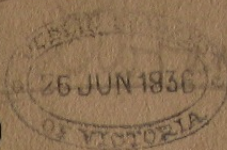


# Paris Commune Issue ●

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# THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

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# The Communist Review

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## *The Anniversary of the Paris Commune*

By L. SHARKEY

"WORKING-MEN'S Paris, with its Commune, will be forever celebrated as the glorious harbinger of a new society. Its martyrs are enshrined in the great heart of the working class. Its exterminators history has already nailed to that eternal pilory from which all the prayers of their priests will not avail to redeem them."—Karl Marx.

And so, in keeping with what Marx prophesied, the working-class over the whole world will be reminding themselves on the 65th Anniversary of the historic event of March 18, 1871, when the first working-man's government in the history of the world was born, when Paris awoke to the cry of "Vive la Commune!"

Marx, Engels and Lenin paid great attention to analysing the experiences of the Paris Commune, because it was the first proletarian government, and because it had many valuable lessons for the future struggles of the working class for political power. So great and important were these lessons, that after the experience of the Commune, Marx and Engels declared that if they were to make an amendment of the "Manifesto of the Communist Party," it would be that "the proletariat cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made machinery of State, but must shatter it," and construct a new proletarian State.

The form of the organisation of this State we know was first discovered in the Revolution of 1905 in Russia—the Soviets. Just as Marx predicted that all the bloody orgies of the reaction after the suppression of the Commune would fail, that the idea of the Commune would not be banished from the mind of the working class, the Commune arose again, mightier, victorious and triumphant over one-sixth of the earth, in the October Revolution of 1917—the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, the (as Lenin declared) lineal descendant of the Paris Commune.

The immediate events leading to the establishment of the Commune were the events of the Franco-Prussian War, which began, as Marx and Engels pointed out, as a defensive war on the part of Prussia (chief State of the German Empire) against the ambitions of the French chauvinists to extend the French frontiers to the boundaries of the days of Napoleon Bonaparte.

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The German States were previously disunited, ruled by more or less independent feudal kinglings, and consequently "prostrate at the feet of the Russian Tsar," and subject to French imperialist coercion and intrigues. By a series of wars against Austria and Denmark, and the Franco-Prussian War, the unification of Germany, which Marx regarded as essential for the proletarian struggle, was carried out. There were two methods by which the unification of Germany could have been achieved, by way of the proletarian revolution and by way of the Prussian Junker method. The proletariat was too weak in the rebellion of 1848, and so the "Prussian method," the method of bourgeois-feudal reaction triumphed, resulting in a series of wars, and the formation of the German Empire.

At the beginning of the Franco-Prussian War, Marx and Engels considered that a Prussian victory would further the cause of progress, but that, if after victory, the Prussians plundered France, this would lead to the most dire consequences. Marx and Engels thus had two different attitudes to one and the same war at two different stages of the development of this war, which is a lesson of the flexibility of the tactics of the two great geniuses, who laid down the basic principles for the conduct of the struggle of the proletariat.

Among the dire consequences foreseen by Marx and Engels of the policy of plundering France, which took primarily the form of the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, was **the coming of the Great War.**

The clear prophecy of the coming World War was given by Marx, in two manifestos of the Council of the First International and the Address on the Civil War in France at the time of the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune. Commenting on this 20 years later, Engels said: "And have we not seen the literal fulfilment of the prophecy that the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine would drive France into the arms of Russia." And that after a short respite, Germany would have to fight the "allied Slav and Latin races." "And is there not perpetually hanging over our heads the Damocles sword of another war, on the first days of which all the chartered covenants of princes will be scattered like chaff" (the "scrap of paper," the literal fulfilment of Engels' prophecy). And "15 or 20 million armed men" would devastate Europe. Such was the marvellous understanding of Marx and Engels as to where capitalism was heading. The proletarian revolution failed to forestall the World War in the way that Marx and Engels desired, the Commune was defeated, the German revolution of 1848 had failed, and the capitalist rulers led the world to the catastrophe of 1914, but which

also led to the triumph of the ideals of the Paris Commune in Russia in 1917.

To-day the proletariat is faced with a similar choice in the present period, either the proletarian revolution, or the Second World War, which the capitalists, with the Fascist States in the van, are now busily preparing.

The Prussian armies were victorious at the decisive battle of Sedan, and marched on Paris, to which they laid siege. The workers of Paris were for the defence of Paris, but the bourgeoisie, as revealed by Marx and Engels, betrayed the national cause, were all for capitulation, and carried on intrigues with the Prussian Chancellor, the famous Bismarck. They did this because they feared the Paris working class, because they feared the proletarian revolution. Engels writes on this:

"During the war, the Paris workers had confined themselves to demanding the rigorous prosecution of the fight. But now, when peace had come with the capitulation of Paris, at this moment, Thiers, the new head of the Government, was compelled to realise that the supremacy of the propertied classes—large landholders and capitalists—was in constant danger so long as the workers of Paris had arms in their hands. His first action was to attempt to disarm them. On March 18, he sent troops of the line with orders to deprive the National Guard of the artillery belonging to them, which had been constructed during the siege of Paris, and had been paid for by subscription. The attempt did not come off; Paris rallied as one man in defence of the guns, and war between Paris and the French Government sitting at Versailles began."

The Commune, the first working-class government, existed for only 72 days. But in this time it showed clearly its class, internationalist character. It showed many of the measures that must be taken by a workers' government. It showed also many of the weaknesses and pitfalls which a revolutionary government must avoid.

"The working-class did not expect miracles from the Commune. They have no ready-made Utopias to introduce **par decret du peuple** (by decree of the people). They know that in order to work out their own emancipation, and along with it that higher form to which present society is irresistibly tending, by its own economical agencies, they will have to pass through long struggles, through a series

of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men. They have no ideals to realise, but to set free the elements of the new society, with which old collapsing bourgeois society itself is pregnant."—Karl Marx.

The Commune did many things during its brief existence.

"The Commune was perfectly right in telling the peasants that its victory was their only hope. . . . The Commune would have delivered the peasant of the blood tax and would have given him a cheap Government, transformed his present bloodsuckers (different officials, lawyers, etc.) into salaried Communal agents elected by and responsible to himself. It would have freed him of the tyranny of the policeman and the official, would have put enlightenment by the schoolmaster instead of stultification by the priest. He would find it extremely reasonable that the pay of the priest, instead of being extorted by the tax-gatherer, should only depend upon the spontaneous action of the parishioners' religious instincts. Such were the great immediate boons which the rule of the Commune—and that rule alone—held out to the French peasantry."—Karl Marx.

"If the Commune was thus the true representative of all the healthy elements of French society, and therefore the truly national government, it was, at the same time, a working men's government, as the bold champion of the emancipation of labor, emphatically international."—Karl Marx.

This idea of Marx, that the workers' government is "the truly national government," and at the same time "emphatically international," because it was the champion everywhere of the liberation of the workers, would be far too deep for the Trotsky counter-revolutionaries to understand, who, because the successor of the Commune, the Soviet Government, devotes attention to the various interests of the Russian masses, and takes measures to defend the U.S.S.R. from imperialist attack, pretend that the Soviet proletariat has "abandoned internationalism."

The Commune was composed mainly of workers, elected by universal suffrage, subject to recall. All public service had to be done at workmen's wages. The Commune was a working body, executive and legislative at the same time. The police was stripped of its political attributes and turned into the responsible agent of the Commune. The whole of the educational institutions were made available to the mass. The Church was separated from the State. Magistrates and judges were made

elective, and subject to recall at any time. The Commune was to serve as a lever for uprooting the economic foundations upon which classes are based, and bring about a classless society. It abolished night-baking and the infliction of fines on the workers. Crime was reduced to insignificant proportions during the brief life of the Commune. These measures indicate the true working-class and popular character of the Commune, this first workers' government. "Look at the Paris Commune" Engels wrote. "That was Dictatorship of the Proletariat."

Marx also showed how "national war," the "most heroic effort" of the bourgeoisie, became transformed into class war against the workers when the Prussian and French reactionaries joined hands against the Commune, an experience repeated in the intervention against the Soviet Republic, 1917-20.

The Commune had many weaknesses which contributed to its fall. It did not have a truly scientific revolutionary socialist party at its head, it was composed of Blanquists and Proudhonists, therefore much was neglected, said Engels, in the economic sphere which should have been done; the hardest thing to understand is the holy awe with which they remained standing outside the gates of the Bank of France. The Commune also failed to take decisive military action against the counter-revolution assembling its forces at Versailles, and was far too mild in its measures against the agents of the class enemy who were undermining the Commune from within.

Lenin writes of the chief lesson of the Commune as follows:

#### "IN WHAT LAY THE HEROISM OF THE ATTEMPT OF THE COMMUNARDS ?

"It is well-known that in the autumn of 1870, a few months before the Commune, Marx warned the Paris workers that an attempt to overthrow the Government would be the folly of despair. But when, in March, 1871, the decisive struggle was forced upon the workers and they accepted it, when the rising had become a fact, Marx greeted the proletarian revolution with the greatest enthusiasm in spite of the unfavorable auguries. Marx did not stiffen into an attitude of pedantic condemnation of the 'untimely' movement, as did the ill-famed Russian renegade from Marxism, Plekhanov, who in November, 1905, wrote in a spirit of encouragement to the struggle of the workers and peasants, but after December, 1905, quavered out, liberal-fashion: 'You should not have taken arms.'

"Marx, however, was not only enthusiastic about the

heroism of the Communards who, to use his words, were 'storming heaven.' Although it failed in its objective, he saw in the mass revolutionary movement an historical experiment of gigantic import, a certain advance of the world proletarian revolution, a practical step, more important than hundreds of programmes and discussions. To analyse this experiment, to draw from it lessons in tactics, to test his own theory in the new light it afforded, such was the task Marx set himself.

"The only 'correction' which Marx thought it necessary to make in the 'Communist Manifesto,' he made on the basis of the revolutionary experience of the Paris Communards.

"The last preface to the new German edition of the 'Communist Manifesto,' signed by both its authors, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, is dated June 24, 1872. In this preface the authors say that the programme of the 'Communist Manifesto' is now, in places, out of date.'

"... In particular," they continue, "the Commune has demonstrated that the 'working class cannot simply take possession of the ready-made machinery of the State and set it going for its own ends.'"

"The author's borrowed words within the second quotation marks in this passage are from Marx's book on 'The Civil War in France.'

"Thus, Marx and Engels considered this principal and fundamental lesson of the Paris Commune to be of such enormous importance that they introduced it as a vital correction into the 'Communist Manifesto.'

"It is most characteristic that it is precisely this essential correction which has been distorted by the opportunists, and its real meaning, probably, is not clear to nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine hundredths of the readers of the 'Communist Manifesto.' We shall deal with this distortion more fully further on, in a chapter especially devoted to distortions. It will be sufficient here to note, that the current, vulgar 'interpretation' of Marx's famous utterance, quoted above, is contained in the assertion that Marx here emphasises the idea of a slow evolution in contradistinction to the seizure of power, and so on.

"As a matter of fact, **exactly the reverse is the case.** Marx's idea is that the working class must **break up, shatter** the 'existing machinery of the State,' and not confine itself merely to taking possession of it.

"On April 12, 1871, i.e., at the very time of the Commune, Marx wrote to Kugelmann:

"... If you look at the last chapter of my "Eighteenth Brumaire," you will see that I declare the next attempt of the French Revolution to be not merely to transfer the bureaucratic and military machinery from one set of hands to another—as has occurred hitherto—but to **break it up** (Marx's emphasis—the original is **zerbrechen**); and this is the preliminary condition of any real people's revolution on the Continent. This is exactly what the attempt of our heroic Parisian comrades implies.' ("Neue Zeit," XX., i., 1901-1902, p. 709.)

"In these words, 'to break up the bureaucratic and military machinery of the State,' is contained, briefly formulated, the principal lesson of Marxism on the tasks of the proletariat in relation to the State during a revolution. And it is just this lesson which has not only been forgotten, but completely distorted by the prevailing Kautskian 'interpretation' of Marxism!" (Lenin, "The State and Revolution.")

Such is the story of the great Paris Commune, the forerunner of the great Soviet Republic and of the proletarian triumphs yet to be, "the glorious harbinger of the new society," whose martyrs "are enshrined in the great heart of the working class."

## The Trade Unions and Leadership

By R. DIXON

THE march of events in the few short weeks of 1936 has served to focus attention more than ever upon the trade union question. The strike wave is reaching higher levels, drawing into its scope new sections of the proletariat, and generating the widest mass solidarity and enthusiasm.

Trade unionism is being revitalised. At Port Kembla Steelworks, where union organisation was weak, a fighting unity, which has few parallels in this country, between organised and unorganised workers, was realised overnight, and the day after the strike commenced, 500 workmen made application to join the union. It required the struggle to bring those workers to the realisation of what organisation means. Similarly with the seamen, whose determination and solidarity remains unbroken after 11 weeks of struggle.

In all industries the seamen's and metal workers' struggles have aroused new interest in the unions, and the drive is on for 100 per cent. organisation on a completely financial basis.

On the background of the mass movement the reformist officials appear in a bad light, particularly the A.C.T.U. For weakness, vacillation and delay, it would be hard to find anything which comes up to the leadership of the A.C.T.U. From the beginning of the seamen's dispute it has been dodging, backbiting, talking—doing anything and everything to avoid concrete action. But action was what was necessary to assist the seamen.

When the combined mining unions decided to put before the miners the proposal for a general stoppage in the industry in support of the seamen, Mr. Monk, president of the A.C.T.U., fearfully proclaimed "it does not bear the stamp of constitutionality." Both the A.C.T.U. and the Labor Party opened up a campaign against any action on the part of the miners, which had a considerable bearing on the subsequent decision.

The attitude of the reformists raises in the sharpest possible manner the question of leadership in the trade union movement. The essential thing about the mass movement is its militant content, even though this may not be consciously expressed. The need of the moment is to clarify the aims of the struggles and unite all forces to ruthlessly pursue the struggle to victory. If that were done the Port Kembla results would be multiplied tenfold and the trade union movement would emerge from the struggle<sup>la</sup> powerfully organised.

The A.C.T.U. officials, however, prefer to avoid the fight, and

shout "constitutionalism" at the least provocation. They fail to see that weakness begets weakness, that the indecisiveness of leadership and the confusion and divisions it causes in the ranks of the workers encourages vacillating and backward elements in the workers' ranks to scab. Persistence in the policy being pursued by those at the head of the A.C.T.U. will bring in its train only disaster for the workers and the setting back of the movement for years.

In its leading article of January 10, two days following the miners' ballot, the "Labor Daily" asked the question: "Where are we going?"—implying: Are we going to militant unionism, a path the "Labor Daily" contemplates with horror, or are we to remain wedded to reformism—that slough of despond and apathy? The "Labor Daily" would like to console itself with the belief that we shall not depart from the latter, but there is a note of gloom in its query.

No doubt it sees in the unchecked advance of the militants in the unions the writing on the wall.

The question to be asked to-day is not so much where are the unions going, but more particularly: "Where are the reformist leaders getting to?" Their sabotage of the seamen's strike in itself is sufficient to demand an answer to that question. But that is not the only thing. On February 4, 1936, the "Sydney Morning Herald" reported that representatives of the A.C.T.U. had attended the Jubilee Conference of the A.W.U. held at Ballarat on Monday, February 3, and urged the A.W.U. to affiliate with the A.C.T.U. That would seem to be quite desirable and worthy of support. The A.W.U. is a very powerful organisation, and its refusal in the past to become connected with the A.C.T.U. has been a source of weakness for the working-class movement.

We are not against the affiliation of the A.W.U. with the A.C.T.U., even though this would mean a very definite strengthening of the forces of the reformists in the latter body. What we are concerned with are the arguments advanced by the A.C.T.U. representatives as to why the A.W.U. should affiliate.

Crofts, the secretary of the A.C.T.U., is reported to have told the A.W.U. conference: "There is a section of the union movement which believes that by a continuous struggle—strikes and so on—they could bring about a chaotic state of things, which would culminate in the overthrow of the capitalist system. The A.C.T.U. also wanted to get away from capitalism, but it aimed at doing this by constitutional methods and actions." From this he concluded that it was necessary

for the A.W.U. to join the A.C.T.U. with a view to supporting the constitutionalists.

Mr. Crofts must be congratulated for his frankness, if for nothing else. His statement is an admission that militant unionism has become a powerful force in the Australian trade union movement. So powerful, in fact, that he considers the differences amongst the reformists, which led to the estrangement of the A.W.U. from the main body of the union movement in N.S.W. and Victoria must be submerged in order that a common front may be presented to meet the new challenge to their threadbare policy and leadership.

That which led the A.C.T.U. officials to this conclusion was not only the seamen's strike and the proposals for its extension to the mining industry, but also the result of the A.C.T.U. emergency congress last November. Although in the congress the reformists controlled the main voting strength, the delegates supporting the official policy came in the main from the small craft unions. On the other hand, the representatives from the strongest trade unions, those with the largest membership, the miners and railwaymen particularly, were militant. Actually, had the vote in the congress been taken on the basis of the trade union members the various delegates represented, the policy of the militants would have been carried. This fact was not lost on Monk, Crofts, and their confères.

In seeking A.W.U. support, the A.C.T.U. executive turned to the most reactionary bureaucracy in the Australian trade union movement. This year is celebrated the golden jubilee of the A.W.U., of that organisation which more than any other has left its mark on Australian trade unionism and the Labor Party. It is not, however, the organisation of the first thirty years of its existence. An almost fanatical adherence to class collaboration by the officials has sapped its fighting strength, and to-day, in N.S.W. and Victoria, the A.W.U. is only a shadow of what it formerly was. In Queensland, a high membership is maintained only because of the existence of compulsory unionism. The A.W.U. bureaucracy stands on the extreme right in the union movement, and in recent years has consistently fought against all signs of militancy, not even stopping at strike-breaking to achieve its aims.

At the twenty-third annual delegate meeting of the Queensland branch of the A.W.U., which commenced on January 15, 1936, J. C. Lamont, the president of the branch, clearly indicated the official attitude of the A.W.U. to strikes. Of the seamen's strike he declared: "The present seamen's struggle shows how hopeless direct action is." He stated that, in t

course of an address during which he traced briefly the history of the A.W.U. from its formation. He had to show how the A.W.U. was born out of struggle, how it grew in strength and influence in the process of fighting. Of the historic shearers' strike of 1891, he fervently stated: "The shearers and bush-workers' strike is history that will last for all time."

Glory be to the past, but let us be thankful it is behind us—such is the philosophy of the A.W.U. official who has become so immersed in the bog of class-collaboration as to be incapable of applying the lessons of history to advance the modern labor movement.

The revolt of the working class against the capitalist class is as inevitable as it is necessary. Strikes are an important form for the preparation of the masses to overthrow capitalism. In them the workers learn how to fight, through them they develop and perfect their organisation. The history of the labor movement has been one of continuous struggle, through which it has advanced to the mighty structure of to-day. In that advance, errors, setbacks, and defeats have played their part no less than the victories. As a matter of fact, a movement in defeat, if it is really sincere, will draw conclusions with more thoroughness than in the flush of victory.

If the labor movement deserts the path of class struggle, it tends immediately to degenerate, to become weak, flabby, and confused. So it was as arbitration more and more became the mode of settling disputes between labor and capital. Lamont, in the course of his address to the Queensland A.W.U., declared that the employers feared arbitration and wanted to have done with it. That is downright deception. Judge Beeby, one of the highlights of the Arbitration Court, declared, during the hearing of the application of the furnishing trades for a shorter working week in November, 1935: "If the court had not control in the industry, employers would not be able to resist the steady movement in Australia for a 44-hour week. Victoria has got the habit of relying on this court as a last line of defence."

That is a candid admission of the role of the courts. That is the situation, even though the trade union movement has been devitalised and weakened as a result of decades of dependence on arbitration.

The path of class struggle leads to the labor movement becoming an all-powerful force, and must culminate in the seizure of power by the proletariat. This latter, it seems, has Mr. Crofts worried. Although he wants to "get away from capitalism," the very thought of the forcible overthrow of the ruling class strikes terror into his heart. Hence, he turns to

the A.W.U. officials, of whom it is well known that, whilst they are not opposed to the use of force and violence on the part of the ruling classes and their State against the workers, they are opposed to the position being reversed.

The aim of the militants, according to the secretary of the A.C.T.U., is to develop a continuous struggle, strikes and so on, and thus "bring about a chaotic state of things." That is merely repeating the slanders of the ruling classes who imagine that if they make enough noise charging the Communists with creating chaos, they will divert public attention from the chaos of capitalism. For just on seven years now we have been living in indescribable chaos; terrible burdens have been imposed on the working class and small farmers, and now war and Fascism threaten to multiply misery a thousand-fold. Strikes did not precipitate the capitalist crisis. Actually they have served to retard the efforts of the employers to place the burdens of the crisis on the backs of the workers, thereby minimising, to some degree, the effects on the masses. The existence of the unions and the threat of strike action was a standing reminder to the employers that there was a limit to how far they could go. The strikes, even though not always accompanied by victory, played a progressive role.

The facts are that the "chaotic state of things" is not brought about by the militants, or by "continuous struggle"; it is brought about by capitalism.

Should conditions develop for the working class to take advantage of the crisis and the disorganisation of the ruling classes to overthrow capitalism, then it would be acting in the most progressive manner possible, for it would be taking the step which would end forever the "chaotic state of things."

The capitalist system is in a state of collapse. Economically it has outlived its usefulness. To-day the issue confronting the exploited is to move forward to Socialist society, which alone offers economic security and a full life for all. If we believe that Socialism is the only solution to the problems of mankind, the question immediately arises: How will it be secured here in Australia? Mr. Crofts heartily asserts: By "constitutional methods and actions." Let us state here and now that if there was a constitutional or peaceful way out the Communists would gladly seize it. If we consider civil war will eventuate, it is not because we are blood-and-thunder merchants, but because we are realists. To sincerely imagine that the employing classes will meekly transfer to the proletariat the factories, the workshops, mines, and fields is the limit of stupidity, and stupidity on this matter can be even more dangerous than open treachery.

Germany clearly demonstrates that as the moment approaches for the working class to take control of the means of production, there is no limit to the barbarities the ruling classes will perpetrate in order to maintain control. In that country the Social-Democrats also preached the peaceful road of constitutionalism. Their policy left the workers disarmed and disorganised before the Fascist attack.

Perhaps the objection will be raised that in Germany it was the threat of proletarian revolution, led by the Communists, which called forth the reaction. What then of Austria, where Social-Democracy was all-powerful and the Communists almost insignificant? There constitutionalism was proclaimed from one end of the country to the other and Vienna hailed as the model Socialist city. The ruling classes prepared for and unloosed civil war against the masses, destroying the Social-Democracy and disbanding the trade unions. Bloodshed was not prevented, civil war was waged against the workers by the ruling classes, and the proletariat, unprepared and poorly led, were defeated.

Mr. Crofts may say that "It can't happen here." May, 1932, however, cannot be forgotten quite so easily. The removal of the Lang Labor Government from office is the evidence that it can happen here. Mr. Lang is one person who could not be accused of wishing to overthrow capitalism. In the circumstances of 1932, when the country was virtually bankrupt, Lang took measures calculated to bring about a reduction in interest rates and also sought to increase the tax on large incomes. The capitalist class furiously organised Fascist gangs from one end of the State to the other, and throwing constitutionalism to the wind, removed Lang from office. The ruling classes did that even though capitalist exploitation and private property was being interfered with in no way whatsoever. They were faced with nothing more than a temporary reduction in profits. If they were prepared to take such drastic steps because of Lang's methods in attempting to enforce a reduction of interest rates and tax large incomes, if they preferred to trample in the dust this constitution about which the reformists are forever sermonising and take steps deliberately calculated to unloose civil war to carry their point, if that was their attitude on a comparatively small issue, is it not logical to assume that in the event of there being a workers' Government (certainly one could not imagine a Labor Government composed of the politicians of the calibre that are in Parliament at present doing it) with the courage to proceed to legislate capitalism out of existence, that it would meet with the most ferocious assault from the capitalist class and their organised Fascist



gangs? Such a workers' Government—should one be allowed to take office—would be faced either with taking far-reaching measures to arm the people, establish workers' militia, and forcibly suppress and disband the counter-revolutionary forces, or with being swept into oblivion, with terrible consequences.

Civil war is not the choosing of the workers, it will be forced upon them by the employing classes.

This fact must be looked squarely and resolutely in the face. To slink from it, to hide behind innocuous phrases about constitutionalism, will bring defeat and destruction to the masses, even as in Germany and Austria. On the other hand, to recognise the inevitability of civil war demands that the proletarian army be prepared for struggle. Such preparation will be obtained only in the more elementary form of struggle, strikes and demonstrations. They are schools of organisation, discipline and strategy, they bring to the forefront and develop those leaders with the capacity, determination, courage, and experience, to lead the workers in the decisive battles with capital.

The trade unions are the main organisations for conducting the economic struggles and will play an essential part in the overthrow of capitalism. It is with these facts in mind that we ask the question—where are the reformists getting to?

The Australian Council of Trade Unions is the highest trade union organ in Australia. It is in the interest of the working class as a whole to see it strengthened. This, however, to quote from the resolution adopted by the Eleventh Congress of the Communist Party of Australia, "will be realised only by it adopting a militant attitude and giving a courageous fighting lead on the issues confronting the workers."

The strengthening of the A.C.T.U. along those lines would stimulate the activity of the masses throughout Australia, would transform the trade unions into closely-welded highly-disciplined powerful mass organisations, and would assure the victory of the working class over capitalism.

## FOR UNITY OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT

### *A Survey of Three Months of Struggle For Unity of Action*

#### Otto Bauer's Campaign Against the Second International

[Reprinted from "International Press Correspondence"]

ON AUGUST 20, at the evening session, Comrade **Dimitrov** made his speech which closed the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, the most memorable Congress since the death of Lenin. The keynote of the whole Congress was the establishment of working-class unity in action. This was the task outlined by Comrade Dimitrov in his great speech, when he said:—

"We must strive to establish the widest united front with the aid of joint action by workers' organisations of different trends for the defence of the vital interests of the toiling masses.

"This means: **first**, joint struggle really to shift the burden of the consequences of the crisis on to the shoulders of the ruling classes, the shoulders of the capitalists, landlords—in a word, to the shoulders of the rich. **Second**, joint struggle against all forms of the Fascist offensive, in defence of the gains and rights of the toilers, against the liquidation of bourgeois-democratic liberties. **Third**, joint struggle against the approaching danger of imperialist war, a struggle that will impede the preparations for such a war."

But the Congress went even further than this: it advocated the restoration of trade union unity:

"We are definitely for the re-establishment of trade union unity in each country and on an international scale. We are for one union in each industry. We stand for one federation of trade unions in each country. We are for united international trade union federations organised according to industries. We stand for one International of trade unions based on the class struggle. We are for united class trade unions as one of the major bulwarks of the working class against the offensive of capital and Fascism. Our only condition for uniting the trade unions is: **Struggle**

against capital, struggle against Fascism, and internal trade union democracy.”

Finally, the Congress also envisaged the establishment of the political unity of the working class, though the conditions under which this could be achieved were more exacting:

“The achievement of political unity is possible only on the basis of a number of definite conditions involving principles. This unification is possible only: **first**, on condition of complete independence from the bourgeoisie and the complete rupture of the bloc of Social-Democracy with the bourgeoisie; **second**, on condition that unity of action be first brought about; **third**, on condition that the necessity of the revolutionary overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviets be recognised; **fourth**, on condition that support of one's own bourgeoisie in imperialist war be rejected; **fifth**, on condition that the Party be constructed on the basis of democratic centralism, which ensures unity of will and action and has been tested by the experience of the Russian Bolsheviks.”

In the meantime, three months have gone by. What were the effects of the Congress decisions? How much of them has been put into practice up to the present moment?

## I

One can safely say that for the last fifteen years no Congress of the Communist International has been the object of such universal attention, and that the documents of no Congress for the last fifteen years have been the subject of such zealous study as the great reports of Comrades Dimitrov, Manuilsky, Ercoli, Pieck, and the resolution which gave a concise summary of the essential contents of those reports. The very first cable reports were already discussed in detail by the entire press. All sincere friends of united action among the Socialists immediately hailed them with joy; other Socialists who, until then, had made a great show of being zealous adherents of united action, Otto Bauer above all, at first said nothing at all, while the right-wing Socialists rose up in arms, using every possible weapon of distortion and falsification in order to render the intention of the Congress suspect in the eyes of the masses.

It was precisely the right-wing and extreme right-wing Socialists who hypocritically declared that after sixteen years of confusion and error the Communists have returned to the

policy of the defence of democracy, i.e., to the policy of the Social-Democrats! To the policy of Ebert, Scheidemann, Wels, Renner, Bauer? Why, the main reason for the very possibility of united action lies in the fact that the Socialist masses themselves have broken away from this old policy! A return to the bankrupt policy of the Socialists would of necessity mean a repudiation of the Communist policy which has stood the test so excellently in the Soviet Union! How can anyone impute such nonsense to the Communists? The Communist International has effected a turn (which we shall discuss later) not in order to abandon its old aims, but in order to attain them more certainly and more rapidly.

How insincere this reproach of the return of the Communists to the old Social-Democratic policy is can be seen merely by considering that if the Communists really advocate a Social-Democratic policy—which these gentlemen say is correct—why don't they want to establish a united front with these Communists? Why do they, on the contrary, do everything in their power to prevent unity of action?

The Social-Democrats of most countries left no stone unturned in their efforts to hinder the formation of a united front after the Seventh Congress.

But the rallying of the workers to the united front has made progress in nearly all countries in spite of that, although it must be stressed that the favorable feeling among the workers has by no means been sufficiently canalised from the organisational point of view. The reverses suffered by Fascism in various countries, which found a most eloquent expression in the recent elections in Switzerland, Denmark, and Britain, are, together with other objective causes, due to the anti-Fascist united front policy of the Communist Party.

The first great victory on one of the most difficult sectors of the front was won by the line of the Seventh Congress in France, when, on September 27, an agreement was reached between the C.G.T. and the C.G.T.U., the two trade union centres, concerning the unification of the trade unions. This victory will have wide repercussions both on a national and international scale.

## II

While the work for general unity in action against the attacks of capital, against Fascism and war, was still in progress, the situation in East Africa suddenly came to a climax, and it became evident that Italian imperialism was about to attack Abyssinia. A semi-colonial country was to fall a victim to the piratical appetites of Italian Fascism. The torch of war was

kindled, and threatened to set the whole world ablaze. Special united action was the demand of the hour.

On September 25, Comrade Dimitrov sent an alarm call to the Second International, urgently inviting that body to a conference of both Internationals with a view to immediate joint action. When no answer came, Comrade Dimitrov repeated his invitation on October 7. We know the results of the Executive meeting held by the Second International on October 12. The united front proposals were rejected, but the Second International wished to take action against the war in conjunction with the International Federation of Trade Unions, and the chairman and the secretary were granted permission to get into touch with other organisations as well, for informative purposes. These other organisations included the Communist International. But a closer scrutiny shows that these proposed actions were not independent actions at all, but only actions within the scope of the League of Nations, and only in support of that body. The contact for informative purposes with the C.I. was merely meant as a sop to those Socialist workers who would not understand the Second International's action if it declined point-blank to have any dealings with the Communist International.

After the Dimitrov proposals, **Otto Bauer** came on the scene. Up to then he had passed the Seventh Congress over in silence, although Comrade **Koplenig** had invited him from the platform of that Congress to explain his attitude. The situation urgently demands international united action. In an article published in "Der Kampf," Otto Bauer proposes merely to set up an informative committee, which in his eyes would "satisfy the real, vital requirements of the international working-class movement." The vital requirements of the working-class movement? No, the requirements of the Second International, which consist in creating a diversion to deflect attention from real action. The proposal was accepted accordingly, though not in the form made by Bauer, who wished that not Friedrich Adler and De Brouckere should be entrusted with this task, but the representatives of the seven parties who, in November, 1934, advocated the united front with the Communists. Such a course would certainly have made an even greater impression on the Socialist workers and have gone further towards "satisfying their requirements."

Bauer, in his article, carefully brings forward every available argument against the united front and, instead of refuting them, as good as puts them into the mouths of the opponents of the united front. He says:

"We harbor no illusions. The majority of the parties affiliated to the Labor and Socialist International reject co-

operation with the Communist Parties of their own countries.

"The British Labor Party and the Socialist Parties of Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Czechoslovakia are convinced that if they entered into a fighting alliance with the Communist Parties of their countries, the bourgeoisie would be better able to scare the lower middle class, the peasants, and the intellectuals with the Bolshevik bogey, rally all sections of the possessing classes against the working-class parties, and put into office a reactionary, non-democratic Government. They are convinced that joint action with the Communists would not weaken but enhance the menace of Fascism in their countries.

"The parties living under the terrorist rule of semi-Fascist Governments, as the Polish and Hungarian Socialist Parties, are afraid that a fighting alliance with the illegal Communist Parties would supply their Governments with an excuse to prohibit the Socialist Parties as well and drive them underground.

"We have discussed the question of the united front with representatives of all these parties at the meetings of the L.S.I. held in November, 1934, in Paris, and in August, 1935, in Brussels. We are aware of the force of the arguments they oppose to co-operation with the Communists of their countries. We do not harbor the illusion that at the present moment [When a war is already raging.—Ed.] we are already able to overcome the resistance all these parties opposed to joint action of the two Internationals."

The very same arguments were in actual fact cited as an excuse by the representatives of the notorious five parties after the rejection of united action by the Second International.

But before Bauer supplied them with these arguments, he took good care to direct them against the Communist International. He wrote:

"The fratricidal warfare carried on by the Communist International with machiavellian unscrupulousness has in many cases resulted in the moral corruption of the leaders heading this struggle. The heavy defeats suffered by the working class, the victories of Fascism and the growth of the war danger have considerably increased the desire of the workers to heal the split and reunite the proletarian forces. But tremendous obstacles, heaped up in fifteen years of fratricidal struggle, still stand in the way of the healing of the split. . . .

"For a decade and a half the Communist International

opposed the Socialist parties on the grounds that the latter were the 'main props of the bourgeoisie.' And now it invites all Socialist parties to form a fighting alliance with it against Fascism and against war. . . .

"For a decade and a half the Communist International fought, weakened and shook bourgeois democracy even at a time when bourgeois democracy was already directly menaced by Fascism. When in Italy in 1922, Fascism was already preparing to spring at the throat of democracy, the Communist International at the eleventh hour found nothing better to do than to tear the Socialist Party asunder and render it unable to fight. When in Germany Fascism was already advancing in a rapid triumphal procession, the Communist International still regarded Social-Democracy as the chief enemy. For a decade and a half the Communist International failed to understand that the proletariat was vitally interested in preventing the transformation of the class rule exercised by the bourgeoisie in a democratic system into a Fascist Dictatorship of big business and the big land-owners, and hence into the complete defeat and enslavement of the working class. . . .

"For a decade and a half the Communist International split the trade unions and the parties of the working class and evoked a fatal fratricidal struggle within that class. Now the R.I.L.U. wants to go out of existence, wants to amalgamate the fractional unions affiliated to it with the free unions and to link up the trade unions of the U.S.S.R. with the I.F.T.U., the thousand-times slandered 'Amsterdam International.' Now it wants to unite the Communist Parties in all countries with the Socialist Parties in joint action, the development of which is to prepare the way for 'organic unity,' for the complete amalgamation of the two working-class parties in each country.

"A decade and a half of fratricidal struggle has heaped up a mountain of distrust, contempt and hate between Socialists and Communists. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that many Socialists distrust the change of policy effected by the Communist International, and regard it as a mere cunning manoeuvre, just another attempt to exploit for Communist Party purposes the desire of the workers to put an end to the split and reunite all proletarian forces for the common struggle."

We forgot to quote the title of this article. It is: "The United Front in International Affairs!" Yes, with an exclamation mark.

In the whole of the long article there is not a word against the Social-Democrats, against Ebert, Scheidemann, Noske, against the co-operation policy of Legien, against Zorgiebel, against Wels, and certainly not against Bauer. True, he repeatedly betrays his bad conscience. Thus, when he writes in another

paragraph of the same article: "The world war split the proletariat." This sentence not only contradicts Otto Bauer's own assertion that it was the bad Bolsheviks who had split the working class—it does much more than that. The war could not split the working class, only human beings could do that, and they did it not because there was a war on but because it was necessary to take up a position in regard to war. Otto Bauer mentions in a casual way—as if to constitute an analogy between the present change of policy of the C.I. and the change of policy of the German Socialists in August, 1914—that the German Socialists effected a turn of 180 degrees with the insincere excuse that they were only putting into practice what they had always preached, when in reality they did the exact opposite of what they had always preached, when in reality they betrayed all their principles. The workers who remained true to these principles could not give any further allegiance to this Socialist party. But the blame for the split attaches not to the traitors Ebert, Scheidemann, and the rest, but to the war, or so Bauer says! Otto Bauer shows tact in dealing with these traitors to Socialism and no mistake.

Bauer says in another passage:

"The Communist International for a long time underestimated the danger that Fascism constitutes for the struggle of the working class for its emancipation. It regarded bourgeois-democracy as the classic form of the class rule of the bourgeoisie, as such to be opposed by the working class—when in reality the leading section of the bourgeoisie in a number of countries had already given up bourgeois-democracy and had already embraced Fascism in order to enslave the working class more completely."

This passage shows not only the beginnings of a correct criticism but the bad conscience of Otto Bauer as well. So democracy is the classic form of the class rule of the bourgeoisie, and should be opposed by the working class, says Bauer. That is something, at any rate. But Otto Bauer knows very well that beside the classic and the declining form of bourgeois-democracy there is yet a third form of democracy. This form was repeatedly mentioned by Engels (letter to Bebel, 1886) and the events of 1918-19 have clearly proved its existence. It is the form of democracy which is made the protecting shield of counter-revolution, which has the task of protecting the bourgeoisie from the proletarian revolution, i.e., where taking sides with democracy is tantamount to betraying Socialism. Otto Bauer is indignant that the Communist International described and still describes the Socialists as the main prop of the bourgeoisie wherever and

as long as the Socialists are such a prop. How else could they be described? For the rest, Otto Bauer was not always so indignant at this. In his "History of the Austrian Revolution" he boasts of this, when he writes:

"It was in such shop and barracks meetings that the great temptation of Bolshevism was repelled. In such shop meetings the re-establishment of the shattered discipline of labor was gradually enforced. In such shop meetings unauthorised strikes were settled and discipline and order restored when starvation and excitement had led the masses astray to riot and to commit deeds of violence. The history of the shop and barracks meetings is the internal, spiritual history of the Austrian revolution." (Page 186.)

Not only did the Socialists fail to combat this kind of democracy, they also failed to combat Fascism and even went so far as to support it. On May 17, 1933, Wels put himself at the disposal of the Nazis in the name of his party, and the Austrian Socialists were prepared to hand over legislation to the Austro-Fascists for a stipulated period of time.

How trifling are all the accusations brought by Otto Bauer against the Communists if we compare them with the serious crimes committed by the Socialists against the working class! The Communists fought democracy at the time when it was no longer the classic form of the rule of the bourgeoisie, but the Socialists supported it not only when it was the classic form of the oppression of the working class, but also the form of the rule of the counter-revolution. The Communists have underestimated Fascism, but the Socialists have supported Fascism.

It should be remarked by the way that the Italian Communists broke away from the Italian Socialists not, as Bauer says, in 1922, i.e., shortly before the victory of Fascism, but in January, 1921, the reason being that the Socialists refused to fight Fascism, although at this time it had already developed into a serious menace.

So what is left after all this of the arguments put forward by Bauer against the Communist International? Nothing. And what is left after all this of the pro-united front attitude of Bauer?

The case of Bauer reminds one of a similar case in the history of the German Socialists, the case of Schippel. Max Schippel was a respected Socialist, and was even a radical Socialist. He was a member of the Reichstag. Suddenly, in 1904, he began to advocate protective tariffs. He was called to account for this, and requested to make a statement. Schippel thereupon wrote

a whole book, in which he attempted to explain how necessary protective tariffs were and how useful they would be to the workers themselves. But at the end of the whole, he wrote: "As to my personal opinion, I am against protective tariffs." This was too much even for the otherwise so tolerant German Socialists, and Schippel had to resign his seat in the Reichstag.

But can we continue to describe Bauer as a champion of the united front?

### III

We cannot conclude this reckoning with Otto Bauer without stigmatising his perfidious attack on Comrade Stalin. As a rule we pay no attention to such vile stuff, the like of which fills the columns of the white-guard and Trotskyist journals. But we must make an exception in the case of Otto Bauer, because up to the present he was regarded to a certain extent as an adherent of the united front, and was sometimes even considered to be the Socialist expert on these matters.

Under the heading, "The Dictator in the Dictatorship," which in itself already shows that no attempt at a Marxist analysis is to be expected, Otto Bauer presents to his Socialist readers a hideously distorted image of Comrade Stalin, based on untrue and deliberately slanderous information whose source is the notorious Souvarine.

In his funeral speech at Marx's grave Friedrich Engels said that Marx had been the best-hated and best-slandered man of his time. Conservative and extreme-democratic bourgeois alike slandered him in unison. And why? Engels explains it:

"For Marx was above all else a revolutionary. His real mission in life was to contribute in one way or another to the overthrow of capitalist society and of the forms of government which it had brought into being, to contribute to the liberation of the present-day proletariat, which he was the first to make conscious of its own position and its needs, of the conditions under which it could win its freedom. Fighting was his element. And he fought with a passion, a tenacity and a success such as few could rival. His work on the first 'Rheinische Zeitung' (1842), the 'Paris Vorwaerts' (1844), the Brussels 'Deutsche Zeitung' (1847), the 'New York Tribune' (1852-61), and in addition to these a host of militant pamphlets, work in revolutionary clubs in Paris, Brussels and London, and finally, crowning all, the formation of the International Workingmen's Association—this was indeed an achievement of which Marx might well have been proud, even if he had done nothing else.

"And consequently Marx was the best hated and most calumniated man of his time."

Lenin shared the same fate and so does Stalin at present, for the very same reason. There has been not much change in this respect—the only thing is that the word "social democrat" must now be substituted for the word "extreme democrat."

If one made a survey of all the slanders directed against Marx, beginning with the calumnies of Vogt and finishing up with the calumnies of Werner Sombart, one would find there all the insults now heaped upon Stalin by Souvarine and Bauer. Bauer is well acquainted with the slander campaign that was directed against Marx, he even knows that the source from which he himself is taking his material is a very unclear one. He writes:

"It is one of the worst aspects of the fractional struggle within Bolshevism that each of the squabbling parties has pressed history into its own service and has falsified the history of the revolution to suit its own requirements. . . . Souvarine himself carefully collected all reproaches and accusations raised against Stalin by his opponents at the time of the most violent fractional struggle, among them much unsubstantiated gossip current at a time when Stalin was as yet a Party official in the Caucasus, known only to a narrow group of people."

Not only does Otto Bauer faithfully repeat all this "unsubstantiated gossip"—he also bases his analysis on it. Bauer takes over the mean expression of Souvarine about "a mediocre individual," and his only further object is to explain the circumstances and conditions which "permitted a mediocre and grotesque individual to play the part of a hero." Bauer makes things rather easy for himself. According to him great economic difficulties existed at the time and therefore—

"the man with the strongest nerves, with the greatest stubbornness, with the most resolute ability to impose the most terrible sacrifices on the people for the sake of victory, for the sake of the future, that is the man with the strongest will, the hardest, most pitiless man was the one to beat all the other competitors for power. . . . 'The brain is an inhibitive organ; that is what constitutes its dignity,' Victor Adler used to say; but there are times when the best brain must fail precisely because it foresees all difficulties and takes into account all resistances, when an individual of high morality, who is in sympathy with the sufferings of his fellow-creatures must fail. In such times

only the fist can be victorious which hits out without too much intellectual and moral scruples."

If one did not see this drivelling nonsense in print, one would hardly believe it to be possible. In the same article Bauer says:

"Under Stalin's leadership a mighty industry has come into being in the Soviet Union in an amazingly short time; through the collectivisation of the peasant holdings an agrarian revolution of unprecedented dimensions has been carried out victoriously and the standards of living and the cultural level of the masses in the Soviet Union have been raised to a remarkable extent. Russia has again become a first-class power. Can we really believe that this great success which is of so great importance for the future, has been achieved under the leadership of a fundamentally insignificant man?"

This is what Otto Bauer himself wrote.

But according to the same Otto Bauer, what one needs for this achievement is not an extraordinary intelligence and—in addition to the stubbornness and perseverance demanded by this great work—not an all-embracing love for the poor and the poorest to whom the establishment of Socialism brings emancipation from want and misery, that is, not a brain and a heart, but a mere fist.

And Bauer dares to say this of a man who considers the loving care of **human beings** to be the central object of his activities.

But Otto Bauer has this good heart which Stalin lacks. He sheds tears for the hard lot of the kulak wrecker and his tools among the middle peasants, for the Social-Democratic counter-revolutionaries who advocate the united front abroad in order to set up an alibi for themselves when they clandestinely return to the Soviet Union to foster counter-revolution.

We know this variety of tears very well. They have been often shed in former times by tender-hearted bourgeois, who deplored that the unfortunate workers were lured into strikes to their own ruin by heartless agitators.

But what is at stake is something much greater than the object of any strike. Had the workers of the Soviet Union not made the sacrifices required to build up Socialism, then that country would not only lack the increasing wealth it enjoys at present; it would also lack the means of defence and would be an easy prey for the imperialists and the white counter-revolutionists. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the victory of white counter-revolution on one-sixth of the earth, would bring upon

the working masses of the whole world such misery and horror as we can hardly imagine. But Otto Bauer does not think of this misery that would sweep over hundreds of millions of men and women; he has to save up his sympathies for the kulaks who wanted to starve out the nation and were preparing the way for a victory of counter-revolution.

Thus this business of a good heart is a curious thing if one does not accept it at its face value, but looks a little deeper below the surface. And if one does so one sees how much this good heart of Otto Bauer is worth, when it beats in sympathy with all the sufferings of mankind.

Otto Bauer knows only a "Dictator Stalin," the "absolute ruler of the Soviet Union," who enforces the realisation of his decrees by terrorist means: Expulsion from the Party, dismissal from jobs, arrest, exile, imprisonment, at times of crisis even the death penalty—such are the methods by which Stalin governs.

Let us try and imagine how matters happen in actual fact. Stalin submits a new proposal: that the welfare of the citizens of the Soviet Union should be made the prime object of all government activities. This proposal is acclaimed with joy and carried unanimously. Do the members of the Political Bureau and of the Government, the newspapermen, the active party members approve of this proposal, was it spoken from their own hearts and do they accept it for this reason? According to Bauer that is impossible. Or else do they consider the proposal wrong but think: this man has led us up to the present with his wise counsels, he has secured tremendous achievements for us, therefore let us agree to his proposal? No, such considerations do not enter into the matter, says Bauer. The proposal is accepted for the sole reason that if it were not accepted, the dissenters would be expelled from the party, dismissed from their jobs, etc., and in times of crisis might even be shot. That is how Bauer sees life under the Soviets.

Victor Adler's phrase about the brain (which, by the way, is worthy of a petty-bourgeois doctor, but not of a revolutionary politician) is quite correct in Bauer's case: with him the brain is really an inhibitive organ.

Otto Bauer makes excuses for these unprecedented vilifications, saying that they are to a certain extent:

"a reaction to the undignified worship with which Stalin's courtiers surround their master. It is really disgusting when Stalin's satellites praise him as excellently versed in Hegel, when they write of him that only through him were certain predictions of Aristotle cleared up and that his last letter helped to understand the theses of Kant, when they

praise him as the best expert on the Russian language, as a splendid stylist, or when they compare him to Goethe or acclaim him as the greatest leader of all times and all nations."

We have no possibility of checking up on these allegations and we don't know whether they were said and written as Bauer says. But even if it were so, are they really such undignified worship? And what is most important, do they in any case justify the undignified filth flung by Bauer?

Let us have a closer look at this "undignified worship of courtiers," of course so far as we can judge. For, to our shame be it said, although we do read Lenin and Stalin in Russian, we are not authorities on the Russian language; nor do we know which letter of Stalin or which theses of Kant are mentioned, nor do we know anything about the predictions of Aristotle. But let us examine the other crimes.

(1) Stalin was acclaimed as one of the greatest leaders of all times and all nations.

We know that Stalin claims to be only a worthy disciple of Lenin. Still, he has led a nation of 170 million souls into Socialism—a feat no one has ever performed nor could perform before him. And we all hope that he will also lead the workers of all other countries into world-wide Socialism. In this case Stalin will be the greatest leader of all times and all nations.

(2) Stalin is praised as a stylist and his style is compared with the style of Goethe.

Heine compared the style of Lessing, that greatest stylist of classic German literature, with a pure spring, transparent right to its bottom. Clarity is the characteristic of Lessing's style. And as to clarity, Stalin is second to no author in the literature of the whole world.

For the rest, this matter of style is a peculiar thing. "The loud-mouthed coxcombs of German vulgar economy criticise the style and presentation of my work," wrote Marx in the epilogue to the second edition of "Capital." Wilhelm Liebknecht, that subtle stylist, praises Marx' style, and Franz Mehring, who knew something about these things, says in his "History of German Social-Democracy" that the first chapter of "Capital," as an example of fine writing, has few parallels in the whole literature of the world. For this, shallow Julian Borchardt called him a flatterer of Marx. True, Borchardt did not dream of throwing dirt at Marx on that account.

(3) Stalin was praised by his satellites as an authority on Hegel.

The founder of scientific Socialism described the dialectics

of Hegel as the most comprehensive and profound evolutionary theory. In its materialistic form they found it to be their best instrument and their sharpest weapon, says Engels. In a later historic epoch Stalin, in a whole series of brilliant theoretical writings developed and materially enriched Marxism. A man who has mastered this evolutionary theory so well in his theoretical and practical work, who bases his words and deeds on it, who handles dialectic materialism both as a tool and as a weapon with consummate mastery—such a man cannot possibly have studied Hegel and certainly cannot have studied him with any thoroughness! That is what Bauer thinks and all those who do not share his opinion are “courtiers,” etc.

Lenin once said of Otto Bauer that he sees only one side of things, or rather that he falls in love with one aspect of them. But he juggles about a lot with Hegelian jargon and very probably thinks that he knows Hegel very well indeed. In his last article, which we quoted above, he writes:

“In the struggle for an integral Socialism which will heal the organisational and ideological split in the working class, will weld all the forces of the proletariat together into one might and resolve all conflicting ideologies in a higher unity . . .,” etc.

The phrase sounds wonderfully dialectic, but in reality it is mere humbug. Just imagine the “Socialism” of Stivin, Attlee, and Bauer on the one hand and the Socialism of Stalin on the other resolved into a Socialism which is neither the Socialism of Stivin nor the Socialism of Stalin but some “integral” Socialism. Lassalle called this sort of thing “Bim-Bam, Bam-Bim” and Hegel himself described it as a “subjective see-saw system of oscillating reasoning lacking content and covering its nakedness with such acumen as engenders this kind of reasoning.” The word acumen is employed in an ironical sense, of course. What Bauer dishes up as dialectics has nothing to do with Hegel. At best it is the kind of dialectic described by Schopenhauer thus: “Dialectic is merely a reduction to system and rule and a description of the arts used by most men if they become aware that truth is not on their side in a dispute and yet want to get the best of the argument.”

Truly, Otto Bauer is well qualified to act as an expert in matters concerning Hegel!

Bauer will never understand the reverence with which the workers, the youth and the intelligentsia of the Soviet Union regard Comrade Stalin—this is proved by Bauer’s reference to the Kaiser. What we respect is not something strange and

superior, but the best part of ourselves, the most acute thinker, the most stubborn noble fighter who can express quicker and better than we the things we merely feel and that not clearly.

Bauer proposes international action to compel the dictators to abolish their dictatorships step by step, for they will not do so unless compelled. To this end, a strong wave of Socialist public opinion is to be evoked and the dictators will have to take such a movement into account because they are attempting to gain favor with the workers all over the world, etc.

Otto Bauer left Vienna after the fourteenth of February, 1934, in order to seek a new line after the shameful bankruptcy of his policy. He was converted to the dictatorship of the proletariat (but a dictatorship of his own fashion) and afterwards to united action. But he finally lands in the arms of Cardinal Initzer, the head of international anti-Soviet propaganda activities.

Shall this really be the end of him?

#### IV

But let us leave Otto Bauer where he stands, or staggers, and let us turn to more important matters.

United action means to take up small matters in a practical fashion, but it does not mean that one should rest content with these small matters. We are fighting against the deterioration of the conditions of the workers, but that does not imply that we make the best of the existing poverty and misery; we fight for the democratic privileges of the workers, but we do not regard them as the highest in life; we fight to preserve peace, but certainly not to keep the present distribution of the world among the imperialist powers as it is now. We rally the forces of the working class for united action, we widen the united front into a people’s front not merely to use the awakened and heightened energies for warding off the deterioration of conditions, but in order to create new and better conditions.

We must see things soberly, but we must see more than what is lying directly in front of us; we must see bigger things as well in their connection and rapid evolution.

The attacks of capital, Fascism, the menace of war are all scourges of humanity. But at the same time they are symptoms of a disease, of the grave crisis of capitalism, which gives it no peace. Socialism, on the other hand, has won a final and indestructible victory which is growing more and more stable day by day.

The working class has suffered serious defeats, but it is now again inspired by a spirit of struggle, and this includes the



Socialist workers as well. They are no longer patiently waiting for another spell of capitalist "trade revival"; they no longer placidly acquiesce in the growth of economic distress and political oppression "in order to prevent something worse," but join hands with the Communist workers for the fight. The first results are already apparent.

Fascism is preparing for war. But the Soviet Union is increasingly successful in its wise and persevering peace policy, bringing together into a united front the nations which expect not even temporary benefits but merely great disadvantages from another war. Thus the Soviet Union blows a fresh wind on to the sails of our peace work and new prospects open up before our eyes: we may possibly prevent a war.

Such were the general circumstances under which the Seventh Congress put forward the slogan: up and fight against the small and smallest grievances, up for unity in action.

Developments have been rapid.

Italy has attacked Abyssinia. The war-mongers think that their hour has come. Hitler Germany is working feverishly to form a new Central-European-Baltic bloc, and more feverishly still at her own rearmament. Japan has launched her new attack on China.

But other, opposite effects show as well: the colonial nations are waking up and revolting against their oppressors. To-day it is Egypt, to-morrow it will be Tripoli, Somaliland, Eritrea, etc. Italian Fascism is entering into a state of crisis, and this is already having certain favorable effects. The fall of the first Fascist dictatorship would have incalculable consequences for Fascism in the other countries and for reaction as a whole.

Of course, the overthrow of Fascism will hardly be achieved by League action. The League will always throw out fresh lifebelts to Fascism. And even if this were not so and Fascism were to fall through League action, such a contingency would be much less favorable to the working class, than if the overthrow of Fascism had been achieved by the action of the workers themselves. Such is the present situation, fraught with grave dangers but with great possibilities as well.

The Seventh Congress of the Communist International has put forward the slogan of united action.

Comrade Dimitrov calls for international united action again the pirate war waged by Mussolini.

United action will decide all issues!

## Australia's Fights for Freedom, Democracy, And Progress

By J. N. RAWLING

### II. Convict Revolts

IN our last issue we showed how the fight for the abolition of transportation was won by unity and mass action. No more convicts ever came to Eastern Australia, although in West Australia, which up to the 'nineties was a crown colony, the system was maintained for a few more years. The last convict ship to come to Australia reached Fremantle on January 10, 1868. It was the "Hougoumont," and she had on board sixty-three political prisoners from Ireland, in addition to 320 non-political convicts. Amongst the former was the famous John Boyle O'Reilly.

By the time (1851) that transportation to N.S.W. ceased, nearly 100,000 convicts had come to eastern Australia—considerably more than half of the population. Such figures indicate the importance of the convict element in the make-up of the population. As we have already pointed out, however, the convicts—as to ninety per cent. of their number or more—were by no means a depraved or degraded lot of people. Many of them were political prisoners and as such were representative of the elite rather than of the dregs of humanity. Of the rest, the "criminals," some were victims of circumstance and the harsh criminal law of eighteenth and nineteenth century England, and others had fought an individualistic fight against a society which had robbed them of the right to live honestly. In all, they were not a spiritless lot but men and women of back-bone who fought against oppression here as in the old countries.

That oppression was deadly. Roger Therry was a New South Wales Supreme Court judge, who, in 1863, published his "Reminiscences of Thirty Years' Residence in N.S.W. and Victoria." In it he tells of his impressions of Sydney when he landed here in 1829. He described the pleasing prospect of Sydney in the evening, with its gay streets and well-stocked shops (population then about 15,000). And then—

"When, however, day dawned in Sydney, the delusion of the evening was dispelled. Early in the morning the gates of the convict prison were thrown open, and several hundred convicts were marched out in regimental file and distributed amongst the several public works in

and about the town. [As the relief workers to-day, except for the chains and dress!—J. N. R.] As they passed along—the chains clanking at their heels—the patchwork dress of coarse grey and yellow cloth marked with the Government brand, in which they were paraded—the downcast countenances—and the whole appearance of the men, exhibited a truly painful picture. Nor was it much improved throughout the day, as one met **bands of them in detachments of twenty yoked to wagons** laden with gravel and stone; in this and in other respects they performed all the functions of labor usually discharged by beasts of burden at home.” (p. 41.)

Then he tells of the “thrill of horror” that was added to the pain caused him by such scenes. This was when, a few days later, he witnessed the effects of a flogging. He says:

“The Sydney Hospital, well-situated, was in a line with the prisoners’ barracks and at a short distance from them (about 300 yards). In an enclosed yard of these barracks, shut out from the public road by a very high brick wall, flogging was administered. A band of from ten to twenty were daily, at one period, marched into this yard to be flogged. As I passed along the road about 11 o’clock in the morning, there issued out of the prisoners’ barracks a party consisting of four men who bore on their shoulders . . . a miserable convict, writhing in an agony of pain—his voice piercing the air with terrific screams. Astonished at the sight, I inquired what this meant, and was told that it was ‘only a prisoner who had been flogged and who was on his way to hospital!’ It often took the sufferer a week or ten days after one of these lacerations before he was sufficiently recovered to resume his labor, and I soon learned that what I had seen was at that period an ordinary occurrence.” (pp. 42-43.)

All this was still happening forty years after the first settlement. And what were they flogged for? **Judge Therry** tells us: “I was once present in the police office in Sydney when a convict was sentenced to fifty lashes for not taking off his hat to a magistrate as he met him on the road.” (p. 43.) And then, floggings to force confessions from the victims, in the style of the Spanish Inquisition. A case is cited from Therry (p. 44):

“Henry Bayre, attached to the Domain party, is sentenced to receive twenty-five lashes every morning until he tells where the money and property is stolen from the

house of William Jacques at Parramatta by him.” Therry adds: “To this conviction is attached the magistrates’ signatures, whose names it may be a becoming exercise of charity not to proclaim. Their names are well-known, however, and their deeds still remembered in the colony.” But one such magistrate was the **Rev. Samuel Marsden**, of Parramatta, revered in school text-books as one of the fathers of his country and described as “missionary, magistrate and sheep-farmer.” In a report to Governor King in 1805 dealing with sheep raising, he had this to say:

“One remark more I would make here, viz., that, as sheep are timid, delicate animals, their welfare calls for the constant care and attention of man. Many flocks have suffered much this season from the ignorance or inattention of the proprietors or their servants. As those who possess flocks of sheep acquire more experience and knowledge, and feel a greater interest in them, it may be expected that this useful animal will meet with more general attention.”

This illustrates Marsden’s solicitude for his sheep. What was his care of the men over whom he was set? A few years before this, rumors reached Marsden of alleged plans for a rising by Irish political convicts. On the basis of these rumors, Marsden had a number flogged—one of his star witnesses in his “trial” of them averring that she had seen them “walking about and talking very earnestly in Irish,” and that she was sure that they intended “something very improper.” One of those flogged was a mere boy from whom Marsden tried to extort a “confession.” This is a description of the flogging by General Holt, one of the Irish exiles, who was forced to stand by and watch it:

“The next prisoner tied up was Paddy Galvin, a young lad about twenty years of age; he was also sentenced to 300 lashes. The first hundred were given on his shoulders, and he was cut to the bone between the shoulder-blades, which were both bare. The doctor then directed the next hundred to be inflicted lower down, which reduced his flesh to such a jelly that the doctor ordered him to have the remaining hundred on the calves of his legs. During the whole time Galvin never whimpered or flinched, if, indeed, it were possible for him to have done so.”

This also formed the subject of a report from Marsden to Governor King. Marsden had this to say:

"Though a young man, he would have died upon the spot before he would tell a single sentence. He was taken down three times—punished upon his back, and also on his bottom when he could receive no more on his back. Galvin was just in the same mood when taken to the hospital as he was when first tied up, and continues the same this morning (three days later). He is not in a situation to be sent down to Sydney yet. I am sure he will die before he will reveal anything of this business."

There spoke a gallant and reverend Christian gentleman—one of the bull-dog breed—one of our school-book "patriots". Is it not time that we rescued patriotism from the polluters?

It is not to be wondered at that there should have been revolts of convicts. One of these was the Castle Hill rebellion in 1804, in which the Irish were mainly concerned. As a result of certain rumors, the free settlers around Parramatta took refuge in the barracks. As soon as the news reached Sydney—at about midnight on March 3—Governor King set out for Parramatta with a force of about sixty, while a messenger was sent to arouse Major Johnston, of the N.S.W. Corps, who was residing at Annandale. He took charge of the troops as they passed his house and reached Parramatta early next morning. He divided his force into two—he leading one along the Toongabbie Road, the other going towards Castle Hill. When he reached the former place, Johnston was informed that 400 of the rebels were formed up on Sugarloaf Hill but, on reconnoitring, found that they had retreated towards the Hawkesbury. He came up with them on March 5, about ten miles from Parramatta.

It was then that Major Johnston showed that he understood the tactics adopted by Richard II. when Wat Tyler was treacherously murdered in 1381. Upon promise of safety during a parley, the leaders of the insurgents advanced to talk with Johnston. The latter demanded their surrender, but they said their terms were liberty or death. Whereupon the order was given for the soldiers to advance and the "gallant" major and his companion presented pistols at the heads of Cunningham and Johnston—such were the names of the insurgent leaders. The rebels, having lost their leaders, were at a disadvantage and, although they replied to the first volley of the soldiers, soon fled in all directions. The soldiers suffered no casualties, while the rebels lost twelve killed, six wounded, and twenty-six taken prisoner.

Contradictory reports were made of the fate of Cunningham, but it seems probable that he was shot dead by Major Johnston's

companion when he clamped the pistol to his head and that his dead body was hanged in Parramatta—to "encourage" the others. The other leader, Johnston, was hanged—as well as seven others. Nine were flogged.

Other revolts took place at various places and times (one at Coal River—now Newcastle), but it was the growth of the free population and the fight by it against the autocracy of the early governors and their penal system that was responsible for bettering the conditions of the convicts and, finally, abolishing the convict system. With the growth of that free population, the powers of the governors were gradually lessened—not without a struggle and, indeed, not without a revolution—but that is another story.

### III. An Exploit a la Dumas

Perhaps the most considerable element amongst the political prisoners who were sent out to Australia was Irish. Indeed, the Irish have played a big part on the Australian stage—not always to the credit of the Irish masses: for Joseph Aloysius Lyons is of Irish descent! But to more than compensate for Irish reactionaries, from Wentworth who wanted transportation and an Australian peerage, a hundred years ago, to Joseph of many colors, to-day, there have been the Irish patriots who have fought in all of Australia's fights for freedom and progress, from Castle Hill (1804) and Eureka (1854) to the anti-conscription victories (1916 and 1917). It all is to be understood—for the Irish have been fighting for freedom for 700 years and many of them who were in Australia were there because of their part in that fight.

With the First Fleet, Irish exiles were sent to Sydney and thence onward almost every ship brought more. Their numbers were swollen after the defeat of the Irish Rebellion of 1798. They became a source of great trouble to successive governors—by their determined opposition to tyranny and their attempts to escape.

The second big batch of Irish exiles came after the revolutionary days of 1848. Amongst those who came to Tasmania in 1849 were Smith O'Brien and John Mitchel, editor of the "United Irishman." Some, with the aid of friends inside and outside Australia, were able to escape, and their stories are as exciting as a Dumas romance. Mitchel escaped, disguised as a priest, and sailed to America from Melbourne.

The West Australian Irish exiles, whom we have already referred to as being on the last convict ship to reach Australia, were Fenians—members of an organisation which sprang up after the defeat of the 'forties. This organisation became very

powerful in the 'sixties, after the end of the American Civil War. The presence of informers in their ranks led to the discovery by the Government of a projected rising and many arrests were made, nipping the revolt in the bud.

The assistance of Australian opponents of imperialism was partly responsible for the escape of some of the West Australian prisoners. One of these, O'Reilly, whom we have already mentioned, escaped, by the help of English settlers, upon an American whaler, in February, 1865, and escaped recapture at Rodriguez by pretending death by drowning—his hat being found floating on the water. In 1869, the Gladstone Government pardoned 45 of them. The widespread opposition to oppression and the sympathy for oppression's victims were shown by the raising of £5000 in Melbourne for their benefit. But the most romantic story concerns the escape of the six prisoners who still, in 1875, remained in West Australia.

In that year, a plan was drawn up to effect their rescue. With money raised in America, Australia, New Zealand, and Ireland, a whaler, the "Catalpa," was bought. John Breslin (who had engineered the escape of James Stephens, one of the founders of the Fenian movement, from Richmond Gaol, Ireland), and Thomas Desmond, of San Francisco, were sent out to Australia to make the necessary arrangements. In Sydney, they joined forces with some Irish envoys, who had £1000 for the project, and got into contact with Australian sympathisers. Thence they set out for West Australia, purchasing arms in Melbourne. In Perth, Breslin became an American investor, "Mr. Collins," and the two of them were received by the Governor. There they remained making themselves popular and even visiting the prison and seeing the prisoners they intended rescuing, until the "Catalpa" arrived at Bunbury.

At Bunbury, the Government gunboat, "Georgette," gave every assistance to the "Catalpa" in the matter of soundings and other information. Everything was ready for the escape. The six prisoners were allowed certain privileges, and, on the morning of April 17, they joined the two buggies that had been provided for them, with the knowledge that they would not be missed for several hours. They drove rapidly towards a point on the coast about 20 miles south of Fremantle, where a whaleboat was to pick them up and take them to the "Catalpa." Everything went as arranged—sentries posted, the buggies at the rendezvous to time, and the telegraph lines to Fremantle cut.

Arrival at the beach, however, meant that discovery was no longer avoidable. An onlooker galloped with the news to Fremantle. But the cut wires prevented a message from being sent to the Government gunboat. A police boat was sent out

but failed to locate the fugitives during the night. Next day, the police went out again and were watching the "Catalpa," when a whaleboat was seen approaching the latter from shore. The police boat gave chase and was gaining on the whaleboat, when the "Catalpa" bore down under full sail and picked up the whaleboat. The police were not more than 400 yards away, and later, on passing the vessel, saw the Fenians on board. The police returned to Fremantle where a crowd was awaiting them on the wharf, and "the general feeling," said the Fremantle "Weekly Herald" (22/4/76), "was clearly one of pleasure that the pursuit had so far been unsuccessful. . . . Never were the people of Fremantle so upset or so excited. Business was almost entirely suspended."

Then the "Georgette" took up the chase. It overhauled the "Catalpa" next day and fired under her stern, whereupon the "Catalpa" ran up the Stars and Stripes and took no notice of the signal. Another shot was fired across her bow. Then a parley began. The Police Superintendent demanded the handing over of the six escaped prisoners. The captain answered, "I have no prisoners aboard—all are seamen belonging to the ship." The Police Superintendent gave the captain 15 minutes and then returned for an answer. But that was the same: "There were no prisoners." The threat was then made to fire into the ship. But the bluff was called—the captain pointing to his flag. After asking to be allowed to board and see for himself and being refused permission, the Superintendent and the "Georgette" had to return to port, beaten. To finish the story, a letter was sent to New Bedford (Mass.) police, whence came the "Catalpa," requesting the arrest of the six convicts. But the Police Chief there was one of the organisers of the rescue! He never saw any escaped convicts!

#### IV. A Black Kosciusko.

A record of the struggle for freedom in Australia would not be complete without an account of the losing fight waged by the black possessors of this country against a ruthless and remorseless invader. The "Sydney Morning Herald" (21/9/34), in a leader, said that there is a "blessed sense" in which Australia may be described as white. "It is the only country in the world . . . not stained with bloodshed in possessing or holding." The pity is that the majority of Australians believe the same. Yet, when bloody and lecherous Leopold, king of the Belgians, was remonstrated with over Belgian atrocities in the Congo, he asked, "Have you read Dr. Roth's report of the treatment of the Western Australian aborigines?"

The "Herald" denied that the "white" of this country had ever been defiled by the red of men's blood shed on it—"in poss-

essing or holding." The slaughter of Indians was, by this sentence, admitted. Canada has had its purity sullied by the blood of French and Red Indians. The Boer War stained indelibly the veldts of South Africa. New Zealand has had its Maori Wars. Every country in the world has been the scene of slaughter—every country except Australia. How true is all this?

"In possessing or holding"—so runs the phrase. "In holding"—then was the blood of 60,000 in 1914-1918, not shed in holding? Was Australia not then in danger in 1914? "In possessing"—The whites landed on a continent unclaimed except by a few hundred thousand blacks. There surely was an opportunity for possessing without bloodshed. But what Scott Nearing says of the similar case of America applies here—not with equal force simply because the Australian aborigines were fewer in number:

"The early white settlers had been, in almost every instance, hospitably welcomed. . . . The whites retaliated with that cunning, grasping, bestial ferocity which has spread terror through the earth during the past five centuries." (Scott Nearing: "The American Empire," p. 35.)

An Australian historian bears a like testimony:

"The Australian natives rendered essential services to the pioneer colonists, such as few savage peoples have rendered to their conquerors and the invaders of their country." (James Collier: "The Pastoralist Age in Australasia," p. 119.)

In a proclamation in 1813, the Lieutenant-Governor of Tasmania (then Van Diemen's Land), speaking of the aborigines said:

"The resentment of these poor, uncultivated blacks has been justly provoked by a most barbarous and inhuman mode of proceeding, viz., the robbing of their children. Let any man put his hand to his heart and ask, which is the savage, the white man who robs the parent of his children, or the black man who boldly steps forward to resent the injury and recover his stolen offspring." (Quoted, Scott: "Short History of Australia," p. 168.)

History books talk of the Black War—but it was one long, continuous massacre, there being no closed season nor any armistices. "The wounded were brained," says John West, in his "History of Tasmania," (quoted by Scott, p. 169): "the infant cast into the flames; the bayonet driven into the quivering flesh; the social fire around which the natives gathered to slumber became before morning their funeral pile."

The "war" was successful enough to gladden the heart of a "Herald" leader writer: the bones of the last Tasmanian aboriginal may be gazed upon, by us children of the conquerors, in a case in a Museum!

Nor is the story different in Australia itself. Quoting Scott again (p. 184):

"The decay of the aborigines in the settled districts proceeded very rapidly from three main causes: from actual destruction by killing, from disease and drink introduced by the whites, and from the perishing due to the change of life necessitated by the limitation of their hunting grounds. . . . The lowest depths of mean homicide were reached by some settlers who systematically gave natives arsenic in wheaten cakes, porridge or other food. They murdered under the guise of kindness."

And Collier has a chapter on the rich squatters who kept a harem of native women for themselves and their white employees—and killed off the black men out of the road! To-day, less than a century and a half after the first settlement, there are less tens of thousands than there were hundreds in 1788. One who knows the aborigines well, Mr. Francis, former M.P. for Kennedy, Queensland, says:

"They are often condemned by people who do not understand them. . . . They are a pleasant, happy people, always willing to please." ("S.M.H." 27/4/'34)—"When the white people came into their country, took the best water holes, drove the native game away, and put cattle and horses on the country in large numbers, the natives resented such high-handed conduct . . . and yet I still think of them as a high class of primitive people who have far less to be ashamed of in their attitude to white men than the white men have in their treatment of the aborigines."

The general attitude towards the aborigines is illustrated by an excuse offered in a New South Wales court about a hundred years ago. In 1838, 40 or 50 migratory natives, camped near a station on Myall Creek, in northern New South Wales, were shot down like so many dingoes by a band of whites. Rather unusually, seven of the latter were tried and hanged. In court, they made the astounding defence that they were "not aware that in killing blacks they were breaking the law!"

At school we were taught to admire Kosciuszko, the Polish patriot, who fought against the Russian, German and Austrian invaders of his country, Kossuth, the Hungarian champion of

his people against Austrian aggression, **Garibaldi**, who fought for Italian independence, and many other fighters for freedom, while, right on our doorstep, a dusky Kosciusko attempted to mobilise his people against the invader.

The Tasmanian has always been classified as little above the animal, but Thomas Dove, a champion amongst them, had this to say:

"The aborigines have usually been regarded as exhibiting the human character in its lowest state of degradation; but if we look, however, to the methods which they devised of procuring shelter and subsistence in their native wilds, to the skill and precision with which they tracked the mazes of the bush, and to the force of invention and memory which is displayed in the copious vocabulary of their several languages, they claim no inconsiderable share of mental power and activity."

Many have said that they were a kindly people, but were driven to desperation by the treatment they received. Many instances could be given of the horrors of their treatment by the squatters and by the military. In 1804, Lieutenant Moore had his detachment fire muskets and cannon upon a group of natives—men, women and children—who had driven kangaroos into Risdon. A number were killed and many were wounded. Reprisals followed; then more atrocities—all culminating in the "Black War" which was begun in 1826, under Lieutenant-Governor Sorell, who himself was forced to protest against the treatment of the blacks. Said the "Hobart Town Times," in 1836:

"They have been murdered in cold blood. They have been shot in the woods, and hunted down as beasts of prey; their women have been contaminated and then had their throats cut, or shot by the British residents, who would fain call themselves civilised people. The Government, too, by the common hangman, sacrificed the lives of such of the aborigines as in retaliation destroyed their wholesale murderers, and the Government, to its shame be it recorded, in no single instance, on no single occasion, ever punished, or threatened to punish, the acknowledged murderers of the aboriginal inhabitants."

Lieutenant-Governor Arthur organised the "King's Own"—which the "Colonial Times" described: "of all the banditti we ever recollect as coming before our eyes on the stage, none have equalled the mob which left Hobart Town on Tuesday last"—to drive all the aboriginals into Tasman's Peninsula; a project in which they failed.

It was during the "Black War" that the black leader was found in Mosquito, a native of New South Wales, who had been transported to Tasmania for murder. He was used against the bushrangers by the Government but later gathered around him aborigines who had suffered at the hands of the whites. He taught them all he knew, and got the Oyster Bay tribe to cultivate the soil. In addition, he instilled into them a relentless hatred of the whites from whom they had suffered so much. Terrible tales are told of his acts and alleged atrocities—but all admit that it was the English settlers in N.S.W. and Tasmania who taught him all he knew, while G. A. Robinson, a missionary who knew him, said that all his offences were in retaliation for wrongs done to him.

He is described as being "endowed with superior physical powers, as well as a vigorous intellect and indomitable will." (Bonwick: "Last of the Tasmanians," p. 92.) After carrying on guerilla warfare against the whites for a number of years, he was finally betrayed, tried and executed on February 25, 1825. But the war went on and did not end until the Tasmanian race was almost wiped out. Some who later surrendered were sent to Flinders Island—but they died off one by one. The last living Tasmanian was a woman, Truganina, or Lalla Rookh, who died in May, 1876.

Mr. J. Bonwick, in his book, "The Lost Tasmanian Race," gives a word-picture of the surrender, of one of the last fighting groups, to a peaceful expedition led by G. A. Robinson. He says:

"When this desperate tribe was captured, there was much surprise and chagrin to find that the £30,000 had been spent, and the whole population of the colony placed under arms, in contention with an opposing force of 16 with wooden spears! Yet such was the fact . . . . With a knowledge of the mischief done by these few, their wonderful marches and their widespread aggressions, their enemies cannot deny to them the attributes of courage and military tact. . . . Though they thus submitted to moral force, it was because they felt their work was done. They had fought for the soil, and were vanquished. They had lost fathers, brothers, sons, in war. Their mothers, wives, and daughters, harassed by continued alarms, worn by perpetual marches, enfeebled by want and disease, had sunk down one by one to die in the forest, leaving but a miserable remnant. Their children had been sacrificed to the cruel exaction of patriotism, and had perished of cold, hunger and fatigue, or had been murdered by parental

hands, as the Roman maiden of old, to prevent a supposed worse fate." (P. 148.)

And, to-day—

"The woolly-haired Tasmanian no longer sings blithely on the Gum-tree Tiers, or twines the snowy Clematis blossom for a bridal garland. Our awakened interest in his condition comes too late. The bell but tolls his knell, and the Aeolian music of the She-oak is now his requiem. We cover our faces while the deep and solemn voice of our common Father echoes through the soul, 'Where is thy brother.'—Oh! if he were here, how kindly would we speak to him! Would we not smile upon that dark sister of the forest, and find joy in the prattle of that piccaninny boy! But now the burden of each saddened spirit is, Would I had loved him more!" (pp. 215-6.)

But, alas for piccaninnies, black and white, such idyllic happiness cannot be where imperialism holds sway. The task of bringing happiness and culture to the remnant of the black Australian people awaits accomplishment when the white Australian people enter into their own inheritance. Thus a doubly patriotic duty is ours!

(To be continued)

## A Better League of Youth

The Sixth Congress of the Young Communist International and the Australian Y.C.L.

By HARRY TORR

For many years much has been said at Party and Y.C.L. Conferences, local, national, and international, on the necessity for "brightening and broadening the life of the Y.C.L." But the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International had to remind us that "In a number of countries, our Young Communist Leagues are still largely sectarian organisations, divorced from the masses." (Dimitrov's Report.)

The Sixth World Congress of the Young Communist International, held immediately after, devoted its main attention to the questions of broadening the youth leagues and uniting all the forces of the toiling youth for the struggle for the right to live and be free.

**"The life of the younger generation of toilers in capitalist countries has lately deteriorated to an unheard of degree, and it still continues to worsen. The overwhelming majority of youth are now a ruthlessly oppressed and exploited generation."** (Resolution, Sixth Congress Y.C.I.)

As pointed out in an article, the Party, the Y.C.L., and the youth, in the November "Communist Review," this applies to Australia as well as to any other capitalist country. Thousands of youth who left school years ago have never worked. Exploitation of those who are working, be it in factory, farm, store, or office, continues to increase. Students have difficulty with their education: "Battleships, not scholarships," is the policy of the Government. Military heads are still agitating for re-introduction of compulsory training. Hunger, war, and Fascism, are all that capitalism has to offer our younger generation.

As Comrade Woolf said in his report to the Congress, "The fate of the youth has become one of the most burning issues of our time, and upon it depends the fate of the people." But the younger generation does not want to be a dying generation. The youth of to-day is looking for a way out. It is looking for a political party which appears to be able to give them life, liberty, and happiness. They are bewildered by the variety of political parties—Communist, Labor, Douglas Credit, and so on, whose programmes appear to them to offer a better life. For this same reason, they fall an easy prey to Fascist demagogy, unless we can show them where their interests really lie.

And this is the role of the youth leagues—to provide the

youth with a broad organisation wherein they can be active in the class struggle, and in the course of this activity, study Socialism, learn what it is, what it means to them, how to attain it. Although we have acknowledged before that the "Y.C.L. is a school for Communism," in active practice this fundamental role of an educator has been pushed into the background. A broad organisation is needed, open not only to Communists, but to members or supporters of the A.L.P., to those youth who have not yet formed definite political ideas; yes, even to Douglas Credit youth, who in many cases believe they are supporting an anti-capitalist party. In this organisation the youth will be able to live the normal life of the youth, indulge in sports, recreation, amusements, cultural activities, and so on, at the same time as they "learn about Socialism."

### Youth's Enemy No. 1!

Of all the troubles, difficulties, and dangers confronting the younger generation to-day, possibly the greatest is Fascism, which intensifies all the evils of capitalism, and further degrades the youth to an unheard of degree. The Fascists, promising all things to all men, and appearing under different guises, with varying names, try to utilise the finest and noblest feelings of the youth for their own ends. Love of people, desire for action and freedom—all are used to ensnare the youth into support of Fascism. To the young unemployed, work is promised; to the employed, higher wages; to the country youth, land; to the young women, home and happiness. But Germany shows how these promises were fulfilled. Hundreds of thousands of boys and girls are driven out of industry into forced labor camps. The girls and women are forced back to the position they held in the dark ages. The number of students in 1933-4 was reduced 50 per cent., the maximum number of students being fixed at 15,000 a year! Baldur von Shirach, official "leader" of the German youth, slanders these youths to the following extent: "The German youth cherishes no respect for knowledge, it respects only the bully." Such is the Fascist ideal in respect to culture!

But the young generation wants peace, not war; it wants freedom, not slavery! And when roused to the danger, the youth, united, constitute a mighty barrier against reaction, as shown in the anti-Fascist struggles in France, in particular. This brings us again to the question of the unity of the whole of the young generation of toilers against their common deadly enemy. To quote Comrade Woolf again: "A youth organisation, uniting all the forces of the toiling youth in the struggle against Fas-

cism and imperialist war, and in defence of their essential rights, that is what the generation of toiling youth in capitalist countries requires."

Some progress has already been made in this direction in some countries. In France and America a strong young people's front is being built. The American Youth Congress Movement has grown to represent a million and a half youth of many political, industrial, sporting, cultural and religious organisations. In France, the young people's front against Fascism has played an important part in defending the rights of the French people.

### Unite all Anti-Fascist Youth

But this uniting of all the forces of youth opposed to Fascism cannot be achieved overnight. An important step is the uniting of the forces of the working-class youth into one organisation.

Here again, successes have been achieved in other countries. A unity agreement has recently been announced between the Young Communists and young Socialists of Germany. The Independent Labor Party Guild of Youth in Britain some time ago decided to affiliate as a "body sympathetic to Communism" to the Y.C.I. In many other countries, too, negotiations for unity, for amalgamation, are proceeding between these two sections of the working youth.

On this point, Australia presents certain peculiarities, insofar as there is no Socialist youth organisation here laying claims to supporting Marxism, as in the case of U.S.A., G.B., and many European countries, where there are sections of the Young Socialist International. As a matter of fact, there is very little at all in the nature of political youth organisations. But there are tens of thousands of youth who follow the A.L.P., or even the D.C.P., as mentioned above, believing that they are opposing capitalism, even though they are not as yet members of any organisation. These working-class youth can and must be united in broad working-class organisations, and activated to a greater extent politically.

A powerful united working-class sports movement, and a drive to "unionise the youth" are stepping stones to a united political, but non-party, organisation for the working-class youth, in turn leading to a strengthening of the young people's front, already beginning in the youth congress movement.

### Change the Y.C.L.

But the Y.C.L. in its present form, narrow, sectarian, isolated, cannot carry out these tasks. And so in Australia, as in other capitalist countries, there is the urgent necessity to alter the character of the youth leagues. This expression no doubt sounds



very familiar, but this time there is the beginning of some improvement. Steps are being taken in Sydney and Melbourne to reorganise the Y.C.L., to make it a broader organisation of the anti-capitalist youth, and one of the main purposes of this article is to focus Party members' attention on the Y.C.L., so that the transformation can be more quickly carried out, and that where the league does not yet exist, it can be begun on broad lines.

Agreeing with Comrade Woolf's statement that "many Young Communist Leagues' internal life is filled with endless political discussions and conferences. They often deprive their members of the possibility of studying, amusing themselves and living the way the youth normally live," more youthful activities are being developed.

In Melbourne, for example, an Esperanto class is being conducted in one locality where there is a "language problem," and a class on English for Jewish comrades.

In Sydney, the East Sydney Section is being reorganised on a "broad" basis meeting fortnightly; the first branch meeting, covering all units, has just been held, consisting of a short business meeting, followed by musical items, supper, and a talk on youth in the Soviet Union by a young Party member who has spent some time there.

Arrangements are being made for further meetings to take the form of musical evenings, inner-league debates, authors' nights, impromptu speeches, etc. A search is being made for new district headquarters, where club rooms can be established, to which members can come to eat their tea, to read, play ping-pong, bring their friends to talk, and run functions. Study camps are organised, where relaxation and study can be combined. In short, endeavors are being made in both these places to enable the League members to lead the "normal life of the youth." Similarly changes must be made in our attitude to activity, discipline, etc. Previously we have demanded that recruits to the League should accept the dictatorship of the proletariat, Soviet Power, the necessity for transforming imperialist war into civil war, struggle against opportunism, and so on.

In place of this state of affairs, the doors of the League must be opened wide to all the youth who loyally wish to take part in its work. The youth themselves must build up their organisations, determine the nature, tasks, forms and methods of work of their organisation. This will mean fundamental changes in forms of organisation, as well as in content. In place of the old stereotyped street and factory units, clubs and groups of various

types, to suit the locality, to cater for the special interest of the youth, must be built, under the control of the youth themselves.

"We must so build our organisations that any youth who wants to dance, sing, engage in sports, take part in excursions or in travel, who wants to study languages or geography, or to perfect himself in his trade, will find the facilities for it in our organisations. If a girl wants to learn how to sew or embroider, or study household management, the facilities for it should be given her in our organisation. Such a change will secure affiliation of various educational, sporting, and cultural youth organisations." (Comrade Woolf.)

These specialised groups, instead of being "auxiliary organisations," "transmission belts," will have to be the main form of organisation, and naturally, there will be big variations in different States, cities, and parts of cities.

It will be seen, then, that much remains to be done in this line, and there is room for assistance from the adults who can devote even only a portion of their time to leading a group of some kind.

### The Press

The press naturally assures a particularly important role in building a better and broader League. Already, over the last two months, some definite improvements have been made in the content of the "Young Worker." New features, such as a girls' section, A.L.P. news, more attention to sports, etc., are to be noted, and further endeavors are being made to make it into the paper of the Australian youth, not of the Young Communist League. However, limitations are placed on the improvements in content, as well as in form, by the huge debt which hangs over the paper.

### Non-Party, but not Non-Political

These changes mean the development of a really non-Party league of the youth—an organisation not under the control of either the Communist Party or the A.L.P., but an independent youth organisation under the control of the youth themselves, and wide enough to consist, in the words of the Resolution of the Sixth Congress, "not only of Communist, but also Socialist and non-Party, national, revolutionary, religious, and other sections of the youth."

But this does not mean that the Y.C.L. becomes a non-political organisation. The task of the Y.C.L. is still to attend to the economic, political, and cultural interests of the youth, and at

the same time educate its "members in the spirit of the class war, proletarian internationalism, Marxism-Leninism."

The Communists in the League will try to convince the members that it is to their interests to maintain friendly relations with the Communist Party, which will render them every assistance.

In conclusion, a broad youth organisation of this type will make a vast difference to the working-class movement as a whole. The forces of progress will be far stronger when the youth have been mobilised behind the banner of "Peace, Freedom, and Progress."

## *Dialectical Materialism*

The following material, sent in by one of the readers of the Communist Review, is mainly excerpts from the pamphlet by L. Rudas, "Dialectical Materialism and Communism."

**DIALECTICAL** materialism is the philosophy of the proletariat. The period in which the theory of dialectical materialism took shape was the period of the tempestuous revolutionary growth of the proletariat in the advanced capitalist countries, a period of the constitution of the proletariat as a class. The social position and the historic tasks of the working class created the necessity for and the possibility of creating a consistent and strictly scientific materialistic world outlook based on all the achievements of science.

Dialectical materialism is the science of the general laws of movement and change of matter, the science of development, which regards the whole world and all processes from the point of view of their origin, source, development and decline, as the result of their continual contacts and conflicts with other processes, of their mutual struggle and their influence on each other.

Starting from Hegelian idealistic philosophy, Marx and Engels soon took the path of materialism. Continuing the teachings of the greatest representatives of philosophy, enriching philosophy with the great achievements of German classic philosophy, especially the philosophy of Hegel, i.e., dialectics, Marx and Engels shattered idealism and overcame the limitations of pre-Marxian materialism.

The dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels is not merely the revival of the old materialism. To the firm foundations of the latter it added the ideological content of the historic development of philosophy, natural science and social science. Marxian dialectical materialism is the first complete, consistent, homogeneous and uniform world outlook ever drawn up in the history of mankind; it is the world outlook of the proletariat, which finds confirmation in absolutely all spheres of action and knowledge.

Dialectical materialism and Communism are inseparably connected with Marxism. Dialectical materialism is the militant revolutionary weapon of the proletariat and the Communist Party. The revolutionary proletarian, the Communist, is a dialectical materialist. The struggle for dialectical materialism is

part of the proletarian class struggle, and is therefore the duty of every Communist.

The intellectual, who does not come to the theory of dialectical materialism by way of revolutionary practice but from the ordinary school philosophies, looks for a "system" of dialectical materialism. He is accustomed to study philosophical systems, Kantianism, Hegelianism, etc. Marxism-Leninism is for him also a "system" alongside of the others. "Where," he asks, "have Marx and Lenin given an exposition of their 'system'? Show it to me so that I can study it. I find only 'scattered pronouncements' in Marx." To a Russian bourgeois sociologist, who asked the same question, Lenin replied with a counter-question, "Where has Marx not expounded dialectical materialism?"

Dialectical materialism is no "system," and whoever seeks such a "system" in Marx, Engels or Lenin, will seek in vain. A "system" is always something finite, limited, transitory, a too narrow framework for the infinite dialectical movement of the world, and even in the case of the great philosophies it was always their "system" which most quickly became out of date; what remained of them was always the dialectical content which was often hidden in their work in spite of the "system."

There is not a single work of Marx, Engels, Lenin or Stalin, there is not a single real step taken by the revolutionary movement, in which one cannot study dialectical materialism. And indeed it is chiefly here that it can be studied and must be studied.

Whoever, however, wants to understand dialectical materialism must study the whole of Marxism-Leninism and then combine this theoretical study with practical participation in the revolutionary proletarian movement. Materialist dialectics is a revolutionary theory and not an abstract philosophising. It is not merely a new interpretation of the world, for it considers as its chief task the transformation of the world.

This close connection of materialist dialectics with revolutionary practice is bound up with another difficulty encountered by the intellectual in the study of dialectical materialism. Dialectical materialism is only recognised and expounded by Marxist revolutionaries. Official philosophy takes no notice of it and not even the names of Marx and Engels are mentioned in any philosophical text books. The really great revolutionary geniuses were in the first place, Marx, Engels, and Lenin—they expounded dialectical materialism in truly adequate fashion.

Materialist dialectics, states Marx:—

"Includes in its comprehension and affirmative recognition of the existing state of things, at the same time also the recognition of the negation of that state, of its inevitable breaking up; because it regards every historically developed social form, as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary." ("Capital," Vol. I, Kerr edition, 1912. Preface to 2nd German edition, p. 28.)

Dialectics sees the motive of development in the struggle of contradictions, in the splitting of the one and in the struggle of its contradictory parts.

"Two fundamental . . . conceptions of development (evolution) are: Development as decrease and increase, as repetition; and development as a unity of opposites (the division of the one into mutually exclusive opposites and their reciprocal correlation).

"The first conception is dead, poor and dry; the second is vital. It is only this second conception which offers the key to understanding the 'self-movement' of everything in existence; it alone offers the key to understanding 'leaps,' to the 'interruption of gradual succession,' to the destruction of the old and the appearance of the new." (Lenin, "Works," Vol. XIII.)

Dialectical materialism recognises nothing but **motion, movements, processes**. But motions, movements, are of higher and lower kinds: the lowest is mechanical motion, mere change of place, the highest is thought. The particular sciences are all concerned with different kinds of movement. The order in which the sciences are ranked expresses the sequence of the forms of movement themselves, the classification of the sciences is "the classification and arrangement according to their inherent sequence of these forms of movement themselves, and herein lies its importance." (Engels, "Dialectics of Nature.")

This conception of all existence as movement, process, is the fundamental condition for the understanding of dialectic. Only from this standpoint do the contradictions and opposites, their struggle, their transformation and conversion into one another, their inter-penetration, their dialectical interaction become comprehensible. Those who see rigid entities before them and have rigid concepts of them in their heads will find it impossible to

understand how the same thing can possess contradictory determinations or change into its opposite. But to those who regard both things and their reflection in our minds as **processes**, it will not seem strange that a process should have contradictory tendencies, sides, elements which conflict with one another, penetrate one another and change one into the other.

Naturally every Communist is not a specialist in philosophy. We should be unpardonable fools to demand such a thing. But neither is every Communist a specialist in economics or history. Nevertheless every Communist must know the basic features of Marxist-Leninist economics and social science if he is to be a conscious and not merely an instinctive fighter for Communism. The same holds good for dialectical materialism. This may be a high demand on the members of the Communist Party, but it is just on that account that this party is the conscious vanguard of the proletariat. The educational task of the party is to realise this necessary requirement of the class struggle. In the Soviet Union the educational apparatus of the proletarian state is joined to the resources of the party. As experience shows, our party thereby succeeds better than the bourgeoisie likes. The successful progress of Communism is impossible without educational work.

## Italy and Great Britain at Grips in Abyssinia

By E. VARGA

[From "Economy and Economic Policy in the Third Quarter of 1935"]

ON THEIR MARCH to Adowa the Italian troops carted a great marble column with them: a monument to the Italian soldiers who lost their lives in the Battle of Adowa in 1896. Immediately after the entry of the Italian troops into Adowa this monument was set up and solemnly dedicated. Its plinth bears the words: "They have been avenged by the victory of October 8, 1935."

It is a little premature of the Italian Fascists to set themselves up a column of victory already. Although the war has been going on already for many weeks, it is not possible to talk of victory. In fact, the real war in Abyssinia has not yet begun. The preliminary successes achieved by the Italian armies by means of an overwhelming superiority of modern equipment and after a year of preparation on their own territory are very moderate. A number of frontier districts varying in depth from 20 to 40 kilometres have been occupied; that is all.

The deeper the Italians penetrate into Abyssinia the more difficult and hazardous will their task become. The lines of communication to be kept open will become longer and more difficult, and the territory on which military operations must be conducted will become more and more formidable and more and more favorable to the particular type of military tactic in which the Abyssinians excel. If the Abyssinian armies avoid pitched battles and if the Abyssinian warriors follow the advice given to them by their Negus at the outbreak of war ("The Times," Oct. 5, 1935): "Be cunning. Fight against the enemy man to man, two against two, five against five, but not in masses. . . . Conceal yourselves, attack unexpectedly, carry on a guerilla war" then the Italian armies will find it extremely difficult to win a decisive victory. Time is working in favor of the Abyssinians. Now that the embargo on the export of arms to Abyssinia has been withdrawn and Great Britain is encouraging such export, the Abyssinian equipment in modern war materials is improving every day. The horror of aerial warfare is being minimised by familiarity. On the other hand, sickness and disease is making gaps in the ranks of the Italian forces, whilst the economic difficulties of Italian capitalism and the discontent of the working masses of Italy are steadily growing.

As we pointed out in our last survey, this will be an arduous

war for Italy, and not a "minor colonial operation." It is significant that the military situation has demanded the presence of the Chief of the Italian General Staff (Marshal **Badoglio**) at the scene of operations.

It is not our task to deal with the details of the campaign; the daily newspapers publish enough material on the point. However, we wish to stress the fact that if the Italian military operations continue at their present rate, then the conquest of Abyssinia will take many years, particularly as each period of rain means the complete holding up of all military operations and will even endanger the maintenance of the positions already won. In addition, the privations which such a protracted war must bring to the Italian people, who are by no means enthusiastic about it in any case must necessarily lead to a serious threat to the whole Fascist regime in Italy, whose prestige has already been damaged by its foreign political isolation.

#### The Imperialist Antagonisms After the Outbreak of War Between Italy and Abyssinia

Italy's attack on Abyssinia is the second attempt at a redistribution of the world by violence since the world war. It is obvious that the complete passivity of the League of Nations and of the great imperialist Powers towards the annexation of Manchuria by Japan with armed force led **Mussolini** to the false conclusion that the world would remain equally passive in the face of an Italian attack on Abyssinia. **Mussolini** has been sadly disappointed. We do not estimate the practical effect of the League of Nations sanctions very highly (we shall deal with the problem in detail further on), but nevertheless it is necessary to ask ourselves why the reaction of the world to Italy's attempt to alter existing territorial relations by force was so different from its reaction when Japan did the same thing two years ago.

The most important factors seem to us to be as follows:—

(a) **The seizure of Manchuria by Japan was directed chiefly against the Soviet Union.** It represented the erection of a military wall between the Soviet Union and China, where the existence of the bourgeois Kuomintang Government was threatened by a revolutionary Soviet movement. It represented the establishment of a basis of operations on the Asiatic continent for a future war against the Soviet Union. The fundamental antagonism between the Soviet Union and the capitalist world therefore hampered, under the circumstances, any energetic action on the part of other capitalist countries against Japan.

**Italy's attack on Abyssinia, however, means in the last resort an attack on Great Britain's world position.** Were Italy really to succeed in subjugating Abyssinia, "the mountain fastness of Africa," it would thereby win a strategic position out of which no enemy would be able to drive it. The Abyssinians have succeeded in defending their mountainous country against the attacks of all enemies—most of them in possession of equipment superior to that of the defenders—for thousands of years, but if this time the Italians succeeded, then their possession of modern military equipment would render their position there impregnable.

Once in possession of the Abyssinian mountain fastnesses, Italy would threaten almost all sections of Great Britain's African colonial empire: Egypt from the East and West (from Libya), the Sudan from the East, Kenya and Uganda from the North, and British Somaliland from the West. The uninterrupted land connection from the Cape to Cairo, which the leaders of British colonial policy worked decades to establish until they finally succeeded in the World War, would be fatally threatened by an Abyssinia in the hands of Italy. But a still more important line of communication would be threatened, the most important life line of the British Empire, **the way to India through the Suez Canal and the Red Sea**, if the Italian colonies Eritrea and Somaliland, up to the present only two narrow strips of desert land along the sea, were joined up with a strategically invulnerable hinterland.

Italy in firm possession of the Abyssinian highlands would represent a permanent threat to the existence of the British Empire as a whole, and no amount of assurances from Italy that it would "respect the rights and interests of Great Britain" could alter this situation in the least. This explains the energetic resistance which Great Britain has offered to the Italian designs, and the mobilisation of the League of Nations against the Italian attack on Abyssinia instead of the passing of a vote of "moral" condemnation, as was done in the case of the Japanese attack on Manchuria.

(b) Both Japanese and Italian imperialism declared, "**Sanctions mean war**," but Japanese imperialism was in a much better political and strategic situation to put this threat into action than is Italian imperialism.

**Politically:** Japan was entitled to reckon that in view of its particular situation in the struggle of two systems, the capitalist Powers would not be able to bring themselves to undertake joint

action, as they did at the Washington Conference in 1921-22, to make it disgorge. In 1921 the Soviet Union was still weak, and owing to the New Economic Policy the bourgeoisie was fostering illusions about the possible peaceable development of the Soviet Union back to capitalism. For these reasons it appeared quite safe to clip Japan's claws a little. To-day, however, the Soviet Union is a power of world importance, and the Japanese imperialists calculated correctly when they decided that the other capitalist Powers would not be able to bring themselves to strengthen the position of the Soviet Union still more, relatively at least, by any joint action on their part against Japan. Japan was also able to count on the strength of the imperialist antagonism between Great Britain and the United States, the two imperialist Powers whose close co-operation was absolutely essential if sanctions were to be imposed effectively. And finally, Japan was able to count on the corruption and degeneration of the Chinese Kuomintang Government, which preferred to have its military forces free to defend the class dominance of the Chinese bourgeoisie against the Chinese Soviet Revolution rather than wage a war against Japan for the defence of Manchuria and North China.

**Strategically:** Japan's position in Japanese and Chinese waters is incomparably stronger than it was in 1921. Japan has strengthened its fleet and greatly extended and strengthened its naval bases. The distance from the Sino-Japanese territorial waters to the nearest American naval bases (Hawaii) and to the nearest British naval base (Singapore) is so great that despite the superiority of tonnage enjoyed by the British and American navies, the **Japanese navy would be superior to either of them in Sino-Japanese waters**, all the more so as neither Great Britain nor America would ever be able to despatch its full naval strength against Japan, because both of them have enormous coastal lines, etc., in other waters to defend. Under these circumstances, therefore, when Japan declared, "Sanctions mean war," the threat was serious, and involved possibly the loss of the Philippines for the United States and perhaps the expulsion of Great Britain from North and Central China.

However, when Mussolini uttered the same threat, "Sanctions mean war," the weight of his words was considerably less than that of the Japanese words.

**Politically:** In Italy's case the antagonism of the two systems plays no role. The conquest of Abyssinia does not threaten the Soviet Union, but the powerful British Empire, which is incomparably stronger than Italy both economically and in its potential

military resources. The antagonisms and contradictions between the imperialist States of Europe are so complicated and so intricate, and they run parallel and counter to each other in such a variety of ways, that Italy has no guarantee of securing any allies in a war against Great Britain. This is a question which we shall deal with later.

**Strategically:** In this respect also, Italy's situation is much weaker than that of Japan in the event of war with Great Britain or the United States. Whereas Japan was able to seize the whole of Manchuria and parts of Northern China without encountering any resistance from the Chinese Kuomintang Government, Italy will have to wage a long, hazardous, and costly war if it wishes to subdue Abyssinia. As far as the strategic situation of Italy itself is concerned, all its important towns are within easy range for the air fleets of almost every country in Europe, and in particular, the great concentration of large-scale industry (particularly the armament industry) in Northern Italy renders Italy specially vulnerable to air attacks. In addition, the enormous stretch of coast line renders Italy particularly vulnerable to attack from the sea. Still further, the last World War demonstrated that the Alps represent no insurmountable hindrance to an invasion of Italy from that direction.

On the other hand, however, it is indisputable that **Great Britain's strategic position as against Italy in the Mediterranean has become definitely weaker since the World War.** The tonnage superiority of the British navy over its Italian rival is still very great, it is true, but whereas a part of the British navy is practically obsolete, almost all the Italian naval units are of post-war construction, and further, Italian armaments, as far as the most modern weapons of naval warfare are concerned, submarines and seaplanes, are at least the equal, if not the superior, of Great Britain's. This circumstance has greatly depreciated the value of the great British naval basis at Malta, within easy reach of Italy, a basis which before the era of the bombing plane was held to be impregnable, because the naval forces concentrated there offer a good target for raiding bombers.

To sum up: whereas Great Britain would appear strong enough to maintain its hold on Gibraltar and Malta and the Suez Canal, and to bottle up the Italian navy in the Adriatic Sea, Italy would appear strong enough to be able to prevent a blockade of Italian ports by the British navy, and to interrupt sea communication in the Mediterranean, that is to say, to interrupt the normal route to India. This is obviously the reason for the

repeated assurances given by British statesmen that Great Britain does not intend to apply any sanctions against Italy on its own account, and this is also the reason why Great Britain has so categorically demanded guarantees for the co-operation of the French navy and for the free use of French (and Greek) naval bases.

Potentially considered, Great Britain is greatly superior to Italy on the naval and military field. The population of Great Britain and its colonies is more than ten times the population of Italy. The economic superiority of the British Empire to Italy is enormous. Great Britain can reckon on the assistance—or at least on the benevolent neutrality—of all those countries which are economically dependent on it or under its military pressure: Portugal with its colonies, Holland with its colonies, Greece, and Abyssinia (and under the given circumstances the Abyssinian army is no mean factor), whereas Italy has, for the moment at least, no reliable ally at all, for even Austria and Hungary might very easily go over to the camp of the enemy under certain circumstances.

However, at the actual moment Great Britain is not so well prepared for war as is Italy, and what is much more important, Great Britain has nothing to gain from the world war which would probably blaze out of a military collision with Italy, whereas it has a tremendous amount to lose. This is the reason why Great Britain is supporting with all possible energy the efforts of the League of Nations to preserve the peace, and why its policy is to keep its own measures against Italy within the framework of the general action of the League of Nations. This situation brings the Italo-British antagonism into the centre of the European political stage, and makes the already complicated skein of interests and antagonisms still more intricate.

It is not our task to follow the rapid series of moves on the diplomatic chessboard in all its details. On the contrary, we shall strive to simplify the picture by picking out the crucial factors.

The starting point for our investigations must be two basic facts: the shattering of the Versailles system by the feverish rearmament of Fascist Germany, and the fact that the conflict between Great Britain and Italy is one between two Powers which fought side by side in the World War. The result of these facts is that the relation of forces between the two great military centres on the Continent, Germany and France, has been greatly altered.

France, and in particular its Eastern allies, above all Czechoslovakia, sees itself threatened by Germany and needs Italian assistance in order to repulse German penetration in South-Eastern Europe, and in particular the conquest of Austria. On this basis, a treaty of friendship was signed between France and Italy after a long period of more or less strained relations. In order to retain French friendship, Mussolini has declared openly that, despite its commitments in Abyssinia, Italy remains strong enough to fulfil all its obligations "at the Brenner Pass," in other words, to defend the inviolability of Austria against Germany by force of arms. The great Italian army manoeuvres which took place in the summer on the Northern frontier were intended to prove this to the world.

However, France needs the assistance of Great Britain to defend itself (and Belgium) against German aggression on its Northern frontiers just as much as it needs Italian assistance. The conflict between Great Britain and Italy has put France into a very awkward situation. France was compelled to choose between Great Britain and Italy. Despite all Laval's complicated manoeuvres and although he succeeded in delaying matters considerably, and successfully toning down the League of Nations sanctions against Italy, he was in the last resort not able to refuse his consent to the application of the League sanctions. Great Britain put France under considerable pressure from two sides.

The foreign policy of France since the war has consisted fundamentally in an attempt to maintain the Versailles system within the framework of the League of Nations. When, therefore, Great Britain mobilised the League against Italy, and it became clear that a second failure like the one in the case of Manchuria and Japan would deprive the League of Nations of the last vestige of its authority in the world and even endanger its very existence, France could not stand aside. In addition, Great Britain gave France to understand (and had already demonstrated the thesis indisputably by its naval agreement with Germany concluded without consulting France) that if France did not join in the action of the League of Nations against Italy then Great Britain would loosen its connections with France in favor of closer relations with Germany. Under the circumstances, therefore, France was compelled to join in the sanctions action of the League of Nations against Italy, despite the fact that this co-operation dealt a heavy blow to the new-found friendship between France and Italy.

Now, whilst the conflict between Great Britain and Italy put

France in an awkward situation, it at the same time **improved Germany's foreign political situation**, because the conflict made Germany's friendship valuable to both the disputants, gave Germany the possibility of manoeuvring in all directions, and finally selling its support to the highest bidder. Germany refused to take part in the sanctions action of the League of Nations, and demonstrated its friendship towards Italy by the benevolent attitude of **Hitler** when the new Italian Ambassador to Germany presented his credentials in Berlin. However, this does not by any means preclude the possibility that Germany may utilise Italy's difficulties to carry out a coup against Austria, naturally with Great Britain's tacit approval.

The conflict between Great Britain and Italy compels the main concentration of British forces in the Mediterranean—the forces of the strongest capitalist Power in Europe which is interested, **at the moment**, in the maintenance of the existing division of the world—and has strengthened the hands of all those forces all over the world which are in favor of a redistribution of the world. **Japan** is operating more aggressively than ever before against North China; it is deliberately provoking the Mongolian People's Republic, and deliberately provoking frontier "incidents" between Manchukuo and the Soviet Union, and it has insolently rejected Great Britain's mediation (**Leith Ross's** visit to China and Japan) with a view to securing an agreement between Japan and China. Following Germany's example, **Hungary** now demands the recognition of its right to re-arm and the revision of the territorial provisions of the treaty of Trianon. **Poland** is adopting an aggressive attitude towards Czechoslovakia, etc.

Thus the conflict between Great Britain and Italy has weakened the position of those States which are, at the moment at least, in favor of the maintenance of the peace of the world and in favor of the preservation of the existing distribution of territory; it has intensified all imperialist contradictions and rendered imminent the danger of a new world war. However, the terrible dangers threatening the very existence of the capitalist social order are causing the statesmen of the countries immediately involved—Great Britain, France, and Italy—to seek hastily for some solution along peaceable lines, for some compromise, naturally at the expense of Abyssinia.

#### The Search for a Compromise

For months, now, efforts have been made parallel with the war preparations of Italy, Abyssinia, and Great Britain to find

a compromise, naturally at Abyssinia's expense. France is most zealously at work to find a compromise to end the conflict between Great Britain and Italy as quickly as possible. In view of the threatening preparations of Fascist Germany for war, France cannot afford to have either Great Britain or Italy as its enemy, and it is therefore anxious to put an end to the embarrassing situation in which it is repeatedly called upon to choose between Great Britain and Italy. The longer the conflict lasts the more certainly will France be forced objectively into the anti-Italian camp, owing to the functioning of the League of Nations mechanism, and all Laval's efforts to sabotage the application of sanctions and tone down their character will not help him in the long run.

But for Fascist Italy, also, the increasing pressure causes its inclination to seek a compromise to strengthen. The most important factors in this respect are:—

(a) The recognition that Great Britain is fully determined to go to war if necessary to prevent the highlands of Abyssinia, "the mountain fastness of Africa," from becoming an Italian possession. The concentration of a tremendously powerful British fleet, made up of naval units from all parts of the world, in the Mediterranean is eloquent of this determination;

(b) The recognition that France (despite all promises that Laval may have made when the pact of friendship was concluded between France and Italy) will, if it is finally compelled to choose between Great Britain and Italy, choose the side of the stronger battalions, as is clearly indicated by the guarantee given by France to Great Britain that in the event of an Italian attack on the British Mediterranean fleet the French air force and the French navy would come to the aid of the British, and that the British navy would be granted the use of French naval bases;

(c) The fear that Germany might exploit Italy's difficult situation in order to seize Austria by a military coup and thus greatly endanger Italy's position in Central Europe;

(d) The recognition that the military tactics employed by the Abyssinians, that is to say, the avoidance of pitched battles in which the superior technical equipment of the Italian forces could be used to the full, make any rapid ending of the war by decisive victories impossible, and that the supply of arms and ammunition to the Abyssinians is guaranteed, thanks to British assistance, thus making years of arduous campaigning necessary in order to crush the armed resistance of the Abyssinians;



(e) Italy's economic difficulties, which will be intensified by the application of the League of Nations sanctions, make it impossible for Italy to wage a long-drawn-out war without a resultant deterioration in the standards of living of the Italian working people to a very considerable extent;

(f) The fear that such a great deterioration in living standards in Italy might produce a revolution; and

(g) The "victories" which have been won up to the present make it feasible for Mussolini to extricate himself with a compromise from a dangerous adventure without any all too great loss of prestige.

The fact that Mussolini is now prepared to come to some compromise agreement is shown by two things:—

(1) The "gesture" made under French pressure of withdrawing one of the three Italian divisions stationed in Libya in order to lessen the tension between Great Britain and Italy; and

(2) The demands which Italy is now putting forward with regard to the partitioning of Abyssinia—as far as one can recognise them from the reports in the world press—are in some respects less favorable to Italy than the provisions of the 1925 agreement between Great Britain and Italy.

The most difficult question to answer is whether the **British bourgeoisie** is really anxious to end the conflict with Italy as rapidly as possible. The ways of British international politics were always very obscure.

Objectively speaking, the following factors suggest that the British bourgeoisie would be ready to settle the conflict as quickly as possible:—

(a) Should the conflict be a long-drawn-out one, and should its severity be intensified, then **the danger of a new world war** will be conjured up, and Great Britain does not favor this, at least not at the moment;

(b) The powerful rivals of **Great Britain** (the United States and Japan) might exploit Great Britain's commitments in the Mediterranean to pursue their own ends in other parts of the world. In fact, Japan is already doing this in China;

(c) A decisive victory for Italy in the war against Abyssinia would compel Great Britain to take up the fight with Italy directly; and

(d) A decisive defeat for Italy in the war against Abyssinia is also undesirable from Great Britain's point of view, because it would tremendously increase the national feelings of all the

oppressed Asiatic and African peoples and give a tremendous impetus to the national revolutionary movement of all the colonial peoples for their emancipation.

Under the circumstances, it is difficult to judge accurately the prospects of the further development of the situation. One thing seems to be certain: Great Britain will under no circumstances agree to a solution which gives Italy military control of the Abyssinian highlands, and Great Britain will also not agree to a solution which gives Abyssinia no outlet to the sea but through Italian territory. We consider it most probable that Great Britain will let the negotiations drag on for a long time in order that Italy may grow weaker and weaker as the result of the war against Abyssinia, and in order to have sufficient time to equip and organise the British naval, military, and air forces to meet any subsequent necessity for war. In the meantime, a compromise is being zealously sought. There are valid reasons why all the parties involved should seek to end the conflict as quickly as possible, naturally at the expense of Abyssinia, and it is probable that such a compromise will be found. On the other hand, it is not at all impossible that the war between Italy and Abyssinia will form the prelude to a new world war and to a counter-revolutionary war against the Soviet Union.