

price on his head. Early in 1937 an attempt was made on his life, at Addis Ababa, when a bomb exploded ten feet from him. Some three hundred bomb splinters entered his body. But the "moudir" survived, and in time he caught the would-be assassins and hanged them in the market-place of Addis Ababa. King Victor Emmanuel was so moved by Graziani's exploits that he made him a member of the

nobility, as Marquis of Neghelly.

In the summer of 1938 he was bitten with the itch to write his memoirs—not unlike Wavell—but, that accomplished, this born soldier and *condottiere* welcomed his appointment by the Duce as commander of the Italian armies in Africa. Soon thereafter, Marshal Graziani began his march on Egypt, against his former comrade-in-arms, General Wavell.

LABOR IN THE WAR

By KINGSLEY MARTIN

Picture Post, London Weekly

THE Dockers' K.C. has become a member of the War Cabinet. He owes his position to his abilities. He is the undoubted boss of a great Trade Union, which he has done more than anyone else to build up. But that is not the reason for his selection. Nor has he been chosen as a politician; he only became a Member of Parliament for the first time a few months ago, after he had become Minister of Labor. He has never been a politician in the usual sense of the word; he has indeed a rather exaggerated dislike of politicians as a class. He is in the War Cabinet because, at a time when Labor shares in the responsibility of government, he is the most forcible personality in the entire Labor movement.

Ernest Bevin's intellectual capacities are certainly unusual. When he was a member of the Macmillan Committee, which dealt with highly technical and difficult problems of finance and currency, he astonished the experts by his swift and firm grasp of

essentials. And when the Scientific Advisory Council to the T.U.C. was set up, only Ernest Bevin really understood its implications. Yet he can have had very little time for study and he certainly owes nothing of his understanding to his education. He was a farm boy in Somerset, earning 6d. a week at the age of eleven. Later he drove a milkcart in Bristol, which led him to become a member of the carters' section of the Dockers' Union, and then a minor trade union official. I believe he learnt much of his philosophy from John Gregory, the cobbler poet, who was himself the father of Sir Richard Gregory, the scientist and editor of *Nature*. Another important influence was Ben Tillett, with whom Ernest Bevin travelled up to London after the last war to arrange the amalgamation of the Transport Workers' Union and the Transport Workers' Federation. In 1922 Bevin, who had then been through all the hierarchy of Trade Union officialdom, became Gen-

eral Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' Union. He had already made a national reputation for himself as a dockers' K.C., when he fought and won the dockers' case in the Transport Inquiry of 1920.

Bevin became leader of one of the three great Unions that formed the Triple Alliance of which the ruling class of Britain was so desperately frightened. He was already a leader when the Council of Action put a stop to Mr. Churchill's proposed war of intervention against Russia in 1920. He remained a leader during the series of Labor struggles that culminated in the General Strike of 1926; and was inevitably tarred with the same brush as the other Labor leaders, whose bluff was called by the Baldwin Cabinet in May 1926. If the Triple Alliance had made its threat of a General Strike, it should have been prepared to go through with it. As it was, the leaders failed, and Labor was saddled with a new trade union law which greatly reduced the funds and restricted the power of the trade unions, while the miners, who had had the worst deal of any workers since the war, were compelled to continue a long and disastrous struggle by themselves.

The humiliating debacle of the Labor Government in 1931, when Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Snowden and Mr. Thomas went over to the opposite camp and helped to form the National Government, reinforced Ernest Bevin's prejudice against politicians. He be-

came more than ever a trade union man. For a time he hovered on the brink of joining the Socialist League. Much of Labor's history since then would have been different if Bevin had finally cast in his lot with E. F. Wise and Sir Stafford Cripps. But there were personal difficulties and the suspicion of intellectual theorists. In the end Ernest Bevin stayed out, and the Socialist League, lacking solid Trade Union backing, could not push home its advanced policy even when it succeeded in persuading the Annual Conference to vote in favor of it.



Then came the great League controversy, which beneath the surface has divided the Labor movement ever since Hitler came to power. Until 1934 Labor conferences continued to

pass resolutions whose background was the Council of Action of 1920. A general strike against a capitalist war regularly appeared as part of their program, side by side with resolutions supporting the League of Nations. The pacifist part of the Labor movement received its first real shock when Hitler smashed the German Trade Union movement and began obviously to re-arm and to threaten the peace of Europe.

The issue was finally decided in one of the most dramatic debates of English history. The speeches at the Dome at Brighton in 1935, when the issue was whether or not the Labor party should support the policy of sanctions against Italy, were as eloquent, as sincere and at least as im-

portant as any of those historical orations in which great issues were debated by Peel and Cobden, and Gladstone and Disraeli. No one could have stated the pacifist argument that war could never be anything but a crime against humanity and a disaster to the working-class with more sincerity, eloquence or authority than George Lansbury, who had just resigned from the Executive on this issue. Ernest Bevin was called upon to reply. He did so in a terrific oration in which was mingled invective against George Lansbury, passionate hatred of fascism and all its works, and contempt for those who, after years of nominal support of League policy, ran away from the risks when the testing time arrived. It was a colossal piece of impromptu oratory, which swept all the conference except the convinced pacifists. It was at this conference that he openly declared his opposition to the Socialist League and all its works. "There is a standard in the trade union movement which we follow," he said, "but loyalty to a decision gets less publicity than disloyalty." He went on to accuse Stafford Cripps of having "stabbed them in the back" by resigning on the eve of the conference. "I cannot stand it and I am not going to," he said. "No person can go into office with a policy of his own. Let those who cannot follow party decisions take their own course." It was one of the decisive speeches of modern British history, for the decision taken that day meant that, throughout the subsequent period of appeasement, Labor was committed to the support of a strong foreign policy, and to the effort to reconstruct a sys-

tem of collective security, even on the ruins of the League of Nations. A strong pacifist element persisted in the Labor party, but henceforth it never had further chance of official acceptance.

Ernest Bevin has a domineering temperament. He might approve of dictatorship, people say—if he were the dictator. He is among those who regard Parliament in wartime rather as a nuisance than as a safeguard for the liberties and ideals for which we are supposed to be fighting.

ONCE regarded as a potential Left-wing leader, he has long since had the reputation of being the bitterest opponent of Left-wingers. Certainly, experience as the head of a great union, and experience particularly of working with Government departments at the task of straightening out national transport problems of this country and getting rid of small pirate companies, has made Ernest Bevin more officially minded than anyone could have anticipated in 1920. It was he who took drastic action against the unofficial bus strikers. There are plenty of people in the Labor movement who say that while Bevin can fight strenuously enough on some issues, he is inclined to pull his punches when the class issue is at stake. It is said that even at the Ministry of Labor, where he has admittedly shown great energy and capacity, he sometimes threatens—bluffs perhaps, we should say—by promising to use compulsory powers against employers which he does not actually use when the time comes. It is too soon to say as yet.

The biggest fights are still ahead.

Ernest Bevin is in his proper place in the War Cabinet. Labor's team in the War Cabinet has been weak. Bevin will bring great additional strength. The issues now before the country are just those that he understands best. He is deeply concerned with the administrative failure in East London where dockers and their families have suffered worse than any other section of the community. His determination to defeat the Nazis is undoubted; he was among the first to realize that the working-classes can only be expected to fight with enthusiasm if the war is their war. As Minister of Labor he has done more to improve their status than he could have done in years of fighting

as a trade union leader. He is one of the few Ministers to be successful on the wireless. He speaks directly and often with a kind of brutality. People like it. Remember, too, that Ernest Bevin's outlook is wide; that he has great imaginative and constructive ability. After his illness and return from a voyage to Australia last year, he put before the country an admirably conceived policy for the well-being and international development of Europe's colonies.

If Ernest Bevin is still at the head of affairs when the time comes for peace making, I should expect him to have much to contribute and an outlook which would guarantee a peace better than Versailles.

Far Eastern Matches

This morning, hastily taking matches from a yet unglanced-at box, purchased in the black-out of yesterday, to light my pipe, the first three promptly snapped. I looked at the label. It bore a chaste design of a rather depressed white elephant in a rice paddy, seen against the rising sun—"Made in Thailand." Thailand Thailand? Oh, yes, our old friend, Siam.

One of the ways to acquire the reputation of an astute detective is to remark to a man whom you notice striking a match in a dainty manner: "Ah, so you've just come back from the Far East!" For the Far East uses Japanese matches, or matches fashioned in the manner of Nippon, which is to say that they are as slender as toothpicks and snap at once if handled in the rough European way. The white man, newly arrived, has to acquire the correct technique, merely brushing match against box instead of jamming it. And when he goes home it takes time for him to get out of the habit.

—"Lucio" in the *Manchester Guardian*

Failures of Italian administrators
have bred a rebellious sentiment

Ethiopia on Brink of Revolt

By EUGEN LENNHOFF

Argentinisches Tageblatt, Buenos Aires Liberal German Daily

IN THE mountains of Ethiopia, the muffled beat of war-drums is again heard in the night, calling upon the tribes once more to rise against their Italian oppressors. The drums are also heard on the neighboring frontiers of Kenya Colony and of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, where thousands of Ethiopians, who would not submit to the Italian invaders, fled and found refuge. In command today of these revolting Ethiopians is General Ras Tifrauri Biddu, former minister of war, who after the fall of Addis Ababa, in 1936, followed Emperor Haile Selassie into exile, and escaped to Jerusalem. The old war-flag of the "Lion of Judah" has been raised again, and it snaps in the hot African wind. [Haile Selassie has returned to his country.]

Four years have passed since Mussolini incorporated Ethiopia into his "Empire" by a ruthless attack on an unarmed people. Nevertheless, the country has never been "pacified."

The Italians have shown their ineptitude as colonizers. Calling themselves "pioneers" and purveyors of civilization to Ethiopia, nevertheless they soon demonstrated that they had no interest in the fate of the natives, and their only interest in the country was to extract even more wealth than Ethiopia possesses. Before the Duce fell upon the country, without any declaration of war, he promised his people "mountains of gold" in return for their war effort. He lied, of course, since Ethiopia contains not a fraction of the rewards that he promised his public and his legions. As one consequence of Italian disappointment over the non-existent rewards, Italian officials and officers who were sent to administer the country instituted a régime of terror.

In the beginning, the natives did not believe any resistance possible, in view of Mussolini's weapons which they saw on every side. But the Italians con-