

# WAR For Anarchism COMMENTARY

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TWOPENCE

## Hands off the Italian Revolution!

THE ITALIAN WORKERS have overthrown fascism. But their struggle for freedom still goes on. The revolutionary forces have still to fight against the military dictatorship of General Badoglio and the Italian Capitalist Class.

We must not forget how, in 1920, the Italians rallied to the defence of the Russian workers who had overthrown the tyranny of the Tsars only to find themselves beset by the Interventionist Armies of Reaction, backed by capitalist governments all over the world. In Italy the Workers expressed their solidarity with the workers of Russia by declaring a General Strike against their government and so stopped the supply of munitions from Italy to the White Armies.

Now it is our turn to show solidarity! This time it is the workers of Italy who are fighting for freedom against their oppressors. We must extend to them the same help as the Councils of Action in Britain extended to the Russians in 1920. They, too, threatened the government with a General Strike if the Interventionist War which Winston Churchill was waging against the Russian Revolution were not stopped. And when the dockers refused to load munitions for the counter revolution on to the "Jolly George" and the coal-trimmers refused to coal her, the ruling class knew they were beaten, and called Intervention off!

The workers of Italy have taken up the torch of their fallen comrades, the working class in Spain. In Sicily, and still more in Italy itself, the Italians have proved their hatred of Fascist tyranny and oppression. Undaunted by twenty years of misery, they have shown their readiness to fight for the freedom of the working class, and justice demands that the working class everywhere support their struggle.

You, British and American soldiers, remember that you are yourselves workers, you must remain loyal to your class. Do not allow yourselves to be sent to Italy as conquerors of a defeated nation, but as allies of your fellow workers. Fight alongside them against the enemies of freedom! Join with them, for their fight against Fascism is the signal for the fight against reaction everywhere! Already the workers of Portugal have gone on strike against the dictator who oppresses them. There have been demonstrations in Central Europe, in Greece, in France, in Germany! Wherever tyranny rules, the overthrow of Mussolini by the Italian workers has inspired hope among the oppressed, has blown into a flame the hidden fires of revolt.

Fellow workers! Do not be deceived by false leaders with their treacherous slogans! In the present war, the Labour Party leaders, the Trade Union bureaucrats, and Communist shop stewards have signed away our rights and liberties. At every crisis, in every country, they have always sold out to the bosses. They refused to counsel direct action in support of the Spanish workers' struggle against the hangman Franco. By following these traitors to their class, the workers everywhere stood by while Spain was massacred by Hitler and Mussolini and the "Non-Interventionist" National Government of Britain. Many thousand workers have paid with their lives in this war for the shameful betrayal of 1936-1939. But the treacherous Labour leaders are still sold to the reactionaries who fought against the Russian Revolution, who supported Mussolini, and who helped Franco to strangle Spain. They will try to sell out the Italian workers' struggle too! It is not to them that we must look for international workers' solidarity.

The struggle of the Italian workers is our struggle! The fight for freedom is the fight of the workers all over the world! If we allow the Italian workers to be defeated, as we allowed the heroic

Spanish workers to be defeated, we are destroying our own freedom, betraying our own comrades. We must be on our guard against any intervention by our government to crush the Italian revolution. Direct working class action through the Councils of Action stopped Intervention in 1920; it can stop it again in 1943!

The Anarchist Federation calls on the working class to repudiate the corrupt leaders who always betray us! Prepare for independent working class action, for Direct Action on the industrial field to stop Intervention against the Italian Revolution! Down with the forces of Reaction!

SOLIDARITY WITH THE WORKERS OF ITALY!

## What is Happening in Italy?

IN WAR MAIL all news is censored; such information as we have comes over the wireless or through the capitalist press. In matters of detail, therefore, it has to be treated with reserve, and their truth must be sought for as often as not between the lines. Nevertheless the general impression is clear. Italy is seething with unrest. The workers in Milan have been in open revolt and been fired upon by the troops. A general strike was reported to have been declared in the city and even the capitalist press described the situation as "revolutionary".

In Rome strikes are reported at the Fiat, Breda, Ansaldo, Bianchi and Conti plants. There have been demonstrations in the streets. Strikes are also reported at Florence, Bologna, Varese and Vercelli, the Maestra plant at Venice, and the Arsenal at Brescia are idle, and it is stated that 9/10ths of the arms factories of Northern Italy have ceased production. Prisoners have been released from prison in some districts.

During the past week there has been a sudden cessation of press reports regarding working class action in Italy but *Reynolds News* on Sunday reports a call for a general strike issued by the Italian Socialist Party. There is as yet no news of the reception which this call has received from the workers

### Badoglio's Moves

It is clear that the martial law decree proclaimed by Badoglio immediately after Mussolini's fall has been simply disregarded by the people. Information regarding the means of oppression at the disposal of the government is rather scanty. It is reported that the Chief of the O.V.R.A., the fascist Secret Police, was assassinated on July 26th and the O.V.R.A. has been taken over since by the Army. Also that Badoglio has appointed as Chief of Police Carmine Senise, whom Mussolini had dismissed from the same post only three months ago!

We expressed the opinion in the last issue of *War Commentary* that the Italian Army might prove unreliable. No widespread mutinies have been reported, but some of the troops in Milan refused to fire on the workers, while in Rome soldiers joined the demonstrators. Badoglio has been withdrawing troops from Greece; and in view of the U.S. support for the new government (Roosevelt rebuked a radio commentator for calling Badoglio 'fascist', and the king 'semi-moronic'), Eisenhower's offer to exchange 360,000 Italian prisoners for 80,000 Allied prisoners looks suspiciously like an attempt to bolster up the existing Italian army with fresh troops.

### Economic Collapse Likely

The Finance Minister, Senator Domenico Bartolini, broadcast a warning on August 6th in which he declared: "Never has our financial situation been so grave and, with the increase of the public debt and fiduciary circulation we are rapidly drifting towards inflation." It was reported soon after Mussolini fell that it had not been possible to pay wages in Milan, this being a contributory cause of the strikes. The new Minister of Corporations has dissolved the Fascist Corporations, and since this was not

done at the beginning of the Badoglio régime it seems likely that economic necessity has dictated the step. The capitalist economic outlook is therefore rather gloomy in Italy.

Altogether, one may say that the Badoglio régime has not stabilized itself to any extent. Indeed with the worsening economic position the ability of the new government to hold down the people is likely to become still less secure. The newest move of the military dictatorship is to declare a "State of Siege" (August 7th.)

### Intervention?

To check the rising revolution therefore Badoglio will rely increasingly on the forces of intervention. Already, the Germans are said to be pouring into Italy. A possible interpretation of Eisenhower's exchange of prisoners proposal has already been mentioned, and it only remains to see whether the Anglo-American forces under cover, of course, of "military necessity", will invade the mainland and "restore order".

Badoglio declares "whoever should try in whatever way to bring chaos to the Italian nation would not work against Italy but against himself, that is, for Bolshevism which is the enemy of the Italians as of the Anglo-Saxons themselves". (By 'Bolshevism' he does not, of course, mean Stalin, Molotov & Co. but the forces of working class revolt). And he is echoed by Churchill with his expressed fear of "chaos and anarchy", of having "no authorities with whom to deal". Roosevelt has made similar declarations and they have been repeated by the capitalist press. The *Catholic Herald* suggests that it might be prudent to come to terms with Badoglio since "the spirit of violent revolution and bloodshed might rapidly develop under successive attempts at government, and hence democracy would stand less and less chance of working reasonably the longer disorder were to last". As always in revolutionary situations, reaction within invokes "patriotism" while the forces of intervention without talk of "democracy" and "order".

The real attitude of the Allied governments was defined by *Reynolds News'* American reporter "as being to prevent at all costs the outbreak of revolution in Europe or anywhere else, which would irretrievably shatter the possibility of re-establishing capitalist democracies, tastefully tinged with Liberalism . . ." The same source quotes a trenchant passage in the *New York Post*. "Until the people of Europe rise, we consider them to be the heroic underground, suffering all manner of torment in our cause. The moment they do rise we instantly hear them described as a Red anarchic mob which wants to pull all Europe down in flames. The same people both times."

### Reactions of Other Countries

As we foresaw, the fate of a fascist dictator has had an immediate effect on other dictatorship. In Spain there have been several reports of "severe tension", of Franco tightening up his régime on the one hand and making overtures to the Left on the other hand—with fair words and the release of some political prisoners. In

Portugal there have been food riots and strikes. A repressive forced labour measure has been instituted and many militant workers have been deported to penal camps. Riots have occurred in Greece and unrest and increased governmental vigilance are reported in Bulgaria and Roumania.

In France, bombs have exploded in the offices of Laval's paper *Le Moniteur* at Clermont Ferrand and street fighting has occurred in Paris.

Reports from Germany are notoriously unreliable and tainted with wishful inventions. For what they are worth, nevertheless, we record the following accounts. Women have demonstrated for "Peace" in Berlin. The Italian workers in the Siemens-Schukert works downed tools in order to celebrate the fall of Mussolini. The German workers joined them, and the police didn't interfere. Mutinies have occurred in S.S. shock troops at Hamburg and Munich. They were crushed. Finally, a secret arms dump has been discovered in Cologne. All these may be fabrications, but it is against reason to suppose that repercussions of Mussolini's fall have been felt everywhere *except* in Germany. Censorship in Russia is too absolute for any news of repercussions there to leak out.

### Liberal and Socialist Vultures

Now that the working class in Italy is on the move all the intellectuals and would-be leaders are sniffing the air and hoping to cash in on the fruits of their labour. Gaetano Salvemini, who was opposed to the occupation of the factories in 1919, and attacked anarchists who advocated direct action on the part of the workers to stem the march of fascism, writes on "What to do with Italy" in the *Evening Standard* (4th Aug.). He advocates merely a democratic republic—and then only after a period during which Italy is to be administrated by a "Commissioner of the Allied Nations". This Anglo-American stooge is to set up puppet local administrations, but, according to Salvemini, he is to retain "the power to veto any decisions taken by local authorities." It sounds rather like India!

The resurrected Italian Socialist party, which advised the workers to give back the factories to the bosses in 1919 and so broke up the stay-in strikes, also has

its plans. It calls for a general strike to overthrow Badoglio—all well and good. But in its manifesto it "appeals to the democratic powers and to public opinion in Britain, Russia and the United States that peace be negotiated with delegates chosen by the Italian people (do they perhaps mean the leaders of the Italian Socialist Party?) on the basis of the Atlantic Charter." They appeal in fact to the same people who stood by and watched the Spanish workers go down to a terrible defeat. Do they imagine that the leopard has changed his spots?

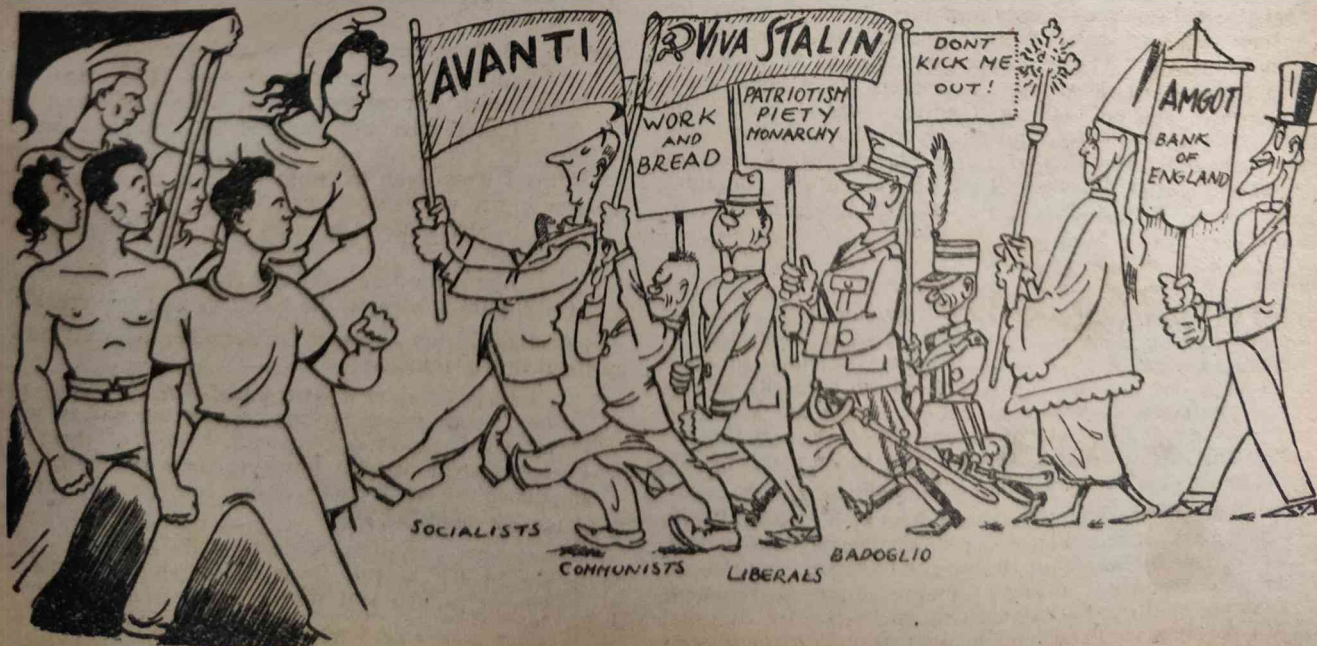
Once again the democrats and socialists have shown that they prefer to treat with foreign bourgeois governments. They do not trust the workers and peasants. They are afraid that if the revolution takes concrete shape there will be little scope in Italy for their lust for power. They do not want to free the workers, they want to rule them.

Meanwhile the Communist Party of Italy seeks to be in the picture also. In order to catch some of the popularity of Giovanni Amendola the Italian M.P. who, like Matteotti, was murdered for his opposition to the Fascists, they have put up his son Georgio Amendola as a "leader" and "liberator" of the Italian people. But Georgio Amendola is a nonentity, and the C.P. will have to advocate the opening up of Italy to serve as a jumping off place for the Allies and a battlefield for the Second Front. Not a very appetising programme for the war weary Italians, however well suited to Joe Stalin!

### Keep to the Revolutionary Path

There is no hope for the Italian workers in appeals to the democracies or their would-be lackeys of the Italian Liberal, Socialist or Communist Parties. Their only allies are the working class of Britain, America, France, Germany and Russia; their only appeal is to international working class solidarity. They will secure that solidarity by revolutionary action, by relying on themselves and their class brothers in other countries in the class struggle against the institutions of power and privilege everywhere. Denounce the political traitors who seek to make terms with the class-enemy at home and abroad! On with the revolutionary class struggle of the workers! Long live Anarchism!

J. H.



# ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

## BOMBING OF HAMBURG

"HAMBURG has ceased to exist" . . . "Not more than 50 houses remain standing in the whole city" . . . "When you drive through Hamburg you drive through corpses. They are all over the streets, and even in the tree-tops". These are but a few of the exultant shrieks of the newspapers. The Right and the Left press alike, from the *Daily Mail* to *Reynolds'* and the *Daily Worker*, glorified the bombing of Hamburg, the most deliberate and calculated blitz of the war. They spared nothing, from the stench in the corpse-filled shelters to the long, hopeless lines of homeless workers streaming out of the city, just as they streamed out of Malaga, of Barcelona, of the cities of China. It seems we have made progress since then; Franco used to deny responsibility for Guernica and Durango and Madrid. We are expected to applaud the butchery of Hamburg.

"Whole rows of houses are now rubble". The East End, Coventry, Plymouth—they all showed who suffered under bombing. It is always the workers, those who are too poor to get away or provide themselves with adequate protection. The misery and horror in Hamburg are borne by the working class. "The San Pauli district, where half a million people lived, was as good as wiped off the face of the earth". The San Pauli district was the poorest in Hamburg. Desperate poverty reigned there. But it is not enough to live in filth and destitution, not enough to suffer ten years of Nazi brutality after fifteen years of Weimar indifference. The ruling class of Britain must needs step in and join in the work of making life even more hideous, and sordid, and without hope for the Hamburg workers. As with Guernica, the Hamburg massacre makes our hatred of the ruling class even more bitter, and deepens our determination to destroy their horrible class-divided society of poverty and pain.

A final touch. With Left wing irony, *Reynolds News* solemnly reminded us that "it was in Hamburg that the German revolution against the Kaiser started in 1918", and "that it contains the biggest proportion of Radicals, Communists and other Left Wing people in Germany. Chaos and disorder would provide the opportunity for those who hate Hitler to organize and plan for his eventual overthrow." Does the Left never learn from events? Mussolini's fall shows that all workers hated him. Does *Reynolds* imagine that the German workers don't hate Hitler? In Hamburg, apparently, all the Left has to do is to organize the workers in the shelters which stink of carrion so that no one will go near them . . . organize the corpses on the streets, and even in the tree-tops . . .

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## GLASSHOUSES MUST GO!

THE appointment, a little while ago, of a committee to investigate conditions in military detention barracks, known as "glasshouses", was expected to calm the anger of service men at the death of Rifleman Clayton. It has not had this effect; sailors, soldiers and airmen regard the committee as a whitewashing commission.

The members of the committee are, Sir Roland Gifford Oliver, King's Bench judge, the Right Reverend A. G. Parham, Suffragan Bishop of Reading, and Lord Moran, fashionable doctor. All were officers in the 1914-1918 war. It is obvious that with their class training and practice these men can have no sympathy with the victims of killer sergeants. Further, Grigg, War Minister, has

stated that the commission will not be allowed to investigate overseas detention barracks. Worst of all, the "investigation" is to be held in secret, only the result will be made public.

Meanwhile brutality continues. Recently M.P.'s in the House of Commons spoke of letters they had received from naval men protesting against arrested shipmates being marched through the streets in chains. Mr. A. V. Alexander does not believe it, but the sailors do.

*Reveille* which, according to its editor W. R. Hipwell, always takes every possible step "to see that nothing that is in any way seditious appears in *Reveille*, and takes a great deal of trouble to delete news items which may cause despair and despondency amongst the Forces" publishes a few letters about Glasshouses which shows how hopeless any kind of reform would be. All the letters are worth quoting but we shall only give a few extracts:

"We were allowed three minutes in the bath once a week only. One chap who didn't have time to get properly clean was taken outside by the staff sergeant and scrubbed with a hard scrubbing brush until the skin was peeled from his body.

"He was screaming with agony when he was brought back to the room. The next day he felt very ill, but said he was afraid to report sick. Anyway, he went out and did a day's work with a pick and shovel, looking like death all the time.

"I was pushing the barrow and he was filling, and, seeing how bad he was, I reported it to the staff sergeant. He told me to mind my own — business or I would be clipped over the ear.

"The following day the sick man said he was too ill to get up. I told the staff sergeant, who immediately came in and tipped him out of bed on to the cold concrete floor."

After six days:

"He had him removed to an emergency hospital, and it was subsequently revealed that this man had been lying unattended for six days with pneumonia—brought on, no doubt, by the brutal treatment he had suffered."

Another soldier writes:

"Sanitary arrangements at — Detention Barracks, which I spent some days, were appalling.

"Thirty men were housed in a room about ten yards by five yards and containing two open latrines. When I woke each morning I felt as though my chest was on fire with the stench.

"In the same room was a soldier suffering from syphilis.

"The beds were twelve inches apart, and two out of every three men in the barracks had the 'crabs'."

And this from the wife of a soldier who visited her husband in a glasshouse:

"The last time I visited him—in February, 1943—the prisoners were trying to plot out a way to get their own back on certain staff. Most of them were posted abroad without finishing their sentence, which happened to be a lucky break for the staff of that detention barracks."

The same periodical reports cases of A.T.S. girls being forced to do full pack drills while wearing gas respirators as punishment for the most trivial offences.

Service men and women will look to themselves and not to secret committees for a cessation of their persecution.

# PRIORY COLLIERY DISPUTE

*Reported by James Carracher*

THE PRIORY COLLIERY disputes and their subsequent results make a clear and informative picture of the power, arrogance, and deceit of the mine-owners. They show, too, that fundamentally the Government remains the Executive Committee of the Boss class, despite what the partisans of State Control say in defence of war-time regulations. A simple narration of some of the incidents without decoration or twisting of facts is enough to convince the workers of the truth of this. The miners implicated and other workers aware of the facts need no convincing of this truth.

In no other mine or industry have the workers been so militant and at the same time so tyrannized and deceived. The miners' leaders—some of them ex-revolutionaries—are equally guilty with the mine-owners and management. The conspiracy of the management and miners' leaders with the government officials in an outstanding example to the Lanarkshire miners of the truth of what the Anarchists have told them for years, namely that workers should not hand over their power to leaders, and that there should be no class-collaboration.

It is almost impossible to describe the miners' disputes that led up to the present situation in which many of the pitmen have lost their jobs—some of them have been "transported" to other districts, others victimized and fined. A well informed miner, also a former delegate, described to me how the management provoked "incidents" in order to turn public opinion against the strikers and to cause disunity amongst the men. This failed because this district was once a busy mining centre and the scene of many struggles with the mineowners who had practised every dirty trick imaginable in order to break the spirit of the miners.

The managers seem to have concentrated their attacks on the men in No. 2 section of the "Humph" coal No. 4 Colliery—one of the best going sections in the pit. By united and direct action, the men in this part obtained relatively better conditions than in any other part of the pit. Their gains stimulated the miners to action and soon the pit was in a state of unrest; No. 2 section was therefore threatened with closure, although it was one of the cleanest coal seams in the whole colliery. Every stoppage of work was described by the Union as "sabotage", and the "anarchists" in No. 2 section were subjected to slander and abuse, although not one miner in the pit was an advocate of Anarchism.

The activities of one D. Kellachan, a union official, is worthy of mention. In No. 2 section at one period the men employed direct action, and were successful in forcing an agreement with the manager about the filling of dirt and increased their rate of wages. By this agreement the miners were able to take more time and care to fill clean coal and reject any stone and "dirt". Kellachan, in another section, was dismissed for filling "dirt", and later approached the union officials to get himself re-instated. The management were willing to re-instate him but a new agreement on filling "dirt" had to be made, and without consultation with the miners, the union officials signed away what they had won. Kellachan was the individual who, in company with the miners' leaders, government and colliery officials, slandered and betrayed his fellow workers. Later, at a meeting at which Lord Trapain was present, and at which the former delegate whom I have already mentioned, denounced the leaders and officials, Dan Kellachan stood up and praised the management and blamed the miners for the disputes. Needless to say, this man supports the war and the Second Front. On another occasion he urged the brushers to blackleg on the colliers who were out on strike on an important issue. This, of course, has been the line of policy of the Trade Union bureaucracy all along, and Kellachan no doubt will be rewarded later on as chief strike breaker.

Once the management saw that they were helpless against the direct action policy of the men, they determined to cause a lock-out but at the same time to throw the blame on the men. Their opportunity came when the miners in an extremely hot section made a claim for more wages as compensation for the terrific heat. Their claim was deliberately refused and a strike followed which was to prove a complete sell-out of the men by the union. The strike was declared illegal and the union refused to support it. However, stalwart as ever, the men stood firm until the Government stepped in with bribes, threats and promises. The leaders coaxed and bullied and told the men that nothing more could be done till they returned to work. Under this constant pressure and the false idea that they would be hurting their sons and brothers at the "front", they consented to return to work. When they presented themselves, the management refused to let them start—proving by this act that it was a lock-out from the beginning; but they had contrived to fix the blame on the strikers.

With a great bluster the Trade Union leaders barge in as the men now had a legitimate claim. They hopped on a train for London to demand the sack of Lord Trapain, who, taking a lesson from the stay-in strikes, said he refused to go. Imagine a *miner* refusing to take the sack! Nothing came of this bluster, but the miners believe it had something to do with the union elections which were held about this time.

Some miners began work under government supervision for repairs and it reduced the rates of wages. The fight is not over by any means, but it will be some time before the men will be able to gather their scattered forces. I hope I have been able to show how the boss class fight their war against the unity of the workers and how the "lick-spittles" assist them while pretending to be our friends.

## "No Victimisation"

In the July *War Commentary* we referred to the case of Stanley Hilton, a Jehovah's Witness C.O. who had already served three sentences of imprisonment and detention, totalling two years and eight months, for refusal of military service.

Stanley Hilton has now undergone his *fourth* court martial, and has received a further sentence of two years' detention. As the sentence was one of detention and not one of imprisonment, Hilton will be unable to appear before an Appellate Tribunal, and at the end of this barbarous sentence, served in one of the detention camps whose conditions have become notorious since the beating to death of Clayton, he will presumably have to appear before yet another Court Martial and undergo a fifth sentence either of imprisonment or detention.

The treatment of this man is so blatantly inhuman that even capitalist newspapers have been moved to protest with some anger. In an editorial devoted to the case, the *News Chronicle* even went so far as to bring against the authorities a statement of Churchill that "Anything in the nature of persecution, victimisation and man-hunting is odious to the British people".

It is true that the quotation of past statements by government leaders shows the difference between the theory and practice of ruling. But the record of our rulers is such that we cannot expect appeals to their sense of shame to pierce the hard-boiled cruelty which is necessary for the practice of government.

This case reveals the insincerity of the whole myth of the "fight for freedom". It also reveals how useless is protection under the law when that law is administered by people whose interests require that it should not work. Legislation is in itself an evil thing, but it is made ten times more evil in its administration by a privileged governing class.

Instead of taking our advice, the miners allowed themselves to be represented in court by a union lawyer who pleaded guilty for them and begged for a modified fine. The penalties were £1 for some and 10/- for those who were unemployed. The management then pleaded Not Guilty and the trial was fixed for a later date.

An interesting bit of news is that part of the money gathered round at the pits for the miners' support is to be used by the Union to pay the fines, thus saving the money for the union's funds. This money gathered by the striking miners is not sufficient to pay the fines, so some of the miners have to pay 5/- to make up the deficiency. Surely the miners and other workers will take this lesson to heart and learn that the class struggle cannot be postponed, "war Effort" or no "war Effort".

We do not share Hilton's grounds of objection, but we regard with repugnance the persecution he has endured and express our solidarity with him in his struggle against the state. We hope his case will at least have the effect of teaching many people that it is futile to trust to the fairness of legislators and bureaucrats, and that the only way to get real freedom is to take it by united direct action against the state.

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## A red and black notebook

# LEFT WING SHOP STEWARDS

WE HAVE BEEN asked to express our views on the "Committee for Co-ordination of Militant Trade Union Activity". This committee has been formed on the initiative of the Independent Labour Party and is made up largely of their members, with a few Trotskyists. It is a committee of shop stewards aiming to counteract the activities of Communist stewards. Almost limited to London, it aims to become a national body. So far, so good, but when we examine the programme of the committee we are bound to disagree. To be quite fair we publish below the programme as issued by the Committee.

1. Re-establishment of Trade union independence. Withdrawal of all Trade Union officials from Government posts.
2. Withdraw of black circular—full freedom of expression for all working class opinions inside the Trade Union movement.
3. For 100 per cent. Trade Union organisation. For unity on the job irrespective of Trade Union.
4. Repeal of all anti-working-class legislation. Shop stewards' control of deferments, dismissals and transfers and no loss of pay for transferred workers.
5. Confiscation of all war profits—all books to be open for Trade Union inspection.
6. Workers' control of industry to end chaos and mismanagement.
7. No penalisation of youth and women, equal pay for equal work, the rate for the job.
8. Trade Union wages and conditions for all members of the armed forces. Minimum Trade Union rate to be determined by the T.U.C.
9. Representation on trades councils by soldier delegates on the same basis as Trade Unions.

Points 1, 2, 5, 7, 8 and 9 do not upset us, except that we would like to know (point 5) who is going to do the confiscating? Is a government of capitalists going to confiscate the profits of the capitalists? If the workers are to do it, then they must confiscate all profits, war or peace. In any case it is almost impossible to distinguish between the two. Point 8 sounds good until we find the T.U.C. is to determine the soldiers rate of pay. The T.U.C. has already supported (by its support of, and part in, the Government), the existing low rates of pay for soldiers. If soldiers are to improve their pay they must look to themselves and not the T.U.C.

### 100 PER CENT. BEVINISM

Points 3, 4 and 6 certainly make us feel uneasy about the Committee. Point 3, "100 per cent. trade union organisation", trade unionism divides the workers into hundreds of craft unions, it makes agreements with the boss settling worse conditions on the workers than they could otherwise have obtained, it breaks strikes and betrays the workers struggle. Trade unionism puts men like Bevin into the Government and gives, gladly, to the bosses all the rights won by a hundred years of labour struggle. Do we want 100 per cent. of that? If 25 per cent. of a thing is bad, is it good to have 100 per cent. of it?

### WHO SHALL DICTATE?

Point 4 includes the astonishing demand, "Shop stewards' control of deferments, dismissals and transfers and no loss of pay for transferred workers". Remember, the transfer of labour only refers to *compulsory* transfer; voluntary transfer is a matter of private arrangement and raises no problem. Problems have arisen only since the

war legislation of labour conscription. All workers resent being forcibly moved, and when they see workers sent from Scotland to the Midlands and others of the same trade from London to Scotland they feel ready to resist.

To add "no loss of pay" means little for the trade unions have already covered this by agreement. But the "no loss of pay" refers only to the standard trade union rate of wages, natural in a trade union agreement, and many factories have much better than trade union conditions. But even if it meant no loss of pay we should still oppose compulsory transfer of labour. Let the worker decide the district in which he shall live. To us the forced transfer of labour is wrong if it is operated by the Government or the boss. It is just as wrong if it is operated by a shop steward—and a damned sight more dangerous!

We know of cases where workers were to be transferred and the whole of the factory personnel stood ready to down tools as soon as the first worker received his direction from the National Service Officer. In every case such action has been successful.

### WORKERS CONTROL

We shall say good-bye to the Committee by examining their sixth point, "Workers' Control of Industry to end chaos and mismanagement". "Workers' Control of Industry", yes, that is a Syndicalist principle. But consider the extraordinary reason the Committee advances for supporting it—"to end chaos and mismanagement"! Supposing there is no chaos or mismanagement in a firm, will the Committee decline to support Workers' Control there? Some firms, as Fords or the I.C.I., are very efficient, but we still advocate Workers' Control.

We Syndicalists fight for Workers' Control of Industry, not because the boss is inefficient (we prefer an inefficient boss, the others are too damned hard), but because we seek to end the capitalist system. Because we would end the profit system, the exploitation of some by others and because we want control of our own lives in all circumstances, we will continue to fight for Workers' Control. And we don't care two hoots if the bosses' affairs are mismanaged or chaotic.

SYNDICALIST:

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A.E.U. AND THE ENGINEERING  
WORKERS

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QUESTIONS — DISCUSSION

FREEDOM PRESS ROOMS

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## AMERICAN WORKERS' STRIKES

During the last several weeks the nation has been distracted by a wave of strikes. Herewith, some examples:

April 23-29—Several thousand coal miners stopped work, and stoppages continued despite an order by the President. Main feature was John L. Lewis' refusal to submit to the decisions of the War Labour Board.

May 20-23—25,000 participated in war-work stoppages at seven Chrysler plants in protest against—among other things—"needless delays by the War Labour Board".

May 22-27—52,000 rubber workers in four Akron plants struck against a War Labour Board decision to grant them a rise of only three cents an hour instead of eight.

May 25—2,000 employees of Spicer Manufacturing Corp., Toledo, halted production of Willys-Overland jeeps to protest the firing of one worker and reclassification of others.

May 25—1,000 struck at Timken Roller Bearing, Canton, Ohio, on the grounds that the company was violating seniority provisions.

May 25—2,000 United Auto Workers walked out at Electric Auto-Lite, Toledo, to protest delay in proceedings of War Labour Board.

May 25—1,900 held up production of ball bearings at Marlin-Rockwell Corp., Jamestown, N.Y., to protest a pay rate for new workers which they thought too high.

May 26—400 Steel Workers of America struck at the Andrews Steel Co., Newport, Ky. for a 23% increase in hourly rates.

A complete list of strikes, stoppages and serious obstructions would run much longer and include a lot of odds and ends: a bus drivers' walkout in Utica, N.Y.—a strike of the A. F. of L. transit workers in Baltimore—the refusal of the New York milk drivers to make double deliveries to save gasoline—and so forth.

*Life*, 7/6/43.

## THE PRICE OF LOYALTY

The thud of Mussolini's fall echoed through Europe. Rumour had it that the "loyal Turks" were at last going to transfer their loyalty from paper practice and openly join their British allies. If so they would no doubt quickly seize the Italian Dodecanese Islands, lying at their doorstep. This would probably be their last chance to get them.

*News Review*, 5/8/43.

## JUST IN CASE

Leaving Buckingham Palace after receiving the M.B.E. from the King, stocky, brisk Superintendent Fred Cherrill, head of Scotland Yard's Fingerprint Department, laughed: "Did I get the King's fingerprints? Well, I wouldn't be at all surprised if I had got them here." And he gently tapped his pocket.

*News Review*, 5/8/43.

## ENGLISHMAN SPEAKS

Girls at a north-west aircraft factory who make friends with Italian prisoners working on neighbouring farms have been rebuked by an R.A.F. pilot.

"At this moment," he said, "the brothers or sweet-hearts of some of you are probably risking their lives fighting the Italians in Sicily, and you are doing this behind their backs. You should be ashamed of yourselves."

"It might not perhaps be so bad if they were German prisoners, for at least the Germans have proved themselves brave men. But the Italians are just cowardly and treacherous."

*Daily Mail*, 9/8/43.

## C.P. POLICY DEFINED

Everybody knows that the Communist Party to-day is working a hundred per cent. for the complete Allied victory, that in the factories it has done its best to prevent strikes and disputes, that it is opposed to contested by-elections, that it supports the Administration far more uncritically—almost, indeed, to the point of folly—than any other party in the State.

A. J. Cummings in the  
*News Chronicle*, 6/8/43.

# Through

## WHAT MORE DO MINERS WANT?

On the second day of their visit to Scotland, the King and Queen yesterday talked to miners and their leaders at Blairhall Colliery (Fife)—and saw miners getting their health back at Gleneagles.

The Queen wore a coat and dress of pale lilac. Her hat was of fine straw in the same colour, with her favourite upturned brim, and trimmed with small velvet flowers. She wore a triple row of pearls.

The Queen had a specially kindly word for 16-year-old William Meek, 25 McMillan-street, Larkhall, youngest patient, who is limbering up a fractured ankle which he got at his work in Benhar Colliery, Harthill. William told her he'd been in the pit since he was 14, and, in reply to a question: "It's all right here—better than the pit," he said.

*Glasgow Daily Express*, 30/7/43.

## WAR STORY

"We were told we were expendable, and that suited us fine. We all got ashore without a shot being fired, and what do you think? We ran slap bang into about 200 sleeping Germans, barely 100 yards from the beach.

"They didn't have a sentry posted, and we let them have it. Many of them never woke up, and those who did we soon put to sleep again."

*Daily Mail*, 10/8/43.

## WAR POETRY

'Twas spelt like this—MESSINA;  
It's different now, we guess;  
The R.A.F. upset the word,  
And now it's IN-A-MESS.

*Sunday Post*, 1/8/43.

## PERTINENT QUESTION

Angered by the £5,000-a-year Minister's monotonously reiterated phrase: "I shall not buy a new suit of clothes until the war is over," and "If battledress were to become the official dress for civilians, I would wear it with pleasure, even if the trousers had no turn-ups," the bespoke trade wondered last week how many suits Dr. Dalton had in his wardrobe before rationing started.

*News Review*, 5/8/43.



## INTIMIDATION ?

Three U.S. students, two girls and a man, who picketed the British Embassy for "Freedom for India," were arrested, reports Associated Press from Washington, and charged with illegally displaying cards "intended to intimidate the British Government."

The man, as spokesman for the three, said: "We have only love for everybody, including the Indian people, but we want justice for them." He said he did not know he could have applied for a licence for picketing.

*Evening Standard, 2/8/43.*

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# the Press

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## RAT POPULATION

Britain has nearly as many rats as humans. One pair can breed 600 offspring yearly. Total cost to the nation is 30s. a rat (£60,000,000 a year).

They live in colonies about 1,000 strong, sleeping in one spot, and all feeding in another. For that reason private wars on individual rats do little good. Best thing the public can do to help is to inform local authorities of the presence of rats and let experts do the rest.

If one of the smart little beasts is killed the others soon move off. Rats have an uncanny memory for some poisons, will not touch bait contaminated with them.

Smartest and most dangerous of all are the black rats which breed in ports, follow the waterways inland to the big cities. Some in the London area live in luxury quarters in Kensington hotels and West End club kitchens.

*News Review, 15/7/43.*

## BUREAUCRATIC UTOPIA

According to a question of which Colonel W. H. Carver (Con. Howdenshire) has given notice, a grocer, "the only one in the district, announces he is closing for a week to enable him to fill up the necessary forms and give his overworked staff some rest."

*Evening Standard, 27/8/43.*

## BRITISH "JUSTICE"

Administering Tripolitania by a SENIOR OFFICER of the Department of Civil Affairs:

It is good to see a British court sitting in the old Fascist tribunals, dispensing justice under the Union Jack. We found the prisons full; many prisoners had been there as long as two years awaiting trial. The prisons were in a shocking state, overcrowded and filthy. Some prisoners were so infirm that they could not walk. We discharged many at once, and a pail of water and some brushes worked wonders. The Italians soon had to learn that it is not the British way to keep people in prison on criminal charges without trial.

*The Listener, 22/7/43.*

Sorry, old man, but you have not forgotten perhaps over ten thousand Indians at present enjoying the hospitality of H.M. Government's prisons and who have never appeared in court.

## Poor Lady Astor!

Lady Astor, this virtuous lady, has been fined £50 for trying to obtain a fur jacket and various other articles from America without coupons.

Lady Astor pleaded ignorance and the Judge expressed his surprise that a person in the Lady's position should ignore such regulations. We don't share the respectable judge's surprise. Doesn't he know that M.P.'s are a caste apart, and have the privilege of not being affected by the regulations and laws they make. M.P.'s are exempted from conscription, fire watching, home guarding. There is no reason why Lady Astor shouldn't have thought that she was exempted from clothing rationing as well. It's purely an oversight on the part of Parliament and instead of letting her be fined £50 a law should have immediately been made exempting M.P.'s from holding a clothing ration book. Lady Astor could have made a moving speech explaining that M.P.'s, because of the peculiarity of their profession, wear out bottoms of pants (and dresses) more quickly than other human beings. If they have the fiery temperament of Captain Cunningham Reid they may even run to risk of having a bit of jacket torn out.

How right was Lady Astor when she declared in the House, only a few days ago, that "mothers of six, seven, and eight, living in a few rooms, are far happier than the women you find in the Ritz Hotel or dodging life in other ways"! If Lady Astor's husband earned £3 a week and she had to look after eight children she would have never dreamt of a wonderful warm fur coat. The next we shall hear, we hope, is that Lady Astor has taken a room in Bermondsey.

M. L. B.

## ARTIFICIAL SHORTAGE OF FISH

FISH has now been scarce for so long that the queues outside the fishmongers whenever a consignment arrives have become one of the sights to be remembered from this war at home. The blame, of course, is usually put on the lack of fishing facilities. Reports from some parts of Scotland, however, would seem to show that the cause of the trouble is, as in the case of onions, eggs and other foods in the past, our old friend the Government-controlled distributive system. At the beginning of August some 50 fishing boats were actually lying up at Tarbert, on the Clyde, because there was no middleman to buy their fish and they did not wish to waste their time catching fish to dump. During the previous week they had been paid 7/6 a basket for their herrings, as against the maximum controlled price of 24/9! Meanwhile, at towns as close as Lochgilphead, less than 15 miles from Tarbert, it was impossible to buy herrings. God moves in a mysterious way, but he's a novice to Lord Woolton.

# MUSSOLINI

## THE GREAT ACTOR

By *Camillo Berneri*

This article is an extract from a book on Mussolini written by the Italian anarchist Camillo Berneri around 1935, and which was published in Spain under the title: *Mussolini The Great Actor*.

"MUSSOLINI is an Italian of the 16th century, a soldier of fortune," said George Sorel, in January 1912. Fundamentally, he was not deceived. In 1914, on the 6th November, the *Avanti*\* recognised the character of its former editor when it wrote:

"We shall soon see in formation an army of gallants who, headed by Benito Mussolini, will march forward valiantly, armed with the King's rifles and equipped by bourgeois gold. But the generalissimo has not a happy knack in the choice of his men. He asks his soldiers neither whence they come, nor where they are going. He sets them in ranks, lines them up in columns of his *Popolo d'Italia* and shows them off to the public.

"The militant bullies of Benito Mussolini must be shown off not so much for the benefit of the public which, however wooden headed, begins to see what is in the wind, but for those who hope to ravish from the socialist party, after the editor of our *Avanti*, the great mass whom they need for their warlike adventures."

Mussolini had taken care to create an army of followers and place it at the service of the bourgeoisie. "To obtain an intelligent leader, the reactionaries must always wait for a socialist to go mad," said the socialist Loebe, president of the Reichstag. Mussolini has that taint of madness necessary to be a leader, but he has a very much greater force—his uncommon intuition. It has been said that Lenin reproached the Italian socialists with not having engaged him as leader. That is possible. What is certain is that Mussolini would have provided all the presumption, all the indecency, all the falsehood, all the demagogic paraphernalia which was lacking in the man who, in 1919 and in 1920, was hailed as the "Lenin of Italy", Errico Malatesta. The *Corriere*

della Sera\* of the 20th January 1920 wrote:

"The anarchist Malatesta is, for the moment, one of the greatest figures of Italian life. The crowds in the cities flock to meet him, and if they do not take him the keys of the gates, according to the custom of yesterday, it is only because there are no longer either keys or gates."

Malatesta was not a soldier of fortune. He could not exploit his great personality, being a rationalist, an enemy of fetishism, loving clarity of ideas and having a horror of poses.

Two personal memories will throw light on this figure. We were in Rome, in 1920. A group of *Arditi del Popolo*†, bare-headed and with clubs in their hands, had surrounded him. There was no fear of an attack by fascists, but these people were very pleased to play their part of protector for the old and famous agitator. Malatesta was annoyed. He nudged me: "We must get rid of them. How can we do it?"

It was mid-day. We entered a restaurant. At the door, Malatesta stopped: "Thank you. Good-bye, friends!" But the friends had no wish to go away. All the group entered with us, and occupied the tables beside us. Malatesta shook his head, as if to say to me, "It is useless." When our lunch was finished, the *Arditi* hastened to pay for their meal, and we were surrounded again. But the "Lenin of Italy" had endured enough of this. He proposed that we should go to our newspaper. And this time, the group decided, when we entered the office, to go away. Before going out again, Malatesta gave a look out of the window. "They are no longer there," he said to me with a satisfied air.

One day when I was at his house, a comrade arrived, one of those young comrades from the country who are so full of naive enthusiasm.

During his long journey he had prepared his little speech. He began: "I salute you, old banner of the International!" But he did not go on. Malatesta, surprised and irritated, pointed out a bench.

\*The *Corriere della Sera* was the most widely read Italian newspaper, it was published (and still is) in Milan. It was an officious paper representing the interests of the bourgeoisie.—Ed.

†The *Arditi del Popolo* were workers' defence corps formed in July 1921 to resist fascist violence.—Ed.

\*The *Avanti* was the organ of the Italian Socialist Party. Mussolini was its editor up to 1914 when he took up a pro-war attitude and came out in favour of the Allies.—Ed.

"Stand on that, you will speak better." I can still see the frozen face of that unfortunate neophyte.

Such a man could not, in the red years, mount into the saddle. In those days, how many agitators without intelligence, without culture, without courage, had succeeded in becoming powerful leaders! In those years happened things such as had never been seen before. Those who had struggled all their lives for their parties were supplanted by the youngest of new arrivals. There were anarchistic socialists, bolshevik anarchists. At the end of one discourse which I delivered to a socialist branch at Florence, the secretary proposed the transfer of the whole of the branch, together with its funds, into the Anarchist Union. And I am no orator. I once spent a whole day at Carrara, among young republicans, believing them to be comrades. D'Annunzio sent articles to the anarchist daily paper, and individualists were arrested in Milan for conspiring with the legionaries of Fiume. Members of Catholic syndicates committed sabotage, and the leader of the Futurists, Marinetti, wrote on the walls "Viva Malatesta!"

We lived in a burning atmosphere where the most opposite of contraries mingled together, where the most contradictory of possibilities presented themselves, where all the myths clashed with each other. In such a period, in a country which had just emerged from a crisis so profound as that of the war and nearly two years of ferocious struggles, Mussolini was able to impose himself. He was young. In 1922 he was twenty years younger than d'Annunzio, forty years younger than Giolitti. At the head of armed gangs, formed for the most part of people who had no desire to return to the work and the humble social positions they had endured before the war, he was the Garibaldi of the counter-revolution, the man of the bourgeoisie. He played under the protection of the government of Giolitti, he had the complicity of the high command of the army, of the magistrates, of the police. He was only the leading actor of a policy of crushing working class forces. He knew how to stand at the window in 1919, to use blackmail against the bourgeoisie in 1920, to betray the cause of Fiume, to deny the initial programme of the Fascists. He knew how to be "a man of the future", which may be a difficult rôle but is always banal. If Mussolini had not existed, the actual history of Italy would not have been the same. But it would not have been much different. There would have been, in his place, De Vecchi, or Grandi, or Balbo. Each of these men has the qualities and

the faults necessary for a rôle similar to that which Mussolini has played. Prestige? Myth? The press would have sufficed to give the one, to create the other.

The whole Italian situation has led up to the dictatorship, has determined the different phases of Fascism. To believe that all that has been the product of the will and the intelligence of one man is infantile.

Mussolini has been and is only an actor in the Italian tragedy. A great actor, it must be recognised. But a country is not a theatre, and the economic decline, the prisons filled with innocents, the islands of deportation, the special tribunal, the police inquisition, the militia, exile: all that demonstrates that to achieve power is more easy than to be a statesman, and that one cannot solve by brute force the problems of the life of a nation. Mussolini has willed a financial and economic policy which has ruined the country: he has trumpeted the "battle of wheat" and that battle has been a downfall; he has promoted an imperialist drive for breeding like rabbits and the birth rate has fallen; he believed he had crushed opposition, but the anti-fascist struggle persists and continues to give its martyrs and heroes, he thought he could conquer the Church, and the Church protests; he thought he could play the double game of successive alliances and of pacifism for exterior use and of bellicosity for interior use, and to-day, the whole world sees in Italy a barrel of dry gunpowder.

The play becomes continually more dramatic. What will be the catastrophe?

N. 1 GIUGNO 1940

# LOTTA ANARCHICA

PER L'INSURREZIONE ARMATA CONTRO IL FASCISMO

I comunisti-anarchici all'estero ai lavoratori Italiani

Compagni!  
 I libertari dissennati lungo la strada vie dell'Esilio, vogliono dire una parola fraterna a voi tutti che —  
 un errore, oggi è un delitto credere agli interventi risolutivi di persone o di caste estranee al popolo, agli aiuti providenziali di fatti che non risultano di esclusione, o — peggio ancora — un pretesto per ritirarsi dal campo dell'azione.  
 « Chi ha un ferro l'altri, chi un asso »

N. 2 AGOSTO 1940

# Lotta Anarchica

per l'insurrezione armata contro il fascismo

LAVORATORI ITALIANI, TENETEVI PRONTI: IL GIORNO DELLA RISCOSSA SI AVVICINA. GLI ANARCHICI SARANNO CON VOI, IN PRIMA FILA

Le voci più disparate su prossimi tentativi di ... Essi verrebbe risolta più o meno così, se le masse lavoratrici rimanesero assenti, rassegnate a

All through Mussolini's dictatorship Italian anti-fascists carried on underground propaganda in Italy. This Anarchist paper calls for "Armed Insurrection against Fascism."

# Give me a white feather!

FOR SOME MONTHS past what can be termed a 'medal campaign' has been waged by the Press with the support of the Government. It would appear that to have the moral satisfaction of being in the vanguard of the forces of liberation is not sufficient compensation for the sacrifices made, and that in particular if by accident or otherwise you have done something outstanding—deeds which in peace time might easily be rewarded with a few years penal servitude—it is likely that you will be rewarded with a medal, the design, weight and value of which varies with the magnitude of the deed. It often happens that you get killed in the process, but you can rest assured that your relatives will be invited to Buckingham Palace to receive your medals, and their photos may appear in the papers, even though later they may be twisted out of a pension.

Goering's rows of decorations are a source of laughter as are the German prisoners with their iron cross (first, second or third class according to the magnitude of their crime) but we seem to fail to see the funny side of members of royalty whose breasts are covered with multi-coloured ribbons representing so many decorations, both civil and military, and who wear a different uniform at each public appearance. And the recent medal campaign, far from provoking material for our comedians, has been a most serious affair in which the highest Government officials have been engaged.

But opinions nevertheless do vary regarding the value of medals. It's a question of temperament and of psychology. There are some people who worship uniforms and decorations. A medal is a sign of courage of the wearer. Others, on the other hand remember the moral of that children's fairy story *The Wizard of Oz*, in which the trembling lion is given courage by the Wizard (a wise psychologist) by being presented with an enormous shining medal for valour! So concerned are some people with outward show that the question of badges for discharged soldiers, for instance, became a major issue in such papers as the *Daily Mirror*.

But as you will see for yourself there are some queer blokes about, no one will ever be satisfied! In the same *Daily Mirror* we learn that Jas. McT.'s worry is that "I don't ask for a pension; all I want is something to show that I am not a coward", but elsewhere in that paper we read of John Rooke of Barrow-in-Furness who is a case in reverse! "He was discharged on account of stomach trouble and awarded the King's medal but no pension". Friend John Rooke at least is a realist. He can't eat his medal and ribbons without aggravating his stomach trouble, so he is more anxious to have a pension to buy the right food.

From the foregoing we can see that the decoration problem is no easy one, and particularly when people start complicating matters as did a Mr. Knight who wrote to the *Picture Post* recently advocating medals for miners. Another suggestion came from an old soldier, Brig. Frederick Dicken, to the Editor of the *Daily Telegraph* (21/4/43) who wants to use decorations as "A symbol of Unity" between the Anglo-American forces. His suggestions for the design of the badge is "the crossed flags of the two nations and, if considered desirable, a national emblem, like say a rose and a star could be inserted between the flags". This most original (?) design is undoubtedly the result of inspiration of the highest order.



In the gallant Brigadier's own words he feels it will "signify their unity of strength and purpose". We note that no suggestion has been made by the Brigadier for the design of a badge to promote comradeship between the coloured and white American troops first? But that is probably only a small detail.

So much for the problem. Now for the solution. No one will deny that the Government tackled the problem with vigour and certainly more energy than they tackle problems such as pensions and Workers Compensation.

The *Evening Standard* (7/7/43) lets us into the inner workings of the whole business of "be-medalling" the nation.

"A Committee appointed by the Prime Minister, which includes representatives from the Navy, the Army, the R.A.F. and the Merchant Navy, is discussing various combinations of colours which are to be submitted to the King for his personal choice.

Several considerations make the task more difficult than it seems.

For the Africa Star an attempt is being made to get some colour scheme which suggests the desert scene.

Then certain dyes are unobtainable or in short supply. And, of course, the ribbons must be unlike any others.

The King will probably choose the ribbons and

(continued on p. 16)

# 'MISSION TO MOSCOW'

THE FILM VERSION of *Mission to Moscow* has little artistic value, and the crudity and falseness of its content will hardly escape the eyes of informed people. Not only are the Moscow Trials re-staged as genuine, but new falsifications are added to the originals. Marshal Tukhachevsky, who was never publicly tried and was shot without benefit of confession, appears in open court with the other alleged conspirators. All those passages in Mr. Davies' book, in which he reveals how doubtful he was during the trials, are brazenly covered in the film by an enactment of his complete certitude in the court-room; in his own text he admits that only later events had led him to "see" the justice and significance of the trials. The history of Soviet and American foreign policy is retold with a similar disregard for fact, for reasons which must be clear to anyone who has followed closely the actual shifts during the last ten years.

These falsifications and their political meaning will no doubt be exposed in fuller detail in the labour press. But the historical and political content of the film should also be considered from another angle, as a type of propaganda film new to this country. The events leading up to the war are presented at the same time as the headlined history familiar to newspaper readers and also as the personal experience of an official eye-witness and participant. Through the combination of newsreels of Hitler Germany and Stalin Russia with the reenacted story of Mr. Davies, the latter takes on the qualities of an authentic historical reality. As he passes from shots of Nazi demonstrations, in which the whole German people seem to be massed before Hitler, to a scene of Davies-Huston making a futile proposal of disarmament to Schacht-Basch, the spectator feels himself transported behind the scenes to enjoy the same direct contact with the secret historical process as in his contemplation of the public review of the Nazi army. He knows that there are only two Hollywood actors, but he is led to believe by the surrounding context of news reels and by the official character of the film, based on the confidential reports of an American Ambassador and approved by the Soviet government, that the actors are reproducing the original events rather than Mr. Davies' version.

At the same time the sentiment of the little man of the democracies that world politics are a mysterious game in which figures beyond his own plane of vision manipulate the fate of the world for motives which are never quite clear is dissolved by the omnipresence of a plain-spoken American, who moves about everywhere armed with the wonderful authority of a mission from the President, and sees the inaccessible heroic or demonic creatures face to face, pleading with them, denouncing their evil intentions, applauding the good, and offering to the latter his sincere promise of co-operation. This messenger appears in his own guise in a prologue to the film to assure the audience, with priestly gesticulations of the eyes, mouth and hands, that he is a plain Christian American who has made good. Unlike the great heads of state who are shown only in their offices and at military reviews, Mr. Davies is often with his wife and pretty daughter, so that his political role strikes one not simply as a professional assignment or a fulfillment of private ambitions, but as a function of the whole human being, with his family attachment and the inherent decency of the man who cares for others. And by this humanization of the envoy, who is called away from a fishing trip, American diplomacy is transfigured as a moral, humane effort, an extension of the naive goodness and intimacy of ordinary people to the conduct of world affairs. Of

this domestication of high politics there are other examples in the film. Litvinov also travels with his wife and daughter, and the twin families of the Russian and American diplomats are joined by ties of the strongest mutual affection. Mrs. Molotov appears as the manager of the cosmetic trust of the Soviet Union and we learn that in Russia as in the United States women wish to be beautiful and that in both countries the wives of diplomats are business women. When Davies calls upon Churchill in 1939, the English politician, not yet in the government, is laying a brick wall in his garden, like any English or American or Soviet workman, while the two wives exchange amenities.

Nevertheless, the politics of democracy cannot be without the divinely inaccessible leader. President Roosevelt is shown vaguely as a voice; sometimes we are permitted to see the back of his head and shoulder, like the Lord on Mount Sinai; sometimes only a hand is visible, as in old Christian images of Moses receiving the Law. The audience is left in doubt for a moment whether an actor or the President himself is on the screen. Davies tries in vain to reach Hitler; the devil cannot confront this simple, good-hearted American; but he shows himself at a safe distance to the millions of the Nazi armies and party and appears in newsreel shots of triumphal entries into Prague, Vienna and Paris. For a long time, Stalin is equally remote. But at the very end, as Davies is about to leave the Soviet Union and is saying good-bye to the dear little father, Kalinin, Stalin comes in unexpectedly,—a veritable theophany, which is prolonged by the dictator with an affectionate bonhomie that convinces us of the double nature, divine and human, of this prime mover of the Russian sixth of the globe.

Outside these two poles of the human and the superhuman in the United Nations lie all those treacherous, mediocre, ignorant and foolish elements who dare to question the wisdom of the great leaders: in Russia, the traitors who wreck factories and conspire with Hitler and the Mikado; in America, a swiftly filmed amalgam of pacifists, Bundists, isolationists and hysterical liberals, who are obstructing the efforts of the President on the eve of Pearl Harbour. The symmetry of Russian and American affairs is established with the same combination of newsreels and fabricated reality.

The producers of the film have no doubt been troubled by the suspicions and criticisms voiced before its release. Their publicity betrays the motivations behind the picture and the uneasy consciousness of falsehood. The first still published in advance of the film was of Trotsky negotiating with Ribbentrop, an incident that is not even mentioned in the testimony of the Moscow trials (although history provides us with unquestionable documents of Ribbentrop's meetings with Stalin and Molotov). In selecting this shot, the producers gave away a central aim of the film, to fix in this country the belief that opponents of the government are a fifth column of the enemy, and that the strength of Russia comes precisely from the extermination of plotters against the state. But this phony incident was deleted from the film, with all other shots of Trotsky, presumably because of protests from Jewish groups which were disturbed by the anti-Semitic conclusions that might be drawn from such a scene. Afterwards, the advertising avoided all mention of the purges and the fifth column, and tried instead to establish the exactness of another order of correspondences. Day after day, there appeared in the press paired photographs of the actors and the people they imperson-

ated, Huston and Davies, Whipper and Haile Selassie, Malone and Churchill, as if to convince us that the film was true because of the resemblance of the faces of the actors to the historic personalities portrayed. And as the climax of this displacement of the test of truth from the actions to the physical appearance of individuals, the publicity on the day before the opening of the film centred on the most marvellous and suggestive correspondence of all: Joe S. and Joe D. The two Joes come up from the ranks the hard way; the mother of the American Joe was an ordained minister of the gospel, and the Russian Joe studied in a theological seminary. The meeting of the two Joes in Moscow brought about the unity of their two nations in the struggle against fascism. Just as those who wish to establish the truth of a reported miracle point to the correctness of the account of the setting and verify all the statements about the people, the buildings, the roads and the instruments involved in the miracle, so the directors of the film who wish to establish a correspondence with reality, where none exists, are forced to multiply examples of correspondences irrelevant to the main question.

In a recent book *Propaganda and the Nazi Film*, Siegfried Kracauer, who is certainly the best connoisseur of the German film, has observed as the main characteristic of the Nazi pictures their use of elements of unquestionable veracity, newsreels and maps and statistics, to create a deceitful pseudo-reality which impresses the audience as a directly experienced fact. No doubt he was mistaken in assuming that this method is peculiar to fascism. In *Mission to Moscow* the same devices have been imported to this country. This technique of falsification seems to arise naturally from the needs of the modern state, which operates on two planes and possesses a double set of truths, one the practical knowledge which governs the action in the interest of the ruling groups, the other the official doctrines and justifications addressed to the mass of the people who have little voice in the state and are the victims of the crises and wars that follow. As the gap between the real motives and the public explanations becomes wider and more apparent, the most powerful means are necessary to close this gap. The double nature of the film as photography and arranged spectacle makes it the perfect instrument for this end. The gap is filled with documents of indisputable correctness, films of actual events and of frequent personal manifestations of the leaders. But the astutely selected events, sometimes even prearranged for reproduction in the newsreels, teach us little about the hidden reality, and the direct confrontation of the public by the leader reveals nothing of his motives.

★ ★

### WAR COMMENTARY BANNED

*We regret that our readers in Ireland and in neutral countries were unable to read the mid-May and July issues of War Commentary as those were stopped by the censor. We hope they will be able to receive our paper regularly in future but this will depend on the good will of the censors as War Commentary is not prepared to "tone down" even if that doesn't make it matter for export.*

## GLASGOW ANARCHIST FEDERATION

A MEETING  
EVERY SUNDAY

GLASGOW — Brunswick Street  
3.30 & 7 p.m.

EDINBURGH — Mound  
3.30 & 7 p.m.

PAISLEY — Gaol Square  
7 p.m.

Meetings at BURNBANK, BLANTYRE, COATBRIDGE,  
MOTHERWELL advertised locally.

A group is forming in Paisley. Any comrades  
desiring to associate should write to the Secretary,  
Anarchist Federation, 127 George St., Glasgow,  
before the 15th of August

Yet in concealing political facts, the film betrays to some extent the real situation. In *Mission to Moscow* the antagonism of capitalist society and of Russia as a workers state, however corrupted and undemocratic, is completely veiled. The two systems are finally identified as one through the common moral sincerity and democratic spirit of their leaders and envoys. In Russia one is offered caviar and the genuine Ballet Russe, but nothing of the Bolshevik revolution. The Russian workers are no different from the American, and some of them may rise like our own to become factory managers. But the people themselves are never politically active, as they were in the twenties in the great films of the Revolution; the democratic process is nowhere to be seen in the picture. Everything follows from the action of an invisible power in the Kremlin.

In an English propaganda picture made before the war, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, the hero, fleeing a gang of foreign agents, finds himself on the platform at a political election meeting. He is altogether ignorant of the issues, yet he is able to improvise a speech which wins the applause of the crowd. By this cynical detail the makers of the film indicate their belief about the emptiness of democratic forms; the real fate of the country is decided by the struggles between secret agents. In *Mission to Moscow* these forms have disappeared from both Germany and Russia; in the United States they still survive in the short scornful sequences on Congress, the Senate Committee before Hull, and a public meeting addressed by Mr. Davies; but they add nothing to the nation's wisdom and are even obstacles to the truth. The destiny of the nation is in the hands of the President who knows and plans all in advance. Those who challenge him are discredited from the start.

MEYER SCHAPIRO,  
*Partisan Review*,  
May-June, 1943.

# THE YANKEE PERIL

AS EARLY AS December 1939 we asked in *War Commentary* "will America rule the World?" and we suggested that if present tendencies continued the answer would be in the affirmative. Since then our fears of seeing American imperialism expand over the five continents have shown themselves to be well grounded. The Central and South American countries are slowly but systematically infiltrated by American capital, Canada and Australia are being drawn in her sphere, American soldiers are to be found in India. In North Africa General Eisenhower showed no intention of liberating the French Empire to hand it over to the French and he will probably not easily be moved from Italy.

Everywhere Americans rule by intriguing and corrupting. They buy Trade Union bureaucrats and generals, left-wing journalists and Roman Catholic priests. They are Franquists in Spain, Darlanists in North Africa, Badoglioists in Italy. Their intriguing is bare-faced; as people sure of their power they can afford to neglect to cover their unscrupulous actions. Roosevelt speeches, which still make all the good democrats gasp in admiration are the only concession to the principles of "freedom" and "democracy".

The Americans have all the qualities of conquerors. A ruling class which, at home, can force workers back to the factories with bayonets, can murder negroes by the hundred, can put forward such filthy propaganda as the film *Mission to Moscow* has given good proofs that it knows how to rule.

For this reason when we read in the American magazine *Life* (21/6/43) an editorial explaining that "in facing the future, the U.S. must base its foreign policy upon enlightened self interest", we have good reason to feel a cold shiver down our spine.

The American ruling class realises that the end of the war will be followed by an economic crisis and mass unemployment and they have set their mind to follow the present war with an economic war such as has never been waged in history.

## *Life* poses the problem:

"By 1944, if present plans are carried out, we will have a civilian labour force big enough to support 11,100,000 men in uniform, run the war industries, and supply all our civilian essentials. After the war we will have this big labour force on our hands, and we will have in addition 11,100,000 returning soldiers and sailors who expect their old jobs back, or better ones. That will make the most potent labour force in history. Let's remember that in the 1930's we couldn't keep a much smaller labour force busy."

And here is the solution advocated by *Life*, a policy of American lebensraum:

"Now of course there are some subtractions to make from that potential labour force. A certain number of boys, for instance, will want to stay in the services\*, and many women now in War jobs will want to quit industry and go back to their homes. But one fact is sure: we can't hope to solve this problem

just by making subtractions. We can only solve it the other way, by making additions. We can only solve it by additions to our markets and our enterprises. We can only solve it by additions to the size of the American job, the breadth of the American horizon. We can solve it by Creating a new and more dynamic United States."

Scientific discoveries, progress in the technical field will be the factors which will create this "more dynamic U.S." And *Life* proceeds to give an idea of the shape of "Things to Come". Production of cars weighing 1,000 pounds, helicopters to become everyman's airplane, radio-telephones for cars, television in colour or even in three dimensions, electronic cooking and electronic control of the factory or home.

*Life* wants America to reap full benefit from these inventions:

"If we try to keep ourselves locked up behind our oceans we shall fail in two ways. First, our domestic market will not prove big enough in the long run and so the inventions will not get developed—labour and industry might even oppose them. And, secondly, we would not be able to keep everybody at work. In order to bring about the new age we must, so to speak, open up the world. Instead of relying solely upon our own purchasing power we must find ways to increase the purchasing power of peoples *outside* of America. Basically, this means an enormous increase in the flow of foreign trade in both directions. It means that we must, at one and the same time, open up our own markets and build up the markets of others."

Of course *Life* is not thinking of dividends and profits for American capitalists. It wants to increase the purchasing power of peoples outside of America, a very noble purpose. The British have been increasing the purchasing powers of the Indians for over a century with the result that the majority of the population is dying of hunger. *Life* is also thinking of preparing a "home fit for heroes" for when the boys come home. "Only thus can we give them, not just a Government dole, but a chance to get ahead. Only thus can we offer them an Adventure great enough to justify the terrible struggle in which they are engaged."

What *Life* overlooks is that America will not be the only country which will want to draw a benefit from new inventions and modern machinery. Russia, Britain, the Dominions will all be anxious to build up markets, the already shrunken field of exploitation will be still smaller. America will have to eliminate its competitors and that is a job the boys will be sure to get. That of conquering new markets for American capitalists, of preserving the American empire with a strong army and navy.

For this it is necessary to make the American people empire-conscious, to inculcate in them the idea of their superiority, of the fact that a comfortable life is due to them. The American Press is certainly doing its bit towards it. M. L. B.

\*To be prepared, we suppose, for the next war to end wars?

(Continued from page 12)

authorize their distribution before he considers the designs of the medals themselves, which will be submitted by artists specially appointed to draw them up."

We have quoted at length in order to show our readers that the problem was one which called for combined operations of all the services, the Prime Minister and no less a personage than His Majesty himself. It is such an important and complex affair that the Government has had special permission from the Paper Controller (or did they?) to waste a few tons to produce a White Paper on the subject.

So we lined up at the Stationery Office with other potential horses to buy our copy of the White Paper. As an example of complication it beats the Income Tax returns handed down. Take for instance a sailor's position in the medal problem. He has got three chances of qualifying for the 1939-43 Star. If he went afloat on the 10th June he's got nothing to worry about, the star is his for the asking. But if he were unfortunate enough to set sail on the 1st June 1940 it's not so easy. He will have to get out his atlas and see whether he was in the right oceans to qualify for his star. For instance, if you were sailing in the Indian Ocean your ship would have to operate in "that part of the Indian Ocean lying S of 15 S, and West of 55 E." One degree to the North and you are sunk—at least as far as the Star is concerned. However our boys in the fighting services can console themselves with one thought. Even if after consulting lawyers and counsel on the subject, and reading up all the necessary White Papers they still find they cannot qualify, there is still one chance left. We knew the Premier wouldn't let you down old man! Under the heading "General" we find that "Operational service for a lesser period than six or two months respectively but brought to an end by death, wounds or disability due to service will qualify." So console yourselves boys, they never forget you when you're dead!

### LIBERTARIAN.

P.S.—After reading through the White Paper for the fifth time it is the writer's considered opinion that neither the Freedom Press editors, nor our Glasgow comrades can qualify for any medals, badges, chevrons or wound stripes. In any case it's such a complicated business that I vote for a white feather any time!

## War Commentary

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## THE SPRINGHALL CASE

AS REPORTED IN the previous issue of *War Commentary*, Douglas Frank Springhall, 42, National Organiser of the Communist Party was, on the 29th of July at the Old Bailey, sentenced to seven years' penal servitude for espionage after a trial in camera.

The charge was that of obtaining from Olive Sheehan, an Air Ministry clerk, information in respect to munitions of war; and obtaining from her "for a purpose prejudicial to the interests and safety of the State information calculated to be useful to the enemy."

Springhall, known in the C.P. and the *Daily Worker* as D. F. Springhall, is a national leader of the Communist Party in which he has played an important part for many years. He was arrested at Communist Party headquarters, being, at the moment of arrest, National Organiser of the C.P., it was stated by the Home Secretary (House of Commons, 5th Aug. 1943).

The C.P. naturally wished to hush up the matter, but espionage, like murder, will out. Surprised by publicity the Communist Party protests innocence with as much fervour as the small boy caught in the pantry with strawberry jam on his face. Pollitt, as secretary of the C.P. states: "The Communist Party had no knowledge of any activity such as it has been alleged Springhall was engaged in."

Such cases are, of course, not novel to C.P. life. Many will recall the similar case of another British Communist leader, Percy Glading, sentenced to three years imprisonment for espionage just before the present war. Glading was well known for his Communist activities in the Amalgamated Engineering Union of which he was the trustee. Glading obtained drawings of guns from Woolwich Arsenal and had them photographed at the office of a C.P. outfit styled "The League Against Imperialism". Scotland Yard used the services of a young woman who became typist and confidante to Glading. Drawings of somewhat ancient cannon were allowed to get to his hands, the Communist spy carefully photographed them and in walked the police.

The most interesting fact revealed in such trials is the ease with which the police penetrate the C.P.. The most outstanding example of this was in the 1931 trial of Canadian Communist leaders. There the chief witness was a policeman, Sergeant John Leopold of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, who had joined the Canadian C.P. in 1921, became secretary of the Party, representing it at the Communist International Congress at Moscow in 1924, and only revealing his true identity when he appeared in full uniform of red tunic, brass buttons and gold stripes in the witness box on November 2, 1931 (from report in the *Toronto Globe*, Nov. 3, 1931).

Unfortunately for the C.P. some publicity was given to this side of party life by a question put to the Home Secretary by Mr. D. Frankel, Labour M.P. for Mile End, asking Mr. Morrison to investigate the activities of the Communist Party. The Communists, who without the slightest evidence of course accuse revolutionary opponents of being Nazi spies, are enraged by the publicity. In the House on the 5th of August, William Gallacher, Communist M.P. for West Fife, replied to Frankel and Morrison in his usual polished manner and by the Marxist dialectical method:

"Will the Home Secretary state frankly to this House how the character of myself or Harry Pollitt compares with his own mouldy character and the disreputable stooge he put up to ask this question to satisfy his malice for his defeat at the Labour Party Conference?" (*News Chronicle*, August 6th, 1943.)

What of this impregnable Communist-Labour unity? Workers of Westminster unite! If we have to choose between Billingsgate and St. Stephens, for good manners and choice of words, we pick Billingsgate.

T. B.