

# DIRECT ACTION

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## KEEPING PRICES UP

While the Labour leaders spend their time talking about wage 'restraint' and the need to keep prices down, the City of London financiers make sure that the prices of as many articles as possible stay as high as possible. Profits roll in better that way.

On March 20 the International Tin Study Group met in Paris to carry on - in the spirit of international ruling-class solidarity - this profitable business. It seems that the world output of tin in 1949 was 160,000, while consumption was only 120,000 tons. On top of this, commercial stocks of tin throughout the world at the end of 1949 were 130,000 tons - more than a year's supply.

But for the fact that the British and American governments, preparing for a third world war, have been stockpiling tin as fast as they could go, there would have been a real crisis as far as prices were concerned last year. Death pays a dividend, and a high one at that, for those whose money is invested in one of the basic materials for war production. Just now dividends are very good, but some shareholders are getting a bit apprehensive about the future. They are not afraid that war materials will not be required but, from the shareholder's point of view, the American government's attitude on stockpiling is not very reassuring.

The British government recently invited their American counterpart to enter into a fully-fledged long-term agreement for the purchase of big quantities of tin for stockpile purposes - and to relieve the price-reduction pressure on the City of London. Rejecting the proposal, the U.S. government said tin would continue to be bought "through the ordinary market mechanism." America, of course, will still buy tin for war purposes, but in the future it will be at the time and price, and under the



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conditions the U.S. government lays down. So we see another important group of British financiers, like the country as a whole, dangled at Wall-street's purse-strings.

Purpose of the Paris meeting was to discuss ways and means of restricting the supply of tin and keeping the price high. Meanwhile tin dividends have continued to rise. A few figures for the Malayan mines will give some idea of this. First price is last year's final dividend, while the figure in brackets is this year's interim dividend.

Ayer Hitam Company, 65% (45%); Hongkong Company, 20% (17½%); Kamunting Company, 25% (6%); Tronoh Company, 65% (60%); Southern Tronoh Company, 50% (60%).

There's still a big demand for tin for peaceful purposes, but apparently the price is not yet high enough for it to be released. In the financial world there's nothing like a shortage for good business. The press used to speak of small-scale efforts of this nature as black-marketing. The City of London condones it on a large-scale as "good business."

## EXPLOITATION - BY WHOME

Classical method of seizing control of someone else's country is to stage an "incident," start a riot, then send the troops in to "restore order." As an alternative you can send the troops in to "liberate a persecuted minority."

In the case of Bechuanaland, however, the incident was ready made. A man married a woman whose skin was a little lighter in colour than his. This gave South Africa's fascist government the excuse to do what they had been attempting for the past two years - to take over Bechuanaland, together with Basutoland and Swaziland.

Then Britain's Labour Government stepped in and stole South Africa's thunder. By means of a cheap trick Seretse Khama was persuaded to come to England, then told he could not go home.

Did the British Government, then, act with the interests of the Bamangwato tribe and the peoples of Bechuanaland as a whole at heart. A glance at the map, and a little study of the economies of South Africa and Rhodesia provide the answer - a very definite "NO."



POPULATION :

SOUTH AFRICA :  
9 million coloured  
2,350,000 European

S.W. AFRICA :  
285,000 coloured  
45,000 European

SOUTHERN RHODESIA :  
1,685,000 coloured  
70,000 European

POPULATION :

SWAZILAND :  
190,000 coloured  
1,500 European.

BASUTOLAND :  
550,000 coloured  
800 European

BECHUANALAND :  
285,000 coloured  
800 European

S.W. Africa is occupied and run by South Africa. Pre-1914 it was German S.W. Africa.

While South Africa possesses modern industrial enterprises, its economy is mainly based on the production of agricultural and mineral products. Providing its white middle-class and still more its ruling-class, with a very lucrative standard of living, it is based on the exploitation of slave labour.

The wages paid and the legal restrictions which compel the coloured population to work for next-to-nothing are nothing more nor less than slavery. An example are the "pass laws" which force coloured people to live in a certain place, to be out after certain hours, to work in a certain job, and so on. Those who fail to have the correct pass on them are arrested and sent to unpaid farm labour.

The Rhodesian economy is based on the same system, although the legal form is a little different. In both countries the coloured population - the majority - exist, so far as the ruling-class is concerned, for the production of cheap raw materials. Both countries are primarily producers of raw materials, especially Southern Rhodesia.

The British Government want to prevent Bechuanaland being taken by South Africa, not because they have any regard for the people of the territory, but in order to incorporate it, at a later date, into Southern Rhodesia. They feel better able to control the activities of Southern Rhodesia in their own interests than to control Malan.



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Driving force on both sides is the agricultural lands, the mineral deposits and the supply of cheap native labour within the territories. As in ancient Rome, the ruling classes of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia require an ever-new supply of slaves, for the death rate is one of the highest in the world.

A scheme has been afoot for some time to amalgamate Southern and Northern Rhodesia with Nyasaland into one big Central African Dominion. Something along the lines of South Africa, but opposed to it and a lot more pro-Whitehall. Bechuanaland will probably be thrown in as a bargain counter.

## LAWFUL BLACKMAIL

This is not the story of a bunch of scabs who refused to join their fellow-workers in defence of their common interests, but the record of a group of trade unionists who, believing in the principles of unionism, tried to practice them.

In 1937 Tom Rice, with many of his mates, broke away from the Transport and General Workers Union after a bitterly-contested strike and formed the National Passenger Workers Union. The "midwives to undertakers" - the T. & G. W. U. - did everything in their power to smash the union, and they were helped by the Communist Party. Unlike the Stevedores Union, the N.P.W.U. had insufficient strength to resist their attack indefinitely.

But let us bring the story up-to-date. In 1947, after ten years of unsuccessful 'persuasion', the Transport and General bosses decided to have done with little menaces and go in for big ones. They negotiated an agreement with the London Passenger Transport Board to kick Tom Rice and his mates out of their jobs if they did not leave the N.P.W.U. and join the Transport and General. The L.P.T.B. was only too glad to comply. From a boss's viewpoint the Transport and General was a much better union. It did not press wage claims too hard, and it did not like industrial militants any more than the Board.

So, in 1947, Tom Rice and those of his mates who refused to join the Transport and General and break up their own union, lost their jobs. Tom Rice, like many workers, was under the impression that you can always obtain redress at law, and he started legal proceedings. On Monday, March 6, 1950, the case came up in the Kings Bench Division of the High Court, Mr. Justice Devlin presiding.



Mr. Thomas Rice, 64, and at present a lorry driver, claimed damages against the London Transport Executive (formerly the L.P.T.B.) for "breach of contract," and against H.J. Edwards, J.W. Jones, A.F. Papworth (Communist Party member) and J.H. Hall, members of the executive of the Transport and General, for "inducing the L.P.T.B. to break the contract and for conspiring to induce." The jury found the allegations had been proved and awarded damages accordingly. Mr. Justice Devlin, after hearing legal arguments, reversed the jury's verdict.

He said, in effect, that members of an executive committee, acting on the instructions of that executive committee, and the executive itself, were not accountable before civil law on such an issue. Inducement was therefore not inducement, conspiracy was not conspiracy. He added, "I think it is right to say that his services were not required for the reason that he declined to become a member of the Transport and General Workers Union." So it was only just a little spot of lawful blackmail.

Check up with the "Trade Union Act, 1906," (6 EWD. 7. Ch.7) from H.M. Stationery Office, price one penny. You can check up, at the same time, on the way the Transport and General act in relation to the bosses.

CENTRAL BUSMAN.

## THE COST OF GOVERNMENT

A few figures may help show that the cost of government is not confined to the production of wars, poverty and unemployment. When money is spend on the upkeep of the state bureaucracy it is spent like water. But water is, in modern times, consumed with some regard to public welfare -government expenditure is not.

Cost of running the costliest gasworks in the world, the House of Commons, will be £1,812,979, plus £75,025 for rail, sea and air travelling by M.P.'s between Westminster and their homes and constituencies which are, generally, two very different places. This is an increase of £2,265.

Cost of keeping senile politicians and social misfits is £410,797. That is the expense of keeping the House of Lords in being. £95,000 will be spent on providing free board and lodging for government guests; this figure does not, of course, include hospitality to the French President and other such visitors.

During the course of last year the government spent £13,029



on six 1949-model Humber Pullman saloons, for the use of Ministers. Another £410,000 was spent last year on the upkeep of the royal palaces. Cost of modernising the sewage system at Buckingham Palace (over the course of two years) alone, is £103,000. As yet it's too early to say if the work will cure the offence.

Another £32,500 was spent in redecorating the home, in Dusseldorf, Germany, of Major General W.A. Bishop, British High Commissioner in the Ruhr. "No expense has been spared," said the German architect in charge. This expense will be borne by our German fellow-workers, but the rest - and a hell of a lot more - comes under "Civil Estimates." In other words, we foot the bill.

## TEA BREAK

**WHAT A GUY!** Fourteen years ago Tshekedi Khama, Seretse Khama's uncle, publicly flogged two Europeans for molesting native women; the two men had been warned about their conduct before. Whitehall sent a gunboat down to Africa, under the mistaken impression that Bechuanaland was on the coast. A party of marines was landed on the coast, at the nearest point to the protectorate, and they set off cross-country. Half-way there the howitzers got stuck in a dried-up river bed. Tshekedi, with an ironical gesture, sent a party of his men to drag the howitzers, and the marines, out of an awkward situation. The expedition was then abandoned.

**BLUE-EYED BOYS** A report compiled at the request of Mr. J.J. McCloy, United States High Commissioner in Germany, states that about 60% of the policy-making positions in the Wurttemberg-Baden State Government are occupied by "former" Nazis.

**LIVING IN SIN** Speaking at Manchester, on March 8, Radio Doctor Charles Hill referred to the nationalisation of the Bank of England. "I've no strong feelings about it," he said, "The Old Lady of Threadneedle Street has been living long enough with the State to justify the final step of matrimony."

**THAT'S A CLEVER GIRL** The Duchess of Kent, who loves motoring, has bought a new car. It is a big saloon, a Humber. She already has a Rolls Royce. The Duchess never drives herself. She is always chauffeur-driven. (Star, March 15)



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### HOLLYWOOD PANIC

General distribution, in the United States, of the outstanding Italian film, "Bicycle Thieves," will be impossible following the refusal, on March 1st, by the Motion Pictures Association of America to approve it. Association stated that two scenes failed to meet requirements of the Johnston Code. It has been suggested that the £2,000 Italian film, which outshines anything Hollywood can produce, has caused fear of mortal - rather than moral - consequences.

### A SUGAR COATED PILL

Tate and Lyles trading profit declined, this year, from £4,830,094 to £4,381,976 - a drop of £48,118. Increase in advertising expenses of £33,837 (from £13,380 to £47,217) accounts for all but £14,281 of this amount. Net profit, however, declined by only £7,965, from £1,570,332 to £1,562,367. Difference between the gross and net incline is probably accounted for, in part, by the income tax allowance on the increased advertisement expenditure, which was mainly incurred by the "Mr. Cube" anti-nationalisation campaign. Back-bench "Labour" M.P.'s have not, as yet, woken up to the dodge.

### M.P.'s - AND THEIR OCCUPATIONS

The following figures give some idea of the former - and in most cases the present - occupations of candidates at the General Election. "Labour" candidates included 55 Trade Union officials, 55 lawyers (including 19 K.C.'s), 34 teachers, 34 lecturers, 27 writers, 19 company directors, - and 22 who are running their own businesses. The 37 stated to be miners include Aneurin Bevan and others who left the "mining industry" (as distinct from the coalface) many years ago.

## SYNDICALISM IN NORWAY.

by S. PETTERSEN

Syndicalism first became generally known in Norway about 1912-13, when a large number of workers became intested in it. Reason for this was that the workers' economic organisation was concentrated in centralistic trade unions, which limited themselves to means of struggle recognised by the government. They limited themselves to reforms and higher wages, without aiming at taking over the means of production and creating socialism.

Section of the workers who were interested in Syndicalism became divided between those who aimed at forming an independent syndicalist organisation - as had already been done in Sweden - and those who wanted to form a "trades-opposition" within the reformist movement, with the intention of re-shaping this movement



in a syndicalist direction - from trade union towards industrial union, from centralism to federalism, with methods of struggle such as direct action, sabotage, etc. The first section formed the Norwegian Syndicalist Federation, an organisation which still lives today.

At the Trades-opposition's congress in 1915 it was agreed that the grouping should not limit itself to working within the framework of capitalist society, but that its job should be to smash capitalism and build a socialist order of society. What happened to this grouping? Only a partial change towards industrial unionism was achieved within the trade unions, and new leaders were voted in, who retained centralism. Instead of smashing the framework of capitalist society, the Trades-opposition's founders went over to the administration of the State and made laws to protect capitalist society. The Trades-opposition became a brake against syndicalist development.

With the unemployment which followed the first World War, the workers were split into those who had work and those who had not. When the worker was thrown out of his job he was also thrown out of the reformist trade union, with its few and small possibilities of maintaining his right to existence. When the workers had the greatest need of the organisation, it became useless. So the unemployed, themselves, formed unions which, naturally enough, only had token value.

During the second World War the labour movement became the slave of Nazism. After 1945 the political parties blossomed forth, and there was no more talk of the workers taking over the means of production - the workers were told to limit themselves to the ballot box. The Communists changed their aim - in name only - from "dictatorship" to "democratic centralism," and many well-meaning intellectuals joined the party, which had both State and municipal representation. The Communists used the same methods as the Labour Party, the only difference being that they were a little more active in governmental institutions, with the result that the party is now in full disintegration. Their only hope for the future is new inspiration and capital from the East.

The Labour Party was smarter and entered into close collaboration with the capitalists. At the New Year, the Minister of State claimed that 15 years of rule by Labour had transformed society, so that it was no longer private-capitalist, though no nearer to socialism. An elastic statement which needs no comment.

The political labour parties see the only hope for the workers in the nationalisation of everything. All shall be under the State, which becomes the reigning, arch-capitalist in society.



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To an even greater extent than under private capitalism, the workers are deprived of economic and personal freedom.

If society is to be saved for the working-class, syndicalism is more relevant in Norway today than it was 35 years ago.. That is the lesson of long and bitter experience.

(trs. from SOLIDARITET, organ of the N.S.F., by P.G.)

# INTERNATIONAL

## DIRECT ACTION AGAINST FRANCO

The two Italian Anarchists who carried out the recent attack on the Spanish consulate in Genoa, are still in prison awaiting trial. During their raid on the consulate - reported in a recent issue of "Direct Action" - they destroyed the fascists' official papers and files. An attempt to blow up Franco's embassy in Rome, by an Italian comrade, Giuseppe di Luisi, was frustrated by the Italian police. Di Luisi, 63-years-old, was condemned to 30 years' forced labour by the pre-Mussolini monarchy in Italy, and was imprisoned under the fascist regime.

One of Franco's main agents on the American continent, Jose Gallostro, has been "removed" by a Cuban Anarchist, Salvador Fleitas. Gallostro was in Mexico, with the mission of organising a fascist rebellion, and a police examination of his papers has shown that he had wide contact with high capitalist and ecclesiastical elements in the country.

Anti-Franco campaign in the U.S.A. has been organised by the I.W.W. and the Libertarian groups. One of the main issues of the agitation is the demand for a trade boycott of fascist Spain.

Mass meeting, organised by the French C.N.T. (Anarcho-syndicalist National Confederation of Labour) will be held in Paris on April 6.

## NEW EXECUTIONS IN SPAIN

Latest information received from the International Working Men's Association speaks of the execution of 16 members of the anti-fascist resistance at the Neta camp in Barcelona on February 9. Anarcho-syndicalist militant, J. Lopez Penedo was among these latest victims of Franco's butchery.

A big military action was recently carried out against an Anarcho-syndicalist resistance group in Andalusia. The Civil Guard, armed police and falangists took part in the operation, which had the aim of wiping out a guerilla group in the mountains near Ronda, led by the well-known comrade, Bernabe Lopez. A bitter struggle ensued, during which 21 anarcho-syndicalists lost their lives. But 30 Civil Guards were also killed, and eight others seriously wounded. A few of our comrades succeeded in getting away, despite the odds.



ANARCHIST PAPER BANNED IN ARGENTINA

"LA PROTESTA" - militant

Anarchist paper in Argentina for the past 53 years - has been banned by Peron's neo-fascist government. Opposition of the paper to Peron's Labour front, the C.G.T. One of the last issues to be published before the government clamped down dealt with the C.G.T.'s reactionary role during the recent big strike of workers in the sugar industry. Commenting on the banning of "La Protesta", the syndicalist paper "El Calderero" ("The Boilermaker") says it is by no means the first time the ruling-class of the Argentine has tried to strangle this voice of the militant workers. "Nor will it be the last," the paper adds.

AID FOR BULGARIAN ANARCHISTS

International Secretary of the Anarchist Communist Federation of

Bulgaria, who has recently managed to escape from the Stalinist dictatorship in that country, expresses, in a letter, the thanks of his organisation for the help Anarchist and Revolutionary Syndicalist organisations in other countries have given to the Bulgarian comrades. "Thanks to the mutual aid organised within the F.A.C.B. and the voluntary help received from abroad," he writes, "the Bulgarian comrades, both inside the country and in exile, are the only sector among those persecuted who have not been forgotten."

Our Bulgarian comrade stresses that the need for help is more urgent than ever. Hundreds of the Federation's best militants are condemned by the cynical brutality of a regime masquerading under the name of "communism" to a slow death in concentration camps - unless international solidarity can be redoubled.

In thanking those comrades who have responded to our previous appeals, we again urge all our readers to give practical expression of their solidarity by sending a contribution for the defence of the Bulgarian militants. We still have a stock of copies of the pamphlet, "Bulgaria, a new Spain" (price 6d, post-free 9d). Money received for the sale of this pamphlet is forwarded to the Aid Commission for Bulgarian Anti-fascists in Paris.

DEATH OF A COMRADE

We learn, with the deepest regret, of the death of the French Anarchist, Dr. Marc Pierrot. Born in 1871 - the year of the Paris Commune - comrade Pierrot was a friend and colleague of the founders of revolutionary syndicalism and international anarchism. In 1925, with other comrades, he founded the review, "Plus Loin" which only ceased publication at the beginning of the war, in 1939.

Comrade Pierrot used his medical knowledge to care for all those who were in need and, in particular, the revolutionary refugees from Nestor Makhno to our exiled Spanish comrades.

Young in spirit, Marc Pierrot leaves us the example of his absolute integrity and his devotion, for more than 60 years, to the Anarchist movement.