

WAR *For Anarchism* COMMENTARY

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TWOPENCE



BRITISH BOMBING has brought death to many thousands of people in the past few weeks. At Quebec, politicians who provide themselves with shelters well out of reach of bombs, are planning to continue massive bombing as a means of carrying on the "war against fascism".

Hamburg, Milan, Genoa, Turin, are covered with ruins, their streets heaped with bodies and streaming with blood. "Hamburgizing" is coming into use as a new term for wholesale destruction of cities, and the mass murder of their populations through terrorist raids. The Press boasts of the R.A.F.'s power to carry such destruction to all the cities of Germany and Central Europe. It screamed with indignation when the Germans bombed churches and hospitals, but now it gloats over the destruction of entire cities . . . "In Hamburg there are not fifty houses left untouched by our bombing raids". The Press wept crocodile tears over chained prisoners of war, but when the smell of carnage goes up from once beautiful and populous towns they find words of rejoicing. When the water mains broke in Milan, and flooded the centre of the city, they find it a subject for a joke. "Lake Milan" the clever journalist calls it. What does it matter to him if "the water is flowing between the ruins and the debris of bombed buildings, and people living in the district were forced to remain in the wreckage of their homes for four days until the water

subsided and they could get out . . . " "Lake Milan" is indeed a splendid joke. But while the journalists chuckle in the Fleet Street pubs, the hospitals and rescue squads are working day and night to try and palliate some of the pain and disfigurement, the hunger and exposure of the victims.

Our cartoonists also find wholesale destruction a matter for humorous comment. "Berlin is off the air, and will soon be off the map too!" But when the newspapers publish descriptions and photographs of the destruction and misery in Hamburg and Milan, the people of Clydeside and Coventry, Plymouth and the East End of London, will be reminded of the days and nights when their houses were bombed, when their relatives were killed, or waited in the hospitals for their turn . . . When the papers talk gloatingly of the streams of refugees frantically pouring out of Hamburg with the remnants of their belongings on their backs, of the people of Milan "camping out under the trees", the people of England's bombed cities will remember their own attempts to get away from the night terror, will remember that when they streamed out of Plymouth into the countryside, they found the big houses of the rich closed to them, and they were left to wander without food or shelter.

For who suffers in the big industrial towns when they are bombed, if not the workers who have led lives of misery and toil just like the workers of Clydeside or Coventry? When the port of Naples is bombed, it is the thickly populated working class district which surrounds the harbour that suffers most. The bombs do not hit the sumptuous villas of rich Fascists which are scattered along the shores of the bay of Naples; they hit those high storeyed houses so crowded on top of one another that the streets are no more than obscure passages between them; houses where people live four or five in the same room.

When German cities are bombed it is not the Nazi elite which suffers. They have deep and comfortable shelters just like the elite in this country. Their families have been evacuated to safe districts or to Switzerland. But the workers cannot escape. The city proletariat, the French, Dutch, Belgian, and Scandinavian workers are forced by Himmler's factory Gestapo to go on working in spite of the heavy bombing. For them escape is impossible.

Workers in British munition factories and aircraft factories are asked to rejoice at this wholesale and inescapable destruction. Photographs showing heaps of ruins are plastered up on the walls with the caption "This is your work" underneath. The ruling class wants them to be proud that they have helped to destroy working class homes, to bring bereavement to working class families. For that is what they have done. They have helped their masters to stage massacres by the side of which the destruction of Guernica, the bombing of Rotterdam and Warsaw look like playing at war. Such posters should out-

rage humanity, make them feel sick at the part capitalist society calls upon them to play.

The Italian workers have shown that, in spite of twenty years of fascist oppression, they knew better where their class interests lay. They have refused to be willing tools in the hands of the bosses. They have gone on strike, have sabotaged war industry, they have cut telephone wires and disorganized transport. What is the answer of Democratic Britain to their struggle against fascism? Bombing and more bombing. We have asked the Italian people to weaken their war machine, and we now take advantage of their weakness to bomb them to bits.

Our politicians professed to want revolution in Europe to overthrow fascism. But it is now clearer than ever that what they are afraid of most is that fascism be overthrown by popular revolt. They are terrified of revolution, terrified of "Anarchy". They want to establish "order", and as always they are prepared to wade through rivers of blood to secure their idea of order—order in which the workers accept their lot of poverty and pain with resignation.

How many times in the past have we heard that Anarchism means bombs, that Anarchists work for wholesale destruction. How many times has ruling class police repression been instituted because an anarchist has attempted to assassinate a single ruler or reactionary politician? But one single Harburgizing raid kills more men and women and children than have been killed in the whole history, true or faked, of anarchist bombs. The difference is that anarchists wished to destroy men like Mussolini who were responsible for the misery of millions; ruling class bombs just kill thousands of workers indiscriminately.

"Disorder, Anarchy," yell the capitalists when single-handed resolute like Sbardelotto, Schirru and Lucetti, tried to kill Mussolini . . . Now the same capitalists want to rub whole cities off the map of Europe, want to reduce whole populations to starvation, bring epidemics and disease all over the world. This is the peace and order that they want to bring with the aid of their bombs, to the workers of the world.

PUBLIC LECTURE-DISCUSSIONS EVERY FRIDAY EVENING 7.30 p.m

August 27th. Ken Hawkes

"Syndicalist Experiences in Spain"

September 3rd.

Lecture to be announced.

September 10th. M. L. Berneri

"The Rise of Fascism in Italy"

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ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

CANADIAN COOKING

FROM what one can gather from the Quebec talks Britain and America are going to start a full scale offensive against Japan. British and American capitalists are anxious to gain back their rich possessions in the Pacific to consolidate their position in India and secure for themselves the Asiatic continent which offers a vast field for capitalist investment.

Russia has received the news with bitterness and has reacted by recalling Litvinoff. She is afraid of not receiving sufficient help in the war against Germany and to have a war with Japan forced on her. The Italian campaign and the extensive bombing of German towns are far from satisfying her. The *Pravda* talks reproachfully of idle troops and unused arms in the British Isles. The *Daily Worker* has resumed with renewed energy its campaign for the Second Front and goes as far as issuing threats:

"If Mr. Churchill returns empty-handed from Quebec . . . then the Government will meet with a storm of opposition from the people of this country. And this opposition will not be mere criticism and expressions of dissatisfaction, it will be a full-throated demand for such changes in the Government as will ensure a win-the-war strategy being adopted".

Relations between Russia and the British-American bloc must have deteriorated considerably for the *Daily Worker* to use such language.

The *Daily Press* publishes headlines assuring the public that the links of friendship between Britain and Russia are as strong as ever but correspondents from Quebec show signs of uneasiness. The *Observer* of the 22/8/43 describes the diplomatic situation in gloomy tones:

"There is great optimism in London about relations with Russia; but the basis for it is hard to find, since all the outstanding problems remain to be solved. There is open discussion about Poland, and divergent policies with regard to Germany, France, and Yugoslavia. The common basis, on which these divergencies can be resolved, has yet to be discovered."

The coming events may well prove embarrassing for our British Communists.

BOMBING OF HAMBURG

THE capitalist attempts to justify the bombing of Hamburg by implying that the objectives were purely industrial and military. While they exhibit a disgusting exultation over the casualty figures, they would have us believe that the 58,000 men, women and children reported to have been killed by the R.A.F. raids, were only incidental losses in an attack on war plant. A comrade who knows Hamburg well writes to us that "the harbour, shipyards and stores could have been destroyed without much destruction to the non-military and non-industrial districts of the town. 'Blohm & Voss' and the 'Deutsche Werft', the main shipyards, are situated, like all the other yards, away from the living quarters of the population. So is the 'Freihafen', the complex of thousands of warehouses, shelters, quays, also isolated from the city itself. This whole complex, as well as the oil-dumps, coal harbour, and the several bridges crossing the broad river Elbe, could have been destroyed, thereby blocking shipping and railway communications with the Reich. In short, Hamburg could have been paralysed completely without laying the whole city in ashes. Even the gas, electricity and water plants

could have been bombed out of existence without having to wreck the living quarters of the workers, killing them by thousands, especially since the Press emphasized, on the occasion of the bombing of Rome, that the R.A.F. pilots are highly trained in accurate bomb aiming, and are perfectly able to distinguish military targets." This bears out our contention that it was the population itself, the workers of Hamburg, who were the target in these terroristic raids. The destruction in Milan shows a similar purpose.

The same comrade adds, "*The Zeitung* (the weekly paper published in German in this country by pro-Ally refugees) issued an appeal recently to its readers in England, asking them to give or lend to the British War Office any material in their possession, such as maps, photographs, German address books, any details which would assist bombing operations. The appeal met with a response. I can hardly find words of comment. I wonder if they are bothered by an uneasy conscience when their thoughts turn to the 58,000 victims of the Hamburg raids."

INDIAN COMMUNIST LEADERS ASSASSINATED

THE *Daily Worker* on August 9th, reported that

two-leading Indian Communists, Ramesh Gupta and Phani Chakravarty, have been murdered in Dacca. The *Daily Worker*, of course, turns their deaths to serve the propaganda of Joe Stalin, and implies that they were killed by Fifth Columnists, i.e. the Congress Socialist Party and the "Trotskyists".

The *Daily Worker* reported on July 3rd that the "Communists and Muslim League members, acting together as 'Peoples' Volunteers', have won permission from the Dacca magistrates to help in stopping riots incited by factional opposers of the local League-Ministry." (see *War Commentary*, Mid-July 1943). We interpreted this action at the time as meaning that the C.P. had formed a sort of volunteer police force to crush Indian revolutionists and demonstrating workers and peasants. The killing of the two Communists in Dacca may well be connected with the counter-revolutionary role of the Indian C.P. One remembers how Stakhanovists in Russia, whose role was to lower wage rates, were frequently assassinated by their fellow workers. The reactionary activity of Communists in India certainly exposes them to similar reprisals.

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FOR A FREE ITALY!

THE SITUATION IN Italy will not be a surprise to readers of *War Commentary*. We are not prophets, but as every class-conscious worker could foretell, the imperialist blood-bath was bound to be heralded by a series of revolutionary situations and uprisings, the major opening of which is found in the Italian Revolution.

Marshal Badoglio, the gentleman-fascist, combines the functions of a Pétain babbling about "honour" and clinging to Roman Catholicism, and that of a Kerensky carrying on the war. In attempting to placate the revolutionary masses and then to suppress them he has joined with Victor Emmanuel and the Roman Catholic clique, (forever with the side that is winning), to form a block that attempts to stave off ruin to fascism, the House of Savoy, and the Roman Church—that unholy trinity which has ruled Italy for the past 21 years.

The reactionary Press, headed by the *Daily Mail*, is trying to sell the idea that it was Badoglio and Victor Emmanuel who sacked Mussolini. In its editorial of July 28th, the *Daily Mail* made a plea for treating with them. "Where is the sense of hounding them at this juncture?" it asks, and goes on to describe the Italian workers as "a dumb mass of political helots". Yet the very same copy of the *Daily Mail* gave its editorial the lie by reporting "Red flags in the streets of Milan", and accounts of how the workers rose against their fascist taskmasters. It had already described in common with all other newspapers how Italian soldiers had given up their arms rather than fight for Mussolini. Badoglio and the King merely signed the order because the people had already sacked Mussolini.

The *Daily Mail* declared that the Italian people have been "bound and gagged for 21 years in the strait jacket of Fascism—partly, as Mr. Churchill reminds us, through their own fault." The colossal impudence of it! Fascism came to power through the crawling mass of politicians who supported it, nourished it, and led it to Rome in its early stages. Nor were all its supporters Italian. Its glowing and fervent apostle in England, "the first Englishman to wear a black shirt," was that very Mr. Churchill. And the paper that identified itself with Fascism until its name stank in the nostrils of every decent man in this country was this same *Daily Mail*. It now publishes articles "Don't forget the Duce was the Fuhrer's idol". We don't forget he was also the *Daily Mail's* idol. The *Daily Mail* was for years synonymous with fascism in this country, and it must not escape the reckoning now fascism is finished—it should suffer for its responsibility the same as its Italian bedfellows. Its support for Mussolini led it to be a mouthpiece for Hitler in later years; and afterwards for Japanese Fascism,

and then for Spanish Fascism in recent years. Its disgusting eulogies of Franco will not be forgotten by the crushed Spanish Revolution; and if the British Revolution comes it will not be forgotten here too. The least it could do would be to apologise now for its mistaken views. But no—Churchill and the *Daily Mail*, the capitalists and the clerics, they all talk smugly of the *Italians'* own responsibility for the fascist British capitalism helped directly to foster.

Politicians argue that recriminations about the past are useless and then pass on to support Vansittart's book *Black Record*!

We attack the *Daily Mail* and the capitalist caucus for which it speaks, Winston Churchill and the clique from which he comes, as renegades, not because they are now anti-fascist, but because they are still pro-fascist and avoid the direct admittance now because it is unpopular, and is a good war-cry against capitalist rivals. They used to revel in the charge of pro-fascism. And now they are of course all anti-fascist *but*—naturally we must deal with Badoglio and Victor to maintain the regime; naturally we must deal with Darlan and Giraud to maintain the Vichy regime; naturally India must have no expression of her own and be denied the claims of their own Atlantic Charter; naturally the colonies are spoils of war, and when captured from the enemy must not be liberated and given home rule, lest our own colonies ask for the same privilege accorded to the subjects of the beaten foe. Already we see the cloven hoof in the statements regarding Italy's future. The British Fascists are to replace the Italian Fascists, but in case that is not too democratic, America, land of liberty, is to import Americans to reorganise the country. These Americans will have either Italian ancestry or Catholic connections, but their stock-in-trade will be Fascismo, attuned with "American traditions" of the new leaders—for the Italians have no leaders of their own—no Abe Lincolns or Dantons, it will be argued, Mussolini killed all their best men (which is not entirely true—Mussolini only killed *some*—the majority perhaps—the G.P.U. of Russia killed others, such as Berneri, the American "democrats" killed others, such as Sacco and Vanzetti).

Thus the "armies of liberation" will bring only a change of masters—unless the new Italy casts off all masters.

We do not know if the Italian revolutionary situation will develop into an Italian Revolution. We only know that the German-Italian army, and the Anglo-American army before the doors, are there to crush it even before they are there to crush each other. In the last analysis the Italian workers and peasants have their own destiny to fight for, and they themselves, not saviours from outside, will make

MOSCOW PREPARES THE GERMAN COUNTER REVOLUTION

BRITAIN HAS ITS crafty weathercock politicians, its shouting chauvinists, favourite "shadow governments", and groups of would-be quislings. And over all these eager tools towers Amgot with the bankers and big business at its head. All of them are vociferous in their anxiety to serve what they call the "interests of the Nation". It is not surprising therefore that Russia also has instruments willing to serve its interests—it is only fair that there should be! Nevertheless the organization of the "National Committee of Free Germany" in Moscow has been greeted with a marked lack of enthusiasm in London and Washington.

The Russians are dropping millions of manifestoes issued by the "National Committee of Free Germany" over the Nazi front lines. The Russian radio broadcasts appeals to the German people to rid themselves of Hitler and "win the nation's right to decide its own fate, save its existence, freedom and honour". German soldiers, using passes dropped by the Russians are reported to be surrendering in increasing numbers. They form discussion circles in the prison camps, contribute to a "Free German" paper, and produce a mass of statements, resolutions and appeals for the use of the Soviet propaganda to Germany. Such events have spread sand in the balm of Anglo-American-Soviet friendliness, and have sown fears that those dreadful red lights are appearing again.

The moral of the German forces is sinking. Inside Germany there are millions of discontented Germans, sick and tired of the war, bombed out and shifted about. There are six million troops holding down the occupied countries. In the event of revolt they would change from hated invaders into comrades of the invaded peoples. There are also twelve million workers from other coun-

tries enduring forced labour in the war plants; French, Poles, Russians, Italians, Slovaks, Croats, Serbians, Roumanians, Hungarians, Danes, Dutch and Norwegians working in Germany's industry and agriculture—Ukrainian miners in Silesia, Russian women and girls in the factories. These twelve millions would join in a German revolt, if only for the sake of escaping the conditions they are forced to live in, and the bombing they have to endure.

But does the Kremlin address these people and propagate revolutionary principles? Does it quote the German revolutionists of the last war—Liebknecht, Luxemburg, Muehsam? Does it even advocate Lenin's tactics? No fear! The revolutionists are replaced by broadcasting parsons, petty bourgeois, reformists, and proved Stalinist party-liners. Stalin appeals to the German Army to lead the rising against Hitler, and quotes Liberal politicians and Generals!

Do you smell the rat? He is appealing to Count Reventlow, to the pro-Russian wing of the Reichswehr, to that bloc which seeks a German-Russian alliance against the west. Stalin knows that the German military caste is already considering—as in 1916—ways of maintaining an illegal existence in the event of a collapse of the war machine. He also knows that Germany has still a special force, highly trained for civil war conditions, which has not yet been used for the purposes of the present war. The German General Staff will, in the event of military defeat or collapse on the home front, use exactly the same tactics to save and preserve the army as it used in 1918. Stalin and the German General Staff both remember the advantageous alliance between the Wehrmacht and the Red Army, whereby the former was enabled to evade the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, by establishing factories and training schools on Russian territory. Stalin once more offers his rescuing hand to the doomed militarists.

The British and American governments demand the complete eradication of German militarism. They did the same in the last war. But the workers will remember that already in September 1919, the victors agreed to slow down the disarmament of Germany, so that the German government would be left enough power to crush the revolutionary attempts which they expected that winter. Revolutionary doctrines were considered such a menace to the world that the Allies set about strengthening that very Prussian militarism they had just been inciting millions to fight and die to destroy.

Stalin knows what to think of the compliments of his gallant allies, and in spite of the *Mission to Moscow* propaganda, they harbour no illusions about him. The sweet tones of official propaganda merely cloaks the nakedness of imperialist rivalry. Stalin tries to blackmail his allies, and they try to cheat him.

The policy of the allies—"unconditional surrender", "re-education", "European Police Force", "Amgot", etc.—and the chauvinist attitude of the British Labour movement, heavily infected with Vansittartism, ignores the potential ruling class ally inside Germany. But Stalin appears to recognize their possibilities and is out to gain the confidence not only of the Germans but also of those sections of Roumanians and Hungarians who are willing to form "Free Committees" in Moscow. The Anglo-American policy is driving German reaction into Stalin's lap. It is he who is preparing the leftist, "liberating" government for Germany which, in the event of Hitler's fall, will ally itself with the Army Chiefs to act as the Ebert-Scheidemann government did in 1918, and save capitalist society in Germany by brutally crushing the revolution.

A. M.

(continued from p. 4)

that FREE ITALY for which thousands have fought the Duce and many attempted to eliminate his personage (the removal of which is certainly shown now to be a beacon to proletarian Italy that might have been lit earlier had such attempts been successful. It is due to the efforts of the police of the "democratic" as well as the fascist countries, that this was not done, and so much bloodshed and wasted life spared Italy and Britain, America and Greece, France, South Africa and Yugoslavia, in the Italian war effort alone). But to the Italians' effort must be added the efforts of the revolutionary forces of the whole world, to take over the control of life and oust the boss class. For only a world revolution can guarantee the Italian Revolution. World capitalism and world fascism will rush reinforcements to the escutcheon of the House of Savoy and the cross of the Church of Rome, which replace the fasces of Cæsar as the executioners' axe of Italy. The Italian people cannot revolt successfully while tied to the axe of fascism, or to the bayonets of rival imperialism—they have made the attempt—each day as we read the papers they are "storming the heavens": let us and the workers and the masses of all the countries of the world join in the effort to throw out the warmakers and the "peace"makers—the governments of all countries, the tyrants of the world.

Liverpool Dock Strike

THE GREAT DOCK strike at Liverpool and Birkenhead ended on Friday, August 20th, when it was stated officially "that the suspension of the 34 men has ended and that the grievances of the dockers will be investigated".

The following account of the strike is taken from the *Liverpool Echo*. 17/8/43:

"Soldiers were called in last night in the Liverpool docks dispute so that the normal work of the port could proceed.

The strike started because thirty-four dockers were suspended at the Bramley Moore dock last Thursday for refusing to work overtime between 7 and 9 p.m., and the number of sympathisers who have since left their work has now grown.

'Our grievance,' said a docker to the *Echo*, 'is that if we work two hours' overtime, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., for which the rate of pay is 3s. 9d. we actually lose 3s. 9d. on the full day. This is how it comes about: For the morning shift, from 8 o'clock to 12, the rate is 7s. 6d. attendance pay, whether there is work to be done or not. For the afternoon shift, from one o'clock to five, the pay is also 7s. 6d. Overtime pay from five to seven is 7s. 6d., but if we work the additional two hours' overtime from seven to nine the attendance pay of 7s. 6d. for the morning shift is deducted from our wages for the day, and this leaves us 3s. 9d. out of pocket. For refusing to work from seven to nine we have been suspended.'

This statement was rebutted by a dock official, who pointed out that the 7s. 6d. attendance pay formed part of the weekly guarantee minimum wage scheme, and did not constitute money earned.

Under the scheme which is based on eleven four-hour turns per week at 7s. 6d. per turn the docker is guaranteed a weekly wage of £4 2s. 6d. even though he may have worked less than eleven turns.

This operates as follows:—If there is no work for a docker on a morning turn during the week he receives an 'attendance proved' stamp, and if he is short of eleven turns at the end of the week he is given 7s. 6d. for it.

A docker having worked ten turns and is in possession of one 'attendance proved' stamp, may be reluctant to work an eleventh turn on the grounds that he would be working a turn for nothing, as the 7s. 6d. under the 'attendance proved' stamp would be forfeited by his working the eleventh shift.

That may be the reason why the thirty-four dockers, who were suspended, refused to work overtime last Thursday.

It is pointed out authoritatively, however, that under the port labour scheme the attendance pay for morning shifts when no work is done is merely a means of carrying out the guarantee under the scheme that the men shall be paid for a minimum of eleven turns a week.

Men have a right to appeal in the case of any grievance, it is pointed out, and in this case it has not been exercised."

The objections of the dock official are absurd, since the men have to clock in at 8 o'clock in order to be able to claim the 7/6d. for the morning shift, it

is ridiculous to suggest that they should forgo money for a period during which they have to be "on the job" whether they work or idle.

The men returned to work when a guarantee was given by Mr. Robert Letch, N.W. Regional Director that the suspensions of the 34 men would be immediately lifted, and that the men's grievances would be investigated. At a mass meeting on 18th August at White City Greyhound Track, a representative of the Dockers enumerated their demands. These were: (1) That all suspensions should be lifted and the men taken back to work with retrospective pay. (2) That a committee be formed with a men's representative to deal with all complaints in conjunction with union officials. (3) A full investigation into the operation of the dock labour scheme in the N.W. area. (4) That the basic wage be increased by 5/- bringing it up to £1 a day. (5) That Sunday work be continued, but not on the basis of the guaranteed wage. (6) That income tax be on a "pay-as-you-go" basis. (7) That the men should work until 5 p.m. on Thursday and 12 noon on Saturday, except in essential circumstances. The speaker added that when a man had done ten hours work in a day, he had done quite sufficient.

These demands limit themselves to ameliorating the conditions of work within the Dock Labour Scheme; they make no attempt to restore the casual basis of dock work, which it was the purpose of the Control Scheme to break. In the absence of any organisation of the men on the job, with defined revolutionary aims, it is not possible to do more than manoeuvre within the orbit laid down by the existing reactionary unions.

A correspondent in Liverpool writes:

"For a considerable time discontent has been rife among dockers on the Merseyside in regard to the operation of the Dock Labour Control Scheme. This is one of the many schemes applied in wartime and operative under the Essential Works Order.

"Briefly, it is a scheme of industrial conscription whereby the dockers in practice are tied hand and foot, and any kind of redress in what may be termed a constitutional manner is out of the question.

"Needless to say, the scheme has the wholehearted support of the Union officials. Unionism becomes compulsory under the scheme, which guarantees the Union officials an assured income. Communist Party supporters—since their last change of line—also give support to the scheme, in addition to a number of others who claim "Left" tendencies.

"Matters have now been brought to a head.

Last Thursday (12/8/43), 34 men were suspended for refusing to work overtime (see the *Liverpool Echo* account quoted above). Upon hearing the news, a hundred men struck in sympathy. At a later hour 400 more came out in sympathy, and since the week end many more have followed suit. The result is that to-day (17/8/43.) practically the whole line of docks on both sides of the river are idle.

"In the early stages, Union officials rushed to the various jobs and urged the men to return to work, stating that they would negotiate on their behalf. However, the more the officials urged the return to work, the more men came out in sympathy, with the result that there has been shown one of the finest demonstrations of solidarity during the period of this war. 20,000 men are involved.

"Whilst the solidarity of the men has been magnificent, it is regrettable that there is no organization to back it up. Mass meetings have been held, but in the main they have been dominated by the Union officials, who are however by no means receiving a smooth reception.

"The question now arises as to the way out. Naturally the Union officials, helped by the Communist Party (it is interesting to watch the changing attitude of the latter from one time hostility to

positive fawning), are anxious to return to the Scheme with an odd concession here and there.

"This will not satisfy the rank and file. One of their chief complaints against the scheme is that the rank and file have no say in any matter, except through Union officials. Dockers are fully aware that the Union does not function in their interests to-day, due to the penalties under the E.W.O. Therefore some way must be found to secure rank and file views on the scheme.

"Under the scheme, all dockers are allocated to what are termed in official language "labour control points"—better known on the dockside as "pens". Here, for the first time, dockers are brought together and work in a certain area. There are twelve of these "pens" on both sides of the river. This concentration provides the key to rank and file organization. Committees can be formed, and representatives chosen to speak on behalf of the men. Already this idea is being viewed with favour, but there is a danger that Union officials will seek to bring such committees under their control, thereby rendering them ineffective.

"The reply of the dockers must be "Independent Committees", claiming the right through their representatives to decide the welfare of the men."

Comic cuts

C.P. issue a balance sheet

THE REPORT of the 16th Congress of the Communist Party is illuminating! The Labour Party has stated that even members of the Communist Party were not allowed to know anything about party finances, and they enquired the source of the Communist Party's money. The "secret service" organisation has now partly answered the query by issuing a statement of accounts which has a number of interesting items, among which are the payments made to officials—how many is not stated.

Central office expenses, for instance, are a paltry £223 per week or £11,667 16s. 1d. per annum and the wage account £6,586 14s. 0d. per annum—if they were renting Buckingham Palace they wouldn't have to pay much more! Publicity exhibitions, demonstrations, material and expenses are a mere £166 per week and £8,636 per annum. Hire of halls, grants to schools and travelling are £49 per week and £2,521 per annum. Travelling and other departmental expenses are listed at £25 per week and £1,840 per annum.

From all this it is obvious that their officials, like all officials, enjoy life at the workers' expense. The reward of the Communist workers, like that of the godly Christians, will be found in Heaven—as many of the old Bolsheviks discovered.

One item is of special interest; it refers to their investments—is this the reason they are so anxious to maintain capitalism? How much of this money is in government stock?

Another interesting item is membership dues; we are told that thousands were flocking to the "party". If the figures published are any guide the new members are like the cat that crept into the crypt—and crept out again. Claims have been made for 60,000 members, we are assured however that the average was 41,000—less than point one per cent. of the population. Income for membership stamps and dues is given as £10,288. As each member pays 12/- per annum the sum should have been £24,900. If however we accept the party rules that each member contributes 4d. to the branch every month, 4d. to District Committee and 4d. to the Executive, each department should receive £8,000. How then do the financiers account for £10,000? In any case 41,000 members should only contribute £8,000 so we have a buckshee £2,000 . . . but we find that in January (1942) the membership was only 23,000 whilst in December it had reached 56,000—this figure equals £11,000! Having no knowledge of money beyond that needed to pay the baker and the rent, I give it up.

To conclude, the Communist Party (guided by Marx and Lenin) had an income of £67,133 and an expenditure of £54,855—so if you want to be among the investors join the C.P. You will then have the sure knowledge that you are fighting to keep Hitler from your party's investments and you will be in the right place to see that the bosses and rulers who exploit you are really a damn decent lot!

JIM BARKER.

ENGLISHMAN'S PRIDE

In your feature on the Ambassador's Party (August 7) you print a picture of a little boy, with the caption "A Frenchman takes the plunge." This small boy is my son, John Christopher Addington. Will you therefore excuse me if I make a correction?

Christopher is the grand-nephew of Viscount Sidmouth, and belongs to one of the oldest families in England. His father, who is in the Colonial Service, is engaged on work of national importance in Mombasa. One of his uncles was amongst the Guards who died gloriously in Tunisia. Of his other three uncles in the British Army, one has been on many Commando raids, including the invasion of Madagascar, and another has been serving overseas for the last two and a half years. Another uncle, in the Royal Navy, was an engineer in the *Ark Royal* at the outbreak of war, then in the *Penelope*; and is now a pilot in the Fleet Air Arm. Yet another is a navigator in the R.A.F. And one of his aunts is in the Wrens. Therefore, without wishing in any way to spurn our French Allies, you will forgive him if he takes no little pride in being called an Englishman.

Barbara Addington (Mrs. John Addington),
Rosemount, Sunningdale.

Letter to *Picture Post*, 21/8/43.

JUSTICE ?

The Home Office last night announced two National Days of Prayer.

The first will be on Friday, September 3, fourth anniversary of the outbreak of war.

A service will be broadcast from 11 to 11.15 a.m. during which time the Government wishes that work should cease as far as practicable. Employers are asked to allow workers the opportunity to listen.

Daily Express, 12/8/43.

Birmingham magistrates yesterday decided that a Muslim labourer who was late for firewatch duty because he was attending an important annual religious meeting and was subsequently fined must pay the fine.

They ordered Ali Mahammed, of Bristol-road, Birmingham, to pay £3 for not turning up to firewatch at his place of work on time.

Daily Express, 12/8/43.

CLAYTON'S FATHER PROTESTS

In spite of the exposure of gross negligence on the part of those who dealt with Clayton, and the appalling conditions under which he died, his parents have received no compensation whatever.

For years he was the only son contributing towards their home, and his loss has naturally affected them financially, quite apart from the deep sorrow it has caused.

In a letter to the Association, his father says: "I feel I must write and thank you for the interest you are taking in the case. Now that the evidence has come to light of the way in which he was brutally killed in the detention camp at Chatham, I hope that through his death other poor soldiers may benefit."

"He volunteered for the Army when he was thirty-seven, and was passed A1, never having had even a day's illness. If he had T.B. then he contracted it in the detention camp through under-nourishment and harsh treatment."

"It will be a great loss to us, as he was the only son living at home, and we shall miss him very much."

"It is hard that, although his death was not his own fault, no compensation is forthcoming."

Reveille, 16/8/43.

HE SHOULD KNOW

In a recent Fabian Society pamphlet Mr. Laski wrote of the Executive, of which he is a leading member, that it is becoming narrow in outlook and sectarian in spirit; "expulsion becomes a monthly experience."

Now, it appears, Mr. Laski would like to do a spot of expelling on his own account. Mr. Attlee, he says, has integrity but not inspiration. The Party knows "that to cling to him in the next general election means defeat."

Evening Standard, 3/8/43.

Through

AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

Two members of the Senate's War Investigating Committee, better known as the Truman Committee, who are to accompany three other Senators in an Army bomber this summer on a round-the-world inspection tour of the American fighting forces, have been directed to pay special attention to airfields built by the United States.

"The time to obtain equitable settlements of our post-war rights to use airfields and other properties built and paid for by us is now," states the committee.

"It is especially important that Congress should acquaint itself now with arrangements which are being made abroad in the name of the United States by numerous representatives of the many special agencies authorised to expend funds and distribute American property."

Daily Telegraph, 5/7/43.

CHRISTIAN SPIRIT

The Rev. F. H. Cooke, Vicar of Hooton, Cheshire, believes that if thieves were given the "cat" bicycle thefts would stop in a week.

In his parish magazine he says: "Fining is no use. Imprisonment is a waste of time and money. So widespread is the evil that drastic measures will have to be taken."

Daily Express, 12/8/43.

B.B.C.'s TACT

Some friends of mine have been listening to the news bulletins on the B.B.C.'s European Service. They have heard through the microphones the dramatic story of the Italian uprising against Mussolini and Badoglio in Hungarian, Bulgarian, German and Italian, French and English. But they have noted one curious thing; no information about the progress of the revolution is given to the B.B.C.'s listeners in Spain.

These listeners noted another strange thing about broadcasts to Spain a few days ago. While the ether everywhere trembled with President Roosevelt's declaration of the extension of the Atlantic Charter, Spanish listeners heard it only in one or two early transmissions; then it disappeared.

It was in this speech that Mr. Roosevelt declared that every people should have the right to the government of its own free choosing.

Evening Standard 19/8/43.

CONVICTS WASTED

Convicts in the United States believe they would make good soldiers.

A leading article in the "Atlantian," a newspaper published by convicts of Atlanta Penitentiary said:—

"Field-Marshal Wavell is said to have described the modern soldier in these terms—a good soldier must be part burglar, part footpad, part athlete, part gunman and all guts."

"If this is on the level, General Eisenhower is overlooking a lot of good material—and we don't mean at Harvard either."

The Star, 11/8/43.

the Press

COMPARISONS

War Secretary Sir James Grigg announces longer leave for men from overseas on disembarkation. Fourteen days for those with less than two years' continuous service: more than two but less than four, twenty-one days; and twenty-eight days for those with more than four.

This also applies to the R.A.F. The Navy are unlikely to alter their existing arrangements.

By comparison, the British Consular Service, which has only been open to the very best people, with the very best education, has different views about leave for its members. I understand that they get three months' local leave each year when on duty in the Tropics, with one full year's home leave in every five.

I tried to check up on these facts with the Foreign Office, but was asked just what the information was wanted for and to write in about it before I could have the information I sought. I could not be bothered with such red tape, so I publish the facts for what they are worth. Anyhow, the comparison is interesting.

Reveille, 16/8/43.

FROM THE CAPTIONS

Daily Mirror (12/8/43) caption to a photograph from Catania:

FALL OF FASCISM

The well-stocked warehouses in this picture belonged to the "gentry" of Catania, who had grown rich by keeping Sicilians poor. But the victorious Eighth swept into the town and the people, delivered from Fascism after twenty years, rose, in revenge. Crowds thronged the streets while men on the balconies threw down to them the food and clothes badly needed. So fell Fascism in Catania; so Fascism will always fall when the people rise against it.

In the *Manchester Guardian* the role of the 8th Army is somewhat different. The caption to the same picture reads:

LOOTING OF CATANIA

People in Catania looting shops and houses after the entry of the Eighth Army and before measures could be taken to restrain them.

ANARCHISM

● THEORY

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FREEDOM PRESS

27 Belsize Road, London N.W.6.

"OUR CRUSADE"

Milan is now a city of the dead. All activity there was blotted out after the last gigantic raid by the R.A.F. on Sunday night.

According to refugees reaching the frontier and Press reports in Switzerland, what was once a city of 1,000,000 inhabitants is now a wreck of gutted buildings, where there is no gas, no electric power, and where railway traffic has been seriously interrupted.

Evening Standard, 17/8/43.

ITALY AFTER 1918

The revolutionary period 1919—1921

THE ITALIAN PEOPLE played an unenthusiastic part during the last war. They had been strongly impregnated with socialist and anarchist ideas and they saw in the war, not a struggle for democracy, but another imperialist conflict. The left-wing parties did not betray their internationalist ideals as openly as they did in other countries. A section of the Socialist party opposed the war throughout while the great majority gave it only lukewarm support. The Anarchist movement refused to take part in the imperialist bloodbath and consistently opposed the war.

The ruling class, in order to obtain some support from the Italian people, had to bribe them with promises; they assured the workers that they would get better conditions after the war and that they would give the land to the peasants. But when peace came they showed no willingness to keep their promises. The country found itself extremely weakened. It had lost one million men in the war, and those who came back found no work to do. Meanwhile the cost of life had gone up tremendously. The bourgeoisie, on the other hand, had done well out of the war and was more sure of itself and arrogant than ever; in particular the agrarians (the landed bourgeoisie) were resolved to do their utmost to prevent the peasants from gaining any concessions. In 1919 the whole country was seething with discontent. The workers and peasants, tired of waiting for the improvements promised them, began to take matters in their own hands. The bourgeois and nationalist elements were frustrated by the Allies' denial of any share of the war booty to Italy. Just as in Germany the Versailles treaty was the stepping stone for the Nazis, in Italy it formed a basis for fascism.

Strikes, looting of shops, occupation of the land began in a sporadic and unorganised way. The general elections which took place on the 16th of November, 1919 gave the Socialists 2,840,593 votes while the bourgeois parties received three and a half million votes. The new liberal government showed itself incompetent both to resolve the internal economic problem and to gain Italy territorial aggrandisement round the diplomatic tables. It was, however, resolved in one thing and that was to crush any workers' revolt. It created a royal guard which mercilessly crushed all demonstrations and strikes.

But in spite of the government's repression the movement of strikes intensified itself. It was merely due to the economic situation and to the disproportionate increase in the cost of life. But already in April 1920 the General Strike of Turin showed that the workers wanted more than economic gains and that they aimed at controlling the industries which belonged to the people by right, because they had built them with their toil and because they were working them. The Turin workers set up factory councils and declared their intention to control the factories themselves. All over Italy strikes of sympathy took place and the railway workers refused to move the troops which the government wanted to send to suppress the revolt. The strike lasted ten days and was finally crushed by overwhelming forces of repression through its having been unable to obtain sufficient support from the rest of the Italian workers. Already we see in the Turin strike the wavering and uncertain attitude which the Socialist Party and the Trade Unions (General Confederation of Labour) were to play all through those years of revolt. Whenever

the working class showed the desire to overthrow capitalist oppression, they used all their power to prevent them from doing so. While the Anarchists and Syndicalists appealed to the Italian people to support the Turin workers by striking and by all other means at their disposal, the Socialists refused to support them by calling a general strike. The Socialist organ *L'Avanti*, in its Milan edition, even expressed regret that the strike should have taken place.

Workers' strikes and expropriation of the land by the workers, particularly in the South of the Peninsula, continued. Unable to maintain order the Nitti government fell and was replaced by a new liberal government with Giolitti, an old sly politician at its head, and with the socialist Labriola as minister of Labour. The people showed their opposition to the government by increased demonstrations. The most important took place at Ancona, a port on the Adriatic coast, where popular riots took place and a regiment destined to Albania refused to embark. In solidarity with the mutiny a general strike took place in the surrounding provinces and ended only when the government promised to abandon the protectorate of Albania.

On the 28th of August the occupation of the factories by the metal workers all over Italy began. The direct cause was the refusal of the industrialists to put into practice a collective contract of work which had been forced on them by the strikes of August-September 1919, and to raise wages in proportion to the cost of living. Afraid that the police would come to the help of the bourgeoisie and occupy the factories, the workers took possession of them themselves. In vain did the government, through its Labour minister Labriola, attempt a reconciliation. The workers refused all compromise.

The workers showed that the aim of the strikes was not merely to obtain an increase in wages. In many parts they armed themselves to defend the factories they had seized, they formed workers' councils to assure the proper running of industry, and the Federation of Co-operatives paid the wages. The moment seemed ripe to deal a final blow to the capitalist class and establish workers' control all over Italy. The enthusiasm and militancy of the masses was at its height. After a year of local strikes and conflicts the people had, in an united effort, manifested their resolution to get rid of the old regime. But both the socialists and communist leadership were afraid of revolution. The most extraordinary pretexts were put forward. Italy had no coal, no iron, not enough wheat to suffice to itself, a revolution would be bound to fail. Even Lenin thought that the revolution would be premature and told Angelica Balabanoff, the old socialist militant, that Italy could not make a revolution because she lacked coal and raw materials!

The Socialist Party and the reformist trade unions instead of following the masses and helping them to strike down the capitalist system lost themselves in futile controversies and only offered the workers empty resolutions. On the 4th and 5th of September the General Confederation of Labour and the Socialist Party (who were affiliated in the same way as they are in this country) met and decided to intensify the struggle, but then did nothing. A week later they met again and adopted the

solution advocated by the trade union secretary: *to get out of the factories and attack the bourgeoisie in its central organ: the State.*

This fine piece of socialist sophistry had the most terrible consequences for the Italian working class. It marked the beginning of a reign of reaction which led straight to fascism.

On the 15th September 1920, delegates from the workers and industrialists met, under the presidency of the Prime Minister, Giolitti, at Turin. He proposed the formation of a commission of six members representing the Confederation of Industry and six members representing the General Confederation of Labour, which would establish a sort of control on the industry. No compromise was reached at first because of the intransigent attitude of the capitalists. But when the negotiations were resumed in Rome a compromise was arrived at. This scheme was a clever move on the part of the astute Premier. The factories were evacuated, the workers lost all their power and the projected law was forgotten in some pigeon hole. But while the Italian workers felt betrayed, weakened and hopeless the bourgeoisie prepared itself to prevent a similar experience from occurring again. The occupation of the factories which could have marked the downfall of the ruling class was on the contrary the signal for the capitalists to rally their forces. They began to look for a man who would give them a strong government capable to crush any attempt of revolt on the part of the workers.

The fascists understood that the moment to act had come. On the 21st of November, 1920, they launched their first attack against working class organisations. From Bologna the fascist offensive spread to the Po valley. In the meantime the government reorganised the police, and the royal guard was recruited amongst the youth and well trained. The forces of reaction came closer together; capitalists, royalists, clericals, army men joined hands.

The Socialist Party did not or would not see the fascist danger. It merely concerned itself with internal discussions, being attacked and split by the activities of the Communists who were still in the Party at the time. It was then the most important and strongly organized party in Italy. It counted almost a quarter of a million members and the General Confederation of Labour counted 2 millions. It had 156 members in Parliament and 2,162 communes were administered by socialists.

The Communist Party was formed after the Congress of Leghorn on the 15-20th January, 1921 when the Socialist Party refused to accept the 21 conditions imposed by Moscow. Its main aim was not to fight reaction but to attack the socialists who, like Serrati, had refused to become the servile tools of the Kremlin. The C.P. was formed of many dishonest elements who had accepted the disreputable role of breaking up long established parties and slandering old working class leaders in order to obtain the favours and money which Moscow bestowed upon its faithful servants. The Communists had plenty of reasons to criticise reformist socialist leaders like Serrati but they did not choose to carry on the controversy on theoretical or tactical grounds. With their now well known methods, they tried to discredit them, by attempting to blacken their private lives, they used slander and blackmail, provocateurs and spies. This only weakened and demoralised the working class so that the growth of Communism in Italy was an important factor in the rise of fascism. The Russian revolution had inspired the Italian workers. At the example of their Russian comrades they had formed workers' councils, they had declared a general strike to protest against intervention in Russia. But Lenin and the Communist International destroyed the inspiration the Russian revolution had given the Italian workers. Seeing that they could not control the Italian working class movements the Communist International set about disorganizing and smashing them. When Lenin died Errico Mala-

testa wrote in the anarchist daily *Umanita Nova*: "Lenin is dead, long live Liberty!" He was expressing the judgement of History.

The Anarchist movement had always had a strong influence on the Italian masses. Its federalist character appealed to a country which had been only recently united and where the central government was weak and unpopular. Its recognition of the important role which the peasants should play in a revolution won it the support of the countryside. The influence which Bakunin exerted was felt long after his death. The Italian section of the International always refused to accept Marx's dictatorship. The Socialist movement which was formed by the former anarchist Andrea Costa was for a long time influenced by the anti-parliamentarianism of the anarchists and was, under their influence, much more ready to take part in direct action than its German or British counterparts.

The anarchists had also a strong influence amongst the *Bourses du Travail* which grouped all the trades locally and often remained independent of the T.U. In 1912 anarchist-syndicalists formed their own Union. It was very active in 1914 during the June revolt which was called the *Red Week*. At Ancona on the 7th of June, in a conflict with the police 3 workers had been killed. Ancona, a republican and anarchist town where Malatesta, then in Italy, exerted a strong influence, immediately declared a General Strike. From there it spread all over Italy, revolts took place at Ancona, in Romagna, Florence and Naples, the army fraternised with the people, town halls were occupied by revolutionaries. The syndicalists led the revolt but the General Confederation of Labour gave the order to its members to resume work.

Of the activity of the Syndicalist Union, Armando Borghi who was its secretary from 1919 writes (in a letter):

"During 4 years from 1919-22 our action was one of a vanguard not only of theory but of action. We often tried and we sometimes succeeded in putting the leaders of the Confederation of Labour in front of accomplished facts, of serious revolutionary movements. But we did not succeed in breaking the tutelage in which the reformist leaders held the masses."

And he adds:

"I still think that a revolution in Italy at that time was necessary like a natural birth and that the abortion which resulted was a catastrophe. France, Spain, etc. would have altered their course and the whole of Europe would have seen things very different from Mussolini."

The Syndicalist Union was at the head of all the strikes and movements of revolt, as also was the Anarchist Union. They did not carry on in a sectarian way. When the working class was struggling for the defence of its own interests it joined socialists and trade-unionists in the fight, trying to carry it as far as it was possible. While the members of the Socialist Party left it, discouraged by its reformist attitude, the membership of the Syndicalist Union grew rapidly and reached more than half a million.

At the beginning of 1921 the cleavage between the working class and the bourgeoisie had reached its climax. On one side stood the working class organizations counting millions of members bound to reformist leaders and a revolutionary syndicalist-anarchist minority unable to draw behind itself the masses. On the other side the liberal and catholic paries resolved to defend by all means at their disposal the interests of the capitalist class. Mussolini became their tool; with a handful of fascists, the protection of the police and the complicity of the Government he was able in a few years to disband the working class organisations and conquer power.

M. L. B.

(In the next issue: *THE RISE OF FASCISM 1921-26*).

A red and black notebook

THE TRADES DISPUTES ACT

A COUPLE OF months ago we were promised a display of direct action by Sir Walter Citrine, the leaders of the Civil Service trade unions and other labour leaders. They were to smash the anti-trade union act of 1927 which forbids the affiliation to trade union bodies of unions of government employees. So far, so good, the way to break the Trades Disputes Act is by such definite direct action.

However, we are sceptical of the threat being carried out. We know the labour leaders. After much pressure from the Labour Party leadership the Union of Post Office Workers has withdrawn its application for affiliation to the T.U.C.

The truth is the labour leaders want and don't want the Trades Disputes Act. They seek, not its abolition, but its amendment. They want the members and fees which the affiliation of the Civil Service unions would bring, but there their eagerness ends.

In as much as the Act prohibits a general strike, the labour leaders must sympathise with the Act, for they are opposed to the general strike. Evidence of this from their own mouths is contained in the Freedom Press pamphlet *The British General Strike*.

Further the anti-trade union act is the chief stock-in-trade of any trade union official addressing a meeting of strikers to order them back to work. Invariably such a person declares the strike to be unconstitutional and illegal and wails, "the Government will confiscate the funds of the union if you don't go back." It's a lot of boloney, but it often works.

Finally, what are we to think of a labour movement which pretends to oppose the Act and yet maintains in cabinet office its own representatives who enforce that Act. Bevin, Morrison and Attlee sit in the War Cabinet as representatives of the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress. As Cabinet Ministers they are responsible for enforcing the Act on their own fellow members. What a sham!

Now, the T.U.C. having advanced towards the enemy, retreats without firing a shot, like the once popular English barn dance:

"The grand old Duke of York he had ten thousand men,
He marched them up to the top of the hill and he
marched them down again,

When they were up, they were up, when they were
down, they were down.

But when they were only half way up, they were
neither up nor down."

CANTEENS

The workers of the De Havilland "Mosquito" aircraft factory became so incensed at the bad food served in the canteen by one of the most notorious of factory catering firms that they organised a boycott and threatened a strike. So determined were they the caterers were forced to leave and the management of the canteen was taken over by a committee of workers elected by ballot.

The new arrangement is working well and one of the first acts of the committee was to increase the wages of the staff by 20 per cent.

Pessimists have tried to obstruct the taking over of factory canteens by the workers by pointing out that the dismissed caterers will, of course, remove their equipment and prophecy that the manufacturers will refuse to supply

new equipment to the workers' committees. The Co-operative Wholesale Society replies to this obstruction by offering to supply all equipment for the running of canteens. The C.W.S. also offers to undertake the whole meals service.

FORCED TRANSFER OF LABOUR

We draw attention to the following two cases of the operation of the Essential Works Order, not because they are outstanding, but because they are typical of hundreds of cases caused by this anti-working class Act of the trade union minister, Bevin.

The first is that of Messrs. C.V.A. Jigs and Tools Ltd. of Portland Road, Hove who were fined £25 and five guineas costs for refusing to reinstate a wrongfully dismissed worker after the National Service Officer had ordered his reinstatement. £25 is a trivial sum to fine a firm. A worker showing such defiance is usually sent to prison. Although hundreds of workers have been so imprisoned, no employer has been sent to gaol when the law is broken by the other side.

The second case is that of Harold Myhill, a Coventry aircraft fitter who was prosecuted under the E.W.O. for refusing to leave Coventry to take employment at Lincoln for half of his normal weekly wage. The Lincoln job was to be at trade union rates, but Myhill, like many others, was receiving much more than the low trade union scale. If he paid income tax on his old wage while receiving the new low rate he would receive about £2 per week.

The Communist Party declares "The large scale industrial transference which is now in process is an unquestionable necessity." (*Daily Worker* 20/8/1943). Free labour transfers itself without any Essential Works Order. The years 1935 to 1939 saw the greatest transfer of labour, from North and West to South, of many generations. The purpose of Mr. Bevin's Order is to forcibly transfer labour to lower paid jobs that free labour would refuse. The E.W.O. is a wage cutting measure. In court Myhill said: "I would not mind going to China if they paid me the same wages as I am getting now."

There are some who believe that forcible transference is alright if carried out by shop stewards instead of the boss. We doubt if Harold Myhill would notice any difference. Myhill was sentenced to two months hard labour. This under the Order of a trade union minister backed by a trade union movement which supports the E.W.O.

DILUTION STRIKE

The strike of Manchester engineering workers against the operation of labour dilution airs a rapidly growing grievance. 1,200 struck work on August 20th against the employment of two dilutees. The only men left in the factory were the two dilutees who were waiting to be trained. Dilution was agreed to on condition of it not throwing out of work skilled men. In this case skilled men were being dismissed while dilutees were being trained to do their jobs.

Reports of skilled men signing at Labour Exchanges while their jobs have been taken by dilutees come from all parts of the country. So much for the bosses' agreement which vaguely promises the return of the skilled mens' jobs after the war.

SYNDICALIST.

How to secure

JUSTICE for BUSWORKERS!!

Amazing Bargain from the Communist Basement!

Road Passenger Transport. Published by CPGB, 2d.

THE ABOVE PUBLICATION implores the tribute of a sigh. It *might* have been an excellent piece of work. It contains 15 printed pages of facts, figures and suggestions, and on an imposing cover are the inspiring words: "How to Secure Justice for Transport Workers" . . . It might have been an excellent piece of work—but for the fifteen printed pages. But credit where credit is due. It has an imposing cover.

Had the publishers been content with that, or had they used their fertile imagination and left those fifteen pages blank, "Justice" for the Transport Workers would have been equally well served. After wading through these fifteen printed pages, let us return to the title page; "How to Secure Justice . . . etc." Misquoting old Omar, I would say:

*Myself when young have eagerly misspent
Many an hour on Communist argument.
But evermore came out by that same door
As in I went.*

Here, as the B.B.C. announcer would say are a few of the headlines.

HOW IS THE INDUSTRY ORGANIZED? There follows a formidable array of facts and figures. Now facts and figures are useful, especially to those who attend Arbitration Tribunals, Conferences with the Employers, and such like picnics—where they can be pulled to pieces and set against other facts and figures. Figures can never lie—but liars can figure! as a friend of mine, a former bus-conductor and member of the C.B.C. used to say.

But to continue (I quote from the pamphlet), "An industry of such far reaching importance *should surely be effectively controlled by the State*, above all in time of war . . ." (My italics). But controlled for what? And who are the State? We have a useful definition of the State already supplied by Lenin and unanimously approved by the Communist Party—let us jog their memories: "*the State is the executive committee of the ruling class*". To obtain "justice" for the workers in an industry "effectively controlled" by the above committee is a classic sample of Communist logic, but its absurdity doubtless escapes the attention of the C.P. in their present occupation of obtaining capitalist contacts!

THE L.P.T.B. Here follows a description of that "Vast capitalist concern with a complete monopoly of public transport . . ." Don't we all know it!

We are told how, with the active assistance of the executive committee of the ruling class, the L.P.T.B. and the Government between them fiddle their bit of the £43½ millions guaranteed annual profits. This truly stupendous example of legalized "fiddling" should be well noted by any conductor who for a few ha'pence and the risk of the sack gets hauled before the Board's Tribunal of Justice on a charge of "caught at the fiddle". Incidentally this sheds a spot more light on wartime "austerity", "equality of sacrifice" and all that.

THE BUS COMPANIES. This deals with the undertakings controlled chiefly by Tillings and the B.A.T., a vast network throughout the country "whose chief function is to earn dividends for the shareholders and who draw increasing profits from the industry". Agreed.

TRANSPORT WORKERS' CONDITIONS. Under the above are given some examples of the basic wage rates at the outbreak of the present war, and certain facts about working conditions. Here one might compare the conditions during the last war with those of to-day. How, before the T. & G.W.U. came into existence and grew into the cumbersome monster that it is to-day, the busworkers in 1914-18 improved wages and conditions by *direct action*. But such methods are of course unpopular with the growing army of self-seeking party officials and leaders because they offer no scope for such adepts to practise their jiggery-pokery.

WARTIME WORKING. Here a tribute is paid to the conductors—especially the women—for the way they are shouldering the heavy burden of extra work in wartime. Busworkers are familiar with this sort of stuff. We get similar tributes wrapped up in nice flowery phrases from the management. They appear in our Traffic Circular and the Staff Magazine from time to time, accompanied by appropriate photographs of the Transport Bosses contacting the workers in festive mood—or at our funerals! Its all very touching.

HEALTH. The authors of the pamphlet express their concern at the rate of sickness *which is likely to cause absenteeism to reach serious proportions*. Evidently the C.P. would prefer us to "die with our boots on"!

Sections 7 & 8 deal with the various committees which the industry is cluttered up with. Joint Consultative Committees, Local Transport ditto. "The

(continued on p. 15)

THE GALLANT SOUTH

by Albert McCarthy

"Past the rude scene of the gallant South.

The bulging eyes and the twisted mouth.

Scent of magnolias sweet and fresh,

Then the sudden smell of burning flesh."

(Extract from a ballad by Lewis Allen).

ONE HEARS MUCH these days of the oppression suffered by various European peoples, and indeed, the plight of the Poles, Czechs, and other races, at the hands of their Nazi overlords is very terrible indeed. However, whatever may be the brutalities suffered by these unfortunate pawns in the present imperialist struggle, they certainly cannot exceed those which the Negroes of the Southern States of the U.S.A. have endured for many years.

There are thirteen Southern States, as follows: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. The Senators from these states are the most reactionary in the Senate, and are all enthusiastic supporters for Roosevelt's "War for Democracy." In fact, the Southern Senators hold very important positions in the administration, and Roosevelt would almost certainly be swept out of office if he displeased these worthies. In 1941 . . . 17 out of 33 chairmanships in the Senate and 18 out of 48 chairmanships in the House were held by representatives of these 13 States.

The Negro population of the United States is now around 13,000,000 and of these, 9,000,000 live in the South, which is the poorest section of the country—both financially and culturally. On the subject of education, Charles H. Tompson in an address delivered to the World Federation of Education Associations, meeting at Oxford during the summer of 1935, said that the South was educationally where the rest of the country was 15 or 20 years before. In the States where separate schools are mandatory, the expenditure for the average white child enrolled, per year, was \$44.31, while for the negro child it was only \$12.57. The Negro schools are usually ramshackle, dilapidated buildings, sadly in need of repair. The average Negro teacher receives 41% as much salary as his or her white colleague, and 70% as much training. On the other hand they have to deal with 40% more children.

Those not conversant with the methods of the gallant Southern gentlemen, often wonder how they manage to retain their seats. This is done by restricting the voting to the middle and upper classes. Around 90% of the Negroes are disenfranchised by the infamous poll tax. A sum of \$1.00 to \$3.00 has to be paid for the Negro and the white share-croppers to have the right to register a vote. This is no small sum for people close to starvation level, and it is usually enough to prevent their voting. However, should this fail, more direct methods of terror are resorted to, such as in Miami in May, 1939, when on the night before the election, hooded riders in automobiles with hidden license plates patrolled the principal Negro residential sections. These men were identified as members of the Ku Klux Klan, and they put the torch to oil-drenched crosses on street windows. Nooses hung from car windows, and one dummy bore the sign "This nigger voted"—this was strung up as a warning.

One must never forget the role that such American Fascist organisations as the Ku Klux Klan play in Southern politics. This group of cowards, half-wits and conniving reactionaries is very powerful; often one finds that the Sheriff, Judge and all local authorities are members. Its main function is to terrorise the Negro into complete

submission, and it is responsible for the murders, lynchings and rioting which so appal the outsider. Since the war, it carries on its poisonous propaganda in areas previously free from race prejudice, and is a menace which the American workers would do well to meet without delay. Although it is best known for its anti-Negro campaign, one must not forget that it deals just as violently with "agitators" and "reds"—this term meaning anyone from the parson who preaches that race hatred is not compatible with biblical teachings, to the union organiser.

The South is largely agricultural, and Negro and poor white labourers work long hours in a desperate fight for existence. To take Alabama and Georgia as an example, we find that 56,500 farmer families are fighting to produce enough to live on land too poor to do so. Of these, 47,500 families are working on farms too small to produce a living. There are potential land resources for only 25,000 family-size farms, and in actual fact, little of this land is actually available. The Negro agricultural workers can be divided into three sections, beginning with the tenants. This section rent a small farm from a landowner, paying either cash or more usually, a share of the goods produced. They live in continuous poverty, as the devices adopted by rapacious landowners (low prices for goods produced, high rent, etc.) ensure that they are in almost continuous debt. The next group is the farm labourers who work for a stipulated wage on other people's farms—usually 50-65 cents a day for men and 40 cents for women. The following statement given to Mr. Charles S. Johnson, and quoted in his "The Shadow of the Plantation", gives a good idea of the conditions of the farm labourer:

"We jest work by the day and pay \$1.50 a month for this house. It's jest a piece of house. I gits 50 cents a day and my husband and the boy gits 65 cents each. We have to feed ourselves and pay rent out of that. My husband is pretty scheming, but sometimes he can't git nothing to do. I don't know how much time we lose, but he works most of the time. Course the boy stops and goes to school in the winter sometimes, but if he can git work to do, he works too."

The last, and most wretched class of farm workers are the "casuals", who work for what is known as a "hand's share", usually just enough to keep them living. A song that used to be hummed by the old women as they worked, about sums up the lives of these wretched labourers:

"Trouble comes, trouble goes.

I done had my share of woes.

Times get better by'n by,

But then my time will come to die."

The methods employed by the plantation owners of the South are sometimes so bestial as to defy description. On May 30th, 1941, a federal Grand Jury returned an indictment against William T. Cunningham and Hamilton McWhorter, for "conspiracy to retain and hold Negroes in a condition of peonage and slavery". Cunningham owns Sandy Cross Plantation in Oglethorpe County near Lexington, Georgia. With the help of McWhorter, attorney, ex-president of the Georgia State Senate and Sheriff Ed. Watkins he sought to carry out a dictatorship of terror on his plantation. He frequently said to his slaves, "I am the government". The following two statements by workers on his plantation give an indication of the "government" he set up:

"We had some fatback and corn bread and dried peas—never had enough to eat. We weren't allowed

to have any milk. He would feed his dogs (he had about 15 of them) the milk and never give my children any. The children would stand around and cry when they saw the milk being poured out to the dogs. He had a special cook for the dogs and bought fresh meat and bones for them. They had barbecued lamb and he gave them corn bread and biscuits. When I asked him for shoes for my children, he told me to tear the pockets out of my husband's overalls and use them for shoes . . . I didn't have any shoes."

(Affidavit of Lucille McCannon).

"I was born on Cunningham's Sandy Cross Plantation in Oglethorpe county, Georgia. At 2 years of age I went to live with my aunt away from the plantation. When I was 13 years old my aunt died. My mother came to me at that time and told me that Cunningham had told her that he would bury my aunt and pay the expenses if I came to work on his plantation to pay off the debt. In 1938, about Christmas time, I told Cunningham I wanted to leave. He said to me: 'If you leave you'll owe me money. I'll get you and put you on the chain-gang.' I knew he meant it because I've seen him send other people to the chain-gang when they tried to leave; others he didn't put on the chain-gang, I've seen him almost beat them to death. The most I ever got for a year's work was \$6.00."

(Affidavit of Hubert Smith).

One must add that it was only with considerable reluctance that the authorities finally took action against this local "fuehrer".

Apologists for the South are for ever claiming that lynching is on the decrease; it is not. In 1942 there were six lynchings, four of these in three days. Apart from these, there were many cases of the shooting-of negro soldiers by white M.P.'s. Most people are aware of the value of the "confessions" extracted by the American police. On February 12th, 1940, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed the death sentences on four coloured men from Florida, because torture was used to get them to confess. A month later they reversed the conviction of a coloured man, Dave Canty, sentenced to death in Alabama for the murder of a nurse. He had been brutally tortured to make him admit his guilt. The case was so flagrant that the reversal took place without argument.

Recent cases of lynching, such as those of Cleo Wright and Willie Vinson, have received some publicity. The details of some of these cases are so revolting that the most hardened reader would flinch. For example:

"A mob of over 300 to-day seized and critically injured a 30-year-old negro held in the city goal at Sikeston, Missouri, on a charge of having criminally attacked a white woman. The crowd then dragged the victim, Cleo Wright, through the negro quarter of the town, soaked his body in petrol and burned it."

Evening Standard, 26/1/42.

Nothing that the Nazi imperialists have done to their enslaved peoples could outdo this for sheer bestiality. The action of mobs in such instances can only make one assume that they were seized by collective insanity.

In January of this year, a particularly brutal case occurred. In Macon, Georgia, a young negro Robert Hall was arrested by the Sheriff and two deputies. While standing handcuffed, he was attacked and beaten by the three men with fists and blackjacks. He died in hospital soon after, and the three men were later indicted. It is reasonable to assume, that as in similar cases, the culprits will get off scot-free, or receive a very light sentence.

"The Gallant South" so beloved of sentimental novelists is a sham. In no other area in the world has every civilised right been so flagrantly violated. The South is the homeland of American Fascism, it represents all that is decadent in ideals and culture. The Negroes

should find their allies amongst the white workers who are similarly exploited, and with them, sweep away the government responsible for their oppression. They have nothing to gain from supporting the present imperialist war, and those Negro leaders who would have them do so are deceiving the masses. Only in a free anarchist society will the oppressed masses find the solution of their problems.

(continued from page 13)

men and women on the job have thus the same possibility as is enjoyed (Oh Joy!) through Joint Production Committees in the factories, of remedying managerial inefficiency and of supplementing managerial brains". What a chance! Please Mr. Pollitt (or should the request be made to the Rt. Hon. Brother Bevin?) Please Brother Bevin, might we have Workers' Playtime instead?

WHAT COMPENSATION HAVE THE WORKERS RECEIVED? Here we get another array of figures—and a large footnote in smaller type with yet more figures. Mention is made of the Arbitration Tribunal's refusal to grant the transport workers' demand a single extra penny. No doubt Brother (I beg his pardon) Professor Harold Laski, the famous Left Wing "Socialist", has explained away his part in the "award"—only a left wing professor could get away with it. On the last page of the pamphlet, transport workers are reminded of the "need for making sacrifices". Lest we forget! "The Ministry of War Transport", we are told, "must also take a hand and in consultation with Ministry of Production, make sure that the industry is so controlled as to provide the maximum efficiency of service compatible with present conditions. Transport workers themselves can play a big part in ensuring that this is done, and their exertions and sacrifices are directed first and foremost towards securing victory over fascism as the first indispensable step towards nationalization of the industry and of Socialism".

The best condemnation of this pamphlet is to be found in previous Communist pamphlets. We can leave Lenin to reply to the paragraph quoted above: "An imperialist war does not cease to be imperialist through the mere fact that charlatans or phrasemongers or philistines put forward and proclaim attractive watchwords. It ceases to be such only when the class which carries on with the imperialist war, and which is connected with it by millions of economic threads (in some cases ropes) is overthrown and is replaced at the helm by the really revolutionary class—the proletariat. There is no other way of getting out of an imperialist war, or of the necessarily following imperialist predatory peace." (Lenin: *The Proletarian Revolution*, p. 90).

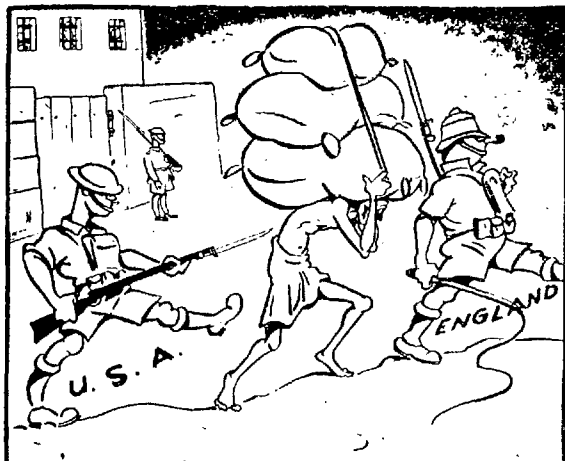
Postscript.—To all those anxious to help to defeat Hitler and all that he stands for, this is a useful pamphlet—for salvage!

BILL THE BUSMAN.

INDIA STARVES

DR. GRANT, Director of the All-India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health in Calcutta declares that tuberculosis in India is spreading because of the poor resistance of the population. Malnutrition and deficiency diseases are found all over the country. He gives statistics to show that India holds first place among Asiatic countries in the incidence of cholera and smallpox. The infant mortality figures exceed 200 per 1000 live births even in cities like Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. (In England, in 1938, the infant mortality was 52.68 per 1000). To cope with this formidable condition of disease and ill-health, there are in India only 4,500 nurses and 42,000 doctors.

It goes without saying that the above conditions are the direct result of the desperate poverty of the Indian people, with their average wage of 2½d. per day. Those who have read Professor Gangulee's book on "Health and Nutrition in India", or looked at the illustrations in Professor Mellanby's "Nutrition and Disease" which are almost exclusively drawn from Indian sources, will have gained some idea of the gruesome realities behind these figures. Malnutrition due to poverty is the main cause of ill-health in this country, though the relation between poverty and ill-health has required the determined efforts of men like the late Dr. G. C. M. McGonigle and Sir John Boyd Orr, before this grim fact has received a grudging acceptance. But in India the facts stand out a mile, and cannot be buried. That has not prevented the British Imperialist Government from ignoring the question in the past. But it has now become so serious that even Europeans in India are shocked. The *Manchester Guardian Weekly* stated recently that "To-day the food crisis dominates everything else . . . the outbreak of cholera in epidemic form in some parts of the country suggests that health conditions have deteriorated." The same paper adds that "the Government of India's Food Member did not deny last week the allegation by a European member of the Assembly that men in authority have obstructed the Government's measures to bring relief



to the masses. The Food Secretary on Sunday admitted that Sind had made enormous profits through the sale of surplus wheat and rice. Lack of foresight, the toleration of profiteering and the fear of alienating certain favoured sections like the landlords have created the food crisis". In short the Government tolerates the deliberate withholding of food by certain provinces in order to secure the highest possible prices, and the maximum profits, regardless of the obvious fact that such actions are paid for which the deaths of God knows how many thousand starving workers and peasants. The semi-governmental *Times* (in its weekly edition 18/8/43) blandly declares: "No doubt there has been local obstruction and bad management. In general, however, it may be suspected that provincial legislatures, local governing bodies and district officers have succumbed perhaps unconsciously, to the natural, humane and—in this case—reprehensible desire to further the prosperity of their own food producers." It is impossible to find words to comment on such depths of governmental cant.

The practical reaction to the health crisis in India is typical of Governmental procedure. The *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (13/8/43) reports that "The Government of India has announced its decision to appoint a Health Commission . . . (which) . . . will be entrusted with the task of making a comprehensive review, including medical relief, drug manufacture, medical research, maternity and child mortality, training facilities for nurses and midwives, nutrition research, industrial health and housing conditions in urban areas, and particular reference to the spread of tuberculosis and venereal disease and sanitary engineering."

By declaring that they are going to embark on a grandiose scheme of investigation, the Government hopes to make people believe that they are intending to "do something" about health conditions in India. The *Manchester Guardian Weekly* says that the appointment of the Health Commission will go "some way to meeting public criticism that the Government of India's post-war reconstruction programme published in April ignored problems of social security". As far as the Government is concerned it will have served its purpose if it allays criticism. And that is all it cares about. It is quite obvious to the Government that the problem of ill-health in India is the problem of poverty; and the Government's attitude towards that is summed up in the mild phrase of the *Manchester Guardian* already quoted: ". . . the fear of alienating certain favoured sections like the landlords have created the food crisis". So long as they are satisfied, and the liberals are staved off with a Health Commission, what does it matter if the workers and peasants starve?

War Commentary

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