

WAR *For Anarchism* COMMENTARY

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TWOPENCE

Misery for Miners *Profits for Coalowners*

IN ALL AGES and lands, miners have been among the worst-treated of the workers. In the British Isles serfdom lingered among the miners of Scotland centuries after it had virtually disappeared in the rest of the country. And now, during the present war, the miners, not only in this country but also on the continent and in America, are almost the first class of workers on whom the ruling classes of the world are attempting to fix again the bonds of serfdom.

Throughout the history of the working class movement the miners have been among its most active and conscious militants. This is largely because the reality of the class struggle was brought home to them continually with a peculiar force that resulted from the way in which their work and the life it forced on them differentiated them so sharply from the rest of the community and marked them in no uncertain way as the tools of an evil system. The struggles of miners against their bosses have been among the finest episodes in the revolt of the workers against capitalism and authority.

Yet the struggles of the miners have failed, because they put their trust too much in labour politicians and in the hierarchies of the Trade Unions. The men who rose to power on their shoulders have time and again deserted them and delivered them into the hands of their enemies, already plucked and dressed for the table. For their very militancy the miners have been persecuted more than ever by a particularly brutal class of masters and to-day, apart from the dangers and discomforts peculiar to their trade, they enjoy a standard of life which, while in England it may not be as low as that of the oriental mine coolie, is nevertheless far too low, even when compared with the remuneration of other no more skilled industries. In addition to this, they

suffer from working in a declining industry. New methods of power have long been reducing the importance of coal to industry, transport and domestic requirements, and countries which formerly imported coal have been particularly energetic in developing the new forms of power. In an equitable society the reduction in coal consumption would be a blessing because it would reduce the amount of dangerous and unpleasant work necessary for the maintenance of society. Under capitalism or a state economy, however, it means that the miner is forced either to work under bad conditions and low wages because the owner must make his profit while the going is good, or else, in less busy times, is thrust aside to get his pittance from the U.A.B. or the parish and rot in that pointless idleness which might so well be transformed into something useful to himself and society.

COAL VITAL FOR WAR PRODUCTION

With such a past of struggle and misery, it is little wonder that the miners in this country and in America should be none too keen to subordinate their interests to a war to defend the very system that has been the cause of their misfortunes. For once they are in a position to hold the ruling class up to ransom. They would be foolish if they did not make use of the opportunity.

At present the technical organisation of industry is still such that coal is necessary to keep going the war industries in this country and America, and, incidentally, to keep the profits flowing into the pockets of the rulers. It is this dependence of the war economy on a continual flow of coal from the mines to the factories that makes the position of the miners in both countries stronger than it has ever been before. This is demonstrated by the consternation caused in American political and business circles by the coal strike there. Against this we have to put the weakening of the power of the miners by various causes within their own movement. These weaknesses arise partly from a lack of unity within their own ranks behind a clearly realised revolutionary aim. They spring perhaps

even more from the fact that the unity which does exist is based on the reformist trades unions built up on hierarchical and authoritarian lines, and dominated by leaders who work consistently against the men they pretend to serve. The leader of the British miners, Will Lawther, is a Communist Party stooge, which is not much different from a boss's stooge. The leader of the American miners, John L. Lewis, is a racketeering politician in the best American style who, as the *Industrial Worker* put it aptly "stinks worse than a pole-cat in springtime".

The deal which the rulers of the various countries are trying to put over on the miners is a raw one, and it is interesting to compare it with that handed out to other industries. Some, such as the railwaymen and the land-workers, have had as bad a deal as the miners—increased work, more slave driving and wage increases which do not even offset the increase in the cost of living. Engineers, on the other hand, have been treated, in comparison, fairly well—i.e. the man who works hard can get quite a large pay packet at the end of the week, although he has to become a slave to do it. It is obvious that the ruling class is deliberately playing off one set of workers against the other. Moreover, it is noticeable that the workers who are badly treated are those whose occupations, though essential for a peacetime society, are likely to be greatly curtailed after the war. Less coal will be needed when the war is ended and the factories turn over to other forms of power. There will be less traffic for the railways to carry when the wartime traffic is over. There will be at least some diminution of agriculture. (All these statements presuppose the hypothesis of a capitalist peace). On the other hand, engineers will be necessary in large numbers, and are in any case the men whose work is essential to the making of arms, without which the state cannot survive.

A DECLINING INDUSTRY

In mining the idea that the industry has little future seems to have become deeply imprinted on the minds of the government and the mine owners. In a parliamentary debate on the fuel situation, Grenfell, a staunch government supporter, summed up the position when he said:

"The industry was getting older and machinery and equipment were getting less productive. There had been no new development in the industry for a score of years. It began the war after a long period of economic attrition, having jettisoned its capital and resources in the struggle to maintain production."

In the same debate the Minister of Fuel said:

"In the past year the men had continued to work long hours—longer than peacetime. Although mining was probably the hardest physical toil of all it had suffered a grievous loss in the younger age-group. More than 20 per cent. of the workers to-day were over 50 years of age."

Later, Major Lloyd George revealed that during the year some 135,000 accidents had taken place in the mines, each involving an absence of eight days or more.

Here we have the situation from the mouths of the government spokesmen themselves. The equipment in the mines is obsolete and worn, and the easiest seams have been worked out. The owners and the government realise that after the war coal mining will be an industry with a dubious future. So they are avoiding any great expenditure on modernising equipment, and are working the more difficult seams now while they get a good price for coal, so that they can cut down expenses by working the easier seams when prices fall. These facts, in addition to the drive for a continually greater production per man, impose a great strain on workers who are already prematurely aged by an exhausting trade. The absenteeism among miners which has been so strongly attacked in the yellow press is due to the fact that the miners are so exhausted by their present rate of work which has to be sustained

on quite inadequate food, that they just cannot do a full week's work.

MINERS' LIVES ARE CHEAP

The Government is following a policy with regard to the miners which they must know will have grave physical effects on them, involving serious illnesses, premature ageing and early deaths. But they do not worry about this sort of thing. Governments the world over show an almost incredible lack of concern for human life when their interests are affected.

And every government is willing to drive millions of its subjects to death in war, so there is no reason to imagine it will make any fuss over the breakdown and death of a few dirty miners.

The position of the miners, in this country and the United States, is thus very precarious, and it is obvious that if they are to succeed in gaining a better state of existence they must act in a different way than they have done up to the present. It is no good their clinging any longer to the old fashioned Trade Union with its authoritarian structure which breeds bosses who use their positions to get into parliament and crush the men who have given them their power. The miners must organise themselves, not in reformist unions officered by treacherous time-serving bureaucrats who will play the boss's game as Lewis is doing with his delaying tactics in America today, but in revolutionary organisations built on the basis of autonomous groups at each mine linked together for the purpose of co-ordinating action, but governed by no centralised bureaucracy with its inevitable leaning towards its similar government bureaucracies. Direct action, unhindered by bureaucratic delays, is the only way by which the miners will beat the rulers.

But the miners should not be left alone in their struggle. This has happened too often in the past and, except for the great General Strike of 1926, betrayed by its leaders, the miners in recent years have had very little support from people in other industries. Particularly vital are the transport workers, who could quite effectively prevent any form of strike-breaking by refusing to run trains to or from the collieries.

The revolutionary changes we believe to be necessary, before mining and other industries can be put on a permanently satisfactory basis of social usefulness, will be achieved only through the unity of all workers, assisting each other in their minor struggles in order, if nothing else, to practice their solidarity to each other which will be a necessary condition before anything in the nature of revolutionary changes can be expected.

THE RUSSIAN ENIGMA

By ANTON CILIGA

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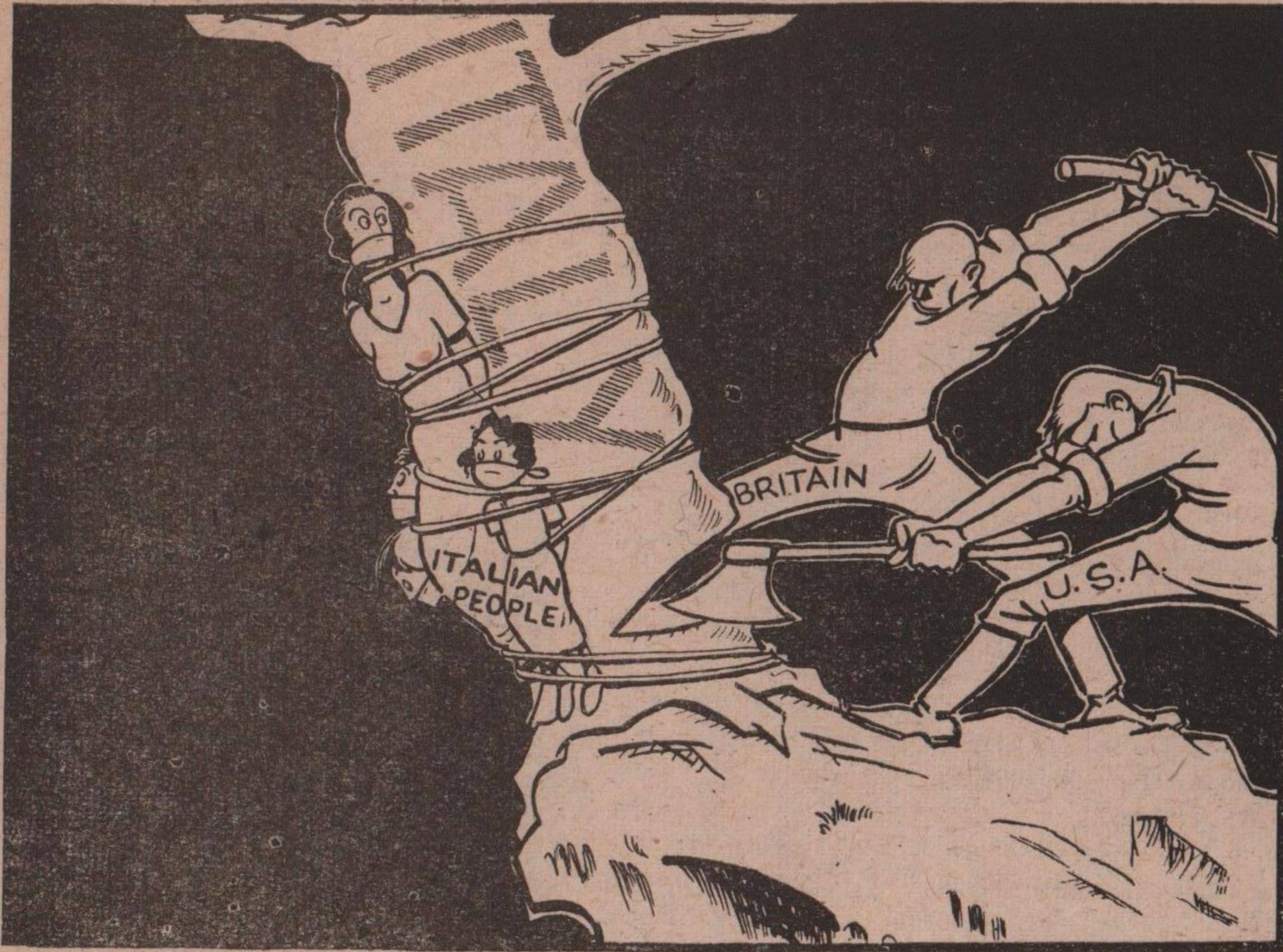
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ANARCHIST COMMENTARY

MILITARY GOVERNOR FOR INDIA

INDIA'S position in the "war for freedom" has from the start been an incongruous one. The spectacle of a handful of champions of Democracy compelling a sub-continent of 390 millions to participate in a war against their expressed will has always presented a problem to the imperialist "freedom lovers" Unfortunately, the apathy and lack of solidarity with which the British workers regard their fellow workers in India has allowed the government to get away with the most clearly revealed tyranny there.

The most recent indication of British rule of force is provided by the appointment of General Wavell as Viceroy. Lord Linlithgow's administration had suspended even the semblance of political freedom, and had carried out massive arrests among Indians. India was specifically excluded from the "freedoms" of the Atlantic Charter. Police and military have repeatedly clubbed and fired on Indian strikers and demonstrators. Recently a curious farce was played out. The Indian High Court ruled the action of Lord Linlithgow in imprisoning Gandhi and others illegal. Were there men released? No, new laws were made to bring their detention within the framework of legality. A clearer demonstration of the subservience of legal forms to tyrannical practice could hardly be imagined.

When Lord Linlithgow's term of office expired no one could be found suitable or willing to succeed him. So his term was extended. That he should be succeeded by a military man underlines the general trend of events in India. It is interesting, too, that the other name, apart from Wavell, which the capitalist press was suggesting as the likely Viceroy, was Sir John Anderson. He was a former governor of Bengal who had distinguished himself for the "firmness" with which he had suppressed the manifestations of hostility on the part of the inhabitants of that province towards their oppressors. Indeed, when he entered the Chamberlain government he was hailed as a much needed "strong man".

The choice of General Wavell shows that the rulers of India in Whitehall demand before everything else a powerful head of the government of India. Military rule is always the answer of a ruling class to the aspirations of the ruled for liberty. The military dictatorships set up after the last war illustrated the same trend. It is clear that the continuance of British tyranny in India depends increasingly on the use of military force. Hence the government choose a military leader as head of the "civil" administration so as to ensure the loyalty of the British Army in India. Just as the Japanese impose military rule on the populations of the territories they occupy, so the British impose a military rule on occupied India.

Such appointments, which expose for all to see the force on which government rests, are intended as a sign of strength. Actually they are a sign of a growing acuteness in the struggle between the masses of the ruled against the minority of rulers. Military dictatorships are notoriously unstable and Wavell's appointment may be regarded as an indication that the British government fears that the tide of revolt in India is rising.

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KILLER SERGEANTS SENTENCED

Culliney and Slater, whose brutality killed the tuberculous soldier Clayton at Chatham

Detention Camp have been sentenced to terms of 18 months and 12 months respectively. These sentences indicate that in the opinion of the judge the brutal killing of a sick man is about on the same level as refusal to undertake military service. At this moment many of our comrades are serving 12 months for the latter crime.

With all their brutality, however, one has the feeling that Culliney and Salter are being made to take the knocks that should be administered not to them only but to the whole system of military force. Everyone knows that discipline in a Detention Camp, and in the Army generally, is maintained by brutality. Unfortunately for

Culliney and Salter, the normal brutality and cruelty proper to their jobs had results which in this case could not be hushed up. It is almost certain that Clayton was not the only victim of military discipline. By sending his killers to gaol, authority attempts to show a kind of liberalism (even though they only get sentences similar to C.O.'s) which is shocked at what has happened. But soldiers who know what kind of things happen in Detention Camps will not be fooled. They know that Culliney and Salter have gone to prison because they were found out. Organised brutality in Detention Camps and glass-houses will continue for the reason that military discipline can only be maintained by a system of brutal and cruel harshness.

For the record: *Daily Worker's* comment: "These men have brought dishonour on an honourable uniform."

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RAILWAY WAGES

THE railway workers' unions are now jovially patting themselves on the back because, having asked for ten shillings a week increase for their members, they have come away from their negotiations with 4/6. The General Secretary of the N.U.R. remarks smugly, "I can personally testify that throughout there has been a common unity of purpose which culminated in final unanimous agreement." We can well believe there is a common unity of purpose between railway bosses and trade union bosses, but fail to see where there is a common unity of purpose between the railway managers with their incomes approaching £10,000 a year, or sometimes more, and the railway workers whose wage packets even now in many cases are still round about the £3 mark.

This increase, we are told, will cost about £6,000,000 a year. Against this, in 1942 the five railways earned a total profit of £89,000,000, which was divided between the government and the shareholders. Even now the total increases granted to railwaymen are less than those received by most industries, amounting in all to 20/6, which obviously does not cover the increase in the cost of living. On the other hand, the railways, with a depleted staff, handled in 1942 nearly half again as much traffic, both passenger and goods, as they did in an average pre-war year, and this year the tempo has increased. Thus the railwaymen are expected to work half again as hard as they did before the war for a return whose purchasing power is less than they had before the war. If the union officials have reason for smugness (they are probably thinking of the five millions safely invested by the N.U.R.), the men certainly have not, and the sooner they decide to organise themselves on a revolutionary syndicalist basis instead of relying on such mountebanks, the better it will be for their interests.

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LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

THE Labour Party Conference has come and gone leaving hardly a ripple on the surface of *working class* problems. What were the principal high-lights? Discussion on the Electoral Truce and whether the Labour Party should stay in the government: the Battle for the Treasurership between Greenwood and Morrison: the application for affiliation by the Communist Party: and some windbag stuff about the post-war world. Nothing at all was said about problems with which workers, as distinct from political jobsters, are concerned. There was no discussion of, no realization even of the issues which affect workers' lives. Only windy clap-trap and shuffling for party positions. No wonder that, on looking back on it, one is doubtful whether the L.P. Conference is worth commenting on at all.

NEGROES IN BRITAIN VICTIMIZED

ELSEWHERE in this issue we publish an account of the recent race riots in Detroit. It must not be thought, however, that race hatred is not a matter for export.

We have received the following letter from a reader describing instances of colour prejudice occurring in England. Most readers will be able to recall similar instances occurring within their own experience:

"I would like to draw the attention of the editors of Freedom Press to the amount of Negro baiting which is being carried out by a hooligan element in the American Army. I can cite several instances as an eye-witness. First, in a café in Soho a drunken Yank demanded that a 'black boy' sitting peacefully having his meal should not be permitted to use the same café as himself. The Manageress, strongly backed by other customers sent the Yank about his business.

Second, a combined attack by American hoodlums on an inoffensive negro peddler in a public-house off Piccadilly. Third, the instance of another Yank on top of a bus threatening a 'nigger' who refused to give up his seat.

Other instances are quoted in the Press of negroes beaten up by Yanks in Soho and one case of a black man being fined and accused of being drunk for defending himself—this in a "British" court!"

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POLITICAL PROCESSIONS

SINCE the beginning of the war there has been a theoretical ban on political processions. And this ban has been so far observed that no openly political processions take place. But for organisations which support the war there is an easy way out. They can just arrange some function with a patriotic-sounding name, and not only do they get their procession, but they also get army bands and contingents of Home Guards, Civil Defence personnel and similar impressive figures to grace their tinsel triumph. In this way the Communists in particular have been cashing in on the help-the-war front, by arranging processions and demonstrations to stimulate aid to our glorious ally, Joe Stalin, which the authorities find it difficult to refuse and which, in fact, they often feel obliged to support actively. The current explanation is, of course, that such processions are not really political, but it is obvious that they are used for political ends, as indeed are all the processions and pep weeks organised by the government or their supporters. One might justifiably say that a Stop-the-war procession was as unpolitical as a Help-the-war procession, but whoever tries to organise one will soon find how different they are in the eyes of authority. We do not expect the government to allow its rivals to demonstrate their objections. That would be against its own nature. Nor do we suggest that other people's processions should be stopped. For we know that when the people have reached a sufficiently revolutionary mood to come out on the streets and demonstrate of their own accord in defiance of authority, the silly shows of authority and its friends will stir as little emotion as the Salvation Army blaring down the High Street on a Saturday night.

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.?

A HANDFUL of RICE

Benefits of British Rule in Ceylon, Mauritius and Malaya

WE HAVE HEARD a great deal, both before and during this war, of the benefits of being a subject of the British Empire. Even our pet Leftists tell us that, while of course they disagree with colonies in theory, yet in practice they regard it as better to be a coolie in a British colony than a coolie in a German or a Japanese colony. British exploitation, we are told, is best, and the native should realise that in our hands he is starving in a much more pleasant way than he would if he had a brutal Nazi master. It may be that conditions are better in plantations managed by the throwouts of Harrow and Rugby; opinions differ, but the point is really irrelevant, for what we have to consider is whether the native should be exploited or not, whether he should be subjected to a foreign master or whether he should manage his own life. If we decide that exploitation is wrong, then it is meaningless to argue about the respective merits of British or Japanese masters, for the only just solution is that the workers of the colonial countries should be relieved of their masters and should take their affairs into their own hands.

This feeling that one master is in the long run no better than another is certainly prevalent among the natives of the British colonies in the East. Before the war an attempt was made by propagandists at home to convince the British public that Indians, Malays and all the other races of the East were happy and loyal subjects of the empire. Events, however, have fully destroyed these contentions, for when the Japanese armies pushed back the British to the frontiers of India, the native workers showed none of the symptoms of a devoted loyalty. At most they remained indifferent to a change of masters and showed their attitude in complete inaction as the invaders swept over their countries. Very often they demonstrated a positive satisfaction at the defeat of the British which, particularly in Burma, took the form of active co-operation with the Japanese forces. Like many of the Indians, these people felt that, if they must have masters, it was better to be ruled by Asiatics than by Europeans. This is a negative attitude which we cannot justify, but those who have had any contact with Malayan planters or civil servants, even when rendered innocuous by retirement, will admit that it is understandable.

Some considerable insight into the conditions under which the workers really live in the British colonies of the East is given by a recent report of Major Orde Browne, Labour Adviser to the Colonial Office, on "Labour Conditions in Ceylon, Mauritius and Malaya" (Stationery Office 2/-).

Major Browne is, as one would expect, conditioned by his background and the prejudices of his caste. He finds no fault in the actual system of exploitation on which the colonial economy is based, and his objections are therefore concerned more with how the conditions of the workers can be improved under this system. He is naturally inclined to think the best of the capitalists and governing authorities concerned, and it is fair also to assume that his tour of inspection, to an extent at least, was a conducted one in which he saw only a superficial aspect of the problems of colonial life. Within these limitations, however, his report shows a conscientious approach to the problem that was before him, and gives

much information which, taken on its own, provides important evidence against the colonial system.

The three colonies he visited present problems which are similar in a number of respects. In all these countries the major industries which interest capitalists (tea in Ceylon, sugar in Mauritius, rubber in Malaya), are based on the system of plantations owned by European companies, officered mostly by English managers and manned by hired labour paid at rates which are far below those of the lowest paid worker in this country. In all three countries, moreover, the Europeans found it difficult to persuade the native population, who were mostly peasants living within their own developed social systems by means of subsistence farming, to undertake any large amount of this hired labour. Of the Ceylonese native, Major Browne writes:

"Fortunate in being the inhabitant of a fertile and well-watered country, he had found existence easy in the past, and saw no reason why he should exert himself in distasteful conditions in order to obtain money for which he had no particular use. The enterprising planter therefore found himself in possession of a most promising proposition without the labour necessary to develop it."

Of the Malays he says:

"The Malay was originally a peasant farmer with his own organised society and culture; regular wage-earning was alien to him, and he showed the same reluctance to undertake this as similar types in other parts of the world. Except for the occasional purchase of some imported luxury, he had little need for ready cash and he relied upon his own resources for the provision of necessities. Favoured by climate and soil, he was able to raise his crops without much trouble, while the sea coasts brought forth a good supply of fish."

IMPORTED SERFS

The independent attitude of these 'dirty natives' led the exploiters to seek their labour elsewhere, and among the poverty-stricken lower classes of Southern India and Southern China they found good recruiting grounds. A few pence more than the pitiable income they received at home, and a respite from a peasant life continually terrorised by the moneylender and the landlord, induced these unfortunate people to leave their homes in thousands to seek a slightly better subsistence in the regimented life of the tea, sugar and rubber plantations. As Major Browne puts it:

"The remedy was the importation of a more amenable labour force from elsewhere; the neighbouring Tamils of Southern India, struggling for a meagre existence in a stern country, welcomed the opportunity to earn wages in surroundings which were far pleasanter than those to which they were accustomed."

The influx of labourers from India, China and, to a less extent, Java, was so large that in the cases of Malaya and Mauritius the immigrants exceed the native populations (only 44% of the population of Malaya are Malays) while in the case of Ceylon, with a population of less than 6 million, there are nearly 700,000 Indian labourers work-

ing on the estates. The presence of these Indian and Chinese immigrants who are forced by economic circumstances to work for wages which, even though higher than they would get at home, are extremely low, depresses the level of payment for natives who are forced to work for wages.

STARVATION WAGES

It is difficult to compare the rates of pay in these countries with those in England, because the prices of commodities differ considerably. The following paragraph from the report gives us a basis on which to work.

"The cost of living in Colombo has been carefully estimated by the Department of Commerce. The average composition of the 351 families under review gives a figure of 5.63 members; this monthly income is estimated at Rs. 39.14 for the head of the family and Rs. 8.95 for the remainder, or a total of Rs. 48.09. The itemised details of monthly expenditure are summarised as follows:

Food	27.64
Fuel and Light	3.31
House Rent	8.42
Clothing	4.41
Miscellaneous	8.97
	<hr/>
	52.75

There is thus an over-expenditure of Rs. 4.66."

The current value of a Ceylonese rupee is 1/6, so the average monthly family income would be £3 12s. od.

But there are many occupations in which the remuneration falls far below this level. For instance, the minimum daily rate of pay for a man in the plantations, including cost of living allowance, is about 10½d. a day. For unskilled railway labourers the maximum is 1/10d. a day and for Government factory labour the maximum rate for unskilled labour is 2½d. an hour. Postmen in Colombo get a maximum of £3 a month. Even among workers whose income rises above the starvation line, the rates are miserable in comparison with those in England. For instance, the maximum rate for a railway signalman is £5 5s. od. a month, and that for a government lorry driver £4 14s. 6d. a month. Even the native bureaucrats are not a great deal better off, for the maximum rate for a Grade III Government clerk is about £90 a year!

No cost of living figures are given for Mauritius or Malaya. It is, however, reasonable to suppose that they can be very little below the low figure for Colombo, and to regard the wage rates accordingly.

In Mauritius labourers in the sugar industry get 1/- a day in the inter-crop season and 1/10½d. in the crop season. If they are working on an agreement, they get 30/- a month. Field overseers, on the other hand can earn up to £37 10s. od. a month! Labourers in the tea plantations get 1/1. a day, and tea factory workers 30/- a month! Bus drivers receive 2/3 a day, with 6d. allowance for lunch. Stevedores, who are among the most highly paid workers, get 4/6 a day, but for that a gang of 13 men must load 100 tons of coal. Railway porters, on the other hand, get up to 43/6 a month for a 70 hour week.

In Malaya the tappers in the rubber plantations receive a minimum of 50 cents a day for men and 40 cents for women, plus 10 cents cost of living allowance. With a dollar valued at 2/4, this means that the men receive in all about 1/5 and the women 1/2 a day. No information is given about wages in the important tin mining industry, operated mostly by Chinese labour, but there are details of wages in certain factories. In pineapple canning and sago factories the pay ranges from 1/2 to 1/8, in the rubber processing factories from 1/5½ to 1/9 and in the tobacco factories from 2/10 downwards. In the Bata Factory for rubber articles the pay varies

greatly, from 3/2 down to 10d. a day. On the railways unskilled labourers earn a minimum wage of 1/2.

On the whole, hours of work seem, at least nominally, to be not very much greater than those obtaining in England in peacetime. There are a number of regulations fixing hours, but whether these are scrupulously observed is not revealed. It is also a point of importance that in many instances the workers are so undernourished that they are just incapable of long hours. Of the plantation workers of Mauritius, Major Browne remarks, "The inability of the labourer to do more than six hours work a day for five days a week was frequently impressed upon me by his representatives, and this limitation to a 30-hour week appeared to me to have some foundation in fact."

In some parts of the colonies, however, extremely long hours are worked. Of the pottery factories near Malacca the report says:

"Hours of work are exceedingly long, amounting to as much as 84 a week. This is on piece-work, and the employees with whom I discussed the question agreed that they were exacting but were not prepared to contemplate any reduction."

The reason, of course, why they would not work less hours was that this would have meant a reduction of their already low pay.

WASTED LABOUR

The report gives a number of instances which show how cheaply labour is regarded in the East, where it is still more economical to employ large numbers of men than to instal modern machinery. Concerning the plumbago mines of Ceylon, it says:

"Descent is by means of a windlass and tub, or, where the shaft slopes, by overhead cable and travelling bucket. In the remoter and newer parts of the large mines, and also in some of the small mines, a more primitive method is in use. This consists of wide ladders some 30 feet in length, with rungs 3 feet apart; these are used, not only for access, but also for the removal of plumbago and waste material. A man is seated on each rung, and filled buckets are passed up from one to another, right to the top. Thirty feet is found to be the practicable length for such a ladder and a platform is therefore cut before the next ladder is installed; thus, where several hundred feet must be descended there will be a series of ladders and platforms, involving a considerable labour force. Illumination is by primitive oil lamp and ventilation is most indifferent. Again, shafts and winzes under construction may also produce bad conditions; at the end of one such passage I noticed that a stay of even ten minutes was enough to produce a perceptible change in the air. In such parts of the mine, eating and smoking become distasteful and the workers, therefore, complete their shift without refreshment save water."

Mining in general seems to be wasteful of labour. It is true that in some large tin mining concerns owned by European capitalists modern methods are used, but in the Malayan tin mines which belong to Chinese owners the methods are still primitive and wasteful, and go to the extent of pumping water from the workings by treadmill.

The conditions under which the workers live vary to a great extent from plantation to plantation. In some cases adequate accommodation is given, but in many others the housing is, as in Mauritius, 'of the old-fashioned "range" pattern, ten or twelve rooms being built in a row, with, in some instances, a second line, back-to-back; concrete or stone, with unlined corrugated iron roof, are common materials, and in some cases the partitioned walls do not extend up to the roof so as to isolate each dwelling.' In Ceylon the regular plantation workers frequently have relatively good houses, but this fact is used by the employers as a disciplinary weapon by a system, similar to the

tied-cottage system of English farms, whereby a man who is dismissed from employment is also evicted from his house.

Sanitation and water supplies vary from good to bad in all three colonies. There is supposed to be a health inspection of plantations, but of Ceylon the report says:

"In practice, inspection does not appear to take place as often as might be desired; on several estates conditions of housing and sanitation required the attention of the Medical Officer; examination of the records at the Labour Department indicated that the period between inspections might be two years or more, while instances were found where it was as much as four."

This shows just how effective are the masses of regulations laid down by Colonial governments for the ostensible protection of the colonial worker.

In the large towns living conditions are bad; there is much overcrowding, and rents are often high in relation to the income of the worker. Of Colombo, the capital of Ceylon, the report says "overcrowding is common and back-to-back construction limits ventilation . . . The main evil is overcrowding; visits by day, repeated at night, suggested that this existed to a serious degree. Rents in Colombo tend to be high."

In the towns of Malaya, particularly Singapore and Penang, conditions are as bad, or possibly worse.

"The average number of persons per occupied house in Singapore was 11.4, in Penang 9.3, Malacca 8.0, and the remaining towns rather less . . . In one part of Singapore the number rises to 20.9, and even this may be far exceeded in individual houses. Singapore and Penang . . . have a heritage of congestion, over-building and over-crowding which renders any improvement difficult and expensive!"

HANDFULS OF RICE

But, poor as the housing conditions often are, they are not the worst conditions affecting the health of the workers. The most serious is undoubtedly the deficient diet on which most of the plantation workers exist, and which often consists of little more than rice. We have all heard that the Indian coolie can live on a handful of rice, but the results of such a diet do not seem to be as good as we are led to expect. Of Ceylon the report says:

"A survey of the labourers' diet was recently carried out by Dr. Nicholl with interesting results. The diet contains sufficient calories to enable a man to perform hard work on it; against this, it is deficient in animal proteins, calcium and vitamins A and B₂; the conclusion is drawn that the scale should be modified in favour of the roots, fresh vegetables, milk and fish."

Reports regarding Mauritius and Malaya are similar. Of Mauritius the illuminating remark is made—"The majority of the manual labourers appear to be definitely undernourished, and this is borne out by the improvement which takes place in the weight and health of prisoners undergoing sentence."

It thus appears that in each of these colonies the working population lives well below the line of sufficient nutrition and this applies most of all to the Indian population. The author tends to stress the fact that the workers do not choose their food well, but this does not take away from the influence their low pay must have on their choice.

Against the exploitation and, even at its best, poverty-ridden life of the workers, we must put the fact that "in 1940, the twenty principal tea and rubber companies paid dividends varying from 7 per cent to 28 per cent., and in one case, 55 per cent." The Ceylonese postman gets £36 a year and the governor of Ceylon £8,000. We have no information concerning the salaries of the officials of capitalist enterprises, but no doubt they are equally disproportionate to the pay of the workers on whose backs

they live.

The report gives some information concerning the attitude of the workers. As might be expected, they are represented mostly as being relatively contented, or indifferent to their conditions, but here and there the author shows that there is discontent. In Ceylon there have been a number of strikes, and the native Sinhalese workers in particular have developed a certain militancy. The tendency towards association for bettering their conditions has arisen among the workers in all the colonies, and has often shown itself in spontaneous groupings on special occasions, which tend to break up after one object has been achieved.

ORIENTAL BEVINS

Permanent associations are represented by Trade Unions which are almost always controlled by job-hunters who have never worked on the fields and wish merely to exploit the grievances of the workers to their own ends. The report says, concerning Ceylon:

"The actual material conditions of living of the worker tend to be overlooked, in favour of abstract claims to concessions or privileges of importance to the leaders. It is a noticeable feature of Trade Union delegations in Ceylon that they seldom include any actual worker employed in the industry which they claim to represent; the delegates usually prove, on enquiry, to be lawyers, school-masters, journalists, ex-Government employees and similar persons of education . . ."

"The Trade Union Law of Ceylon requires that 50 per cent. of any executive shall be workers actually engaged in the industry concerned; the Trade Union officials whom I met assured me that this provision was scrupulously observed, but that the labourers themselves were ignorant and inarticulate, and that they were therefore unable to present their own case, and required spokesmen on their behalf. With this contention I am unable to agree, and I consider it unduly depreciatory of the shrewdness and common-sense of the Ceylonese worker. In other countries I have had very useful discussions with labourers of a more ignorant and primitive type than those of Ceylon; similarly, in my various visits to places of employment I had numerous interesting conversations with actual workers, though unfortunately, of necessity, only through interpreters."

Thus in Ceylon the Trade Union movement has already got into the hands of the kind of professionals we find tricking the workers in our own country. In Malaya the bureaucracy of the State railways actually put in hand a scheme for forming a 'company union' before the men themselves had shown any tendency to combine in their own unions.

The facts given in this article need little comment. Coming from a source friendly to the colonial system, they condemn it as strongly as the most passionate indictment could have done.

It remains to be said that the colonial workers will gain a fair standard of life neither from any likely improvements in the colonial administration nor from the self-seeking efforts of the petty leaders who spring from among them to take their share of power and privilege in the political and trade union hierarchies which already afflict them and add to their parasites. Only by throwing aside the native as well as the British politician will they be able to evolve their own social and economic life in freedom and well being.

In that struggle the British worker has a great part to play and he should bear in mind always that one of the great objects of working class action in this country should be to help the colonial peoples to gain their freedom by destroying at its roots the imperialism that binds their lives in poverty and toil.

GEORGE WOODCOCK.

WHEN JUDGES HELP

"A soldier's wife was told by Judge Tudor Rees at Uxbridge country court to-day, that she is 'a very brave woman.'

She told him that she was unable to pay instalments of £1 a month on some furniture. She has two children and her income in £2 16s.

She said that she wanted to keep the home together until her husband returned. To help pay the debt she had sold some of his clothes for £4. She thought that she could manage to pay 2s. 6d. a week.

The Judge: 'No, you cannot. I want to help you to keep your little home together. I shall suspend the warrant on payment of 7s. 6d. a month. Don't worry. You are doing very well.'

Evening Standard, 22/6/43.

Jolly decent of the Judge to want to help the young woman. Now she will have to pay only 1/10½d. instead of 2/6d.—thanks to the Judge's magnanimity!

"MADE IN ITALY" FOR KING

"Before sailing to Malta, the King spent a day with the Eighth Army in Tunisia.

The Eighth Army did itself proud at the Royal luncheon party held in a huge tent lined with white cloth and mosquito netting.

Alongside was a complete kitchen and dining caravan captured from the Italians, and the King ate off snowy linen with silverware also supplied by the Italians.

Italian cigarettes were on every table."

Evening Standard, 22/6/43.

We do not think it is fair that His Majesty should be reduced to eat out of silverware and smoke cigarettes looted from the Italians. Can't we afford British goods?

ATLANTIC SHARKS

"Fantastic profits—up to 80 per cent. were made by a number of British shipping firms engaged on warship construction for the Admiralty, as we reported in *Tribune* a month ago. From the United States now comes a report from the House Merchant Marine Sub-Committee. This has now published the findings of an investigation into American merchant vessels chartered by Britain for trips to the Middle East.

During the most critical months of the spring and summer of 1941, 81 privately owned American vessels made 90 trips to the Middle East. The shipowners were paid by the U.S. Government out of lease-lend funds.

The cost of these trips totalled £1,100,000. The shipowners received a grand total of £7,500,000. In other words their profits were £6,500,000 or over 600 per cent."

Tribune, 18/5/43.

POST-WAR UTOPIA

"The Kaiser organization is currently intrigued by everything from housing to motor boats. A six-room post war house, described by Kaiser, would be pre-fabricated, demountable, completely outfitted, would weigh only 2,000 lb. (approximately the weight of the 1942 car).

Demountable house can be compressed like an accordion, mounted on wheels and hauled as trailer . . ."

Life, 5/4/43.

NEW STEP TOWARDS COMMUNISM

"By a decree instituting a hierarchy of ranks in the Soviet Diplomatic Service, there is introduced a system analogous to that in use in the diplomatic services of other countries.

Soviet Foreign Office officials working at home are also to be given appropriate ranks, says a Moscow message."

Manchester Evening Chronicle, 16/6/43.

Through

INDIAN'S ILLUSIONS

"Claiming that a promise by Queen Victoria, that they would never have to fight a 'white man's war,' was being broken, a delegation of Canadian Indians are going to Ottawa, to protest against a court decision given in Montreal against Harry Smalfence, a member of the Iroquois tribe, who had refused to answer a call for compulsory military training.

The court ruled that, although the Indians as wards of the Crown were not entitled to full rights of Canadian citizenship, nevertheless they were British subjects and amenable to the laws unless specifically excepted.

The Indians' citation of American practice was thrown out because the United States regards Indians as aliens, although they were the nation's first inhabitants."

Evening Standard, 22/6/43.

It just shows what savages Indians are . . . what would happen if American citizens refused to join the Army just because President Roosevelt promised them, only a few years ago, that American boys would not be sent abroad? One can only approve the wisdom of the Canadian Government in refusing them the full rights of Canadian citizenship; people who believe in promises and have such a good memory are dangerous!

GAD SIR, THE MAJOR IS RIGHT!

"A Corps Commander frequently had two military policemen following his car on motor-bicycles to take the names of officers and men, for disciplinary action, who failed to salute his car.

This was stated in the Commons by Mr. Silkin who asked the War Secretary:

Whether he approved this action, and whether, in view of the need to save manpower and petrol, he would put an end to this practice.

Major Henderson, Financial Secretary, War Office.—A commander is responsible for maintaining a high standard of discipline in his troops, and insistence on punctiliousness in saluting is one of the methods by which this high standard is achieved."

Evening Standard, 22/6/43.

EUROPE, 1943

"Mass suicide of the Amaxosa tribe in 1857 is recalled by the death of Mrs. Freda van Niekerk, the oldest resident of Alexandria, near Port Elizabeth, South Africa, in her 92nd year.

She was an eye-witness when the Amaxosa, on the urging of a false prophetess, burnt their crops and destroyed their livestock in the belief that their larders would be magically refilled and all the white people driven into the sea 'when the sun rose in the west'."

Manchester Evening Chronicle, 16/6/43.

the Press

POLITICIAN'S TRICK

"Since the great fire in 1871 Chicago has been planning a subway and since 1938 it has actually been building one. Last week with fanfare, oratory and flag-waving it was 'opened'. After painters worked all night to get things in shape, Mayor Edward J. Kelly and 450 civic officials trooped into the catacombs for the dedication. The Mayor posed for pictures, rode in the motor-man's cab on the first trial run, and shook hands with the workers who had built the \$64,000,000 monument to the Kelly-Nash political machine.

But the 'opening' of the Chicago subway did nothing to solve the city's transportation problem. The train ran only because Mayor Kelly was running for re-election. This political master stroke, with the subtlety of a sledge hammer, occurred just four days before election."

Life, 19/4/43.

Where are the old days when kissing the baby did the trick?

CAPITALIST'S FORESIGHT

"A bomb-proof hide-out on a private estate of 3,500 acres in the wildest part of Oregon, stocked with tons of food, and equipped with huge refrigerating plants, machine-shops and a sawmill, has been built by Eugene Pallette, the film actor with the foghorn voice and ample corporation.

Pallette has for years been convinced that a great social upheaval is on its way, and he wants to be prepared for it.

When the revolution comes, says Eugene, he will hide away in the mountains and stay there until it is all over.

An immense cellar holds thousands of empty tin cans which Pallette proposes to use to can his own vegetables. A huge ranch-house is being built hard against the steep side of the canyon so there can be no surprise attack from the rear. There are tractors, lorries, and cars.

Pallette is not scared of war. All this was started long before Hitler got into his stride. It began partly because Pallette likes privacy and partly because he has a firm conviction that the business conditions he laments so deeply will end in what he calls a big 'blow-up'."

Manchester Evening News, 15/6/43.

AMERICAN VIEW OF THE SOVIET-POLISH BREAK

The Facts

"The most cheerful thing that can be said about Russia's breaking off relations with the Polish government-in-exile is that 'it clears the air'. Stalin has blown away the idealistic fog in which the United Nations looked more united than they really are. The dispute touches off so many passions, old and new, that Americans should weigh the facts very carefully before taking sides.

When Russia occupied eastern Poland during her pact with Hitler in 1939, she rounded up 181,000 Polish soldiers and put them in Russian prison camps. The following spring she began to release them; but according to the Poles, 8,300 officers proved to be missing. After Hitler attacked Russia and Russia resumed diplomatic relations with Poland, Sikorski's government-in-exile began to ask Moscow about the missing officers. They never got a satisfactory reply.

Suddenly, three weeks ago, the Germans announced that they had discovered the bodies of 10,000 Polish officers buried in a mass grave in the Katyn forest near Smolensk. Documents found on the bodies, said the Germans, proved them to be the same officers who were on the Pole's missing list. They claimed the Russians had shot these Poles while still prisoners early in 1940.

The Russians answered by declaring that the Poles had fallen into German hands during the Russian retreat from Smolensk in 1941, that the Germans had shot them, and that the documents were faked by the Gestapo.

Washing Their Hands

Our alliance with Russia is based on the fact that we have a selfish interest in common, the defeat of Germany. Fortunately we are likely to find other selfish interests in common after the war, such as the maintenance of world peace. At very few points, in fact, do our selfish interests conflict with Russia's; and the Polish border is not one of them. The important thing for us to remember is that no vital U.S. interest is involved in the Russo-Polish dispute. . . .

The U.S. has an interest in Europe and therefore a duty to understand Europe's problems, complex and tiresome though they may be. We also have a duty to apply our principles through our foreign policy wherever we can. But we must be smart about where they are applicable. In the present dispute, they are not. The Russian Government is a dictatorship; the Polish Government is the shadow of a backward, anti-democratic pre-war regime. Neither State represents freedom and democracy. And since our major self-interest lies with Russia, our diplomats ought not to get too huffy in backing up the Poles."

Editorial of Life, 10/5/43.

"LOVE THINE ENEMIES"?

"Finland, which has never missed the payment of her war debt to the United States until she became involved in the war with Russia, will resume paying again to-morrow. The Finnish Government has notified the United States that it will pay £42,000."

A.P., 15/6/43.

CANADIAN WORKERS STRIKE

"Mr. C. D. Howe, Canadian Munitions Minister said, in Ottawa, to-day, the Government has planned to take over several shipyards in the St. Lawrence River area, including the three where 7,000 workers went on strike last Tuesday night.

At least 10,000 workers in Canadian war industries are on strike in Quebec and Ontario seeking higher wages or union recognition."

Reuter and A.P., 15/6/43.

C. P. Record

“HITLER’S AGENTS EXPOSED”

By Bill Brown

IN A RECENT publication called *Hitler's Agents Exposed*, by John Mahon, the British “Communist” Party have now reached a new low level in political treachery and deliberate misrepresentation. The aim of this pamphlet is an attempt to show the similarity between the Nazi propaganda in English, and the views expressed in this country by groups of workers who oppose the war from a revolutionary standpoint. By means in innuendoes, clever implications, and deliberate lies, this gangster political party endeavours to prove that such revolutionary workers are “pro-Nazi”, “pro-Hitler,” or “playing Hitler’s game”.

On page 4 of this booklet are printed details of propaganda coming from a Nazi-controlled radio calling itself “Workers’ Challenge”. Says the C.P., “It (the radio) plugs away, day after day, on three ideas:

- (1) First. *Britain, under Churchill, is waging an Imperialist war.*
- (2) Second. *The capitalists in Britain are taking advantage of the war to lower the wages, worsen conditions and gag labour. The Coalition Government is a betrayal of labour.*
- (3) Third. *Therefore the workers of Britain should organise a general strike to overthrow the Churchill Government, and set up a Workers’ Government.*

What Hitler wants is clear enough. He would gain immensely if he could foment strikes and civil war in Britain. That is what his radio is asking for. It is the old fascist trick of dividing the democratic forces.”

Further on, page 6, Mahon says, “Any attempt to follow this policy would immediately imperil Britain’s war effort, and would open the way to a Hitler conquest of Britain, in which the British working-class would be reduced to the level of the slaves of Fascism.”

Before going any further into this grotesque piece of reasoning, let us now turn to previous publications of the “Communist” Party. When Britain declared war, the C.P. first supported it. On Sept. 14th, 1939, Harry Pollitt said, “The C.P. supports this war, believing it to be a just war which should be supported by the whole working-class, and all friends of democracy in Britain” (*How to Win the War*, by H. Pollitt, p. 3). However, on October 7th, 1939, Pollitt was sacked from his position as Party Secretary, but crawled back later, saying in his recantation, “I recognise that my action in resisting the carrying out of the line of the C.P. and the Communist International, represented an impermissible infraction of Party discipline, and played into the hands of the class enemy, especially into the hands of the reactionary Labour leaders.” (Supporters of affiliation of C.P. to Labour Party, please note last bit!) The *Daily Worker* during this period, had demanded a negotiated peace with Hitler. On October 4th, 1939 it said, “We are against the continuance of the war. We demand that negotiations be immediately opened for the establishment of peace in Europe.”

(1) R. Palme Dutt in *Why this war*, published November 1939 writes: “This is an Imperialist war, like the war of 1914. It is a sordid exploiters’ war of rival millionaire groups, using the workers as their pawns in the struggle

for world domination, for markets, colonies and profits, for the oppressions of peoples. This is a war to which no worker in any country can give support”.

On May 14th, 1940, the *Daily Worker* said, “On this day, British workmen, on the orders of the capitalist government, face death and wounds in Belgium in the biggest, and most murderous international gang-fight of capitalist society that has ever been seen.”

In October, 1940, Pollitt said, “This is an Imperialist war. If bombs drop on British people, that responsibility rests not only on Hitler but also on the National Government of Britain.”

Examination of these statements will show that they are identical with the first statement issued by the Nazi radio!

Let us now look into the matter relating to the second Nazi demand.

(2) As far back as 1934, we find in a pamphlet called *The Labour Party and the Menace of War*, by R. F. Andrews (now withdrawn), the following: “Suppose Fascist Germany attacks the U.S.S.R., are you in favour of British workers supporting the British or French Governments in an attack on Fascist Germany? UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES! Such action would help the German capitalists to represent the war as one of self-defence; it would strengthen the British capitalists and weaken British workers; it would put British Imperialism in the event of a victory in a favourable position for attacking the U.S.S.R. It would mean suppressing the inevitable revolt in India and the Empire. On the contrary, by supporting the workers in their struggle against exploiting, profiteering and oppression in war time, and developing it into a struggle against the war itself, the British workers would undermine Hitler’s own front, which would be the most effective assistance that British revolutionaries could give to the U.S.S.R. in such circumstances.”

Then in June 1940, Harry Pollitt said in his publication, *The War and the Labour Movement* (now withdrawn), “How dangerous a step this is (the Labour Party’s decision at the Bournemouth conference to support the policy of the Churchill Government) can best be shown by recalling the names of the principal Tories in this government: Churchill, Chamberlain, Beaverbrook, Lord Lloyd, General Page Croft, Amery, Duff Cooper, Eden; these men represent everything that stands for Toryism, the historic enemy of the Labour movement. They stand for Imperialism, Poverty, Unemployment, Derelict Areas, Means Test, Trades Disputes Act, etc. They suppressed the colonial peoples of the Empire . . . The emergency measures are then quite clear and distinct. They mean the complete dictatorial control of wages, hours, trade union rights, customs and the actual lives of the workers. They sweep away every privilege won by past generations of working-class struggle against capitalism . . . In Britain as well as in Germany, there is a handful of rich families who live on rent, interest and profit extracted from the labour of the workers. These capitalists are as surely opposed to the workers’ interests as are the foreign capitalists. Anyone who attempts to persuade the workers otherwise is deceiving them.”

R. Palme Dutt in *We Fight for Life* (November,

1940) writes: "The British ruling class are not fighting to liberate the people of Europe from Fascism and reaction. They have always been, for a century and a half, the main stranglers of every popular revolution in every country . . . *The war aims of Churchill for which the British workers are asked to die, are the war aims of British Imperialism, to protect and maintain the domination of the British Empire over a quarter of the world; to smash the rival German Imperialism, and inflict a new super-Versailles, to maintain the reactionary interest of capitalist-class rule against the world Socialist Revolution.*"

Again, R. Palme Dutt in *Labour Monthly*, November 1940. "The danger of a German invasion and conquest last summer was all our imagination or rather a scare put about by Mr. Churchill in order to induce British workers to work longer hours for the interests of capitalists in the 'rich man's war'."

Harry Adams say in pp. 5-6, of *Why Britain Needs a People's Government*, January 1941, "When, therefore, two powerful rivals such as British and German big business go to war, it is only to be expected that they will outdo each other in the ruthless reduction of their workers' standard of living, a process which they accompany by a hullabaloo concerning nobility of sacrifices and the lofty aims of those that enforce them . . . *The international cut-throat competition . . . takes the form of lowering the wage levels and standards of living of their peoples, so that cheap supplies of labour required for the continuation of their war can be obtained.*" p. 9.

Palme Dutt, *Labour Monthly*, April 1941. "The class struggle, so far from being ended with the political truce, rages with unabated fury, but in a one-sided form, being waged with ruthless energy by the exploiters, while workers' organisations are disarmed by their own leaders".

We find references to the Coalition Government as follows:—

"The policy of the Labour Party and the T.U. Congress seeks to place the working class movement unreservedly behind the present foreign policy of the National Government. The workers hate and distrust the National Government, that is why they are fearful about supporting any policy that seems in the slightest way to indicate support for the national Government." (Harry Pollitt, *We Can Stop War*, 1935).

"A pretty parliamentary game. The *Daily Herald* thunders against Chamberlain, but is silent about Churchill. What a man to take under the wing of the Labour Party! He has now two Gallipolis to his credit. Perhaps the Labour leaders will help him carry off a third" (*Daily Worker*, May 10th, 1940).

"Workers are being told that the 'interests of the Nation are at stake'—'War ends all political differences'. But, in actual fact, the Coalition of Labour with Tories is to save capitalism and enable attacks to be made on the workers, which if they were attempted by the Tories alone would meet with stern resistance" (Harry Pollitt, *The War and the Labour Movement*, June 1940).

"Labour's own Daily Newspaper, the *Daily Herald*, hails Churchill as Britain's man of destiny. That is the measure of Labour's shame, the betrayal of every principle of Socialism and Peace. For one thing is now understood by our people, that wherever Churchill speaks or acts, suffering or death are the result, exactly the same as when Hitler speaks or acts" (Harry Pollitt, *Labour Monthly*, December, 1940).

"Fascism only comes to power when working class unity is broken, when the independent class line of fight is abandoned, when the superior strength of the workers is sapped and destroyed by the agents of reaction at the head of the working class organisation. *Fascism comes to power when the reactionary leaders of the Labour Party, in the name of 'National Unity' combine in coalition*

Government with the leaders of Conservatism." p. 107.

"The first condition for the real defence of the people is a powerful, united, and independent working class movement." p. 113. (Palme Dutt, *Labour Monthly*, March, 1941).

Compare this long series of statements of the C.P. with the second statement of the Fascist radio propaganda!

Now for the third point, on the question of a Workers' Government.

(3) Quite early on in the war, the C.P. demanded a Workers' Government. The *Daily Worker*, October 4th, 1939 said, "The tying of the Labour movement to the Government of the Chamberlains and Churchills, strengthens British Imperialism and its war aims. It opens the way to Fascism in Britain. *The struggle of the British people against the Chamberlains and the Churchills is the best way to help the struggle of the German people against Hitler.*"

Palme Dutt in *World News and Views*, June 1st, 1940. "There are only two paths before the workers in this critical time. Either to hasten to the rescue of sinking imperialism, abandoning the class struggle and proclaiming national unity, and to share in its discredit and downfall. This is the Labour policy. This means destruction of the working-class. It means the victory of Fascism from within. *Or to sharpen the fight against Imperialism, the sharper the military situation, and to hasten the advance of new forces as the only way to save the people.*"

World News and Views, October 1940 says, "The coalition Government can give no leadership to the people. Its interests are the class interests of the wealthy enemies of the people. *The people can only save themselves by their own action.*"

Harry Pollitt, *The War and the Labour Movement*, June 1940. "This mighty force can then combine to establish a new Government in Britain . . . Repudiate the surrender to the Churchill Government of every victory won by the Labour movement in the course of its long and glorious history. *End the Coalition of Labour with those who have brought the people to Britain to the verge of disaster . . . End the coalition with the British Imperialists intent on dampening down the mass movement in France, and support the French workers in the struggle against their capitalists . . . How can we sincerely call upon the German workers to overthrow Fascism, and not ourselves strive to win power in Britain . . . The Socialist way was taken by the Russian workers and peasants in 1917. We can also win victory if we keep faith with the traditional workers' policy in imperialist war.*"

Palme Dutt, *We Fight For Life*, November, 1940. "So long as Churchill rules Britain, so long as the British ruling class maintains and fights for the domination of subject nations, so long as they threaten Europe with a new Versailles . . . for so long is the revolutionary struggle held back in Europe . . . but as soon as the British people throw off their Imperialists, the position is reversed. The position and power of reaction in Europe can be undermined."

On January 12th, 1941, a Peoples' "Convention" was born, but this C.P.-controlled child died very soon afterwards, although the official death certificate was not issued until January 7th, 1942. During its short spell of existence, it propagated Eight Points as its programme, one of which read "A Peoples' Government truly representative of the working people and able to command the confidence of working people throughout the world." Point No. 7. In a pamphlet by Harry Adams, *Why Britain Needs a People's Government* on p. 11, we read, "The fact is that our Government must drive the people down to the meanest level of existence, so that it can compete with its rivals; continue the war for its markets and possessions; and still maintain the profits of the rich.

Only a Peoples' Government can guarantee that this process can be halted." Further on, p. 16, "All sections of the people can play their part, by striving with might and main, this minute, to defend the people's interests, to achieve the People's Government."

A Communist Party Bulletin of May 19th, 1941 said, "In this country questioning and criticism is rising against the Churchill Coalition Government and its policy . . . We show that it is necessary to end the domination of the big, propertied interests and Tory machine, which have brought disaster on the people of this country. We are a party of constructive leadership, confident in our power to win the masses to our standard, and to lead the people of this country to the victory of their cause against the whole dying system of capitalist exploitation . . . The Party must go forward for the achievement of a People's Government . . ."

In this host of Communist Party publications, there are obviously many incitements to overthrow Churchill's Government, and establish a Workers' Government. Compare these with demand No. 3 of the Nazi radio station. Again we see the identity of statements.

After this rather exhaustive comparison, let us review other choice bits from Mahon's scribblings. On p. 7 Mahon again quotes the German radio: "Says Hitler's radio on November 16th, 1942: 'We pointed out to you that real nationalisation could only come when the taking over is done by a Government that is 100% Socialist, and 100% responsible to the working-class.'" On p. 14 the C.P. says that the demand of "Nationalisation of the land, mines, banks, transport, and all big industry without compensation" is at "this moment nothing but a diversion from our immediate need—more production and better transport *now* in order to equip the armies necessary for the victorious offensive against Hitler." Yet we see that Point 4 of the People's Convention programme says, "Emergency powers to be used to take over the banks, land, transport, armaments, and other large interests in order to organise our economic life in the interests of the people.!!!"

On p. 17, Mahon seems amazed to think that it is true to "put Laval, Giraud, De Gaulle, Quisling and King Haakon on the same level". Yet the *Daily Worker* of Sept. 27th, 1940, said of De Gaulle, "This reactionary militarist does not speak for the 'Free French' . . . De Gaulle is now a discredited puppet, but his paymasters still toy with the idea that he may have further use. The *Daily Worker* says, "Chuck him out!"

Ivor Montague wrote: "The subsidised De Gaullists, comically named 'Free French', like all fascists and reactionaries make 'abstention from politics and factionalism' the excuse for suppression of all influence of the Popular Front. The bunch of decadents and wealthy wire-pullers in his offices parallels the bunch round Pétain."

Other tit-bits from this "atrocious" of a publication deserve our attention. p. 14 "It is just not true to say that all the officers compose a reactionary caste."! As a Communist remarked to the writer of this article: "there are quite a number of Communists who are officers." Of that, we have NO doubt whatever, considering the way the C.P.'ers crawl and suck-up to the ruling class of this country, by strike-breaking, scabbing, and working harder. We may even live to see the day when Brigadier-General Sir Harry Pollitt, K.C.B., aided by Lieutenant Gallacher, Knight of the Thistle, will lead the gallant "Fireside Fusiliers" into Battle on the Second Front!!!

p. 15. "The vital question for victory is not whether somebody made a profit on them, (arms, guns, tanks, etc.) but are there enough of them?" (!) p. 20. "Sooner or later, we shall have to deal with them, why not Now?" This is a clear incitement to suppress revolutionary activity

of workers. Yes, the booklet is rightly called *Hitler's Agents Exposed*; only Fascists call for suppression of Revolution. It is clear that the C.P. can easily be indicted for the same offences, as it now accuses other groups of doing. If the C.P. policy now is correct, it must have been wrong before Russia entered the war. If, on the other hand, their anti-war policy was right, the present one is a betrayal of the workers.

What, then, are intelligent people to think of all this tortuous lying and deceit that pours off the Communist Press? It must be very obvious that the C.P. cares naught for the people's interests; that the C.P. has shown itself once more to be the treacherous organisation of the Comintern in Britain. "When Uncle Joe says 'Turn', we all turn", that is their guiding policy in a nutshell. For the C.P. to malign revolutionary groups of workers that are endeavouring to bring about the downfall of the exploiting classes, demonstrates the bankruptcy and corruption of the Stalinists. Such must be the role of *all* political parties who want POWER, and control over the people. To seekers of privilege and position, what is the working class but a mere tool to dupe and bemuse by slogans and promises? There can be no scruples, no honesty of purpose, no moral integrity, if one desires POWER and AUTHORITY. The strongest will win, and any method will be used, nay, *must* be used in the fight.

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DEMOCRACY and DIXIE

Cause of Racial Riots in Detroit

THE APPEARANCE OF thousands of coloured troops from America, in this country, has given many English people their first inkling of the so-called "colour problem" that exists in the United States. Relying for information upon the biased reportage of the National Press, their ignorance of prevailing conditions among America's Negro population is hardly surprising. That the Negroes number thirteen millions is to most, news in itself. The disclosure that they are intelligent human beings, not addicted to rape, would be a revelation.

With the arrival of coloured troops, tales of discriminatory practices and petty persecution began to circulate. Newspapers printed accounts of racial strife in the U.S. Army, while one of the bolder columnists hinted at Washington pressure exerted upon Whitehall to prevent the British "fraternizing" with Negroes, thus "spoiling them" for the time when they must resume their traditional role of caste inferiors.



Of late, rigid censorship must have been imposed, for although we receive reports from all parts of the country, of race friction, leading frequently to violence, these disturbances are seldom mentioned in the daily press. Similarly—in the matter of news from the States, our "dailies" have exercised the utmost discretion in reporting the Negroes' bitter struggle for social and economic justice, with its resultant strikes and riots. However, from time to time there occur outbreaks of such magnitude, that even the daily press are forced to pay attention to them. Then, it is customary for the press to carry out the traditional policy of misleading public opinion. Either the accounts are inaccurate, with important data omitted, or facts are presented badly, with no analysis attempted and no conclusions drawn.

The recent rioting in Detroit, Michigan is an example in point. Conflicting accounts appeared in dozens of papers. No less conflicting were the reasons given for this outbreak of race-war that caused at least thirty people (twenty-seven of whom were Negroes) to lose their lives and over 700 to sustain injury. One report claimed, that the riot broke out after an altercation between a white man and a Negro at Belle Idle Bridge. Another said a Negro woman and child had been murdered; subsequently this was denied. Yet another attributed the outbreak to professional "fifth columnists", while another quotes the head of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who stated that the trouble was caused by "kids" of 14 to 18 years of age! Only those reports which explain that appalling social conditions, jim crow rule, and Ku Klux activity constituted the background of the riots, should be considered when seeking the explanation of this latest example of racial strife.

As a result of the War, large scale immigration from the South of both white and coloured workers, has resulted in increasing tension. The Southern attitude to the Negro has been instilled into many white factory workers, who had previously remained immune from such reactionary propaganda. One result has been an outbreak of strikes to prevent Negroes earning wages equal to whites, or learning skilled trades. In the *News Chronicle* of June 8th, the following appeared:

• "The Ku Klux Klan objecting to three Negroes being allowed to work on the assembly lines at the Packard Co. Works in Detroit was responsible for a

four-day strike at the works. An unnamed number of employees have been suspended as a result of the strike."

The Ku Klux Klan, the secret Black Legion, and other American fascist organisations have been at work in Detroit and other industrial centres spreading the poison of Southern caste system. It is also possible that their agents play on the grievances of the Negroes who—overflowing from their dilapidated ghettos and forcibly barred from living elsewhere, denied the privileges promised by the Fair Employment Practices—are naturally in a very bitter frame of mind. If Roosevelt is so concerned at the loss of working hours one wonders why he does not take action against the Ku Klux Klan. In actual fact of course, Roosevelt knows that this would offend the Southern Senators upon whom he relies for support, and like all politicians is not prepared to lose power because of injustices to workers. He prefers to bring out the troops, 1100 of whom "restored order" in Detroit with the aid of guns and tear gas. It is important to note that of 1300 persons arrested 83 per cent. were Negroes. Besides, such organisations as the Ku Klux Klan may be useful later to help quell revolt among workers who realise how they have been tricked into the present imperialist war.

Undoubtedly the deplorable housing conditions are a very large contributory factor to the discontent prevailing. In February of 1942 a new housing estate was ready for occupation by Negro tenants, helping to relieve congestion and the slum conditions prevailing in the area. However, one Sunday morning, when the selected two hundred Negro families attempted to move in, white residents arrived in force and commenced hurling bricks at the coloured folk. They erected barriers across the entrance to the Estate, and destroyed vans containing the furniture of the Negroes moving in. The police watched all this without raising a hand. Once the coloured people attempted to defend themselves, and tear down the barricades, they went into action. A riot ensued, and 109 persons were arrested; only two of those arrested were white, and once again the police force showed their reactionary role.

At this time the C.I.O. were quick to act, and

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a picket line of hundreds of C.I.O. trade unionists were thrown round the City Hall demanding the release of the Negro Workers and a Government enquiry into the incident. Bitter experience of white and coloured workers against Ford and the Auto barons had taught them the necessity of class unity. A check-up of motor-car number plates showed that some of the "indignant white neighbours" had travelled from places 25 miles away to foment race hatred.

It is the duty of American workers to oppose the Fascist propaganda of the Ku Klux Klan, Silver Shirts and Black Legion, not forgetting the roman catholic hack, Father Coughlin. Race antagonism is one of the oldest methods of splitting the workers, and only the capitalists benefit. In a revolutionary situation there is no doubt that the reactionaries would play up this latent hatred as much as possible in an attempt to evade the fate which they so richly deserve. As Anarchists we oppose race hatred of any variety. The workers' enemy is the same in every country—the capitalist class and their labour lackeys who impose state tyranny in the name of democracy. In a free, anarchist society, race hatred would be a thing of the past.

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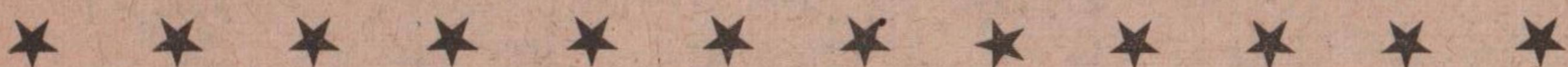
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★ Books on Russia ★



“MISSION TO MOSCOW” by JOSEPH E. DAVIES, United States Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1936 to 1938.

THIS BOOK is, as it is described in the subtitle: “A record of confidential dispatches to the State Department, official and personal correspondence, current diary and journal entries, including notes and comments up to October, 1941”. This pot-pourri of important documents, allowing us to peep into the mysterious realm of diplomacy, and of sometimes quite irrelevant letters to family and friends, makes at the same time fascinating and tedious reading. Fascinating in as much as one watches the roles of “defenders of democracy”, civilization and so forth being played in the higher governmental spheres where one might have thought that plainer language is used as there is nobody to fool. Tedious because the book is full of repetitions: the same incident might be related several times in almost identical terms in despatches and letters to friends. There is also a great deal of quite irrelevant and insignificant matter, such as vague and boring conversations with unnamed diplomats, cuttings, wireless reports, etc. The passages which deal with Russia's regime are, however, interesting and the analysis is often penetrating.

Ambassador Davies was not long in realizing that communist principles had been abandoned in Russia and as a believer in capitalism he rejoiced to see a return to the profit system. Everywhere, at the top in factory management, and at the bottom at the bench, directors and workers are urged on by the desire to earn more money.

After having seen how the Commissars lived (they “certainly treat themselves well”), he spares us the idiotic assertion of many writers on Russia that the Soviet Union is a “Classless society”. He emphatically declares: “The idea of a “classless” society has been and is being destroyed in practice. The government itself is a bureaucracy with all the indicia of class, to wit: special privileges, higher standard of living, and the like. An illustration is found in the fact that the only caviar which can be obtained here is served to the high government officials or possibly obtained as a matter of favour through the Kremlin restaurant, which is provided for the high governmental officials living therein”.

A film based on Ambassador Davies' book *Mission to Moscow* has been made and has recently been shown in the U.S.A. A book made up of official reports and scraps from letters does not seem to be very suitable for the making of a film but Hollywood experts have done the trick. The reason for producing such a film is given by the American magazine *Life* (10/5/43) which describes the film as follows: “Davies' movie whitewashes Russia Beyond entertainment value, the movie has a serious political mission—to sell Soviet Russia to suspicious American citizens. To this end the U.S.S.R., its leaders and its foreign politics are whitewashed to a degree far exceeding Davies' book. Russians are made to look and act like residents of Kansas City, and the American standard of living appears to prevail throughout the Soviet Union. The complicated history of international diplomacy is reduced to terms of lily-white virtue and blackest villany.”

In the film Mr. Davies is shown visiting wounded Chinese children which had been taken to Russia after the occupation of Nanking, although Mr. Davies never made such a visit. But we guess that there are many passages in the book which our film technicians have not cared to illustrate. This one for example: “There is scarcely a day but what our American chauffeur ‘Charlie’ Giliberti is approached on the streets by some American who has taken out Soviet citizenship and who pleads that he intercede with the American authorities to help him to get back home. A thousand communists came here in 1934-35 from Austria, so I am told by the Austrian Minister, took up citizenship in the promised land, cannot get out, and are all bending every effort to get back home’. Or this description of the terrorist methods used by the Soviet Government: “The Terror here is a horrifying fact. There are many evidences here in Moscow that there is a fear that reaches down into and haunts all sections of the community. No household, however humble, apparently but what lives in constant fear of a nocturnal raid by the secret police (usually between one and three in the early morning). Once the person is taken away, nothing of him or her is known for months—and many times never—thereafter. Evidences of these conditions come from many sources. They are: statements made to myself or members of the

staff from first hand witnesses; statements based on actual personal observations of members of the staff (as in one instance, the sight of a struggling unfortunate being arrested and torn from his eleven-year-old child on the street in front of the adjoining apartment house at 3.30 a.m.) . . .

This book is not worth 15 hard earned shillings (for those who can't get it through the Left Book Club) but you can probably borrow it from your library. It needs a bit of patience but it is worth reading.

“THE RED ARMY” by FRANK MAITLAND. 14pp. 3d.

THIS PAMPHLET analyses the formation and record of the Red Army from the point of view of the Communist Opposition. Maitland believes that Sovietism is the best defence of the Soviet Union but his sovietism is the one of Lenin and Trotsky rather than the sovietism of the Russian workers and peasants who formed the workers' councils in 1917. He therefore adopts the view that the organisation of the workers' and peasants' militias into the Red Army was an important factor in the winning of the revolution. He completely forgets the reactionary role played by the newly formed, Party controlled Red Army in the crushing of the Kronstadt revolt, in the annihilation of the Makhnovist movement, in the suppression of strikes. A. Souchy's article in the July 1942 issue of *War Commentary* gives ample proof of the counter-revolutionary activities of the Red Army under the leadership of Trotsky.

We also cannot agree with Maitland when he approves of Trotsky's use of the “intelligent and trustworthy elements in the old officer class” and asserts that “Trotsky showed that the new army remade the officers; the officers did not remake the army”. This interpretation does not take into account facts.

Again discarding all evidence by observers of the Russian people, Maitland believes that the Soviet campaign is inspired by the revolutionary idea: “proletarians and peasants continue to fight expending their tremendous energies and yielding their lives to achieve a *substitute* for socialism”. That substitute is not, from the evidence before us, the revolutionary idea but love for the fatherland, Russian nationalism. And it is the Sovietism which Maitland defends which has created the situation existing in Russia to-day, that sovietism which puts the interests of a party, of a class and of a country above the interests of the Russian peasant and worker.

M. L. B.

Vive Gigaulle ?

IF ONE COULD have compassion for politicians one would certainly pity de Gaulle. One thing alone, the sight of him marching behind the King's car with his Majesty and Giraud in it, while the former was visiting French troops in North Africa, must have been heart breaking. It was a tragic epilogue to three years of beautiful friendship.

When France fell de Gaulle was received with open arms by our politicians here. He was petted and boosted by the whole apparatus of the Governmental advertising machinery, till he appeared as the real leader of the French people. He is now told, fairly plainly, that his existence is a source of embarrassment to the Allied Governments.

According to "well informed" circles his troubles come from the fact that the Americans never liked him. Roosevelt's administration has been notoriously pro-Vichyite and now that they have been forced to change their line they, of course, prefer Giraud to de Gaulle; he reminds them more of the much regretted Darlan. Giraud has himself been guilty of a certain amount of collaboration with Vichy, while de Gaulle's clean record in that respect is standing as an eternal reproach.

While the Press was treating Giraud and de Gaulle as naughty children quarrelling over a broken toy or as lovers who can't make up their minds, American and British officials in North Africa were doing their best to muddle matters and prevent any kind of agreement between the two generals. When the situation was too bad to last they presented the French with an ultimatum. General Eisenhower de-

clared that, whatever the decisions of the Committee of National Liberation would be, the American and British governments would not take the slightest notice of them: General Giraud had to remain in charge of French Forces in North Africa. The Free French must have been gifted with prophecy when they changed their name, it is pretty obvious that they are not allowed to manage their own affairs but that they can do the fighting.

The Allies have made it clear that the Committee of National Liberation must be a tool in their hands and must do nothing to go against the wishes of General Eisenhower. The Committee which claims to liberate the French people is not only a creation of the two rival generals and not of the French people, but is also manoeuvred from London and Washington. Now General Giraud is reported to be going to America, probably to get his orders straight from the horse's mouth.

It is characteristic that Allied intervention in French matters was hushed up in the press. While a great amount of space was given to the de Gaulle-Giraud quarrels, Allied intervention was mentioned in a few words. Even the de Gaullist Press in London closed their eyes to the whole affair. They are put in a humiliating position and have not the courage to admit it, or to protest against it.

The attitude of the Allies towards the French is perfectly understandable from a political point of view. As long as the exiled French leaders are divided, the British and the Americans can rule them as they choose. Eisenhower is obviously playing one French General against the other so as to remain master of the situation. It is also understandable that Giraud should be the favourite. He has proved he is ready to compromise, he has kept many of his Vichyite collaborators and has therefore no strict principles. Who can collaborate with Vichy can collaborate with Washington. The last thing the Allies want to see is a free and independent France who, under the leadership of de Gaulle, will also be intensely nationalistic and will want to reconquer its former prestige, its colonies and a powerful army. De Gaulle with his plans for organising a strong, modernly equipped army represents a danger; the Allies have no wish to have to fear France in the future and perhaps to have to ally themselves with Germany!

The North African events have been a most valuable lesson. They have proved, as we have always said, that exile governments were only the puppets of the Allies, quislings with another name. No doubt the French people will find in them a new reason for distrusting politicians in whatever pay they may be and rely only on themselves for their own liberation.

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