

of the Italian Socialist Party... of the aerial bombardments of the civilian population... of these for so long as it is necessary to this policy and regard from year to year to have got at least some... to

The Central Committee of the Italian Socialist Party has drawn up a detailed memorandum on the aerial bombardments of Italian cities, based on the reports received from the provincial committees of the Party. The memorandum is addressed to the working-class organisations in the democratic countries at war with Italy. We are giving here a résumé of its main points:

1. The memorandum begins by reaffirming the antifascist and Socialist position of the Italian Socialist Party with regard to this war. The Italian Socialist Party condemns all aerial bombardments of the civilian population, by whichever side they are carried out and whichever people they are directed against. We are not deceived by the debate as to which side started this barbarous method of warfare. Our feelings as Socialists are wounded no matter which civilian population be attacked. The destruction of Coventry cannot console us for that of Palermo. The razing of Baghdad does not compensate that of Rotterdam or Warsaw, according to our Socialist and human ideal.

2. The memorandum confutes the assertion that damage to the civilian population is an inevitable consequence of attacks against military objectives. There are hundreds of cases to prove that it is not so. There have been aerial attacks on the ports and railway stations of Italian cities in which, outside of these objectives, the civilian population was spared; numerous other attacks, including daylight raids, at low altitude, have exclusively hit civilian districts far removed from any military objective. The spectacle of the ruins of civilian dwellings in many Italian cities, together with the unanimous testimony of the inhabitants, leave no room for doubt that many aerial attacks have been deliberately aimed at the townspeople, for motives of terrorism.

3. The memorandum confutes the opinion, now apparently prevalent among those who from the democratic states are directing the air offensive, according to which the repeated bombardments of enemy cities can shake the morale of the population and induce them to revolt against their government. In reality, if there has been any change in the state of mind of the stricken populations since the beginning of the bombardments of Italian cities, it has been to the detriment of the democratic powers. Hundreds of episodes prove it. There were antifascist demonstrations, organised by the Socialist Party, on the occasion of the first air raids on Milan and Genoa; they were produced, not by terror, but by the determination of the Socialist workers to fight. With the repetition of the bombardments and the increase of the number of victims and of the damage to the civilian population, the antifascist demonstrations during air raids have not occurred any more. The state of mind of the populations in the hardest-hit cities is one of profound apathy. "The democratic governments are not any better than the Fascist government", one hears them repeat. The attitude of Italians to-day in air-raid shelters is no different, in its essentials, from that of the English during the great German air offensive. All those who expected that it would be otherwise merely show that their knowledge of the Italian character is superficial. While, after the first air-raids, the English pilots who jumped by parachute from their planes, were hailed as befriended and aided by the population, and in some cases even hidden, there have now actually been cases of American pilots who jumped with by parachutes and were lynched by the peasants. Fascist propaganda is very cleverly exploiting the sentiments of hatred of the populations hit by aerial bombardments; it would not be so effective if the people themselves were not convinced, by the way in which the bombardments are carried out, that the latter have frequently got the premeditated aim of hitting and terrorising the people.

4. The memorandum concludes by calling the attention of the British and American working-class organisations to the above facts. Bombardments of civilian dwellings far removed from any military objective are not only inhuman and barbarous, but they are also a help to Fascism. It is absolutely indispensable that the methods of warfare used by the democracies should renounce the sophism of reprisals and consider the civilian population of Italy, not as an enemy to be terrorised but as a friend in need of help to be freed.