way to which the gravest exception must be taken.

Rather than recognizing it as their duty to attend to these matters, the military always viewed requests as it they had been asked to perform some personal favour. They responded grudgingly and usually made each interview the occasion for prying into the personal affairs of the detainees who came before them. It is not suggested that all officers comported the themselves the same way, but certainly most of them followed the unpleasant example set by one Capt. Petrie, a pompous windbag who exerted preponderant influence in detainees' affairs at Ascot and Huyton and during early days at Peel.

But for the voluntary detainee organisation within the camp, these early days at Ascot must have been a nightmare of turmoil. The military apparently considered their full responsibility dis-charged when they had dumped the daily raw ration materials inside the camp gates. All cooking and other camp routine fell to detainee labour, not only unassisted but usually positively obstruc-ted by the camp military organ-isation. A typical example of the difficulties was the fact that the Camp Leader was expected to keep 700 men informed of military orders, which were varied or added to from day to day. Applications for a typewriter for office use were unavailing and but for the emergence of a Camp Secretary, who volun-teered use of his own portable machine the position would have been impossible.

With internal organisation somewhat stabilized the Camp Leader and his assistants made representations to the military upon the following major points

1) The subject of rations. These had been below the amounts specified on an official statement of rations.
2) The subject of delivery and despatch of letters, at that time only effected after inordinate delays.
3) An effort, to speed up Advisory Committee hearings. At the then rate of conducting these hearings it was calculated that it would take over two years before all cases could be heard.
4) Request for issue of essential clothing to destitute detainees.
5) Request for issue of tools and cleaning materials.
6) Request for arrangements or some form of remunerated labour for destitute detainees
7) Request for a canteen or other special facility for obtaining cigarettes and supplementary rations.
8) Subject of visits by friends and relatives.
9) Enquiries regarding whereabouts of impounded property and articles missing from parcels. Pilfering was a long-standing complaint, against military representatives responsible for handling parcels).

10) Application for essential structural repairs and alterations to camp build-ings (this covered the subject of leaking roofs, ventilation, etc.).

It was after making these strong representations on these points that Moran and Hamer were transferred to Brixton Prison as potential troublemakers.

One practice for evading military responsibility at Ascot Camp was the playing of “general post” with the army officials. It worked this way.

An officer would be appointed Welfare Officer. He would listen carefully to representations on the subject of camp welfare and give solemn assurances that some action would follow. After a week without any result, he would be again approached, only to inform his questioners, that he had handed over the position of “Welfare Officer” to another officer, who must henceforth be approached on all these matters. For days one could chase around from one officer to another, only to find, when tho-roughly tired of the whole business that the original Welfare Officer had reverted to the job and was now all set to begin the pernicious game all over again.

Conditions obtaining at the various camps are briefly described, elsewhere in this document, reference to the appropriate section will plainly disclose that it was an inept administration alone that was to blame for much of the hardship endured. It is noteworthy that the strongest complaint against military admini-stration is earned by those conducting matters at Ascot and Huyton, where the same set of officers were in control: Major Veitch, Capt. Shaul, Capt. Petrie, Capt. Collins and their staffs were the people whose control brought the strongest resentment and it was the two last mentioned officers, Petrie and Collins, who, by their insufferable boorishness and arrant stupidity, did most to create a temper for the revolt at Peel, Isle of Man. If Major Veitch could claim that nothing he did personally calls for complaint, nevertheless he cannot evade all responsibility for what happened under his command.

After a joint petition from detainees to the Captain, Petrie and Collins were transferred, their places being taken

by lesser irritants, Intelligence Officer Captain Harris and Lieutenant Brown. This was followed by a short period during which it seemed that the Peel Commandant, Major Francis, was intent on redressing grievances. Unfortunately, Major Francis was suddenly and inexplicably removed to make way for a Major Dunn. Attempts to improve conditions ceased, military frigidity increased, correspondence delays re-occurred and the parcel post arrangements became deplorable. The canteen service remained absolutely inadequate and generally it was apparent that grievances were no longer receiving consideration and were not being referred to the respective higher authorities.

Two more references should be made before leaving this subject.

It is an indisputable fact that health services facilities provided would have been hopelessly inadequate but for the indefatigable voluntary efforts of detained medical men. The efficient handling of emer-gency cases has always been due to the unselfish work of such volunteers, who have yet had to contend with mulish obstruction from the military authorities. The case in point occurred at Peel, when a detainee died during the night. Dr. Bode, a detainee, had to administer his attentions by the light of a hurricane lamp because the military refused to turn on the main light switch.

There is a major complaint in regard to arrangements for religious practices,. Several Church of Eng-land ministers were among the detainees, some of them padres of the last war, and they have always contrived to give some form of Divine Service from the earliest days in detention camps. It was, how-ever, only with difficulty that they succeeded in obtaining the necessary equipment for serving Com-munion and observ-ing other holy rites. After pressing representations were made at Ascot, and after a certain amount of delay, arrangements were made for regular visits by a Catholic Priest. This arrange-ment became an established feature at all later camps until, at Peel, detainees were allowed to walk to the church in the town. Nevertheless, one vastly important religious practice was at first flatly for-bidden—the visiting priests were not allowed to take confession. These bungling military bumbles called the secrecy of the Confessional, inviolate throughout the centuries, into question. Worse than that it was imputed, intentionally or otherwise, that the confessional and the Catholic priests involved more potential instruments of treachery. Twelve months after this important objection had been silenced at Ascot, it was again advanced at Peel, and for five weeks confessions were disallowed.

And still one might go on, amplifying a hundredfold the complaints against the military, still without any exaggeration or distortion. In well nigh two years of detention, there had occurred a multiplicity of incidents, which prevents any brief summary from covering a tithe of the illus-trative detail. But, lest enough has not been written to convince the reader of military short-comings in respect to detention camp administration, one important aspect is more fully described in the following.

Riot

The events of Saturday, the 20th September, 1941, were sufficiently publicized at the time for everyone to have some knowledge of the riot at Peel. The reliability of such know-ledge depends upon whether it was acquired from the press, from the Home Secretary’s statement, or from personal accounts from detainees.

First press accounts were luridly drawn by Manx reporters who found this an occasion for sensational journalism outside their usual experience, and a further opportunity to vent their spleen against 18B detainees. It was these reports, which first made headlines in the national press. Later, national news-paper-men came to Peel to follow up the sensation story and, apparently, despite the fact that true cir-cumstances belied this view of the happenings, felt impelled to continue in the same strain.

Here is the substance of the newspaper version, variously printed under such head-lines as—“Mob Law Wins”—“700 Fascists Riot”—“Fascists Cause Night of Terror,” and “Rioting Fascists injure Guards.” 700 Fascists interned at Peel, Isle of Man, rioted on Saturday night and continued the distur-bance at intervals throughout Sunday. “They yelled for return to the camp of three runaways who had been recaptured and placed

in cells”.. . . “They stoned military guards knowing that they had no power retaliate”. . “Wild disorder for many hours” . . . “shouting and catcalls” …”smashed every window in hotel” demanded “send the prisoners back” “Riot at peak for several hours.” Their demand was refused —reply violence . . . “Number of soldiers injured.” “Captain struck by bottle” . . “Shots fired in the air” .. . “fusillade of missiles” “hour’s bombardment” . “Residents described night of terror.”

This was the tenor of all newspaper reports of the incidents. They not only conveyed a greatly exagger-ated picture of the events but gave the public an entirely false understanding of the cause of the trouble.

The riot was not a result of any immediate prior occurrences, but was a culmination of deep-seated resentment grown out of a period of maltreatment and denial of elementary justice. What transpired after the arrest of three escaped prisoners was the spark that lit a ready tinder which was bound to blow at some time. Men had harbored these brooding grievances in the face of extra provocation. Capt. Ryan’s conduct on Saturday afternoon brought them to breaking point.

The three runaways were brought hack after the combined efforts of naval, air force, and police detach-ments had been applied to the search for them. Their escapade had about it, that element of adven-turousness, which always appeals to British men. It is safe to say that the men who chal-lenged odds whatever the reason for their captivity had a certain grudging sympathy from many outside the wire of detention camps, as was the approval of the majority who had shared their detention. When the men in the camp saw the returned prisoners, they greeted them with cheers of encouragement. No cry washed up and no effort was made to bring them back into the camp itself.

Capt. Ryan, overjoyed at the recapture appearing to be flushed with delight, shouted to the cheering detainees “They couldn’t get away from us,” a bombastic boast utterly countenanced by the fact that the men had escaped from his charge and the fact that his part in their re-arrest had been to wait by tele-phone in the adjacent hotel. His remarks were resented, but were not the cause of the demonstration. This came later.

After individual detainees had been called out by the military in connection with matter of the escape, they returned to the camp with information that the three recaptured men, by now lodged in camp cells, been without food for 48 hours. Representations were at once made to the military in a reasonable and proper fashion that a meal be supplied to them. Capt. Ryan’s reply was “They must wait - they’ve stayed without for two days and it won’t hurt them to stay without for a third—they’ve given me plenty of trouble and now I’m going to give it to them.” This was the military attitude responsible for the demonstrations, which followed.

Several quarters further requested that the men be fed. During this period a meal brought from the house the men had formerly occupied was turned back from the gate. As a result tempers in the camp became strongly roused. Men gathered at the wire opposite the military offices and shouted repeatedly their demand for humane treat of the prisoners in the cells. The shouting was ignored and some angrier detainees decided that the time had come when more strenuous means must be used to gain attention to legitimate complaints. Stones were thrown at the hotel in which military offices were situated and several windows were smashed. Increased military guards were rushed to the scene, but still no respon-sible officer would parley with the camp’s elected leaders. At no time were missiles thrown at the guards; detainees’ greater satisfaction being derived from pelting the hotel itself, property of Mr. A. E. Ostick, instigator of many of the vilest press attacks on them. After little over an hour, the Superinten-dent of camps on the island had arrived and he interviewed detainees’ representatives. The prevarication of Capt. Ryan delayed reasonable settlement of the matter until 1 a.m., but all signs of disturbance had ceased considerably before that time—as soon as the military had indicated reasonable willingness to consider the detainees’ viewpoint.

At no time were more than 250 men concerned in the demonstration, and it is deeply regretted that two members of the soldiery sustained very slight injuries from missiles rebounding from the hotel walls.

This was the full extent of the disorder at Camp M, and at no time, either on the next day or subsequent days, was there any further outbreak.

Lest it be supposed that the foregoing is biased in favour of the detainees, here is an extract from the account of the affair given by the Home Secretary to the House of Commons on October 2nd, 1941.

"The recapture of these men and the manner in which they were dealt with on their return to the camp was the immediate occasion of the disturbance. It was not possible to conduct them to the detention cells without exposing them to the view of other persons detained in the camp, and a number of these persons staged a demonstration of welcome. The officer in charge of the camp refused a request of some of the inmates that a meal should be sent to them from the camp. These men had been given a meal on the patrol boat, but the men in the camp did not know this, and a story was spread that the men, were being starved. These circumstances appear to have caused a feeling of resentment and after dark this found expression in a considerable amount of shouting and stone throwing at buildings in the vicinity of the camp. The extent of the disorder has been exaggerated in many of the published accounts. No assault was directed against any individuals, and although damage was caused to windows only two persons were slightly injured. The Com-mandant of the Internment camps on the Island was summoned and, on his arrival, he sent for the camp leader, warned him of the seriousness of what had occurred, and made it plain that the dis-orders must cease immediately and complete silence be maintained for at least an hour before he would listen to any representations which the men might wish to make through their leaders. Complete quiet was at once restored and after a lapse of an hour and a quarter he met the group leaders, who told him that the demonstration was due to resentment aroused by the treatment accorded to the recaptured men. The Commandant explained that the men in question were, in fact, being given a meal, and sent the group leaders back to the camp with another warning against further disorder. The rest of the night passed without incident." Hansard, Vol. 374, No. 103, Col. 714.1715).

Here was a straightforward explanation, which, although deprecating the methods used, did show that the demonstrators believed they had profound reasons for making some form of protest, It is surely significant that the Commandant of the Isle of Man internment camps ultimately promised that food would be sent to the prisoners, despite previous assurances that they had been fed on the patrol boat.

The press, having convinced themselves and the public that their distorted and exaggerated account of events was a true one, now set up a clamour for severe punishments against the detainees. Cartoons and rhymes were used to suggest that occupants of Camp M led a life of pampered luxury and demand for a "firm hand" and strong repressive measures grew each day.

Bowing before the storm, Mr. Morrison announced that he would impose a month's suspension of privileges against all members of the camp. He particularly mentioned that all cinema visits would be stopped. (This last concession to press agitation was a pitiful bluff, for Mr. Morrison must have been aware that the privilege of visiting cinemas had never been extended to 18B detainees). A further punishment was to be the removal of "a number of persons likely to cause trouble" to Walton Gaol.

The removal was actually in progress whilst Mr. Morrison was speaking. On the morning of October 2nd, 18 detainees were suddenly told to be ready to leave the camp, with their baggage at 1 p.m. Four-teen of these men were members of the British Union section. Some definitely took no part in the demonstration. How they had been selected was, and still remains, a mystery. (One man removed was the leader of the British Union section, who had personally done more than anyone else to bring the Saturday night disturbance to a close). There was a strong suspicion inside the camp that voluntary informers had been co-operating with the Military Intelligence officers and so paying off old scores or satisfying private vendettas. There was no appeal and all the selected 18 men had to go.

They were taken by closed truck, with lorry loads of armed soldiers before and behind, and convoyed by motor-cycle despatch riders to Douglas Gaol. Their final destination was kept secret at this time.

At Douglas, an air of secrecy was maintained, the men being only identified by numbers.

At 6 a.m. next morning they were aroused, breakfasted, and in due course marched, under heavy escort, to the boat. Spectators lined the quayside and included many pressmen and photographers, some of whom shared the crossing.

At Walton Prison, reception proceeded as usual. An officious reception warder ordered one man, an ex-officer of the last war, to remove his medal ribbons as constituting a badge. When met with a firm refusal, he did not press the point.

The 18 men were allotted a wing of the prison, which had been badly damaged in a recent air raid. Windows at both ends and the roof still awaited repair; so that the whole place was inten-sely cold and damp. Rain poured into some of time basement cells where prisoners were housed. The heating system was out of operation. Even in the cells, with windows closed, overcoats had to be worn. Meals had to be brought through the prison yard from other wings and were generally cold when received. In this way were the supposed "troublemakers" punished; and so Peel was saved from further "nights of terror."

But this is not the end. Within four mouths, out of the 18 desperadoes assumed responsible for the disturbance, three were back in Peel camp, three had been released on an unsuspecting world, seven had been transferred to Brixton Prison, either at their own request or to appear again before an Advisory Committee, and the remaining five were awaiting removal either to Peel or to Brixton.

The Police in Control

It was as a direct result of the disorders described in the previous chapter that Metropolitan police, under Superintendent Ogden of the Vice Squad, were drafted to Peel and put in charge of 18B camp.

Newspapers reported this development with comments to the effect that the Superintendent was of the type to stand no nonsense from the "tough boys" in the camp. The whole detachment of police came with militant intent to quell the seething agitation they believed to exist. They were considerably surprised, to find no occasion for drawing batons and facing an unruly mob.

With none of the bombastic braggadocio of former commandants, the Superintendent soon established himself as a man who, while prepared to brook no infringements of discipline, was yet prepared to give full and sympathetic consideration to detainees' legitimate complaints. He, sooner than anyone else, has striven to implement the terms of Command Paper 6162 and has succeeded in bringing about great improvements in conditions of detention.

Perhaps his first improvement was unintentional. By requisitioning the Creg Malin Hotel adjacent to the camp, as police headquarters, he effected the removal of the mischief-making proprietor. For this, detainees owe him relief and gratitude. Through the offices of his various police officials, camp amenities have been vastly improved. Social club centres have been encouraged and a camp reading room has been made available.

The room in which detainees receive visitors has been rendered less black and cheerless. (Although the visits themselves are still under the supervision of Military Intelligence represen-tatives and are by no means as favourably arranged as those in better days at York Camp).

Parcel delivery has been speeded up. Newspapers are delivered on the day of publication instead of, as hitherto, the day after. Strenuous attempts are being made to eliminate unnecessary delay in delivery of letters. Most gratifying is the fact that inflammatory items have disappeared from the local press and newspaper sensation-seekers have been politely discouraged.

Where the military found it impossible to arrange for 18B detainees to share the privilege enjoyed by alien internees of visiting the cinema, the police, surmounting any obstacles there may have been, have made a

cinema visit a regular weekly feature.

Administration of detainees' funds, always previously a cause for serious complaint, was immediately improved. For the first time, regular statements of accounts were issued and a committee was formed by detainees to act, with the guidance of the Commandant, in the disposition of all communal camp funds.

Bills unfairly charged to the camp are questioned by the Police Commandant and if found to be dis-proportionate due rectification is secured. In a recent instance where bills were presented for damage and dilapidation to property in the camp, the Commandant upheld the Finance Committee's opinion that the dilapidations were covered by a plea of fair wear and tear, and the bill was subse-quently withdrawn.

In general demeanour, the police officers have appeared more friendly, because less impersonal, in their relationship with detainees. Because they are men of stature and mature understanding, this tendency towards familiarity has increased, rather than diminished, the respect in which they are held. From this attitude the detainee is able to derive a new morale. To be recognized again as a human being, instead of a numbered animal is of unlimited service to him.

There are many vexatious Home Office rules still felt to be onerous. There is still the injustice of the 18B Regulations rankling in the minds of detainees. But, for the first time in nearly two years, they are not being treated like cattle. The police have maintained a record of honesty and scrupulously fair service in the performance of their duties.

An intelligent interpretation of camp regulations has led detainees to collaborate readily in the smooth operation of camp affairs. In return for their understanding attitude, the police have found that they have reasonable people to deal with. There have been only very minor infractions of discipline since the mili-tary abdicated camp control. These having been dealt with justly, there has occurred no bitterness bet-ween gaolers and gaoled. If men are bullied, maltreated and swind-led over a long period, and denied redress or any consideration of their complaints, then, if they are real men at all, there must come a time when they are bound to rebel and cause just such commotions as occurred at Peel in September, 1941. It may he argued that this commotion was not a proper way to express complaints, but it was only a cul-mination of discontent existing after many reasoned petitions had failed. It brought the police into control; it brought order out of chaos.

Fair-minded detainees do not hesitate to give credit where it is due. But they are not so impressed by what Superintendent Ogden achieved that they credit him with super-natural powers. What he did could have been done by any former custodian in his place with his initiative. Thus an important question arises. Why was no improvement effected before? Why, if these reforms were possible; if the imple-menting of Command Paper 6162 was possible under the police, was no reform attempted before?

The conditions now obtaining at Peel are in the spirit of the Command Paper, and it is plain that they are nearer the letter of that document than any previous conditions have been, then, by their very difference, they constitute a fierce indictment of the treatment experienced in the past.

Matters Financial

In our earliest days, we learned what we thought was part of our heritage—the English tradition "Don't kick a man when he is down." Internees experience, throughout has been such that they could not be blamed if they concluded this tradition has been lost. It was so in regard to financial administra-tion at internment camps.

True, many were also robbed in prisons, of small items of personal property, sometimes of money; specified articles ordered through warders were all too often substituted by cheaper goods, or accounts over-debited; or, on transfer from one prison to another, or to a camp, balances would simply disappear, repeated requests for transfer being ignored or side-stepped. Better was expected, however, of military control. But read on and

form your own conclusions.

The position of most 18B prisoners—the wealthy portion was so small as to be ignored —was that their internment had cost them everything they had, job, pension rights, insurance policies, home, everything; and could now promise them, after release, utter destitution. It was men in that condition who tried to find work of some kind inside the camp, and this was available for only a minority and was miserably paid: 8p. a week at Huyton, only a trifle more at Ascot, 18p. at Peel, up to 20p. (in a few cases) at York; sometimes supplemented from the detainees' own Welfare Funds, sometimes paid entirely from them. Outside work yielded slightly better remuneration, but was sometimes deliberately "milked" by the authorities on one pretext or another. On top of that, how-ever, it must be recorded that detainees' own accumulated funds have completely dis-appeared at Ascot, at York and Huyton.

Detainees were not allowed to have legal tender money in their possession. For inside payments and purchases, Canteen Cards were issued at Ascot and Huyton, and token money at other camps, all against balances in individual accounts.

The accounts were handled by the military, who were also charged with holding special accounts, ter-med " Welfare Funds," created by voluntary subscriptions by internees or their friends, and approved allocations from canteen profits. The Welfare Funds were intended for the improvement of camp ameni-ties; making nominal payments to men under-taking work of general social benefit within the camps, and assisting less fortunately placed detainees.

At the first camp, Ascot, the Commandant, Major Veitch, definitely promised that 50% of canteen pro-fits should go to the Welfare Fund, and the remainder to the "Barrack Damage account". Canteen prices were well above normal retail prices, even for fixed price goods, so that substantial allo-cations were therefore expected. Some optimists even expected that, since Barrack damages were unlikely to be enormous: they might not even account for the whole of the 50% balance, and additional amounts would accordingly accrue for the Welfare accounts; certain cynics, however, suggested that such a position would not be allowed to arise—and they were more than justified. Generally, however, the scheme was accepted as sound.

Because certain detainees assisted in the keeping of the accounts, we can give some details of the system adopted. A separate account card was kept for each detainee and there was a detainees bank account, into which all incoming monies, represented by remittances to detainees, earnings of outside working parties, etc were paid. Money for individuals was posted to the appropriate accounts cards.

So far, so good. But no accounts card existed to show the balance to the credit of the general Welfare Funds in the case, there-fore, of donations of a general character for welfare purposes, or the expected periodical transfers from canteen profits, no appropriate entries appeared in any account book or other records.

Cheques would be drawn from time to time to cover amounts paid out to detainees through account cards or tokens, and presumably would go to the credit of Canteen Account. Now it would have been perfectly simple, at any time, or each time a camp was vacated, to draw up a balance sheet on the following lines:

Receipts.	Outgoings.
Remittances to individuals.	Credited to Account Cards.
Outside workers' earnings.	Payments to inside workers.
Donations to Welfare Fund.	Credited to Barrack Damage account.
Transfer from	Expenditure on camp

Canteen Account amenities.

Balance

when it would become clear what balance remained for welfare purposes.

On that basis, there would have been no complaint. It remains as a plain fact, how-ever, that when representations were made, the military stated emphatically that detainees had no right to see or criticize their own Welfare account, and that no check was available on canteen profits. To this day, there is no information available of what money is due to detainees from any camp.

At Ascot artisans were continually working on the premises, building new punishment cells, enlarging the cookhouse, laying new drains and erecting new barbed wire fencing. The work was by no means necessitated by barrack damage, but it is by no means clear that detainees were not called upon to pay for it. Be that as it may, it still remains a sheer impertinence, and quite unjustifiable, that prisoners should be made to pay for the upkeep of their own prison, through any sort of Barrack Fund. Presum-ably, even had the money been used to purchase weapons in guarding the camps, there would still be no right to question the proceeding.

Certain detainees keep well-supported private accounts, in their own interests, and it was deduced from these that at Ascot camp the canteen profits and other income total £910-81p, and the total expenditure, for camp workers and camp amenities amounted to £610-2p. The assured balance of £300-79p. was never accounted for, and it is asked—what happened to it?

Yet another matter for enquiry is what happened to the wireless set and furniture, which cost £70, pur-chased by detainee funds? These have not been seen since detainees were transferred from Ascot camp.

It is appropriate to mention here the military practice at Ascot of using detainee labour for military official or semi-official purposes and leaving such labour to be paid for by detainee funds. Squads of men were used for camp maintenance work; building drains, making paths, while others were employed building a new barbed wire compound for new arrivals at this place. Other men worked the gardens of “Wood-stock,” a house used as the Officers’ Mess. It is strongly alleged that military authorities made no payment of kind for the work thus performed, and that payments which they instructed should made were only possible by the improper us of detainees’ monies entrusted to their care.

At York camp, the position is clearer as a better system of accounts was adopted. It was further sim-plified because canteen was managed by private contract’ who paid into a camp fund an agreed per-centage of their takings. Here again it was proposed to impose a charge on canteen profits for “barrack room damage.”

The accounts at York camp, agreed by military a few days before its closure as a place for 18B detain-ees, showed a favourable balance of £192-33p. Once again we ask—what happened to this money?

It has been suggested that a sum of £92-30p was sent on to the detainees in camp at Huyton. If there be any truth this story, there is still the question—what happened to it when it reached Huyton? The further question—why only £92-30p. It is not quite certain that even this inappropriate amount has yet reached the detainees to whom it belongs

Detainees from Ascot and York were united at Huyton in March 1940. It required some hundred wor-kers to run a singularly ill-equipped and ungainly establishment, and after six weeks a grant of £50 made from canteen profits to enable some payment to be made to them. (It is important to bear in mind that a very large number of detainees had been rendered absolutely destitute by detention, and these insignifi-cant payments from camp funds were a source of income to many).

After heavy air raids in the district parties were taken from the camp to engage demolition work. It is understood that Council concerned paid full Trades Union rates for the men thus employed, with which condition many men refused to work lest they be displacing any available labour outside. First charge against wages detainees taking these jobs was an impudent percentage of deduction, stated to be account of a "billeting allowance." Significantly enough, the amount of this deduction made against the pro-vision of mean rations and ill-equipped dwellings in Huyton camp. It was larger than the billeting grant given provincial housewives asked to accommodate civil service evacuees! The remaining aggregate earnings of the demolition workers, being some £30 per week, was fairly apportioned to cover costs of camp workers wages.

No canteen accounts were published during the entire period of Huyton camp's usage as a place of deten-tion for 18B prisoners, and acknowledgment was shown of the £92-3p. suggested to have been trans-mitted from York. From careful calcu1ations, it is deduced that the canteen takings at Huyton were in the neighbourhood of £960. In view of the inflated prices imposed, it is fair to suggest that a gross profit of £240 was made. No detainee ever saw a penny of this money save the £50 already referred to.

Since reaching Peel, Isle of Man, the administration of detainees' finances has been much more satis-factory. The strain on camp funds caused by provision of camp workers' wages is greatly relieved because the Manx Government, as is only just, makes small provision for a certain number of cooks and cleaners. (at a rate of 3p. per day). Again, destitution is not the same problem as it has been at previous camps because of wider scope for outside work on farms and land-drainage schemes. The most favour-able aspect of Peel camp is that a proportion of canteen profits is faithfully transmitted to general camp funds, full accounts are available and, under police super-vision, detainees have been encouraged to take a keen interest in the position of their accounts.

One item shown in early accounts at Peel still causes great resentment. It is a debit for £56 for the resid-ue of goods alleged to have been packed and sent to Peel from Huyton. They were sent in the care of a military sergeant and the bulk of them never reached the canteen at Peel. It is grossly unjust that detain-ees should have been charged for defalcations or losses for which they could not have been responsible.

The foregoing is a summary of the details backing detainees' assertions that they have been made the victims of double-dealing and sharp practice. Repeated requests have been made in official quarters that some form of inquiry be instituted. When Home Office representatives have visited the various camps they have heartily agreed that these matters were deserving of the closest investigation, yet there is still a strange reluctance to do anything.

Now, we have tried to discuss this matter dispassionately. But all who have followed the press reports, and particularly the Manx press, will know that there were times when Courts Martial were a weekly occurrence in regard to officers and NCOs attached to internment camps, on account of their unjustified debts, or actual peculation of public or private monies; and until there is some attempt to explain what has happened to the various Welfare Fund balances, it can only be assumed that, unscru-pulous men, clad in His Majesty's uniform, have abused their positions of trust with 18B prisoners too.

Consider the position of the detainees. Through accident of birth, or because they have violated the time-honoured political dictum—never demand reforms ahead of public opinion—British citizens, hundreds of them, were deprived of their living and financially ruined, made destitute.

In internment, as their clothing wore out, they were issued, as though it were a great concession, with the shoddiest kind of clothing and footwear; and as these became damaged or torn, were made to pay, out of what they could earn within the camp or hard-hit relatives could send to them, for necessary repairs, or call upon their better-off companions in misfortune to meet the hills.

The only efficient medical advice has been that given willingly by a fellow internee, a well-known London specialist. The British authorities would pay him nothing at all for what he did; those in the Isle of Man offered him 18p. a week first.

Dental service, of a sort, was given free. But if a man, even one without funds, required repair of a dental plate, he must be prepared to see the cost debited against him as soon as he has any funds to his credit, however great his other needs may be.

On release, the final hardship comes. The very fact of release implies that after the fullest investigation the Home Office is satis-fied that the man can safely be at large; in other words, the whole internment is admitted not to have been justified.

Then, thrust into a world taught, and eager, to suspect and mistrust him, lucky if he has a decent suit to stand up in, the victim is granted by way of recompense and to enable him to start life anew, the noble sum of 25p.

The Welfare Funds had as their primary object the supplementing of this paltry sum by a pound or two, to lesson the initial hard-ship and cover those first empty days of liberty while the man was adjusting himself to the outside world and could find himself a job.

This compassionate effort has been stultified when inefficiency and crooked-ness have conspired to conceal accounts and hold back the rightful funds of 18B detainees. We can think of nothing meaner; of no plainer case where authority should step in and deal with those responsible, and make honourable amends to their victims.

The Use and Misuse of MI5.

Behind the external war, there has raged, continually, an internal one, waged by established political parties against a possible rival. No quarter has been given. Fascist thought, regardless of whether it was or was not in sympathy with any foreign power, was the enemy; so in many indictments against British subjects detained under Regulation 18B we find the charge:

“He was sympathetic with the system of government of a power with which His Majesty’s Government is at war.”

How this squares up with the fact that many of the countries now allied to His Majesty’s Government have themselves political systems paralleled to those of Germany and Italy, is something only a politi-cian could explain; but that provides no valid defence to a detainee before the Advisory Committee.

The mind of Mr. Herbert Morrison on this subject was revealed in a House of Commons speech on the 10th December 1940, replying to one by Mr. Stokes:

“What is the lesson of Nazi Germany? It is that the republican politicians were too soft—not that they were too hard—in applying to what was a revolutionary situation, classical liberal doctrines and so on. I am sure that my Hon. Friend would have dealt more properly, with full legal advices and procedure, with Herr Hitler if he had been in Germany at that time. If I had been running the German Government at that time, that man would never have got out. He would never have sur-vived. He was an enemy of the State and he ought to have been shot.”

This may be a sound comment on the attempted insurrection of Hitler and his subsequent mild political imprisonment. But such reasoning, concerning the punishment of an overt act, cannot be held to justify internment without trial, or the subsequent job victimization, of persons who hold heretical political opinions. This argument is a complete surrender of the principles of democracy to a punitive oppor-tunism of fear.

It may be said that Fascism denies democracy and aims at establishing a totalitarian state. A Fascist may have no right, therefore, to plead for democratic treatment if he denies democratic principles. Neither have

democrats a right to violate democratic prin-ciples, which cannot be outraged nor denied with impunity. Democracy is the constitu-tional protection of mankind. Only when democratic society falls short of full economic democracy and so tends to become plutocratic need it be afraid of its politi-cal democracy, and extending the full rights of free discussion and assembly even to Fascists. A happy social democracy need have no fear of Fascist intrigues or conspiracy, which would remain abortive. Inherent in society is the ancient right of free men to uphold even political errors. No Govern-ment has the right to assail such a right. It has been claimed by the friends of the imprisoned 18B prisoners that the Home Office smashed this right. But one of the means used has been MI5, otherwise known as Military Intelligence.

The widespread nature of unjust political discrimination against detainees, before, during and after det-ention, has been indicated in some measure elsewhere in this document. The full story cannot be told until after the war. One is apt, of course, when placed in distressing circumstances, to imagine all sorts of hidden conspiracies. But that truism cannot explain away what has happened before our eyes.

The Secret Police were features of all the old time books about Czarist Russia, until the OGPU (KGB) assumed that mantle. Nowadays it is the Gestapo that is dangled before the public gaze, as an example of what we must avoid in this free land; the secret agent, the agent provocateur, and all the rest. Against such institutions this war is being fought .

But you may not have seen this report in the “Manchester Guardian” of January l5th 1940:

The Executive Committee of the Civil Service Clerical Association is to meet next week to consider further action following the refusal of the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Capt. Crookshank) receive a deputation concerning the activities of MI5 agents in the Government departments.

The deputation hoped to have pointed out that civil servants had been dismissed or relegated to subor-dinate positions on the basis of charges made against their loyalty and reliability, although those charged were not told the origin of the detailed nature of the charges.

Mr. L. C. White, assistant general secretary of the association, told a reporter that it appeared that these MI5 agents, who looked after civil servants and others in munitions factories and other places operated upon the receipt of anonymous letters in many cases.

After enquiry, the agents recommended that employees should be dismissed or removed to work where they could not reveal confidential information.

“About 100 cases have been brought to our notice since the war began,” said Mr. White. “Most of the people affected are alleged to have left-wing views or to have been active in political work. It is unfair because there is reason to believe that some of the information that MI5 gets is unreliable. The accused should be informed of the actual charge and given an oppor-tunity to reply.”

Capt. Crookshank has stated that the matters are only appropriate for discussion, if at all, by the Whitley Council for the Civil service.

The procedure will be noted. No open enquiry, but sudden transfer or dismissal without redress or right of appeal. In a way it is an extension of 18B to the public still at large. Capt. Crookshank’s inference will also be noted; that the matter is not really appropriate for discussion at all.

In Peel now is a man who joined British Union because of its promise to promote econ-omic and Indus-trial efficiency in Britain. He also has a passionate belief in Empire and in the welfare of the working people. At the outbreak of war his abilities earned him the position of works manager in an aircraft factory in North Wales, where he instituted several improvements and came up against vested interests from time to time. If he

criticized production methods with vigour, it was surely not to his discredit.

This man had occasion to write to his hometown asking for re-payment of a debt. A few weeks later, a director of the firm asked him to carefully sponsor a new employee, and he did so, even became friendly and mentioned to him his past connection with British Union. Suddenly, came detention under I8B, charged with "acts prejudicial," the sole evidence being remarks passed by the new employee. His son, disgusted with what had happened, asked permission to leave the works. He, too, was threatened with 18B: From the time of the victim's detention, agents of MI5 shadowed and worried his wife until an appeal was made the Regiona1 Commissioner to call off this persecution and give the poor woman some piece of mind. Thus a promising production engineer was lost to the war effort because of political disinclination possibly coupled with self-interested malice.

A Welsh farmer and his daughter, belonging to one of the oldest families in Pembrokeshire, began to receive police attention in 1940 because of British Union membership; constant1y being visited on one pretext or another; was even prosecuted for riding a horse without a light—a charge never brought before or since in the whole country.

The house was raided early in June, when certain Fascist papers were confiscated. A week later police came again, to accuse a son of saying in a certain village that "we would lose the war". It was untrue, as he had been on the farm premises at the time mentioned. In August, about a dozen soldiers on motor-cycles entered the yard and one, a corporal, asked for the loan of a spanner. This led to general talk, leading to joking questions as to whether the farmer ever listened to Lord Haw Haw, and so on. Pre-sently, all went away excepting the corporal, who then passed remarks abusing army life generally, said he was miserable in his billet, and asked he might come round some time to listen to the wireless.

The same evening the corporal returned, bringing a friend, and whilst left alone turned the wireless on to a German station. They were entertained to supper and stayed on late. The next night, they came again, and were again asked to supper. By this time their behaviour aroused suspicion, so that when they retur-ned two nights later they were asked if they were detectives, and strenuously denied the fact. Again they had supper and then went away and were not seen again.

In November, the father and daughter were arrested, under the usual brutal circumstances. Three months later, the Advisory Committee heard their case, the chairman telling them that he considered they had been badly treated and he was advising immediate release. He asked about the soldiers who had visited them and claimed they had made a statement that swastika flags were being made at the farm to welcome Hitler, and that parachute troops that might land on the farm would be hidden. Striking his pencil through the rest of the accusations, with the remark that they were obvious lies, the chairman said he was perfectly satisfied with the explanation given.

The farmer still remains in Peel camp, whilst his farm suffers for lack of labour. Another man still de-tained—not in British Union, but long interested in Fascist thought was employed by a large insurance company. Early in June, 1940, his employers (following the procedure in very many cases) were visited by the police and warned about him, so that he was suddenly transferred from the Head Office to a small evacuation office; at the same time his house was visited in his absence and his wife was asked two questions; had he ever be1onged to British Union, or had he any foreign blood; apparently an attempt was being made to build up a case, but the reply in, each case was negative, so the police went away.

The next development was at his office, where a newly employed female clerk was allotted to him. Ob-viously acting under instructions, her job was to find something incriminating; why otherwise should she, a girl of about 22 or 23, have suddenly interposed into a general conversation the question: "Do you think messages could be transmitted by means of music?" Quite innocently, he discussed how this could be done, through the arrangement of musical programmes, or by particular kinds of syncopation. He was arrested on July 1st, and at his Advisory Committee hearing seven months later that conver-sation was thrown back at him.

Just three examples of MI5 at work.

The employment of traps and agents provocateurs, are as old as diplomacy itself. They are devices of the corrupt and inefficient. One did not think, though, to see them flourish in modern Britain.

How is MI5 recruited? No layman really knows. Some say it is largely composed of "young hopefuls" of all ages in the Conservative Party, who wish to make a mark politically or possibly diplomatically. The Manchester Guardian report certainly indicates political bias. Agents we have met include a British Union member who was expelled for lack of common honesty, and another man who had earned a con-siderable competence through particularly nasty activities in regard to divorce cases. But our experi-ence is limited—we move among ordinary decent men and women—and it must be clear that there are agents of more character than those we have men-tioned, though obviously character and ability for this kind of work do not necessarily go hand in hand.

In the various internment camps, however, there have been good opportunities for seeing Military Intel-ligence at close quarters. There, the officers have been on a higher social plane, unsuccessful barristers, and occasionally a genuine scholar (otherwise quite inefficient) in a particular language. All have the spy complex very marked, to a degree, which can be termed pathological, imagining the wildest possibilities, and living in a world of gun-running and gangsterdom.

These officers have not hesitated to use the services of people whose character has broken down under the worry of internment, and have turned "nark." Here are extracts from letters received in the camps from two such "broken reeds".

"Since moving in a complete atmosphere of Fascism, as in all the prisons and camps in which I have been detained, I have realized, mostly from overhearing conversations, that when supporting the Fascism (sic) regime as I did before detention, I must have been living in a fool's paradise, and I now fully realize my mistake."

"I have definitely decided to abandon all participation in the B.U. and break with all my former friends and associates, as I feel I have been duped, or used as a tool for their ulterior motives."

Such is the stuff of which agents are made; may they get their just reward. To crawl and squeal on your comrades is considered the worst offence of all, even among criminals. To infer, by filthy innuendo, that innocent men have done something their one-time comrade is ashamed of is about the rottenest action one can think about.

What have these "narks", "snoops" and intelligence officers achieved in two years of the most careful scrutiny of the intimate details of detainees' lives? Precisely nothing; and that because there is nothing there for them to find. All the breaking open of cigarettes, cutting of cakes, opening of tins, steaming off of postage stamps and pouring over letters and the hundred and one other things laid down in detec-tive fiction have not yielded one small plum to enable authority to say " I told you so." Yet, like the child in the nursery story, still they plod on looking for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, when sensible, normal people would have given it up long ago.

In many well-authenticated cases, release has been promised or hinted at, if only a detainee would get certain information or betray imaginary secrets. Sometimes the man approached led them up the garden, but no matter, on they went; finding nothing. In a particularly vile case, an Intelligence Officer offered release to a detainee if he would lay evidence against a brother officer, whose sole offence was that he desired to treat detainees as ordinary human beings.

The real purpose of these Intelligence Officers cannot readily be ascertained. They act as a second cen-sor; snooping into the letters of certain detainees; perusing books and periodicals despatched (in accor-dance with

Home Office rules) direct from the publishers; they censor camp cinema shows, even the BBC news and the daily newspapers. At times, even the most innocuous books are banned if sent to particular individuals. In fact, it often seems as if they just exist to make lifer a little more diffi-cult, and to justify their own existence; refusing proper access to books through the lending libraries; refusing correspondence courses; and preventing adequate correspondence. Sorriest farce of all is the solemn scrutinizing of letters to MPs which, nowadays, they are even allowed to alter in any way; even there they insist that the special sensitized paper be used preventing any writing in invisible ink. Really sinister is the process known detainees as "Funfing"

A detainee will suddenly be sent for. And will be asked, quite politely, to take a seat. It is a real danger signal if he is also offered a cigarette. Then starts one of these freak interviews, so stupid as to compete seriously with a Dixon Hawke fiction story:

"Who do you think will win the war?"

"Are you part of the pro-German element in camp, or are you pro-British?"

"Why did you move from House X?"

"What do you think of Mr. Churchill?"

"Do you like the Japanese?"

"Do you intend to continue political activities during and after the war?"

"Did .. .. tell you he was going to join Scotland Yard when he was released?" And to crown it all:

"Of course you know we don't employ 'snoops,' don't you?"

These and scores of other leading questions have been asked. The reader may laugh; but the detainee was not always in the position to do so, as often his liberty, and the well being of his family, depended on what he answered. Hints were frequently thrown that the officers themselves had sympathies with particular Fascist ideals and had at one time almost joined British Union.

All the paraphernalia of the detective technique, as outlined in those advertisements, appearing in cheap American magazines headed "Be a detective and earn big money" And all yielding exactly nothing, though they went on week after week, month after month. Their employers must be very patient, or very stupid. But it is clear that a good deal of this reporting gets to the Advisory Commit where detain-ees are often confronted with practically verbatim accounts of conversations in their own quarters, twisted so as to make a good point. One is reluctantly forced to the conclusion that political discrimi-nation and bias is guiding motive, looking for justification what is otherwise unjustifiable.

We have tried to give a picture of the position in the internment camps where British men and women are confined. It is not far removed from the state of affairs in 1817, when the Habeas Corpus Act was sus-pended on baseless grounds, later condemned by historians, under an act "to empower his Majesty to detain such persons as His Majesty shall suspect are conspiring against his person and Govern-ment." Two quotations from " The Age We Live in," vol. 1, by James Taylor, reveal further similarities:

"It was in the month of June (1817) the conduct of the Government in employing and informers had been exposed and condemned by the House of Commons."

“Lord Sidmouth’s biographer affirms that normally the Government spies were ‘employed in the instance by Lord Sidmouth, they themselves found him out’ and ‘if they in any circumstances instigated the conspirators to crime in order to betray them, the treacherous act must have been entirely their own.’ There is no reason to question the truth of this statement.”

The position became so bad as far as the pressure of pub1ic opinion was concerned William Cobbett ceased pub1ication of the popular “Weekly Political Register” and fled to America, observing that:

“Lord Sidmouth was sorry to say that I had not written anything that the law officers could pro-secute with any chance of success . . . I do not retire from the combat with the Attorney General but from combat with a dungeon . . . . any sort of trial I would have stayed to face . . . but against the absolute power of imprisonment without even a hearing for a time unlimited, in any jail in the kingdom, without the use of pen, ink and paper, and without any communication with any soul but the keepers . . . . against such a power it would have been far worse than madness to strive.”

Possibly the following quotation from the “ Black Dwarf,” a contemporary political periodical, relative to the Cabinet, which appeared on April 2nd, 1817, will give a further interesting parallel:

“(They) talked of patriotism when they meant plunder, and their object in embarking in a war with France was, not to conquer that country, but ourselves.”

Are our politicians turning back the clock a century and a quarter? Are the liberties of the public being insidiously chequered?

The Press

In preceding chapters it has been clearly shown, by statements of the Home Secretary himself, that per-sons detained under Regulation 18B are not deemed guilty of any offence. They are detained solely because the Rome Secretary subscribes that he has “reasonable cause to believe that in certain unspecif-ied circumstances—which may never arise—they MAY act in such a way as would assist the enemy.

The Home Secretary’s belief is apparently founded upon certain known facts about the indivi-duals detained. It is convenient at this point to restate very briefly the main heads under which detention orders may be issued, since these represent the primary known facts in which Sir John Anderson and Mr. Herbert Morrison find ‘reasonable cause’ for their beliefs. They are as follows:

(a) HOSTILE ORIGIN—The reason being applicable when one or both parents of the detained person, or the detainee himself, were once aliens of one country or another with which we now happen to be at war.

(b) HOSTILE ASSOCIATION — Which head may cover any relations, family, social or comercial, with nationals of enemy countries — even though such relations may have been severed long before the outbreak of war.

(c) Membership, or former membership, of any organisation believed to have had sympathy with the system of Govern-ment of those countries with which we are now at war—even though such membership was always legal and fully sanctioned by existing laws.

Regarding [c] it is important to note that approval of such a purely domestic matter as a new Agricul-tural Policy sponsored by Mosley’s British Union could—and actually did—lead many innocent people to months in

gaol. There is a case on record in which one of the reasons given for a man's detention is that he once stood for Parliament as an anti-Tithe candidate. (He is a man with an out-standing record of military service to Britain).

It will be seen that these causes for supposedly "reasonable" belief are perilously wide in scope. It is no exaggeration to submit that in one aspect or another they might touch on the pre-war activity of nearly a quarter of the population. The margin for mistake and detention without adequate grounds is dangerous-ly large—and there is ample proof that mistakes have occurred.

Out of a total of 1817 arrested under Regulation 18B, about 1,288 have already been released from detention, many of them unconditionally. Circumstances affecting national security have changed so little since the arrests were effected that it seems only reasonable to assert that if these people are fit and proper persons to be at liberty now, then they must have been equally so at the time of their detention.

In some cases, where it has been patently evident that suspicion of ill-intent was not sufficiently justified to warrant further detention, the victim of 18B, by then duly stigmatized in the public eye, has been allowed to go free. In other cases, where the unfortunate detainee has been unable to perform the very difficult task of dispelling hazy and insubstantial suspicions, he still remains in a prison or barbed wire cage. There he must stay as weeks become months and months drag on into years. He must endure the hardships and vileness of conditions detailed elsewhere in this document whilst dependants and loved ones outside suffer want because they are denied his support. His only solace is Mr. Morrison's re-peated declaration—"These people are not charged with any offence" and even that solace is completely negatived by the obvious fact that not one person in five of the general public believes such declaration.

"No smoke without fire" is a saying that finds great currency in this country. Send a man to gaol for a lengthy period and no matter much you proclaim his possible innocence, the lay public will nod its head sagely and knowingly, happily convinced that such things could not happen in England unless some grave misdemeanor had been perpetrated.

In view of the respect in which British justice has hitherto been held, this attitude of mind is hardly sur-prising. Whether it should be so or not, there can be little doubt in the public mind that 18B detainees have been tried and found guilty. In this erroneous opinion they have been encouraged, led and unscru-pulously misinformed by the most ter-rible machine of propaganda—THE PRESS.

Reminiscent of its behaviour when the Prime Minister asked the public to reserve judgment upon the capitulation of King Leopold of the Belgians, and the press promptly leapt in to rend the character of that unhappy monarch, is newspaper treatment of 18B detainees. Completely disregarding the Home Secretary's declarations, they attacked the subject like hungry jackals attacking a near helpless prey.

The anecdote printed with subtle intent to defame; the mean innuendo; false interpretation are only the lesser injustices for which 18B detainees must one day demand redress. Treason has been charged against them by more than one malicious newspaper out to make sensational headlines. The relevant cuttings are carefully preserved for the time when the responsible publishers may be invited to explain their accusations. They are among hundreds of press extracts retained to prove that a campaign of calumny has been maintained right up to the present date.

Extracts from offending newspaper matter will not adequately illustrate the full reason for complaint, as, in many cases, it is the inference to be drawn from articles in com-plete form which constitute most grievous libels. The articles themselves are too lengthy to be embodied in this statement, but lest it be supposed that a persecution mania, arising out of a lengthy spell of unmerited imprison-ment, might have led to the interpretation of innocent newspaper comment as something more sinister, the example, which follows, may be taken as typical.

An article entitled "I HELPED TO GAOL THE TRAITORS," written under the name Ewart Brookes, was

published in the “Daily Mirror” during August, 1940. In the centre of the article a paneled announ-cement stated: “Ewart Brookes watched and joined the British Fifth Column rats. Read his story and see if you agree that prison’s too good for them.” The writer is, therefore, a self-confessed informer who claims to have supplied the police with data leading to many detentions under 18B. His article makes a sensational adventure story and is totally unembarrassed by restricting demands of truth. He writes:

“If Sir John Anderson will put them (the detainees) on trial I will volunteer as a witness. I will tell of the men and women who, when war broke out, rushed to join civil defence organisations and stamp their treachery with a forked lightning badge.” (It is made clear that the badge referred to is that of British Union).

This is followed later in the article with:

“I will tell how I turned over to authorities personally conducted dossiers of these traitors.”

Later again he declares that he will tell so much that men and women will “line up outside the prisons and barbed wire camps in which these suckers live in comfort and will demand the right, to hang them from the nearest lamp post.”

The writer of this scurrilous nonsense has not left himself the excuse that his accusations are directed only against a few individual detainees. His penultimate paragraph plainly states:

“As far as aliens are concerned, Sir John may have been extra and superbly cautious. As far as our own British brand of rat is concerned lie hasn’t put a finger wrong.”

Not a finger wrong, says Mr. Ewart Brookes —yet the Home Secretary, with infinitely more information on the subject, has since seen fit to release two-thirds of the original number detained! The “lucky” 1288 released have gone out to associate with the public taught by Mr. Brookes, and the “Daily Mirror” to regard them as rats and traitors,

One large circulation Sunday newspaper described certain 18B arrests under a streamer headline across a whole page: “GAULEITERS TO BE ARRESTED”. The article that followed was made up of a list of names and descriptions of the latest detainees. These names included that of Lieut. Francis Christopher Fane, R.N., who was granted his, unconditional release only after spending more than a year in captivity.

The name Fane is deservedly respected, not only at home in Lincolnshire but in a far broader sphere. It is known with honour in the Forces of the Crown and Lieut. Fane may claim that he has endeavoured to maintain a proud family record. His claim is belatedly recognised by his release without any restrictive conditions. His freedom is restored and he is officially regarded as one with all the other Englishmen willing and ready to serve their country. But who would argue that his position can ever be the same? He has been publicly branded as a Hitler puppet and no retraction of such charge has yet been published. Only those well acquainted with public temper at this time can fully realise what opprobrium has thus been attached to his character.

Lieut. Fane’s case is not exceptional. It is representative of many cases of innocent men now released and many others awaiting the Home Secretary’s pleasure.

Where men have been named in offensive newspaper matter the imputations are dreadful indeed, and will doubtless be the subject for challenge in the appropriate place, when clarity of mind and freedom to discuss the issues involved in Courts designed to stand between the citizen and the Executive are again functioning assets of our Constitution. The position of the average detainee who has not been individu-ally mentioned in the press is not less invidious and equally deserving of redress.

The average 18B detainee, though deprived of his rights of free citizenship, is not otherwise unlike the average

free citizen. He has only a crude understanding of the complexities of the law, and, in any case, could not afford recourse to expensive litigation. How then is he to protect his character and protect those private interests which inevitably suffer when character is impugned ?

During detention, he is forbidden to write to newspapers, and even after release he does so only at his peril. While in detention this is a complete and unbreakable ban. Thus he is forbidden any attempt to correct glaring misrepresentations and distortions of facts. The Home Secretary, who is armed with full powers to enable him to prevent the publication of mischievous and false matter, which he has himself deplored in Parliament, displays noteworthy respect for freedom of the press by doing nothing about it.

The individual detainee is left absolutely helpless against press slurs on 18B prisoners collectively yet no individual detainee can escape the stigma.

It is true that occasional misgivings about the Regulation have found expression in various media, but only one newspaper, the "Manchester Guardian," has expressed consistent opposition. In the main, such trepidation as has been displayed has been not so much about how the Regulation has been applied in the past but how it might be applied in the future. Newspapers find it truly horrifying to reflect that it might be applied against newspapers. These selfishly inspired misgivings in no way compensate for the evil the press has worked on present and past 18B victims.

In criminal proceedings any newspaper which ventured sub-judice pronouncements on the guilt of the accused person would be guilty of contempt of Court, and, if convicted, fined and the responsible person might even be imprisoned. Finding that considerations of expediency and economy do not demand the same restraint in the ease of detainees, who are neither charged nor awaiting trial, the press appoints itself prosecutor, judge and jury. It then passes judgments calculated to appeal to that inflamed public opinion it has itself so shamelessly misinformed-

It is difficult for anyone who has endured the detainee's experience at the merciless hands of the press not to sound a harsh note of condemnation. To him no condemnation seems harsh enough.

He has been used as "whipping boy" for the unhealthy entertainment of readers of the yellow tabloid press; he has been used as an experimental guinea pig by sedate and serious papers and reviews intent on proving or disproving, with the aid of pontifical men of law, that the cause of liberty is best served by its negation; and to him it seems that he has been used as the subject for exercises in unrestrained invective, by every gossip columnist, every hardened hack, and every aspiring amateur of the poll, writing in every medium from the national Press to the most remote little local "rag."

As has been said before, extracts from newspaper matter, given without the full context, would not pro-perly illustrate the very solid grounds for detainees' complaints against the press. The reader is remin-ded that files of cuttings, sufficient to justify every assertion here made, do exist, and will be produced as required, even though reasons of space prevent reproduction here. Any reader of this document who is also a student of the popular press will reasonably agree that further proof is un-necessary. Neverthe-less, there is one section of the press, which, though of no great importance in general influence, demands special mention—and from which quotations must be given.

The papers of the Isle of Man demand this particular mention because:

(a) The British Government at Westminster has no direct authority over them.

(b) They are not restrained by the same laws of libel that apply on the mainland (thus any litigation undertaken against them would involve extra complication and cost).

(c) They may, and it is reasonable to suppose that they do, by their own attitude to detainees held on the Island, influence the attitude of their readers. This means that they are in a position to pre-judice not only the Manx people with whom detainees may come in contact in the course of work on farms and land reclamation schemes, but also, and this is of immense import-ance, they are in a position to prejudice the atti-tude of guards and personnel of the detention camps.

To suggest that one paragraph in one issue of a local newspaper is likely to exert any great influence is patently ridiculous; but when all local newspapers, daily and weekly, in a geogra-phically detached region work to a like pinion; when they are from time to time supported by organs of the national press; when prominent local figures endorse that opinion, and when no counter opinion is ever given publicity, it would be expecting too much of human nature to hope that the reading public should not be swayed, and their attitude not be biased, by such weight or propaganda.

These things considered, one is entitled to expect a sense of responsibility dictating press conduct. One is entitled to expect newspapers which eschew sensationalism to take pride in sober, objective news pre-sentation. One might think to find a stronghold of that press dignity which commercialism and ballyhoo have ousted from Fleet Street journalism.

So much for expectations; what does one get?

Here are some extracts from an "Isle of Man Examiner" report of the arrival of 18B detainees on the island. This report is headed

"TRUCULENT VISITORS."

The contempt in which those who would undermine national stability in pursuit of a political belief are held by true blooded Britons was shown late on Monday (12th May, 1941) night when one of the Manx steamers engaged on Government work arrived at Douglas with about 600 18B detainees.

The words we have bolded clearly impute treachery to the uncharged detainees. "The ship's passengers were mostly members of the British Union of Fascists. . . .

Actually, the Fascists were a minority in a party, which was largely composed of British subjects of Italian or German origin.

"There were many typical Englishmen for whom one can have nothing but a feeling of utter loathing."

One or two detainees had hoped to impress on bystanders that they were not traitors by chalking "18B" upon their clothing. This pathetic precaution is described by the "Isle of Man Examiner" as "merely another instance of their depraved attitude of mind."

The report ends:

"Shortly after 7 o'clock the first of the two special trains left for Peel, and the second one departed just before 8 o'clock—and as a result the atmosphere of Douglas became all the purer again."

On the same day (16th May, 1941) the "Isle of Man Daily Times" published an item sub-headed "The Corner Mob in the Camp." Two separate paragraphs will suffice to show its tone:

"These Fascists can fight, but with their tongues, and though we treat them with contempt we give our readers a few of the thoughts of these traitors now at Peel."

“We were, however, asked a poser at Peel this week by a Government official.. He asked how could we or anyone else account for a man wearing the Mons Star and the Military Medal turning against his own country, as was the case of one man now behind the wires at Peel.”

(The bold print is ours.—Ed.)

Such writings can only be interpreted as positive assertions of treachery. They permit no other reading. In the same issue of the paper another news item ends with the question:

“Why all this secrecy over the Fascists? The public is allowed to look at the skunks at the zoo.” This was the beginning of a long chapter of insult and persecution. When events at camp did not provide news items, then items were shamelessly invented, all of character to give openings for new and more violent outbursts of contumely.

A purely imaginary ban by Manx farmers against “Mosley men” gave an opportunity to quote one farmer as saying: “We look upon these men as traitors to Empire. I would rather work till I drop than one of them on my land.”

This item, together with many more scurrilous fabrications, appeared also in London “Daily Mail.” The falsity of this news is best proved by the fact that many detainees, “Mosley men” and others, subseq-uently worked regularly on Manx farms and enjoyed perfectly civil relationships with their employers.

That visitors to detainees may bring husbands, brothers or friends present creature comforts to lighten the ordeal detention sends the Manx press, and certain Manx officials, into a frenzy of protest.

A.E. Ostick, formerly resident proprietor of an hotel adjoining the camp and a member of Peel Commis-sioners, a gentleman of who more must be written, furnished grotesque exaggerated accounts of the quantities of foodstuffs delivered in this way. His account taken up acidly by both local and National press, were the basis for an outcry against alleged “luxury feeding of Fascists” in Isle of Man Daily Times 4/7/41 to 8/8/41, and other papers).

The circumstances that public seats on the promenade had been enclosed in the barbed wire fence of the 18B camp caused another flutter among the Town Commissioners, incidentally gave the press an opening to report a Mr. Jenkinson as saying:

“I do not object to the aliens using the seat but these Fascists are different—they have turned against their country.”

The accumulation of “news” cuttings couched in similar terms to examples given would themselves fill a volume.

Here follows an instance in which gross misrepresentation is the weapon used to public animosity against detainees.

First the bare facts:

On the night of Sunday, September 1941, in accordance with normal practice at that time, all camp lights were switched at 10.30 pm. They were switched off by a master switch controlled by the military situated outside the camp itself; thus detainees would be unable to switch on a light until such time as the master switch was turned on next morning.

This being the recognised signal, detainees proceeded to remove blackout materials and throw open windows for the night. About an hour later, by a careless mistake by the military, the lights were again switched on, and before the mistake was corrected or detainees could all be awakened to re-adjust black-out curtains, lights had been exposed for several minutes

Here is the incident as recorded in the "Isle of Man Examiner" (12th September, 1941

"PEEL RATS KICK UP A RUMPUS - Many Lights Show Out to Sea."

"Considerable noise was heard in the neighbourhood of the Fascist detainee camp at Peel late Sunday evening, when there was yelling and shouting and the banging of pots and pans. At the time the camp was in complete darkness, but suddenly scores of windows facing the promenade were lit by electric light, reflecting into the bay and visible far out to sea. When the lights were shown there was further shouting, and after a few seconds lights were put out with a few excep-tions. One in the middle of the promenade and another on Victoria Terrace stayed on for several minutes. Eventually the lights were put out, but others were showing on several occasions. This appears to call for serious investigation, as showing of lights out to sea is so dangerous to people living on the Island."

In the editorial of the same paper, the matter is taken up again in these words:

"THE PEEL RATS"

"The disgusting behaviour of the British traitors at Peel last week-end calls for serious investi-gation. These men—if they can be called so—seem prepared to do anything, which will upset the people and damage our cause. It is a matter of serious import that they should be in a position where they can switch on lights exposed out to sea, and the proper way to deal with them is to deny them any artificial lighting at all. They are the scum of the country and are not worthy of, the slightest consideration. We do hope that some serious notice will be taken of last Sunday's outrageous behaviour."

And here is how the story was distorted for the readers of the world's largest circulation daily newspaper:

"LIGHTS UP IN BLACK-OUT"

Fascists Protest.

"British Fascists interned at Peel on the coast of the Isle of Man switched on bedroom lights 'wholesale.' The men said they had a grievance. The lights shone out to sea for 15 minutes during the black-out. More than 20 boarding houses forming part of the camp were illumin-ated, and some lights, were switched on and off like signals." ("Daily Express," 11/9/41.)

So, it will be seen, how a careless action by the military guards was used to severely discredit the detain-ees. The embellishments supplied in the "Express" report give their version of the affair an air of com-plete authenticity and incalculable harm accrues to the detainee, who is already hard put to it to establish his claim that he is a sober, responsible individual.

The anxieties suffered by relatives of detainees through these mischievous reports, and the baneful influence they may exert, is shown in the worried letters, which reached the camp after each of such publications. The wife of a man who has served Britain in war and peace (he was a member of the Shackleton Expedition to the Pole) wrote a letter including this passage:

"I have striven desperately to urge men who know your record to make representations to secure your release,

and at times I have been hopeful of useful aid. Then comes news of this kind (the “Express” report of the lights incident) and I cannot sincerely blame them when they say that people guilty of such dangerous conduct should not be freed. Why! Oh why must you do such terrible things which only make people hate you?” Such damnable lying has actually wrecked a number of marriages.

Even the foregoing quotations of such defamatory newspaper matter lose significance in compari-son with what was let loose after the so-called “Fascist Riot” at Peel. This subject is more fully dealt with in the section of this statement devoted to “ Riot.” Here it is sufficient to record that those primarily res-ponsible for the “exaggeration” deplored by the Home Secretary were the Manx newsmongers, who acted as representatives to the National Press, prominent among these being Mr. A. E. Ostick of the Creg Malin Hotel, whose masterpiece of graphic fabrication made “splash” head-lines in the “News Chronicle.” When the more highly trained reporters of the National press did reach the Island the situation was only aggravated. As if bound to justify the expense of their trip to Peel, they began to manufacture sensations out of the most trivial happenings—sometimes without any happen-ings at all. Failing this, they sent back “local colour” stories which, though vivid, bore scant relation to the truth.

Discovery of a tunnel by which three escapees had crawled under the wire fence of the camp, led W. A. Dixon of the “Daily Herald,” and many other reporters to compose a fantastic tale of a mass-escape attempt.

The discovery was obviously legitimate material for a piquant news item—but the mass-escape plan never existed outside repor-ter’s imaginations. It was deliberately invented to “build up” the news value of the tunnel find. Nor was this all. Detainees, who had spent the normal quiet and monotonously boring week-end in the camp, were dumb-founded to read in the press one Tuesday (30th September, 1941) that, in addition to planning this mass-escape, they had been burgling their own canteen (a small lock-up shop) and en-gaging in riotous brawling.

Since Mr. Dixon is one of those who com-piled this lying nonsense, let him tell the story his own way:

“The discovery of the tunnel followed a disturbance in the camp canteen, during which a number of detainees were injured. Some of the detained men broke into the canteen with the object, I understand, of toasting in wine the completion of the tunnel and the prospective bid for freedom. There was a free fight, in which empty bottles were used as weapons. Eight men were put into the camp glass house as a result of the brawl.” (Daily Herald, 30/9/41.)

The whole deliberate fiction was front paged under one-inch headlines. Other National dailies and the BBC generally regarded as the guarantor of news authenticity, shared the story of fighting and injuries, causing God knows how much alarm and concern to the families of detainees.

When men pressed for permission to send home conciliatory telegrams they were told— “the matter is not sufficiently important.”

Damaging effect of these and other reports on the outlook of the general public is reflected in the correspondence columns of the papers responsible. Here is a typical letter to the press:

“I protest against the utterly flabby treatment of the rioting Fascists in the Isle of Man—I refuse to call them British. If we are fighting with our backs to the wall why not, shoot these Quislings and so save complications? Why should they live in peaceful surroundings while other people have to sweat and toil and die.—J. White, South Molten.” (Daily Mail, 24/9/41.)

And here is an extract from another:

“These so-called men, these spineless creatures, revolted, knowing that their guards were not allowed to hit

back. . . . These are the men who, rather than fight for their country, prefer to attempt to betray it in the hope of receiving good jobs if their betrayal is successful. And these dirty, would-be traitors are the ones who are allowed to throw broken bottles (wine bottles, I expect), old tins and mud at their guards." (Letter in " Daily Mirror," 25/9/41.)

These two letters indicate an attitude of mind that is by no means rare.

Regulation 18B and the machinations of an unprincipled press have directed an intensity of hatred that is mercifully uncommon in the British people against a group of men and women held in captivity without trial or charge, with no means of protesting their innocence and no defence against the foulest calumny. Here is a situation that shrieks aloud for rectification.

If it is really necessary to the well-being of the country to commit innocent men to prisons and prison camps; to scrap their rights; to reserve or totally dispense with charges against them; if these unconstitu-tional, un-British measures are truly necessary then we, the detained, must reserve our defence and sub-mit, with what patience we can muster, to our unhappy lot. But is it too much to ask, in view of this absence of charges and of our reserved defence, that all men of fair mind should reserve judgment upon us and press vilification be silenced.

There is another aspect at which we can only hint, as we have only suspicions, not actual proof. That is, that the press is used, deliberately, by certain anonymous quarters, to create bias against detainees at moments when new moves are contemplated against them, or sympathy for them threatens to become too strong.

Commander Bower, MP, seems to have the same suspicions, so that he remarked in the Commons on the 21st July, 1942:

"In the last few days there has been a very tendentious press propaganda tending to discredit the internees. Coming just as this debate was pending, I cannot help wondering whether this is absolutely fortuitous."

Release

That Defence Regulation 18B has been administered oppressively is proved overwhelmingly by the fact that, of the 1160 persons released to date from detention under this regulation, only one man has been given even partial vindication. We refer to Mr. Ben Greene, former Hertfordshire JP, who, after 20 months of detention, was released on the 7th January, 1941, with all the original charges leveled against him unreservedly withdrawn by the Home Office. Even here, however possibly to save face, the Home Office imposed the nominal condition on him that he must report to the police any change of address.

Other releases have taken the form of "revoked order" or, as in the majority of cases, a "suspended order." It is in the circumstances of these releases, and the refusal of vindication to hundreds of men and women returned to a world convinced that they are actual or potential traitors to their country that the fully punitive effect of this regulation can be seen.

Command Paper 6162, which purports to define the conditions of detention, expressly states that "the condition of the confinement will be as little as possible oppressive."

Can it be other than oppressive that the detainee should read in a newspaper that he has been released, yet that he and the Camp Commandant should continually telephone the Home Office for three days before he actually is freed? This happened.

Can it be anything but punitive that detainees should receive anxious letters from their relatives asking for their whereabouts, as local police said they had been released and that a month of mental stress should have to be endured before actual release takes place? This happened in several cases.

Is it not oppressive that the release should not come until as long as five weeks after the date on the release order, a gross delay which could do irreparable damage to business affairs, or to the health of the detainee and his relatives? This was a common occurrence.

Can it be anything but malicious treatment that Military intelligence officers should question detain-ees—twice in one man's case—on the views of fellow detainees suggesting that satisfactory answers would bring their own release much nearer? This despicable practice was once a regular routine.

It may be contended that muddle and "red tape" is responsible for delays in fulfilling the intention to release men. Yet does the knowledge of Governmental ineptitude lessen the mental torture of its victims? Furthermore, even this excuse meant nothing where the price of release is the invitation to become an informer. So obvious was it that the Military intelligence officers concerned were flagrantly over stepping their duties that, after strenuous protest they were removed from their posts.

The punitive effects of the Regulation can also be seen in the release of certain men and continued detention of others.

Ex-servicemen of the last war, Englishmen who bear decorations for heroism and service, have been casually informed that the Home Secretary sees no reason for their release. In the meantime British subjects of enemy origin have been released against their own wish, while avowing their allegiance to Hitler. These men, two of German origin and one of Italian parentage, left M Camp, free, after protesting against a release which might cast doubt on their German and Italian loyalty. Farcical limits are reached when we find one of these men of German origin being forced to join the British army.

It is equally difficult to understand why, of men detained on precisely the same ground— membership of a particular political body— some should be released and some kept in detention indefinitely. There are hundreds of such cases, where it seems that the deciding factor has been not the decided judgment of the Advisory Committee or the Home Secretary, but the whim of some local official; for if the holding of certain political views has led to detention, what intelligence on earth could decide, at a distance, that one man has changed his attitude and can safely be released, whilst his neighbour must still be confined, in the public interest?

One prospective Parliamentary candidate for British Union was abruptly released; although only five days earlier he had been notified that he must be further detained. Could his views have changed in so short a time?

But punitive treatment endures after release. Every man and woman released, after months of detention, knows that he or she can be whipped back into internment at any time, for there has been created a new and vicious form of "ticket-of-leave" system. This became clear and was brought to a definite threat by Mr. Herbert Morrison in the House of Commons on the 27th November, 1941, when he said

"It must not be assumed that the curve of detentions is always going down. There may come a time . . . . that it may be necessary for the curve of detentions to go up again and, believe me, provided that I carry the support of the House with me, I shall not hesitate, in the changing situa-tion that may arise, to detain every person whom I think with reason might be a danger to the State in the situation of anxiety."

This is no mere threat. Men have been released, perhaps by mistake, through some inefficiency in high places and have been re-arrested after so long as six weeks of liberty.

Fifteen men serving in the army, mostly as volunteers were detained for 16 months and then abruptly released having been arrested under a wrong clause of Regulation 18B

For a few days, wives, relatives and dependents enjoyed a heartfelt relief;, then came the tragic shock. All were re-arrested under new orders. The cruelty of such frivolous play with human liberty is only exceeded by its utter pointlessness; which is revealed in the fact that at least eight of the men have since been released again.

But it is the stigma attached to any released person, which carries its punitive effect hack into civil life. He leaves detention without any withdrawal of the imputation that he is a potential traitor. The facts of this matter were notably summarized by Flight Lieut. Boothby when he said in the House of Commons on the 26th November, 1941

"But to the British citizen interned under Regulation 18B, or the friendly alien interned under Regulation 12 (5A), a stigma must necessarily attach not only to himself, but to his children and his children's children. We cannot get away from that fact."

The Home Secretary will not admit the error. Every man released carries with him, often endorsed upon his identity card, which must be produced whenever he seeks employment and upon many other occas-ions, a stigma, making him an outcast amidst a public.

Under a suspended Order, the detainee often finds that he may not live in his own town, often even in his own county. A man from Kent reached home to find his wife and family acutely destitute. A local job was available to him; that would have enabled him, in some small measure, to compensate his family for the grievous deprivation they had suffered. The job had to be rejected because the police forbade his residence in the county. Little imagination is needed to visualize the anxiety with which he had to search for work else-where, still, in effect, as far from his family and home life as ever.

In a second case, a schoolmaster in the East of England was likewise debarred from living in his own county. Driven to take hotel accommodation elsewhere, he suffered the indignity of being locked in his bedroom. The landlord, no doubt an excellent citizen, had considered it his bounden duty, on observing that his guest's identity card bore traces of Regulation 18B, to keep such a man under restraint.

Other men have gone out of detention to find their families completely broken up. There are three known cases in which wives have deserted their husbands rather than continue to live in an atmosphere of spiteful malevolence too great for human endurance. The number of shattered engagements is too great for computation.

Many ex-detainees have found their wives in a state of irreparably damaged health. A Bolton ex-serviceman, released alter 19 months detention, discovered his wife in a condition of physical collapse because of her endeavors to keep on with his job as caretaker of a three-storey warehouse.

Some cases illustrate a vicious misunderstanding by the general public. A Brighton butcher had his premises bedaubed "Traitor." An Islington trader had his shop ransacked. An Ashtead man wrote that he left his timber-yard "full of poles, timber, sheds and returned to find it bare and depressing. A tim-ber-yard without timber is awful." It would seem that those who have incurred the Home Secretary's suspicion are no longer protected by any laws of property; that they are regarded as fair game for 'patriotic' vandals and thieves.

Released, yet still suspect, subject of whispered back-door gossip, of scandal handed over the shop counters of their neighbourhood; undesirable employees; the released detainees are marked men wherever they go.

A Worcestershire man obtained work with a forestry unit, and there is no doubt he would have been an efficient organiser in work of great value to the country. When the Labour Exchange observed the evid-ence of 18B deten-tion on his identity card and reported this to his director, he was immediately dis-missed. He was informed that membership of British Union was sufficient reason for this treatment.

Another former member of British Union has been forced to change his employment no less than 17 times. He has been dismissed from most jobs because of such member-ship. One firm of Government contractors who employed him as a lorry driver gave the Security Clause in their contract with the Government as the reason for his dismissal. This, they said, forbade the employ-ment of members of British Union. Questioned in the House of Commons by Sir Irving Albery, the Minister of Labour denied that his Department had issued such instruc-tions. Be this true or not, the fact remains that ex-detainees are being victimized either by employers or Government Departments.

In the case mentioned salt was rubbed into the wound when, on application for relief at the local Labour Exchange, the man was refused assistance. This in spite of the opinion of Mr. Craven Ellis wrote

"I cannot believe that this would be refused."

Lieut. Colonel Sir Thomas Moore, M. P., asked in the House of Commons:

"Is the Hon. Gentleman aware that men who have been released from internment camps have their identity cards marked to show they were so interned? How is it possible for them to get jobs?"

There was no adequate reply. There could be none. The press did not report the question. There is as much injustice attached to release as to actual detention. It cannot be emphasized too vigorously. It is unjust that men and women of good character should have been flung into prison without warning and detained for more than two years without charge, It is unjust that their cases should have been consider-ed by a tribunal whose findings have frequently been over-ruled by a single Minister of the Crown. It is unjust that established Courts of Law have been bound to refuse ancient right of Habeas Corpus, a right treasured by the British people for more eight centuries. Equally unjust is the complete lack of explan-ation when release from detention is granted. It is damnably unfair that with so much mystery about their detention and release, men and women are denied public vindication by the Minister responsible for creating that mystery. This flagrant travesty of justice that they should left exposed to the condem-nation of a world taught to regard them with gravest suspicion.

There can be no computing what misery, what depths of desolation and utterly hell of desperation may come from this ultimate cruelty.

The point has been put forward that because some three quarters of those originally detained have now been released that there never any justification for detaining them. Mr. Morrison replied to this sugges-tion that changed circumstances justified him in adjusting his decisions.

It must be recorded however that a 1arge number of those who have been released joined the army and we should have thought that no amount of change of circumstances would have warranted accepting a man in army if his status as a "suspected person" still existed.

We should admire Mr. Morrison a great more if he were man enough to come out the open and admit that the whole thing a mistake from start to finish, and that there never was any justification the detentions in point of fact.

Because the great majority on release had to report themselves weekly or monthly to the police it is logical to assume that in the eyes of the authorities they are suspected of traitorous intent.

There are numerous cases of such persons being required to do this right up to moment they have joined His Majesty's forces. It is perfectly good logic to suggest therefore that the Forces are being obliged to men of suspected traitorous intent.

This of course is a very wrong procedure unless of course we must assume that Morrison knew perfectly well

that such men had no suggestion of traitorous intent and if that is so why did he compel them to report regularly to their local police? Was it to damn them still further in the eyes of their neighbours?

Was Parliament Deceived?

Imprisonment for offences against the civil or criminal code is a survival from those far off days when the king or his barons had absolute power to cast their rivals or serfs into dungeons or, perhaps to inflict physical torture upon them, as punishment to themselves or deterring examples to others. Modern civil-ization calls for modified treatment, so that mere fact of confinement under unpleasant conditions, coup-led with coarse and barely adequate feeding, and forced labour, is regarded as sufficient punishment for most offences; but, mark, it is thought of as punishment. Actually, it is the family of the wrongdoer who are usually the worse hit, because while he, at any rate, is housed and fed, they are left outside, deprived of their breadwinner and exposed to such obloquy as neighbors may inflict upon them, but that is a thing legislators do not often consider; for one thing there are no votes in it.

It is obvious in any case that to sane people the mere fact of imprisonment is punitive and oppressive; otherwise gaols would have terror for nobody, would serve no purpose whatever

Whatever the Government thought and felt about Regulation 18B, Parliament was distinctly restive when the matter was first under discussion, and this feeling was only set to rest by Government assur-ances, embodied in the Command Paper 6162, already set out in this document, laying down strict pre-cautions to be adopted to ensure that the imprisonment would be as little oppressive as possible.

Paragraph (1) reads as follows:

As persons detained in pursuance of Regulation 18B are so detained for custodial purposes only and not with any punitive purpose, the conditions of their confinement will be as little as possible oppressive, due regard being had to the necessity of ensuring safe custody and maintaining good order and good behaviour.

We will make nothing here of such matters as temporary deprivation of books, extra food or tobacco and cigarettes in war-time. All should expect inconveniences and loss of solaces and luxuries. Further, it is unnecessary to stress such things, in view of the manifold examples of cases where the Command Paper was not complied with in far more serious respects, to a degree counter both to ordinary humanity and to the expressed will of Parliament.

The Home Secretary cannot plead ignorance of these matters, as innumerable and continuous represen-tations were made through prison officers, visiting magistrates, Home Office inspectors, petitions to the Home Office and complaints to MPs (where these were not obstructed or lost in transmission). Yet applications and petitions were ignored, and parliamen-tary questions were disposed of by deliberate evasions or downright lies; and when pressed both Mr. Morrison and his Under Secretary, Mr. Peake, have indignantly denied that conditions were oppressive.

Consider some of the circumstances attending arrest and first arrival at prison. How men were seized in their homes, at places of busi-ness or employment, or elsewhere, and, without any opportunity to straighten up their affairs before being whipped away into timeless imprisonment, bundled into gaols or local police stations; were not allowed, in some cases, even to acquaint relatives with their fate and whereabouts, or to ensure that children would be looked after; were some-times paraded, handcuffed or chained together, through the streets of their own town. How an ailing man of 76 was taken on a long and arduous journey, handcuffed, and thrown into gaol to die. How men were threatened, even struck, by police bullies in search of kudos.

Picture how men in His Majesty’s forces were often detained in a manner contrary to the Army Act and King’s Regulations, were paraded before the public view wearing handcuffs—in one case, a serving officer was

handcuffed to a junior rank, a breach of every army code; how regimental badges and badges of rank were torn off uniforms, to provide a public spectacle at a Liverpool railway station.

Read again the testimony of Mr. G. B. as to the birth-pangs endured by his wife, whilst, unatten-ded, even unprovided with articles of hygiene, she lay in a cell at Shrewshury.

Recall how a child of 10 underwent police interrogation and then, instead of being returned, as pro-mised, to his mother, was placed in a public institution; and we would mention here another case where both parents were arrested on a ridiculous charge, their children also being put into an institution, the London Council (of which Mr. Morrison has been so important a member) later billing the mother, still in imprisonment, for their keep.

Were these things punitive? Were they oppressive? Or has the English language changed its meaning?

It is laid down that detainees should be kept apart from convicted prisoners. Yet there are established cases, at Maidstone, Winchester and Walton prisons, where this was not done; and at Brixton and elsewhere many men were made to strip in the presence of convicted prisoners, who sometimes assisted in searching their property.

Frequently, treatment worse than laid down for convicts was meted out. Unless, that is, it is customary for prisoners to be lodged in filthy cells and denied facilities for properly cleaning them; unless it is usual to keep prisoners in solitary confinement 22-23 hours in a day, for days or weeks on end; unless it is typical of English gaols that towels and soap should not be issued until several days after arrest, and that men should, in default of proper cell fittings, be forced to wash their clothes in a cell urine utensil.

Visits were expressly allowed, subject to suitable supervision. In a number of cases, notably at York, Cardiff and Leeds, these visits were refused. Still, in prisons, they are limited to 15 minutes duration. Rules have varied accord-ing to the person in charge, but often a warder has sat between the detainee and his visitor, and an embrace, even a handclasp, refused.

On the transfer to Ascot, a permit system was instituted, but was not notified either to detainees or their friends; so that for a period it was a common spectacle to see visitors who had in many cases spent their last few shillings, even borrowed money, to gain touch with husbands, to obtain advice as to how homes should be kept together, turned away and walk, weeping bitterly, along the road back to the station. Somebody had bungled or somebody didn’t care. Telegrams and urgent letters sent from the camp, giving instructions how to get permits and stressing that it would be futile to come with-out one, were deliberately delayed or sup-pressed, resulting in yet more wasted journeys and bitter disappointments.

At Huyton Camp, an Intelligence Officer, Capt. Ormstein, laid down that detainee and visitor must be separated by double table width. When several detainees and their friends were present conversation had to be carried on in unnaturally raised tones amid a babel of voices, distressing to both visitors and visited; small wonder that after one such experience visitors avowed they would rather undergo separation than such painful meetings.

Food could be sent in; and, packed by loving hands, often at personal sacrifice. It was left in dirty rooms awaiting the pleasure of those detailed to see to it, eventually reaching the detainees in a battered and rotting condition, if at all, having been pilfered by some scoundrel in uniform.

Immediately following the mass arrests, in early June, 1940, letters, inwards and out-wards, were subject to extreme delay, it being usual for a letter to take a month in transmission, exchange of letters rarely being accomplished inside six weeks. So families without means were cut off from touch, wives in many cases not knowing their husband’s whereabouts; and traders and businessmen engaged on work of extreme national importance unable to contact their businesses and works. It was ruled in prisons (with the exception of Stafford) that no more than two letters could be received in one week, so that frequently a man would receive letters from casual acquaintances, whilst those from his family or business were returned, without explanation,

to their senders. This aggravated an already distressing state of affairs.

The situation became acute on transfer to Ascot, when first of all a printed “field card” was allowed to notify the change of address, and then two 24-line letters, written on sensitized “prisoner of war” note-paper, were allowed weekly. But relatives waited for many days without news. It was so with a Stock-port man, who was telegraphed on the 31st July advising of his wife’s coming con-finement; not until 17th August was a reply allowed to reach her. Reassuring telegrams were not allowed to be sent, or were delayed, while letters poured into the camp asking “Where are you and why don’t you write?”

Of all the trials undergone by 18B detainees this barrier to reasonable communication facilities has always been a major provocation to discontent and mental stress. Still in May 1942, there were many occasions when letters took a month in transmission.

When a detainee’s home town is bombed, he waits with great anxiety for news that his family is safe. Is it not punitive, not oppressive, that his anxiety should be protracted over weeks before his heart is set at rest? Says the Command Paper:

“A detained person will be given full opportunity to make representations in writing to the Secretary of State regarding his case and treatment.”

How has this been interpreted? At the outset, a single sheet of paper, probably the most important docu-ment a man has ever had before him, in which to make his appeal against detention for an unknown period, on undisclosed grounds. Legal advice was not permitted as to its compilation. In one case, only five minutes were allowed in which to write it. One man was refused it altogether at Walton, resulting in failure to lodge it within the prescribed ten days.

After this, there was the right to petition the Home Secretary. Some petitions got lost altogether; most of the others never seem to have been acknowledged.

“Medical attention will be provided”. So we read on. At Walton Prison, a man with duodenal ulcers could not get any attention at all apart from powders. Another was refused permission to obtain medi-cine which had not failed, over a number of years, to reduce a complaint to a mini-mum of discomfort; when he pressed the point, the doctor left his cell and ordered the door to be locked.

Also at Walton, two men required dental treatment. One, a Sheffield school teacher, after ten minutes of acute agony during which the doctor had only succeeded in breaking the top off a tooth, was told that nothing more could be done. When he had undergone weeks of pain, a dentist at Ascot Camp removed the stump in a complete1y painless manner and without trouble. Another with acute toothache, asked for a dentist, and was told the dentist was only available once a week; after a sleepless night, he entrus-ted himself to the prison doctor, who removed it, without a local anesthetic.

Altogether a pretty story. Legal minds may still be divided on the point whether the 18B Regulation is legally valid at all; but none, surely, will have two minds about the manner in which it and the Com-mand Paper, have been carried into effect.

It is submitted that there are only two possible explanations. Either the Home Secretary and the Home Office have been lax in tolerating the many abuses which have continued in breach of the Command Paper; or that there never was any serious intention of honouring it.

Detainees have their own feelings in the matter. It is for MPs, however, to decide if, and to what extent, they may have been deceived, and what they propose’ to do about it.

Conclusions

In the foregoing pages it has been attempted to outline the origin and working of the 18B Regulation. Such shortcomings as are evident—and they are many—have arisen from a number of causes; the conditions under which the compilers had to work, inside an intern-ment camp and therefore cut off from many sources of enquiry, and aware all the time that at any moment authority might step in and seize their writings, to be impounded or destroyed, or turned to use against them; the reluctance of a great many detainees to discuss on their cases, lest publication should prejudice their own chances of release or subsequent immunity from re-arrest; and the fact, all too well appreciated, that the compilers them-selves do not profess to be professional writers. Yet setting all that aside, there remains that it has been their lot to live through or watch, day by day, the hardships and cruelties complained of or to have heard them related at first hand; and to have read pathetic letters received by detainees from sorely tried relatives, or from men who, after release, have still found oppression and manufactured hatred dogging their every step. Unfortunately, the women's case cannot yet be given in any detail. Piecing the story together was no light task. Personal distress and anguish are things of feeling, not to be set down by ordinary men in words; and in striving to remain objective has been endeavoured to avoid high-flown phrases, keeping rather to blunt fact, as is the English way.

The fact that most of the victims were alleged or avowed Fascists is no justification of the treatment meted out to them, if the tenets in this document are correct. It is not our purpose to defend the political views of these victims. But it is demanded that an enquiry be made of the wrongs done to them, and that adequate redress be made wherever possible.

The Demand.

It has been shown nearly 2000 men and women have suffered grievous hardship and loss as a result of this panic legislation, rushed through Parliament by means of threat and deception.

We demand that there be set up an impartial body, independent of any Government department, which shall review every case where a British subject has been detained or has been the subject of restrictions under Regulation 18B, and where it is found that in view of all the circumstances the action was unjust-tified, proper amends shall be made under the follow-ing heads:

Victimization.

This we put first and foremost. Remember the words of the Under-Secretary of State, Mr. Osbert Peake: "Why should they be tried? There is no charge against them." (Hansard, Vol. 370, No. 41, Par. 517).

For three bitter years false accusations have been launched against these unfortunates of State, and the possibility has already been envisaged that the slur will remain with them for the rest of their lives, and be borne by their children and their children's children after that. That must not be. We demand that definite Government declarations be forthcoming, and given proper publicity through press and radio, refuting the lies and calumnies that have come to be accepted as fact; furthermore that, apart from any matter of Court proceedings for libel and slander, it be constituted an offence, punishable by law, to conduct further persecution, or business or social discrimination, based on the fact of 18B

Rehabilitation and Redress.

1. Where positions of a permanent nature, whether in private or public employ, have been lost, they must be restored, with due adjustments for lost time; or should this be found impracticable in indivi-dual cases proper compensation must be awarded, to include reasonable allowances for loss of pension rights, loss of career and similar damage sustained.
2. Similarly, all other employed persons to be reinstated, or proper compensation awarded if similarly paid

work cannot be obtained.
3. Proprietors of businesses or shops shall rehabilitated, so that they shall not have lost by their intern-ment; every aspect must be considered—e.g., loss of or damage to business connections, damage to goodwill, loss of ability through long idleness.
4. Compensation shall also be granted in respect of:
(a) Damage to health or mental faculties.
(b) Material losses sustained, for instance, where dwelling, furniture or other pro-perty has had to be sacrificed or mortgaged during and/or as a result of detention or restrictions.
(c) Losses sustained by and hardships enforced upon internees' families where these have arisen solely as a result of interment or the imposition of restrictive conditions.

5. In assessing compensation, there shall he taken into account any breaches, that is, failure to carry into effect the provisions of Command Paper 6162, the terms of which met with approval in Parliament.

Those are the amends, which we feel, should be made. There is no desire by internees or others to make money out of the situation, but harm has been done and must be righted.

Ben Greene Case

Reference has been made in this work to the internment of Ben Greene. On January 7, 1942, Ben Greene was released from Brixton Prison and a week later he received a long letter from the Home Office, which concluded with the following words

"After considering the report of the Advisory Committee the Secretary of State thinks it right, taking account of the allegations in the above quoted particulars and of the excep-tional publicity given to them, to inform you that these allegations should be regarded as withdrawn."

Ben Greene proceeded to take action for false imprisonment and for over a year the matter hung about in the courts, with one appeal after another. The hearing came up in April 1943, and after some days Ben Greene withdrew the ease, because of the impossible legal position. His case established beyond any shadow, of doubt that no 18B person can possibly win any action for false imprisonment for the following reasons.

To win such an action the plaintiff's innocence is not a material factor. He must prove that Secretary of State did not believe him to be guilty, or in other words, he has to prove the state of mind of the Home Secretary.

Lord Clauson stated the legal position in this way

"The only thing which in this action can be discussed will be when Sir John Anderson said 'I have reasonable cause to believe.' Was he lying and was it the fact that he did not believe anything of the kind?"

To prove the state of mind of anyone is difficult enough but in the case of an 18B it is made quite im-possible because at the behest of the Secretary of State himself the most essential evidence can be ex-cluded as it was in this case by the claim of privilege. The Secretary of State declared:

"I have examined the plea of the Advisory Committee including the transcripts of the proceedings and the reports of the two Committees and I have to inform you that I object to their production other than for letters and documents passing between the Committee and Mr. Greene or his ad-visors on the ground that it would be contrary to the public interest that they should be disclosed. Further, I have to say that it would be contrary to the public interest that evidence should be given as to what passed at any of the proceedings before the Advisory Committee."

The court upheld this claim for privilege and the most important evidence was thereby excluded and Greene

withdrew his case to save some of the costs.

It should be noted however, that in Capt. Ramsay‘s libel case against “The New York Times” there was no claim for privilege but on the contrary the New York Times was permitted to use the evidence sup-plied by the Secretary of State. Whichever leg the boot is on, the 18B prisoner goes down.

Kurtz admitted that he was a paid Government agent and admitted that in such circumstances it was his duty to lie. Though he denied to Greene’s solicitors the fact of the alleged report, in the witness box he withdrew the denial and the only evidence not covered by privilege was nullified. To cap it all the Government now require Greene to pay over £1,000 for the legal costs for daring to bring an action for alleged false imprisonment.

Editor’s Statement

[Whilst this work was passing through the press, the editor and compiler indicated to the publisher he wished to change the foreword. It was not easy to make this alteration so the following paragraphs from the intended revised foreword were published as the editor’s and compiler’s concluding words.—Publisher.]

I leave it to the reader to judge for him whether the facts as presented ring true. If he feels that they do ring true then I ask not to allow the cry of those so unjustly treated under this regulation to go unheard and unanswered.

I am bringing these facts to the public not merely for the sake of the sufferers themselves. It has been said that “ a house divided against itself will fall” and the same is true of a Nation. More than ever do we now need complete national unity and if those who are abroad fighting for liberty feel that injustice is being perpetrated in their own country t can hardly he expected to give of their best.

This is no matter of personal surmise for I have seen letters from all three services indicating that the writers are gravely concerned what they have heard about the administration of Regulation 18B.

My final appeal to all who are impressed with what they read is that in every possible way they will bring pressure to bear on their elected representatives so that The Mother of Parliaments may compel the executive to cease further abusing the war-time powers confer upon them; with, I venture to think too lively a fear for the military danger of the present and too little regard for constitutional dangers of the future. It would be sad indeed for Britain and her allies if they gained a military victory only to find that they had lost the most precious thing for which are fighting.

I wish to make it quite clear that so far possible I have refrained from showing political bias for any party or section but as a British Officer with active service in the last war I am naturally prejudiced in favour of England.

J. WYNN

Coleshill.

Publishers Afterword

18B Regulations Continued.

A prayer was presented in the House of Commons on July 8, 1943, to annul certain Regulations under the Emergency Powers Act, by H. Webbe. The attack was directed mainly against the delegation of powers by Minister. Major Lloyd George resisted the prayer and contended that, during the war, these powers were necessary. Finally, the motion was withdrawn. Seven days later, the continuation another year of the Emergency Powers Defence) Act, 1939, dating from August 24, 1940 were discussed. It was evident that the manner in which the liberty of citizen, undemocratically and objectionably termed "sub-ject," under the 18B Regulation is curtailed, meets with growing dislike in the House of Commons. Mr. Pickthorn whom I have attacked for his anti-socialism in the past, but with whom I agree on this matter, said that, next year, the house would divide against the Government unless, by then, its intentions for the future were made clear. Mr. Montague, though wanting other restrictions to continue, ex-pressed the opinion, that as soon as we can get back to those fundamental principles of the British Constitution in respect of personal freedom the better. I hope that in priority of abandonment the restoration of per-sonal liberty will take the first place.

Mr. Stokes contended, as he has on other, occasions, that it was never the intention of the House that a Regulation should be passed to keep persons without trial under detention for any indefinite period of time, and he added:

"Whatever may happen, this House will be held responsible after the war for any injustice that may be proved to have been done to people who have been so detained."

Mr. Stokes referred to special cases, and, as regards Capt. Ramsay, said:

"I do not believe that the Hon. and gallant Member for Peebles and Southern (Capt. Ramsay) would do anything consciously against the interests of the country. I know he has odd views, but if people are going to be locked up for having odd views, quite a number of Members of this House are in danger. His views about race or religion have nothing to do with whether or not he should be locked up. He was in the last war, and he has three sons in this. However cracked his views may be on one particular point, I do not believe he would do any-thing contrary to the nat-ional interest. I suspect other motives. I should be most interested to hear whether his know-ledge of certain telegrams, which passed between high officials in this country and America, had any-thing to do with his detention. Other people are detained for the same reason. One was tried under the Official Secrets Act and acquitted on all points but is still detained under the Regula-tions and, as far as my knowledge goes, for the same reason. My right Hon. friend knows well enough to what I am referring. I think the House is failing in its duty and always has failed in its duty on this point by not demanding that the Hon. and gallant Gentleman should come to the House and state his case. Whether he is in a fit state to do it after three years of detention I do not know. Per-sonally, I should not be. I should have measured six feet of earth by now if I had been looked up so long. I do not believe any harm would done if his case was reviewed and his liberty restored."

With respect to Sir Oswald Mosley. Mr. Stokes, backed up in his views later by Mr. Boothby, who also mentioned the case of Admiral Sir Barry Domville, considered that the proper thing to do was either to let him out or shoot him after trial, and there was a flurry in the House when he stated that it had been admitted that no foreign money was coming into the British Union organisation, Mr. Morrison believing that that was a quotation from the private report of the Advisory Committee and so should not be given, whereas Mr. Stokes subsequently quoted Hansard of 10 December, 1940, to prove his assertion.

"It is hard to avoid the conclusion that, as stated by Mr. Pickthorn, Ministers have not really made the necessary effort to present to their imaginations the extreme heaviness of the penalty inflicted upon the victims, deserving or undeserving, of 18B. It does require some effort of imagination to bring home to oneself what that situation must be. It semms to me, personally, an infinitely worse fate than death. I would sooner be shot or hanged, with or without trial, than detained for two or three or nobody knows how many years, without charge being made against me, in such circum-stances, that I think my exis-tence would be certainly a curse to my children and grandchildren for ever afterward. Mr. Morrison in his reply maintained that the Government and the house acted as regards Regulation 18B with their eyes fully open, but he agreed that it was a highly exceptional Regulation, adding: I do not feel any great sense of pride in administering it."

He explained that cases are reviewed irrespective of whether detainees ask for a review or not, and said:

"They are not only periodically reviewed in the Department; they come up to me, and I consider them personally. There have been cases in which on, two or three years ago I would not have authorized release, but where I have thought that, even apart from any change in a man's mind, which sometimes takes place, it was right in the different circumstances to release. There are even persons of very doubtful respectability whom I would not have let out but whom I let out now with some risk, recog-nizing that in present circumstances it is safe to let out people whom I could not let out earlier. I think that is the common sense way of dealing with the matter. I have made many mistakes in letting people out, and I also hope that, broadly speaking, I have not made many mis-takes in keeping people in.

At this time, there were 429 persons detained, or 100 fewer than in July, 1942, of whom 286, Mr. Morri-son stated, are persons of hostile origins or associations, 55 were concerned in acts pre-judicial to the public safety, and 88 were members of the British Union or active in the further-ance of its objects. To describe some of these detainees as "nasty bits of work," as Mr. Morrison did, seems to be going beyond the limits of fairness, for, not knowing to which class of internee it applied, the House could not object. After all, there are some "nasty bits of work" at large.

"The opinion has been expressed in some quarters outside the House, and to some extent in the House, that these Regulations are dangerous because they enable people with whose opinions others do not agree to be shut up. This is a most dangerous thing that can come into our consider-ation of this matter. I would, therefore, invite the attention of my right Hon. Friend to this point, and I think he will agree with me. I do not ask him to accept my word, but I gather that these Regulations, including 18B, are intended to deal with those who overtly or covertly act as agents of the enemy and not those who ex-press themselves in favour of any totalitarian system or any form of government foreign to our system. If it were true that they were to be shut up because they were in favour of any totalitarian system or any Constitution foreign to our system, Commun-ists would be in prison, including the Hon. Member for West Fife (Mr. Gallag-her). The right Hon. Gentleman himself at the Trade Union Congress accused the Communist Party of being practically in favour of violent revolution in this country.

The only justification for the Regulation is that the people arrested are those who are in some way acting overtly or covertly as agents of the enemy. It is necessary that that should be made clear. Otherwise we should get into a dialectical dilemma; the Home Secretary himself would, because of the speech which he quite properly made the other day at the Labour Party Congress. Even more dangerous statements are being made outside. Many people are suggesting that because a man expresses an opinion in favour of a totalitarian form of government he should be shut up if it is in favour of Fascism but not if it is in favour of Communism. That way lies complete dictator-ship. Nothing could be more dangerous. It is a view, which is being expressed by the Communist Party, though we could reply, any Socialist or any Tory could reply, "You ought to be shut up too." Another impression is growing up outside."

Before the debate concluded, Commander Sir Archibald Southby referred to the growing apprehension both inside and outside the house of the increase in government by Regulation and by Order, the appre-hension of members themselves being evidenced by the greatly increased attendance at each debate on the subject. As regards 18B itself, Commander Southby declared that he himself had never been one of those who wished to do away with it and he added:

"If you can produce for me a man convicted as a traitor to this country, not only will I acquiesce in his execution, but I will be prepared to take a hand in executing him. But I do say that the time has now come to review the way these Regulations work. The most obvious example, in my view, of the danger inherent in this type of legislation lies in the fact, that we, as MPs, have allowed a Member of this House to be locked up without insist-ing upon being told why he has been looked up. I conceive that it may be necessary to lock up any or every MP, but I have always said—and I adhere to it—that YOU should not lock up a MP and silence his voice without first coming to this House and saying, as could be done in Secret Session, why he was being locked up and giving him the opportunity of standing in his place or at that Bar and defending himself against

the charge.

As a matter of fact I believe that, if enough Members put down a motion deman-ding the presence of the Hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for Peebles (Capt. Ramsay) either in his place or at the Bar of this House the Government would have to produce him here so that he could answer the charges against him, it cannot be right that you should silence the voice of a MP this way."

The contribution of Mr. Boothby, however, was noteworthy as being an excellent summary of the position. In the course of his speech he said:—

"I intend to deal with Regulation 18B and also with Regulation 20(a), which in my opinion is even more pernicious; because 20 (a) entitled the Executive to imprison an alien against whom a depor-tation order may have been made, It may have made on reasonable grounds, and in the of peace no one questions the right of the Executive to make such an Order; but simply because it is physically impossible to execute the deportation order owing to the fact that there is a world war, the Execu-tive has arrogated to itself the right to imprison the person against whom the deportation order is made. That is a very serious thing. It may have serious repercussions in the years that lie ahead. It is even more arbitrary than 18B.

In opening this debate the Solicitor-General says that the good faith of the Executive was implied and assumed, and was subject to the review of the High Court if necessary, and if it could be impugned. But nobody denies that the Executive act in good faith. Nobody has suggested that the Home Secretary puts people in prison because he does not like their faces or has some personal spite against them. The fact remains that the High Court of Justice has no power whatsoever in regard to the administration of Regulations 18B or 20 (a). It is known that the High Court judges hate Regulations 18B and 20 (a). There are many cases, which I could point out to my right Hon. and learned Friend, but he knows them well enough, in which the judges expressed profound dis-satisfaction with them. I do not like them.

Most of the people detained under Regulation 186 and 20 (a) were put there in the supreme emer-gency of 1940. I still maintain that it generally thought and assumed by this House that those people were being taken into custody for comparatively short period of weeks while the supreme emergency lasted; but their detention has turned into penal servitude for an indefinite of years, without any right of appeal to any tribunal public or private. I believe that that is wrong and I will never change my opinion on this point.

What are the concessions for which some of us are asking at the present time, and have asked every time these Regulations have been debated. They are very moderate concessions. For these years now we have asked the Government to establish a properly constituted legal tribunal sitting in camera; to give these internees a chance of putting their case, and to judge by the results. Let them also be represented by counsel, should they desire. Above all, allow them to know whatever case is against them. It is never a good thing to try a man without charging him; and nobody says that it is. It is a bad business. But that is what we have done to these people. In nine cases out of ten they have no idea of what they are charged with. They are there, eating their hearts out in doubt and misery; and that is cruel and wrong.

An Hon. Member mentioned Sir Oswald Mosley and I quite agree with much that he said. I would try Sir Oswald Mosley, and if he were found guilty of high treason I would shoot him. Failing that I think he might do much better work for the country outside prison than in, under whatever sur-veillance the Home Office may consider necessary. The same goes for a man like Sir Barry Dom-ville. No one can persuade me that a man who was second in command to Admiral Tyrwhitt in the last war, is going to do anything but fight the Germans if they landed in this country. He is a man of over 50 with a record of distinguished service to the State What is the point of keeping that man in prison at the present time? There is also the case of the Hon and gallant member for Peebles (Capt. Ramsay). I would certainly have had him before some properly constituted tribunal as a Member of this House before committing him to prison. As I have said before, and now repeat, I often wonder what would have been the position of Charles James Fox in this country today, if he had been a Member of this House and had made any one of a whole series of speeches that he made during the Napoleonic War. He would have been in Brixton Prison before he was half way through the first speech if the Home

Secretary had had anything to do with it. It is not in accordance with the tradition of this country. The Home Secretary has recently been making speeches in the country about the future organisation of government, and talking of the control of monopolies. So far as monopolies are concerned I am with him a large part of the way. But I would just say to him that control of the bureaucracy is equally important. And where you get the monopolies and the bureaucracy getting together, that is the greatest danger of all, because we are on the pathway that leads directly to the totalitarian Fascist State."

The house concluded its sitting by extending the Emergency Powers Act for 12 months. Whether in the meantime these powers can be modified, as suggested by Commander, Bower, remains to be seen.

While Earl Winterton cannot be expected understand economics, or to realise that Stalinism is not Communism, there is point in argument concerning the operation of 18B.

When the repressive Regulations were introduced, the Communist Party, then anti-war because of its own hireling character, and the existence of a Russia-German Pact, was afraid of being suppressed. So it cried out against the legislation it now approves, not from principle, but purely from a mean party political power complex interest; that is, from the standpoint of unprincipled political scoundrelism.

On this point, so that readers may judge for themselves, we reproduce the following article from the columns of the " Daily Worker," for Wednesday, July 3, 1940

New Anti-Labour Regulation.

A new Defence Regulation giving the Home Secretary power to suppress certain organisations and to make participation in their activities illegal, has been made by a recent Order in Council.

The new Regulation concerns any organisation which, in the opinion of the Home Secretary, "is subject to foreign influence and control" or of which the officials have, or have had associations or sympathies with the system of government of an enemy country and which is in danger of being used for purposes prejudicial to the public safety, the defence of the realm, the maintenance of public order, the efficient prosecution of the war, or of the maintenance of essential services.

Such an organisation can be the subject of an order by the Home Secretary, the effect of which will be to make it illegal for any person to summon a meeting of members, attend any such meet-ing, publish any advertisement of such meeting, enlist support for the organlsation, or make or accept any contribution for the organisation.

Any member or creditor of the organisation or the Attorney-General can apply to the Court to wind up the affairs of the organisation and to dispose of its assets. The Court may, if it is satisfied that the organisation is of the kind described in the Regula-tion, order its funds to be disposed of in any way the Court thinks fit.

Government Policy.

The new Regulation, 18AA, is in continuation of the Government's policy to invest the Home Secretary with arbitrary powers against persons and organisations which the Government may at any time wish disposed of.

Power to make participation in a political organisation of itself an offence is almost unpreceden-ted in British legal history. The nearest analogy is the early nineteenth century ban on trade unions and the persecution of their members.

In France, of course, It was precisely under such powers as that given to the Home Secretary by Regulation 18AA that the Communist Party was suppressed.

The Regulation was made at a meeting of the Privy Council in Buckingham Palace on June 20. It is not known which Privy Councilors were present.

Labour Agreement?

It would be interesting to hear from the Labour Ministers, who are, or have been made, Privy Coun-cilors, whether any of them were present at the June 28 meeting and whether they approved of the new Regulation.

The point is important because, the Regulation could quite, easily be made to apply to the great trade union and labour organisations of this country, which have always had international connec-tions, and which, In a period when these organisations become “troublesome” to a reactionary Government, may be held to be capable of being used for purposes prejudicial to the “maintenance of public order.”

The entire working-class movement is entitled to know whether the Labour members of the Privy Council had any hand in framing or approving of such an anti-Labour Regulation.