

DIRECT ACTION

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THE NEXT CUTS

Within five weeks three defeats were inflicted on the British workers. The Labour Government, the T.U.C. and the Rail Wages Tribunal finally established the wage-freeze. Right after came devaluation, which lowered the "frozen" wage, then the cuts announced by Attlee, biting at the social services and hitting the building trade.

These are not all the cuts. Undoubtedly the next General Election will be followed by more sweeping cuts and measures of labour coercion, but even before the election further attacks on the workers' standard of living will be made.

The fact is, the Labour Government cannot fulfil its promise of social reforms without attacking the capitalist class, and changing property relations. This it never meant to do. And the workers who elected the Government had the illusion that they could get more without ending capitalism, even though the war had diminished the national assets.

It is as though a pre-war cake had been divided, one-third to the workers and two-thirds to the capitalists. Now, with one-third of the cake consumed by war, it is hoped that the workers will get more than a third without lessening the share of the capitalists, landlords, royalty and such. It should be obvious that the workers' condition can only be improved by attacking the institution of private property, ending capitalism, and establishing workers' control of industry. Until the workers shed their illusion of reform this is not possible.

Another illusion which befores the workers is the belief that Britain won the war. Although Britain was on the side which won the final battle, nevertheless the war was lost to Stalin and Uncle Sam. If anyone believes that being on the winning side makes one a victor, he should look at Poland, the most heavily defeated nation since Carthage.

Britain since 1945 bears, but to a much lesser extent, many points of resemblance to Germany after its defeat in 1918. There, too, a Labour Government introduced a few reforms and then set about reducing the workers' standard of living. There, too, was devaluation, and the attempt, successful for a short while, to flood the world market, supported by low wages and a devalued currency.

Post-1918 Germany offered golden chances to the workers' movement to make revolution, but these were discarded in favour of reform and class collaboration. The result was Nazism.

The present crisis in Britain, too, offers opportunity to the workers to end capitalism with its wars, crises and poverty. If these opportunities are refused then reaction, blacker than any we have known, will follow.

It need not follow if the workers shed their reformist illusions and take the path blazed by the Anarchist Federation, difficult though that may seem.

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THE ENGINEERS' QUID

Anyone knowing the wage rates in the engineering trade will agree that the £1 advance asked for is long overdue. That it will be refused is equally accepted as certain. That the A.E.U. members deserve a rise is another matter. For here we have something unpleasant to say and, though unwilling, we must say it. The conduct of the A.E.U. recently, and during the last few years, has not been such as to deserve the £1 a week increase.

At this year's T.U.C. the A.E.U. delegates supported wage freezing - and at once claimed an A.E.U. wage advance. In other words, the A.E.U. believes in frozen wages for everyone else but the A.E.U. members. A selfish policy! And a foolish one, when most other unions are also running a "I'm alright Jack" policy too.

GOOD-BYE DISTRICT RATE For generations the A.E.U. and the old A.S.E. members gallantly guarded the district minimum rate, keeping it as high as possible. Even during the years of slump in the 30's they made a gallant fight to keep it up.

But since the early part of the war, when Communists gained control of the union, the district rate was allowed to slide down, even though the conditions were favourable for it to be pushed up. Now, the district rates are the lowest, in real value, in living memory.

THE OVERTIME RACKET It has been possible to make some of the members forget the district rate by the use of overtime "to make up your wage", thus destroying the 44-hour week, and by the use of "payment by results". In some cases some members earn £10 a week, while others take home £5, or even less, a week. So, the whole basis of unionism is knocked away. As to overtime, this vice is used by the employers to keep down the rate and to play off their

favourites against the others. For years the A.E.U. has winked at this rotten practice.

COMMUNISTS CAPTURED THE A.E.U. During the war the Commies boasted that they had completed their capture of the District Committees, including London. They got their leaders and nominees, such as Hannington, Scott, Tanner and others, into full-time jobs and secured, by the most treacherous tactics, control of most Shop Stewards' Committees.

Having control of the Union, the Commies used it to give away to the employers the hard-won rights and privileges of half a century's struggle in the name of the "People's War" for Russia.

They used their control to siphon union funds to the C.P. by means of fake organisations. They used it to turn the A.E.U. from an industrial body into a political party and, through the "shop stewards", to make war on militants and rebel stewards.

THE FRUIT THEREOF

The result is the present sorry condition of the A.E.U. and the poverty of many of its less fortunate members. The disaster would be more obvious if we were not in an engineering boom. When the inevitable slump in the trade occurs we shall see how disastrous the last eight years have been.

The Union, with its Commie leadership and "York Memos" and other stranglehold agreements, is now practically useless as a means of struggle. It now remains for the rank-and-file militants to organise action committees in the factories and alongside the unions to establish a new minimum rate on at least a 4s a week advance and to dig in against the next boss offensive.

The first task of such a movement must be to kick out the Commie leadership wherever it shows up. True, many Commies claim they have lost control of the A.E.U., but the fact stands that their nominees still hold the leadership, even if some of them have retted recently.

Out with the Commies, Up with the wages.

OLD A.S.E. MEMBER.

----- LITERATURE -----

"MICHAEL BAKUNIN AND KARL MARX" (K.J. Kenafick) -----	5/6	o.
"ANIMAL FARM" (George Orwell) -----	2/9	!
"TRADE UNIONISM OR SYNDICALISM" (Tom Brown) -----	4d	o
"BRITISH GENERAL STRIKE" (Tom Brown) -----	3d	!
"SOCIAL GENERAL STRIKE" (Tom Brown) -----	3d	o
"STRUGGLE IN THE FACTORY" (Equity) -----	4d	!
"PEOPLE AND CHARLATANS" (A. Saltabiano) -----	3d.	o

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From: A.F.B., 25a, Amberley Road, London W.9.

T E A B R E A K

"BARNES (MINISTER OF TRANSPORT) BLAMES THE WORKERS"

(Daily Express)

You asked for houses - they gave you Barnes!

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MORE BEER, LESS BRAINS! "Due to taxation beer is still far too expensive", said Mr. A.C. Harford,

speaking recently to the West Somerset Women's Licensed Trade Association. "We should like to see a big reduction in the duty so that it could be sold at a reasonable price. I believe this would tend to relieve the tension in industry, and I do not think we should have people always after more wages".

(Morning Advertiser, 12/10/49)

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GET THE IDEA? "During mealtimes at Chisnall Hall Colliery, Lancs, the miners hear a recorded message played over and over again. It is from Mr. Isaac Mason, local mineworkers president, urging greater production and saying: "We must not let our country down after it has given us more in three years than our fathers obtained in thirty years". The pit manager said: "We shall play the record until they either listen and digest it - or THROW COAL AT IT!"

(Daily Mirror, 14/10/49)

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A GENTLEMAN'S WORD. "Because of rising production costs the Rotherham steel firm of J.J. Habershon and Sons have informed 600 of their 1300 employees that their bonus payments will have to be cut by 40 to 80 per cent.

(Telegraph, 8/10/49)

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YOU SCRATCH MY BACK..... "During his visit to Portugal, General Franco appointed Marshal Carmona (Portuguese President) a general in the Spanish Army. The Portuguese Ministry of War, in a decree signed by all members of the Portuguese Cabinet, has created General Franco a general in the Portuguese Army"

(Telegraph, 24/10/49)

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TOO MUCH EFFORT! The Royal Command Performance on November 7th is to be held at the Coliseum instead of at the Palladium, because at the Coliseum there will be fewer steps for the King to walk up. Organisers of the show were told: "After his leg trouble the King must climb as little as possible". So they spent hours finding out the London theatre which has the easiest-to-walk-to box.

(Daily Mirror, 5/10/49)

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STOCKBROKERS LIT UP! Stock Exchange reaction today to the Prime Minister's statement was that it is easily the most popular pronouncement that any minister has made during this Government. And how the mood changed. Like men emerging from a visit to the dentist

for weeks, brokers dashed to the City, pushed up prices to begin with and added their good humour to the cheery spirit which illuminated the "House" and spread out to the damp grayness of Throgmorton St. (Star, 25/10/49).

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A NEW TRADE-UNION INTERNATIONAL

A conference will be held in London towards the end of November at which representatives of a number of countries will form a new trade-union international. This is a result of the split in the World Trade Union Federation, controlled by the Communists, which was formed in 1945. Then it was the TUC and the American CIO who took the main initiative in its constitution. But it was these two bodies, together with the Dutch trade-union organisation, which some years later were to produce the split in the World Federation by leaving it. The reason for this was that the Communists had succeeded in bringing the international under their control and were using it for their own political ends. Since then, many other national organisations have broken away for the same reasons.

The preparatory work for the formation of the new body was carried out in a Conference at Geneva on June 25-26 last. Thirty-eight national trade-union movements were represented there, as well as delegates of industrial internationals, and others representing 12 trade-union bodies not belonging to the national organisations in their respective countries.

The break-up of the World T.U. Federation had been expected for some time, as unity was impossible to maintain with the international being used solely in the interests of the Communists' fraudulent politics. The international carried within it, from the beginning, the seeds of its own dissolution.

On one hand the formation of the new international could be considered advantageous as a break with communist methods, and as a new organisation prepared to fight against communist dictatorship.

But on the other hand it must be recognised that the new international will, itself, serve state-political interests. It will become an organ adapted to the politics of the "democratic" states. At Geneva Leon Jouhaux stated that the new organisation would be absolutely independent of all political parties and governments. But, in France, Jouhaux himself collaborates with the state and political parties. The trade-union organisations in the majority of countries which will join the new international are linked with the politics of their respective governments in such a close way that one cannot talk of an independent trade-union movement.

One of the organisations which will form the new T.U. international is the American A.F. of L., a body with a frankly capitalist ideology, which defends private property. The brutal struggle of the A.F. of L. against the revolutionary I.W.W. clearly demonstrates the ends this movement pursues. Its presence alone would be enough to make the new international suspect. Organisations like the A.F. of L. (in spite of the beautiful statements made in Geneva) do not fight for

democracy, but use the word to deceive the masses. In practice they are ready to terrorise workers who demand the right to belong to other organisations. Many workers, not wishing to belong to reformist organisations, are hounded from their places of work by the reformist-monopolists.

It is clear that we, as revolutionary syndicalists, have no more to hope for from the new international than we have from the communist controlled World T.U. Federation. Everything indicates that we must redouble our efforts on the industrial field on behalf of the International Working Men's Association, our own international, which is independent of the politics of states and governments, and which tries to unite the working masses in the fight against the state and capitalist exploitation. We must intensify our work for the IWMA, for freedom and for a new social system.

JOHN ANDERSSON, General Secy., IWMA.

BOOK REVIEW

"MICHAEL BAKUNIN AND KARL MARX", by K.J. Kenafick. Published in Melbourne, Australia. 384 pp. Available from the A.F.B. (see page 3).

By writing this excellent work, comrade Kenafick has done our movement the greatest possible service. For many years Bakunin has been wilfully misrepresented in this country, by marxists and others, and the fact that his works have not been available in English translation, has often made it difficult to make an adequate reply. Kenafick's book is based on a close and exhaustive study of the writings of Marx and Engels, and of Bakunin and his close collaborator, James Guillaume, to whom his work is dedicated.

"Bakunin's crime in the eyes of the Communists" writes Kenafick, "is that he opposed dictatorship in the International Socialist movement when it first showed its hand, and he analysed its character and demonstrated irrefutably to what it must lead - to the State Capitalism that oppresses Russia today".

A careful study is given of the break-up of the First International. Marx preferred to see the workers' international destroyed rather than that its control should slip from the hands of he and his followers. In this Marx followed the same tactic that is adopted by Stalinists at the present time - either to rule organisations in which they participate or to destroy them - rule or ruin.

One of the most valuable aspects of Kenafick's book is that it contains much of Bakunin's original writings in English translation - probably for the first time. A study of Bakunin's work should be sufficient to convince even the most hardened philistine that he was not an irresponsible individualist believing only in destruction (as he is so often represented by marxists and bourgeois writers such as Carr), but that his ideas and action were determined by the interests of the working class. No-one interested in the background of the revolutionary movement can afford to miss reading this book. K.H.

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