

DIRECT ACTION

Organ of the Anarchist Federation

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The A.F.B. is opposed to all wars between rival states and governments. It stands firm for the international solidarity of the world's workers. But while it opposes war, it does not urge non-violent submission to ruling-class aggression. It believes that it is necessary for the workers to use violence in their own defence.

ANARCHISTS IN KOREA: "NEITHER STALIN NOR TRUMAN!"

The biggest flare-up yet between the Eastern and Western blocs is in full swing as American land, sea and air and British naval forces are flung in to bolster up the Southern Korean army against the Stalinist invasion from the North.

It is not yet clear whether a third world bloodbath is imminent, but it is obvious that one is in full preparation. From MacArthur's statements and actions it looks as though American imperialism wants it now.

In this critical situation, the Anarchist Federation reaffirms its complete independence of both imperialist camps. It supports neither the Yankee nor the Stalinist variety.

The AFB stands firm for the interests of the working class throughout the world, and it expresses its solidarity with all peoples who are being oppressed by the imperialist warmongers.

In Korea there is a strong Anarchist movement, which has a long and honourable tradition in the fight against exploitation. We reprint, below, extracts from the report sent to the International Anarchist Congress in Paris last November by our comrades of the General Anarchist Federation of Korea (GFKA).

"The Pacific war put an end to the cruel Japanese oppression in Korea. In December, 1945, the Moscow conference gave to the country a provisional government, accredited by Russia, the United States, Britain and China. But Russo-American antagonism and, above all, the movement of opposition by the Korean people (a movement initiated and sustained by

the Anarchists) defeated this attempt. A series of Russo-American conferences failed to solve the problem and, in 1947 the United Nations authorised Southern Korea to elect an autonomous government.

"Northern Korea, ruled by a government of the 'People's Republic' type, is a satellite of Russia. In Southern Korea the democratic government is economically and militarily dependent on the United States.

"The frontier dividing the two parts is the scene of what has been baptised 'the battle of the 38th parallel'. Every night Bolshevik groups attack, burn, murder and sack.

"This state of affairs allows the Southern government to bombard the people with decrees and, under the pretext of anti-bolshevik struggle, to extend its authority,

"In spite of this state of nascent war and permanent insecurity, life in Southern Korea is infinitely better than north of the 38th Parallel. The follow figures speak for themselves:-

"POPULATION OF THE SOUTH: 1944 - 16,565,370 Koreans, 462,507 Japanese; 12,648 other nationalities; 1946 - 19,369,270 Koreans; no Japanese or other nationalities; 1947 - 21,800,000 Koreans, no Japanese or other nationalities.

"The reasons for this rapid growth of the native population between 1944 and 1947 were the return of about 100,000 workers and soldiers and, above all, the flight of some five million Koreans from the Bolshevik terror in the North.

WORKING CONDITIONS

"As a result of the rise in prices, due to monetary disorganisation, wages are very low and cover barely two-thirds of one's strictly necessary expenses. There is, moreover, great unemployment. In November, 1946, there were 1,050,957 workless according to official figures, and to these must be added more than ten million people who receive periodic assistance.

"Northern Korea is a mainly agricultural region, although its soil is not very fertile (22% arable land). After the Japanese withdrawal many big landowners, fearing agrarian reform, sold their estates. But these transfers brought about no great changes, and the land continues to be very little divided out.

STRUGGLE OF THE KOREAN ANARCHISTS

"After the defeat of the Korean revolution, the Anarchists fought on, and killed many of the leaders of Japanese imperialism. The Emperor himself was attacked several times

by our comrades, who destroyed the means of invasion and sabotaged Japanese exploitation, organising - at the same time - working-class unity.

"The police decimated our groups repeatedly. When action became impossible inside the country, the militants went to China, Manchuria and Japan itself to carry on the struggle. The sacrifices they made were enormous and this stimulated the revolutionary fervour and desire for justice and freedom among the survivors.

"The Japanese authorities became obsessed with fear, and the police repression became even more severe. The terrorised people had great admiration and sincere respect for those who, in such great numbers, died for our cause. At last, when the terrorist regime was defeated, the GFKA resumed the struggle in the open.

SINCE THE WAR "In September and October, 1945, the majority of the workers and peasants joined the Workers' Union, sustained and led by the Anarchists. Heavily aided by the U.S.S.R., the Bolsheviks succeeded in using the Union as a means of action for their political ends, lessening the strength of our comrades. Soon another "union" was formed, of American inspiration, and in a short time it supplanted the other. Undismayed, our comrades carried on the struggle on all fronts.

"In May, 1946, the GFKA created the "Agricultural Workers Party" and the movement of 'Independent Workers', together with the General Federation of Korean Revolutionaries, the General Federation of Young Workers, and the General Students' Federation.

"Some figures to show the influence of Anarchism in Korea - the GFKA has 3,000 militants who, by means of the above movements influence 600,000 perfectly organised Koreans. The GFKA has two daily papers and one weekly - printed, moreover, on its own presses. The GFKA has created a University, where young workers can study in the evenings, and two schools for youth in the country."

LITERATURE

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HEALTH SERVICES CUT

(by our Scientific Correspondent)

According to a recent report, published by Dr. Burn, Medical Officer for Health at Salford, Manchester, only one working class mother in four is properly fed. Eighty-five per cent of these women are tired and worn out in the morning. One out of three have not had a holiday since they were married.

Dr. Burn finds that working class children are eight times more likely to die of respiratory diseases than children from upper class homes. He considers they are four times more likely to be born prematurely and far more likely to be killed in street accidents. Should they develop gastro-enteritis their chances of survival, compared with upper class kids, are four to one against.

THE CUTS Despite this state of affairs, which clearly indicates under-nourishment among the working class, the government have decided, as a first step in their economy measures, to slash the health services. From May 16, a whole range of medical products are banned from distribution under the so-called free health service.

Among the preparations listed are invalid foods, lemon and barley water, meat and vegetable extracts and other essentials to the convalescent patient. Also included are malt extracts, vitamin compounds, glucose and other things essential to the preventive treatment of under-nourished persons who have a family history of respiratory and lung diseases such as T.B.

Needless to say, the whole report is nicely varnished over. As a window-dressing, and at the top of the list, such items as whisky, brandy and gin are included. No doubt Scrooge and his associates in Whitehall are satisfied with the smoke-screen.

THE WASTE By their actions the government is encouraging bigger and better profits for the gangsters of the patent medicines trade. During the last financial year £2,562,679 were spent by the health service on medicines and the like. Cost for the country as a whole was in the region of £11-million. This compares with £2½ million spent by the "panel" in 1938 which, of course, covered only actual wage-earners. About £5 million was spent on medicines prescribed by private doctors.

During that year the turnover of the patent medicine racket was estimated to be between £20 and £28 million annually. This amounts, at the lower figure, to eight times the panel expenditure, or 2½ times the total expenditure on prescriptions from competent doctors. The present-day actions of the government are likely to give a new lease of life to patent medicines and the incurable harm which they cause.

Industrial Front

DIRECT ACTION WINS

SHIP PAINTERS STRIKE A successful 24-hour strike by 750 ships' painters in the London Docks has resulted in heavy defeat for the shipyard bosses. It was the outcome of an attempt by the bosses to break the labour-hiring system, which is under union control.

As employment in the trade is on a fairly casual basis, the workers, when they are fired on completion of a job, report to the union office and take their place on a rota. As work becomes available, the organiser sends to the employers the men at the head of the rota, which the bosses are obliged to accept. The system is a fairly effective guarantee against quiet victimisation of known militants.

On May 26, however, a man named Blackett was fired as redundant by his employers, Harland and Wolff. On May 30 he signed on the union rota, being No. 68. Contrary to agreement, Harland and Wolff offered to re-employ him, on June 1, as charge-hand of a gang of four men painting dock gates. In defiance of union rules he accepted.

On June 4 a meeting of the workers gave an ultimatum to the employers to remove him by midday, June 5, or they would withdraw their labour at 8 a.m. on June 6. This they did. Before the day was out both Harland and Wolff's and Blackett had enough. Blackett quit his job, the industry and the printing trade. It is not healthy to be where you are not wanted, and the workers don't want scabs.

If Blackett had taken his turn on the rota he would have been given work by June 10. But he preferred to play into the hands of the employers, who were trying to drive into the employing system, which has served the workers' interests over a number of years. The shipyard bosses will have to think again.

"SHIP PAINTER"

"DAILY WORKER" STRIKE

"For the first time in its history no editions of the Daily Worker were published... though they were produced," to quote that journal on June 16. This resulted from a strike by the entire warehouse staff. It was called when the management refused to promote a Bro. Connor to the position of overseer, which had become vacant on the death of the previous overseer. Bro. Connor had been deputy overseer. The workers say that the management's nominee has the advantage of being a "party member," while the deputy overseer is not.

Within 24 hours the management agreed to submit the case to arbitration. But they were very upset about this threat to their "managerial authority."

"The Daily Worker cannot allow groups of workers, in violation of union policy, to choose their overseers. The management must have the final choice and exercise it in

appointing a new overseer. The management cannot concede to the warehouse staff of the Daily Worker a right which the warehouse staff of no other newspaper would dream of claiming from their own particular employers.

These are just a few of the fuehrer-type declarations which the Daily Worker, living up to its totalitarian masters, made the following day. Added to this, the management, it appears, cannot abstain from lying. For since when has it been "a violation of union policy" for workers to attempt to choose their own nominee for a position?

We can, however, understand all this when we remember that the workers employed by this company were compelled to strike in defence of their "politically victimised" mates once before. It was back in 1942, when a friendly war-crazy government lifted the ban on the "Daily Worker." The management refused to reinstate a number of workers and the remainder in their defence. On that occasion the management brought in non-union scabs to keep the presses running. This time the scabs weren't handy.

"NEWSPAPER WORKER"

THE BIG SWEAT DRIVE

"How about coming in on Saturday morning?" In a number of factories which have kept strictly to the five-day week since the war, this question is being asked by the governor or his stooge. Now that wage rates are mostly frozen, and with prices creeping upwards, many workers jump at this opportunity to take home a few extra shillings. A little thinking shows that by doing this the workers are the losers in the long run; that the mug who works overtime is helping to do a mate out of a job and is, in fact, laying himself open to cuts in his own standard of living.

Now that the government and employers are putting on the screw in their mad drive for profits, for increased output, and to sweat as much as possible from each worker for as little payment as possible, it is as well to see through their little game. They encourage workers to do overtime so that with nine workers doing the work of ten, and one unemployed, they can use the fear of the sack as a weapon against the nine at work. It is clear that if the nine work slower - even though this means losing overtime money - there will be a job left for number ten. If there is a so-called "shortage of labour" it will be easier for us to force up our standard of living than if there is unemployment.

During the post-war period of comparatively full employment, when most of us worked 40-50 hours a week, living standards were generally higher than in the depression of the 1930's, when many workers regularly put in more than 60 hours a week trying to earn a living wage and to avoid the sack.

In addition to lengthening working hours, they are trying

to make us work harder by such means as piece-work rates, production bonuses and other forms of payment by results, anyone who has worked under such "incentives" knows that these methods are mere tricks to foment competition between workmates who ought to stick together - in addition the rates are continually being adjusted to keep the worker constantly "at it" if he is to maintain his earnings.

We can conclude that if masses of workers do longer hours now, even at high rates for overtime, we shall be working those long hours later on for a very low standard of living. By refusing all overtime and fighting for an even shorter working week, we can maintain a higher living standard without slaving our guts out sixty or more hours a week, all the time slaves of the clock, the conveyor belt and the shift rota. The production drive was unwittingly exposed in a radio talk by Dennis Healey, when he said that productivity had increased by 10 percent in the last two years, but that only one-tenth of this increase in wealth had found its way into the wage-earners' pockets. (BBC, "European recovery and the trades unions," May 2, 1950).

Everywhere employers are clamping down to end our cherished gains of the last few years, and it is necessary for us to throw our full energy into resisting these attempts to grind us lower again. We must encourage our workmates to stick together and fight. They will learn by experience and understand our common position as the working class and our common interest in going forward from our immediate gains to build a new world-wide industrial commonwealth of free workers. -P.G.

SMITHFIELD HAS ANOTHER GO

As we publish this issue of "Direct Action", the 1,200 drivers at Smithfield meat market are striking for a £6.6s. a week minimum wage. At the moment they are getting only from £5.7s. to £5.17s.

As usual the press is howling with indignation that workers should claim what is, after all, only the very bare minimum for a living wage under the present level of prices. To read the papers one would think the drivers are striking simply to see the housewife doesn't get a weekend roast. What cant!

Here's wishing the Smithfield men an early success in their struggle. With the dockers they have kept the banner of class struggle flying during the last few years of apathy and inertia.

SOUL SAVIOUR

With a Salvation Army lilt in his voice, Percy Morris, Labour MP for Swansea West, in his presidential address to the Railway Clerks Association conference at Scarborough on May 15, said they wanted something "more comprehensive and permanent than a £5 a week minimum. Referring to gambling and drink he said, "Think what could be done with the money and labour now spent on these evils." We suggest Percy worries more about wages and less about morals.

THE TRUTH WILL OUT...

Few acts in the history of modern warfare can compare with the diabolical murder of 130,000 human beings at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The very use of this filthy weapon brands the Allied war leaders as some of the foulest criminals in history. But when we consider the circumstances in which the bombs were used the English language becomes incapable of providing a suitable name for these homicidal maniacs.

Writing in the American magazine "Look", Rear-Adm. Zacharias wartime Deputy Director of Naval Intelligence in Washington, admits there was no military reason for dropping the atom bomb. He asserts that "Japan would have surrendered by August 15, 1945, without the use of extreme measures." He documents his statement as follows:

1. -During the early part of 1945 Emperor Hirohito asked the Vatican to find out the American terms in preparation for peace negotiations. "Unfortunately," he comments, "nobody outside the Navy Dept. and Office of Strategic Services seemed to take the opportunity seriously."
2. -Tokio also asked Russia to negotiate for peace on her behalf. "However, the Soviet never acted on the request. In fact it never advised us of the Japanese move."
3. -On April 5 Hirohito dismissed Gen. Koiso as Prime Minister, naming in his place Adm. Suzuki, "whose job would be to examine the possibility of ending the war."
4. -Late in May an Intelligence report was received saying that Japan's Supreme War Guidance Council had accepted a resolution to seek ways and means to end the war.
5. -On June 26 an Imperial conference was called and the Emperor "ordered his advisors to prepare immediate plans to end the war on whatever terms Japan could obtain from us."
6. -Adm. Zacharias, himself, made a broadcast on July 21 offering Japan the chance to surrender unconditionally. Tokio's answer was, he says, "in effect an open invitation to begin surrender negotiations on the terms we had proposed."

A DEMONSTRATION On July 21 Japan was prepared to surrender. Yet on August 6 the first atom bomb was

dropped on Hiroshima. Two days later a second was dropped on Nagasaki. What is the reason behind this cynical murder of 130,000 people? A month ago President Truman declared it was to "save the lives of our young men, and the best way to save Japanese soldiers too."

Adm. Zacharias' disclosures show Truman to be a liar and an accomplice in murder. As the Anarchist Federation said in 1945 and many workers have seen since, the action of the Allied war leaders was determined by their desire to demonstrate to Russia the inadvisability of attempting to encroach on American territorial booty. In this diplomatic lesson 130,000 people were wiped out by the vermin of Whitehall and Washington. -FR,

International

ANARCHISTS ON TRIAL

The three Italian Anarchists, Busico, De Lucchi and Mancuso, who raided the Spanish fascist consulate at Genoa on November 8 last year, appeared before the court at Genoa on June 1. During the hearing, our comrades made it clear that they did not expect "justice" from the court. "We have come to the trial in order to make propaganda," declared De Lucchi.

The defendants stated that their action was against the brutal Franco regime in Spain, and was aimed at helping the struggle of the anti-fascist resistance movement.

When the Chairman said, "We administered justice under the Monarchy in the same way as we are doing today under the Republic," De Lucchi replied, "We know. You were for the King, and now you are for the Republic."

The Public Prosecutor, demanding a year's imprisonment for our comrades, said, "We who came here filled with human understanding and Christian brotherhood, find ourselves confronted with men who understand no other language but that of the bomb and the dagger."

The three Anarchists were committed for trial at the Assize Court.

ANARCHIST CONGRESS IN JAPAN

Annual congress of the Anarchist Federation of Japan was held in a hired Buddhist temple towards the end of May, writes the "Industrial Worker." One of the main issues discussed was that of developing the formation of syndicalist labour unions in Japan, and the possibility of creating an IWW section was mentioned.

UNITY IN ACTION

Successful strike of agricultural workers, lasting thirty days, is reported from Aimargues in the French Midi. Strike committee was composed of delegates from the anarcho-syndicalist C.N.T. and the C.G.T. Landowners and the government used every means, from tear gas and assault troops to attempts to split the workers.

On Monday, June 5, terms were agreed for a return to work. The workers, however, did not start until the following day, thus giving the employers a glimpse of their great reserves of fighting spirit.

SYNDICALIST EDITOR GAOLED

There is never a great lapse of

time between the occasions on which the administrator of "Arbetaren" (The Worker), the national syndicalist paper in Sweden, comes before the public eye for being a nuisance to the parasite class. This time it is Armas Sastamoinen, who exposed and condemned irregularities in a certain public servant's handling of his responsibilities. This sort of thing has gone on for a long time, so we can only conclude that prosecutions and sentences are attempts to cover up grave misconduct by persons in public service.

Editor Sastamoinen was sentenced to two month's imprisonment and "Arbetaren" ordered to pay \$300 in damages and costs.

So comrade Armas sits in prison, enjoying Swedish justice's appreciation of his struggle for a cleaner handling of public affairs.

SYNDICALIST YOUTH IN NORWAY

Our Norwegian syndicalist comrades have formed a new youth organisation (Norges Syndikaliste Ungomsforbund) to include all young people, youth clubs and associations agreeing with syndicalist ideas and willing to work to spread them. It is not insisted that every member must be a 100% convinced syndicalist.

" CHANCE OF A LIFETIME "

"I am sorry that some well-meaning people, apparently syndicalists, are giving away, outside cinemas where 'Chance of a Lifetime' is showing, a grubby leaflet (illegally bearing no imprint) commending the film. Nothing could be more putting off to the average film goer." Tom Driberg, Reynolds News, 25.6.50.

Only leaflets we know of were published and distributed by the London League for Workers' Control, whose imprint they bore. Had the leaflet borne no imprint, it would still have been legal. It welcomed the film, but did not give it unreserved commendation. Here are some extracts:-

"This film has the courage to deal with an idea which the Government scorns in nationalised industries, and which so horrifies Private Enterprise - the idea of Workers' Control or Democracy in Industry.

"True, it does not give a clear picture of how or why workers might run their factories. It gives the impression that workers should simply elect their bosses instead of having them thrust upon them."