

DIRECT ACTION

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CUT PRICE LABOUR UNDER BRITISH FLAG

First steps have been taken by Canadian shipowners, to transfer 123 Canadian ships to the British flag. Transfer of the first eight vessels was authorised by the British government at the beginning of April. The remainder will take British register during the next six months. About two-thirds of the ships have been under charter to the British Ministry of Transport for some years, and many are still operating.

Contracts for all these vessels finish by the end of 1950. They will then be formally handed back to their respective owners - who will promptly re-register them under the British flag.

JUST THE JOB HE WANTS

Mr. Herbert Morrison spoke at a dinner of the Master Signmakers Assn. at the Dorchester last night, and afterwards the president, Mr. H.A. Hawkes, who is head of a Leicester firm said:-
"If you leave the Commons, I shall be glad if you will accept a directorship in my company."

Daily Express,
11.3.50.

CUT-PRICE WAGES.

No-one should run away with the idea that the shipowners' actions are motivated by a burning patriotism for the "old country", or an altruistic desire to see the red duster flying over their ships. The whole thing is strictly business. British seamen's wages are considerably lower than those of their Canadian mates, and it is the intention of the owners to engage mainly British crews.

Canadian seamen who wish to stay on will be paid British rates and in sterling. It is the practice of British shipowners to engage Lascar crews on some ships as cheap labour at £5 a month. Canadian shipowners are now applying a similar scheme in engaging British

crews. Although British shipping agents will operate the vessels, the Canadian owners will continue to draw Canadian dollars from them.

1948 WAGE SLASH This is not the first time the Canadian owners have shown their claws. In October, 1948, the agreement between the Canadian Seamen's Union and the owners, on wages and conditions, expired. The shipowners demanded a 45-a-month wage slash which the Union rejected, and no new agreement could be negotiated. A bitter strike ensued in which two Canadian seamen were killed by the police. One of them had been decorated during the war and given the freedom of the City of Hull, for bravery at sea. He had been torpedoed four times.

The Canadian shipowners won the strike by bringing in scab labour from the American Seafarers International Union. Working-class organisations throughout the world called a boycott of Canadian shipping, and it is now history how 16,000 London dockers were locked out for refusing to handle the "black" ships Argomont and Beaverbrae.

Many of the Canadian seamen, loyal union men, were victimised and will never be allowed to sail on Canadian ships again. Irony of the present situation is that, among the Canadian seamen thrown on the scrap-heap by the re-registration of the 123 vessels, are some of the S.I.U. scabs who broke the strike last year. The tragedy is that decent Canadian seamen will suffer with this scum.

UP WITH WAGES It is high time that the situation where British crews can be used as cheap labour was ended.

The National Union of Seamen, however, has never been very efficient at tackling questions of wages and conditions. When twenty-four seamen walked off the S.S. Adviser, at Northfleet last September, over filthy conditions aboard, they said outright that the union officials had not collaborated with them.

Canadian shipowners also make use of cheap British labour for repairing their vessels. The Beaverdell, sister ship to the notorious Beaverbrae, was being painted, including hull and bottom, by Harland and Wolff, in the King George V dock, London, two months ago.

It's time wage rates went up. Compared with Canadian, Swedish and Norwegian standards they are pitifully low. If they stay as they are now, the red duster will be confused with the flag of Panama, under which sail ships and crews that could not put to sea under any other flag.

SISTER ANNA WILL

Lady Astor, in a recent address to Oxford undergraduates, said that one of her sons once said, "if mother wasn't in the House of Commons, she'd have been in the Salvation Army."

THE MIXTURE AS BEFORE

BUDGET SOP FOR HIGHER INCOME GROUPS

The Budget proved, as was expected, to be very much the mixture as before. The working-class will continue to bear the sacrifices, while relief is given to those who could afford to be taxed up to the hilt. Fireworks for the benefit of the gallery were provided by Cripps' retrospective surtax on the free gifts of £100,000 to Sir John Black of Standard Motors, and £125,000 to Mr. L.P. Lord of Austin Motors. The employing class as a whole was not hurt by this display, as most of them stick to the method of bonus-share issues for dodging their taxes. Only the two individuals concerned are reported to be biting their thumbs.

HELPING THEM OUT

The much-publicised income-tax reliefs turned out to be a damp squib. A married couple without children, but with an income of £5 a week pay 2d less a week or, as P.A.Y.E. works, a shilling less every sixth week. A married couple earning £6 a week will save themselves 9d a week. Majority of married couples with children are not affected at all, as they don't earn enough to pay tax. Any married couple with three children, lucky enough to be earning £16 a week will, on the other hand, be 4s. 4d. better off.

There was, however, good news for anybody who can lay his or her hands on £1,200. There will be a reduction of purchase tax from 66 2-3 to 33 1-3 on private cars costing more than that amount.

It was also announced that there would be an inquiry into tax relief on savings for old age and retirement. The inquiry is under the nice, safe chairmanship of tobacco tycoon, Mr. J.M. Tucker, K.C., a director of Carreras cigarette manufacturers. Few workers will be interested in the inquiry, as it costs about £3 a week to go in for one of these "£3,300 for you at the age of 55" schemes. Most of us lack the necessary ready cash.

HELPING ITSELF

While the Government is helping the higher income groups, it is helping itself at the same time - out of our pockets. Food subsidies are being quietly pulled down from £465 million last year to £410 million this year. We are going to finance the tax cuts for the tax dodgers - and it's no pleasure.

Ninepence a gallon extra is to be charged on petrol. The transport people will promptly pass the extra charge on to us for goods carried, and passenger fares will probably jump too. Extra charges on funeral hearses are a certainty. On the other hand, anyone who can afford £1,200 for a car won't suffer too much on account of the tax. The worker with a 1931 Austin

certainly will.

While taking tax off private cars costing more than £1,280, the government has decided to slam a 33 1-3 purchase tax on all goods vehicles from May 1. Extra cost of the lorry will, of course, be passed on to the consumer of the goods the lorry carries. What a joke for May Day - thought Sir Stafford. But the joke's stale - we've had too many of these budgets. Only bright spot in the programme was the announcement of stronger beer - and we will need it. If half the tricks pulled in this budget were tried during a friendly game of nap, the player in question would be a candidate for the casualty ward of the local hospital. -F.R.

HOW THE HELL DO WE LIVE?

- NEARLY TWELVE MILLION WORKERS' FAMILIES ON SHORT RATIONS

Facts that emerge from the government's White Paper on National Income and Expenditure (published on April 17) raise, for most workers, the question, "how the hell do we manage to live?" White Paper covers the country's 23,500,000 personal incomes, ranging from those below £2 a year (or £5 a week) to those above £10,000 a year (or £200 a week). Consideration of the state of affairs it discloses makes it easy to understand why no adequate review was given by the popular press.

UNDER £5 A WEEK: Families with a weekly income of less than £5 a week, states the White Paper, total 11,790,000. This represents 50.17% of the total population. When we take into consideration the estimate in the March issue of "Direct Action", based on official and semi-official figures, that a £7-a-week wage is worth only a 1938 wage of £2.17s. 8d, we realise that these families are living on very short rations indeed.

We find, however, that a so-called "Labour" Government is not only content that this state of affairs should continue, but - to make matters worse - rakes £28,000,000 out of these families in income tax each year. This is, of course, in addition to the estimated 34s. 6d which each family pays, every week, in indirect taxation on food, clothing and other necessities.

THE BETTER PAID WORKER The White Paper shows that, since 1938, 8,710,000 families have managed to climb from the under-£5-a-week class to the £5 to £10 a week class. From our own experience, though, we know that the majority of these people are only on the £6 to £6.10s. a week level, the average wage of a skilled tradesman,

This section of the population represents 36.80% of the total, and receives 34.30% of the national income, compared with the 50.17% of the total and 48.55% of the national income of the under-£5-a-week families.

THE HIGHER INCOMES The 2,830,000 earning between £10 and £40 a week, represent 12.09% of the population, but receive £2,249-million or 26.34 of the national income. Although only a quarter the size of the under-£5-a-week section, they receive nearly as much in total income.

Above this section there are the 106,000 families, or .94% of the total, who get £40 a week and over. Although this section is only one-fiftieth the size of the under-£5 class, it takes one-third of the amount earned by the latter group. Figures are £924-million or 10.81% of the national income. A sub-division of this class is the over £200 a week group. Here 11,000 families - or 1-200th part of the population (.05%) take £195-million, or 2.28% of the national income.

The above figures are official and probably under-estimate the difference in income. But even as such, they smell to any worker.

- J.R.

THE BURNING

LUNACY AT LARGE U.S. Army told "G.I.'s today to spruce up their table manners. It said two enlisted men have already been court-martialled for refusing to pass the ketchup to a sergeant.

-UP dispatch from Frankfurt, 26.4.50.

Barnes, told a pre-election meeting at Winsor-road school, East Ham, that there would be no increase in railway fares. Three days after the election result the Railway Executive announced it would ask the Railway Tribunal for a fare increase. Memory slipping?

MIDDLEMEN? Commonwealth Gazette, Canberra, Australia, recently explained the duties of second secretaries to Ministers. They were, it said, "to assist the First Secretary and to direct Third Secretaries."

LOS WEEK-END

Minister of Transport,

ATOMIC LIFESAVER Speaking of the atomic bombs dropped on Japan, President Truman said, "I made up my mind that the best way to save the lives of our young men, and the best way to save the lives of Japanese soldiers too, was to drop those bombs and end the war."

-BUP dispatch from Idaho, 10.5.50.

PORTWORKERS AGAINST THE MACHINE

Latest strike of London portworkers gives proof - if proof were needed - that the tradition of solidarity is still very much alive in the docks and an outstanding feature of the dispute, which lasted ten days, was that the workers went back 11,000 stronger than they came out. Unfortunately they went back defeated.

STALINIST "LEADERSHIP"

After last summer's strike in support of the Canadian seamen, the Communist Party had succeeded in regaining a measure of the support it lost during and immediately following the war by its "let's be friends with the bosses" policy. It was Communist portworkers who were behind the formation of the Portworkers' Defence Committee and, although many sincere and militant workers supported the new-formed committee, it was the C.P. which dictated its policy. With this committee leading the strike, it was doomed to failure, as are ALL Stalinist-led disputes, for the Communist Party is concerned not with the issue of working-class solidarity, but solely with its own political ends - the foreign policy of Russia.

Issue on which the strike was fought was the breaking, by the Transport and General Workers Union executive, of the "no victimisation" terms under which the portworkers returned to work last July.

A USELESS UNION

Three men - Bert Saunders, Harry Constable and Ted Dickens - were expelled from the T.G.W.U. for their activity during the 1949 strike. Their appeal against expulsion was rejected by the union's appeal committee. Of the three, only Dickens is a member of the C.P. Saunders and Constable are ex-members - they both left the party through fundamental disagreement with its policy.

Dockers rightly considered that the terms of "no victimisation" in 1949 were binding on Deakin and the union executive as well as on the employers, and they saw quite clearly that the aim of the executive was to undermine militancy in the docks.

Right to work in the port has been, for a long time, bound up with union membership. By expelling the three men from the union, Deakin hoped to get them out of the docks.

This manoeuvre failed - thanks to the strike, but only because the workers, as well as the employers, accepted the position of the three men working in the docks without a union "ticket."

"BRING IN THE TROOPS"

The first thought of Attlee, who owes his present position to the dockers of

Limehouse, is to "bring in the troops."

Since the 1949 strike the Labour government have perfected their strike breaking apparatus. Colonel-in-charge of troops in the Royal group of docks told a BBC correspondent, "We had it all laid on ... we knew at 11.30 am for certain and moved in this afternoon," adding, "Some men have been here before." Now we know a special strike-breaking force is always ready and "laid on!"

Special feature of the strike was the government's endorsement of the Dock Labour Board's threat to sack the 15,000 strikers if there was not a return to work by Monday, May 1 - MAY DAY. On this question it's interesting to note what the responsible journal of big business, the "Economist", had to say: "The Dock Labour Board has rattled the sabre, saying that the continued breach of contract might lead to dismissals ... but threats, which could not possibly be carried out against 14,000 strikers, tend to do more harm than good."

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? Any remaining illusions about the T.G.W.U. have been very nearly destroyed by the strike. It is not without reason that it has become known as the union the boss prefers. Union leaders and employers were up to their ears in the conspiracy to break the militancy of the London portworkers.

But in their disillusionment with the union, portworkers must beware of the Communist Party with its cries of "we want a new leadership." What IS needed is a syndicalist union for ALL portworkers - a union based on the principle of workers' control, in which the men on the job will decide on Union policy, and where delegates will be subject to recall by those who elect them if they fail to carry out their mandate. - SYNDICALIST

Book Review

PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL POLICY by R.M. Titmuss, Stationery Office and Longmans Green, 25s.

Some of the cold-blooded calculations, on the basis of which a government prepares for war, are disclosed in this book, one of twenty official Civil Histories of the war to be published following a Cabinet decision in 1942. It follows, therefore, that the disclosures are official and will not be contradicted in the future.

In 1937, the Committee of Imperial Defence judged that an all-out aerial attack, lasting 60 days, might kill anything up to 600,000 people and maim and injure 1,200,000. On this basis the Ministry of Health issued a million burial forms in 1939. The Home Office, in its turn, envisaged that mass burials and the burning of bodies in lime would be necessary to

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save the cost of 20-million square feet of coffin timber (valued at \$300,000) each month.

Some local authorities went a step further and bought up a large number of shrouds and papier-mache coffins. Local hospitals were warned that between three and four million cases of panic, hysteria and other neurotic conditions were to be expected. They were described as a "probable menace."

"A hideous question-mark to plague one planning committee after another throughout the 1930's" was the possibility of a "disorderly flight" from London. A police cordon around London was worked out in detail. It was to consist of the police, 17,000 special troops and 20,000 reserve constables.

It is true that the government over-estimated the number of possible casualties - but they were prepared to accept them. The lives of millions of workers were to be thrown away as deliberately as one throws away a pawn on a chessboard. W.J.

INTERNATIONAL

Grigor Petrovitch Maximoff, author of "The Guillotine at Work" and editor of the Russian Anarchist review, "Dielo Trouda" ("Workers Cause") died at Chicago on March 16 after a heart attack. His ashes were scattered in Waldheim Cemetery on March 20.

Maximoff, who was born in 1893 near Smolensk, joined the army in 1915 - although opposed to the war - to carry out revolutionary propaganda among the soldiers. He took an active part in the Russian Revolution, was member of a factory soviet at Petrograd and participated in a number of soviet conferences. He was arrested six times by the Bolsheviks and, in 1919 they condemned him to death as a Red Army soldier who refused to fight against the revolutionary peasants and the Makhno movement. Only a speedy intervention by the metalworkers union saved his life. On March 8, 1921, he was again arrested, this time for carrying out anarcho-syndicalist propaganda, and imprisoned until September of the same year in the Taganka jail. A hunger strike of 103 days and the energetic protest of European trade-unionists, then meeting in Moscow, forced his release. With ten other Anarchists (V.M. Voline, G.A. Gorjelik, Mark Mratchny, Jefim Yartchuk and others) he was exiled on January 5, 1922. He lived for three years at Berlin, then went to Paris for a time, and in 1925 went to America, where he settled at Chicago.

There our comrade Tom Brown visited him last year. He was working, with other comrades, as a paper-hanger. Last letter we received from Comrade Maximoff, in January this year,

spoke of K.J. Kenafick's book, "Michael Bakunin and Karl Marx," "The book is very useful and valuable for our movement," wrote Maximoff, "and therefore deserves to be distributed in large quantity." Same letter enclosed a donation to our Press Fund. Pamphlet by Maximoff, "Bolshevism, Promises and Reality," was published by the Anarchist-Communist Federation of Glasgow in 1935 (reprinted 1937 but now out of print). Maximoff has left the manuscript of a book on Bakunin's work, "Scientific Anarchism."

Loss of this great fighter for the libertarian cause will be felt keenly throughout the international movement. K.H.

MAY DAY IN PARIS

Mass meeting, organised by the French National Confederation of Labour (C.N.T.) attracted a big crowd to the Mutualite Hall in Paris on Sunday, April 30 to hear speakers from the International Working Men's Association. Fontaine, Juhel and Bouye spoke for the French C.N.T., Duran and Pintado for the Spanish C.N.T. in exile, Albrozini for the Italian Syndical Union, Simoff for the Bulgarian anarcho-syndicalists in exile, and Hawkes for the revolutionary syndicalists in Britain.

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY

Swedish section of the I.W.M.A., the S.A.C., was constituted on June 23, 1910, and will celebrate its 40th anniversary this year. A jubilee congress has been called to meet in Stockholm on June 23. Throughout the past 40 years the S.A.C. has always taken the keenest interest in international questions and has maintained close relations with revolutionary syndicalists in other countries through its affiliation to the IWMA. In 1913 the S.A.C. was represented at the International Syndicalist Congress in London, where 15 countries were represented. General Secretariat of the IWMA is, at present, in Sweden.

- IWMA

VISA REFUSED

Spanish Anarchist, Federica Montseny, recently visited Sweden, to speak at 25 meetings organised in different towns by the S.A.C., and culminating in a May Day meeting in Stockholm. The Swedish authorities gave comrade Montseny a visa for her trip, but the British authorities refused to give her a visa to cross the British Zone of Germany on the way to Sweden from France. Difficulty was finally overcome by comrade Montseny travelling by air.

- IWMA

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CHINESE DEPORTEES IN EUROPE

Europeans who do not conform with their Stalinist governments are sent to forced labour in Siberia and the Far East by the Bolsheviks. Now the reverse process is in operation - Chinese workers who will not toe the party line are being sent to forced labour in Eastern Europe. In Czechoslovakia 4,000 Chinese coolies are working in the mines at Karvine, while in Upper Silesia the German deportees have been joined by 20,000 Chinese workers.

- IWMA

ANOTHER COMRADE "DISAPPEARS"

In Eastern Germany, the Anarchist comrade, OSKAR HIPPE, has been condemned to 25 years forced labour for "anti-soviet activities." He has been "missing" since September, 1948. Hippe was arrested in 1919 and 1926 for revolutionary activity, was re-arrested and subjected to all kinds of bad treatment by the Nazis in 1933, and has now been condemned to a slow death by the Red Fascists.

- IWMA

RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

The anti-bolshevik resistance movement in Estonia has been particularly active recently. Under the leadership of Elmar Hilp and Purggas, armed groups attack Russian convoys, free the deportees and hold to ransom the party officials - when they don't kill them immediately, as has been the case with more than twenty. As in France, at the time of the Maquis, the people are working with the Estonian Resistance.

-"Le Libertaire"

LITERATURE

MICHAEL BAKUNIN AND KARL MARX (K.J. Kenafick)	5s. 6d
ANIMAL FARM (George Orwell)	2s. 9d
BULGARIA - A NEW SPAIN	9d
TRADE UNIONISM OR SYNDICALISM (Tom Brown)	4d
BRITISH GENERAL STRIKE (Tom Brown)	3d
SOCIAL GENERAL STRIKE (Tom Brown)	3d
STRUGGLE IN THE FACTORY (Equity)	4d
PEOPLE AND CHARLATANS (A. Calabiano)	3d
LES BULGARES PARLENT AU MONDE (in French)	9d

"Le Libertaire" - "Solidaridad Obrera" - "Industrial Worker" and other international papers - 3d each.

- All prices postfree -

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