

WAR *For Anarchism* COMMENTARY

Vol. 4 No. 16.

MID-JUNE 1943.

TWOPENCE

The 'Liberation' of Italy

Bombs will do the Job

THE CONQUEST OF Italy has started. By adopting methods of blitzkrieg even superior to those of Germany the Allies have forced Pantelleria to surrender. Though we have been told for months that Italy was the unwilling partner of the Axis, that the morale of the Italian people was very low and that at the sight of a British soldier whole Italian divisions surrender themselves, thus giving us the impression that Italy would fall like a pack of cards, we see that the Allies took no risks in their first attempt to land on Italian soil. They have shown that they were going to use brute force on as large a scale as possible.

The *Daily Worker* tried to attribute the defeat to the morale of the population. In its editorial of the 12/6/43 it says: "But the sudden collapse is not only a tribute to the destructive power of the aerial attack, it also reveals a breakdown in morale". From the newspaper reports one can see however that the Allies did not reckon on the morale of the adversary breaking down. The work was more that of butchers than of psychologists. Alex Clifford in the *Sunday Dispatch* describes the island after the surrender: "Landing parties stepped ashore on heaps of rubble which used to be jetties . . . 6,000 civilians were on the island. They had been without water for three days . . . The island, as we landed, was still filled with smoke and fumes from that terrible raid when the entire place disappeared under a boiling pall of smoke. A huge oil dump was burning fiercely near the town. *There are so many bomb holes that sometimes three or four are on top of one another.* The island was beaten into insensibility by its bombing ordeal".

This is how the liberation of Italy has started and there is no reason to think that other methods will be used till the whole country is reduced to

submission. There is, it is true, President's Roosevelt's appeal and we are assured by the *Sunday Dispatch* New York reporter that "similar calls in between the mass bombings will be made". Those appeals asking the Italian people to revolt against their government and dropped with the sound of bombs are an insult to all intelligent Italians. Government propaganda has, since Italy came into the war, ridiculed the Italian people, treating them as cowards, as a sub-human race good enough for the circus. Now those cowardly buffoons are expected to make a revolution under the rain of Allied bombs!

Italian soldiers had to be sneered and laughed at; if the Government did not teach the British people to despise them, who knows? The British tommy might have begun to think that there must be a reason why the Italian did not fight, that he had nothing to fight for, and he might have begun to wonder if he had anything to fight for himself. It would not have taken him long to realise that the cowardice of the Italian people is simply their unwillingness to fight in a cause which is not theirs. Italy, like Spain, is one of the few European countries which had not, till recently, been militarized by an efficient and modern state. She was dragged against her will into the last war. The anarchist movement and most of the socialist party remained faithful to their anti-militarist ideals; they had a strong influence on the masses who, not being able to prevent the war, did all they could in order to sabotage it.

Since Mussolini came to power the Italian people showed that they did not share the Duce's desire for an Italian Empire; they fought badly in Abyssinia. The Abyssinian war was unpopular in Italy and it was only after the democratic powers adopted their silly policy of sanctions that Mussolini

received some support. In Spain, again, the Italian soldiers did as little fighting as they could and the Press sneered at the cowards of Guadalajara. But that cowardice has nothing to do with race or nationality was actually proved on the Spanish front. On Franco's side were the troops of the Duce, well equipped, well protected by aviation and tanks; on the other side fought many Italian anti-fascists, coming from all parts of the world after exhausting years of exile, with few and out-moded arms. While the Fascist Italian Divisions gave up their rifles, the Italian anti-fascists fought waiting to pick up the rifle of the fallen comrade and hundreds of them died on the Aragonese front glad to give their lives for a cause to which they had already sacrificed so much.

One has not to go far to find the reason for the lack of enthusiasm of the Italian troops. After twenty or more years of a fascist regime which has only imposed more and more privations on the majority of the Italian people, Italians are called on to defend an Empire which has brought them only wars and sacrifices. Who is called up? Not the factory worker whose position has been somewhat bettered under fascism; the industrial worker must remain in the factories to maintain the supply of war materials. As in all agricultural countries, it is from the peasant population that the majority of the Army is drawn. From people who have been more and more taxed since fascism has come to power, who have had to endure the hated interference of the State at every minute of their daily lives. The fairly comfortable farmer of Northern Italy and the poor *cafone* of the South don't care about Mussolini's Empire. They want to be able to sell their milk, their wheat and wine without being ridiculously taxed and tied up in red tape; they want to be left in peace. They have put up with harder work under fascism, they have put up with privations and vexations, but they do not want to put on a uniform and abandon their beloved fields to die with glory on foreign battlefields and they have resisted in their way by refusing to fight.

That is what the super-sophisticated minds of our Fleet Street journalists or Ministry of Information officials are, of course, unable to understand. They, who only know how to sell their pen to the highest bidder, who have never defended anything but their cushy jobs, sneer and abuse the Italian people who are not prepared to die for the benefit of the Axis' glory or for the defence of desert land decorated with a few victory arches.

The French, who have not the Italian's reputation for cowardice retreated in front of the Germans at a speed which makes Caporetto and Guadalajara look like a walk home. Like the Italians the French had been demoralized by years of political corruption and dictatorship, and had not been given, like

the Germans and the Russians, a militarist and nationalist training to make them willing tools in the hands of the government.

The correspondent of Reuter in an interview to the *Manchester Guardian* said that the Italians wanted peace: "unless the peace looks uglier than the war, and Mussolini, of course, is doing his best (not without success) to make it look fiendishly ugly . . ." Mussolini is well assisted by British and American propaganda which has been pouring insults on the Italian people, which has been condemning Mussolini while flattering Badoglio and the King, which has spread rumours about Mayor La Guardia coming to Europe to be made military dictator of Italy. The methods of intensive bombing used at Pantelleria and in many important cities do not offer prospects of a very bright future for the Italian people.

What is the antidote to Mussolini's propaganda? Some Italian anti-fascists are trying to form a Free Italy Legion, under the Garibaldi flag, which proposes to march into Italy with Allied troops. Bringing "liberty" at the point of bayonets, and having to defend themselves with British and American troops against the people they are going to unshackle!

The days are far when Britain isolated, and on the brink of defeat, talked of revolution on the Continent. Having no planes, no arms, our democratic leaders were prepared to use socialist and revolutionary methods and slogans. Now that they are well provided with tanks, guns, fighters and American "fortresses" they forget about the armies of the French revolution and would more gladly model themselves on the hordes of Genghis-khan.

Their game appears plainly now, but let us not forget how our socialists were fooled. Let us not forget, because from this there are some lessons to draw. Just as our democrats were prepared to consider revolutionary means when preparing their suitcases for Canada, they are now talking of an idealistic post-war Europe. Now, because victory is not in their pocket yet. When and if it is, the "free determination of peoples" will spell armies of occupation in Italy, Germany, wherever it suits them; feeding the starving people of Europe, will spell taxation to pay for the costs of war; free trade-union movements will mean crushing of any independent workers' movements, pitiless extermination of any revolutionaries.

The Allied Governments have nothing to offer to the Italian people. It will be for the British people to help them by getting rid themselves of the future oppressors of Italy: the Churchills, Edens, Morrisons, and all the rotten clique which rules us now.

ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

LEWIS AVOIDS SHOWDOWN

UNDER the above headline *Reynolds News* of June 6th announced John L. Lewis's further retreat in the U.S. mine dispute. *Reynolds* goes on: "Lewis to-day ordered the miners to return till June 20th pending fresh negotiations. The effect of the June 20 limitation is equivalent to a truce and the men will all be where they were a month ago, except that these on and off strikes have provided just the right atmosphere for the House of Representatives to pass a drastic Anti-Strike Bill, despite energetic Government opposition."

We are not so sure about the "energetic Government opposition", but since then just such a Bill has been prepared, and is likely to be passed. The press have been publishing figures for the coal output lost to "the nation" through the stoppages, and thereby alienating sympathy from the miners, exactly as we said they would when the first "truce" was announced. Meanwhile these constant decisions taken solely by Lewis, ordering the men first to come out, then to go back, then to wait and see, have the inevitable effect of blunting their enthusiasm and initiative. Lewis's tactics, in fact, as we foresaw, are doing the bosses' job of demoralizing the men. Let us hope they recover their initiative, and recognize Lewis for what he is—an agent of the bosses.

★

THE AMERICAN GOERING

THE more a man figures in political life, whether in the ordinary politics of intrigue and government or in the activated politics of war, the more he becomes forced by his circumstances to lead a double life. For, unless he is a sadist of a peculiarly intense kind, he cannot live his ordinary human life on the political plane, and thus becomes the split man, the Doctor Jekyll with kind thoughts and cultural interests at home and among his friends, and in politics the Mr. Hyde to whom the realities of his inhuman role have become abstractions which do not impinge on his possibly gentle personal life. Thus, Hitler, Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill are all probably genial chaps among their friends, but beyond the circle of human contact they crush and destroy without compunction the men whose lives lie in their hands. At one time the favourite example of this Janus-headed public figure was Goering, whose pleasantness towards his friends and whose taste for the common pleasures of life was said to be as great as his ferocity towards the unfortunate people he chose to regard as his enemies. Now, however, we have, in Goering's opposite number in the American air force, General Spaatz, a man

who plays in an even more clearly divided manner the role of the pleasant and gallant Dr. Jekyll and the cold, abstract-minded destroyer Mr. Hyde. The following extract from *Life* (19/4/43) gives an interesting portrait of this debonair General, who reminds us of Frederick the Great flirting with Voltaire's ideas while he laid the foundations of German military tyranny:

"So far as this war is concerned, Spaatz is the complete professional soldier. Neither a scholar nor a geopolitician, he is prepared to furrow the German soil with high-explosive bombs, not out of any personal animosity towards the people below but because Germany is The Target. To blast the Luftwaffe from the air is for him a problem in aerial tactics. Unlike some of his colleagues who hate to hear pilots lightly speak of 'Jerry' and urge them instead to use the term 'Hun,' Spaatz is ready to admire—in an abstract way—the undeniable proficiency of German airmen. In the aerial warfare of 1943 he sees little place for the individualism and occasional flourishes of international gallantry that characterized the air battles of 1917. But he does not waste time deploring this 'dirty war'. To him war is mathematics.

That the Allied High Command has not given him a chance to win the war by air power alone fills Spaatz with regret. For, in his opinion, a fully-exploited air phase would render unnecessary the sacrifice of thousands of slogging infantrymen and other wretched groundlings. He would like to end the war quickly. But even more, he would like to prove his thesis, and see his faith in the supremacy of airpower corroborated once and for all. When that is done he will turn his back on the charred desolation of Europe and return to his home in Alexandria. He will pluck the strings of his guitar and listen to Beckie play Beethoven sonatas on the piano. He will put on his old clothes, row out into the middle of the slow Potomac and silently, contentedly fish."

This is an admirable illustration of the way in which people who take part in any way in the business of ruling are forced to deny not only the moral concepts on which a good society must be based, but also the very personal qualities which may make them pleasant and tolerable men away from their political lives.

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GOOD ENOUGH TO FIGHT

THE way in which Governments are willing to use for their own ends a man whom they have previously segregated from society as an enemy of their interests is shown by the following report which appeared in the *Evening Standard* of the 11th June last:—

"Richard Krebs, who writes under the name of Jan Valtin, author of *Out of the Night*, has been summoned for medical examination by his board at Bethel, Connecticut.

Krebs was arrested last November on warrants

ordering his deportation as 'an undesirable alien' or internment. Since there was nowhere to deport him to he was interned on Ellis Island, from which he was released a fortnight ago."

Valtin, apparently, was too bad to be left free to speak his views, but good enough to be set at liberty to die for the people who imprisoned him!

For months now the *Daily Worker* has been informing its readers that Jan Valtin was interned for being a Gestapo agent. This is quite untrue. On the other hand, it is true, as Valtin himself relates at length in his book, that he did at one time work in the Gestapo, *with the knowledge of and on behalf of the O.G.P.U.* If Valtin is to be blamed for working in the Gestapo, what is to be said of the Communists who used him in that capacity? This, however, is beside the present issue, as Valtin was not arrested, as the *Daily Worker* alleged, for being a Gestapo spy, but for being an unreliable subject. Now, however, he is presumably regarded as reliable and desirable, for he is called up to defend democracy. What has Mr. Holmes to say about this?

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ABSENTEE MINERS THE newspapers report that six hundred unemployed miners are registered at Blackwood au Risca (Mon.) unemployment exchange. Attempts are to be made to alleviate the position, though many are said to be unfit for work on the land.

This is the answer to "absenteeism" charges. Miners are unemployed while the Labour Exchanges, twentieth-century press-gangs, force ex-miners out of better jobs to which they gravitated in the depression, back to the foul pits. And while there is a proof that miners can be unfit for work on the land (which can be done by girls), owing to their work in the pits, who dares attack those who occasionally submit to a day off?

★

WHITE MAN'S PROGRESS

"The great Rio Grande, bordering New Mexico, is rising yearly and threatening to flood thousands of acres of valuable farm land.

So Washington experts agreed to dam it. But they ran across a stumbling block, a tribe of Pueblo Indians, once owners of all America, who still own the Rio Grande Valley.

Nothing would persuade them to give up their ceremonial Plaza where they hold their secret meetings.

To-day nine Indians, dressed in traditional robes, arrived in Washington to argue their case before a Senate committee.

Said the leader: 'We do not care for the White Man's progress. White Man builds big things, and then he goes to war and kills and destroys what he has built.'

The Senate Committee is finding it difficult to find an answer to that."

Daily Express.

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MOSCOW'S TROJAN HORSE

Communists and the Labour Movement

THE COMMUNIST PARTY of Great Britain was formed in August 1920 of Socialist organisations almost equally divided for and against the Labour Party. The largest party, the British Socialist Party, was affiliated to the Labour Party, but the Socialist Labour Party was bitterly opposed to it, though the S.L.P. engaged in parliamentary activity on its own account. The other bodies, the South Wales Socialist Society, the Workers' Socialist Federation and a number of Scots shop stewards were not only opposed to the Labour Party, but also opposed parliamentary activity. The most prominent spokesman of the latter groups was William Gallacher, now a respectable, Conservative-applauded Member of Parliament. On behalf of the Scottish Workers' Council, Gallacher wrote:

"The above 'Council' is definitely anti-parliamentarian and has behind it the Left wing of the various political bodies.

We represent the revolutionary movement in Scot-

land, striving to build up a revolutionary organisation, and a Communist Party, based on social committees, throughout the country. For a considerable time we have been sparring with the official parliamentarians. We have not considered it necessary to declare open war on them, and they are afraid to open attacks on us."

"Revolutionary comrades must not give their support to this gang. Our fight here is going to be a difficult one. One of the worst features of it will be the treachery of those whose personal ambition is a more impelling force than their regard for the revolution."

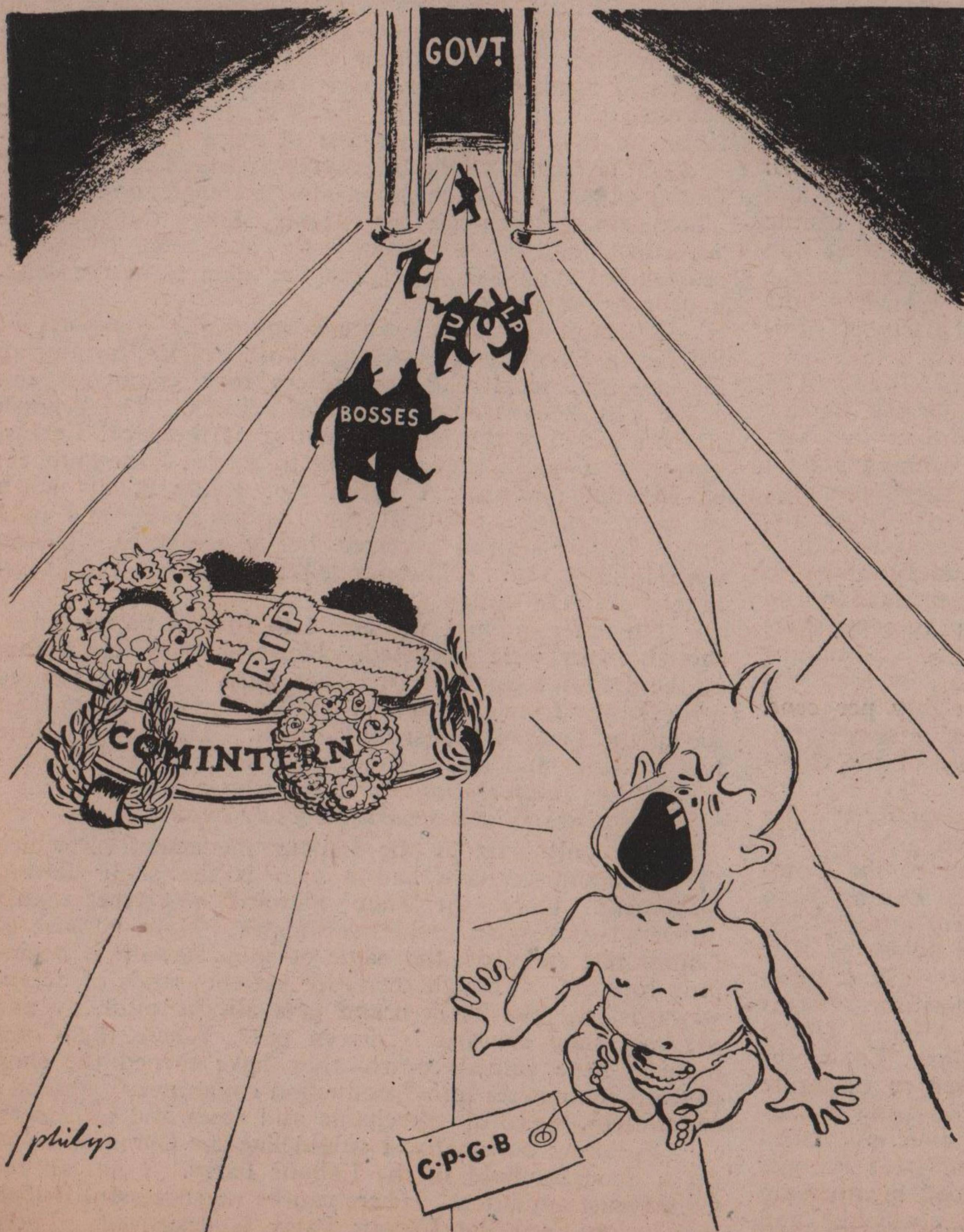
Lenin attacked the anti-parliamentarians and urged the coming Communist Party to run candidates for parliament and affiliate to the Labour Party. Lenin also proposed an electoral bloc between the Communist and Labour Parties to divide the seats in parliament,

"while the Communist Party retains complete liberty to carry on agitation, propaganda and political activity. Without the latter condition, of course, no such bloc could be concluded, for that would be an act of betrayal: the British Communists must insist on and secure complete liberty to expose the Hendersons and Snowdens." Lenin: *Left Wing Communism*, page 66.

The first conference of the C.P.G.B. defeated the anti-parliamentarians and applied for affiliation to the Labour Party but to their own followers and to meetings of workers the Communist leaders reconciled this application and their attacks on the Labour Party by saying it was easier to attack Labour from within and talked of "tactics" and "boring from within". One leading Communist was asked why he denounced Arthur Henderson and yet wanted "to take him by the hand". The Communist spokesman replied: "We intend to take Arthur Henderson by the hand as a preliminary to taking him by the throat." Naturally, Henderson objected to such comradely tactics and the Labour Party rejected the proposed affiliation of the C.P.G.B.

In spite of this, however, members of the Communist Party were allowed to become individual members of the Labour Party and attend Labour meetings and conferences as delegates of trade union bodies. Communists were also allowed to become Labour parliamentary candidates and two of them, Walton Newbold and Saklatvala, were returned as Labour M.P.s.

Communists soon flocked into the Labour Party and became very "active"; that is, they occupied most of the meetings in moving long-winded resolutions. It soon became clear that the C.P. was to become not the party



THE POOR LITTLE ORPHAN NOBODY WANTS

of revolutions, but the party of resolutions. But, it was not because of their politics that the Labour Party began its counter-attack against the Communists. Consciously or unconsciously, the Communists were breaking up all sections of the Labour Party in which they could make themselves felt. Some have tried to discuss these events as though one could be as objective towards them as one is in a study of astronomy, but it was the conduct of the Communists which brought about their expulsion from the ranks of Labour.

Not only did the British Bolsheviks seek to monopolise every Labour meeting and act most disorderly when unable to, but their personal conduct was much below that of the regular Labour Party members. The Labour Party had, in a few years, been built into a huge and stable organisation by the hard work, loyalty and honesty of hundreds of thousands of these members. The Communists now sneered at these working men and women for their "bourgeois" ways, "bourgeois" meaning anything from taking strict care of the Party funds to personal cleanliness. The chief policy of the C.P. at that time seemed to be "Here's a man with a clean collar, he must be a bourgeois, throw a brick at him!"

The Communists continued their campaign to get into the Labour Party, then described as "the main body of the working-class movement" (Inkpin, Secretary of the C.P.G.B.), until the 1928 World Congress of the Communist International at which Moscow ordered a change of face. At this Congress Bukharin, the spokesman of the Russian Bolsheviks, demanded a world wide attack on the Social Democratic and Labour Parties. Not Fascism but "Social Democracy is the chief enemy" became the slogan of the Comintern. The leaders of the C.P.G.B. made a show of adopting the Comintern instruction and quietly shelved it until the storm broke. Several of the leaders were called to Moscow to receive a caning and those who returned did so to denounce affiliation to the Labour Party. Who wanted to affiliate? Anyhow the grapes were sour. Labour was "the third party of capitalism" (Pollitt).

Then came the General Election of 1929. The Labour Party had a good chance of winning a narrow majority of seats. (In fact, the Conservatives lost 141 seats, and Labour gained 127 new seats, winning a total of 289 out of 615 seats.) At this election the Communist Party ran 25 candidates against Labour. Naturally, Labour supporters reasoned that if the Communist candidates received a good vote 25 seats would be given to the Conservatives, the scales tipped in their favour and a Labour majority lost. (Labour was only 19 seats short of this majority). However, most of the Communist candidates received each a total vote of a few hundreds only, some less than two hundred, and eighty per cent. lost their deposits. No Communist was returned, but three Labour M.P.s lost their seats because of the Communist split vote.

By January 1930 Pollitt was using the *Daily Worker* to urge his followers to smash Labour meetings.

We are now to consider the working of the Communists in and against the trade unions. During 1929 and the early thirties the Communist Party attacked the trade unions and attempted to set up "red unions". The first attempt was in the Scottish coalfields. Communists had been successful in many of the ballots for officials of the Fife, Clackmannan and Kinross Miners' Union and the Scottish federation of miners' unions. The Communists claim that the old officials refused to recognise these ballots and give up their jobs and in 1929 a conference to set up a Communist miners' union was called and the "United Mineworkers of Scotland" was formed. The new red union claimed to have a good membership in Fife and Lanark (the two important coalfields) and support in Ayrshire and the Lothians. They may have had this large membership, but they did not know what to do with it. They were better at telling Labour how to manage its affairs than managing their own.

The irresponsible and anti-social conduct which had threatened to wreck the local Labour Parties was then wrecking the U.M.S. The Communist union soon collapsed in Lanarkshire and the Fife branches were alone. The General Secretary, Willie Allan, sought more secure employment as a check-weighman at Cambois, Northumberland, and the union's funds approached bankruptcy.

Gallacher claims that the union recovered, which is quite untrue as Gallacher himself admits later in his book. Appendix B of *Revolt on the Clyde* begins, "On December 29, 1935, the United Mineworkers of Scotland held a conference in Dunfermline where a decision was taken to disband the Union" page 297. What Gallacher conceals is that the union had already disbanded itself.

Next in turn for the blessing of a red union were the garment workers. In London the Communists succeeded in organising a breakaway from the Tailor and Garment Workers' Union and formed the "United Garment Workers", (for some concealed reason all breakaways are called United!). The new union was unable to spread outside London and soon the ruling clique quarrelled with Sam Elsburg, the only efficient organiser they had. The "United" further split and tried to carry on without Elsburg for a few months. Alas! like some delicate flower the poor thing died in the night.

Undaunted, the Communists decided to have a red seamens' union. Taking advantage of the seamens' discontent over the compulsory unionism of the National Union of Seamen, they organised the "Seamens' Minority Movement" as a prelude to the new union. They were fortunate in having the services of Fred Thompson, ex-dockers' organiser of the Transport and General Workers' Union who had left the union after a quarrel with Bevin. Thompson, himself an old docker, knew the ways of sailormen, but he was completely over-ruled by Communist Party officials who, like the admiral in the song, had never been to sea.

Thompson achieved quite a success in the ports of the North-East Coast, especially South Shields, but during his absence, local C.P. organisers took command and called a strike—without asking the seamen. The English seamen took not the slightest notice of the local Lenins, but, unfortunately, they were able to deceive large numbers of Muslim seamen. A racial riot followed, at which the paid organisers caught the London train, and over fifty Muslim seamen received heavy sentences. (Many were injured also). Thus ended the ill-conceived Communist seamens' union.

No other attempt was made to form a paper union, though many were discussed. However, they had a shot at the trades councils. One shot only. They organised a breakaway from the London Trades Council calling their set-up the London Industrial Council. The L.I.C. held a few meetings and disappeared. No one enquired of it.

*"The summer shines and the winter snows,
But where it lies buried nobody knows."*

The only part of the Labour movement on which the Communists have had a grip is the shop steward movement. Once the shop steward was the highly respected spokesman of his workmates. Now, because of Communist stewards, the name of shop steward is beginning to stink. Though there are yet thousands of decent stewards, the Bolshevik brand gets all the publicity and the real shop steward is driven out. Where the Communists have gained control they have turned the shop steward committees into "production committees", absentee committees, speed-up merchants and spies and informers.

Speaking personally, I would like the Communists to get a good foothold in the Labour Party. I am all for Communist affiliation. There can be no successful British Revolution until the Labour Party is destroyed. There can be no quicker or more thorough way of destroying it than admitting the Communist Party to its ranks.

TOM BROWN

SHOULD WAR COMMENTARY

THERE ARE MANY reactionaries—particularly the Stalinists, whose new-found patriotism is of course louder than the most extreme Blimps—who would agree that a paper propagating revolutionary views in wartime should be banned. Many of them point out that in the fascist countries this has been done, thus proving where their sympathies lie.

It is not, however, only in the fascist countries that freedom of speech and the press is banned—Russia is even more dictatorial: owing to the control of paper supplies by the State, even the underground

Press is more powerful than it could ever have been had Hitler not suppressed it. Free from all restraint of considerations of libel, advertising revenue, party control, Big Business susceptibility, any organ of whatever opinion can say what it pleases. Had Hitler allowed the press to continue under sufferance, as the British did in India, and allowed it to criticise his regime, it would have been compelled to observe a certain caution; being illegal and felonious (and none the less widely read) it can speak out forthright. Being dependent on the goodwill of

BE SUPPRESSED?

press cannot maintain its voice, as it can even in occupied Europe. Even from "democratic" America we get many letters from readers telling us how surprised they are to find we can publish a newspaper here taking a revolutionary and anarchist position in the middle of the imperialist war: they have assured us of the persecution attending such a publication in the U.S.A. For many years, even in peace-time, the U.S. Government have attacked the anarchist paper *Man*, centring on a persecution of its editor, Marcus Graham, while Father Coughlin's fascist sheets went unchecked. Now comes news of the virtual censorship of many issues of the organ of the American Trotskyists, by the postal authorities banning those issues being handled in the mail. It is interesting to note that the explicit objection was not to their views as such, but to the particular fact that they gave publicity to the reports of Negro-baiting and colour segregation, in the U.S. Forces and elsewhere, and urged the Negroes to stand up for their rights. The authorities claimed that any paper urging the Negroes to fight for their rights in a time of crisis should be suppressed.

The anti-anarchist immigration laws would debar Tom Paine from entering the U.S. to-day: it seems that even so late a "Father of the Republic" as John Brown of Ossawatimie, who was hanged by the Virginians for his raid on Harper's Ferry, to begin a slave-insurrection in time of crisis, and who was later canonised by the North during the Civil War, would also be debarred by the ruling-class if his soul were really "marching on".

In the dictator countries the Press has been entirely shackled and suppressed: this has not stopped free speech. In Europe to-day the underground

their readers in a way no legal journal is—for a hostile reader could betray the distributors—they are impelled to say not so much what the publisher thinks as what the readers for whom he caters think—hence even those journals founded for purely nationalistic and anti-conqueror reasons, assume a revolutionary manner from the proletarian readers for whom they write, instead of being the tool of Big Business interests, like the widely-read press in the democratic countries.

While therefore the illegal press in Nazi Europe is read under conditions of risk and danger, it is nevertheless freer than the legal press in the democratic West. As an observer wrote of Russia, the only place of free expression was in the prison-camps of Siberia, where prisoners of every shade of working-class opinion—anarcho-syndicalists, Trotskyists, Mensheviks, dissident Communists, social-revolutionaries—could freely express their views, behind bars.

This is not to say that we should prefer to see an illegal Press. If our Press were banned we should feel compelled to publish in any case, but it is natural to prefer the safer path so long as it is possible. When that is no longer possible the other path must be chosen. Many hints have indeed been dropped regarding the suppression of the British unofficial Press. The reason given by the Government for not doing so is that the circulation of anti-war, revolutionary, left socialist and pacifist papers is not large enough to warrant suppression. This presumably is a roundabout way of saying that suppression of papers obviously not pro-the-other-side would enhance their prestige.

The *Daily Worker* was banned when Russia and Germany were allies, and the ban lifted when Russia

THIS RUSSIA

"The name of one of the Soviet Union's millionaires who has contributed generously to the over-subscribed war loan is published to-day. He is a farmer from the region of Southern Kazakhstan, where agricultural production has considerably expanded since the loss of the Ukraine."

Times, 9/6/43.

Shouldn't the *Times* pay a tribute to the normality of our great ally? The farmer lent his money free of interest, but how did he make it? Presumably he is not one of those dirty kulaks . . .

AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY

"In Australia a law has been passed providing for the call-up of any who, by failure to perform his obligations, causes a stoppage in a protected industry.

The law can only be enforced in the case of strikes, lock-outs and stoppages."

Evening Standard, 28/5/43.

FINNS WANT TO STRIKE

"Workers of certain Finnish enterprises are demanding a general strike in protest against the fact that the leaders of the Trade Union Association are concealing from the masses, the Government's reply to the Trade Union May address demanding Finland's withdrawal from the war.

In his reply, Professor Linkomies, the Prime Minister, rejected the demand."

Manchester Evening Chronicle, 5/6/43.

Such a general strike would be of the highest social significance—as a strike against war, against the Finnish Government and the labour leaders; against Nazism and certainly not in favour of Bolshevism, which in Finland is not genuinely anti-war but merely Fifth Column.

D.W. INVECTIVE

"I remember Souvarine as one of the more loathsome of the types of Paris sewer rat. He chose Paris as the scene of his contemptible efforts to oppose the Bolshevik Party's leadership in building Socialism in Russia: collaborated with Trotsky and Trotsky's son, little to their profit. What his latter end has been, I neither know nor care much.

Enough for me is the vivid memory of his leering at the first World Congress of the Comintern in 1924, when I had the misfortune frequently to sit opposite him . . ."

Walter Holmes in the *Daily Worker*, 23/5/43.

If you want to understand the reasons for Holmes' not too tasty invectives read Boris Souvarine's book on Stalin.

FROM THE HEADLINES

"GIRAUD DE GAULLE: A KISS."

Evening Standard, 4/6/43.

IS IT REALLY APPROPRIATE?

"Paris radio reported to-day that a new series of coins will be issued from the Vatican. They will be five and ten lire pieces.

Brussels radio added that the coins will include a gold one of 1000 lire, and will have the picture of the Pope on the front and a dove of peace on the back."

Evening Standard, 8/6/43.

WE DIDN'T SAY IT!

"No one can read the reports of the Conservative Party Conference the other week and the agendas of the Labour and Liberal conferences that are soon to come without being struck by their remarkable points of agreement. Every party likes to be different, to have some saving remedy that it can claim to be its own. Yet there was never a time, perhaps, when in their broad approach the three parties have been so compelled by force of circumstances and by their reading of the temper of the people to map out the same road."

Manchester Guardian, 10/6/43.

Through

A SCANDAL

"Two groups of London women are earning big money in many kinds of work because they are not effected by any order of the Ministry of Labour.

They are young married women with children under 14 living at home and women over 45. Because of the shortage of certain types of skilled workers in City offices,

and in the suburbs, many are offering their services to the highest bidder.

Frequently women who are exempt from any kind of direction leave their jobs to go to employers who offer more money.

Some employers have complained to Labour Exchanges about exempt women who leave and go to better-paid work."

Star, 22/5/43.

Sheer capitalism we call it!

BEVIN'S VICTORIES

"Mr. Bevin, Minister of Labour, states in a written reply that during the year ended March 31 there were 5,403 successful prosecutions of persons for absenting themselves from work without reasonable excuse or for being persistently late."

News Chronicle, 2/6/43.

How many managers, factory owners, business men were included, Mr. Bevin?

ANARCHISTS CAN'T BECOME AMERICANS

"England has been criticised for being unduly reluctant to enlist volunteers from among enemy alien anti-Fascists. America seems to have gone far the other way. Dr. Henry Hazard, who has arrived in England to naturalise any willing aliens among the American forces, expects his candidates to include German and Italian-born men who were drafted with their age groups. If captured such men might be shot as traitors. In Tunisia, one learns, they have been kept in the rear for their safety. Dr. Hazard will conduct a simplified form of naturalisation requiring honourable service in the armed forces, the witness of two colleagues, and a ten-year innocence of anarchist activities. Five of the strict naturalisation conditions have been waived."

Manchester Guardian Weekly, 7/5/43.

SHARING THE BOOTY

"Reversing its usual anti-British form, the *New York Daily News* to-day suggested editorially: 'We hope the Allies will give the British the final say in who gets North Africa after the war and what is to be done with it.'

'The British are excellent colonial administrators and have had a great deal of experience in this line.' The leading article also lavished praise on the Eighth Army."

Daily Mail, 12/5/43.

the Press

ANOTHER WAR AHEAD

"Since then two Soviet ships have been "accidentally" torpedoed by the Japanese, but still Russia maintains a calm, polite exterior towards Japan.

But some day Russia is going to get mad with Japan, of that I am certain.

However guarded and neutral in tone the Russian Government may be, the Russian people are united in their detestation of the Japanese, whom they regard as their traditional enemy.

Russians have not forgotten that Japanese Fascists murdered many Communists on their way to power, and extinguished the Labour and Socialist movement there. They have never forgotten the Russo-Japanese war, which is remembered even more to-day because of reviving Russian nationalism.

There was a time when defeat at the hands of the Japanese was attributed to the class which was ruling Russia at that time. To-day it is felt more as a national humiliation which must some day be wiped out."

Evening Standard, 8/6/43.

Will an exhausted Russian people be so keen to fight another war after this one? Especially in order to revenge a defeat of the Tsarist Government!

GENERAL SPAATZ DESERVES TO WIN

"General Spaatz's most famous diplomatic coup was an act of sheer inspirational gallantry. In July, Queen Elizabeth came to an American airdrome to greet newly-arrived units of the 8th. During her visit rain began to fall. Protocol hung in the balance for just an instant. Then before a dozen drops had mottled the Queen's light suit, Spaatz put his own coat over her shoulders with the remark: 'Your Majesty, this makes you a major general in the American Air Force.'"

Life, 10/4/43.

General Spaatz is the man who directed the bombing of Pantelleria. It is doubtful of Pantelleria's women think of General Spaatz in terms of Sir Walter Raleigh.

FISHERMEN ON STRIKE

"There is now a complete stoppage of all British as well as Dutch trawlers at Fleetwood.

The Dutch fishermen have been on strike since Monday awaiting an assurance that when the Ministry of Food's new schedule of reduced maximum fish prices comes into operation to-morrow their earnings will not be decreased.

Yesterday all Fleetwood's trawler skippers and other ratings decided on strike action. Their objection is that the new scale of pay is inadequate and does not compensate them for the loss they will sustain when the Food Ministry's new schedule comes into force."

Manchester Guardian, 11/3/43.

WOOLTON PLEASE NOTE

"How would you like to have at least ten pints of milk and four eggs a week as a regular diet? Well, one day you may get it.

This is part of the United Nations' Food Conference diet for the 1,600,000,000 people—three-quarters of the world's population—represented at Hot Springs.

It is planned for after the war—if the conference proposals are accepted by the various Governments concerned.

The minimum weekly diet—they say—necessary to maintain health should also include 1½lb. of meat, fish and poultry, 5lb. of fruit and vegetables, ¾lb. of sugar and 5lb. of fats, potatoes and nuts."

Evening Standard, 4/6/43.

This is fine defeatist talk. Lord Woolton has been telling us that we have never been so fit as we are now living on potatoes, 1s. worth of meat a week and raw carrots. We shudder to think what our health would be like if the proposed diet of the Food Conference were accepted.

CHEAP LABOUR

"To those who decry British powers of organisation and cling to the idea that we still 'muddle through' in our supply systems, I should recommend as a corrective a visit to two wartime depots 'somewhere in the Midlands.'

In this transformation, so far, over 900,000 cubic yards of earth have been removed, four and three-quarter miles of main drains have been cleared, 14½ miles of pipe drains laid, and 78,000 tons of ballast used.

All the work has been done by military personnel. The railway construction company which began work at this depot formed part of the Royal Engineers (Supplementary Reserve) raised before the war from skilled personnel of a railway company.

As far as possible the personnel work on regular shifts, for the operating of the depot is a 24-hour problem, and besides being railwaymen, they are soldiers with military duties.

The work is arduous and has to be done in all weather and in the black-out."

Oxford Mail, 9/6/43.

Government methods are simple, put skilled workers in uniform and then use them in their technical capacity at military rates of pay, in all weather and under very hard conditions.

Pages of Working Class History

RED HAMBURG

By Willi Freimann

HAMBURG THE INTERNATIONAL port, with its hundreds of thousands of industrial, shipyard- and dock-workers, sailors and peasants, is widely known even outside Germany as Red Hamburg, or the Red Bastion of Germany.

As a Free City and member of the Hanseatic League, Hamburg had always occupied a special position in Germany. Having its own territorial rights, and its own legislature it formed a more or less independent Reich within the Reich. In imperial Germany its citizens were known as liberally minded democrats, as far as one can talk of democrats in any imperialist state.

Even before the last war the greater part of Hamburg's workers were organized in the social-democratic party and in the trade-unions.

If one may generalize one could describe the average type of Hamburger as quiet, respectable and composed, averse to all kinds of extremes, licentiousness included.

When in 1914 the S.P.D. (Social-Democratic Party of Germany) deviated from the Basle Resolution of 1912, thereafter renouncing the socialist-revolutionary line and becoming reformist-opportunist, there developed within the party a left-wing opposition, upholder of the old socialist tendencies, which during the last war was responsible for the illegal anti-imperialist and anti-war propaganda. The most active members of this opposition later on turned away from the S.P.D. altogether or, like Rosa Luxemburg and Liebknecht, joined the Spartacus movement, germ of the later German communist party.

This left wing of the workers' movement was revolutionary. Apart from differences of opinion as to the best methods of bringing about socialism, the left wing stuck without exception to the old principles: consequential revolutionary policy, on the basis of class war; no compromising with the enemies of the working class; unity of the proletariat; general strike; state control of industry; all power to the workers and soldiers councils. But these revolutionaries among the organized workers were in the minority. Those who believed in a development towards socialism without use of force, on the basis of democracy and under the leadership of the S.P.D.—and these formed the majority of the politically-minded workers—remained inside the S.P.D. The average German worker was not a revolutionary, even after the last war.

With the collapse of the German Empire the ranks of the S.P.D. were enormously reinforced from among the uprooted bourgeoisie, now threatened with becoming proletarianized, as well as from among those of the workers who up to then had been politically apathetic. The S.P.D. judging the situation rightly, realized that the war had left the great mass of the people exhausted and without energy, and that all the people wanted was bread and peace. The U.S.P. (Independent Socialist Party), however, believed itself capable of inspiring the masses, arousing their enthusiasm, and stirring them to direct action. The S.P.D. preferring to have the new recruits trained in Marxism by the old hands, therefore refused to accept the programme-points put forward by the U.S.P. for the purpose of collaboration.

If the situation in 1918 had been one of revolutionary maturity, and not only of rebellion, the S.P.D. would doubtless have recognized the revolutionary directives and re-established itself on the basis held prior to 1912.

The youth-organisation (A.J.=Workers' Youth) of the S.P.D., moreover, became crowded with young mem-

bers of the bourgeoisie who, disillusioned and shaken to their foundations by the experience of war, turned away from the traditions of their disintegrating class, and looked for a new political orientation. The socialist spirit which had been predominant in the A.J. now became weakened by bourgeois tendencies. Consequently the true young socialists were in all decisive questions out-voted and gradually pushed out. Part of them remained in the A.J., hoping to work as best they could for the revival of socialism within an organisation growing more bourgeois every day. The other part tried to re-organize themselves in so-called working-teams (independent groups), or changed over to the Free Proletarian Youth or the Communist Youth movements.

At that time there were in Hamburg only a few young anarchists and syndicalists, while the communist youth group, though also being weak numerically, was all the stronger in its propagandist activities.

EFFORTS TO CAPTURE S.P.D.

The leaders of the K.P.D. (Communist Party of Germany) were as well aware as those of the S.P.D. that the masses at that period were not revolutionary-minded. But the K.P.D. true to bolshevist tradition, aimed coldly but deliberately at creating the required political situation, in order to secure political leadership and power, like the Russians, into their own hands.

Like all good Leninists and Trotzkyists, they were not in the least interested in the masses as such. The masses to them were like a dumb primitive monster, incapable of producing logic, discipline and reason out of themselves. The masses had to be led, if necessary, even against their own will and instincts. Being easily moved to enthusiasm and difficult to control, incalculable in their confused instinctive reactions, servile and longing for authority, as well as credulous and without judgment they could, without qualms, be deceived for their own benefit, on demagogic lines, and crudely flattered.

At first the communists tried to implant this attitude towards the masses on the already organised ranks of the S.P.D. with the aim of breaking the power of the social-democratic party and the trade-unions and so to disrupt both these large organisations. A violent propaganda-campaign was started, which did not shrink from any distortion, libel or spite. Lenin's old accusations uttered during the war, were again brought out, and to the old sins of the S.P.D. were added all those committed since 1918: its compromise with the capitalist bourgeoisie, the strangling of every revolt, the favouring of the newly awakening counter-revolution, the deliberate misleading of the proletariat. The poor S.P.D. was made the butt of the most violent attacks by the "most revolutionary party in Germany", whereby no-one took into account that the S.P.D. had long ago ceased to be socialist-revolutionary, and had become, as its name indicates, merely a social-democratic party with a bourgeois-reformist policy.

Instead of basing their agitation mainly on objective criticism and enlightenment of the proletariat, the K.P.D. expended all its energy on a policy of blind and mad incitement. It did not think for a moment that this subjective agitation was bound to have negative results. Their secret contempt for the masses gradually betrayed itself and was rightly understood by the sound instinct of the workers organised in the S.P.D. and the trade-unions.

Belief in the K.P.D. slogan: "solidarity of all workers" was anything but strengthened by these crude and creap methods of propaganda. Their true motive, an enraged feeling of rivalry, was all too obvious.

Naturally the workers organized in the S.P.D. did not agree in all respects with the policy of their party. But in spite of all its defects they still had greater confidence in it on the whole.

True the S.P.D. pointed out rather too often the political immaturity of the masses; true it committed mistakes which were afterwards excused by "the prevailing circumstances" or the "inevitable gap between idealism and realism". On the other hand the social-democratic party did believe in the emancipation of the masses, it did have faith in progress for all, in the appeal to reason. And—it preferred democracy to dictatorship. Unlike the K.P.D. it therefore showed greater confidence in the masses and, in return had their confidence as well, in spite of its obvious deficiencies.

Moreover it became known how the K.P.D. dealt with opposition arising from its own rank and file. In particular how the communists dealt with those comrades who wanted a united front of all the workers, who sought to come to an understanding with the S.P.D. and who, from a better political instinct, were against the weakening of the working class by a deliberate policy of sub-division, demanding instead a definite front against the true enemy of the working classes, reaction.

In addition there were the reports from "the fatherland of the workers". They showed how brutally the red dictatorship treated workers, peasants and soldiers who did not readily submit to the new party bureaucracy. All this was not likely to arouse undivided enthusiasm among the German workers. The methods used by the K.P.D. became more obvious every day, and those among the organised workers who were no communists became all the more confirmed in their distrust and dislike of the communist party.

DUBIOUS ELEMENTS ATTRACTED

Quite early on the K.P.D. Wasserkante (Hamburg) had on the board of its youth-organisation a young comrade to whom the leaders of the party had assigned the task of influencing the youth of the opposition. Young communists were to infiltrate the numerically vastly superior A.J., at first in order to get information. They had to compile lists of all definite opponents of the K.P.D. and the K.J. (Communist youth) inside the A.J. Next they had to provide themselves with facts from the private lives of those on the list, which later on might serve, at the appropriate moment, to expose these inconvenient opponents. Further the local branches of the A.J. were to be tested for their vulnerability to communist propaganda. Members of the A.J. with communist sympathies were to be used for deliberate or unintentional undermining activities. If no opposition existed in the respective youth groups young communists were assigned to them. After obtaining membership, these were to create opposition against the S.P.D., the leadership of the A.J., and to create divisions.

The fruits of this labour did not satisfy the expectations of the party leadership, and in particular they did not satisfy the adviser to the German communist party sent from Moscow. Following his directions the work was consequently concentrated to a greater extent on the politically indifferent. Here the K.J. succeeded in absorbing various unions and organisations.

Among the metropolitan youth of Hamburg were many who did not care for politics, who felt no desire to play the soldier in one of the semi-militarist right-wing organisations, those to whom the ethical aims of the bourgeois youth movements meant nothing whatsoever,

who preferred tramping, drinking, sexual orgies, dancing and brawls. They had their own clubs and unions, as for instance—one of the most famous and notorious—the Falkenberger Bund. Wherever there was a brawl on, the "Falkenbergers" were in it. By their provoking insolence, their acts of unbridled brutality they became the terror of the town. The members of this organisation came from the Hamburger slums, the so-called "Gaenge-Viertel", home of the lowest elements among the proletariat. The K.J. did not find it difficult to make the Falkenberger Bund one of their affiliated organisations. Later on the Falkenbergers were among the most active members of the Red Shock-Troops (Roter Front-Kaempfer Bund). Smaller organisations of a similar character were systematically invaded by young communists who, by becoming members, at last managed to obtain a majority vote for affiliation to the K.J.

Systematic infiltration was not as easy in the case of sports and students unions. The agents of the K.P.D. had to be content with attracting a few members here and there, who sympathised with the tasks prescribed by the party; in other words who were well fitted for undermining activities, intrigues and spying.

Before the K.P.D. entered into this phase of degeneration there were enough decent comrades both in the party and in its youth movement who believed firmly in revolutionary honour and morale. Sooner or later they all were overtaken by the same fate: they were supplanted and removed. Some could not get over their disappointment with the K.P.D. After having become victims of defamation and persecution they lost themselves in bitterness and inactivity. Others were absorbed into the numerous sectional movements with a radical or nihilist tendency. But on the whole it can safely be said that the majority of those expelled have tried ceaselessly to tell the German workers the truth about the K.P.D. A reorganisation of any significance or permanency, however, did not take place. The followers of the K.P.D. were too prejudiced and incapable of criticism. Again and again they became victims of the jesuitical methods characteristic of their party. In other words: there was no widespread opposition, but only the opposition of the advanced elements, the political intelligentsia. They found themselves in isolation. Their party jobs were taken over by submissive party dupes, incapable of objectivity and without initiative, mere instruments to whom obvious nonsense made sense as long as it bore the stamp of the central party office. For the proud freedom-loving revolutionary, collectivist by his own free will, was substituted the submissive slave self-effacing to such a degree that he would not only turn against his own class if that served the party, but even against himself.

The time came when the leaders of the K.P.D. had to realize that their campaign against the S.P.D. and the trade unions had failed in its purpose. The majority of the workers stood by their old organisations,—even in spite of the growing crises such as inflation and unemployment. These latter did, indeed, bring a certain influx to the K.P.D. but they were far from making it a party of the masses.

"DOMINATION OF THE STREET"

There followed a new phase. The successful method of the K.J. of assimilating the politically indifferent was now to be utilized for the party itself. The systematic struggle to "revolutionize the masses", the struggle for the "domination of the street" became henceforth the slogans of the party leadership.

Suddenly the workers "seduced" by the S.P.D. were dismissed as mere dupes of their party bosses, as revolutionary slackers who had become as bourgeois as their leaders. From now onwards the K.P.D. acted as pro-

tector and liberator of the most outlawed elements in a class society which "owed its prolonged existence only to the criminal attitude of the S.P.D." From now onwards "Germany's most revolutionary party" stood by the most despised of the people promising protection and relief to the declassed, unsocial elements.

In Hamburg the prostitutes, criminals and tramps were legion. Furthermore there were thousands of unemployed as well as those who had sunk from a better life to the bottom of the social scale. Communist agitators were now placed in every doss-house.

A "prostitutes' paper" was founded, officially unconnected with the K.P.D. But the non-party editor was in fact a convinced communist, a secret member of the party. And it was the party that indirectly paid for the paper. Among the collaborators, apart from many professedly non-members of the K.P.D. were comrades like Clara Zektin, and Kaethe Killwitz. The paper fought mainly against the control of morals, the trickeries of the public inspectors of prostitutes, against compulsory Salvarsan-cures, against the hypocrisy of bourgeois society which made prostitution safe while at the same time casting a stigma upon it. This newspaper aimed at doing away with the existing form of society and at replacing it by a new one in which prostitution would no longer exist. At the same time an organisation of prostitutes was founded, through which the prostitutes were given advice, support, medical treatment, legal assistance and work. Unnecessary to mention, this organisation was intimately connected with the "Red Help", a communist institution. The lawyers and doctors were remunerated by the K.P.D. either directly or through the usual side channels, unless they offered their services free of charge, in a spirit of "class solidarity and loyalty to the party". The public welfare organisations were of course boycotted. No wonder then that the prostitutes, the pimps and the criminals blindly and enthusiastically embraced the party, defending as it did, the rights of those previously exposed to contempt and isolation, against the odious enemy: state.

In exchange the underworld helped the party wherever it could. With the aid of all the unsocial elements the "illegals" of the party, hunted by the police, were given asylum in the hiding places of the notorious Gaenge-Viertel. Private meeting-places, dumps for banned literature, secret printing-presses, etc., all served to make tracking down and discovery by the police next to impossible.

Not only prostitutes, but also youthful delinquents were now organised. There were publications about conditions in the reformatories, like for example the sadist excesses of those in charge. Flogging, which had been officially abolished by the republic, was again and again secretly practiced in public institutions, (prisons, orphanages, lunatic asylums, work-houses and reformatories). The K.P.D. declared itself protector of all those at the mercy of such public institutions. The "Union of Discharged Delinquents" helped those who had escaped into safety, and assisted them in overcoming the dangers of an illegal existence. Ex-criminals too had their own organisations where they found help and advice, and where the feeling of solidarity between their kind and the party members made up for the loss of their good reputation with bourgeois society.

From among all these organisations the ablest of the a-social elements were drawn into the party. Many of them were picked out for "special tasks". After a certain period, if they had proved useful and reliable, they were admitted in the internal circle of the German illegal movement. A few of them went to Russia to be specially trained for future work.

The greater part of the sinister deeds on the register of the K.P.D.—ranging from forgery, house-breaking, robbery, to the liquidation of "class enemies" were carried

out by ex-members of the underworld whom the K.P.D. had "rescued from the beggars' proletariat and made into class-conscious revolutionaries".

Even before the founding of the "Red Shock-Troops" and "Red Marines" the K.P.D. had begun the struggle for the "domination of the street". At that time the S.P.D. could at all occasions assemble greater and more impressive masses in the streets. Communist demonstrations failed to rival to them. But gradually the situation changed. Numerically the mass demonstrations of the K.P.D. still did not reach the S.P.D. level, but they made up for it by being "livelier" and—as the central party office thought—more impressive. Clashes with opponents of the Left and Right, as well as with the security police became more frequent and more violent. The communists began to illustrate their "superior revolutionary temper", their intrepidity in face of state power by attacks on the police and systematic street fights.

FICTITIOUS REVOLUTIONARY MOOD

These demonstrations were staged with the assistance of the new followers, the one time street mob, now made class-conscious and revolutionary". They aimed at two things:

Firstly, they were to create the impression that a revolutionary mass mood existed among great parts of the people.

Secondly, that these revolutionary sectors of the population stood united and ready for action behind the K.P.D.

The prestige of the police was to be impaired. A police incapable of controlling the restive masses, incapable of clearing the streets loses its authority. Increasingly spontaneous mass demonstrations, more and more rebellious crowds in the streets would make the citizen feel unsafe, unprotected, intimidate and paralyze him and his class. Those workers, too, who hitherto had remained passive, were to become convinced of the revolutionary spirit of the K.P.D., of its right to leadership, they were to be swept away by the contagious enthusiasm of the crowds. Brutal acts of violence on the part of the police, regarded as a sign of weakness in face of the masses, were to be used not only to increase the passionate hatred among the victims and eye-witnesses within the party itself, but also to provoke the moral indignation of outsiders. Many of the social-democratic workers whom the communist propaganda hitherto had failed to convert, would, so it was thought, rise from mere sympathy to a feeling of solidarity and quickly shed their earlier scruples. In face of events, many policemen, members of the S.P.D. might, it was hoped, begin to lose confidence in the attitude of their own party. Police and army could, once effectively undermined, perhaps be used as party tools.

Acting on these various assumptions the K.P.D. tried to bring about a psychosis, to create a fictitious mood and situation which would incite its own members and those of the other parties to throw off their aloofness and restraint. The "revolutionary mood of the masses" was designed to goad them into action.

The S.P.D. and a number of bourgeois people too, saw through this game. Their warnings were answered by the K.P.D. with a flood of fierce invectives. But they were right in denouncing the machinations of the communist party. It had absorbed all those most inclined to radicalism, all the wretched and miserable outlaws who had nothing to lose and everything to gain.

In itself this would not have been objectionable. A revolutionary movement ought to be the receptable for all the downtrodden and oppressed. What was bound to arouse the moral indignation of all decent people was the cold-blooded systematic exploitation, the gambler-like employment of these elements for the political ambitions of

the party without regard to the number of their victims, or the extent to which they suffered.

The K.P.D. did not even shrink from making war cripples, women and children march at the head of their processions, ostensibly in order to prevent the police from firing at the crowds, in reality however to expose them to the bullets of the police. In some cases *agents provocateurs* had been placed among the spectators. They had to start shooting, in order to create the impression that it was the police that fired first at the demonstrators. In most cases where clashes between police and political demonstrators had occurred it could be proved that the police had been provoked by communist agents trained and placed among the demonstrators for this purpose. What mattered most was to get propaganda-material in hand, such as would create indignation among the people, against those "bloodhounds" the police—for instance against Zoergiebel, the successor of Noske—material against the S.P.D. as betrayer of the workers, solely responsible for every shedding of blood since it was on the side of reaction and did not shrink from any acts of violence or brutality in order to quell the revolution of the masses.

C.P. TACTICS

A party which drives its masses into action knowing—to quote their leader Lenin—that revolutions cannot be manufactured; knowing that no real revolutionary mood exists, but merely a hectic state of intoxication as a result of their own violent propaganda; knowing that with the greater part of the workers still in opposition, the counter-revolutionary national movement better organised and equipped, the morale and military strength of the police and army unimpaired, the result of any forced action was not only doubtful but almost bound to be negative; a party which in spite of all this tries to create an uprising acts against the most elementary principles laid down by its own authorities, Luxemburg and Liebknecht; it acts against the interests of the masses, its acts are criminal and unpardonable.

This mass of confused minds, of people led astray, interspersed with the most radical elements of the lowest stratum, continued to be used for further spontaneous and stormy demonstrations, "eruptions of popular fury", attacks on nationalist and social-democratic "strike-breakers",* emergency squads and the police. Street battles and disorders during the indoor meetings were organized and carried out by specially appointed bands. Choruses shouted through the streets: "Hamburg remains red. Death to the fascists". The terror was organised with murder and manslaughter of members of the security police, of the right-wing organisations, and of the non-communist worker's unions. Innumerable workers became victims of this terror.

1923. The German Mark stood at 8,000,000,000,000. Which meant that one dollar cost about 34 billion Reichsmark. The inflation had reached its top height. Formerly well-to-do people had become beggars overnight, large sections of the middle-classes had been completely proletarianized, the proletariat itself driven to the bottom of misery and despair.

A revolutionary situation seemed to prevail, if one was inclined to regard the protests of the dissatisfied, the atmosphere of general excitement as symptoms of a popular revolutionary mood. That was at least the official view held by the K.P.D. Inside circles of the party, however, were mostly inclined to regard the excitement

and the demonstrations of the people as mere signs of crisis. In their view the people, in spite of all their apparent indignation, still lacked the revolutionary will to fight. The people still had not got over their war weariness and exhaustion. Politically they were less certain than in 1918. The revolutionary and class-conscious workers of the period immediately after the last war had meantime been severely decimated. The militants had been imprisoned or murdered. Many revolutionary workers had had the experience of risings suppressed with much bloodshed, as in Central Germany and in Munich. The masses remembered the abortive insurrections led by Bela Kun, Max Holz, Dimitrov; they knew of the massacres of Kronstadt, they witnessed the unfortunate fraternal strifes between the various workers' parties, the triumphs of the patriotic movements, subdivided but still united by a central leadership, they saw the law being subjected to class prejudices, the successful tactics of strike exploiters. They felt no enthusiasm for open civil war.

K.P.D. DILEMMA

The K.P.D. itself showed how little it believed in a successful revolutionising of the masses, and in the success of a rising under its exclusive leadership by entering into negotiations with the S.P.D. and the trade-unions, in order to achieve *common* action. Of course it did so knowing that they would refuse. Firstly because they knew exactly to what extent the mood of the masses was genuinely revolutionary, secondly because they know how strong the counter-revolution had become by that time, and thirdly because they were wholly informed about the actual fighting power of the K.P.D. and the extent of the preparations taken for a rising. The main reason of their refusal was, however, that they had seen through the true intentions of the K.P.D. But the K.P.D. could then point to the T.U's and S.P.D. as "dividers of working-class unity". This is what is meant by "the tactic of the United Front".

The counter-revolution was far better organized and equipped than the whole of the Left. The fighting power of the illegal communist squads was not as significant as the K.P.D. and Moscow were willing to admit. The intention of the K.P.D. to usurp the power sooner or later, with every means available, was all too well known.

When the S.P.D. and the trade-unions refused their co-operation utter confusion ensued.

On the one hand it was impossible to stop the course of events. The communist masses had been goaded into a frenzy. To call off what one had desperately tried to bring about would have exposed the K.P.D. to ridicule. It might have produced a feeling of indifference amongst the following which could easily be converted into severe disappointment. It was impossible for the communist leaders to go back on their own assertions, to withdraw all slogans and thus to put the opponent into the right. That would have meant to admit their own weakness, to give away the whole of this hazardous game, to deprive themselves deliberately of their best chance.

On the other hand the K.P.D. was facing the most dangerous enemy of all, who for years had been secretly preparing, growing in strength every day, and only waiting for the opportunity to strike with all his might at the labour-movement: the counter-revolution. The other difficulty was Moscow, which had been sent over-optimistic reports about progress, about the successful preparations for revolution in Germany, and which therefore declared that the moment had come.

When Moscow's chief representative in Germany explained the strategy of the rising (according to which all towns were to strike at the same time and not, as Valtin

* The K.P.D. on several occasions would call their party adherents in a factory out on strike on issues which it knew were bound to fail: the S.P.D. would naturally refuse support for such a strike, which gave the K.P.D. the opportunity of dubbing them "strike breakers"—which was the real purpose of calling the strike.

has suggested, Hamburg leading the revolution and the other towns following later) the leaders of the German communist party got the jitters. Terrified of the possible consequences of this enterprise these same "leaders" of the K.P.D. who had been the first to clamour for "revolution!" "Arms to the proletarians!" "Down with the Weimar Republic," now opposed the plan and raised objections. The Moscow chief representative categorically insisted on the unquestioned execution of his orders, threatening to arrest the entire Committee. Whereupon the Committee, panic-stricken, wired to Moscow begging for help. On receipt of this wire Radek was immediately despatched to Germany to clear up the mess.

According to Valtin's account this was what happened: The negotiations with the S.P.D. and the trade-unions having failed Thaelmann, in a fit of rage, sent a courier to Hamburg carrying the order to strike. This courier, according to Valtin, was to have been called back at the last minute. Those sent after him, however, reached the station when the train was already in motion, so that the beginning of the revolution was in fact due to a misfire. This representation of the events is simply absurd. It would have been child's play to get in touch with the direction of the party in Hamburg *before* the arrival of the courier, (for instance, by telegram), and to cancel the premature order.

What happened in fact is very simple. The K.P.D. was no longer master of the situation. The leading circles were thrown into the utmost confusion, everything was in a state of upheaval. What started the revolution was not an order issued by party-leaders who had the situation in hand; its outbreak was actually caused, involuntarily, by the now too highly-strung police, during the communist demonstration at the Besenbinderhof in Hamburg. Once the revolt had begun an order, or rather an S.O.S., was passed on to the other German towns calling them to join. But at this moment, when it came to the real thing, most of the communist leaders chosen for this task had nothing better to do than to abandon their party-offices, get into the next taxi, and leaving the revolution to look after itself, seek refuge beyond the German frontier, in Czechoslovakia or Switzerland.

Among the workers of the K.P.D. the rumour is still circulating that, in the most critical days, when the revolt was already in full swing, "Teddy", (Thaelmann), the leader of the Communist party of Germany was nowhere to be found, and that he was at last picked up by some of his party-officials completely drunk in the Hamburger Stadtpark, where he was trying to sleep off his hang-over.

I myself can only declare that comrade Thaelmann was not observed to have been on any of the barricades in Barmbeck, Rothenburgsort, Veddel and Eimsbüttel. And history confirms that he was not among the barricade-fighters of Schiffbeck, who, surrounded by police and army, preferred to be butchered in a heroic, if senseless, fight of despair rather than surrender.

BRISTOL COMRADES NOTE!

Our Bristol comrade Eve Righton writes to us that she is forming a group and organising regular weekly or fortnightly meetings. Will all readers in that area interested in anarchism get in touch with her by writing to Miss Eve Righton, 150 Longmead Avenue, Bishopston, Bristol, 7.?

(continued from p. 7)

switched her allegiance. The fascist papers—at least, the *openly* fascist papers—were likewise banned—Germany not having switched her allegiance they are still banned. The papers that supported fascism—the Rothermere Press, *Daily Mail* and the like, and the Catholic Press—are not even under surveillance. These papers not only backed Franco, Mussolini and Hitler but their views are little different—it is the other that have changed, not they—witness their attitude to the Pope and Franco, and in the Hess and Darlan affairs. Indeed, one London publishing house has notoriously been the centre for Catholic-Fascist propaganda: it has published everything from the fake Protocols of the Elders of Zion to Franco's official propaganda in the Civil War. And here it cannot be argued that their opinions mysteriously changed on the 3rd of September, 1939—only the other day I picked up a book, in which thinly disguised "Mussolini's better than Hitler" hints, and the fascist mentality, underlay a crude work of fiction* This was published in 1942. It is typical of this firm, which is by no means under suspicion by the Home Office! Indeed it is a most respectable firm which merely reflects the opinion of a certain section of the British ruling-class—perhaps of the total.

We do not advocate the suppression of these Right Wing journals and publishing centres. Suppression of even fascist journals does not help—witness the illegal appearance in this country of certain extreme fascist Polish-language organs. What we advocate is a fair chance for all to hear all sides: the open hearing of the ruling class is enough to condemn it, providing the working class case can also be heard. We do not ask to be allowed to propagate revolutionary and anarchist views as a privilege. It is an inalienable right, and for it to be taken away is aggression from the ruling-class: Hitler has found to his cost the price of taking it away—direct resistance from the masses beneath him.

When we hear suggestions from reactionaries, anti-libertarians, Stalinists, that the Government should suppress this or that paper for taking this or that line, that such and such a "subversive" paper should be stopped, we know that these suggestions in the final analysis may be tracked down to the same sources that, in France, shackled the Press, beginning with the smaller papers and ending with the larger, that they might "betray without witnesses".

A. M.

**The House of Lee*, by Gertrude Atherton.

TWO MORE VICTIMS for STALIN

The case of Erlich and Alter

WHILE EVERY COUNTRY in the world is competing with its neighbour in trying to find the most efficient means for destroying whole cities and their populations, and our politicians are extolling the Christian virtues of beautiful fat bombs, it is not surprising if Stalin assumed that no one—particularly the moribund labour movements—would be interested in the fate of two middle-aged Jews. And besides, Stalin must have taken the view that, since for the past year his armies has taken the brunt of the fighting, and he has thereby been recognized as the champion of the “democratic cause”, no one would dare to criticize or doubt the correctness of any of his actions. He must have recalled that when his armies did not crumble up after the first German assault, the capitalist press gave as one of the reasons for his “success” the fact that he has been wise in liquidating those fifth column elements (known to socialists as the “old guard of the bolshevik party”) who were undermining the Soviet State! Stalin’s surprise is therefore justified when so much publicity is given in America and this country to the execution of the two Polish socialists Henrych Erlich and Victor Alter. The facts of the case have just been published in pamphlet form* and should be read by all men and women who profess progressive ideas, and above all by that large mass of people who, since Russia was accidentally allied with the anti-Axis powers, look to that land as the inspiration for post-war reconstruction in their own countries.

Briefly, the history of the case is as follows: Erlich and Alter, both prominent members of the Polish General Jewish Workers’ Union “Bund”, were actively working amongst the Jewish population in Poland to offer resistance to the Nazis in the event of an invasion. A few days after the Red Army entered Eastern Poland, Erlich and Alter were both arrested with hundreds of other Poles by the Soviet authorities. Erlich was later charged with the usual crimes, acts of terror against the U.S.S.R., support for the preparation of an armed rising against the U.S.S.R., collaboration with the fascists, etc. He was sentenced to death and transferred to the condemned cell where he remained for two weeks, when the sentence was commuted to ten years hard labour in the labour camps. The charges preferred against Alter were of the same nature. His answer was simply “It’s a lie”. In September 1941, two years after their arrest, they were released from

prison. High authorities of the N.K.W.D. (alias O.G.P.U.) on behalf of the Soviet Government expressed their regret for the “mistakes which had been committed by those sections of the N.K.W.D. which had detained them in prison, tried them, etc.”, and they were offered residence in one of the best hotels in Moscow and a sum of money was paid to them as compensation.

Shortly after their release they were approached by High Soviet authorities with the suggestion that they should form an all-world Jewish anti-Hitlerite committee, to which they agreed. Less than three months later they were again in Soviet prisons. On the 27th January, 1943, a cable signed by “a group of prominent citizens of the United States” was sent to Molotov asking for the release of Alter and his comrade who had spent a year in prison since being re-arrested. On the 23rd February, 1943, Ambassador Maxim Litvinoff informed these “prominent citizens” on instructions from Molotov that after they had been set free the first time, Alter and Erlich had “resumed their hostile activities including appeals to the Soviet troops to stop bloodshed and immediately to conclude peace with Germany. For this they were re-arrested and in December 1942, sentenced once more to capital punishment by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court. This sentence has been carried out in regard to both of them”.

The charge is a fantastic one which can only be accepted by the lick-spittles of the C.P. and those war-time converts to Stalinism. But compare Litvinov’s statement “they resumed their hostile activities, etc.”, with the apologies of the high Soviet authorities when Alter and Erlich were first released; and imagine how it was possible in the space of three months for these two men “to appeal to the Soviet troops, etc.” when presumably the Soviet press and the Soviet radio were not at their disposal, then, we repeat, the charge becomes fantastic and grotesque. And as the authors of the pamphlet above quoted point out “no proof whatsoever has been put forward by the Soviet authorities to substantiate their absurd accusations.”

What did the Communist Press in Britain have to say about the publications of the facts of the Alter-Erlich case? That was left to Walter Holmes, the *Daily Worker’s* abuse-in-chief and hatred merchant. His tactics are always the same. First of all the names of the publishers and the printers, just in case one of the party fanatics feels strongly enough to go and blow up their respective premises for daring to publish and print criticisms of the Soviet Government. Then with a pin he picks out the sinister “aim” of the writers:

“The murder of Erlich and Alter . . . proves anew the terrible consequences resulting from a reign of terror and despotism and reveals plainly the great perils it holds for the new order that will have to be reared on the ruins of Fascism and Nazism.”

Actually Mr. Holmes has just picked out a paragraph from Appendix I of the pamphlet, and calls it the aim of the writers. Relying on the devoted readership of his paper not to be polluted by any publication which he attacks, he dismisses (but does not refute) 16 pages of documents and facts as “counter assertions against the findings of the Soviet court which tried and condemned them.” Incidentally he does not add that when Erlich

**The Case of Henrych Erlich and Victor Alter*, published by Liberty Publications, London. 21 pp. 2d. Obtainable at 3d. post free from Freedom Press, 27 Belsize Road, London, N.W.6.

and Alter were tried the first time and sentenced to death they were accused of the same crimes, and were later released with apologies! Mr. Holmes then proceeds to attack Transport House for recommending this pamphlet and accuses them of "joining this clique of emigrés and anti-Soviet Poles in challenging Soviet justice, interfering in the affairs of our ally in a matter which they cannot possibly judge . . ." Then if you turn to page three of the same issue of the *Daily Worker* you will see the C.P. challenging Argentine justice, and interfering in the affairs of a friendly power with a headline "Argentine Anti-Fascist Faces Deportation, Death", but in this case the victim happens to be a communist, and the head of the government concerned is Ramirez and not Stalin! Also, if you read your *Daily Worker* you will see that every day the C.P. is plugging away at the question of affiliation with Transport House, the same Transport House which is hand in glove with those Polish emigrés, which recommends that book on Stalin by Souvarine (picturesquely described by Mr. Holmes as "one of the more loathsome types of Paris sewer rat"), and which has the impudence to question Soviet Justice! Such is the misfortune of being born with faith but without vision, with cunning but without intelligence, with brawn but without brains!

★ ★ ★

The execution of Alter and Erlich will not be the last crime to be committed by Stalin, nor is it the first. Thousands of men and women, Anarchists, Social Revolutionists, Socialists of all shades, including Communists, have been liquidated because their ideas represented a menace to the security of the Soviet State. Nor are these crimes limited to Russia alone. Mayor La Guardia, speaking at the memorial meeting in New York compared the executions of Erlich and Alter with those of Sacco and Vanzetti, and Mayor La Guardia could have added that the anti-Anarchist laws still hold in the land of the free. All comparisons could be found for most countries. To-day the victims are Erlich and Alter; to-morrow someone else, somewhere else. So long as the rule of the many by the few continues, and gets the support of the

so-called leaders of the workers, there will always be victims. The Polish Bund attacks the Soviet for its rule of terror, but at the same time is so tied to the corrupt political machinery of the existing systems that it has to affirm that "despite the grievous injustice perpetrated by the Soviet court on the two servants and leaders of labour we are, as ever, loyal and devoted to the declared and clear aims of our country's alliance with the Soviet Union, and all the United Nations as expressed in the Atlantic Charter and given living meaning by President Roosevelt." In that case, Erlich and Alter died in vain!

V. R.

SCAB LABOUR on the land

Ostensibly to cope with the war-time harvest, the Government has created holiday camps as sections of the W.A.E.C., and has endeavoured to flood the countryside with holiday scab labour. In conjunction, another type of scab idea originated at Salisbury and has been much publicised by A. G. Street—namely the Auxiliary Land Corps. These people, part-time workers from the towns, are driven to and from the farms in lorries and by a voluntary car pool system. They receive a flat rate of 1/- an hour for both men and women. This rate is higher than the normal rate for women but lower in the case of men. But the holiday camp scabs are on yet another basis and are paid 10d. an hour for women and 1/- an hour for men. There are paid organisers such as Capt. A. M. Davies, who is principal organiser of the Home Counties, and W.A.E.C. men in charge of county camps. Volunteer organisers are drawn from the holiday scabs who show efficiency and qualities of "leadership" within the domain of each camp. All the holiday workers are bribed to work by the offer of extra rations above those which are granted to the ordinary farm workers. The volunteer organisers are induced to carry out their obnoxious tasks by the provision of separate tents, extra rations and numerous incidental luxuries. As a result of all this 'coddling treatment' so much dissatisfaction has been caused among farm staffs that the Lancashire Executive of the National Farmers' Union sent in a resolution of protest to the Union headquarters. During times of labour scarcity such as the present, farm workers have the opportunity of forcing their demands for higher wages. But at a camp near Pinner (Middlesex) the holiday 'scabs' were doing some hoeing at 1/- per hour; the gypsies worked alongside at a piece rate of 1/6 per hour; this was a 50 per cent. increase on the 'scabs'. But with an unlimited influx of scabs at 1/- an hour, what chance have the gypsies to strike for say 2/- a row? Before the scabs came along the Irish labourers in Norfolk were having great success and had succeeded in getting a wage of £4. 10. 0. a week. The Government took a serious view of this position and contemplated putting agriculture under the Essential Works Order. Farmers opposed the idea, as they well know from past experience that it is better to have a willing worker than a dozen low-paid unwilling ones. So the Government very cleverly introduced the holiday workers to the land at different scales of pay and better rations to cause dissension among the workers. The age-old theory of divide and rule! Fortunately the public are not responding very energetically for the schemes to be a success and, in the words of a *Farmers' Weekly* observer, who was actually working in the Hertford camps, the whole movement simply 'lacks life'.

C. H.

WAR COMMENTARY

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