

Great Britain

The Lesson of September Ninth

By Harry Pollitt (London),

On September 9 the **London** workers answered the call of the **Anti-Fascist Co-ordinating Committee** to "drown the Blackshirts in a sea of organised working-class activity," by demonstrating in larger numbers than on any occasion since May Day, 1926. In the face of the organised opposition of the Reformist Labour Movement the workers turned out in such numbers that, according to the "**Manchester Guardian**," the Blackshirts and their supporters were outnumbered by twenty to one.

If ever there was a time when it was justified in feeling proud of membership of the C.P.G.B. it has been during these recent months, when each day has seen the **Communist Party** giving the lead in the fight against our class enemies, a lead which has been followed by an increasing number of workers.

Every member, every unit of the C.P.G.B. was mobilised for September 9, and the whole campaign was carried out in an atmosphere of intense enthusiasm. It was a model of the way in which political campaigns should be run. This is not to say that our campaign was free of weaknesses and of mistakes—from the latter we shall profit in the future. But in spite of all weaknesses the mass of workers realise that September 9 would have been an impossibility without the Communist Party. This is a fact we must hammer home.

The campaign marks a tremendous advance. It exposed more clearly than ever before the supine and defeatist leadership of the **Labour Party**, who urged the workers to "keep away from Hyde Park," and who tried to hold the ring for Mosley. The line of the Citrines and Hendersons was the line of the capitalist press. With one voice they urged the workers to listen to their leaders, to be deaf to the call of the Communists.

To this the Communist Party replied:—

"Fight fascism now: its growth can be arrested: it can be defeated."

Now we must go forward to reap where we have sown, to build up our Party. This is the important task, although its full importance is not yet realised by a large proportion of our membership. Our comrades have shown themselves to be tireless in their activity, to be self-sacrificing in all that they do; nevertheless, the building of the Party, the recruiting of members is the last thought—not the first—in their minds.

Yet, and no one knows it better than our members, without a truly mass Communist Party there can be no effective united front, no successful advance, no victorious conquest of our class enemies, no successful revolution, no building up of socialism. This is a fact beyond dispute.

There are in Britain countless thousands of workers and intellectuals who pay verbal tribute to the Soviet Union, its constructive achievements in industry, agriculture and the cultural fields, its power and its peace policy. These workers and intellectuals pledge themselves again and again to defend the Soviet Union.

We must put the question to them bluntly: "Why was the Russian Revolution successful against tremendous odds?" And then we can ask: "Why is socialist construction succeeding, and why are the two worlds—the dying world of capitalism, fascism, barbarism and war, and the world of socialist advance, peace, culture and achievement all along the line?"

The answer rings out with crystal clearness: The existence of the Communist Party. This is the lesson we must hammer home. Why is it that in Austria and Germany the fascist murderers have wiped out all other parties but the Communist Party? Because the Communist Parties alone are based on indestructible principles and forms of organisation that no terror, no illegality can defeat them. If anyone thinks I am exaggerating I will quote an anti-Communist witness, **Douglas Reed**, special correspondent of the "**Times**," in Germany:—

"Those who take a long view of history may ponder the fact that the Communist Party as an organisation alone survives of all the parties that national socialism has destroyed. The Conservatives, the Socialists, the Catholics, the Democrats, the Liberals, all have been swept into the dustbin of time. The Communist Party, which it was the primary purpose of National Socialism to destroy, remains a skeleton force, working underground, its members still apparently in organised relationship

with each other; its activities an obstacle—waiting for its opportunity, waiting for National Socialism to collapse in the stress of a new war or some such thing.”

It is no coincidence that the same is true of Austria. The reformist leaders say: Shun Communism, place all your reliance upon the Labour Party, the T.U.C. and the Co-operative Party are all that are necessary. These are sufficient of a united front for anyone. Yet their counterparts in Germany and Austria were knocked out of the ring at one blow when the crash came, whilst the Communist Parties live and strengthen their work.

Our members must realise that now is the time to build our Party, that every minute counts. The test of all work must be—how many members are being recruited. These recruits cannot be made apart from the daily work and campaigns of the Party. Recruiting is part and parcel of every campaign—not a thing apart.

Never was there such great interest in our Party on the part of the masses of workers, never was our leadership so readily responded to—yet our Party has, up to now, grown but slowly. This must be a cause of serious perturbation to us all.

This position must be ended. From now on the Communists in Britain must cultivate a fierce resolve that the Party shall grow, shall continually develop, expand and really become the mass Party of the working class.