

NOTES OF THE MONTH

Fascism and Anti-Fascism—The Critical Stage—Constitutional Illusions—National Government and Fascism—Workers' Rising Resistance—The Outcry of the Bourgeoisie—Fascism as the Irregular Army of the Bourgeoisie—The Fascist Trinity—The Black Hundreds' Army—Olympia—Gilmour's Apologia—Rôle of Police—Rôle of Magistracy—After Olympia—Bourgeois Panic—New Laws against Workers—"Freedom of Speech"—Labour Party's Rôle—"Non-Resistance"—Organise the Anti-Fascist Front

THE struggle in Britain between the working class and Fascism, supported and protected by the State, has entered into a new and sharper stage since the events at Olympia on June 7. Despite all the prophecies to the contrary, the course of the development of Fascism in Britain shows obvious similarities to the other countries in Europe ; the myth of the imagined immunity of Britain from such disorders is following the fate of the other myths of the long vanished British isolation. In view of this situation it is urgent that all should face with open eyes the issues involved. It is of life-and-death importance for the entire working class movement to understand from the outset, without illusions, the character of the fight now opening, which will be decisive for the whole future in Britain. *Either the working-class movement will destroy Fascism and its violence, or Fascism will destroy the working-class movement.* Between these two alternatives there is no halfway house. This is no welcome truth to those who still cling to the dwindling island of "democratic" illusions of the "impartiality" of the State and of classless "law and order." But realities cannot be conjured out of existence, merely because they are unwelcome. The advance, on the one hand, of British capitalism to increasingly Fascist forms (of which

the open organisation of a Blackshirt Army and its black-guardism is only one of the expressions and symptoms), and the resistance, on the other, of the working class to fight such advance, are realities which are considerably stronger than legal forms or constitutional illusions.

LET there be no mistake. It is the existence of the working-class movement that is at stake. The gangsterism which has begun its exploits on the bodies of questioners and interrupters at a meeting, will rapidly, as in other countries, extend its operations to wider and wider fields, if it is not resisted. Such resistance will never come, save in form and pretence, from the State, legal and police authorities ; for these are in fact bound up with the whole advancing attack upon the workers. If the workers let themselves be weakened in their resistance ; if they let themselves be confused by the present cloud of Conservatives' and National Government Ministers' protestations "deprecating" the Fascist violence which they have in fact permitted and protected, and of which their present protestations are only the verbal smokescreen ; if they let themselves be led astray by the Labour Party line of "Trust the Police," "Freedom for Fascism," "No United Front" : this will mean the destruction and enslavement of the working class as surely as the same line led to the victory of Hitler in Germany. The fight against Fascism is not a mere political discussion against verbal and ideological adversaries ; it is at the same time a fight against a movement of organised violence whose avowed object is physically to destroy the working-class movement. In this fight there can be no compromise. The examples of Germany and Italy should have taught this lesson. *Fascism must be, and can be, defeated in its early stages by the power of the mass movement, and in no other way.*

THE greatest danger confronting the anti-Fascist fight is the constitutional illusion. Under cover of the constitutional illusion Fascism grew to power in Germany and Italy. The workers were told by the bourgeois and reformist leaders to place their trust in the state and in the police ; and meanwhile

the state and the police were in fact, as a host of official and semi-official evidence and testimony of independent witnesses has since revealed, actively engaged in assisting and promoting the growth of the Fascist forces, and acting only against the working-class defence. The cry for strengthening the powers of the State and the police, for the Law for the Defence of the Republic, for emergency powers, resulted only in these powers being used, not against Fascism, but against the working class. The Storm Troops were left free, while the workers' Red Front was suppressed. *The same process has begun in Britain.* The bourgeois state authorities have permitted Fascism to form and equip its private armies unmolested, and to exercise their violence without let or hindrance from the partisans of "law and order." When the workers have demonstrated their protest, the result has been a display of gangsterism which has aroused a shocked outcry from widespread strata of the population. But this outcry is being immediately used to rush through measures, not to suppress Fascism and its private armies, but to suppress the anti-Fascist opposition, to strengthen police powers against interrupters at meetings, that is, against the workers. Thus the classic process of Fascism goes forward in Britain on exactly parallel lines to the development in Germany and Italy.

IT is vital to learn the lesson from these countries and to see the real character of the fight against Fascism. It is a very narrow view which sees only the gangsterism that has aroused so widespread an outcry, and does not see where the *real responsibility* lies—with the National Government, with the state, police, legal and judicial authorities, which have protected the growth of Fascism at every stage, and with the leaders of finance-capital, who have fostered, subsidised and built up the growth of the Blackshirts, just as Czarism built up the Black Hundreds. *To see the rabble of the Black Hundreds and not to see Czarism*—this is the cardinal error of all the "respectable" people who are raising such a verbal outcry to "deplore" the excesses of Fascism (as if Fascism could exist without "excesses"!), and calling at once for strengthened

police powers as the solution, without seeing that they are thereby calling for the strengthening of the enemy, for the strengthening of Fascism, without seeing that the real criminal is "respectable society" itself, which breeds and fosters the rats and vermin for its protection, that the real enemies are MacDonal, Baldwin, Rothermere and Deterding, and not merely their tools. This is the heart of the situation which governs the line of the fight against Fascism.

THE mass of the workers and the petty bourgeoisie have witnessed with growing amazement the toleration and protection of the Government and high authorities for Fascism. They have seen how the bourgeois state authorities have resisted every proposal to check or interfere with the private armies of Fascism. They have before their eyes the example of what the unchecked growth of Fascism has led to in Germany and Italy, in despotism and terror and the suppression of every right of political expression and organisation. In spite of the century-old training in legalism and "democratic" illusions, the actions of the bourgeois state authorities are to-day teaching them the lesson, are driving home to the blindest, that *they have no other course save to take their defence in their own hands*. In the face of all the present experience, in the face of the lessons of Germany and Austria and Italy, in the face of what is now developing in Britain, the working masses are revealing *a rising anger and indignation and determination by every means to prevent the growth of Fascism in Britain*. And they are a hundred times right in their determination. The anti-fascist counter-demonstration at Olympia has shown the true path of the fight against Fascism. The anti-fascist demonstrators, by their courage and at the cost of their own bodies, have opened the eyes of millions to the real character of Fascism. It is solely thanks to their stand that the present universal outcry against Fascism has developed, where before there was silence or indifference or amused toleration ("Laugh, and Fascism Will Die," as the *Daily Herald* said). But let none mistake the outcry for the fight. The anti-fascist demonstrators at Olympia have shown the united front in action, and

have laid the foundations for a broad Anti-Fascist Front throughout Britain, which can sweep Fascism out of existence.

TO-DAY the rising anger and strength of active resistance of the working class has startled the bourgeoisie. Hence the sudden outburst of noisy protestations of all the respectable bigwigs and Government Ministers who themselves bear the heaviest responsibility and have laughed out of court every proposal to check the private armies of Fascism. *Not the Fascist violence, but the resistance of the working class has thrown them into alarm.* The workers will do well not to let themselves be lulled by all these vociferous protestations of all the "respectable" people—which have at all times and in all countries accompanied, but never checked, the growth of Fascist violence. They will do well to watch the actions of these gentlemen rather than their words. For the "solution" proposed by them, one and all, Conservative and Labour alike, is—to extend the powers of the police. What does this mean? The situation was that the violence of the police outside Olympia *accompanied* the violence of the Fascists inside Olympia, but never checked the violence of the Fascists. The difficulty was not that the police lacked powers; the difficulty was that the police only exercised their powers against, and only arrested, the workers and anti-Fascists who were trying to protect themselves, and never the Fascists who were making the attack. The grand "solution" proposed for this difficulty is to increase the powers of the police, that is, to strengthen Fascism.

IT is essential for the workers to see clearly the character and strategy of the enemy they have to fight. For the enemy is not merely the Blackshirts; the workers could easily deal with these, despite all their weapons, if it were only a question of these. The problem only arises because the Blackshirts are assisted and protected by the forces of the State, both police and judicial. This is the heart of the problem. The Blackshirt army is in effect a kind of *auxiliary irregular force* of the State—something like the Black and Tans, but with no formal official character—which can on the one hand be used, under the protection of the regular forces, for rough

work not suitable for the regular forces, and can on the other hand be disavowed as often as necessary. Open Fascism is in reality an *unofficial Department of the capitalist state machine*, which is itself preparing the conditions of Fascism in every field. The central enemy is still the National Government, which simultaneously assists and protects the Fascists to organise their forces of violence, at the same time as in public it disavows them.

IN short, the disposition of the enemy the workers have to fight can be expressed diagrammatically in a threefold scheme. In the centre is the National Government, the state machine and the police forces, which provide the main basis of the dictatorship and of the offensive against the workers. On one wing of these are the open forces of Fascism, whose rôle at present is to carry out the advance skirmishing and guerilla warfare. On the other wing are the forces of Social Fascism, of the Labour Party leadership, whose rôle is to break up the resistance of the workers by preaching passivity, freedom for Mosley, trust in the Government, increase of police powers, &c. Only when this threefold front of the enemy is clearly seen can the anti-fascist fight be successfully fought.

THIS is the disposition of forces which was powerfully exposed to all by the events at Olympia. Let us note first the flagrant rôle of the police and state authorities in relation to the open forces of Fascism. The Blackshirt army, whose bullying exploits at Olympia shocked observers and witnesses from all strata of the population, did not spring from the sky overnight. It had been continuously organised for close on two years. Yet the Government and police authorities, who had full knowledge of its development, who could have checked it at any time if they had wished, permitted it to be organised without interference. *Is it for a moment conceivable that if a similar working-class force had been organised, with uniforms, with barracks, with semi-military training, manoeuvres and marching in formation, and with open preparation for violence, it would have been thus left unmolested?* Yet the Government resisted every attempt to interfere with its growth, and thus

constituted itself the patron-protector of Fascism, just as on the international field it constituted itself the patron-protector of German Fascist re-armament. When the question was raised in the debate in the House of Lords on February 27, the Government spokesman, Lord Faversham, replied that in the opinion of the Government

It was unnecessary for any great action to be taken to restrict such parties.

When on May 16 the resolution proposing a ban on political uniforms, as in a number of other countries, was introduced, it found no supporter in any section, and did not even reach a division.

The whole debate was good-humoured, great laughter having been aroused by a previous question concerning alleged rioting. (*Times*, May 17, 1934.)

Within three weeks of that debate the character of the Black-shirt army was to be further demonstrated, including to many of the "good-humoured" legislators, and the "great laughter" began to give place to a considerable dismay at the rising anger and resistance of the working class.

THE rôle of the police at Olympia was only the continuation of this policy. "On no account to interfere with the Blackshirts"—this, according to the statement of a constable reported by a correspondent in the *New Statesman and Nation* (June 16, 1934), was the instruction officially issued to the men on duty. The account may be quoted for the light thrown by this eye-witness on the rôle of the police :

I was walking down Blythe Road to the south of Olympia, where police were standing shoulder to shoulder across the closed gates of the exit. The gates were opened, and the spectators on the opposite side of the road could see inside one man being viciously beaten and kicked by a dozen or more Blackshirts. Presently the victim was hurled out of the gate in a semi-conscious condition, his face almost pulp and a large gash in his neck. He staggered across the road, and as he did so the police obligingly closed the iron gates. A number of the spectators rushed across to the police and asked why they did not make an arrest for this aggravated assault. The police told us to keep quiet. We offered our services in the appropriation of the perpetrators—as by law

good citizens, witnesses of the commission of a crime, are obliged to do. We called upon the police to do their duty, and were threatened with arrest. Shortly after, mounted police drove us back to the other side of the road, the injured man being half-carried, half-dragged from the horses' feet by a few spectators. What makes the whole proceedings tragically absurd was that one of our number, a young man, was arrested and subsequently charged and fined for "obstructing the police in the execution of their duty."

Later in the evening, during conversation with police officers at a local station, the arrested man was informed by one constable that they had received instructions, "on no account to interfere with the Blackshirts." (Richard Jefferies in the *New Statesman and Nation*, June 16, 1934.)

THE Home Secretary, Gilmour, has subsequently stated that the police were powerless to prevent the Black Hundreds' brutality (and therefore, no doubt, compelled as an alternative to arrest their anti-fascist victims and any members of the public who protested), on the grounds that by a ruling of a Departmental Committee of 1909 the police have no power to intervene unless "by leave of the promoters of the meeting or when they have reason to believe that a breach of the peace is being committed." By this little sleight-of-hand the agitation against Fascist brutality is neatly turned by the Home Secretary into a proposal to increase the powers of the police over working-class meetings and against working-class interrupters at meetings. The hypocrisy of this "explanation" of the rôle of the police is glaring. The uniformed police outside could witness plenty of bloody and semi-conscious bodies being flung out by the Fascists; the uniformed police in the precincts were witnesses of the beating up outside the hall; the plainclothes men in the hall could see the rest. Yet they had "no reason to believe that a breach of the peace was being committed." No doubt, if a corpse had been flung out of a window, it would have still appeared an obscure and knotty point to the police whether this might not have been due to natural causes. Such is the subtle argumentation presented by a conservative Home Secretary to a docile House of Commons to cover up the glaringly obvious relations of the

police and Fascism. Once again, is it conceivable for a moment that, if a workers' meeting has been engaged in beating up in this way a set of Conservative Members of Parliament, the police would have found such insurmountable technical difficulties preventing them from intervening, or a Conservative Home Secretary would have been at pains to hunt up such transparently inapplicable administrative quibbles to justify their rôle ?

HOWEVER, the police were not inactive. They arrested twenty-three anti-fascists and members of the public who protested against the Fascist brutality, but not a single Fascist. With regard to this point, the Home Secretary stated: "I am not aware whether those taken up by the police were Fascists or not." It is evident that this was pure chance, or rather, a mathematically very striking series of twenty-three pure chances, that all those arrested were anti-fascists or non-partisan members of the public, and never Fascists. However, more light is thrown on these arrests by the statements of the men arrested, as in the case already quoted above of the man who protested at police inaction in front of Fascist brutality and was promptly arrested. For the essential fact of Olympia was that it was a case of *combined* violence of the police and Fascism, *a division of labour*, with the Fascists operating inside the hall and the police outside. On this the evidence of all the independent witnesses is agreed. With regard to inside the hall, we have the statement of G. Barry on the wireless, that "not in any case did the violence originate with the members of the audience." For outside, we have the statement of Lord Berners and his friend, C. V. Jackson, the physicist, who, innocently in search of their car, found themselves unexpected victims of the police. Lord Berners stated in the court: "The crowd were not rioting. They were singing a very dreary song which he believed was called the 'Internationale.'" In the midst of this crowd, to whose non-violent behaviour he thus testified, Lord Berners found himself set upon by the police and "knocked down and crushed up against the railings" by them. "A policeman said 'get out'

and hit me over the head with some sort of weapon like a sword.” His friend, Jackson, protested, and immediately found himself under arrest: “To my horror I was taken to the police station. I was amazed when the police started hitting me and digging me in the ribs with sticks.” It is a fortunate accident by which these two highly surprised bourgeois were thus turned into valuable historical witnesses of the rôle of the police as the allies of Fascist violence against the workers. It is not to be wondered at that the Home Secretary was above all insistent that “no inquiry” should take place. “A public inquiry was unnecessary and undesirable.” (Gilmour in the House of Commons, June 14.)

NO less important is the rôle of the magistracy revealed by the whole episode. According to the Conservative Member of Parliament, R. T. Bower, in the *Times* (June 12, 1934), repeating the general line of the law textbooks:

As the law stands, it is the duty of any member of the public to arrest at once any one who in his presence commits a treason or felony or dangerous wounding; he may use all force that is necessary to prevent the crime or to prevent the offender from escaping; he may also arrest any one who is on the point of committing such an offence if such arrest is necessary to prevent the crime from being committed. He may also arrest any one committing a breach of the peace in his presence.

Such was the bourgeois law before Fascism. Now, however, as already seen in the case quoted above (letter of R. Jefferies), members of the public who protested to the police at their inaction in the face of Fascist violence were arrested and sentenced. Another member of the public who stated that he intervened to protect a victim of Fascist violence was also arrested and sentenced. The magistrate did not question the facts. But he laid down the law as follows:

It may be that altogether excessive and indefensible violence was used in ejecting people from Olympia. I do not know. It may well be that you may have witnessed something that aroused your sympathy and your indignation. But you should know that it is quite impossible to allow individuals to take the law into their own hands.

The bourgeois law, it will be seen, is highly pliable to suit the purpose of Fascism.

WHAT follows Olympia? There is a considerable outcry at the unlimited Black Hundreds' brutality revealed. Many disinterested witnesses are sincerely shocked and give evidence. Immediately the leader of the Black Hundreds, Mosley, is given full facilities on the governmental broadcasting monopoly; no Communist, representative of the counter-demonstration or of the victims is given facilities. The Government expresses its concern at what has taken place, its anxiety that there should be no inquiry, and its determination to take all necessary measures to deal in future with interrupters at Fascist meetings. The other parties concur in these excellent intentions, and promise their co-operation in drawing up the new legislation. Thus the public outcry against Fascist brutality and the connivance of the Government and police with Fascism is skilfully turned by the Government, with the complaisant aid of the Labour Party, into an agitation against working-class interrupters at meetings and to increase the powers of the Government and police. Well might MacDonal, Baldwin and Gilmour rub their hands over a successful day's work. The public indignation against Fascism is adroitly utilised to assist the advance to Fascism.

THE real meaning of the bourgeois drive after Olympia is thus rapidly laid bare. On the one hand, the outcry of leading members of the bourgeoisie and of some Government Ministers undoubtedly represented a real alarm at the rising anger and resistance of the workers, a fear that the too extreme and reckless terrorism of the Fascist gangsters might provoke a wave of mass resistance of the working class, and a consequent anxious sense of the necessity, not to suppress Fascism, but at any rate temporarily to moderate Fascism. Thus the Conservative, Anstruther-Gray, put the question in Parliament

whether, in view of the fact that unnecessary violence, such as that shown by persons wearing political uniforms at Olympia on June 7, *will inevitably provoke retaliation*, the Government will give an early date for the discussion of measures to avert this menace to public order and political goodwill.

The same fear is expressed in the *Daily Telegraph* editorial on June 12:

Violence inside a meeting leads straight to *reprisals* without. Fascism actually begets the Communism which it is ostensibly

designed to overthrow. At this moment Sir Oswald Mosley is easily the best recruiting sergeant for the Communist Party.

Here speaks the fear of the moderate bourgeoisie at the two-edged sword of Fascism: let us, they say in effect, beware of provoking too soon by "unnecessary violence" this patient, hitherto peaceful, beast of burden, the British working class, on whose backs we ride, lest we rouse its anger and it overthrow us; when the time comes that it becomes at last necessary to establish a Fascist dictatorship as the last resort, let it be done with careful preparation and in due form.

If during the next few years Parliament has to shut up shop for a short time, a temporary Dictator here will act in the King's name with the King's forces. (*Observer*, June 10, 1934.)

ON the other hand, as the necessary complement to this, the *political aim* resultant from the fear of the rising anger and resistance of the working class, is to increase the powers of the Government and police against the working class, that is, to carry in reality a stage further the advance to Fascism. The occasion of the Olympia episode is utilised to rush through "with the agreement of all parties" (including consultation of the Government with Mosley, whose relations to the Government may be compared with the relations of "First Murderer" to a Shakespearian King), a measure for the police control of all meetings—fit pendant to the Sedition Bill. The former democratic right of meetings to be free from the presence and control of the uniformed police is to be suspended, and in its place is to be established the old Kaiser or Austrian system. And this—crowning irony—is to be done in the name of "freedom of speech."

HOW is this amazing inversion of all logic and common sense achieved that, in the name of "freedom of speech," the right of public meeting is to be suspended and subjected henceforth to direct police control? It follows automatically from the peculiar bourgeois theory of what they mean by "freedom of speech." By "freedom of speech" they mean that the workers must listen like docile, obedient sheep in regimented silence whenever a noble, respected

bourgeois chooses to get on his hindlegs to air his caste-theories and generally put them in their place. The workers, however, being human, have a different conception of "freedom of speech." They actually mean "freedom of *their* speech." If they go to a meeting, they wish to express their view, and if their view is strong, the expression may not be parliamentary. Still more, if the speaker happens to be of the persuasion of those who are proposing to gag and bludgeon the workers into slavery with wholesale murders and atrocities, as in Germany or Italy, it is not surprising if the workers consider that such have not any right to "freedom of speech." Certainly, if the German workers can once get Hitler in their power, they will soon make an end of his "freedom of speech," however much the Social Democratic leaders may plead for him; on the other hand, they will give plenty of "freedom of speech" to Thaelmann. All this is no doubt profoundly shocking to the fair-minded British bourgeoisie, fresh from bludgeoning all pretence of "freedom of speech" in India and the colonies. If, however, they could temporarily by a miracle get outside their own skins of their own select minority, for whom alone they in reality demand "freedom of speech," they might begin to understand the matter in this way. When a worker gets up in a workers' meeting and begins to say things that seem to him and his audience eminently plain, fair and reasonable, but appear to the bourgeoisie execrable, outrageous and, in short, "seditious," the bourgeoisie have a very short way of making an end of his "freedom of speech"—witness the present cases in which leaders of the workers are at present under trial for having advocated alleged revolutionary doctrines at an obscure little meeting in South Wales, and are threatened with prison for it. But when a bourgeois gets up and begins to say things that appear to the workers, including his audience, even more execrable and outrageous, the workers have no such handy weapon (at present) for dealing with him; they have only their own voices to express their view. And now the bourgeoisie wants to take even these away from them—in the name of "freedom of speech." But the highly freedom-loving present-day bourgeoisie must not be surprised if the workers are inclined

to receive their plea with angry contempt, when a Government which is engaged in pressing through the Sedition Bill dares to speak of "freedom of speech."

THE most despicable rôle in this whole process is that of the Labour Party chiefs. With one accord they have leapt to the service of the bourgeoisie on this issue, in the name of the slogan of "freedom of speech" (for Mosley!), denounced the Communists and militant workers who dared to interrupt the sacred Mosley, and declared their readiness to "co-operate" with the National Government in extending police powers and framing the new police regulations of meetings. The National Joint Council officials' statement anxiously inquires "whether police powers are sufficient" or "whether further legislation is required to safeguard freedom of speech," and "repudiates entirely every form of organised interruption at public meetings." When even the bourgeois press and spokesmen found themselves compelled to denounce the atrocities of the Fascists, the Labour M.P., F. R. West, came forward to blame the Communists: "The Communists by smashing Blackshirt meetings are as usual aiding the Fascists. We, of the Labour Party, do not fear the effect of Mosley's speeches. In any event let him be heard." Hamilton Fyfe, former editor of the *Daily Herald*, writes to the *Times* to attack the "organised interrupters," "bands of young men, mostly Jews," "they got what they wanted." The *Daily Herald* reports the Labour Party co-operation with the National Government (June 15, 1934):

It is understood that Party leaders will be prepared to take part in the All-Party Conference suggested by the Home Secretary in order that when the Bill is brought on to the floor of the House it may go through as an agreed measure.

The *Times* maliciously comments:

It is understood that the Labour Party will also agree, provided that the final responsibility for introducing the necessary legislation remains with the Government of the day. Some of the more moderate Labour members have suffered heavily at the hands of the Communist wing, and they will welcome the chance of an orderly meeting quite as much as members of the other parties.

Keir Hardie would have no doubt looked forward to the glorious day when Labour Party members would be taken under the wing of a Conservative Government and its police to be secured an "orderly" hearing from the workers. The rôle of Social Fascism is the necessary complement to the rôle of the National Government, of the police and judiciary, and of open Fascism, laid bare by the Olympia episode and the following intensified drive against the workers.

THE line of Social Fascism means in fact for the workers the line of passive defeatism and of the victory of Fascism. Be passive, the Labour Party leaders preach to the workers ; beware of the united front ; stay at home like wise men ; do not get beaten up ; let Mosley carry on his meetings and provocations and organise his armies and go step by step along the path of Mussolini and Hitler without resistance ; for us is reserved the nobler rôle of German Social Democracy, to hold back the workers to the last, and then quietly to pass out or pass over without a struggle. But in view of the outcome of this line in Germany and elsewhere the Labour Party leaders must not be surprised if the workers are little inclined to listen to these counsels of non-resistance, and may prefer to reply to the Labour Party leaders : " Most noble Gandhi-Lansbury and Gandhi-Henderson and Gandhi-Morrison, apostles of non-resistance, why not first set the example of non-resistance in India instead of bludgeoning every meeting of five persons with lathis and imprisoning sixty thousand for daring to ask for democratic freedom ? For ourselves, we have observed where the line of Gandhi has led the great mass-movement under his control in India, to the lowest depths of unconditional capitulation, impotence and degradation ; and we have no wish to repeat this path here for the benefit of Fascism. On the contrary, we shall fight with all our power already to-day, before Fascism is strong, while we have still hands and heads and hearts to fight with, before we are all locked up or otherwise disposed of by Fascism ; and we shall call with the utmost urgency every working man and woman and boy and girl to the common struggle, every little clerk and shopkeeper, every

student and intellectual, and even every gentleman who is not yet utterly corrupt and has a spark of honour left, to help to build the great common anti-fascist front of mass struggle, which shall wipe out the poisonous canker of Fascism in Britain while there is yet time, and help our comrades abroad to overthrow it equally."

TO organise the *Anti-Fascist Front*—this is now the urgent task in Britain. The initiative achieved by the counter-demonstration at Olympia must be followed up. The moment is ripe. The widest sympathy among all strata of the population against Fascism has been won. It is essential now to *organise* this sympathy into practical form. The masses are ready, are showing their readiness all over the country, despite all the alliance of Fascism and the police, and despite the bans of the Labour Party leaders. Just this readiness of the British and French workers to throw themselves into active struggle, to learn the lessons from other countries, to build up the united front in action, is the most hopeful sign for the future, that Fascism need not conquer in Britain and France, that the tide will turn in these countries, at the same time as the mighty anti-fascist movement in Germany under the leadership of the Communist Party is rising in strength and mass-support and already beginning visibly to shake the foundations of the power of Hitler. The present conditions offer high hopes ; but leadership and organisation is now essential. The Communist Party has put forward its proposals for the formation of the Anti-Fascist Front ; these should now be seriously considered by every working-class organisation and by the whole working class. The Anti-Fascist Front should have the widest character, dominantly proletarian, but embracing also students, intellectuals and petit-bourgeois anti-fascists. Its platform requires simplicity and wide appeal, yet definition clearly of the mass-struggle character of the fight. The menace of Fascism is serious ; but Fascism can be defeated, if action is taken in time.

R.P.D.