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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

FASCISM DEMANDS
COLONIES: L. Sharkey

A CONGRESS TO BE RE-
MEMBERED: L. Donald

THE SITUATION IN
SPAIN: L. Jamieson

NEW DEVELOPMENTS
IN THE LABOR PARTY:
R. Dixon

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OF VICTORIA

Fascism Demands Colonies

By L. SHARKEY

THE German, the Italian, and the Japanese peoples have become too numerous for their own territories, for their homelands, we are told by the spokesmen of the Fascist and militarists—these organisers of the new world massacre—and by their apologists in other countries.

The crime in Abyssinia was committed under cover of that cry by Mussolini. The seizure of Manchuria was justified by the Japanese on the same grounds, whilst the Nazis are vociferous for the return of the colonies now held under so-called "mandates," by the victors of 1918.

Strangely enough, at the very moment when Hitler and Mussolini scream to high heaven that their nations must have elbow room, they demand from their own folk an increased birth-rate, they penalise bachelors, and Hitler demands that German women restrict themselves to the function of "instruments of production," i.e., producers of cannon fodder for the next war. On the one hand the population is too great for the country to support, they say, on the other they demand of that self-same population that it increase itself as rapidly as possible; but then logic was never a strong point with Fascist dictators.

Their increasing populations, they say, make it imperative that they be given "colonial possessions," in order to have room for their "surplus" population. Their next claim is that colonies are essential in order that they can have supplies of raw materials for their industries. Thirdly, these benevolent Christian gentlemen, the Fascists, wish to participate in the carrying of the "White Man's Burden," they are extremely desirous, so they declare, to help in the noble work of the more successful imperialists, such as the British and French, of "civilising the natives." Fourthly, they claim that it is only consonant with their "dignity" as great nations to be "entrusted" with colonies and the teaching of the barbarian.

Let us now consider whether all these or any of these arguments are true. In the first place it is known that the great land monopolists, the Prussian junkers and the Italian feudalists, have in their possession vast tracts of lands, sufficient to suffice for the needs of the Italian and German populations, if

Contents

	PAGE
FASCISM DEMANDS COLONIES (L. Sharkey) ..	1
A CONGRESS TO BE REMEMBERED (L. Donald)	9
THE CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN MOLOTOV AND M. CHASTENET (EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF "LE TEMPS"	22
AUSTRALIA'S FIGHTS FOR FREEDOM, DEMO- CRACY, AND PROGRESS (J. N. Rawling) ..	29
THE SITUATION IN SPAIN (L. Jamieson) ..	39
NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LABOR PARTY (R. Dixon)	43
THE FORTY-HOUR WEEK AND THE CONDITION OF THE WORKING CLASS (E. W. Campbell) ..	56
"PRAVDA" ON NANKING'S PROTEST AGAINST THE SOVIET-MONGOLIAN TREATY	63

these lands were divided among the peasants or organised, as in the Soviet Union, as Soviet and collective farms. In the pre-war German colonies in Africa, the total number of Germans resident there has been stated at as low a figure as 24,000, and these, of course, were bureaucrats, traders, and all manner of exploiters and fortune hunters, together with soldiery and police. In the present Italian colonies in Africa, the merest handful of Italians, of the same classification as the pre-war German "colonists," are in residence. Japan, which invades China to "find an outlet for surplus population," fought the war with Tarist Russia in which 300,000 Japanese soldiers were slain, but to-day, 30 years after this war, there are only about 200,000 Japanese in Korea, Manchuria and North China, which certainly does not justify the cost in human life of the Russo-Japanese war of 1905. Japan's latest move is into China proper, into her northern provinces with the threat of occupation of Peking and Tientsin. Fancy any sane statesman, seeking "an outlet for surplus population," selecting China, with its teeming, struggling, poverty-ridden 500 million human souls! The very inmates of an asylum would surely laugh such a thought to scorn. As to educating the natives, let us consider after a century of imperialist domination of India, Ceylon, Africa, etc., what is the state of "native" education? These figures for India are:—

LITERATE, 22,623,651 (of whom only 2,782,213 are females).

ILLITERATE, 316,055,231.

The aristocracy and bourgeoisie are literate in India, but that unimaginable mass of more than 300,000,000 can neither read nor write and are deliberately kept in that condition by the British Imperialists and their tools, the feudal aristocratic Nawabs and Rajahs.

And the same picture of illiteracy is presented by Africa and all other "colonies," which about disposes of the civilising "mission" of capitalist Imperialism in Asia and Africa. But let us have a look at the other aspects of Imperialism's mission in India, which we can regard as the classic victim of Imperialist conquest, the classic colony, which typifies the "work" of the Imperialists.

The report of the Government of Bengal's Health Department for 1927 had to admit that: "The Bengal peasantry feed so badly that even rats could not live longer than five weeks on such a diet. The population is so terribly weakened that it is quite incapable of resisting the slightest infection. Last year 120,000 died of cholera; 250,000 of malaria; 350,000 of tuberculosis, and 100,000 of enteric."

In Bombay in 1933 comes the following health report: "The cholera figure for the week ending June 10 was 237 attacks, 81 deaths; 72 cases of plague, 61 deaths; 422 attacks of smallpox, 71 deaths. Out of the total deaths 143 were of infants under one year, whereas the birth-rate was 184. Ten to 15 per cent. are venereal, and some years 100,000,000 suffer from malaria attacks.

The reason for this awful disease is that the minimum sum upon which it is estimated a worker's family can live solely on millet is 1 rupee (about 1/3), and the wages of textile workers in Bombay are from 12 to 30 rupees. Even so, they are robbed by money-lenders, foremen, etc. The Indian worker lives on an average of nine in a room 8 feet by 10. The sanitary conditions are better imagined than described. Eighty per cent. of them sleep in the streets. The Whitley Commission on India admits that "the workers' diet is unsatisfactory from many standpoints." The Hindu worker is a vegetarian, but the Commissioners say that milk is difficult to get and ghi, the vegetable oil which is the basis of his diet, is unobtainable in a pure form. Fruit is almost unheard of. So we have a vegetarian who cannot get vegetables.

Child labor from 4 to 10 is common, according to the same Whitley Commission. There are no compensation laws against accident or sickness, no factory inspection, no limit on the working day, which ranges up to 16 hours.

No wonder Indian cotton firms showed profits of up to 300 per cent.! The condition of the ocean of peasantry is even worse than that of the workers of the towns. Such are a few, not near all, of the horrible features of life in the "brightest gem of the British Crown," British India.

Imperialism prevents the normal economic development of the conquered colonies, attempting to maintain them as raw material bases for the "mother" countries, as the Indian example shows.

During the 40 years 1891-1931, the percentage of the working population occupied in agriculture rose from 61 to 66.4. Parallel with this process all possible kinds of difficulties and obstacles were put in the way of native industry, which by the efforts particularly of the Lancashire mill-owners was tied hand and foot. For example, when, at the end of the nineteenth century the fall in the price of silver gave the Indian capitalists a very great advantage in rapid accumulation, and allow the textile industry in Bombay temporarily to advance with swift steps, the English introduced the gold standard into India, along with the existing silver coinage and artificially stabilised the rupee

on a high level, in this way depriving the Indian industrialists of all the advantages they had temporarily obtained over their Lancashire rivals. From the 'nineties until the Imperialist war, with the exception of a certain growth of the textile industry, there was very little development in Indian industry.

In 1894 the Indian Government, in order to raise its revenues, had to introduce a 5 per cent. tariff on imported yarn and cotton goods. The English capitalists, in order to deprive the Indian manufacturers of any advantage from this tariff, immediately commanded the Indian Government to place a 5 per cent. excise on all yarn and cotton goods produced in India. Afterwards the tariff and excise were lowered to 3.5 per cent. During the debate in the House of Commons in 1916 on the lowering of this excise duty, Phillip Snowden, speaking for I.L.P. members and on behalf of the Lancashire manufacturers, opposed the motion. Even at this time British reformism was against concession to any section of the Indian people which might injure British capitalism, though it appears as the "champion" of that very Indian bourgeoisie, whose robbery by Lancashire cotton lords it supported in 1916. The tariff and excise lasted until the Imperialist war changed the general position, and the tariffs were raised to 11 per cent., while the excise was abolished in 1925. After the war a general tariff on all imported goods was introduced in India, since the Government could not balance its enormously increased budget in any other way. In order that the Indian bourgeoisie should draw no particular advantage from this tariff the Imperial Government thought out a new trick—they began energetically a process of deflation of the currency, and in 1927 despite the protests of the Bombay manufacturers, fixed the Indian rupee at 1/6.

Nevertheless, in 1929-30, it was again decided to raise the tariffs in certain cases, for example with regard to cotton goods, the tariff was even doubled, but at the same time all measures were taken to prevent Indian industry from using this increased tariff in its own interests, for a preferential tariff was introduced in favour of their chief competitors, the Lancashire cotton kings. The introduction of preferential tariffs for English goods was a heavy blow at Indian industry, and even the imperialist writer, Miss Vera Anstey, author of the most recent history of Indian economy, recognised that "in general, India gains almost nothing from the introduction of preferential tariffs for Empire goods, whilst she loses much and risks a great deal." Protection for India's iron and steel industry has been steadily refused and was only recently introduced, after British capital had gained a big

interest in the Tata firm, and even then with a heavy preference.

The development of native industry is also held back by the banks, which are almost entirely in English hands. The banks refrain from granting credits to Indian industrial enterprises, giving preference to the financing of various commercial operations and transactions connected with the harvest, since agriculture and trade bring quicker profits and are the source of a great part of the Government revenues.

Another aspect of the civilising process as understood by the Imperialists is the massacres of the natives that are continually taking place. We are by this time familiar with the "punitive measures" by the Royal Air Force which are almost continuously occurring, the dropping of bombs from airplanes, which were well described in Labouchere's poem ("Where Flies the Flag of England?"), written before the era of aerial warfare:

"From out the blazing hovels, whence African victims fly,
To be shot with explosive bullets, to miserably starve and die."

An outstanding massacre besides that of Amritsar in India was the shooting down of demonstrating women in Nigeria, one of Britain's African colonies, in December, 1929. In the old Nigerian society which is now being destroyed women had equal rights with the men, and they particularly resented the new way of things ordained by the British, particularly being stirred by rumors of a new tax on women, to be added to the already oppressive taxation. The women demonstrated, burned a few native courts and hustled a few unpopular native chiefs suspected of being in league with the British. They were armed only with sticks, but machine-gun fire was opened on these women by the British officers. When there was public outcry against the massacre, the reasons given by the officers were certainly astonishing.

The women, it seems, were old and ugly and naked. They were painted "in a warlike manner" and were hysterical, consequently, according to this, it was necessary to kill 43 and wound 50 with the machine-guns.

Such is the great British "genius for colonisation" which the champagne-inspired patriots rave about.

That he is not to be left behind by the British or the Belgians with their awful Congo record, Mussolini is now proving. Following the occupation of Addis Ababa, accounts state that "Abyssinians are being executed in batches of 40 or 50," and "at least 1500 have been arrested in that city." (Sydney "Sun," May 18, 1936.)

It will go without saying that in all of the conquered colonies

no rights or democratic liberties are given the "natives."

[Authority quoted on India: Ralph Fox, "Colonial Policy of British Imperialism."]

There is yet one other argument used by the British Imperialists to justify their rule in India: that is that without the "loving" care of the "British Raj," as the imperialists affectionately dub themselves, the natives and races inhabiting the Indian Peninsula would tear each other to pieces. They point to the hundreds of languages, dialects and religions. But surely a philosopher from another planet, or an Indian, viewing the history of Britain and Europe, with their centuries of useless wars, their "national" hates and discordant languages, could justly claim that they also should be placed in restraint for their own good, by some higher power.

The Indians, from such a point of view, are just as entitled to make war upon each other as are the Hitlers, the Mussolinis, the Kaisers and Tsars and bankers and capitalists of Europe.

But that, however, is not the question; there is a solution of the national question insofar as it is a real question, and that solution is not an abstract, theoretical solution, but one that is in living, practical operation, the solution is the Leninist-Stalinist answer to this problem, the one that has actually solved this problem for the vast medley of races and nations composing the great Soviet Union, which in the number of races and tongues, different degrees of social development, and differing cultures at the time of the overthrow of the Tsarist Empire, most closely approximated to the India of British Imperialism. The nations of the U.S.S.R. have overcome illiteracy, backwardness and disease and are developing peacefully side by side, aiding each other economically and in every other way, whilst each retains its own individuality, language and culture. Such is the solution that will one day bring new life to the great peoples of India, will bring a new day of Socialism, obliterating the hideous nightmare of what exists to-day, which is a crying shame on the whole civilised world.

As the stock arguments justifying modern Imperialist conquest and domination of colonies are exposed as the merest chicanery, what then are the Imperialists and Fascists after, what is it that leads them to world war for the division of the world, for the possession of colonies?

Lenin points out that capitalism to-day is monopoly capitalism; free trade has given way to monopoly, to the organisation of vast syndicates, trusts and cartels, which subordinate all things within the country to their domination and exploitation.

Industrial capital has united with bank capital, has reached out for the backward territories and sources of raw material and has divided the world among the different cliques of monopoly capitalists, thinly disguised behind the national flags of Britain, U.S.A., France, Italy, Japan, etc.

Some commentators point out that raw materials can be purchased on the world markets, that Germany, for example, does not have to conquer America in order to be able to secure American raw material for her industries and so on. But the monopoly capitalists are not out for "fair trade," but for super-profits to be extracted from the starving colonial slaves; they want monopoly, they do not want to pay prices on the world market fixed by rival monopolies belonging to countries who have seized possession of colonial raw material territories; in other words, capitalism is capitalism, and is out to obtain the utmost possible profits and **super-profits**, which Lenin has pointed out are drawn from the colonial Empires. It is only under an international world Soviet system that all peoples can have co-operation and a rational division of raw materials, not under the insane, profit-lusting capitalist order.

A most important feature of modern capitalist Imperialism, Lenin points out, is the export of capital, i.e., the means of production, rail-equipment, etc., to the colonies as a means of finding an outlet for the mass of accumulated capital in the hands of the monopolists.

Then there is the struggle for the monopoly of the sources of raw material. On this Lenin wrote: "The principal feature of modern capitalism is the domination of monopolist combines of the big capitalists." These monopolies are most durable when all the sources of raw materials are controlled by the one group. And we have seen with what zeal the international capitalist combines exert every effort to make it impossible for their rivals to compete with them; for example, by buying up mineral lands, oil fields, etc. **Colonial possession** alone gives complete guarantee of success to the monopolies against all the risks of struggle with competitors, including the risk that the latter will defend themselves by means of a law establishing a state monopoly. The more capitalism develops the more the need for raw material arises, the more bitter competition becomes, and the more feverishly the hunt for raw materials proceeds throughout the whole world, the more desperate does the struggle become for the acquisition of colonies."—Lenin, "Imperialism."

Imperialism, Lenin said, is the highest and last stage of capitalism and is the eve of the world-wide proletarian revolution.

From all this, which is far from a complete survey, we see that modern Imperialism arises out of the latest phases of the

development of capitalism. It has nothing whatever to do with "civilising" the natives, or settling surplus populations, which are only made surplus by capitalist conditions themselves. Whatever happens in such directions are merely incidental, merely by-products; the aim of the Imperialists is monopoly of the sources of raw materials, colonial markets, and avenues for the export of capital; the quest for super-profits from the billion and a half of colonial slaves who are forced to incredibly low standards of subsistence, in order that their products, sold on the world market at monopoly prices, can yield what Lenin termed super-profit.

This struggle for colonies was at the bottom of the causes leading to the last war, and the demand of Germany, Japan and Italy for Imperialist expansion has already, before the eyes of all, driven the world to the verge of a new world catastrophe.

We must therefore expose before the masses the hypocrisy of all the imperialist arguments and demands in regard to colonies. Not a new world war for the re-division of the world among the financial oligarchies, but the liberation of all the colonies from Imperialistic rule, such is the only true position in consonance with working-class principles and ideals.

[For the study of imperialism in all its ramifications, read "Imperialism, the Last Stage of Capitalism," by V. I. Lenin, and "The Colonial Policy of British Imperialism," by Ralph Fox.]

A Congress To Be Remembered

By L. DONALD

"THE 1936 annual conference of the [Victorian] Labor Party," states the "Labor Call" in an editorial following the conference, "will always be remembered by Laborites. . . ." There is no doubt that this conference will "always be remembered," not only by Laborites, but by all workers, not with the same enthusiasm as the "Labor Call," but with deep feelings of regret and disappointment that this conference failed to decide in the interests of the working class the important issues with which it was confronted.

The conference took place in a period vital for the working class and farmers. The few months previous to the conference had seen a steady development of widespread discontent amongst the workers and farmers, expressing itself in the seamen's strike, smaller struggles in other industries, action by the unemployed, the great mass demands for shorter hours which come from every section of workers, the struggles of the mallee settlers and other sections of the farming population. At the same time, there has taken place a rapid growth of the movement of the people against war and Fascism. These factors were having a tremendous effect upon the masses, who, in the course of these actions, were learning more rapidly than ever before that for success in their struggles they must have unity of will and action, and a desire for such unity was sweeping throughout the ranks of the workers, whether Communist, Australian Labor Party, or non-party.

Hence the paramount problem which faced the A.L.P. conference was the determining of its attitude to this great forward movement of the workers, what steps it would take in assisting to bring about unity in the ranks of the workers in the struggle against war and Fascism and in defence of the daily interests of the workers.

Large sections of workers and numbers of workers' organisations waited expectantly for the A.L.P. conference, expecting that the decisions of this conference would fulfil their hopes and desires, would strengthen the working-class movement and bring unity within its ranks, would go forward from the achievement of some kind of unity within the Labor Party federally to the achievement of the real unity of the whole working class.

Were these hopes fulfilled? Did the conference produce anything of value to the working class? Did it even attempt to grapple with those problems which were and are of such importance to the working-class movement? The 1936 annual confer-

ence of the Labor Party will always be remembered by Laborites and by all other workers because, faced as it was with such important tasks and with such a desire on the part of the workers for united action to defend their conditions and their rights, it failed miserably to take any real steps to advance the workers' struggles, it rejected proposals for action to win the vital demands of the workers, it did nothing to bring about unity but rather the reactionary leaders were able to still further split and weaken the ranks of the workers, it drove out of the Party staunch and active members, it did nothing to advance the fight against war and Fascism, and took all possible steps to tie the Labor Party more securely to the capitalist Dunstan Government. It can correctly be said that no A.L.P. conference has produced such a feeling of disappointment and of hostility towards the reactionary leaders as that of 1936.

It must be clearly understood, however, that the decisions made did not express the feelings of all the delegates, and that a large number of delegates fought valiantly but unsuccessfully for a working-class policy. This was indicated in the strong support for action to win the 40-hour week and wage increases, the large minority vote of 53 against 89 on the questions of anti-war unity, etc. It is also indicated by the fact that amongst those who voted consistently for a real working-class policy were the representatives of a large number of the most important and powerful unions.

The composition of the conference shows that it is not a real expression of the opinions of the rank and file of the A.L.P. or of the trade unions. The election of the A.L.P. delegates is not upon a branch basis, but from electoral councils, and the selection of the best representative is very often prevented. In addition, a large number of Labor politicians secure election as "proxy" delegates representing country areas, and in some cases small unions. If an examination is made of the composition of a large number of conference delegates, the reason why the conference failed to make decisions in the interests of the working class is abundantly clear.

One of the main discussions of the conference centred round the position of the Labor Party in relation to the Dunstan Government. The report of the State Parliamentary Labor Party attempts by distortion and word spinning to show that the working class has gained considerably through the alliance of the Labor Party with the Dunstan Government.

The report begins by stating: "To-day a Country Party Government holds office principally because of the support of your party. . . ." However, there seemed to be some confusion

on this point, because although Mr. Cain, M.L.A., also spoke of the "arrangement" with the Government, Mr. Cremean, M.L.A., attacked those delegates who "tried to emphasise the view that there was an arrangement between the Labor Party and the Dunstan Government. There was no arrangement, and they did not desire to have one." The hasty denial of what had already been reported by the State Parliamentary Labor Party was probably occasioned by the trenchant criticism made by several delegates of the policy and actions of the Dunstan Government since it took office.

The report of the Parliamentary Labor Party tried to prove that the Government had done some good for the workers and farmers. Dealing with the unemployed, it stated: ". . . Our support of the Dunstan Government has been responsible for a marked improvement in connection with both the volume of work and the amount of sustenance." It eulogises the Marketing Bill and the Debts Adjustment Bill, Workers' Compensation, partial restoration of public service salaries, and other minor questions. It concludes with the statement: "So that we would not be exaggerating if we wrote that, from the workers' point of view, the last session was the most prolific in the history of the State Parliament."

It may have been prolific, but let us examine just what the workers and poor farmers have got from the Dunstan Government. The Country Party emerged from the last State elections with 20 seats, compared with 25 held by the United Australia Party and 17 by the A.L.P. In this situation, an offer was made by the Labor Party, and accepted by the Country Party, offering Labor Party support against the U.A.P. A censure motion against the Argyle Government was carried, and the Dunstan Government came into office with its own Ministry. From that time to the present, as the report of the Parliamentary Labor Party states, it has been kept in office by the Labor Party.

It was clear that when the Country Party took office it did so to carry out the policy of the capitalists and big farming interests by placing all the burdens on the workers and poor farmers. In the policy speech of Mr. Dunstan, it was plainly stated that the Country Party stood for "sound finance," and favored the "continuation of the Premiers' Plan" until the State budget had been balanced.

The claim of the Parliamentary Labor Party that the Dunstan Government has improved the conditions of the unemployed is a false one. The Dunstan Government came into office during the great unemployed strike, when the unemployed throughout the State were waging a determined mass struggle

for improved conditions. It was clear to everyone that the struggle had reached such a stage that, no matter which Government was in office, it would be forced to capitulate. Already the Argyle Government had made offers to the unemployed which were rejected because they did not go far enough. When the Dunstan Government came to office it was forced to go further than the Argyle Government and grant terms which were satisfactory to the unemployed.

However, everything possible has since been done to rob the unemployed of the conditions won by them in this struggle, and **the position of the unemployed is to-day worse than it was before the Dunstan Government came to office.**

It has put into operation on a wholesale scale the most vicious regulations of the Unemployment Relief Act, particularly the Permissible Income Regulations. It has not confined itself to the clauses of this Act, but has imposed regulations which are not included in this Act and actually oppose its provisions—such as the Residential Act, which states that a man must be resident in a certain locality for **three months** before getting sustenance, instead of in the State, as provided in the Unemployment Relief Act.

It is "reducing" unemployment on a wholesale scale by the closing down of registrars in the country districts on the plea that there is "local work" available, introducing a brutal system of "unemployables," developing a system of "inspectors" whose job it is to visit the homes of unemployed workers and remove them from the dole by intimidation and all possible forms of corrupt practices, by transporting thousands to slave labor camps in the bush with the alternative of starvation if they refuse to go.

It has reduced thousands of unemployed to the lower rates of sustenance on the basis of all possible tricks and pretexes. It is sponsoring the introduction of the contract system which destroys the conditions of unemployed and employed alike. **If all the individual acts perpetrated by the Dunstan Government against the unemployed were cited, a volume would be written.** And yet the report of the Parliamentary Labor Party can state in dealing with the unemployed: ". . . There has been a substantial alteration for the better brought about by the Parliamentary combination."

Unfortunately for the apologists of the Dunstan Government, the report on unemployment adopted by the conference reveals the complete falseness of this claim.

The report shows that according to census figures on June 30, 1933, there were 85,089 persons unemployed in Victoria (not

including men working for sustenance who were classed as "employed"). Figures supplied by the Commonwealth statistician showed that the numbers of male workers in employment increased by 15,763 from June 30, 1933, to September 30, 1935. Deducting this increase from the number of unemployed as per the census it leaves 69,326 male persons unemployed. If to this is added the number working for sustenance on September 30, 1935, namely 16,579, we get a gross total of 89,905 unemployed males in Victoria on September 30, 1935. On that date the number of male persons receiving relief was 31,476. Thus on the basis of the figures placed before conference 58,429 male unemployed are denied any form of relief under the Dunstan Government.

Despite this report, despite the steps taken by the Government to drive the unemployed down to the lowest possible level of existence, the conference made not one decision for improving the conditions of the unemployed and actually commended the Dunstan Government for its policy in relation to the unemployed.

Is there any basis for the eulogistic references to the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Bill? According to the Labor Party this Bill is a veritable boon to the great mass of poor farmers, but a cursory examination of this Bill proves that the opposite is the case. Under this Act a board consisting of a lawyer, commercial man, and a man of "farming experience," has the task of determining if a particular farm "may pay." If it is considered that it is a "payable" farm the farmer may receive a stay of five years in the liquidation of his debts. But in this period the farmer must keep a strict account of all receipts and expenditure, and can spend only that which the board considers necessary to provide a "decent standard of living." The creditors are then paid out of a fund provided partly by the Government but mainly by the farmer himself.

This means, in effect, that the middle farmers (about 33 per cent. of the total) become little more than workers on the basic wage, working for years under the supervision of the Board, to pay debts to the big monopolists, machinery companies, etc.

Again, the Board will handle only those farms which are considered "economic" and a large number of poor farmers whose farms are considered "uneconomic" will receive no benefits under the Act whatsoever and, as the experiences of the mallee show, face eviction and starvation. There is not one mention in the Act of the farm laborers, whose plight is terrible.

Thus the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Bill, hailed so loudly as the salvation of the countryside, means simply that one-third of the farming population face dispossession and unemployment,

another third are reduced to a mere existence, working to meet the debts to the creditors, under the supervision of the Government Board, whilst the big farmers, landowners, banks, and machinery companies reap huge benefits. It is a capitalist Bill framed only in the interests of the wealthy.

What have the workers in industry received from the Dunstan Government during its period in office? The Labor Party acclaim improvements in workers' compensation, partial restoration of Public Service Salaries, payment of the Wonthaggi miners £8000, etc. It is time that workers' compensation has been improved, but public servants are discontented because, after being promised full restoration of salaries, they received only a partial restoration, while the Government was forced to pay £8000 to the Wonthaggi miners as a result of the tremendous mass pressure organised by the miners.

But also in this period the Government has refused to recognise a whole series of demands made by Government employees, particularly railwaymen, and nothing has been done to improve the conditions of Government employees or other sections of workers.

One of the outstanding examples of Government policy is its attitude to the 40-hour week. A select committee set up to investigate this question, after an exhaustive investigation, made a recommendation to the Government that a universal 40-hour week be introduced as a social and economic necessity. Despite the recommendation of its own committee which was made some months ago, the Government has not only done nothing in regard to it, but on the contrary is to-day attempting to completely evade its own responsibility and shelter behind talk of "Premiers' Conferences," "Commonwealth Matter," etc. It has been made abundantly clear that the Dunstan Government, of its own accord, will do nothing to legislate a 40-hour week or to improve in any way the conditions of the workers. One would not expect a capitalist Government to do anything in the interests of the working people, but one should and does expect that a Government which remains in office only with the support of the Labor Party should legislate in the interests of the toiling people or be thrown out of office.

However, the discussions at the A.L.P. conference show that the Labor Party leaders greatly prefer unity with the capitalist Dunstan Government and its "Premiers' Plan" policy, rather than the united action of the whole working class in defence of their initial interests or even of the unity of the Labor Party itself. This was shown clearly in the discussions on questions of wages and hours and in action against war and Fascism.

In the discussion on wages and hours Delegate Bergin (Tramways) moved as an amendment the following:—

"That, unless the State Government immediately gives effect to the finding of the Select Committee of Parliament on the hours question and introduces the 40-hour week, with a basic wage of £5 a week, this conference instructs the Labor Party in the State House to withdraw its support from the Dunstan Government; and, further, that a mass agitation be launched, factory job committees be formed, and public meetings held and addressed by Labor members of Parliament, union officials, and other speakers willing to enforce these demands."

The amendment was bitterly attacked by the Labor politicians and T.H.C. leaders, and supported by union representatives. The amendment was lost and a motion piously "demanding" restoration of wage reductions, 30-hour week, etc., was carried. The debate was characterised by a panicky defence of the Dunstan Government by the supporters of the motion. Don Cameron (assistant secretary, T.H.C.) slandered the workers by stating that elections showed the extent to which the workers were prepared to go in securing reforms, that as the workers were not sufficiently interested in returning a Labor Government they would not be interested in mass meetings, and, delivering himself of the most priceless piece of reasoning, declared that in any case the shorter working week was unsuitable and would come into being as an economic necessity because increasing production could not be maintained without increasing consumption and improving conditions of employment.

The policy of the A.L.P. and T.H.C. leaders; as shown at the conference, is to do nothing to use the position of the Labor Party to force the Dunstan Government to grant the 40-hour week, to sit back with folded arms doing nothing to develop a mass movement for the vital needs of the workers and waiting for "economic necessity" and the kindness of the employers to do so.

This policy is further emphasised by Tunnecliffe (leader of the Victorian Labor Party) in the Melbourne "Herald" of April 14, 1936. Mr. Tunnecliffe stated:

"The party did not intend to bring internal pressure to bear on the Dunstan Ministry to inaugurate a 40-hour week in Victoria. . . . The Victorian Government could pass legislation to make it compulsory here, but if other States refrain from taking similar action, trade will naturally flow to the State where the hours are longer.

Therefore it would be injudicious for one State to take the initiative by individual action."

Here is a clear pronouncement of A.L.P. policy. It intends to do nothing to disturb the Dunstan Government no matter how insistently the workers may demand the 40-hour week, no matter where the interests of the workers lie. Mr. Tunnecliffe, in addition to evasion, indulges in clumsy falsification. His reference to the flow of trade being consequent on the hours worked in a particular State is not only an argument of the employers, but it is also untrue. The fact that the 48-hour week is the rule in Victoria, whilst a 44-hour week is the rule in New South Wales and Queensland has not resulted in a flow of trade from these States to Victoria, nor would the introduction of a 40-hour week in Victoria have the opposite effect. The only hope held out by Mr. Tunnecliffe for the workers receiving a 40-hour week is the policy of Mr. Dunstan—that a Premiers' conference (of "emergency cuts" fame) "might possibly" bring sufficient pressure to bear on the Federal Government to get it introduced.

The discussion on the fight against war and Fascism brought out even more clearly the splitting policy of the A.L.P. and T.H.C. leaders. The policy of these people at the conference was:

(a) Drive out of the Labor Party any individual or organisation associating with the Victorian Council Against War and Fascism.

(b) Prevent the achievement of any kind of unity between the anti-war organisations.

(c) Hinder the development of any really virile campaign against war and Fascism and maintain the present inertia of the Labor Anti-War Committee.

The debate on the anti-war questions was made the occasion for a bitter and slanderous attack upon the Communist Party, and those workers of working-class organisations standing for unity of action against war and Fascism and in defence of the workers' interests. This campaign of slanders has been consistently maintained since the conference, particularly in the pages of the "Labor Call." Nothing is too false, no distortion too great, for the splitters to use in their struggle against the achievement of unity.

It is interesting to examine the means used by the A.L.P. leaders in justifying their autocratic action against branches, unions, and members associated with the V.C.A.W. & F. The Federal Executive ruling of February 16, 1928, to the effect that "individual members of the A.L.P. are prohibited from advocat-

ing the policy of the A.L.P.," and the decision of the 1924 Interstate A.L.P. conference to the effect that "neither the Communist Party nor a branch thereof may be or become affiliated with the A.L.P." With this basis, the A.L.P. and T.H.C. Executives proceed to declare the V.C.A.W. & F. a "subsidiary" of the Communist Party, dig up all the old "anti-Communist" decisions, and basing themselves on these proceed to take action against all and sundry who have the temerity to associate with organisations whose activities are directed against the capitalists. By this means the A.L.P. Executive has the right to declare any organisation a "subsidiary" of the C.P., and proceed to place the notorious "anti-Communist black ban" upon it. It is by these measures that the A.L.P. Executive prevented the representatives of the Australian Railways Union and the miners from attending the conference and that the T.H.C. Executive has threatened the expulsion of several powerful unions from the T.H.C.

It is interesting to note that the actions of the splitters are hailed with approbation by the capitalist press. The "Age," in a long editorial, bemoans the expulsion of Hogan, and receives with joy the expulsion of Blackburn and other members and the threat against the organisations. It refers to the expulsion of Hogan as follows: "When, for example, it expelled members of the most successful Labor Government which has held office in Victoria, it sacrificed nearly one-half of the Party representation in Parliament, and administered a setback from which the political organisation has not yet recovered."

But when dealing with the recent split it completely changes its tone: "A wider, fairer view induces sympathy for the party in its present difficulty, and admiration for its courage. . . . There must be either a clean-cut separation or a gradual absorption of one force by the other. . . . If the A.L.P. compels wavering members to make their choice they cannot reasonably complain, and the party cannot fairly be accused of intolerance for excluding any whose dual associations are objectionable or injurious. . . . These reasons, apart from all others, justify every constitutional measure which emphasises that the gulf between Australian Labor and Communism is unbridged and unbridgeable. . . . If an unequivocal declaration means present dissension, it is essential to ultimate strength." Undoubtedly the Labor splitters will be gratified that they have the enthusiastic support in their activities of the capitalist press.

The attack on the V.C.A.W. & F. at the conference was characterised by its clumsiness and the falsification and distortion indulged in by the splitters. It is interesting and instructive

to examine these arguments, as they indicate clearly the position occupied by the splitters.

Mr. Riley (of the Manufacturing Grocers) and Mr. Cameron (of the "Labor Call") vie with each other in "proving" who really dominates the V.C.A.W. & F. Mr. Riley asserts that the policy "is made overseas," whilst Mr. Cameron asserts that it is made "by the Communist Party." It seems that Mr. Lovegrove's select class on "How the Communists Work" is not bearing much fruit. (Perhaps it is due to the level of his pupils!)

However, both Messrs. Riley and Cameron agree on one thing. Mr. Cameron states in the "Labor Call": "Affiliation with the V.C.A.W. commits the unions concerned to a policy which has been decided upon without their members being consulted"; while Mr. Riley states at the conference: "The V.C.A.W. called a conference in the Port Melbourne Town Hall, but those attending had no say in determining the policy."

While we can pass over the fact that the V.C.A.W. & F. did not call a conference in the Port Melbourne Town Hall, it is clear that both these statements are lies. The policy of the Movement Against War and Fascism has been formulated at National Congresses, in which large numbers of unions and A.L.P. branches have participated actively and fully. Representatives of all affiliated unions attend every meeting of the V.C.A.W. & F. and take part in the formulation of policy.

How does the participation of unions in the formulation of V.C.A.W. & F. policy compare with the procedure of the Labor Anti-War Committee? **The L.A.W.C. is composed of representatives elected by the A.L.P. and T.H.C.; no union or A.L.P. branch has the right of representation on the committee; unions or A.L.P. branches have no direct say in determining the policy of the committee; conferences called by the committee have no right to elect their own committee; decisions of the committee are subject to ratification by the T.H.C. and A.L.P. Executives. It is clear that the V.C.A.W. & F. is a broad and democratic anti-war organisation which provides every facility for unions and A.L.P. branches to participate in the making and carrying out of decisions, while the L.A.W.C. is a bureaucratically composed organisation with no democratic basis and providing no facilities for unions and A.L.P. branches to determine its policy and activities.**

The "Labor Call" of April 16 states: "The policy of the V.C.A.W. is opposed to that of the A.L.P. This has not been denied up to date. If it should be and proof is forthcoming later that this is not so, and that for all practical purposes the two policies are one and the same, there will be no need for the two

organisations. One would be quite sufficient and more effective."

The Editorial ignores the fact that the V.C.A.W. has already denied that its policy is fundamentally opposed to that of the A.L.P., whilst it admits that on some questions there are sharp differences. However, in the proposals made by the V.C.A.W. to the A.L.P. and T.H.C. Executives in 1935, the V.C.A.W. stated that it was prepared to accept the decisions of the A.C.T.U. Congress as a basis for unity.

Hence the argument that it is not possible to reach agreement because of the difference in policy is baseless. If the writer of the Editorial were sincere he would say that because "for all practical purposes the policies are one and the same," the formation of one organisation should be possible and easy. However, the insincerity is shown when the writer draws the conclusion that this organisation "must be the Labor Party and not the Communist Party." Comment upon such a conclusion is unnecessary. **We have said and continue to say that what is needed is not a "party" anti-war organisation, but a really broad and united non-party anti-war, anti-Fascist organisation representative of all organisations and individuals sincerely opposed to war and Fascism.**

The Communist Party has given whole-hearted support to the proposals made by the V.C.A.W. to the A.L.P. and T.H.C. Executives for the formation of one anti-war organisation and the recent proposals to agree to the disaffiliation of unions connected with the V.C.A.W. if the two Executives took steps to form a broad and democratic Labor anti-war movement. Both these proposals have been rejected, and it is quite clear that the Labor leaders will do nothing which has as its object overcoming the present split in the ranks of the anti-war forces. The A.L.P. Conference discussions and decisions have made this abundantly clear.

Despite the statement of Mr. Hayes of the Bakers' Union that "The Labor Committee against War and Fascism was a virile party," the report of the Committee to Conference indicated clearly its ineffectiveness. The main progress reported—the formation of 14 Anti-War Committees in trade unions—was not the work of the L.A.W.C. at all, but these committees were formed on the initiative of the militant workers in the unions. In the Clerks' Union the reformist leaders used the argument that the formation of Union Anti-War Committees was against the constitution of the L.A.W.C. to oppose the setting-up of a committee in the union.

The A.L.P. Conference was characterised not only by the intensive splitting efforts of the most reactionary section of the

Labor Party and T.H.C. leadership, but also by the growing support for unity expressed by a number of delegates in the discussions. The adoption of the Executive's report on the V.C.A.W. ban, and action against members of unions, was bitterly opposed by Delegates Smith (Clothing Trades), Mick Conside, member of the A.L.P. Executive, Graton (Boot Trades), Dewsnap (Teachers) and others. Fifty-three delegates voted for the attainment of unity of the anti-war forces. Among those who opposed the Executive refusal of the Communist united front proposals were the delegates of the Tramwaymen, Bootmakers, Tanners' Unions and St. Kilda Branch A.L.P. The Executive received a severe set-back by the Conference endorsing the re-admittance of members of the Essendon Branch, who had been expelled by the Executive, whilst the L.A.W.C. and Women's Organising Committee were both censured for the manner in which they had taken action against members who were associated with the V.C.A.W. In the election of Junior Vice-President, Albert Monk (President of the A.C.T.U. and Secretary of the Trades Hall Council), leader of the splitters, was defeated.

Following the conference, the Labor Party leaders have intensified their splitting campaign. In addition to the unions against whom action has already been taken, the Ballarat and Maryborough T.H.C.'s have had their representatives removed from the Melbourne T.H.C. and are threatened with expulsion. A mass meeting of tramwaymen and railmen was organised by the Anti-War Committees of both unions. Included in the speakers invited were Messrs. Blackburn, Clarey and Lovegrove. Clarey and Lovegrove would not attend, despite the fact that the meeting had been called by two committees affiliated with the L.A.W.C.

However, whilst the splitting campaign goes forward, so does the opposition to it grow rapidly. The Ballarat and Maryborough T.H.C.'s have intimated that they will not be intimidated by the splitters. The ironworkers at a special meeting decided to continue their affiliation with the V.C.A.W. The Tramways Union Executive has strongly condemned the refusal of the L.A.W.C. representatives to speak at the Rail and Tram anti-war meeting. The discussions on the A.L.P. Conference which are now taking place in the unions show a rapidly growing support for unity and opposition to the policy of the splitters. Mr. Hayes, M.L.A., at the last meeting of the Melbourne Branch of the A.L.P., made a strong appeal for working-class unity in the fight against war and Fascism.

Before, during and after the A.L.P. Conference, the leaders of

the Labor Party have done and are doing all in their power to prevent the working class using the position of the Labor Party to force the Dunstan Government to grant the 40-hour week, are exerting every effort to prevent the achievement of unity in the fight against war and Fascism, they are fighting strenuously to keep the masses from the path of action and continuing along the path of reformism and class collaboration.

But the workers' movement is going forward despite the splitters. Unity is growing in the fight against war and Fascism. The masses are going forward in the struggle for the 40-hour week, and the nature of the movement is indicated by the decision of the Tramways, A.R.U. and A.F.U.L.E. Unions to hold a great mass meeting in the Town Hall to demand a 40-hour week, in the decisions of the Tramways Union to organise deputations from all depots to wait upon all local members with the same demand.

It is essential that the Communists and their supporters exert every effort in this period to advance still further the movement for unity between the Communists and members of the Labor Party and non-Party workers, to help forward in every manner the movement for uniting the anti-war forces; to develop united action with local A.L.P. branches and members; to forward with all possible speed the movement for a 40-hour week and wage increases. The extent to which the Communists and their supporters carry out these tasks will determine the rapidity with which the splitters in the Labor movement are smashed and unity is achieved.

In the words of the resolution of the Eleventh Congress of the C.P. of A. on the struggle for the united front:

"In the ranks of the A.L.P. and among the unionists who adhere to the A.L.P. there is growing a section who support the united front. Evidence is not wanting that among the leaders, especially the trade union and A.L.P. branch leaders, there are supporters of the united front against war and Fascism. Immediate unity is possible in many localities. Comradely action by Communists and members of the A.L.P. who want unity will find a ready response in the ranks of the working class, compelling the splitters to cease their work for capitalism and participate in welding the essential unity or driving them into the arms of the capitalists."

*The Conversation Between V. M. Molotov,
Chairman of the Council of People's Com-
missars of the U.S.S.R., and M. Chastenet,
Editor-in-Chief of "Le Temps" (Paris)*

Held on March 19, 1936

CHASTENET: What is the position of the Soviet Government in the present international crisis? Does it not believe that the military re-occupation of the left bank of the Rhine, by enabling Germany to build lines of fortifications along the French border, aims primarily at giving Germany greater freedom for an advance in the east?

MOLOTOV: The remilitarisation of the Rhineland has undoubtedly strengthened the threat to the countries located east of Germany, and in particular to the U.S.S.R. It would be wrong not to see this. Nevertheless, the introduction of German forces into the Rhineland, which borders on France and Belgium, and the creation of fortifications along the Franco-Belgian border in violation of certain international treaties, signify a threat primarily at the western neighbors, France and Belgium. We can therefore appreciate the special alarm felt by France and Belgium.

CHASTENET: Inasmuch as it is clear from this that the interests of the Soviet Union and France in the present international crisis are to a certain extent identical, the question arises of how to act in the face of this crisis and what is the attitude of the Soviet Government towards it?

MOLOTOV: In connection with your question I can refer to Comrade Litvinov's speech in London published in the newspapers to-day. It throws a strong light on the policy of the Soviet Government in relation to the present international situation and illumines this situation as a whole, which relieves me of the need to make a detailed elaboration of this theme.

CHASTENET: In the event of a German attack in the west and Poland remaining neutral, what practical assistance could the U.S.S.R. render France? This question has a somewhat strategic character. Apparently assistance from the U.S.S.R. would mean assistance through Rumania and Czecho-slovakia. Poland's neutrality, however, would largely interfere with action on the part of the U.S.S.R. How in practice could Soviet assistance to France be given?

MOLOTOV: To answer this question it would be necessary

to know the concrete situation in which it would have to be decided. All assistance required by France in connection with a possible attack on her of a European state, inasmuch as such assistance is provided for by the Franco-Soviet Treaty which does not contain any limitations in this respect, would be rendered to France by the Soviet Union. Assistance would be rendered in accordance with this treaty and with the political situation as a whole.

CHASTENET: Does the Soviet Government consider an improvement of Polish-Soviet relations possible, and, if so, how does it consider it possible to realise this improvement?

It would be desirable for Poland to stand on the side of France and the Soviet Union. This would correspond to the true interests of Poland herself. In the present state of Soviet-Polish relations, however, the possibility exists of Poland adopting a position of neutrality. Does not the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars consider it desirable to find means of improving Soviet-Polish relations?

MOLOTOV: The Soviet Government considers an improvement of Soviet-Polish relations both desirable and possible. One of the means towards this end was proposed last year in the form of an eastern pact in which Poland could join.

CHASTENET: Some Poles assert—I am saying this not in my own name but am merely repeating what I heard—that Communist propaganda in Poland, which had at one time completely ceased, was resumed with new force in the middle of 1935. If this is so would it not be possible to attempt to bring about its discontinuance as a means of improving Soviet-Polish relations?

MOLOTOV: I do not possess the data on Communist propaganda in Poland which you have pointed out, and, in general, this question seems to me to have been artificially dragged in by the hair by those few Poles who informed you of such rumors.

CHASTENET: I spent four days in Poland and came to the conclusion that influential persons there believe that Poland has common interests with the U.S.S.R., and that the two countries are divided only by questions of a sentimental and historical nature.

MOLOTOV: The Soviet Union has definitely put an end to the imperialist and oppressive tendencies of tsarism. We are opponents of all national oppression and have demonstrated this in action both by our internal and foreign policy. This determines also our attitude towards the historical past of the peoples, in particular Poland. If the Polish leaders had a real desire to strengthen peace in Europe, in which the Polish people are un-

doubtedly very much interested, sufficient possibilities could be found for an improvement of Soviet-Polish relations.

CHASTENET: Do all tendencies existing at present in the Soviet Union equally regard a rapprochement between Germany and the Soviet Union impossible under present conditions? I am referring to the reports that there are groups within the Reichswehr which for purely political reasons believe in a rapprochement with the Soviet Union. Are there similar tendencies in the U.S.S.R. working in the same direction?

MOLOTOV: Among a certain section of Soviet people there is a tendency which treats present-day ruling Germany absolutely irreconcilably, particularly in connection with the ever new hostile statements of the German rulers against the Soviet Union. The chief tendency, however, which determines the policy of the Soviet Government considers possible an improvement of relations between Germany and the U.S.S.R. Of course, there may be various ways to bring this about. One of the best would be Germany's entry into the League of Nations, provided, however, Germany proved in action her respect for international treaties, provided she proved in action that she would observe her international obligations in accordance with the real interests of peace in Europe and with the interests of universal peace. If these conditions were fulfilled, Germany's participation in the League of Nations would be in the interests of peace and would meet with a favorable attitude on our part.

CHASTENET: Even Hitler's Germany?

MOLOTOV: Yes, even Hitler's Germany.

CHASTENET: How does the Soviet Government regard the possibility of a Franco-German rapprochement? In the event of such a rapprochement would it regard it with favor?

MOLOTOV: We know of France's desire to preserve peace. Should the German Government also prove in action its desire for peace and respect for treaties, if it proved this in particular in relation to the League of Nations, then on this basis of defence of the interests of peace we would consider a Franco-German rapprochement desirable.

CHASTENET: How, since the time of the latest Japanese crisis and M. Stalin's interview, does the Soviet Government picture the immediate future of its relations with Japan?

MOLOTOV: Lately there have been signs of a certain improvement of Soviet-Japanese relations. This found its expression in the recent negotiations between the Assistant People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Comrade Stomonyakov, and the

Japanese Ambassador, M. Ota. The contents of these conversations have been made public. The negotiations have not yet been completed, but the possibility of an improvement of Soviet-Japanese relations exists.

CHASTENET: Does the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars believe that since M. Stalin's statement there have been new indications of a Japanese intention to act against Outer Mongolia?

MOLOTOV: There have not been any new facts in this direction.

CHASTENET: How in the opinion of the Soviet Government could France at the present time co-operate most usefully with it in the field of military preparations? What I mean is, whether such co-operation should take the form of contacts between the general staffs or whether it is a question of France supplying war materials to the Soviet Union?

MOLOTOV: The question requires special study. This would have to be taken up by military specialists.

CHASTENET: I should like to ask the same question in relation to industry. Does the Soviet Government intend at present to place orders with French industry, and what kind of orders?

MOLOTOV: The trade agreement signed at the beginning of January, 1936, will be carried out by us in full. Our orders are connected chiefly with the purchase of metals, products of the machine-building, chemical and some other industries. Our general import has lately shown a tendency to increase. Should the technical and financial terms in France not be less favorable than those in other countries, an increase of orders in France would be possible.

CHASTENET: Will the realisation of the economic plans of the Soviet Union make it possible to import in the future the so-called "Paris goods," that is, products of Paris industry in the field of fancy goods, leather and silk products, and other articles of "semi-luxury," as it were?

MOLOTOV: We are ourselves developing such industries at present, but within certain limits the import of so-called Paris goods is not excluded.

CHASTENET: Does the Soviet Government believe that the fulfilment of the Second Five-Year Plan will make it possible in the near future to effect a considerable reduction in internal prices? What sort of reduction could this be?

MOLOTOV: Yes, it does. The Soviet Government is firmly convinced that the fulfilment of the Second Five-Year Plan will insure a considerable reduction of internal prices. I might add

that the fulfilment of the Second Five-Year Plan is proceeding no less successfully than the fulfilment of the First. You are asking what sort of reduction this will be. I think that the reduction of internal prices will reach several times ten per cent.

CHASTENET: As far as I understand, this does not mean a reduction of wages, but it means an increase in real wages by the rise of the purchasing power of wages.

MOLOTOV: Quite true.

CHASTENET: Has the attention of the Soviet Government been drawn to the difficulties of the material situation which arises for foreigners residing in the Union in consequence of the latest financial reforms, particularly in consequence of the closing of Torgsin?

MOLOTOV: The Soviet Government is aware of this question, of course. But difficulties of this sort have a transitory character.

CHASTENET: In connection with the democratisation of the constitution—true, democratisation not in the western sense of the word—projects of which have been reported, I should like to ask what alterations will be introduced in the Soviet constitution? In particular, will this mean the replacement of the existing pyramidal system of elections of the lower organs by the population and the higher organs by the lower, by a system of direct representation? Will the federal structure of the Soviet Union also be changed in this connection, or will not the existence of republics and national regions be affected by the reform of the constitution?

MOLOTOV: In the deliberations of the commission which are to be completed this year and which are directed by the chairman of this commission, Comrade Stalin, they are concerned with the establishment in the U.S.S.R. of truly universal, truly direct, truly equal and secret suffrage, which only persons disfranchised by court sentence will not enjoy. On the basis of this suffrage, will be elected both the local organs of power and the central organ—the representative body of the whole people.

We have created socialist economy in every field so that the foundations of the classes have been completely undermined and conditions for a classless socialist society have been created. Now in the new constitution the remnants of inequality in suffrage rights between workers and peasants will be eliminated and, together with this, suffrage will be granted to all groups of the population, including those citizens who formerly belonged to the bourgeois strata but are now working in enterprises, collective farms and state and co-operative institutions, or as private

artisans, and so on. A more democratic suffrage than the one which will be fixed by our constitution does not exist in a single country.

The existence of republics and national regions will not be affected by the reform of the constitution.

CHASTENET: Do you permit the formation of other parties?

MOLOTOV: This is not a vital question in the U.S.S.R., inasmuch as we are closely approaching the complete abolition of classes struggling with each other, the interests of which are represented by parties.

CHASTENET: It seems to me that other parties might arise even without a class struggle, as a result of the existence of different tendencies even within the Communist Party itself. As an example of what I have in mind, I will remind you of the split of the Russian Social Democratic Party into Bolsheviks and Mensheviks. Should a new party arise in this way, would its existence be permitted by the Soviet Government?

MOLOTOV: As regards the possibility of a split in the Party, should M. Chastenet study the situation in our Party in recent years he could establish the following: At one time there was an acute struggle in the Party and attempts were made to create special factions leading to the creation of new parties; but it is now several years since the situation in this respect has fundamentally changed and the Communist Party is truly united. This can be said now more than ever in the past.

CHASTENET: Inasmuch as the Soviet Government intends to broaden the basis of elections and to permit the existence of a certain opposition, does it not plan some weakening of the administrative measures, some weakening of the dictatorship?

MOLOTOV: Our entire internal situation testifies to the fact that now not infrequently there is already no need for those administrative measures which were employed formerly.

The Soviet power, however, must of course be strong and consistent in the struggle against terrorists and wreckers of public property and their accomplices. The forces opposing it are growing weaker all the time, but in some cases just because of this they seize upon extreme measures, which demands corresponding counter-measures on the part of the Soviet Government. The chief thing, however, is that the Soviet power is now based on the broadest support of the workers and employees in the cities and of the peasants in the villages, and the reform of our constitution which introduces a maximum of democracy tes-

tifies to the firm confidence of the Soviet Government in their support.

CHASTENET: Does the project of the reform of the constitution provide for the introduction of what we call a responsible ministry?

MOLOTOV: The Council of People's Commissars, as you know, is an elected body and is fully responsible before the Central Executive Committee. After the reform of the constitution our Government will continue, as formerly, to be elected and to be fully responsible before the popular representative body of the Soviet Union elected on the basis of universal, direct, secret and equal suffrage.

Australia's Fights for Freedom, Democracy, And Progress

By J. N. RAWLING

VII.—The Fight for Constitutional Government

(Continued)

IT was Robert Lowe (afterwards Lord Sherbrooke) who put forward the proposal with which the "Herald" agreed, namely, that there should be organised passive resistance to the reactionary scheme of Lord Grey. But the passive resistance did not need much organising. As we have seen, mass meetings were held all over the colony, and the determination of the people not to have the District Councils and the indirect election system became apparent even to Lord Grey. Poor Lord Grey!—he had to suffer many defeats during his political career. But we can say about him that, like the Bourbons, he never learned: he came up for more after every knock-out.

On this occasion, he was informed by the Governor of N.S.W.—Fitzroy—that "the introduction of the double scheme of election by making District Councils the constituents of the House of Assembly would be most unpalatable and would excite a resistance which would in all probability render it inoperative and create ill-feeling towards Her Majesty's Government which would not easily be allayed." With the memory of the Canadian Rebellion recent in their minds and even fearing a working-class revolution in their own country, the British Government accepted the advice of the Governor of N.S.W. to drop the proposal.

The next move was to appoint a Privy Council Committee to enquire into the matter of constitutions for Australia. This Committee reported in May, 1849. The report recommended:

That Port Phillip District be separated from N.S.W.

That the Legislative Council be retained in N.S.W. and similar bodies be set up in the other colonies—to consist of nominated and elected members in the proportion of one to two.

That these Councils be allowed to alter their Constitutions and even to convert themselves into double-chamber parliaments.

That the Legislatures have greater control over public funds.

That District Councils be set up only upon the request of the inhabitants.

That one of the Governors be made a Governor-General

as a step towards Federation and to ensure a uniform tariff.

As a result of the Committee's report, the Australian Colonies Government Act (1850) was passed by the Imperial Parliament. By this Act, Victoria was created and Legislative Councils were set up there, in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), South Australia and West Australia. In New South Wales the franchise was somewhat extended to embrace "every man of the age of twenty-one years . . . having a freehold estate, within the district for which his vote is to be given, of the clear value of £100 . . . or being a householder within such district, occupying a dwelling-house of the clear annual value of £10 . . . or having a leasehold of the value of £10 per annum."

In N.S.W., too, the Legislative Council was given the power to impose customs duties. The Governor of N.S.W. was to be a Governor-General with power to supersede the various Lieutenant-Governors in case of emergency. An early attempt at Federation which, however, was in operation for only a short period.

Such a Constitution was not far in advance of that of 1842 and there was great dissatisfaction in N.S.W. By a resolution passed in 1851, the Legislative Councillors expressed:

" . . . their deep disappointment and dissatisfaction because of (1) the appropriations of our ordinary revenue under the sole authority of Parliament; [that is, the British Parliament—this was a protest against their non-control of their own revenue—J.N.R.]; (2) the administration of the waste lands, and the territorial revenue, which are still forbidden us;

"(3) the interference of the British Government, by instructions to the Governor, with appointments to colonial positions and

"(4) the lack of control by the Legislature over the Government."

It was full responsible Government that was being demanded. W. C. Wentworth drew up a "Declaration and Remonstrance" that was accepted by both the old Council and the new one elected under the new Act. It protested emphatically against the restrictions still maintained on responsible Government and demanded "the establishment of a Constitution among us similar in its outline to that of Canada."

There followed a reply by Earl Grey and then a reply to this reply, from the Councillors. In this latter reply, there was a veiled threat, when the Councillors called attention to the meddling of George III. with the liberties of the American colonies so that

" . . . those unfortunate heartburnings arose which soon led to their dismemberment from the British Empire . . . Nor

it to be forgotten that the vetoing power is one of the prominent grievances set forth in the celebrated Declaration of Independence."

Never was a threat more delicately worded! "We should enjoy the same powers of self-government as are possessed by our fellow-countrymen at Home," so the reply proceeded. "To be content with anything less would be alike derogatory to ourselves and unjust to our children. It would be to bequeath to them a smaller measure of freedom than our fathers transmitted to us."

The response of the Home Government to this reply was to instruct the new Home Secretary, Sir John Pakington, to give the Legislative Councillors in N.S.W. the opportunity to draw up a draft Constitution. It was W. C. Wentworth's opportunity!

VIII.—An Australian House of Lords?

The dialectic of history brings us to a new split in the ranks of the forces of progress. It must be grasped that there is a difference between Representative Government and Responsible Government. W. C. Wentworth and his party wanted Representative Government as long as it was representative of their class. But it was Responsible Government that they were most concerned with. All sections of the people in N.S.W. demanded Responsible Government—that is, a Government which would be responsible to Parliament here and not to a Governor or an overseas Cabinet. When, however, Wentworth and the class he represented were in sight of obtaining Responsible Government, they set about ensuring that the Parliament to which the Government was to be responsible would be a Parliament representative of themselves and not of the masses of the people. Henceforth Wentworth was a reactionary and we have now to consider his reactionary proposals.

The Legislative Council, in 1852 and 1853, appointed Select Committees to draft a new Constitution. Wentworth was Chairman of both. The Committees were composed of such men as Donaldson, James Macarthur, Deas Thompson, Martin, Cooper and, as events showed, the majority of them were reactionaries. The Committee favored two Houses, but reported that

"They had no wish to sow the seeds of a future democracy (!), and until they are satisfied that the nominated or the future elective Council which they recommend will not effect the object they have in view of placing a safe, revising, deliberative and conservative element between the Lower House and Her Majesty's representative in this colony, they do not feel inclined to hazard the experiment of an Upper House based on a general elective

franchise. They are the less disposed to make the experiment, as such a franchise if once created will be difficult to recall."

So it was recommended that the Legislative Council either (1) should have an hereditary membership, so that there should be "incentive to a laudable ambition" and "one of the strongest inducements not only to respectable (!) families to remain in this colony, but to the upper classes of the United Kingdom and other countries who are desirous to emigrate to choose it for their future abode," or, (2) consist of representatives of an hereditary nobility, chosen as were the Irish and Scottish members of the House of Lords.

"We are of the opinion," went on the Report, "that the creation of hereditary titles, leaving it to the option of the Crown to annex to the title of the first patentee a seat for life in such House, and conferring on the original patentees and their descendants, inheritors of their titles, a power to elect a certain number of their order to form in conjunction with the original patentees then living, the Upper House of Parliament, would be a great improvement upon any form of Legislative Council tried or recommended in any British colony."

It would sound well, would it not?—the Earl of Vaucuse Viscount Macarthur of Camden and, later on, Baron Brown of Minmi! A House composed of such as these "would lay the foundations of an aristocracy, which from their fortune, birth, leisure, and the superior education these advantages would superinduce, would soon supply elements for the formation of an Upper House modelled as far as circumstances will admit upon the analogues of the British Constitution."

Other proposals were: Extension of the franchise for the Lower House electors to men earning more than £100 per annum or who paid £40 a year for board and lodging or £10 for lodging only; a two-thirds majority of both Houses for the future altering of the Constitution; a Lower House membership of 54; and a Federal General Assembly for Australia as a whole.

The main point, however, and one that overshadowed all else was the diabolical proposal to create a nobility and a House of Lords. Happily our fathers were as fully awake to the devilishness of the scheme as we are to-day and were alert and vigorous enough to defeat it.

The protest was instantaneous, widespread and passionate. The "Sydney Morning Herald" was stricken all of a heap. It thought it too good to be true, and so on the whole thought it better "to regret" the introduction of the idea of an hereditary nobility, "though we do not disapprove of it in the abstract."

The "Herald," of course, was confident that there were one or two in the colony worthy of being ennobled—Baron Fairfax would sound well—but, on the whole, "we fear the materials of such an aristocracy are as yet wanting in our community, and we are strongly of opinion that, even were materials at hand, the temper of the public mind is not prepared to treat such an aristocracy with respect. Unless we are very much mistaken, a colonial baronetcy would be an object of ridicule rather than of defence." What a compliment to the common sense and independence of Australians eighty years ago!

The principle of nomineeism, however, was favored by the "Herald." "If we start by way of experiment," it said, re-echoing Wentworth and his Commission, "with a House of nominees and it should be found not to answer our expectations, there would be no difficulty in doing away with it, and having recourse to the elective principle; but if, on the other hand, we start with an elective House, and it should be found not to answer, it would be difficult in the extreme to disfranchise the constituency and have recourse to nomineeism." It is only necessary to add that "Granny" has not found the nominee system wanting during the eighty years since—except when it was desired that Labor nominees be appointed!

But the "Herald" was right in its appraisal of the "public mind." Public meetings were held everywhere and the mass indignation was at fever heat. The most important of these meetings was one in the Victoria Theatre, where, five years before, the public meeting had protested against Lord Grey's proposed constitution. Then, Wentworth was on the platform—now he was reviled and execrated. New blood was in the leadership—one of it being Henry Parkes, then proud of his radicalism and founder and owner of the "Empire" daily newspaper. That paper summed up the demands of the people in a Leader (15/6 '53) entitled: "The Urgent Topics of this Crisis." These were (1) "Not to have imposed upon them the continuance of the nominee principle in legislation"; (2) "That there be a complete reform in the electoral principle, and in the franchise of the Representative Body." (3) "We must gain a full and just control over the characters and conduct of our rulers. They must be made responsible on the spot for the measures they project and the manner in which they accomplish them." (4) "We must have the whole land system at once corrected. We must not be subjected longer to the insults of a set of men who taunt us as the squatters do, after having profited by our witless inattention to their selfish proceedings. . . . A handful of them have usurped more legislative power by far than half the population possesses,

and the danger of the imposition now being planned will probably result from their conspiracy with the Government." During the whole time that Wentworth's Committee was deliberating, the "Empire" kept up a campaign against nomineeism.

On Friday, July 29, 1853, the "Empire" announced the completion and publication of the "Report of the Select Committee on the New Constitution," in these words:

"It is our melancholy duty, this morning, to bring before the notice of our readers the final scheme propounded by Mr. Wentworth for the Government of this colony. Melancholy, indeed, it is to see a man who might have been the benefactor of this country to a larger extent than any other among us, and been held in veneration by the whole mass of the people, falling away from every principle that he stood by in his better years, renouncing every correct and manly opinion that he ever expressed. . . . If we do not misjudge the authors of the present scheme, they depended for the accomplishment of their designs on the apathy of the colony. . . . Its complexion is oligarchical—its tone is oligarchical—its tendencies are all oligarchical. . . . We should be tempted to employ a few minutes in inventing titles for the august founders of our hereditary peerage, and seeing how much better Baron Triangles and Sneak might look than plain Dr. Douglas. . . . But the matter is too pregnant with danger for dalliance on the part of the colonists. If the spirit of free men was not left behind with the foreshores of our fatherland, that spirit will be roused now, and roused to a great and intelligent purpose. If there are, indeed, men in the Legislative Council who can justly estimate, and wisely seize their opportunities for accomplishing public good, let them remember . . . that the whole of the Press of Australia, with the exception of the 'Sydney Morning Herald,' is on their side."

It was a unique distinction, by the way, that the "Sydney Morning Herald" gained for itself, but one which will not surprise us who know something of that paper's history and character—the same yesterday, to-day and forever! In its issue of August 11, the "Empire" presented the position of the Press in this way:

"New South Wales can boast ten newspapers; and the ten have all spoken out; there has been no quibbling, no hesitancy, no half-and-half expression. One has gulped

down the nauseous dose; nine has spurned it from their lips. We classify them by name accordingly:

For Nomineeism:

1. Sydney Morning Herald (Daily).

Against Nomineeism:

1. Empire (Daily)
2. Freeman's Journal
3. People's Advocate
4. Bell's Life in Sydney
5. Maitland Mercury
6. Morton Bay Courier
7. Morton Bay Free Press
8. Goulburn Herald
9. Bathurst Free Press."

On August 3, 1853, a preliminary public meeting of protest against the new constitution was held at the Royal Hotel. Resolutions of protest were carried, a Committee formed and arrangements made to call a big public meeting. This further meeting was the **Royal Theatre** meeting that we have already mentioned. It was held on Monday, August 15, 1853. Resolutions were carried there protesting against the proposed Constitution and pledging the meeting "to resist, by every Constitutional means in its power, the formation of any second chamber that is not based on popular suffrage."

According to the estimate of the "Empire," "not far short of 4000" people were present at the meeting, which was held in the afternoon. The principal speakers were J. B. Darvall, M.C. (Member of the Council), Robert Johnson, Henry Parkes, J. L. Montefiore, T. S. Mort, J. W. Bligh, M.C., D. H. Deniehy, J. P. Fawcner, M.C., of Victoria, and Archdeacon McEncroe. Of course, Wentworth was the name that called forth the loudest groans, and in the person who bore it centred all the hatred of those who resented the iniquities of the new Constitution. Of course, too, much was made of the prospect of Australian Lords and Ladies strutting through Government circles, and keeping themselves unspotted from the common herd which would show them due respect! Deniehy in particular cleverly ridiculed the contemplated "harlequin aristocrats," "Botany Bay Magnificoes," "Australian mandarins." He supposed that Mr. James Macarthur [son of John Macarthur] would "aspire to the coronet of an earl, he would call him the Earl of Camden, and he would suggest for his coat of arms a field **vert**, the heraldic term for green, and emblazoned on this field should be a **rum keg** of a New South Wales Order of chivalry." ("Empire," 16/8/53). (For the point of the rum-keg allusion, see April "C.R.".)

Deniehy was an orator of no mean order and he repeatedly

roused the vast audience to applause. "Looking at the gradually increasing pressure of political parties at home," he said, "we must prepare to open our arms and receive the fugitives from England, Scotland, Ireland, who would hasten to gain security and a competence, that appeared to be denied them in their own country. The interests of these countless thousands are involved in our decision to-day and they looked, and were entitled to look for a heritage befitting the dignity of free men. Bring them not here with delusive hopes; let them not find a new-fangled aristocracy haunting these free shores; but it is yours to offer them a land, where man is rewarded for his labour, and where the law no more recognises the supremacy of a class than it recognises the predominance of a religion. But there is an aristocracy worthy of our ambition. Wherever man's skill is eminent, wherever genius asserts its elevation, **there** is an aristocracy that confers honor on the land that possesses it. . . . I am a native of this young but glorious continent. Its past is not hallowed in history by the achievements of men whose names reflected a light on the times in which they lived. We have no long line of poets, of statesmen and warriors; in this country art has done nothing and nature everything. It is ours to inaugurate the future."—"Let us," he concluded, "with prophetic eye, behold the troops of weary pilgrims from foreign despotism, which will, ere long, be flocking to our shores, and let us now give the most earnest assurance that such men as compose the Wentworth clique are not the representatives of the spirit, the intelligence, or the free men of New South Wales."

In spite, however, of the widespread opposition to the nominee principle, the democracy of New South Wales failed to prevent it from being included in the new Constitution. That principle was to blight the parliamentary Government in New South Wales for another 80 years, when an even more reactionary and iniquitous procedure took its place. One victory, however, that the people did have in 1853 was the prevention of the creation of an hereditary nobility. While Wentworth and his subservient majority in the Council were able to drop this and so retain nomineeism, it was a victory that the people were able to prevent the establishment of an hereditary nobility and an hereditary House of Lords.

IX.—"Freedom's Fight of '54."

"Freedom's Fight of '54" is how the late R. S. Ross characterised the magnificent struggle of the Diggers of the Victorian gold-fields against tyranny and reaction and for the elementary democratic rights that were denied them. This struggle, which culminated in the Eureka Stockade, was not merely a fight

against the iniquitous licensing system and the tyranny, corruption and bullying of the police, it was something more. It was a part of the struggle for representative and responsible government in Australia. It was a part of the larger revolt of the masses against reaction and for a share in their own government—a revolt that found expression in Europe in the revolutions of 1848, the Chartist movement and the beginnings of the revolutionary working class movement in England: many were present on the Victorian goldfields who had taken part in those struggles in Europe. It was, also, a part of the Australian revolt against the tyranny seated in Downing Street, whose minions were the imported governors and their servants, imported and local—in this respect the movement even went so far as to play with the idea of an Australian Republic! It was a part of the class-struggle of the masses against the feudal squattocracy. It was, finally, a political movement which put forward its political demands:

The right of all the people to Parliamentary representation.

Manhood suffrage.

No property qualification for candidates.

Payment of members.

Short duration of parliaments.

It is a fatal error to look upon the Eureka episode as an accident, as something that happened because of the gathering together of a lot of irresponsible and reckless elements. It was the culmination of a people's movement, a people's fight for democratic rights. The only accidental thing about it was that it was the discovery of gold that gathered together such a large population in so short a time. If gold had not been discovered the population would have been slower in the growing. But inevitably the struggle against tyranny and for democracy must have later taken place. We have necessarily, therefore, to place the gold-fields struggle in its proper perspective—as a part of that larger struggle for representative government that we have already been discussing. The mass political meetings (1848-53) in Sydney and elsewhere (including the N.S.W. goldfields), the fight against transportation by the Australasian League (see Feb. "C.R.") and Eureka were all parts of the one movement of the masses of Australia, grown self-conscious.

But it was gold that brought such a rapid increase of Australia's population. Gold had been discovered in Australia long before 1851—but its finding was kept secret because the government feared the result of a gold rush on a convict settlement. In 1839, Count Strzelecki had found traces of gold and others also either reported discoveries or, from scientific data, predicted the

discovery of gold. In Victoria, there is record of the discovery of gold in 1849. But it was not till two years later that it was found in payable quantities—first in N.S.W. and then in Victoria. When the richer fields were discovered in the latter colony, those in N.S.W. lost their importance.

It was on August 26, 1851, that a man named Connor, with five companions, washed out 30 ozs. on the first day at Golden Point, Ballarat. Soon, the name Ballarat—a native name inappropriately for the sequel signifying “a place of rest”—was to become famous the whole world over. Within five weeks there were 2000 people on the field and this number was quickly multiplied as the news spread—especially such news as the washing out in two days by two men of 30 lbs! Then came the discoveries in Bendigo and, in December, Lieutenant-Governor Latrobe reported to Earl Grey that there were 20,000 people on the Bendigo field, whence came gold to the value of £200,000 per week. Soon people were flocking to the Victorian gold-fields, not only from the other Australian colonies, but from all over the world.

This influx of population found a machinery of government unable to cope with it and unwilling to look upon it as anything else but a mass of outsiders who would have to be kept in their place with an iron hand. Overnight almost, the placid colony of Victoria, the preserve of wealthy and arrogant squatters, and governed by the government of those squatters, found itself overrun by a huge influx of “the common herd,” which not only showed that it would not be ruled by a rod of iron, but which was soon able to wrest from the hands of the squatters the control and government of the colony. In the eyes of those squatters the new population was a cancer which threatened to grow until it spread over the whole body. Their first reaction was to attempt to cut it out.

(To be Continued.)

The Situation in Spain

By L. JAMIESON

THE October 1934 revolt was a desperate, but unsuccessful attempt on the part of the Spanish working class to block the advancing tide of reaction. The revolt was marked by a heroic determination on the part of the entire working class, to prevent the coming to power of the Right Wing, and Communist, Anarchist, and Socialist workers fought side by side on the barricades. However, the revolt failed because of

(1) The lack of preparation for it on the part of the Socialist and Left Republican parties.

(2) The weak and elementary character of the united front in most parts of the country. In Madrid, the united front agreement between the Socialists had been concluded only a few weeks prior to the revolt. In the Asturias, where the united front was of a developed and consolidated nature, the revolt was strongest and most successful.

(3) The betrayal carried out by the Anarchist leaders, in broadcasting an appeal over the radio to their followers to pull out of the fight.

(4) The weakness caused by general Anarchist tactics, of seizure of the factories, transport, etc., without any political consolidation (election of Soviets). The victory of the reaction, was however, anything but complete. The militancy of the masses did not die with the revolt, and the tremendous pressure from below, and the maintenance of class struggle at a high level, preserved the existence of the main trade unions, and prevented the dissolution of Parliament and the complete silencing of the Left wing.

However, the masses suffered many casualties, and 30,000 of their best elements, their leaders, were cast into gaol, under conditions of unprecedented terrorism, whilst many more were killed, tortured, and exiled. The municipal councils were closed down, as well as the workers' clubs, whilst all anti-fascist elements were removed from the army and from industry, as far as possible.

The lessons of this forced retreat were quickly learned, not only by the workers, but also by the middle classes, causing the Left Republicans to enter into an anti-fascist anti-imperialist agreement with the Communists and Socialists, thus bringing about the creation of the People's Front on a nation-wide scale.

The main points of the agreement between the three parties were:—

(1) The overthrow of the Gil Robles-Lerroux Government, and its replacement by a government prepared to carry out the programme of the People's Front.

(2) The dissolution of the Fascist leagues.

(3) The removal of all reactionary elements from the armed forces, especially in the higher commands.

(4) The restoration of municipal government.

(5) Adherence to the system of collective security, as outlined in the League covenant.

During the period of reaction, strike struggles of a mass character were carried out in Madrid, Barcelona, and many other centres. This served to draw the middle classes towards the united front of struggle of the working class, and prepared the way for a nation-wide People's Front of a more than Parliamentary nature. The unparalleled victory of the People's Front at the polls in February of this year was the signal for the Fascists to attempt to seize power per medium of a military coup. However, the coup became a coup de grace for the Fascists for the following reasons:—

(1) The Communists, having prepared for the election victory, immediately led the toiling masses on to the offensive, by bringing about—

(a) The forcible release of all political prisoners.

(b) The forcible closing down of Fascist headquarters and newspaper offices.

(c) The opening of all the workers' clubs.

All of this was done without waiting for the sanction of Parliamentary Government.

(2) The workers who faced the soldiers on the streets, fraternised with them, winning them over completely, and paralysing them as an instrument of reaction.

Having failed to mobilise effective mass support, the Fascists were reduced to acts of gangsterism and individual outrage, which are still being perpetrated by them. Typical examples are the murder of Judge Pedregal, the machine-gunning of Largo Caballero's house, the murdering of the Badia brothers, and the attempted murder of the Speaker of the Cortes.

The Spanish elections have had repercussions in Latin America, and may be expected to exercise a favorable influence on the development of the national-revolutionary movement there.

When the Cortes met, it presented a People's Front majority, whilst where there had been one Communist in the previous Parliament, there were now seventeen. Despite the wavering and

vacillating attitude of Azana, coupled with appeals for "no violence," the Cortes was impelled to legalise—

(1) The removal of Fascist elements from the chief commands of the army and the air-force (General Franco and General Goded);

(2) The reinstatement of all militants and strikers generally who were discharged from industry in 1934.

(3) The dismissal of all scabs from industry.

(4) Recognition of the U.S.S.R.

(5) The seizure of certain estates by the peasantry.

(6) The restoration of municipal government.

However, to compel the government to legalise the dissolution of the Fascist organisations, a national general strike, of 24 hours' duration, was necessary.

From the events in Spain to date, therefore, it can easily be seen that the People's Front is anything but a Parliamentary bloc, and that it is manifested in the extra-parliamentary mass struggles of the whole people, in the strikes, the freeing of prisoners, etc.

Up to the present time the Spanish people have been faced with the choice between bourgeois democracy and Fascism. However, the situation is rapidly changing to one in which the choice will be between bourgeois democracy and proletarian dictatorship; in other words, to a revolutionary situation.

The People's Front aids the development of such a situation by—

(1) Crushing the power of the reaction;

(2) Bringing the middle class and farming masses closer to the working class, causing them to understand their true relation to the working class, and engaging them in joint struggle with the workers of the city and countryside.

(3) Raising the level of interest in things political amongst the broadest masses of the people.

The basis of the People's Front, in the final analysis, must be the welding of the whole people around the fighting core of the united working class, the whole being firmly founded on industrial and local committees of the masses. It is only on such a basis that it can be successfully transformed from the struggle for bourgeois democracy to the struggle for proletarian dictatorship.

Within the framework of the People's Front, militancy is rising; Largo Caballero, while hoping for the "peaceful" seizure of power by the workers, states that the Socialists will go forward to the taking of power by the workers, whether it means armed

insurrection or not; Azana, the leader of the middle-class Left Republicans, stated to the Madrid correspondent of "Izvestia" that the "Communists are our friends"; whilst May Day was celebrated throughout Spain by a general strike. The Anarchists have up to the present time managed to exert an influence of an alienating character over the middle-classes and the peasantry, by reason of their intense sectarianism, but these sections, thanks to the work of the People's Front, have now been detached from the Fascists, and are accompanying the working class of Spain along the road to the final battle against the Spanish bourgeoisie and the landed aristocracy.

A most important phase of the People's Front victory is the fact that it means independence for the minorities within Spain, such as the Basques and the Catalonians, although the independence of the African colonies is not yet in sight. The achievement of Catalonian independence will prove a strong stimulant to the working class of Catalonia, and should result in a great unification of political forces, in the form of the uniting of the Catalonian Communist Party, the Catalonian Socialist Union, and the Proletarian Party, and their subsequent affiliation to the Third International.

The foreign policy of Spain has also changed with the election victory. Spain, from being a country linked up with the British-German-Japanese anti-Soviet bloc, has become a country supporting the maintenance of peace by collective security and mutual peace pacts. The connecting link with the Carmona-Salazar terrorist military dictatorship in Portugal has also been broken, and the events in Spain will without doubt exercise a powerful effect on the Portuguese people in their efforts to unseat the monster of reaction in their own country.

The general prospect is one of rapidly-maturing class struggle, leading shortly to the point of a revolutionary situation. The workers are united, and are leading the middle classes and farmers in a convincing manner towards the goal of a free, Socialist Spain.

New Developments in the Labor Party

By R. DIXON

SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY, or, as it is called in England and Australia, the Labor Party, has been characterised by the Communist International as the main bulwark of capitalism. Let us recapitulate, briefly, some of the facts of post-war Social-Democracy which emphasise the correctness of this estimate.

After the defeat in the war of 1914-18 a proletarian revolution broke out in Germany. The Central Government was paralysed and bereft of authority. Demoralisation was almost complete in the ranks of the ruling classes. The working masses were moving to the seizure of power, and Soviets of workers, soldiers and sailors' deputies were established in many parts of the country. Into the breach stepped the Social-Democracy. It became the centre around which gathered the counter-revolution. Noske, the Social-Democrat recently granted a pension by Hitler, and Schiedeman led the armed forces of the reaction against the revolution. The best leaders of the German working class, Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, and Leo Jogiches were foully murdered. Tens of thousands of workers participating in the revolution were killed.

With fire and sword, by murder and treachery, demagoguery and cajolery, the Social-Democrats saved Germany for capitalism. They demonstrated beyond all doubt that they were the main bulwark of capitalism. The experiences of the revolutions in Hungary, Italy, Bavaria, and other European countries all confirmed the German experience. Everywhere the Social-Democracy came to the rescue of capitalism. Then, in the period following the post war revolutions, it co-operated with the employing class in stabilising the capitalist system at the expense of the working class.

When the capitalist crisis broke in 1929 the Social-Democrats, continuing their role as the main bulwark of capitalism, supported the passing of the burdens of the crisis onto the workers and small farmers, they initiated, as in Australia, premiers' plans, they cut wages, taxed wages, and where strikes occurred they disrupted and broke them.

To-day, however, the question arises: Does the characterisation of Social-Democracy as the principal bulwark of capitalism apply with the same force and in the same manner as earlier? It should be obvious that it does not. When in 1918-19 the Social-Democracy destroyed the possibility of a German Soviet Republic, the ruling class rewarded them with the Weimar Constitution, with the establishment of a bourgeois democratic republic.

That was the mecca of their dreams. Social-Democracy, as the name implies, is a party of the system of bourgeois democracy. Parliament is the crowning glory to which everything must be subordinate. History has seen the Social-Democratic organisation degenerate into a purely electoral machine, completely dominated by the parliamentary fraction.

The decay of capitalism, however, is causing the ruling classes to turn from bourgeois democracy to more open and naked methods of rule. In Germany, Fascism was nurtured and reared within the Weimar Republic, and 14 years after its establishment the parliamentary bourgeois democratic system gave way to the bloody dictatorship of Hitler. The mecca of the Social-Democrats became their scaffold. Scores were killed, thousands were gaoled, tortured, pilloried or exiled. The Social-Democratic Party organisation, fit for little more than conducting a parliamentary election campaign, was incapable of withstanding the assault of the Fascists. It was destroyed. Thus, not only did the German capitalists abandon bourgeois democracy but also Social-Democracy. Not only did they abandon Social-Democracy but they aimed to destroy it. In such circumstances it is actually impossible "for Social-Democracy to preserve its former role of bulwark of the bourgeoisie." (Dimitrov: Speech in reply.) In Germany Fascism is the chief bulwark—the ruling class will rely on force, violence and terror to maintain its domination.

It would be wrong, of course, to believe that Social-Democracy is now a negligible factor in Germany, even though Hitler succeeded in crushing the organisation. It is one thing to liquidate an organisation but another to destroy ideas. German Social-Democracy has behind it a long tradition. If to-morrow its legality were restored it would immediately rise, mushroom-like, to a position of great power and influence. Whether for good or ill, depends largely upon the degree to which the German workers have learned the lesson of the Fascist dictatorship and the extent of the Communists' united front successes. Irrespective of that, however, the fact remains that in the present situation the German Social-Democracy is no longer the bulwark of capitalism.

And what of the Social-Democracy of France and Spain? Would anyone say that the French Socialists, who are participating in the mighty People's Front movement against Fascism and who have entered into an election agreement with the Communists, have not changed their policy quite considerably since 1932?

Of, course, a fundamental change in Communist tactics took

place as well. The victory of Hitler and the powerful growth of Fascism in all capitalist countries which followed, demanded a re-examination of our attitude to bourgeois democracy.

In the period prior to Hitler's seizure of power, it was the bourgeois democratic method of rule, in the main, on which the capitalist class relied to keep in subjection the masses. The parliamentary democratic system was the power of the counter-revolution and against it the Communists raised the slogan of proletarian dictatorship and Soviet democracy. With the advent of Hitler, however, the most immediate issue the masses were confronted with was to check the advance of the raging Fascist counter-revolution—the issue now raised was the parliamentary democratic system or Fascist dictatorship.

We Communists have never evinced much love for bourgeois democracy, but when it comes to choosing between it and Fascism, we have no hesitation in choosing bourgeois democracy. More than that, we will organise and fight to defend the parliamentary democratic system against Fascism. Prior to 1933, when the masses were being asked to decide between bourgeois democracy and proletarian dictatorship, the slogan "Defend Democratic Rights" found little or no place in the arsenal of the Communists, precisely because in the circumstances then prevailing it would have meant calling the masses into action to defend bourgeois democracy, the citadel of the counter-revolution. To-day, however, this slogan takes on a totally new meaning and is profoundly revolutionary in character. It is revolutionary in as much as the purpose of finance capital is to destroy even the limited liberties enjoyed by the people under bourgeois democracy, and to arouse the masses to resist this means to draw them into the struggle against their mortal enemy, finance capital.

Undoubtedly the changed attitude of the Communists improved the chances of securing a united front with the French Socialists. It was not this which decided the Social-Democratic leaders, however. It was the French workers, who had learned well the lessons of the German defeat and who, with magnificent initiative, proceeded to show the world how to fight Fascism.

Thus, when in February, 1934, the Stavisky scandals revealed the wholesale corruption and filth in French politics and caused a political crisis which the Fascists seized upon to try and capture power, the French workers—Communists, Socialists, Anarchists, and non-party—came into the streets and fought unitedly against the Fascist bands. The united front movement swept the country and the Socialist leaders, faced with isolation should they stand apart, involuntarily agreed to the proposals of the Communists. The united front movement,

established in the February days of 1934, led to the building of the People's Front, to-day the most powerful factor in French politics. It has delivered a crushing blow to Fascism and given the greatest impetus to the revolutionary forces in France since the Paris Commune.

The People's Front movement is proving a deluge which is not only sweeping Fascism before it but threatens to overwhelm the parliamentary democratic system, so beloved by the Socialists. To fight Fascism is to fight capitalism. In this fight there is no room for class collaboration, the Janus-like feature of bourgeois democracy is revealed and the whole basis of reformism is undermined. The class struggle must be consistently waged and as it mounts higher and higher the masses tend to become revolutionised. They are carried beyond the limits desired by the reformists. Counter-revolutionary fascism must be suppressed but every measure against it is a step nearer proletarian dictatorship. If, to-day, the issue is bourgeois democracy or Fascism, as the struggle sharpens it more and more becomes Proletarian Dictatorship or Fascism.

By their very participation in the united front with the Communists the French Socialists facilitate the revolutionisation of the masses and help to destroy the last strongholds of class collaboration. In view of all this it must be obvious that it becomes increasingly difficult for them to preserve their former role of bulwark of capitalism.

The position in Australia is not nearly so advanced as in Europe. The mass movement is not so great nor the danger of Fascist dictatorship so immediate, whilst distance makes the war danger, which is equally as menacing, seem much more remote. Nevertheless changes of a far reaching character are taking place within the Labor Party, changes which undermine its role as chief bulwark of capitalism. The strikes of the seamen and the Port Kembla steelworkers throw particular light on this question.

The seamen's strike, led by the militants, met with bitter opposition from the most reactionary reformists. They set their course to isolate the seamen and defeat them expecting that this would dampen the strike wave, weaken the blow against arbitration and register a setback to the militants. This attitude was strongly resented by an important section of the trade union leaders as well as the rank and file. Then came the Port Kembla strike, which was led, it is true, by the reformists, but by a section of the reformists who resisted the Labor Party attitude to the seamen's strike. In the Port Kembla strike

the main core of this leadership fought sincerely, diligently and firmly to bring the struggle to victory. We Communists may have had some differences with them as to tactics—their slowness in agreeing to extension and weak measures to activate the strikers—but we had no cause to doubt their determination to see the struggle through. They fiercely denounced arbitration and by effective publicity swung public opinion behind the strikers. It was not difficult to secure a united front in such circumstances, and whereas the seamen's strike was defeated because of the splitting tactics of the Labor Party, the Port Kembla strike was victorious because all ranks were united. Even the extreme right wing in the Labor Party was placed in the unusual position of supporting or, if not supporting, at least not opposing the strike. And, most amazing of all, the "Labor Daily," which was always very reticent about strikes until it opened up its barrage against the seamen, came out strongly in support of the Port Kembla strikers. This can be explained only as a reaction to the seamen's strike, an effort to contrast reformist leadership to Communist. But it was all in vain, for the strikers and their leaders fought not in a reformist manner but in a militant manner. The victory achieved emphasised the value of the strike weapon, whilst the struggle itself brought much nearer to maturity a strong Left wing within the Labor Party.

This latter is perhaps the most significant feature. It means that the differentiation within the Labor Party is proceeding rapidly. It signifies that "side by side with the existing camp of reactionary elements, who are trying in every way to preserve the bloc between the Social-Democrats and the bourgeoisie, and who furiously reject a united front with the Communists, there is beginning to form a camp of revolutionary elements who entertain doubts as to the correctness of the policy of close collaboration with the bourgeoisie, who are in favor of the creation of a united front with the Communists and who are increasingly coming to adopt the position of the revolutionary class struggle." (Dimitrov.)

The strike of the seamen and Port Kembla metal workers provided the background for the 2KY fight and the opposition to the changing of the Articles of Association of the "Labor Daily." This struggle followed right on top of the unity conference in Melbourne, where the differences between the Federal A.L.P. and N.S.W. State branch were patched up. It was quite obvious to any close observer that the Melbourne unity agreement did not come up to requirements. As a matter of fact, it has since been stated by Garden that the Lang clique, during the process of the

conference, tried to break up the proceedings and prevent agreement. Be that as it may, the fact remains that the conference did not get down to fundamentals. It haggled over formulas without taking into consideration the new developments both within the labor movement and without. It covered over the sores making for disunity instead of opening them up. Hence it is not surprising that almost before the ink on the unity agreement was dry eruptions were taking place in New South Wales.

The struggle around the 2KY issue has helped to consolidate the Left wing noticeable already in the shipping and Port Kembla strikes. The group of officials who opposed the policy of the Labor Party leaders in connection with the seamen and who supported the Port Kembla struggle are to-day leading the fight against Lang on the 2KY and "Labor Daily" issue and rallying to their side an ever-widening strata of the reformist officials. A split of far-reaching dimensions exists within the Labor Party, and the struggle seems certain to end with the defeat of the very reactionary Lang clique.

It has been asserted in certain quarters that the present struggle within the Labor Party is but another of the conflicts which break out periodically between the industrial and political wings of the labor movement. There is no denying that this is an important factor. Over a number of years there has gathered strong opposition within the unions to the Labor Party's crisis policy—reducing wages in conformity with the Premiers' Plan, wage taxes, etc. A rift already existed between the industrial wing and the Labor Party, and this accounts for much of the support for the anti-Lang forces in the 2KY fight. This struggle between the industrial wing and the politicians, however, is not the main thing. That which is most important is the fact that this Left wing brings into question the basis of the policy of the Labor Party—class collaboration, takes up a decidedly militant position in relation to strikes, and approaches to a united front with the Communist Party. The present struggle within the Labor Party is at bottom a struggle involving fundamentals, even though the personal element seems paramount, and its outcome will have a considerable influence on the further progress of the labor movement.

Lang is the leader of the most reactionary clique within the labor movement of New South Wales, and his removal would be to the general good. Whilst he retains the leadership of the Labor Party in New South Wales it will not succeed in elections. Lang is regarded with much doubt by the workers, and is distrusted by the middle classes. But more than this, with his

removal it is natural to suppose that a revision of Labor Party policy will take place, and in view of the processes going on within the labor movement this must be towards the Left. At the same time, there must be established, on a firm basis, correct relations between the Parliamentary fraction and the trade unions.

It is highly desirable that the fall of the Lyons Government result in the next elections. It would be intolerable, however, if a Labor Government as weak and innocuous as the last Scullin Government were elected. A future Labor Government will be expected to remove all anti-working-class legislation (Crimes Act, Transport Act, etc.) from the Statute Books, and provide increased facilities for working-class educational and organisational activities; it will be expected to legislate to provide for a shortening of the hours of labor, an increase in wages, and an improvement in labor protection and conditions of work; it must introduce a system of social insurance to provide adequately for unemployment, sickness, and pensions. If such a programme is to be carried out, the trade unions must strengthen their connections with the Labor Party, and the masses must be kept fully acquainted with the activities of any future Labor Government.

The present tendency is toward a strengthening of the connections between the trade unions and the Labor Party. The initiative in this is coming from the Left wing of the industrial movement. The Communist Party plays an important role here because of the positions it occupies in the trade union movement and the influence it exerts on the Left wing. There is little doubt that the future will see a deepening concern on the part of the trade unions in the activities and legislation of Labor Governments.

So far we have examined the position only as it relates to the trade unions. The labor leagues are also in a state of ferment, but the Left-wing element lack that co-ordinated activity and leadership so marked in the unions. Co-ordination in this sphere has become an urgent necessity, for a concerted drive by the Left wing in both the unions and leagues would drive out confusion the quicker and facilitate the uniting of the working class.

Great changes are taking place in the labor movement. The conflict and disunity, so marked at the moment, is a sign, not of degeneration and decay, but of the fact that the ranks of labor are reforming on a new basis. Class collaboration is falling into discard. Slowly but surely the masses are taking the path of class struggle. The change-over is not easy. The labor move-

ment is saturated with the theories of class collaboration purveyed by the reformists for more than two generations. The old ideas die hard. The struggle we are now witnessing was inevitable. It is the class struggle being waged within the labor movement. It is the battle of the class-conscious proletariat and awakening masses against ideas that are bourgeois in origin and spirit, it is the fight against a policy and practice which doom the working class to impotence and perpetuates its enslavement to capital.

The Prelude to War

Hitler Acknowledges the Support of Mussolini; Dimitrov Shows the Only Road to Salvation

THE Socialist press of France and Belgium, in commenting on the events of March 7, reproaches the leading League Powers, namely, Great Britain and France, with having, by their toleration of Fascist aggression, favored the present action of Hitler. This reproach is absolutely justified.

The League of Nations had it in its power to deal with the deliberate aggressor in a manner calculated to deter others from following his example. It could thus not only have checkmated the present aggressor himself, but overthrown his whole system. Even though this would not have immediately affected the position of Hitler, he would certainly have been deterred from aggression. **Mussolini's** attack on Abyssinia thus offered France an opportunity of safeguarding her eastern frontier to an extent which formerly she could not have thought possible. But this security would have been bound up with the overthrow of Fascism and the weakening of reactionary tendencies in the other countries. But that was precisely what **Laval** and **Baldwin**, and probably even **Flandin**, did not want. Thus **Mussolini** not only survived, but could even carry on an intrigue with Hitler and encourage him, possibly even instigate him, to break the Locarno Treaty, guaranteed by **Mussolini** himself. The French people have **Laval** and **Baldwin** to thank for the fact that German guns are now trained on Strasbourg and Metz. The assistance they gave to **Mussolini** has now been acknowledged by Hitler.

The fate of the aggressor of Abyssinia, however, depended not only on the League. A great united movement of the workers of all countries, jointly organized and led by the two political and the two trade union internationals, would have mobilized enormous masses and prevented the sending of any war materials to Italy. Such a movement would, in addition, have exercised a tremendous moral influence over the Italian workers, the Italian peasants, the Italian soldiers. It would have compelled the League to take very different measures from the ones it actually took. The tremendous repercussions of such an all-embracing movement would have swept **Mussolini** away. Both before and after the attack on Abyssinia, **Dimitrov** appealed to the Labor and Socialist International, implored it to organize joint action without delay. In the famous meeting of the L.S.I. executive on October 12, 1935, five parties, among them the representatives of

Czechoslovakia, Holland, and Denmark, prevented any joint international action. To-day these countries are among those which have the most to fear from Hitler Germany. Thus, not only Laval and the French Fascists, but Stivin, Soukup, and Schaefer for Czechoslovakia, Alabarda and Vorrink for Holland, and Christensen for Denmark (the leading lights of October 12) have also received their acknowledgment from Hitler.

The excuse proffered for the coup de main, i.e., the ratification of the Franco-Soviet Pact by the French Chamber of Deputies is so threadbare that it is already being completely disregarded in all international conversations. Hitler's motives can be found in the field of foreign policy and, above all, of German domestic policy. The League of Nations proposed to apply oil sanctions against Mussolini. Thereupon he created a situation in which sanctions would certainly have to be applied, i.e., a breach of the Locarno Treaty was brought about. By reason of the fact that in this case the delinquent would be turned into a judge and even into an arbitrator, sanctions would become impossible both against Mussolini and against Hitler. Truly an attractive prospect which Hitler could not fail to seize upon. In addition, the economic and financial position of Germany demanded a diversion. "The Times" of March 10 contains a detailed description by its Berlin correspondent of the struggle between the economic leaders and the party propagandists. The latter pointed to the unrest prevailing within the party because the Socialist part of the programme had not yet been begun.

"The Times" correspondent writes:—

"The explanation as indicated yesterday is to be found in the internal situation. For some time, Dr. Schacht and other moderates have been pressing the Fuehrer to resume contact with the Western Powers. That way they saw financial and economic salvation for Germany, whose attempt to create recovery and finance rearmament by a continuous expansion of Government credit has foreseeable limits. On the other side was the party, insisting that the Fuehrer should not capitulate to Dr. Schacht and restless because the Socialist part of the programme has not yet been begun. No one is prepared to say with any degree of certainty what the floating debt now amounts to or that the limit of expansion has yet been reached. It is certain, however, that there are serious difficulties in the way of funding it and a deadlock between the party and Dr. Schacht as to the form of the new taxation which must be levied if Germany is to begin the process of bringing

income and expenditure into line. . . . It is said that Dr. Schacht protested against the reoccupation of the Rhineland, and offered his resignation. . . .

"The uncertainties of the internal situation tempt into adventures men who are already adventurous by nature."

However, the Bolshevik bogey used by Hitler as a pretext for the Rhine adventure forced him to return to the programme of conquest as laid down in his book "My Struggle," and to disclose frankly enough the brutal plans of robbery for the sake of which he would be prepared to sign non-aggression treaties in the West in exchange for a free hand in Central and Eastern Europe, where Czechoslovakia has been selected as the first victim. Of course, the non-aggression pacts would bind only the others—for Hitler they are only "scraps of paper." He would attack in the West and in the North no less than in the East and in the South, provided he saw a chance of success.

The significance of March 7 lies precisely in the fact that Hitler once more revealed his plans and methods with ruthless candor. He has played a prelude to the war conflagration which he would certainly bring about if the nations were quietly to accept his present coup without offering any resistance.

Therefore, it is difficult to understand how French and British Socialist opinions, as expressed by Paul Faure, Rosenfeld, or the "Daily Herald," can advocate the course that nothing be done to check Hitler and that negotiations with a view to the conclusion of new "non-aggression pacts" should be set on foot with Hitler as one of the parties. In return, they have had the great honor of being broadcast verbatim by Herr Goebbels over the German wireless. The current phrase is: "After all, we can't do anything if German troops march into German towns." But this occupation of Karlsruhe, Cologne, Aix, Coblenz to-day means the occupation to-morrow of Rotterdam, of Brussels, of Prague, of Berne and Lyons. Is the paper on which the German treaties with Holland and Switzerland are written of better quality than the paper on which the Locarno Treaty is written? The old German custom of "borrowing" foreign frontiers has not been abandoned.

The need of the hour is action against Hitler. Naturally the measures to be taken should not be of a military but only of an economic character, which would have to have the support of the laboring masses of all countries. Both the military and the economic situation of Germany are favorable to such a course. This would sober even Goebbels, Goering, and Blomberg, and would strengthen their opponents. On the other hand, a

conciliatory attitude would merely encourage Hitler's insolence.

But Britain does not want measures of any kind against Hitler. Britain goes even further: the paper settlement of the quarrel with Germany is to be used for the raising of the sanctions applied to Italy, i.e., the intention is to deliver up the Abyssinian people completely to the tender mercies of Mussolini.

This cannot be tolerated. International action must be taken both against Hitler and against Mussolini. This international action must compel the League of Nations to apply oil sanctions, the more so because an effective blow at the warmongers on the banks of the Tiber would at the same time strike the warmongers on the banks of the Spree.

After March 7, even the blind must see that Fascism is aiming to destroy the national existence of the peoples. France is threatened; Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Switzerland are threatened. But it must be clearly understood that Fascism is menacing the liberties of the nations from the inside as well as from the outside. French Fascism has prevented the flaying of Mussolini, and has thus fostered the aggressive spirit of Hitler. Even now, when all the terrible results of this are evident, when the very life of the nation is in jeopardy, Hitler still enjoys the support of **de Kerillis** and **de la Rocque**. They, in their turn, find support among the officers of the French army. At a time when the Bolshevik Soviet Union has become the defender of national liberty for the Slavs and Latins in the whole East, when the U.S.S.R. is the strongest buttress on the Continent of the national freedom of the nations, when the revolutionary working class, the Bolshevik-Jacobins, are the strongest pillars of national liberty. General **Castelnau**, the defender of Verdun, is still using the word Bolshevik as a term of opprobrium. French generals are known for being good tacticians but bad politicians. This deficiency is the reason why they had no correct estimate of the position of the German army even in October, 1918, and therefore could not defeat that army on the field of battle and afterwards dictated conditions which might at best be dictated to an army so defeated. General Castelnau would not open any doors to Hitler, but by his Bolshevik-baiting he is helping Hitler.

When, on October 12, 1935, the L.S.I. rejected the offer of Dimitrov, it limited itself to the announcement of an action consisting exclusively of support for the League of Nations. Since then, five months have passed, and as a result thousands of Italians and Abyssinians have been killed and Abyssinia is menaced with complete subjection. Now, however, things are even worse. To-day the national independence of the Western

and Central European nations is menaced by a war of annihilation such as the world can hardly even imagine. Only concerted international action can stop it, and now **the road shown by Dimitrov must be taken at last**. The representatives of the Communist International and Labor and Socialist International, the representatives of the two trade union internationals, must meet.

In his great speech at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, Dimitrov said:

"Fascism could achieve power above all because the working class was split by the policy of co-operation with the bourgeoisie pursued by the leaders of Social-Democracy and thus disarmed both as a political force and as an organisation in face of the attacking bourgeoisie. The Communist Parties were not strong enough to mobilise the masses without and against Social-Democracy and lead them into the decisive struggle against Fascism."

Now that Hitler has trodden the German people into the dust, do the leaders of the L.S.I. want to permit him to tread down other nations? Do they intend to persist in preventing international action?

The nations want peace, they want national independence and liberty. It is high time to follow the call of Dimitrov.

The 40-Hour Week and the Conditions of the Working Class

By E. W. CAMPBELL

THIS article is inspired by a contribution to the Brisbane "Telegraph" of May 15 and 16, headed "The 40-Hour Week and Unemployment," by J. L. K. Gifford, who purports to examine critically the Trade Union viewpoint on this burning social question of the moment.

Mr. Gifford's sole qualification is that he bears the dignified title, Lecturer in Economics, University of Queensland. It is not out of respect to his imposing place that we pay him the compliment of this reply. Rather is it because his article contains many current misrepresentations and distortions that we join issue in developing herewith the real trade union view.

"There has been, and there still is, a great deal of confusion about the shorter working week," commences Mr. Gifford. How much of this confusion is the result of the efforts, unconscious or deliberate, of "economists" like himself, acting in the service of the bourgeoisie, he fails to relate.

"A mere reduction of hours worked at the same weekly wages (the trade union proposals) could not possibly stimulate every industry to employ more wage-earners."

Here, right at the very outset, our worthy bourgeois lecturer in economics displays his abysmal ignorance regarding the true significance of the trade unions' demand.

His formulation of the question implies that the working class in its claim to reduced hours unaccompanied by wage-cuts is motivated solely by a desire to stimulate industry and thus reabsorb the unemployed.

Such conclusions are entirely erroneous and could only spring from the false premise that the interests of the capitalist class and those of the working class are identical. Unfortunately such ideas are not confined to Mr. Gifford and his ilk. They have penetrated some sections of the labor movement and constitute the source of confusion earlier referred to.

Having thus misconstrued the objective of the trade unions to begin with, Gifford finds it comparatively easy to prove the utter impossibility of these aims being realised without bringing in their train dire consequences for all concerned, including the trade unionists themselves.

"The final result," he tells us, "is likely to be no absorption of the unemployed, a discouragement of further expansion in industry, a rise in the cost of living and a reduction in the standard of comfort. The attempt to maintain the standard of com-

fort for wage-earners, in spite of a reduction of hours, would suffer shipwreck. Fewer goods would be produced, prices would be higher, and real wages would be reduced roughly as much in the long run as if money wages had been reduced proportionately along with weekly hours of work."

It is some consolation that Mr. Gifford frowns with equal disfavor on the alternative policy of 40-hours with wages reduced proportionately.

About this he has the following to say: "Spreading work and wages is a delayed action remedy." We will not weary readers with an outline of Mr. Gifford's "remedy of quick action."

Of this we will only say that it arises from the very thing that Mr. Gifford accuses the trade union case as suffering from. He tells us, with unconscious irony, that "The trade union case rests on a very unfortunate misunderstanding of the economic situation; their policy, if enforced, would fail in both its aims, the standard of comfort would fall and there is nothing in the policy to cause a reduction in total unemployment."

"In their own interests the trade unions should abandon the policy of the 40-hour week, and should realise that their interests in recovery policy are the same as those of the manufacturers."

Here again in clearer form arises the fallacious contention that the interests of the workers and the bosses are identical.

Regarding this "community of interests," Marx had the following to say in "Wage-Labor and Capital": "Capital can only increase when it is exchanged for labor power, when it calls labor power into existence. Labor power can only be exchanged for capital by augmenting capital and strengthening the power whose slave it is. An increase of capital is, therefore, an increase of the proletariat—that is, of the laboring class. The interests of the capitalist and the laborer are therefore identical, assert the bourgeoisie, and their economists." "And, in fact, so they are!" continues Marx. "The laborer perishes if capital does not employ him. Capital perishes if it does not exploit labor power; and in order to exploit it, it must buy it. The faster the capital devoted to production—the productive capital—increases, and the more successfully industry is carried on, the richer do the bourgeoisie become, the better does business go, the more laborers does the capitalist require, and the dearer does the laborer sell himself." . . . "Thus, the statement that the interests of capital and labor are identical comes to mean merely this: Capital and wage-labor are the two terms of one and the same proposition. The one conditions the other, just in the same way that the usurer and the borrower condition each other mutually. So long as a wage-laborer remains a wage-laborer his lot in life is dependent upon capital. That is the exact meaning

of the famous community of interests between capital and labor."

Is this how Mr. Gifford understands the "identity of interests"? Undoubtedly no. He would have us believe that the best interests of the trade unions demand their co-operation in a "recovery policy" of the employers. To this end they should drop their claims to shorter hours and increased wages, as these claims conflict with all known laws, natural and economic. The trade unions, be it said, have had some telling experiences of such "recovery programmes" over the past few years. Programmes that have led to results that are chronicled as follows for the employing class: "Remarkable recovery." "£869,000 losses recouped in 3 years." "General Motors" (heading in Brisbane "Telegraph," May 15).

The achievement of this capitalist enterprise is typical of the process going on to-day. The report goes on to say: "After incurring losses amounting to £869,000 in 2½ years to December, 1932, General Motors-Holdens Ltd. has shown remarkable recovery. The profits for the last three years have more than offset those losses, leaving an average profit of £61,900 for the 5½ years to December, 1935."

Is it to this end that the trade unions must adapt their policy? According to Mr. Gifford, yes. According to trade unionists themselves, no.

Whilst General Motors-Holdens Ltd. and other big capitalist concerns have experienced "remarkable recovery," the wages of the workers remain 25 per cent. lower than pre-crisis levels, and unemployment is as widespread as ever.

Actually, "stimulation of industry," the avowed objective of Mr. Gifford, has been realised to some extent, but contrary to leading to re-absorption of unemployed has on the contrary displayed a tendency to repel larger numbers of wage workers. This because it has been brought about on the basis of capitalist rationalisation. "Rationalisation leads to an absolute lowering of the living standards of the workers, it lessens their share in the product of industry and brings in its wake chronic unemployment." (Resolution of Eleventh Congress, C.P. of A.)

Marx commented on this "stimulation" as follows:—

"With the general increase of the productive capital of a bourgeois society, a manifold accumulation of labor force takes place. The capitalists increase in number and in power. The increase in the number of capitalists increases the competition between the capitalists" . . . "The one capitalist can only succeed in driving the other off the field and taking possession of his capital by selling his wares at a cheaper rate. In order to sell more cheaply, without ruining himself, he must produce

more cheaply—that is, he must heighten as much as possible the productiveness of labor. But the most effective way of making labor more productive is by means of a more complete subdivision of labor, or by the more extended use and continual improvement of machinery. The more numerous the departments into which labor is divided and the more gigantic the scale in which machinery is introduced in so much the greater proportion does the cost of production decline, and so much the more fruitful is the labor." Thus arises a manifold rivalry among capitalists, with the object of increasing the subdivision of labor and machinery, and keeping up the utmost possible progressive rate of exploitation" . . . "The greater division of labor enables one laborer to do the work of five, ten, twenty; it, therefore, multiplies the competition among laborers, five, ten, or twenty times. The laborers do not only compete when one sells his power cheaper than another; they also compete when one does the work of five, ten or twenty, and the division of labor which capital introduces, and continually increases, compels the laborers to enter into this kind of competition with one another."

"Further, in the same proportion in which the division of labor is increased, the labor itself is simplified. It is changed into a monotonous and uniform power production, which can give play neither to bodily nor to intellectual elasticity. Competitors, therefore, throng into it from every side and, besides, we must remember that the more simple and easily learnt labor is, and the less it costs a man to make himself master of it, so much the lower must its wages sink."

" . . . Therefore, exactly as the labor becomes more unsatisfactory and unpleasant, in that very proportion competition increases and wages decline. The laborer does his best to maintain the rate of wages by performing more labor, whether by working for a greater number of hours or by working harder in the same time.

" . . . We have sketched above in hasty outlines the industrial war of capitalists with one another, and the war has this peculiarity, that its battles are won less by means of enlisting than of means of discharging its industrial recruits. The generals or capitalists vie with one another as to who can dispense with the greatest number of his soldiers." ("Wage-Labor and Capital.")

Are not all these factors plainly evident to-day? Most especially stands out the tendency of the capitalists to cheapen costs of production by forcing the laborers to "work harder in the same time."

Capitalism in its period of decline and decay experiences con-

siderable difficulty bringing about a greater division of labor. In fact, it cannot fully utilise the colossal means of production already existing, much less develop them further. Hence the brutal drive to speed up the workers, to intensify their labor, to squeeze a greater amount of energy out of each individual employee within the given working day.

It is with this working day and the strivings of the trade unions to reduce its length that we now wish to deal. According to economists like Mr. Gifford, such efforts are foredoomed to failure.

Such contentions have not even the saving grace of originality. Whilst Marx in his writings showed clearly that the development of capitalism was inevitably accompanied by an absolute worsening of the conditions of the working class, he, at the same time, bitterly opposed those who maintained that no matter what the worker does, no matter how hard he fights, he will not be able to improve his conditions. And there were those in Marx's time holding views similar to those of Mr. Gifford regarding the limitation of the working day.

What constitutes a "normal" working day? How is it fixed? Marx provides the answer in "Capital": "The creation of a normal working day is therefore the product of a protracted civil war, more or less dissembled between the capitalist class and the working class. . . . For 'protection' against the 'serpent of their agonies,' the laborers put their heads together, and, as a class compel the passing of a law, an all-powerful social barrier that shall prevent the very workers from selling, by voluntary contract with capital, themselves and their families into slavery and death."—"Capital," Kerr, Chicago, p. 330.)

Herein lies the key to understanding the present striving of the trade unions to enforce the reduction of hours to 40 per week without wage reductions. It is not with the narrow aim of stimulating industry to absorb the unemployed, as Mr. Gifford would have it. It is with the burning desire to protect the working class from the rapaciousness of capitalism. To put a check to the greed of the employing class. Neither will the trade unions rest content with a 40-hour week. A still greater reduction to even 30 hours per week is visualised in the near future. Nor do the trade unions claim that this will solve the unemployment problem.

Unemployment is the inevitable accompaniment of the capitalist mode of production. Just as capitalism cannot exist without wage-labor, neither can it get along without a constant surplus of supply over demand of this very wage labor. Even in peak periods of capitalist prosperity a certain residue of wage-laborers are unemployed.

In times of crisis this residue increases to alarming proportions. In the present period of general crisis the army of unemployed has become a permanent army and no solution for this problem exists within the confines of the capitalist system.

Is this any reason why the trade unions should give up their claim to a 40-hour week. Absolutely not. The struggle for 40-hours is more than a struggle for a palliative. It is the struggle for a principle.

Speaking about the earlier historical struggles of the working class around the working day, Marx says:

"After a thirty years' struggle, fought with most admirable perseverance, the English working class . . . succeeded in carrying the 10-Hours Bill. The immense physical, moral and intellectual benefits hence accruing to the factory operatives . . . are now acknowledged on all sides . . . Hence the 10-Hours Bill was not only a great practical success, it was the victory of a principle; it was the first time that in broad daylight the political economy of the middle class succumbed to the political economy of the working class."

The present-day struggle for the 40-hour week assumes like significance. It represents the asserting of its right to an increased share in the product of industry on the part of the working class. It denotes the will of the working class to reduce the width of the social gulf which separates the laborer from the capitalist.

"Our wants and their satisfaction have their origin in society; we, therefore, measure them in relation to society, and not in relation to the objects which satisfy them," wrote Marx.

"A house may be large or small, but as long as the surrounding houses are equally small, it satisfies all social expectations as a dwelling place. But let a palace arise by the side of this small house and it shrinks from a house into a hut. The smallness of the house now gives it to be understood that its occupant has either very small pretensions or none at all, and however high it may shoot up with the progress of civilisation, if the neighbouring palace shoots up also in the same or in a greater proportion, the occupant of the very small house will always find himself more uncomfortable, more discontented, more confined within his four walls."

Is this not the case to-day? Forty-four or even forty-eight hours may have been accepted as a "normal" working week in a period prior to the present colossal development of machine production. To-day there are in existence brick-making machines that can turn out 400,000 bricks per man per day, as against 450 that could be produced previously by hand. There is already in the United States a modern flour mill, which if it

were worked at full capacity could supply the present demand for flour in the U.S. (6,500,000,000 lb.) with the employment of only 17 workers.

Is it then surprising that the working class to an increasing extent feels its "confinement within the four walls" of the 44-48 hour week and is demanding 40 and even 30 hours with increased wages.

Can it be denied that the achievement of these aims will not result in immense physical, moral and intellectual benefits for the entire working class?

This, Mr. Gifford, is the real significance of the struggle of the trade unions. However, it is not yet the full significance. Once again, to quote Marx, "The working class ought not to exaggerate to themselves the ultimate working of these everyday struggles. They ought not to forget that they are fighting with effects, but not with the cause of those effects; that they are retarding the downward movement, but not changing its direction; that they are applying palliatives, not curing the malady. They ought, therefore, not to be exclusively absorbed in these unavoidable guerilla fights incessantly springing up from the never-ceasing encroachments of capital or changes of the market. They ought to understand that, with all the miseries it imposes upon them the present system simultaneously engenders the material conditions and the social forms necessary for an economic reconstruction of society. Instead of the conservative motto, 'A fair day's wages for a fair day's work!' they ought to inscribe on their banner the revolutionary watchword, 'Abolition of the wages system!'"

The 40-hour week will come to represent an outpost, captured by the working class, in a preliminary skirmish, whilst marshalling their forces for the major battle destined to bring political power into their hands and thus pave the way for the economic reconstruction of society—for Socialism. Only then will it be possible to liquidate unemployment, clear the way for an ever-upward surge in the material and cultural standards of the toiling masses, as has long since been proven by experience in the Soviet Union.

"Pravda" on Nanking's Protest Against the Soviet-Mongolian Treaty

THE Soviet-Mongolian Treaty providing for mutual assistance in the event of aggression by a third power has given rise to an exchange of notes between the Chinese and Soviet Governments.

Chang-tsyun, foreign minister of the Nanking Government, claims, in his note, that the Soviet-Mongolian pact contradicts the Chinese-Soviet treaty of 1924, in which the Soviet Union recognised the sovereignty of China over Outer Mongolia, People's Commissar Litvinov, in his note of reply, clearly demonstrates that the Chinese protest is unfounded.

At the time when the Chinese-Soviet treaty was signed, the Red Army was on Mongolian territory, and it had been called there by the Mongolian People's Government and the Chinese Government to give assistance against the white-guard bandits who were supported by Japan. The Chinese Government saw in this no violation of its sovereignty, but, on the contrary, came to an agreement with the Soviet Government regarding the conditions of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Mongolia, in the course of which she recognised the fact that these troops should remain in Mongolia until her frontiers were secured. Thus, we see that the Chinese Government realised that—as it was not capable of protecting Outer Mongolia, which was under its sovereignty—it could not demand of Mongolia that for the sake of Chinese sovereignty it should submit to the depredations of bandits, instead of seeking help from those who were able to afford it. Besides this, the Chinese Government had no opposition to offer when other sections of China conclude separate agreements; for example, the agreement between the Soviet Union and the three eastern provinces, at Mukden, in 1924. Litvinov rejected the protest of the Chinese Government and has openly and unambiguously emphasised the fact that the Soviet Union will continue to recognise Chinese sovereignty over the Mongolian People's Republic.

The "Pravda," on April 9, published a commentary on this exchange of notes, and writes as follows in an article entitled, "A Protest Under Pressure From Tokio."

"It is clear that the completely unfounded protest of the Chinese Government took place under direct pressure from Japan who is now appearing in the entirely unfitting role of the "defender" of the interests of China—of that same China against which Japanese imperialism has been waging a war for the last five years or so, that same China whose territories—Manchuria,

Jehol, Inner Mongolia, and North China—have been ruthlessly occupied by Japanese troops.

"It is not difficult to establish that the arguments of the Chinese Government have not the least foundation. First, the Soviet Union has no territorial aspirations whatever with regard to China or the M.P.R. Second, the Soviet-Mongolian pact of March 12, has but one object, the increased security of both countries against an attack by a third power. And third, the Soviet Union believes now, as formerly, that the Peking treaty of 1924 still retains its validity.

"The Soviet-Mongolian pact is directed against no one, for it only comes into operation when either the Soviet Union or the Mongolian People's Republic is attacked by an aggressor and compelled to defend its own territory. It is ridiculous that the Japanese imperialists should complain that the pact represents an "act of conquest" of the M.P.R. by the Soviet Union. The Japanese militarists have long specialised in the conquest of foreign territory. They are the least suited for the part of defenders of the M.P.R. or of China. The Chinese people know who are their enemies and who their real, disinterested friends. The protest of the Chinese Government will remain as an episode in the history of Soviet-Chinese relations which has arisen solely owing to the fact that the Nanking Government is not in a position to offer opposition to the pressure of the Japanese imperialists."