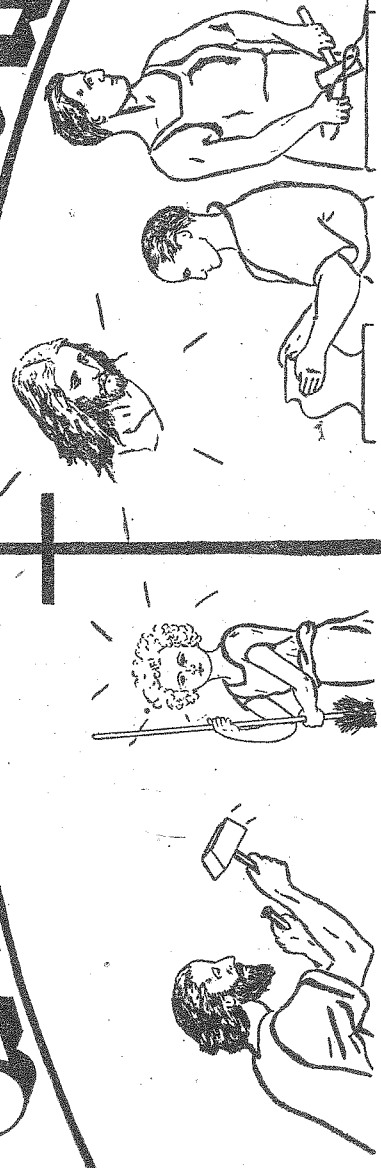


THE CATHOLIC WORKER



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Lyons Govt. Fights Seamen

ONE UNION v. A SYSTEM

Although the recent Arbitration Award for seamen makes some improvements in working conditions, the men have a good claim against the steamship companies. It is a claim that would never be recognised by our system of arbitration, based as it is on a capitalist mentality. £14/7/6 per month at 56 hours per week, for an able seaman is not a just wage when we consider the prosperous condition of our leading shipping companies. For overtime pay the rate has been reduced from 2/9 to 2/6 per hour.

JUSTICE AND ARBITRATION.

The shipping industry could afford better pay, but we must remember that the Arbitration Court is part of a capitalist system. This does not mean that it is run by servants of crafty bosses. The Court merely reflects the mind of modern society, of the "free" press, and of the selfish public that seeks every comfort and luxury on a passenger ship, without caring two hoots how the crew get on, or enquiring whether just wages can be given if they pay a certain fare and demand swimming baths and ultra-modern furnishings.

ENFORCING ARBITRATION

By striking against the Award the seamen come up against the fact that arbitration is compulsory. In militant circles much noise is made about the penalty clauses and the licensing system; the fact is that arbitration awards have always been protected by a scale of penalties against employers or employees who disobey them. On the other hand the capitalist press talks of the "illegal" actions of the strikers as though stating the law were the same as saying what is just. There are some cases in which we may disobey the law because we have justice on our side.

LICENSED SLAVES

Since the unions have long ago accepted arbitration as a means of settling disputes, we cannot blame the Government for enforcing the awards of its court by reasonable means—unless we are to expect the Government to desert its capitalist nature and direct the Court to make a really fair settlement. Seamen's working conditions should be much better; the Government will never see that. The Court has made an award which is not usually one-sided; the licensing system is a very one-sided way of enforcing the award. Examining it more closely we see that a seaman may be de-licensed and thrown out of his profession if he disobeys a lawful order of his employer. Now the Arbitration Court has refused the union claim that, unless a ship have its full complement, seamen should not be required to take the ship to sea. So then it would be lawful to order a man to work on an

WE FIGHT

We have come into existence because there is a solution which the Catholic Church alone can provide, and because there is a taunt to which the Church must reply. The problem which has to be solved is the social problem, a problem of universal importance, affecting every nation and every individual. The solution must of its nature be a revolutionary one and the Church is the only organisation which has a revolutionary teaching. The new Communism is only the old capitalism plus a little missionary fervour. Both are the illegitimate offspring of the same diseased materialism; both insult Man by regarding him as a labor unit rather than as God's noblest creation; both regulate their behaviour by economic expediency rather than by considerations of justice. Catholicism is the only creed which proclaims the inviolability of the personality of every individual; which proclaims that every individual must be in receipt of sufficient means to be free from that perpetual anxiety concerning his livelihood, which distracts his mind from primary things. "It is seldom possible," writes Colosseum, "to keep christian moral laws if living eight in a room. We must do everything to help forward all legitimate means of taxing to the limit those who have more than enough, to make provision for those who have less than enough. It is the duty of the State to intervene TO ANY DEGREE NECESSARY in private enterprise with the object of securing continuity of employment."

The taunt to which we reply is the frequent Communist allegation that the Catholic Church is a Church of the bosses. Never was there a greater lie. Capitalism has no more deadly an opponent than the Church. How is it possible for us, as Catholics, to have the slightest sympathy for a system which has de-christianised the world by its insistence on secular education; which has sacrificed the Home on the altar of the Machine; which has deprived the ordinary man of property and has destroyed his liberty? We oppose Communism. Can we then love Communism's brother, Capitalism? We fight with victory before us, because we know what we are fighting and what we want. We state positively that if there is to be reform, it must begin with the individual. Until we can instil our ideas into the masses, until we teach them to regulate their actions in accordance with the social doctrines of the Church, and not merely to render lip-service to them, reform is impossible. Let us be clear on this point once and for all. Even if Communism were the ideal economic system—which we deny—we do not believe that it would ever work in the hands of men who do not possess any moral reason for not being corrupt. We are not the only ones who realise that a change in human nature must come. The Communists aim at the creation of what they think is a new character—the Communist man. But this character cannot be built up until we have gone through the purifying fires of a Communist revolution—a blood bath in the best Stalin and Hitler style. The Marxists optimistically expect good to come from evil. We know human nature better.

Ours is the harder road, but it is the only sure one. When the barbarians over-ran Europe it took the Church 400 years to convert them, but the result was worth the while. The Catholic State of Paraguay, which was the nearest approach to an earthly paradise Man has ever seen, was not built on a foundation of blood, but on a foundation of Catholic principle.

Reform the individual first. Society will follow. That is our policy, and ours alone. Until men become living Christians there will be no solution to the social problem. We have a fight ahead of us—let us labor under no illusions as to its bitterness. The might of the Soviet and of Hitler is turned against us. In Mexico our bishops and priests are dead or in exile, our workers are slain. The Chinese Communists torture our priests. A herd of bigots in Scotland and Northern Ireland conducts periodic pogroms against Catholics.

It's a fight. But we have been fighting for two thousand years. Victory has always been ours. It will be ours again, for our leader is Christ the King; our standard is the Cross.

work on a ship, once he has disobeyed a lawful order, if the employer does not lose his right to own and operate ships, once he has given unlawful orders or otherwise infringed a Court award?

DISHONEST PROPAGANDA

Many seamen are striking for the wrong reasons. They have been deceived by the militant minority into thinking that the Arbitration Award struck at them with new penalties. The penalties are as old as the Arbitration Act and are supposed to operate against both parties, whether they are put into the award or not. Such hoodwinking by agitators suggests that the Communist minority is anxious to provoke industrial unrest at any cost. As for the licensing regulations, it should have been seen from the first that once the Government supported the Arbitration Court it would obviously do everything possible to make that support effective.

ONE UNION v. A SYSTEM

The crux of the question is this: Although our sympathies in this dispute are entirely with the seamen, and completely against the shipowners,

newspaper readers with lying distortions of the seamen's case, still we are of the opinion that the seamen were guilty of a tactical error in striking when the whole union movement, as represented by the A.C.T.U., thought that the strike had no chance of success.

The seamen—and not only the seamen, but every other union whose activities are of national importance—must realise that no strike can hope to succeed unless it has the unwavering support of organised unionism. They must realise that the A.C.T.U. is the best judge of the expediency of a

"If the people are going to take a firmer grip upon political affairs, it is not likely that the workers will rest content with present industrial conditions. They will not be satisfied to be cogs in a wheel. More and more they will try to control the industries in which they are engaged. It would be hard to convince them—or to convince anyone—that they are not as much entitled to industrial control, as they are

strike in given circumstances, that A.C.T.U. leadership is essential.

THE COMMUNIST AIM

When the A.C.T.U. embarks on a strike it is out to win. The Communist is out to lose. The reason is simple. The Communist does not hope for, does not desire improved working class conditions under capitalism. A victorious strike means that the strikers are content with their newly-won conditions of labor. But that is the last thing the Communist desires. He is not out to settle discontent—he is out to aggravate it. That is the function of Keenan and his crew of agitators in the present struggle. By placing themselves under Communist leadership the seamen have given the shipowners the pretext they needed so badly. The failure of the strike is certain; and the same sorry tale will continue until the seamen dispense with their parasitical Communist agitators and return to their A.C.T.U. allegiance. The "Catholic Worker" and all those organisations which wish the seamen complete success in their struggle

Militant Pacifists!

In January, 1935, the Free-thinker International, with headquarters in Paris, decided that the fight for Communism in the ensuing twelve months was to be waged under the guise of a United Front Against War and Fascism. And that is the real origin of our strangely militant Council Against War.

The explanation lies in the complete change which has transformed Communist strategy throughout the world. The various Communist parties for that they were making no progress. Definitely crushed in Germany, Italy, they cut no ice in any of the European countries, and wherever they were represented in Parliament were a very small minority. To gain lost ground, the Third International sacked the formation of various national anti-war movements. These gathered within their ranks a people of every type—milk and water sentimentalists, emotional ladies of the afternoon-tea-party type, respectable Protestant parsons who had any reason they ever had for being a Communist. The latter have always been the driving force of the movement, have concentrated less on fighting than on indoctrinating the members of the organisation with usual Marxist mumbo-jumbo. While the Communists could not accomplish openly they have accomplished stealth. The climax came a couple of months ago in that big fraternal meeting at a City Protestant Church, where Communist preached materialism from a "Christian" pulpit, and a congregation of Marxists intoned Protestant hymns—with their tongues in their cheeks. The success of Communist tactics coincided with another proof of the bankruptcy of Protestantism.

No doubt a genuine anti-war movement is indispensable when our civilization is rushing on from crisis catastrophe and from catastrophe chaos. But the Victorian Council Against War and Fascism is genuine. It is rather a Council War Against Fascism. Whether Government of Italy or Germany should be overthrown is an open question the Communists want to overthrew them, let them do their own dirty work. By favoring a policy of military success against Italy, the Third International is fostering world war, and does so deliberately, since it knows that in the resultant chaos miserable revolution will have its opportunity. But the Austrian working classes want peace. They have no wish to fight for the independence of Abyssinia or the still more doubtful boom of an Australian Communist dictator-him in the hands