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FIGHTING FUND

The donations to the Fighting Fund for December (up to 28th) show a very small improvement over November. We still fall short of our target—and that means that our financial difficulties increase. Each month we have to meet our bills for the Paper and we can only do so if our readers and sympathisers come to our assistance by swelling the Fighting Fund. There is a gap between our income from selling the paper at 2d. and the cost of production and distribution. Comrades—help us to close that gap!

Our Paper is the only journal in Britain devoted to the struggle of the Working Class for emancipation and for the winning of the Socialist Republic. Our line is consistently that of the class struggle against the bosses. Ours is the only Party and the only paper which bases itself on the Internationalism of Marxism.

We have no hesitation in asking for your financial support—all advanced workers must be conscious of the role that our Party and our paper is playing in the struggle for Socialism and we feel confident that our readers will help us to maintain our press.

Comrades—our Paper does its duty to our class—please send us your donations and do your part in helping the work along.

Send your donations to:

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December, 1946.

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Conditional Decasualisation for the Dock Workers

BY N. PENTLAND

For many years dock and port workers have been constantly pressing their union officials to secure a scheme of work that would abolish casual labour and ensure regular employment.

In the years of slump and unemployment between the two wars, dockers were a section of the working class who suffered most at the hands of the cyclical depressions engendered by the chaos of capitalism.

Never sure of a job from one day to another, completely at the mercy of the "hire and fire" agents of the Port Authorities and shipping owners, dockers are determined not to go back to such conditions.

Regular employment after the war was a reform promised to the dockers in urging them to "go to work," a promise made by Churchill's Ministry of Labour, Ernest Bevin, and the T.U.C.

With the coming to power of the Labour Government some semblance of this promise had to be implemented, the outcome of which is the recent recommendations of Sir J. Forster, K.C., as provided for in the October 1945 Dock Workers' Bill.

This Bill, when enacted, replaces the existing National Dock Labour Corporation.

The recommendations of this capitalist K.C. brings very little consolation to dock workers. These recommendations fail to strike at the roots of the problem of unemployment and only mean a reshuffle of employment for a comparatively few registered workers.

Fewer Dockers Recommended

One of the main recommendations suggest that ports should efficiently handle the volume of work which is locally handled. This, in essence, borders on the old method of discrimination and victimisation, and work for only a few, and is far from the dockers' ideas of full employment.

Against this proposal must be the demand for a shorter working day without loss of earnings which will allow for every dock worker to be employed.

Forster further recommends in return for a comparatively privileged few being employed, the dockers must hold themselves in readiness to be transferred and directed

to other ports should there be a slack period in his home port. While the dockers were passively prepared to undergo such direction during the war with all the inconveniences it entails, direction in "peace time" will not be tolerated for the privilege of being a registered worker.

Sir John recommends also that only ports with a high volume of trade would come under this scheme. This undermines the whole idea of decasualisation. While the busy ports of Liverpool, London, Bristol and Glasgow will be "covered", the many other ports like Grimsby, Hull and Middlesbrough will be left out. Such ports all round the coast employ many workers.

Having recommended "full" employment, Forster suggests that the local manager of port registration should have the power of suspension or removal from the register of any worker who has "misconducted" himself!

Dock workers have experienced this wartime measure of suspension and they may appeal against such arbitrary decisions. They know only too well just how "impartial" the appeal court really is, and how these measures were used against militants.

From all this, which is supposed to make the dockers' job secure, the worker is to receive a wage which is half-way between national unemployment benefit and an average the dockers can earn when employed. The exact amount has not yet been recommended!

No Real Report

The recommendations do contain no real solution to the problem of unemployment and casual labour. While trade and shipping remain in the hands of the capitalist class there will always be unemployment and casual labour. While the ports and shipping lines are still left to the mercies of the ups and downs of capitalist booms and slumps, no real security for the dock workers can be assured.

All the pious recommendations in the world will not alter the workers' conditions.

The first steps the dockers must take is the struggle for a living minimum wage, a Sliding Scale of hours to absorb casual and unemployed labour, the abolition of all disciplinary organs, used so effectively by the capitalist to victimise trade unionists.

The demand must be made to the Labour Government to nationalise without compensation under the dock workers' control, all management of port and shipping transport.

News in Brief . . .

Maurin, General Secretary of the P.O.U.M., Spain, jailed for 10 years, was released together with other workers' leaders. It is rumoured that he has again been arrested. The French Stalinist "l'Humanité", commenting upon his release, repeated the usual slander that he was a "Trotskyist agent of Franco." Maurin never belonged to the Fourth International, but belonged to the P.O.U.M., affiliated to the centrist "London Bureau."

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion Royal Berkshire Regiment, stationed near Hanover, Germany, gave up their chance of Christmas at home so that they could give a party to German children. They had saved their rations for weeks in preparation for the party.

A new fascist organisation has been uncovered in Atlanta, Ga., (U.S.A.) named Columbians, Inc., who boast they are "40 times as bad as the Klu Klux Klan." Openly launching a pogrom against Negroes who are moving into white restricted areas, they also hurled threats of violence against Jews. They claim branches in other cities, including New York.

Three members of the Lanka-Samasamajist Party (Ceylon Unit of the Bolshevik Leninist Party of India) have been elected by large majorities to the Colombo Municipal Council. The names of the comrades are Comrade Doric de Souza, Comrade Indrapala, and Comrade Aboubacker.

BUILDERS PROBLEMS

Volunteer Labour on Housing

SHOULD BUILDING TRADE WORKERS OFFER THEIR SERVICES WITHOUT PAYMENT OF WAGES DURING THEIR WEEK-ENDS ON REPAIR OF HUTMENTS.

A BUILDING WORKER GIVES THE ANSWER.

Some time ago Building Trade operatives had to be stopped from working an extra hour a day without wages on a housing site at Bexley, Kent, because of a breach of the Working Rule Agreement.

Stalinist Line

More recently a "help-my-neighbour" campaign has been resorted to by the local Stalinists in the Hendon-Edgware district, who have been making an appeal to Building Trade workers in the Trade Union branches, and in the Hendon Trades Council to give a few hours of their spare time at week-ends to the repair of some disused Nissen huts on the Arrandene camp site, Wise Lane, Mill Hill.

State Of Hutments

It is some weeks ago since these hutments were taken possession of by a number of squatters, who were in desperate need of a home. An idea of just how desperate was the need of these people can be gained by the fact that the state of the huts was considered by the Borough Council to be so advanced in dilapidation as to render them absolutely unfit for human habitation.

Notice of eviction soon followed, and it was then that the squatters decided to stay put, and to inform the Council of this intention, besides demanding the right to discuss the position with members of that body. As a result of this, the Mayor of Hendon visited the site, and after a parley with the squatters' Committee who claimed that the hutments could be made fit to live in, his worship agreed

to have the eviction notices withdrawn, and to have materials supplied to make the necessary repairs as soon as possible.

As to the necessary labour, the Mayor could not guarantee the possibility of putting members of the Council's maintenance staff to work on the huts, and suggested that the squatters should cope with that aspect of the problem as best they could. This is the point where the line is taken by the Stalinists of calling on building workers to give some of their spare time to doing a service to their fellow-workers.

Switch Labour Force

They succeeded in having a resolution sent from the Trades Council to the Town Clerk demanding that he make application for a permit to enable workers on the maintenance staff to work week-end overtime on the site also demanding that voluntary labour be paid. Representations were made to the Hendon-Edgware Branch of the N.F.B.T.O. asking them to support this line. But that body decided to follow somewhat different procedure, by deciding to urge the Borough Council to have repair work on the huts made Priority No. 1, so as to make it possible to switch the necessary labour force away from work of lesser importance.

In answer to this request, the Council will only commit themselves to saying that they are not prepared to take over the huts but are prepared to manage them on behalf of the Ministry, and they are awaiting further instructions from the Ministry. Meanwhile members of the C.P. are going

around endeavouring to get recruits to go to work at week-ends, seemingly oblivious to the fact that by doing so they are only toying with the fringe of the problem. Such a policy is only practicable in a workers' state where the ownership and control of the means of production is in the hands of the workers.

As it is, the correct line is to have resolutions flowing into the Council and the Government departments concerned from the Trades Councils, Trade Union branches, etc., demanding immediate action in switching labour away from some of the luxury jobs not only in the district referred to here, but in other parts of the country where similar conditions are being experienced by other squatters.

By accepting the line of the Stalinists the workers in the building trade are finding an easy way out for landlords and Borough Councils who are reluctant to face their responsibilities and in this particular case, a Tory Borough Council into the bargain!

From a Sympathiser

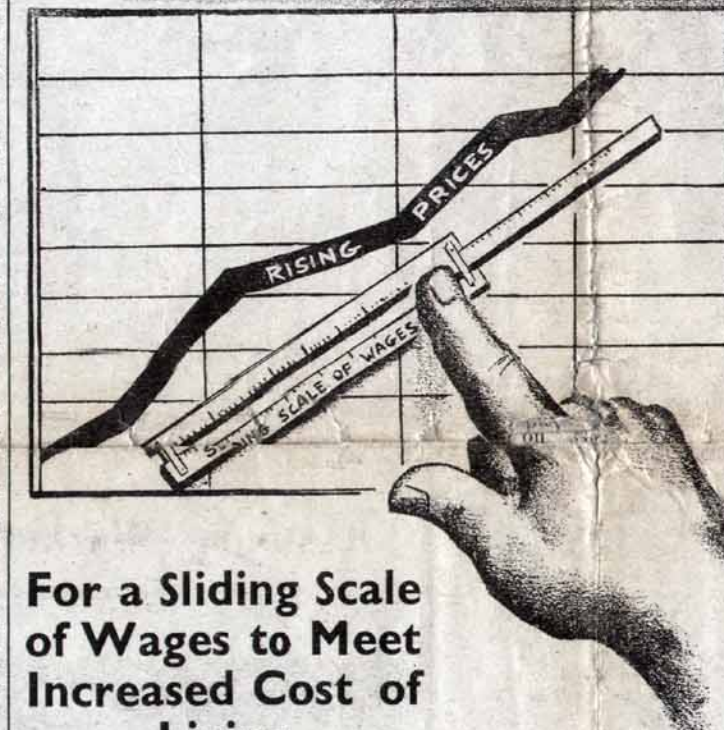
Dear Editor,

Could it be possible for you to insert in one of your publications an article on inflation and deflation, as there is so much reactionary trash being let loose in the place where I work, that it makes me feel sick every time I hear it, and especially when I hear from those very same mouths talk such as: "Sweated Labour", "Free the colonies", "Down with capitalism" and such like, that somehow it seems impossible.

I was so overwhelmed on reading your Mid-November editorial on Italian Labour that I can still feel that true spirit of internationalism crying out again and again wanting to be heard. I showed it to one of my workmates (as I normally do with all our literature); he agreed in general with the policy, but the revolutionary fervour wasn't there. Still, I suppose one has to be contented with getting a hearing at the present time. I will remember one time when you couldn't get a hearing at all.

Please find enclosed £1.0.0. for your organisation. I wish I could spare more. Every letter of that editorial deserves a pound.

Comrade Sympathiser



For a Sliding Scale of Wages to Meet Increased Cost of Living

From LEFT and RIGHT

BY AGITATOR

U.S. COLLABORATORS GO FREE

When Ribbentrop and his fellow Nazis swung from the gallows at Nuremberg, many a big business man and financier in this country and in America must have said to himself "There but for the grace of God . . ." During the whole drawn-out process at Nuremberg they must have experienced many anxious moments lest one of the defendants should expose to the world the close tie-up between British and American capitalists.

Confirmation of this close link comes with the news from Washington that Assistant Attorney General O. J. Rogge has been summarily sacked under orders from President Truman himself. Rogge was responsible for drawing up a report on Fascist activities in the United States, and his dismissal follows his public revelation of some of the contents of the report after it had been suppressed by the Department of Justice. An important section of the report confirms from Nazi sources, the dealings of America's leading corporations with the Nazis.

After his dismissal, Rogge told a meeting in New York that he had questioned a Berlin attorney, formerly in the service of Hitler's Foreign Minister, Joachim von Ribbentrop, who said that he had come to the United States in 1940 in order to strengthen connections between American and German capitalist interests.

The German envoy told Rogge: "My most important connection with American business was with

the International Telephone and Telegraph Co., whose President Sosthenes Behn, was also a director of the German Standard Elektrizitäts Gesellschaft."

He also referred to the German connections of the Underwood-Elliott-Fisher Co., Eastman Kodak, General Motors and the Ford Motor Company.

It should now be quite clear to every worker why the American Government, representing the American capitalist class wanted this report suppressed and why the Department of Justice dropped the prosecutions of Standard Oil, General Electric and many other big American concerns for business dealings with Nazi cartels. It should also be clear why there has been no investigation in this country about similar activities on the part of Imperial Chemicals and other British capitalist concerns.

HOW "THE WORKERS" LIVE

Despite Molotov's negative attitude at most sessions of U.N.O., signs are not wanting that the Stalinists have the highest confidence in the future of the organisation—or at least in the future of New York real estate.

According to the "Evening Standard" of October 24th, of all the 51 nations who are members of U.N.O., Russia is the biggest buyer of property in New York.

"Latest purchase is three five-storey houses near fashionable

Central Park. They cost £168,750. Mr. Gromyko, Russia's permanent delegate on the Security Council will occupy one. . . .

"The Russians now own four properties in Manhattan and a million dollar estate with a 51-room mansion—apparently one for every U.N.O. nation—at Glencove, Long Island."

In these sumptuous premises, the representatives of the Workers' Fatherland can be quite sure that they will not come into contact with the working class of New York.

FOR WORKERS AROUND MAYFAIR

Headed "Beauty in Business" and adorned with a picture of a bejewelled female, the following advertisers' announcement appeared on the 11th December:

"Mrs. JOHN CHURCHILL, well known in Mayfair, has opened an antique shop in fashionable Sloane Street. Against a background of rare and beautiful things, the daintiness of her fair skin shows to full advantage. 'I rely on . . . Cold Cream for cleansing and keeping my skin soft,' says Mrs. Churchill. 'And I always use Vanishing Cream as a powder base.'"

Where did this appear? You've guessed . . . in the "Daily Worker."

40 HOUR WEEK SELL-OUT

BY J. KELLY

The acceptance of the Employers' offer of a 44 hour 5-day week by the Confederation of Engineering Unions was a betrayal of the fight for a shorter working day.

Ever since the emergence of trade unionism in the engineering industry this fight has been to the forefront. If the ghosts of past militant action had been present at the conference table, they would have roundly condemned the lengthening of the 8 hour day, regardless of any excuses peddled by such spineless leaders as Scott, Tanner and Hodgson.

History Of The Struggle

The struggle for the nine-hour day first began in the North East, where the militant President of the Sunderland A.S.E. led the engineers out on strike on April 1, 1871. In spite of the hostility displayed by the leadership of the A.S.E. to the movement (there were Scotts and Tanners in those days also), the local employers agreed to introduce it on June 1st. This was refused, however, by the Strike Committee, who insisted that it should operate from May 2nd, and the threat of continued strike action eventually ended in complete victory for the men.

The movement in Sunderland quickly spread to Newcastle, where the "Nine Hour League" was formed from elected shop representatives. The local employers, who had banded themselves into an association, contemptuously rejected the demands of the League, and in a short while 6,000 to 7,000 men struck work. This strike covered five months of bitter struggle, with the employers using every method to force defeat. They even went to the extreme length of importing foreign labour from Belgium and Germany, whilst the strikers on the other hand, operating through the International Working Men's Association, succeeded in winning over to their side this potential scab labour, until the engineering bosses had to admit complete defeat. So great was the solidarity between the engineers and the foreign workers that the latter appeared on the strikers' platform at a great meeting on the Town Moor. The "Nine Hour League" assisted many of them to go home. This great struggle resulted in a historic victory and by the Spring of 1872 every important district had won the 9 hour day.

The 8 1/2 Hour Day

Eight days after World War I came to an end, the Employers' Federation agreed to the 47 hour week. At that time there was considerable opposition from the storm centres where the shop stewards' movement had been strong during the war. This was checked in January 1919 by the strike on the Clyde for the 40 hour week. The position of the strikers was expressed as follows: "Thousands of workers are being demobilised from the Army and Navy every day. Over 10,000 workers have been dismissed from civil employment. They are now looking for jobs. There are no

jobs for them. There is only one remedy. Reduce the number of hours." After two weeks of struggle, during which the Government drafted troops with machine-guns into the Clyde, the strike was smashed and many shop stewards were blacklisted from employment for a considerable period afterwards.

An article in the A.S.E. Journal during that period talked about the "immediate necessity of now demanding our place in the sun . . . tomorrow will be too late." These words are a warning to the engineering workers today. From all over the country news is forthcoming about the "get tough with the stewards" policy which is being pursued by the Employers' Federation. Today the A.E.U. and the Confederation are in the strongest possible position to drive home the demand for the forty hour week; that is why after all the struggle and propaganda that has been carried out in its favour, the decision to accept 44 hours by increasing the length of the 8 1/2 hour day cannot be classified as other than a defeat.

The trade union leaders who have agreed to the sell-out, not only betray the historic struggles of the past, but contravene the recent decision of the T.U.C. against the lengthening of the working day. Is it not despicable when a man like Sir Mark Hodgson can lay down the law at the T.U.C. against the lengthening of the working day, and then turn around as Chairman of the Confederation and accept on behalf of the engineers, just such a proposal? At the T.U.C. and Trade Union Conferences in general such bureaucrats talk a lot of hot air, but when they meet the employers they quickly don the mask of servility. After all, Hodgson did not get his knighthood for serving the workers. Perhaps before long we may read in

the names of Sir John Tanner or Sir Joseph Scott, and even Sir Walter Hannington.

The lesson for the rank and file is clear: the fight for the 40 hour week must go on and it must be linked to an organised struggle inside the unions to replace the present docile bureaucracy with trusted militants from the ranks. Only in this way will victory be achieved and the militant traditions of the past be vindicated.

* Facts in this article based on the book approved by the A.P.U., "Story of the Engineers" by D. Jefferies.

Third Greek C.P. v. Trotskyist Debate

ATHENS, Dec. 2—

On Sunday, Nov. 26, in Athens, the third public discussion between the Greek Communist Party and the Internationalist Communist Party of Greece (Fourth International) took place on the subject: "The war and the tasks of the communists".

The first speaker was a Trotskyist. He analysed the attitude of the communists towards the different wars since Marx, and insisted particularly on the imperialist character of the First and Second World War. He refuted all the arguments of the Stalinists, who presented the last world war as the war of "democracy against fascism", and criticised the attitude of the Greek Stalinists in the Italo-Greek war of 1940-41 in which they supported Metaxas and the Greek bourgeoisie in the name of "the defence of the independence and integrity of the country."

In concluding he insisted on the danger of a Third World War of the imperialists against the Soviet Union if victorious socialist revolutions did not intervene.

The Stalinist speaker, justifying the "democratic-progressive character of the last war on the part of the imperialist 'Allies' of the U.S.S.R., declared that the last war was led by fascism in the aim of oppressing the "free" countries of Europe and not for the conquest of colonies and he mentioned the position of Marx, in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 distorted to suit his case!

The auditorium was less numerous than in the two preceding discussions, the vote included only 641 people.

The C.P.G. obtained 411 votes, the P.C.I. (Fourth International) 204 votes and there were 24 white ballots and 2 abstentions.

The minutes of the three discussions will be printed in common pamphlets by the C.P.G. and the P.C.I.

GERMAN YOUTH

It was the custom of the ultra-pessimists during the war to pour cold water on any suggestion that German Youth might not, after all, have been quite so hopelessly poisoned by the Nazis. For these gentlemen, who still voice their opinions in spite of the ready response of German P.o.W.s to the programme of socialism, I wish to record one fact. The Lünebeck Young Socialists organisation has increased its membership fivefold during the last three months. Scores of the new members are ex-soldiers, and they have an avid interest in theoretical questions. In particular they want to know what Trotskyism is, and what the Trotskyists think about the Soviet Union. There is no need to make any comment.

Help Our German Comrades! SEND FOOD

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