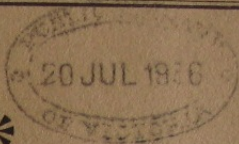


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The Events in the New South Wales Labor Party and the Future

By L. SHARKEY

THE recent events in the New South Wales labor movement have arrested the attention of the working class all over Australia.

The centre of this interest has been the struggle that has been waged around the possession of the trade union wireless station and the "Labor Daily," together with the proposal to found a new paper, now named the "Sunday Express." In the centre of these issues arose political issues of fundamental importance, first voiced by J. S. Garden at a Labor Council meeting, namely, sanctions and the attitude to the Italo-Abyssinian war; and the question of democracy in the N.S.W. Labor Party. The issues were rendered more sharp by the subsequent expulsion of J. S. Garden, M.H.R., by the Lang executive.

It will be seen here that something more than a mere faction fight between the "ins and the outs" within the A.L.P. machine is at stake, which does not deny that there is an element of the personal involved. There is evidence of a growing revolt against the present controllers of the N.S.W. Labor Party. Such a widespread move cannot be explained on the basis of personal distaste towards Messrs. Lang, McCauley, Graves, Martin and Keller, the chiefs and instruments of what is called the "inner group." No, the move reflects dissatisfaction with the barrenness in policy and lack of life in the A.L.P. movement, and lack of success in that sphere where the A.L.P. stakes its all, namely, the Parliamentary elections. The leftward moving masses feel that there is something lacking in the A.L.P.; they are tired of the old stock phraseology and the same old bunch of promises that are never fulfilled.

The tactics adopted by the "inner group" in relation to 2KY and the "Labor Daily" prove the fact of their fear of the rank and file, firstly because they wanted to gain complete control and monopoly of all means of agitation at the disposal of the labor movement in order to secure the dominance of their faction by using them in the unscrupulous manner the "Labor Daily" has been used to attack opponents of the "inner group" within

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and without the Labor Party. The truth of this contention is shown by the fact that the policy of 2KY has at all times been an A.L.P. one and that the A.L.P. was given time on the station at the last elections, according to the statement of Mr. King, Labor Council secretary, to the value of no less than £5000. But the "inner group" wanted 2KY, because they feared that the growing opposition, the growing militancy would express itself through 2KY, and also partly because the station is now becoming a financial success. In the same way, the "inner group" feared that the growing opposition to the editorial and political policy of the "Labor Daily" would result in the removal of the sponsors of that policy from the directorate of the "Labor Daily" and the adoption of a policy by the newspaper more in accord with the growth of militant sentiment among the working class. The aim was therefore one of securing the dominance of the ruling Lang faction at all costs and to secure a position of vantage in the inevitable fight against their own rank and file and against the spreading influence of the Communist Party.

The tactics adopted to achieve these ends equally bore the hallmark of distrust of the rank and file, a clear recognition of the growing antagonism among masses of unionists and even a large section of powerful union leaders, erstwhile supporters of Lang.

This explains the unscrupulous methods adopted. In the case of 2KY, to flood the Labor Council with people of the type of McNamara and also with honest A.L.P.-ers, who in the first stages of the fight imagined they were being sent on to the Council to "clean-up" the past maladministration that has been alleged in connection with 2KY. These workers, after having the position clearly outlined to them, in many cases later became supporters of the policy of retaining 2KY under the aegis of the Labor Council and the trade union movement. But not before a certain amount of damage had been done in the way of electing a reactionary executive, now completely out of touch with the majority of Council delegates, at the annual Council election. The spectacle was witnessed of men, such as McNamara, with a week's delegateship to Council, being pitchforked on to the executive, whilst the two vice-presidents, J. Maloney and J. Hughes, with a long association with Council, were removed by the votes of the newcomers, who knew nothing about the issues involved and had never participated in Council's work.

At the same time, the so-called "co-ordination" plans were announced, and the "inner group" developed its fever for forming

"companies." A "company" was to be formed to control 2KY, consisting of two "Labor Daily," one A.L.P. executive, and four Labor Council directors. At this moment, the "inner group" still believed it had a majority on council, so that the control would actually have meant that of seven who were prepared to accede to the wishes of the "inner group" and annex the station from the Labor Council. Two thousand pounds was to be added to the capital of 2KY from some "inner group" source. J. Maloney at once ridiculed the philanthropy of this offer, pointing out that £2000 was being offered for a station of a potential value of up to £100,000. This, then, was the proposal on which the Labor Council deliberated for months.

The tactics of the "inner group" and its agents during this struggle were as reprehensible as anything in the long record of opportunist intrigue and corruption which has cursed the labor movement in this country. The "inner group" certainly is a worthy successor in this regard to its predecessors, whom it destroyed, the "Bailey gang." Attempts at bribery were alleged, continuous intimidation of delegates; tricky motions that said one thing and meant another were introduced; and McNamara and Kelly and their clique earned the contempt of all and sundry by the frustration of Council's business over a long period and the miserable artifices they employed to frustrate the will of the majority of the affiliated unions. These tactics were boomerangs, and assisted considerably to open the eyes of numbers of delegates to the fact that there was more behind the precious co-ordination than met the eye, with the consequence that the minority at the time of the council election rapidly became a majority and increased until it became an overwhelming majority, which at last rejected in its entirety the "inner group" "co-ordination" proposal, amended the rules of Council to prevent any tampering with 2KY in the future, and finally elected a committee composed of those most strongly opposed to "co-ordination," including the expelled J. S. Garden.

The proposals of the "inner group" in connection with the "Labor Daily" and the proposal to start a Sunday labor newspaper brought out even more widespread opposition than in the case of Station 2KY. The proposal here was to issue 20,000 new shares and to alter the Articles of Association of the "Labor Daily" Company. Opponents of this scheme pointed out that 24,000 of the original "Labor Daily" shares had not yet been issued, and that the conditions of the new issue meant that such shares could be had on, say, a 3d. call, carrying full voting rights equal to the fully-paid-up shares held by the big unions. The

whole scheme was therefore seen as one to outvote the present big shareholding unions and to maintain the present control and policy to perpetuity and to strengthen that control.

This proposal evoked great opposition, such union officials as O. Schreiber, president of the Union Secretaries' Association of the Sydney Trades Hall, and E. C. Magrath, a "Labor Daily" director, lining up alongside the Miners, whose interests were involved by these proposals. Many examples of chicanery and double-dealing on the part of the "inner group" were exposed.

An unscrupulous campaign of misrepresentation and false charges was opened up in the columns of the "Labor Daily" against the officials of the most powerful industrial organisations in the State. The officials defended themselves vigorously by means of roneoed materials and through union journals. The tactics adopted by the "Labor Daily" editor (McCauley) were as unscrupulous as anything that the capitalist yellow press has produced: statements were distorted, false information given out, undue importance given to the statements of petty little heelers, the real issues and the real policies of those attacked were entirely suppressed. McCauley utilised every miserable trick that his long experience on the capitalist press had taught him. The sooner he hies back whence he came, the better it will be for the labor movement.

However, the "Labor Daily" directors' plan was turned down by a meeting of shareholding unions called by the Miners, to the tune of 28,000 shares out of a possible 42,000. A formal notice was sent to the shareholders informing them that the proposal had been dropped. But the pseudo-smart tactics of the "inner group" of Lang and his advisers know no limits. A day or so later, a number of union officials, carefully selected, other than, for the most part, the 26 who had signed the manifesto against the so-called co-ordination, were suddenly summoned to the awful presence of Lang without any knowledge of what was to be discussed or who else was invited, and there Company No. 3 was born, this time to found a Sunday paper to be called the "Express." At the time of writing, the whole thing is shrouded in as much mystery as its creators can envelope it.

Every union leader and the rank and file have expressed themselves as favorable to the proposal for a Sunday paper, but despite this the Lang group will not take the masses into their confidence nor approach the big unions for support. They have endeavored to split the unions, and have succeeded in getting a number of officials of unions to lend their names to the proposed Company, not of those 26, however, with the exception of Brock,

of the Tramways Union, who signed the manifesto against "co-ordination." The attempt to weaken union control over the "Labor Daily" has definitely failed, and the big majority of shareholders are still in opposition to the "inner group" and their plans, and the "inner group" views the approach of the election of the Board of Directors with great misgiving.

The committee of seven representatives of the shareholding unions has now issued a manifesto pointing out that the formation of a new Company is unnecessary. They demand that the Sunday paper be issued by the "Labor Daily" Company, and controlled by the shareholding unions.

Observers are of the opinion that the "inner group" are prepared to divert all "Labor Daily" advertising to the Sunday paper, if started, and hand over to the "Labor Daily" shareholders a ruined concern. The motto of the "inner group" is "Rule or smash," according to these critics. And the evidence tends to confirm such a view. However, adequate steps will be taken to prevent such a development. The fight will intensify, and the "inner group" is expected to break all previous records of abuse, trickery, and misrepresentation.

A feature of the struggle around "co-ordination" was the developments in connection with the case of J. S. Garden in the 2KY issue on the Labor Council. During one of these debates, Garden, as is well known, charged that the "inner group," and especially McCauley (the "Labor Daily" editor) favored assistance to Fascist Italy, and had endeavored to bring pressure on the A.L.P. Federal members to offer an amendment on those lines during the sanctions debate in the Canberra Parliament. Although it was denied, it was in accord with the policy of the "Labor Daily" on the Abyssinian issue and the action of Lang in suddenly announcing, without authority from the rank and file or even the A.L.P. executive, an anti-sanctions policy. Garden maintains his charge, and points out that the questions answered by the M.H.R.'s in the "Labor Daily" evaded the point. Beasley admitted at Glebe that lengthy discussions had taken place, that he was not satisfied with the arguments of Martin (A.L.P. organiser) and McCauley at Canberra, but had requested a discussion with the executive in Sydney. Everything goes to prove that Garden's statements on this point are substantially correct. Garden also charged that the "inner group" was opposed to A.L.P. unity and challenged the lack of democratic procedure in the present-day A.L.P. control in the New South Wales A.L.P.

The "inner group" threatened Garden with expulsion, and in the name of A.L.P. president P. Keller brought up a whole

number of statements made by Garden, such as "Dead men tell no tales," "A night of darkness," and "Lang is greater than Lenin," and others, which Garden claims were distorted by the bourgeois press, but in any case were made years ago and prior to Garden's selection as a Labor Party candidate and election to Parliament. Mr. Lang was present at the conference when Garden was alleged to have made the statement, "Lang is greater than Lenin," but there is no record of any objection by him or anyone else. These were linked up with Garden's charges to show that he is a disruptor. But the peculiar feature of Garden's expulsion lies in the fact that some weeks after Garden's charges were made at the Labor Council and Keller had presented his statement to the A.L.P. executive on Garden, the N.S.W. Labor Party Conference assembled. The 2KY issue was well under way. But Mr. Lang declared that the Labor Council had been fooled into a belief that there was a factional struggle developing in its ranks, and this belief had gained credence because of capitalist press articles and machinations and the activities of "whisperers" in the labor movement. Lang declared that there was absolutely no disagreement and, outlining his company "co-ordination" plans, declared that Messrs. Garden and King would move for their adoption at the next meeting of the Labor Council. Neither Lang, at the conference, nor any of the "inner group," said anything about Garden's expulsion, but as subsequent events show, offered Garden a large daubing with the whitewash brush if he was prepared to assist in the annexing of 2KY from the Labor Council. Could there be a better illustration of the Tammany methods of the bureaucrats than this example of holding up the political guillotine to a man unless he carried out orders dictated by a handful of bureaucrats?

Garden's expulsion was therefore primarily because of his attitude to 2KY. His charges would have been overlooked, together with the past utterances about which so much noise was made, had he obeyed the "inner group" instructions in connection with 2KY. When Garden did not do this, the axe fell and he was placed outside the A.L.P. The Communists hold no particular brief for J. S. Garden. Our attitude has been made clear on many occasions, including his expulsion from the Party, but on this occasion, in taking the attitude he did, he rendered a service to the labor movement, which is something different from the Lang-McCauley-Martin-Keller gang, who simply want to exploit the labor movement for their own enrichment and aggrandisement.

The expulsion of Garden broadened the front of the struggle from the Labor Council and the unions into the A.L.P. electorate

councils and leagues. Here, at the time of writing, the majority endorse the expulsion of Garden, with a number of important exceptions. In many cases where the majority voted in favor of the "inner group," there were big minorities in opposition, which again shows the widespread nature of the opposition. Most of these groups are not in possession of all the facts, and Garden's past leaves him vulnerable to attack, a factor which the "inner group" seizes upon to present the question: "For or against Garden," whereas Garden's case is only subsidiary, and the real issues are those of future policy of Labor Governments, of democracy in the labor movement, and of the united front proposals of the Communist Party, all of which are carefully kept in the background by the Lang group, in presenting the case in this manner. It is in keeping with the tactics adopted throughout. Mr. McCauley (the "Labor Daily" editor), utilising his capitalist press training, acted on the assumption that if enough mud is thrown, some of it will stick. He set out to raise a "Red bogey" after the best style of the Zinoviev letter experts, the Reichstag incendiaries, Stanley Bruce, and others. He relied on this old and tested technique to obscure the issue and serve the turn of Lang & Co. But he forgot something, namely, that the masses, taught by experience, do not respond so readily to "Red bogeys," and whatever effect such scares may have on suburban petty-bourgeois maiden aunts, trade unionists are an intelligent body, and want not Wild West stories but cold, hard facts. And the "Labor Daily" scribblers failed to produce any.

The Anti-Communist League was formed, but its crude and childish efforts were laughed at. The opposition on the Labor Council and in the unions gathered further strength. The "Labor Daily," Lang, Keller & Co. worked overtime on the job of presenting the Communist Party as the enemy. The Communists, it was lyingly stated in their precious propaganda, "had the aim, in common with Fascism, that both believed in minority dictatorship." They wanted to seize the control of 2KY and the "Labor Daily" to establish this minority dictatorship. The Communists were especially concerned with preventing a working-class victory at the next Federal elections, according to this foul propaganda. All this showed that the Communists "are in alliance with the capitalists." Just imagine that coming from a person such as McCauley, the ex-editor of the old "Daily Telegraph" at the time of its most vicious labor baiting, a man who, if removed from his position on the "Labor Daily," would return, like a dog to its vomit, to his dirty job on the capitalist press, and McNamara, Keller and others, cynical

and obvious opportunists, who regard, not the world, but the labor movement, as "their oyster."

But this anti-Communist campaign, in similar fashion to previous ones launched from the same quarter, broke down because it was based on the shifting sands of lies and misrepresentation and sponsored by a corrupt clique. The Communist Party does not strive to establish "minority dictatorships" in the labor movement or elsewhere. Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin have taught that the revolutionary proletarian movement is the "movement of the gigantic majority in the interest of the gigantic majority." ("Communist Manifesto.")

The Soviet Government is the most democratic in the world, Lenin taught, based as it is on the alliance of the workers and peasants, the overwhelming majority in society. The toilers established their own class dictatorship, the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the vast majority, which dictated its will to the tiny minority of overthrown exploiters, whose counter-revolutionary struggle was directed at re-establishing the yoke of the exploiting, parasitical capitalist minority on the neck of the great toiling majority. Yet McCauley & Co. shed tears over the fate of the Tsarists, whose stranglehold on the Russian people was broken; let them weep for the fate of the Spanish parasites, whose ruthless exploitation is menaced by the establishment of proletarian rule in Spain. Let them bewail the fact that cannon-manufacturers and Tsarist hangmen were suppressed by the iron rule of the revolutionary people. All governments and states are dictatorships of one class over another, even if in some capitalist countries this stern fact is obscured by a facade of democratic trimmings. Their talk of "minority dictatorships" was singularly ill-timed, as it coincided with the moment when the new Soviet Constitution's draft was announced, a democratic constitution which far surpasses any capitalist constitution, a constitution which reflects a classless society, an economic as well as political democracy. In its local application, i.e., that the trouble around 2KY and the "Labor Daily" was caused, not by "inner group" unscrupulous Tammanyism, but by the desire of the Communists to establish a "minority dictatorship" in the N.S.W. labor movement (which is particularly brilliant coming from Lang, who is the "inner group's" dictator within the A.L.P.), this charge was shown to be nonsense by the Communist Party's official announcement that none of its members would be candidates for either the "Labor Daily" directorate or the 2KY Committee.

The Communist Party also emphasised its policy in connection with the big problem of the labor movement: the removal of the Lyons and other reactionary U.A.P. administrations,

which are the midwives of war and Fascism and the oppressors of all toilers, from office, and the securing of governments more favorable to the working-class movement. The Communist Party raises the slogan of "Down with the Lyons Government" and sets itself the task of being the chief organiser of the campaign for their removal. No amount of misrepresentation will obscure that fact. The "inner group's" misrepresentations were particularly crude in face of the actions of the Communists in France and Spain, as it is known to wide circles that the Communist Parties were the best organisers, as well as the initiators of the People's Front, which realised such excellent election achievements. They said that the strike movement was an attempt of the French Communists to "embarrass Leon Blum," which is obviously in contradiction to all of the known facts; the menace of war and Fascism, especially, which led to the formation of the "People's Front" after a united front pact had successfully been accomplished between the French Socialists and Communists. However, the mass development of the strike in France soon convinced the "inner group" that they had again "picked a loser," so this witch's tale was also quietly dropped.

The Communists want the removal of the Lyons Government in order to give the working-class movement elbow room for its further development. But the question that confronts the honest left-wing elements in the Labor Party, as well as the Communist Party and the workers, is the question of the character of this government? Does the Australian working class want a Federal Government of the Scullin-Lang-Forgan Smith type, which introduced and implemented the infamous Premiers' Plan, which forgot all its promises to the workers the moment it achieved office? No, most emphatically, a Government of this character does not fill the bill of the present-day working-class requirements.

And this raises the question of Lang and his role in the sharpest form. Recently Mr. Beasley put the question, "Why should Lang go? He has always been a fighter"! But when did Lang fight? When threatened by Governor Game? No! Against the wage-cuts? No, he himself said that during his last term of office the railway workers' income had fallen by 36 per cent.; there were likewise cuts for the tramways, for public servants, for all sections of the workers. Lang voted at the Premiers' Conference when he was still Premier for the Federal pensions cut of 12½ per cent. on pensions totalling nearly £20,000,000, and then exempted widows' pensions in N.S.W. amounting to only £60,000 per year. This was merely a trick to deceive the masses; had there been any sincerity in Lang on this issue he would have fought the Federal cuts instead of

presiding over the session of the Premiers' Conference that agreed to them. He would, had he been a fighter, have fought the landlords on the evictions issue instead of sending the police to aid the landlords. He would not have increased the wage tax to 1/-, but would have made the wealthy pay.

Where does Lang fight?

He has ruthlessly crushed personal opponents. He has fought hard on the 2KY and "Labor Daily" issues, he has fought hard against opponents within the Labor Party and unions, he has fought hard to establish and maintain his dictatorship over the Labor Party. He thus is seen as a determined fighter for the personal domination of J. T. Lang and the furtherance of his own interests. When it comes to a real fight for the working class he leaves this to the Communists, to the unionists, to the rank and file.

The achievements of the People's Front Government in France, partial solutions as they are and only milestones on the road to the Socialist goal, at the time show we Australian workers how far the past "orthodox" A.L.P. governments fell short of what a really workers' government could and should be. That is why the Communists must do everything to aid and assist the honest and left-wing elements in the Labor Party in their struggle, in order that the subservient, time-serving type of A.L.P. politicians shall not be at the head of the next Labor Party Government to disappoint the masses and encompass the break-up and downfall of the government, as they have done on so many previous occasions. The Communists are for the united front in this fight against Lyons as part of the fight against war and Fascism and for the improvement of the standard of living of the working class and small farmers. The "alliance of the Communists with the capitalists to prevent a Labor Government" is as pure a fiction as anything that Edgar Wallace attempted in that line. The running of Communist candidates and the Party's independent campaign does not weaken the united front, but of course strengthens it, as the energy and policy of the Communists will attract to the polls thousands of workers who otherwise would not trouble to vote, such is their disgust with past Labor Government performances. An exchange of preferences precludes any worker's vote going to the capitalist parties. The Communist Party suggests negotiations for an election pact, which could meet any other objections that might be raised. The Communist Party supports the left wing in the Labor Party, because the present "inner group" and Lang leadership, barren of any policy that appeals to the masses, endangers the chances of winning the elections. It is a barrier to the further progress of the labor movement as a

whole; it is the most reactionary section of the labor movement, the bitterest enemy within the labor movement of the united front, and consequently has the responsibility of preventing the healing of the breach in the workers' ranks and eventually establishing one all-embracing working-class party in Australia.

The fight within the N.S.W. labor movement, for the nonce centring around 2KY, the "Labor Daily" and Garden's expulsion, is therefore seen as being but the outward expression of a fundamental inner process of the labor movement, striving towards a really working-class policy and towards a Socialist programme. That is why the Communists have given every support to those who in one form or another find themselves involved in the struggle against the present control of the N.S.W. Labor Party. The results so far have an extraordinary bearing on the future of the united front and of the working class. The friendly collaboration that has been established, and the fact that the Labor Council, the Miners, A.R.U., Printers, and other of the big unions, together the decisive leadership of the trade union movement, are united on these issues, is of the utmost importance and something that must be maintained at all costs, as they must determine the future policy of the labor movement; the Langs and McCauleys are only the straws floating on the stream. These great industrial organizations, acting in unison, will ultimately decide the future. That is why the present co-operation must be maintained at all costs. And the Communists are and will do everything to bring about the necessary revival of the labor movement, fighting for the united front, co-operating in honest, comradely fashion with all that is good and sincere in the A.L.P. and for the strengthening of the trade union movement.

Ernst Thaelmann Fifty Years Old

By WILHELM PIECK

Ernst Thaelmann will be fifty years old on the sixteenth of April. There is hardly a corner of the world where the name of the imprisoned leader of the Communist Party of Germany is not uttered with warmth and emotion by all workers and friends of peace and liberty and where his release is not insistently demanded. Ernst Thaelmann, whom the bloodthirsty hangmen of the German proletariat have already kept in prison for three years, whom they are torturing and ill-treating, has become the symbol of the struggle against war and Fascism, the struggle for Socialism, all over the world.

It was a long journey, rich in sacrifice and struggle, that the Hamburg docker, Ernst Thaelmann, had to make before he grew to be the great leader of the producing masses of Germany and one of the most popular leaders of the Communist International.

As the son of a class-conscious worker organised in the Social-Democratic Party, Ernst Thaelmann came into the Socialist movement in his early youth. He was hardly sixteen years old when he joined the Social-Democratic Party. The indigent circumstances of a proletarian family drove him very early into the drudgery of capitalist exploitation. These circumstances prevented him from following the well-meant advice of his teachers that this talented working-class boy should continue his education.

Ernst Thaelmann began his independent proletarian existence as a porter in the Hamburg docks. He made a trip to America as a coal trimmer, and worked as a daily laborer on American farms. Thus the international character of capitalist exploitation was hammered into him in early youth—but at the same time it taught him the militant life of the international working class. Arriving back in Hamburg, he devoted his whole energy and all his spare time to work in party and trade union. After a heavy day's work and an evening spent in the service of the organisation, he voraciously read and studied the Socialist literature. At first his activities were mainly in the trade union field. Very soon his work for the organisation, his personal courage, his self-sacrifice and the successful way in which he stood up for the workers' demands, won him the confidence of the workers. They elected him to the local executive of their trade union, they sent him four times as delegate to the congress of the Transport Workers' Union. And already in those

days Ernst Thaelmann began his open and determined fight against opportunism.

In Hamburg, Germany's largest city serving international trade, all the shady sides of the capitalist system were in evidence in their most blatant forms. Besides the strata of labor aristocrats corrupted by colonial surplus profits, it was the circumstance that Hamburg was the seat of a number of central trade union and co-operative institutions with their large bureaucratic apparatus which, more than anything, supplied a firm foundation for opportunism. Among other things it is also noteworthy that after the Revolution of 1918 these opportunist elements in Hamburg became the representatives of the most reactionary and right-wing opinions in Social-Democracy. In order to indicate their attitude, it is enough to mention that it was one of the leaders of reactionary Hamburg Social-Democracy (Sarendorff) who replied to the united front proposals of the Communists before Hitler's assumption of power with the provocative statement that he would ten times rather go with the bourgeoisie than once with the Communists.

In the struggle with these reactionary elements in the working class movement Ernst Thaelmann became an uncompromising fighter for revolutionary Marxism.

When the slaughter of the nations began, and opportunism went over with banners flying to the camp of chauvinism and imperialism, the revolutionary worker, Ernst Thaelmann, did not waver one minute. From the very first days he fought resolutely against the war policy of Social-Democracy. In the first few weeks of the war he was ordered to the front. As an internationalist he set out to enlighten the troops, circulating illegal leaflets and newspapers and making a stand against the brutal treatment of the soldiers by Prussian militarism. For this he was deliberately victimised by the officers and given the most dangerous duties in the front line. Even from the trenches he kept in close touch with the illegally operating Hamburg opposition. Together with it he joined the Independent Social-Democratic Party. After the outbreak of the Revolution in November, 1918, Ernst Thaelmann fought in the foremost ranks of the revolutionary workers against the counter-revolutionary troops which Ebert and Noske had sent to crush the workers of Hamburg and Bremen. The revolutionary workers of Hamburg, who recognised Thaelmann's personal courage and daring, elected him to represent them in the City government of the port. It was due to him that out of the 42,000 members of the Independent Social Democratic Party's organisation in Ham-

burg, 40,000 declared their allegiance to the principles of the Communist International.

After the Party, following the defeat of the German proletariat in 1923, had devastatingly settled the opportunists, Ernst Thaelmann, as one of the most popular left-wing leaders, was summoned to the Central Committee of the Party, where he very soon rose to be leader of the Party. Under his leadership, the Party quickly and definitely rid itself of the ultra-left group of Ruth Fischer and Maslow, whose pseudo-radical, fatal policy had done immense harm to the mass-influence of the Party, threatening to isolate the Party from the masses.

With the help of the Communist International, he welded all the healthy and valuable forces of the Party in the leadership and in the organisation as a whole into an iron phalanx, which first flung the Trotskyist gang out of the ranks of the Party, only later to cleanse it with equal thoroughness of the Right opportunists and conciliators.

To all of us in the leadership, and to every single Party comrade, Thaelmann became a model of revolutionary loyalty and devotion to the Communist International, the World Party of Lenin and Stalin. He taught us absolute devotion and passionate love for the Soviet Union and for our great leader Stalin. Thaelmann never wavered on this question. At the October Conference of the C.P.G. in 1932, he addressed the following words of warning to the Party:

"There were sometimes in our own ranks comrades who thought themselves cleverer and more capable of judging various questions than was done in the definite decisions of our World Party. Here I stress with the greatest emphasis: our relations with the Comintern, this close, indestructible, firm confidence between the C.P.G. and the C.I. and its Executive—this is one of the most important results of the inner development of our Party, the inner-political struggles and disputes in the past and of the higher political maturity of our Party generally."

The latest war-provocation by German Fascism recalls to our mind Thaelmann's passionate struggle against war, against Fascism, for an international understanding among the nations, particularly between the working masses of Germany and France. Under Thaelmann's leadership the Communist Party of Germany resolutely took over and resolutely continued the militant policy of the Spartakus-Bund against the Treaty of Versailles. In contrast to the criminal war-policy of the German-

Fascists, however, the policy of the Communist Party is founded on international solidarity among the nations, on peaceful understanding between them, on the alliance of the working class of the whole world. This attitude was forcibly expressed by Thaelmann at that historic mass meeting of the French workers in Paris, at which he had to appear illegally because the French police tried to prevent him from attending. There Thaelmann said:

"Even more boldly and more courageously we shall hold out our hands over frontier barriers to our militant comrades in France, joining with them in fraternal solidarity in a fighting alliance against the war-criminals and their accomplices. We shall not allow the German and French workers to be goaded again into mutual fratricide."

The Bolshevik policy of the Communist Party under Thaelmann's leadership led to a steady, constant increase in its mass-influence. At the elections to the German Reichstag in November, 1932, six million working people voted for the Communist Party of Germany. The Party numbered more than 300,000 members, and it was fulfilling with ever-increasing success its great historical task of preparing the working masses of Germany for the struggle for and winning of Socialism.

The development of the Party to a mass-party with a vigorous Bolshevik character was largely due to Ernst Thaelmann. He was more than usually sensitive to the temper of the masses, especially the Social-Democratic workers. For this reason he was accused by the group around Neumann of "running behind the S.P.G. workers." But Ernst Thaelmann's work was anything but this. Quite the reverse: he tried to make the Social-Democratic workers realise the necessity of the united front in view of the rising wave of Fascism. He tried also, however, to create the conditions for this in the Party itself. At the meeting of the Central Committee on February 19, 1932, he said:

"We say that the revolutionary united-front policy forms the main link in the proletarian policy in Germany. Comrades, a formulation like that is one of great moment; we have chosen it on mature reflection."

And at the Berlin Anti-Fascist Unity Congress on July 10, 1932, Thaelmann said: "The question of the united front against Fascism . . . that is the question vital to the German proletariat." On the initiative of Ernst Thaelmann the "Anti-Fascist Action" was inaugurated by the Communist Party in May, 1932, bringing the Communist and Social-Democratic workers closer together. And yet there were still present in the Party very

powerful sectarian inhibitions among the Communist workers against the united front with the Social-Democratic workers, chiefly caused by the struggle conducted against the Communist Party by the Social-Democratic leaders, especially the Social-Democratic Prussian Government, with the use of terrorist methods.

In these circumstances a number of grave errors were made by the Party, to correct which, on the strength of experience gained in the meantime, Ernst Thaelmann would naturally have acted with the utmost vigour if he had not been prevented from doing so by his arrest. The most serious error was that the Fascist menace was under-estimated and the main blow was not aimed at the Fascist menace as it became more and more clearly manifested.

On the bold initiative of Comrade Dimitrov, the Seventh World Congress decided to divert our tactics to the creation of the united front and the People's Front, and set the Communist Party of Germany, in view of the altered situation in Germany, the special task of revising its relations with Social-Democracy, so that the rapid creation of the united front should become possible.

The working masses in town and country are beginning to revolt against their Fascist oppressors, although under the severe terror this result takes at first the simplest forms. The tasks facing the Communist Party of Germany in such a situation are great and fraught with responsibility. Now is the time, in spite of the Fascist rule of terror and the suppression of all free expression of opinion in Germany, to counteract the mass chauvinist infection and to rally all available forces for the overthrow of this mad rule of the war-mongers, the oppressors and murderers of the working people of Germany. It is necessary to unite quickly and boldly all the opponents of the Fascist rule of terror against all reactionary attempts at sabotage and against all sectarian inhibitions; but above all to heal the split in the working class and to lead the Communist and Social-Democratic workers together into a united fighting front.

The C.P.G. lives on and is working despite the tremendous sacrifices it has to make under the Fascist terror. The heroic struggle, full of sacrifices, which tens of thousands of Communists and revolutionary workers are waging at the cost of the lives of thousands of their best, has shown that the Fascist terror and the reformist policy of capitulation were not able to demoralise the ranks of the proletariat. The fact that the Communist Party has been successful in this is due primarily to the

heroic cadres raised by the Party under Thaelmann's leadership.

For more than three years Thaelmann has been lying in a Fascist gaol. During all this time it has only been possible once—through the workers' delegation from the Saar—for the proletariat to establish personal contact with Thaelmann. The Fascists allowed the visit on that occasion in order to confuse the workers of the Saar, because they thought that the long period of terrorism in prison would have cowed Thaelmann and that he would not dare to speak openly to the workers. But Ernst Thaelmann bade farewell to the workers in these words: "I have been and I am being tortured! Greet the workers of the Saar from me as I would greet them!" With that he showed that the brutalities of Fascist imprisonment could not break his revolutionary fortitude.

The indictment against Thaelmann published the other day is no more than a miserable declaration of bankruptcy on the part of the Fascist prosecution. That explains why the Fascists for three whole years have been continually postponing the trial and now want to abandon it altogether. The latest report concerning Thaelmann's fate should arouse the international proletariat to the utmost vigilance. Thaelmann has been transferred from the custody of the remand authorities to that of the terrorist Gestapo gangs. **This increases the mortal danger in which he is.** But, on the other hand, in view of the publication of the indictment against Thaelmann, the present moment is also favorable for the struggle for his release. If we succeed in raising a tremendous storm of protest throughout the world, it will be possible to break down the prison walls and, as in the case of Dimitrov, deliver Thaelmann from the clutches of the Fascist hangmen. The fact that Ernst Thaelmann has got to spend his fiftieth birthday in the gaols of Hitler-Fascism is an urgent reminder to the anti-Fascists of the whole world that they must intensify to the utmost their campaign for the release of Thaelmann and the many thousands of imprisoned victims of the White Terror.

We greet our Ernst Thaelmann on his fiftieth birthday! Freedom for him and for all anti-Fascists! Long live international solidarity! Long live the joint struggle of the workers of the entire world under the leadership of our great Stalin for peace and liberty for World Communism!

Australia's Fights for Democracy, Freedom, and Progress

By J. N. RAWLING

IX.—"Freedom's Fight of '54."

[Continued]

"We swear by the Southern Cross to stand truly by each other, and fight to defend our rights and liberties."

Such was the oath taken, nearly 82 years ago, by thousands of diggers upon the Ballarat gold-fields. But if that drama, culminating in the climax of Eureka Stockade on a December Sabbath morning in 1854, was played upon an obscure provincial stage, it was influenced by the dramas that were enacted in the mighty theatre of all Europe in '48. From that arena of universal revolution, from that epoch in which the proletariat of the old countries fought its last big battle for its bourgeoisie against feudalism and began to be aware of its own historic mission, thousands scattered all over the world. Many of them came to Australia—among them the bravest of spirits. From Germany, from Italy, from Ireland—full of revolutionary spirit and experience. These were the leaven that strengthened the mass of the thousands gathered on the Victorian goldfields—themselves men with spirit and hatred of tyranny and oppression. There were Irish amongst the slain and within the Stockade; there were Germans, there were Italians, there were Frenchmen—all fresh from revolutionary battlefields or else come from there to seek a new home here in a new land, away from the age-long tyranny of Europe.

In August, 1851, the right of the government of Victoria to all gold on Crown lands was gazetted. At the same time, a fee of 30/- per month was placed on every male on the goldfields. In December that fee was doubled, and the goldfields passed under the dictatorship of a bullying Gold Commission and a villainous police.

The excessive fee was, by 1852, unpayable. A Legislative Council Committee claimed that one-fifth of the men evaded payment. Only a lucky few could, however, afford to pay the fee. Non-payers were often maltreated—chained to trees, for example. Those who did pay were equally hostile to the government and its agents, for the boundaries of the Gold Commissioners were ill-defined, and the bands of licence-hunters would cover the same ground, so that diggers would be called upon two

or three times a day to show their licences—often having to come up from shafts 100 to 150 feet deep!

"Picture to yourself a man working 120 or 130 feet below the surface, and suddenly called up from his work at the order of an autocrat in the uniform of a policeman; dismissed if he had a licence; to be called up again within the next half-hour by some other camp official; and, if he dared to say a word, arrested and marched to the Camp, locked up the night with felons, and fined the next morning £2/10/- for insolence to an officer in the discharge of his duty. If he had no licence, or if he had left the talismanic document in his tent, it was all the same—away he went to the lock-up; or, if not able to pay, was kept in prison for four months in company with felons and thieves."

That is how Vern, who took an active part in the insurrection, describes the treatment to which the Diggers were subjected by the police in their hunt for licences. And here is the testimony of C. Rudston Read, a Government Commissioner:

"To ask a man quietly whether he had a licence was quite out of the question; it must be accompanied by some low-life expression, making, of course, respectable men indignant, and if they remonstrated they would handcuff them and swear they resisted them in the execution of their duty. I have myself had to check men when taking a party out on duty, and if such occurs before officers what will they do at other times."

Again, Henry Brown, in his "Victoria As I Knew It," tells of a scene that he himself witnessed:

"Our conversation was interrupted by cries of 'Police! Police!' and in all directions I saw diggers suddenly take to their heels and scamper. Looking round I beheld a large body of troopers, spread out like a fan, and gradually driving back the flying diggers upon a body of foot-police, who were steadily marching along the road. In their midst were several miners, some of them in handcuffs. As this body of men drew near, the commotion and excitement increased. There was a desperate look of exasperation upon men's faces, and they hooted and yelled, shouting 'Joe! Joe!' Every moment I expected a rush and a rescue. The police, supported by the cavalry, marched steadily on, and it was evident that any attempt to rescue the prisoners would be useless. The whole countryside had by this time taken alarm. Men were running as if for their lives, and

the police seemed to cause as much commotion as does the entrance of a ferret into a rabbit warren. All my efforts to get an explanation from my own party were in vain. Their faces told the same tale of compassionate excitement as those around, but, to my surprise, their tongues gave no utterance to their anger."

The diggers were to be considered, so the policy of the government was, as little more than criminals, as the scum of the earth. But, according to the testimony of contemporaries—both hostile and partisan—it was the police that were the scum of the earth and (this is quite obvious to anyone who understands human nature and society) the diggers were, with the usual few exceptions, quiet and industrious men. The fact that they were where they were—the majority thousands of miles from their homes—betokens a spirit of sturdy independence and plenty of backbone. The police, however, were mostly men of low type—many being the "pick" of that bunch of criminals transported to Tasmania (not for political offences), who were promoted to be gaol warders over the others. Just the sort of men who would be welcomed by a reactionary government to try to keep independent men in subjection, and in turn would welcome the opportunity to exercise their brutality and to make money in the process. For the general consensus of opinion of all contemporary writers—and plenty of proof is forthcoming—was that the police were quite openly corrupt. And the supreme example of the brutality was furnished on the day of the attack upon the Stockade—they even bayoneted the wounded as they lay helpless!

The question arises in this and in similar cases, how far are the powers that be responsible for the deeds of their agents? It is useless for the apologists of tyrannical authority to blame the agents and exonerate the sanctioning body. Here was no unfortunate episode arising from the sins of a handful of police. It was a class struggle in all its naked reality. As we pointed out in last issue, the coming of the diggers heralded to the squattocracy of Victoria the coming of democracy. That squattocracy was determined to keep political power from the diggers, and from the working class generally, and to keep the diggers in a condition of perpetual slavery. They were to work and suffer and starve—virtually as slaves of the squatters' government—and to be mulcted, the majority of them, of more money than they earned. That was the position—and the government in Melbourne was prepared to use whatever methods and instruments it could in order to attain its ends. The police and their methods were the instruments and methods adopted. They were

the only methods that could be employed in order to try and coerce a free people—just as the Black and Tans were the only force that could have been used in the kind of warfare that Lloyd George wanted to wage upon the Irish people sixty years later.

The fight at the Eureka Stockade was not a mere flash in the pan. Nor was it unrelated to the happenings on the other fields. It was, on the contrary, really the culminating point of the diggers' movement, which spread over the whole field. In Bendigo the first Miners' Union in Australia was organised in 1853—the Bendigo Gold Diggers' Union. The diggers there demanded that there should be "no taxation without representation," and scorned the offer of Governor Latrobe to appoint one of them to the Council. They demanded the franchise, a representative parliament, the reduction of the licence fee to 10/-, and the cessation of the collection of the fee by armed forces.

In spite of a demonstration of armed force by the government, the diggers unanimously refused to pay more than 10/- and invited arrest. The government had to climb down, and the fee was reduced to £1 per month or £8 per year.

But the police were still to collect it, and "digger-hunting" still went on. At this time the population of Ballarat was between 30,000 and 40,000. Reform committees and leagues were formed all over the fields. In June, 1854, Sir Charles Hotham succeeded Latrobe. He ordered the police to redouble their activities and to devote two days a week to hunting unlicensed diggers.

Then occurred the incident of the burning of Bentley's Hotel. Bentley was an ex-convict, who kept an hotel at Ballarat. He had in his pay (a) a gang of bullies, who robbed of their gold diggers who went to the hotel and who put them out of the way if they made a fuss, (b) the police, and (c) the local magistrate. A digger named Scobie was murdered by Bentley and his gang, and so great was the general indignation that the police magistrate, Dewes, had to arrest him, but released him on bail. He was brought to "trial" before Dewes and acquitted! The indignation of the diggers then found expression in a big meeting, called together to give voice to the growing resentment at the corruption of the police authorities. A crowd of about ten thousand diggers gathered around Bentley's hotel and burned it to the ground. The detachment of the 40th Regiment which was summoned to deal with the crowd did not interfere, but stood and watched the hotel burned. Bentley escaped.

Governor Hotham was furious with the diggers and with the military authorities on the spot for their indecision. He

sent a trusted officer to the fields with another detachment of soldiers. . . .

The day of the final digger-hunt was fast approaching. On November 29, 1854, fifteen thousand diggers in Ballarat had put into effect the unanimously-carried decision to burn all licences, amid scenes of remarkable enthusiasm and determination. On the following day, the discontent, which the harassing of the miners, the oppressive taxation of them and the constant provocative display of armed forces throughout the mining camps had caused, came to a head in the determination to arrest it all, by armed force if necessary. On that morning, when the police began what was to be their last licence-hunt, a determined body of men faced them—with no licences! There was some fighting, and the soldiers came to the aid of the police. Eight prisoners were taken. The government had thrown down the gauntlet, which the men were in the humor to take up.

There began a search for arms. "Let each," who had no firearm, "procure a piece of steel," said Peter Lalor, the unanimously-appointed Commander-in-Chief, "five or six inches long attached to a pole, and that will pierce the tyrants' hearts!"

Lalor, of Queen's County, Ireland, Carboni Rappaello, of Italy, and others had held a Council of War, and there Lalor gave his pledge to lead the diggers in the fight that had been forced upon them. A mass meeting endorsed his appointment. Then the building of the stockade was begun and very soon the number of armed men totalled 500.

Demand was made for the release of the arrested men and that there should be no more licence hunts. These demands were refused. On Friday, December 1, drilling began within the stockade. Lalor was allotting posts, while a German blacksmith was making pikes! Many of the diggers had aims of creating a republic, and a declaration of independence had been drawn up. Not for nothing was there present the spirit of '48 in persons who had suffered and resented tyranny in nearly every country of the earth.

Confidence that nothing would happen on the Sabbath day was part of the cause of the undoing of the diggers. This, together with widespread lack of understanding of the seriousness of the step that had been taken and the fact that no provision had been made for 600 men from a neighbouring field, who had arrived at the stockade and who, as a consequence, left again. Many diggers left the stockade for the week-end and there left, too, some who had succumbed to the exhortations of the Rev. Father Smyth to avoid violence. So that, when Sunday dawned, less than 200 diggers were behind the breastworks.

The government forces numbered 276—30 troopers, 70 mounted police, 65 of the 12th Regiment, 87 of the 40th Regiment, and 24 foot police. They advanced, their cavalry on each flank, their infantry in the centre—good military practice! Spies having informed them of the fewness of the defenders, the attack was made at dawn. When the attacking force was about 150 yards away, a volley was fired from the stockade. Lalor was wounded early. Seeing all was lost, he urged flight on the others. Some refused until they had placed him in a shallow hole and covered him. It was as well they did, for the body of the German maker of pikes, for one, was found with fifteen bayonet wounds in it—received after death! Wounded were killed as they lay in their agony; men surrendering their weapons were shot in the act of surrender! Between thirty and forty of the rebels were killed.

"The Southern Cross"—flag of the short-lived "Republic of Victoria"—bit the dust, but the sacrifice and the effort were not in vain. The digger movement had results which marked the complete capitulation of the government. Representation was granted in the parliament that took the place of the old Legislative Council.

Lalor, upon whose head, in 1854, a price had been set, was returned unopposed for Ballarat West. On the fields, the licence system was completely abolished. The day had passed when armed police terrorised the fields. Industrially, the miners gained all that they had demanded. Politically, they wiped out of existence the old nominee and despotic government, and in its place there came the parliamentary system and an extension of the liberties of the subject—liberties that we are to-day again faced with safeguarding.

The working class of this country can never forget those who fought and died in Eureka Stockade, for liberty against tyranny, for manhood against despotism, and for democracy against autocracy. Let us keep alive the memory of those men and of that day—December 3, 1854!

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It is of interest and of importance in order to appreciate the social nature of the Eureka revolt to read what was the view of it held by the contemporary press. For this purpose we cite the "Sydney Morning Herald" (representing the most reactionary interests in Australia and, moreover, aping the condescending tone of an organ of a suzerain State to its feudal inferior—the new Victorian colony), the "Argus" and the "Melbourne Herald" (both speaking for Melbourne conservatism), and the "Age"

(voicing the democratic and liberal elements of the population of Victoria).

The "Sydney Morning Herald" condemned the Diggers' Movement even before it knew anything of the fighting at Eureka. Speaking of the events of the week previous to the episode at the Stockade and of the aims and objects of the Diggers' Reform League, it had this to say:

"The Reformers, whatever may be their pretended objects, speak in language too clear for mistake—their friends may translate it as a loyal remonstrance against misgovernment, but to us it sounds like revolution. . . . Those who form a league to dispense with constituted tribunals and pledge each other protection against legal responsibility have proclaimed a Provisional Government."
—"S.M.H.," 7/12/54.

The "Herald," with true class instinct, characterised the attempts of the Diggers to organise against oppression and unbearable tyranny as revolution. And so it was—it was a part of the wider struggle for democratic Government that could only come against the opposition of the class represented by the "Herald." [It is necessary to remember that news took a week to travel from Melbourne to Sydney in '54—so that the "Herald" of the above date—December 7—knew nothing of the events of December 3.]

The "Herald," in the same editorial, connected the troubles on the fields with "riots" and the revolutionary movement generally in England and Europe. It thus endeavored to counteract sympathy with the Diggers by averring that the "troubles" were caused by foreign agitators and disloyal elements from Britain and Ireland. For eighty-two years, at least, then, the "Herald" has been blaming all our troubles on foreign agitators and disloyal elements. How almighty must those forces be! And how dumb and docile the ordinary Australians and the loyal elements! But the "Herald" explanation has often played its part in causing a split in the ranks of the workers.

After news had been received in Sydney of the fighting at Eureka, the "Herald" had this to say:

"Every loyal subject must rejoice in the prompt suppression of the Ballaarat insurgents; every sane man will be glad that, by an early check, the diggers are saved from the gulf which yawned beneath them. The rebels, for such they were, extended their views beyond the griev-

ances of a class, and proposed to establish a new empire! A diggers' empire! We imagine that the distressing consequences of this first appeal to arms will satisfy the working classes that it is not by such measures they can redress their wrongs."
—"S.M.H.," 13/12/54.

Not by such methods! But has it been by any other methods than mass organisation and solidarity that the working class or any other oppressed class has found amelioration of its conditions and finally its emancipation from thralldom? As we watch, as we will in later articles, the class struggles of Australian history and, especially, the big strikes of the last fifty years, we shall see that it was solidarity and determination that won results, and division and indecision that brought defeats!

On the following day, the "Herald" breathed fire and hatred of the Diggers. It called for vengeance and attacked the Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria (Admiral Sir Charles Hotham) because he counselled "moderation" to the commander of the military forces and stated that "public opinion would ultimately be heard." Firmness and the ignoring of the rabble was what the "Herald" advised. Otherwise it saw danger for the ruling class of Australia. Where shall we be if the workers begin to organise? Listen to this slice from a "Herald" leader:

"The conduct of the insurgents placed them without the pale of law. They not only threatened but organised rebellion; and yet the Government has to apologise for an attack on their entrenchments, as if its powers were not conferred for the special purpose of crushing systematic conspiracy [My emphasis.—J. N. R.], much more an armed resistance. Every man who stood behind those barricades with arms in his hands knew that he forfeited his life. . . . 'Public opinion,' His Excellency suggests! This has been the great bugbear of His Excellency. He has looked for public opinion where others have expected public ignorance, extravagance, and bombast. The inferior leaders of the Melbourne public opinion hustle and jostle the worthy admiral, and keep him in perpetual alarm. . . . If . . . the prevailing tone of the administration demands respect, it is no business of a Governor even to notice the censure of spectators, or to compliment as 'public opinion' the ignorant reproaches which drop from the mere frothings of an excited assembly."
—"S.M.H.," 14/12/54.

"The inferior leaders of Melbourne public opinion," forsooth! This was no anti-Melbourne outburst. It was the voice of

reaction against the growing tide of democracy, of which the Digger Movement was an advance wave!

And what of Melbourne? There the voice of democracy rang true. A monster public meeting expressed its sympathy with the Diggers. A meeting called by the Government was a failure. The shots of Eureka found echoes in Melbourne which struck fear into the hearts of the Government. It should be remembered, as indicative of the amount of support and sympathy that was forthcoming for the Diggers, that Peter Lalor was safely taken from Ballarat to Geelong by friends, although there was a big price upon his head and that no jury could be found to convict any of the arrested leaders who were brought to trial!

The Melbourne "Herald" was true to its namesake in Sydney. It urged, without avail, the populace to rally to the Government's meeting and to assure the Government of its support. And, to encourage the "loyal Britishers," it also blamed the whole affair on the wicked foreigners:

"Melbourne's tens of thousands were as one man, and Sir Charles Hotham might have yesterday proceeded to Ballaarat with a mounted guard of armed gentlemen [!] such as never escorted British Governor before. They felt the disgrace to the British name as a wound. . . . If, unfortunately, as we have been induced to suspect, these outrages are fostered by foreigners for their private ends, they may come yet to learn with a fearful force that 'they are reckoning without their Victorian Host.'"—Melbourne "Herald," 5/12/54.

The "Argus," official organ of reaction, followed suit:

"We have admitted foreigners amongst us, with a liberality almost without precedent. . . . **But they should not meddle in our quarrels** [Emphasis by "Argus."]. . . . Let them dig our gold and welcome, but they should abstain from interfering in our national disputes."—"Argus," 4/12/54.

On the other hand, the "Age," while repudiating violence, gave all its sympathy to the Diggers, and voiced its opposition to the Government. It looked upon the two meetings as the test and truly prophesied that the first would be a failure and that the second would, in no uncertain manner, express its solidarity with the Diggers against the Government.

This is what it had to say:

"Two public meetings of the colonists are advertised, to be held to-day and to-morrow. The first, we will predict,

will be a dead failure; because it is avowedly got up at the instance of the Government, with the covert design of inducing some of the more respectable citizens to join in upholding and applauding its proceedings. Let the Government be undeceived. . . . When peace shall be once more regained, and there shall be time for deliberate judgment, the citizens will reckon with the Government. Meantime, they will not pledge themselves to support it; and they will not organise themselves into bodies for the purpose of filling the place of that expensive military force, which should never have been sent out of Melbourne. They do not sympathise with revolt; but neither do they sympathise with injustice and coercion. They will not fight for the diggers; but neither will they fight for the Government. If the Government think differently, the experiment of to-day will completely undeceive them."—"Age," 5/12/54.

[To be continued.]

Improve the Lives of the People

By L. DONALD.

THROUGHOUT the capitalist press statements are being made that "prosperity is returning," there is talk of "better times." The Melbourne "Argus" speaks of a "bright outlook," while the Melbourne "Herald" refers to "a convincing recovery." Economists are speaking of how the depression "has been mastered," while one of them goes so far as to say: "We can once again breathe freely—the dark days of the depression are behind us."

There is rejoicing throughout the capitalist camp, even if there is not universal optimism regarding the future, and general agreement that "all will now be well." The tariff decisions and other indications show that the capitalists also realise that the crisis has not yet been left behind, that they cannot yet follow the advice of the learned economist and "breathe freely."

But they can well speak of "prosperity" and "better times"; they have justification for rejoicing. Production is increasing, profits are rising, dividends are becoming greater. Figures just released by the Commonwealth Statistician for the year ended June 30, 1935, show that the value of factory production has increased from £111,000,000 in 1931-32 to £143,500,000; the number of factories from 21,657 in 1931-32 to 24,211; the value of factory, land, buildings, and machinery has also increased. The value of factory output in Victoria has increased from £93,388,617 in 1931-32 to £108,496,310 in 1933-34. The value of building permits issued in Victoria has increased from £1,125,901 in 1931 to £4,784,465 in 1934.

The growth of profits is shown in the following figures selected at random from various industries: Beau Monde (hosiery) showed a net profit for year ending June, 1935, of £24,024, or 31 per cent. on total capital, despite the spending of a huge amount—£13,000—on new machinery.

In other industries the following is the position (profit in percentages):—

COMPANY.	1933.	1934.	1935.
Henry Jones Co-operative Ltd.	7.8	9.4	10.5
Hoffman Brick	—	1.6	5.2
Kauri Timber	1.4 (loss)	2.8	5
Lamson Paragon	7.1	9.8	10.8
Rosella Preserving	7.3	9.6	10.6
Aust. Cement	5	5.7	10.5

On every hand the rich are growing richer; parasitical shareholders draw greater and greater dividends, the small

group who control Australian economic life add huge sums to their already huge fortunes; luxury and wealth abound for the capitalist class. It is no wonder that their mouthpieces, the daily press, their "economists," etc., speak of "prosperity" and "better times."

But what of the great mass of the people, the workers, farmers, small business people, the overwhelming majority of Australian families? Is there any return to "prosperity" and "better times" for them? Is material progress giving them better lives—better living standards, improved cultural and social well-being, better health and the possibilities to better enjoy their lives?

Let us examine the present conditions of the Victorian people to secure an answer to this question.

The figures issued by the Commonwealth Statistician show that the number in employment has increased from 336,658 in 1931-32 to 449,598 at June 30, 1935, or an increase of 112,940. The total wages bill in 1931-32 was £55,900,000 and for 1934-35 £72,800,000. The capitalist press puts this forward as a "big increase in wages." But what is the actual position? A study of the figures given shows that the average per employee from the total wages bill was £174.84, whereas in 1934-35 the average was £169.34. Thus, while there has been a substantial increase in the total wages paid, there has been a big decrease in the average wages of all the wages-earners.

The same process is reflected in the Victoria figures. In 1931-32 the average for each wages-earner was £165, while by 1933-34 it had fallen to £158. In considering these figures, it must be kept in mind that the years 1931-32 were the period of the lowest depths of the crisis, and that the figures for production, profits, etc., all show a big increase over those for this period.

The extent and nature of the rationalisation drive is reflected in the figures of the Commonwealth statistician on woman and child labor. The number of women in industry increased from 117,000 in 1928-29 to 127,133 in 1934-35. The number of children from 13,800 in 1931-32 to 26,300 in 1934-35. The increase in employment is to a large extent that of child and woman labor and considerably reduces the number of unemployed who are being re-absorbed into industry. The development of rationalisation and the mad quest for greater profits is increasing the employment of children and women, because their labor is far cheaper than that of the men; it is wrecking the lives of the children of the working class, who go from school into the body-wrecking hells of modern capitalism; it maintains and increases

the standing army of unemployed. The evidence placed before the Select Committee which investigated the 40-hours question in Victoria showed the terrible effects of rationalisation and speeding-up upon the working class.

For the workers there has been no return of the wage-cuts filched from them from 1930 onwards, under the Premiers' Plan, Financial Emergency Acts, etc. Despite the increase in production and rise in profits, requests for higher wages are refused by the employers and their Arbitration Court. Figures given previously show that the average wages are actually still being decreased. The Victorian basic wage was £4/10/- in 1929 and to-day it is £3/4/-.

In addition, the workers are subjected to a whole number of attacks, which take a number of forms. An example is given from the McKay Harvester Works, Victoria, where the Arbitration Court has introduced 200 classifications, reducing skilled to the level of unskilled, etc., with a consequent drop in wages.

The general conditions of the workers in industry are no better to-day than in the period of the lowest depths of the crisis—in some cases they are worse—and they are considerably worse than in 1928-29. For the workers in industry the order of the day is rationalisation and speed-up, replacement by cheap child and woman labor, direct and indirect wage-cuts, worsened working conditions and health, and a lower standard of living.

The standard of life of the unemployed workers is, in many respects, worse to-day than at any time previously. The Dunstan Government publishes figures from time to time with the object of showing how it is "liquidating unemployment." The latest figures released by the Government show that there are now 28,200 unemployed in Victoria. However, it is unfortunate for Mr. Dunstan's doctored figures that there is such a thing as a census and that the census returns are available to the public.

The census returns show that on September 30, 1935, the total number of unemployed in Victoria was 89,000. Excluding women and children, the figures of the Commonwealth statistician show that approximately 89,000 unemployed have re-entered industry since 1931-32. For Mr. Dunstan's figures to be correct, 61,000 of these would have to come from Victoria and only 28,000 from the rest of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Dunstan's carefully doctored figures will not bring about a decrease in the number of unemployed, but Mr. Dunstan's actions are bringing about a big decrease in the number of unemployed who are receiving any form of relief.

Under the Permissible Income Regulations tens of thousands

of unemployed are denied any form of relief and are forced to exist the best way they can. Thousands are forced to go to country camps for "relief work" three months in the year, irrespective of health, family difficulties, ability to do the work, etc. Refusal to go to these camps means removal from any form of relief. Those receiving relief are forced to work in return, and in a number of cases are forced to carry out work which would normally be done by full-time workers at trade union rates of pay.

How do the unemployed worker and his family live? The scale of unemployed relief is as follows:—

	Single men	Married men
Benevolent	6/-	9/-
Intermediate	10/-	17/-
Higher rate	16/-	27/-

In the case of families, 2/6 per week is allowed for each child. The various categories are determined as follows:—

Those on the "Benevolent" are those classed as "unemployables," which covers a larger and larger section of the unemployed as the Government extends this method of reducing the relief payments. The "Intermediates" are those who are "eligible" for sustenance work and who are waiting for a call for work. "Relief work" is provided in country camps, single men earning 37/6 per week for three months and married men award rates for the same period. Single men have to find their own food and other necessities while in camp from their "wages," and married men are forced to maintain themselves and a separate home. In addition, there is no payment for wet weather and no opportunity to make up time lost in this way.

The unemployed are supposed to receive issues of wood and clothing free. They are also supposed to receive rent assistance. However, the clothes allowance is hardly worth the name, wood is 1½ cwts. a week in winter, which does little more than cook meals, as the unemployed cannot afford pennies for gas. Before they get rent allowance they must be evicted, and then they must make up the difference between the 8/- allowance and the rent charged by the landlord. As it is difficult to get any sort of house under 12/6 or 15/-, the allowance is altogether inadequate.

A married man with one child would draw approximately £1/4/- per week on the average throughout the year. From this he must pay from 4/6 to 7/- per week above rent allowance, leaving at the most £1 per week to feed and clothe himself, wife and child.

It is estimated that each person requires at least 12/6 worth

of food per week as a minimum. Our family of three must exist on considerably less than half that amount. **Insufficient food, in many cases no firewood for heating the home, insufficient footwear and clothes, no provision for medicines or other necessities, nothing for recreation.** Such is the life of the unemployed worker in "Sunny Australia."

A pregnant woman is allowed an addition of 1/- per week for fruit and vegetables. When she goes to the hospital £3 of the £4 bonus is kept by the hospital. She receives no clothes for the baby. Is it to be wondered that infantile mortality in Australia still reaches a high figure?

The unemployed workers and their families exist on the borderline of starvation, denied the possibilities of a decent life.

The plight of the great mass of the farming population is little better. The prolonged agrarian crisis has brought about the degradation of agriculture; prices of primary products have fallen considerably. Thousands of farmers have been ruined and evicted from holdings, whilst tens of thousands more face ruin and eviction. The great bulk of those still on farms slave from daylight to dark for the benefit of landlords, banks and machinery companies. It is estimated that not less than 66 per cent. of the farming population are in the hands of financiers, and the majority owe large sums to their wealthy creditors.

The position of the Mallee settlers is a clear example of the plight of the farming population. These people who pioneered the Mallee, who cleared it and made it fit for cultivation over a period of years, are being driven off their holdings with little or no compensation. The debts they owe, in the main, are due to over-valuation of land and wrong classification, and cannot be classed as their responsibility. The land from which they are being driven they originally paid rental of £1/2/- per acre for, and this same land is now being rented to big land companies at 4/- per acre.

The Dunstan Government, which came to office as the "friend of the farmer," has taken drastic steps to come to the aid of the "creditors"—the banks, machinery companies, landowners, etc.—with his Farmers' Debts Adjustment Bill, but nothing is being done to ease the burden of the poor farmer, who faces only poverty, slavery on a farm of which he owns nothing, and an existence which is little, if anything, better than that of the unemployed worker in the cities.

The widespread poverty existing among the largest section of the population has a profound effect upon the small business people and shopkeepers. This section depends mainly on the purchases of the poorer people for their existence, and their

degree of prosperity or otherwise depends on the level of the purchasing power of the majority of the people. At the same time the small business man also suffers from the development of monopoly, the growth of the huge capitalist establishments, which take away his business and threaten his very existence. Large numbers of shopkeepers are heavily in debt to the big wholesale houses and are fighting a losing battle to escape from their indebtedness.

The interests of the small business man are indissolubly bound up with those of the workers and poor farmers, and the defence of their own interests demands that they must align themselves with the workers and poor farmers in the struggle against capitalism for a better life for the great mass of the people.

The growing impoverishment of the people, the inability of a great number of families to provide themselves with the necessary food, clothing and decent housing, is having disastrous results upon the general health and well-being of the largest sections of the people. Particularly is this reflected in the children and youth. The supreme hypocrisy of the capitalist class is revealed in their exhortations that the workers should have larger families, the "baby is the best immigrant," etc., when the same capitalist class consciously bring about the deaths of children of the working people, they destroy the bodies of the children and condemn them to a life of poverty, diseases, denial of culture and recreation, they deny to the children of the people all that is theirs by right.

An examination of the position of child and adult health in Victoria provides some alarming material. Dr. Hilda Bull found that 43 per cent. of five-year-old children examined by her suffer from malnutrition. The low wages of the workers and the starvation level of existence of the unemployed, combined with the high food prices, all have the effect of further extending malnutrition, and semi-starvation of large numbers of children has become an established fact under capitalism in Australia and is condoned and extended by the capitalist class and their governments.

The growth of semi-starvation, combined with the condemnation of the poor to life in dark, damp and overcrowded slums, where germs thrive and multiply, fosters a rapid growth of disease and a high mortality rate, particularly where children are concerned.

The effects of malnutrition and the steady deterioration of child life are shown in the following figures:—In 1932 there were nine deaths from measles, while in 1933 there were 13; the figures for whooping cough show 15 deaths in 1932 and 38 for

1933; for diphtheria in 1929 there were 3256 cases reported, while in 1933 the number was 6564; deaths from diphtheria in 1929 were 101 and 1933 126. There are as yet no figures available for 1935-36, but this year has seen one of the worst diphtheria epidemics yet experienced, and it is certain that the number of cases reported and deaths considerably exceeds the figures of 1933.

The figures for general diseases (largely affecting adults) are equally alarming. In 1930 there were 34 deaths from influenza, and in 1933 there were 195 from respiratory diseases, there were 917 deaths in 1932 and 1818 in 1933; typhoid was responsible for seven deaths in 1932 and 16 in 1933. All of these diseases become more virulent mainly as a result of under-nourishment and bad living and housing conditions.

The effect of these conditions is further shown in the figures for infantile mortality. Where these conditions apply sharply (in the overcrowded industrial suburbs) the rate is much higher than in the less crowded residential suburbs. Thus, for instance, while the Victorian average is 40 per 1000, the figures for Port Melbourne, Fitzroy and Richmond, some of the worst centres of poverty, are 92.31, 56.48 and 59.43 respectively, while for better-class residential suburbs, such as Brighton, Heidelberg and Kew, the figures are 21.41, 21.88 and 24.91.

Hundreds and thousands of babies are doomed to death on entering the world, thousands of children are doomed to be victims of diseases, which thrive and grow on the basis of malnutrition, damp, dark, and insanitary housing, lack of proper means of recreation, etc.; the health and well-being of the whole nation is threatened by the continued existence of these evils.

It is characteristic that the capitalist governments can find more huge sums for war preparations and for improving the position of the capitalists, but find less and less for social services, for the needs of the people.

Out of a total of £25,546,979 expenditure from State revenue for 1933-34, the expenditure on public health amounted to only £128,992, or $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the total, and decreased from £141,270 in 1928-29. The total expended for all forms of education, recreation and health administration decreased from £4,409,934 in 1929-30 to £3,572,494 in 1933-34. The expenditure of municipalities on health shows the same tendency. In 1932-33 only £118,661 was allocated for this purpose from a total expenditure of £5,979,712, or 2 per cent. of the total.

The "medical inspection" of children in schools provided by the Government is completely insufficient. Out of 262,417 students in State schools in 1932, 40,699 were examined, or ap-

proximately 16 per cent. The Victoria Year Book states concerning this so-called inspection: "nearly all country schools and some schools in the densely populated inner metropolitan area are visited once in three years." (Our emphasis.—L. D.) The Year Book admits that there are "a large group of schools which have never yet been visited by a medical officer." There is one school nurse to give attention to the quarter of a million students.

There are no figures available for 1934-35-36 which would show the amount expended by the Dunstan Government on social services, and particularly health administration, but this government has given no indication whatsoever that it intends to change the attitude of the previous governments. Its policy is shown vividly in the recent widespread diphtheria epidemic. Immediate steps to ensure immunisation in all schools would have considerably lessened the seriousness of the epidemic and, although it costs approximately 5/- to immunise 100 children, the government completely evaded any responsibility and allowed the epidemic to spread and claim the lives of a number of children; cases were turned away from the overcrowded infectious diseases hospital and affected children were forced to remain at home, infecting others and so assisting to spread the epidemic. The utter callousness and indifference of the Dunstan Government to the interest of the people and the lives and health of the children is strikingly expressed in this single instance, and this could be multiplied many times.

Can steps be taken to wipe out this state of affairs? In the Soviet Union the indescribable poverty, diseases, living conditions, darkness and illiteracy of Tsarism have been abolished, and to-day the Soviet people are among the healthiest in the whole world. The expenditure on social services by the Soviet Government is one of the largest items of expenditure, and increases by millions of roubles each year. It is true that these conditions in Australia are the results of the capitalist system and will not be abolished until, as in the Soviet Union, capitalism is abolished and production will not be for the purpose of amassing huge fortunes for the few, while the producers starve, but will be carried on for the benefit and well-being of the whole of the people. But while Socialism offers the only final solution, at the same time the worst effects can be alleviated, improvements can be effected, a better life can be won by the poor, but to do this the capitalists must be forced to disgorge some of their huge profits and fortunes, the government must be forced to legislate in the interests of the people.

Both the Federal and the present Victorian State Govern-

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Both the Federal and the present Victorian State Govern-

ments have proved themselves to be enemies of the people. Since the Dunstan Government came to power it has passed practically no legislation whatsoever in the interests of the people, but has introduced and is introducing its main legislative measures solely in the interests of the rich. It has worsened the lives of the unemployed by all possible means, it has presented the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Bill, savior of the wealthy creditors and enslaver of the poor farmers, to the farmers, it refuses to consider the report of its own Select Committee on the 40-hour week, it refuses to do anything to improve the conditions of the government employees, it assists in the spread of poverty and the development of disease, it condones and does nothing to prevent the high mortality among the children of the people. The government is a friend only of the rich—it assists the rich to become richer, whilst the poor are driven deeper into poverty and misery.

In the trade unions, in the Labor Party organisation, among the broad masses of the workers and poor people, the question is being more insistently asked: Why does the Parliamentary Labor Party continue to support a government of the rich against the poor? Mr. Tunnecliffe has stated on behalf of the Parliamentary Labor Party that he will not exert pressure on this government to legislate for the people. The Labor Party leadership are to continue their "arrangement" with the Dunstan Government, **IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER IT IS AN ENEMY of the people or not, irrespective of whether it condemns the poor to starvation and death in order that the rich may grow richer.**

But the working class, the poor farmers and other sections of the people have different ideas. From trade unions and A.L.P. branches the demand is being made on the A.L.P. Executive: Force the government to act for the people or kick it out of office. But the people are not confining themselves to demands. There is to-day developing throughout Victoria a widespread movement of the people, a movement which threatens to sweep the government out of office, a movement based on the essential needs and demands of the people, on their determination that there shall be better times and that the rich shall pay.

In another article in this issue the fight of the Victorian workers for the 40-hour week is fully dealt with. The demand for 40 hours is directly linked with that for wages increases, for a return to the wages levels existing in 1929. Also, as the figures released by the Commonwealth statistician show, it is essential that the fight against rationalisation be intensified, particularly the replacement of adult labor by cheap child labor, and the

replacement of male labor by cheap female labor. The working class must demand the extension of the school leaving age, with a government subsidy to parents of the child remaining at school, and equal pay for equal work for women workers.

The unemployed workers are also beginning to take action. Recently there was set up a Broad Citizens' Unemployment Committee, with a number of prominent citizens represented. In the localities similar committees are growing. The Citizens' Unemployed Movement is taking steps for the carrying out of a mass campaign to create public understanding of the plight of the unemployed workers and arouse public opinion to demand that the government shall take steps to provide a decent life for the unemployed.

The chief demands of the Citizens' Unemployed Movement are:—

- (1) City relief work to be provided for city men; country work to be optional.
- (2) The higher rate of sustenance to be paid to all unemployed, whether worked for or not.
- (3) Modification of the Permissible Income Regulation to exclude earnings of children, relatives, and pensioners and bring the P.I.R. up to the level of the basic wage.
- (4) Immediate raising of child allowance from 2/6 to 7/6 per week.

The Communist Party is giving its utmost support to this movement and it is necessary that no opportunity be lost by the unemployed to win the support and co-operation, not only of the working class and working-class organisations, but also of the other sections of the people, and all those individuals who are prepared to assist the unemployed escape from the poverty and misery of their present existence.

Similarly a broad movement is developing around the protection of child health, and recently conferences have taken place in Richmond and Collingwood, participated in by leading doctors, nurses, councils and other bodies and individuals. Committees were set up by each conference, with the task of organising further activities. This movement is now developing in other suburbs, and is attracting considerable attention.

The demands put forward by these committees cover questions of housing, nutrition, medical care of children, etc., and the committees now in existence and those at present being formed are planning widespread publicity and public demand for adequate attention to these questions.

It is essential that as soon as possible these scattered committees be linked together in one movement and that the support

of the people's mass organisations and leading doctors, intellectuals and other public figures be secured for the movement.

The movement which has created the greatest public interest is that for slum abolition. The A.L.P. has set up a Slum Abolition Committee, and a Housing Reform Council has been formed; the capitalist press features from day to day examples of slums and gives publicity to the anti-slum movement; councils are "examining" their districts, looking for slums. All of these activities, if they have served no other purpose, have directed public attention very sharply to the slum problem and its effects. However, there is extreme confusion in the movement which has developed and dangers in the demands which have been put forward.

The main question is that the workers should live in houses which are fit for habitation and should pay a reasonable rental for these houses. Hence the problem is not only one of abolishing slums, but also of transferring the slum-dwellers to decent houses, with no increase in rentals. An example of the effects of "slum abolition" is given from Richmond, where the council condemned a block of houses, but the tenants cannot find other houses at near the same rental and they face the possibility of being turned into the streets.

Again, the demand that new houses shall be built for the transference of the slum-dwellers must take into account the limits of rent that the poor occupants can afford. It is stated that the new "workers' homes" at Fishermen's Bend will be rented for 17/6 and 22/6 per week. Such a rental is entirely beyond the reach of the present occupants of the slums.

The movement for the abolition of slums to be of real value to the slum-dwellers and the working class generally must:

- (a) Connect the demand for the abolition of slums with the demands for wages increases, increased unemployed relief, more money for health, etc.
- (b) Put forward a positive demand for the building of new homes and rebuilding and repairing of slum houses, the money to come from increased taxation on property, values, levies on large fortunes, etc.
- (c) Be accompanied by a demand for legislation fixing low rentals, the amount to be determined by value of the property rented.
- (d) Must make the responsibility that of the government and avoid the racketeering of land sharks, building companies, etc., who will attempt to "cash in" on this movement.

In addition, the Communist Party, whilst supporting every honest endeavor and every movement which aims at improving

the living conditions of the people, must at the same time point out to the masses that the slum problem will only be finally solved when the system which daily gives rise to it is abolished.

In conjunction with these movements of the people for better conditions, there is also a widespread demand for the removal of the shackles being placed upon the political liberties of the people. This growing demand and determination of the people to protect their rights is expressed in various forms. There is a strong demand that the Federal Government withdraw its action against the C.P. and F.S.U.; general hostility has been expressed throughout the trade union movement against the Transport Workers' Act and similar legislation; there has developed a popular demand for the lifting of the book censorship; a broadly representative Council of Civil Liberties has been formed, with the objects of defending the people's rights.

At the same time intense public indignation has accompanied the development of the present inquiry into the shooting of Superintendent Brophy, of the C.I.B., and there is condemnation of the government for limiting the inquiry to this particular incident and not conducting a full investigation into the whole administration and operation of the police force.

Throughout Victoria a broad people's movement is developing around their vital needs and demands. The slogan "The lives of the people must be improved at the expense of the rich" becomes more and more popular.

The Dunstan Government and the Labor Party which holds it in office must recognise that the people are determined on winning their demands. From every organisation, from every section of the people, by deputations and mass meetings and all other means, the Dunstan Government must be told in no uncertain manner: Give us our demands—legislate for us instead of the rich parasites—or get out of office and the people will elect a government that will carry out its will.

In this movement of the people the position of the working class is of vital importance. The working class must be the basis, the driving force of such a movement. For this to be done the working class must be united in its activity. The urgent demand for unity of action of the whole working class comes sharply to the fore.

The Communist Party has, and still continues to, appeal to the Labor Party to discuss with it the bringing about of such united action of the workers and workers' organisations. The demands and movement of the masses at the present time make more urgent than ever the acceptance of our appeal. A united

working class, with the support of the other oppressed sections of the population, would guarantee a government which would legislate for the people and not for the rich, would register tremendous victories for the workers and the whole of the toiling people, as have been registered by the French and Spanish people.

The Communists will strive everywhere to develop the struggles of the people for:—

A universal 40-hour week and increased wages.

Unemployment insurance, as a charge on industry.

Abolition of the slums and the provision of decent housing for the workers at low rental.

Adequate food for all parents and children.

Adequate free medical attention for all those who require it.

A minimum income of £150 per annum for the small farmers, with security of tenure.

For better times and a better life for the people.

THE RICH MUST PAY.

Lessons of the Shipping and Port Kembla Strikes

By R. CRAMM

[The following is taken from the report of Comrade R. Cramm to a meeting of District 2 functionaries.—Editor.]

DESPITE the general character of the seamen's strike against the new award, which considerably worsened the conditions and terms of employment of the seamen, it was defeated. On the other hand, Port Kembla, embracing 3000 metal workers, and confined by the reformists to the one locality, was successful. The victory in actual visible material gain was small, but nevertheless it was a good partial victory. We might ask ourselves: Why this difference?

If we study the seamen's strike, we find that the then main leading officials of the Seamen's Union had signed the iniquitous award and were opposed to the strike from the very beginning. They portrayed the award in the light of a gain for the seamen, and preached defeatism about the impossibility of striking against the powerful shipowners and the Government. They centred their attacks on the Communists, and were ably assisted by the "Labor Daily" and the capitalist press. Even before the strike commenced, the struggle between those in favor of opposing the award by strike action, which embraced the majority of the union membership with the militants at their head, and those in favor of accepting the award with Johnson, Clarke, and Casey leading them, was assuming the character of a tussle between the forces of class struggle and those of class collaboration.

Such a situation did not develop from the side of the militants, who were not concerned with narrow party questions in connection with the struggle, but were doing their level best to win a victory for the seamen. They were prepared to work in unity with all classes of thought within the labor movement towards this end. This was their central effort throughout the dispute. However, despite this effort on the part of the militants and the Communists, the reactionary reformists inside and outside the union developed their tactics not to win the strike for the seamen, but to defeat the militant leadership of the struggle. The traitors within the union gave the lead to the A.C.T.U. bureaucrats and the leaders of the Federal unions connected with the maritime industry to this end, their denial of the strike being used by these people to sabotage the struggle. First and foremost the line and tactics of the reformists were

to defeat the militants, to swing the seamen back to arbitration, and to end the struggle irrespective of results.

Furthermore, the strike, once it had commenced on a national scale, under independent leadership, quickly assumed a sharp political character. The seamen were challenging the decisive sections of the bourgeoisie—the bankers, the coal barons and shipping magnates, the very core of finance capital, the force and power behind the Lyons Government. This can easily be proved if we study the connections of the shipping companies, who their directors and main shareholders are, and so on. This fact quickly brought about the intervention of the State in the dispute. The spokesmen for the Government (Menzies, Lyons, etc.) centred their main attack on the Communists. The line and tactics of the reformists were, in the main, the policy of the Government and the shipowners. Licences were applied, scabs were recruited, and every slander and artifice used to defeat the militant strike leadership and hound the seamen back to work. The combined forces of reaction had as their one main aim the defeat of militant methods of leadership. The Australian Labor Party executive, in the face of the tremendous determination and solidarity of the seamen, solidarity and courage rarely seen in the majority of struggles that have taken place, passed a resolution of support for the seamen, but this was never implemented. On the contrary, the executive demanded that no A.L.P. speaker, under threat of expulsion, speak on the same platform as Keenan or other militant seamen.

That the lack of activity on the part of reformist officials was deliberate there can be little doubt, as their later work in connection with Port Kembla seems to indicate. Comrades, what was the basic reason for this unholy alliance, this synchronising, as it were, of the policies of the bourgeoisie and the reformists? I don't think we need look far for the motive. A win for the seamen, under militant leadership, particularly in view of the political character of the strike, would have meant a big strengthening of the labor movement on the basis of class struggle, a political gain for the workers of no mean importance, with a tendency to encourage the unfoldment of the strike wave amongst other broad sections of the workers who would learn the lessons of such a victory and adopt the methods of leadership and tactics used to redress their own grievances. Moreover, such a victory would have meant the widespread exposure of arbitration amongst the masses, and consequently the exposure of the bankruptcy of reformist policy, which is based on arbitration and other forms of class collaboration. The outcome of

such a victory would have meant a tremendous rise in the prestige and influence of the Communists, a weakening of reformism, and a strengthening of the Party and its organisation. These disturbing possibilities were the basis of the strenuous efforts of the reformists and the ruling class to defeat the militants and their political leadership, the Communist Party.

The militant seamen used every effort, every possibility, to win a victory. Approaches were made to other waterside unions, to labor councils, to the A.L.P. and the labor movement generally, to help win the struggle for the seamen, against the Government and the shipowners, for the defeat of the new award and the retention of trade union rights of organisation. Every effort was made to achieve unity so vital for success.

The Miners' Union rallied to the seamen, organised meetings of all craft union officials connected with the coalmining industry, and although, after a great deal of discussion and granting of concessions, they achieved formal agreement at the top to recommend a general stoppage in support of the seamen, the majority of mine-workers did not accept their lead. This does not mean to imply that the miners were not solidly behind the seamen. In almost every centre they were. This could be gleaned from the numerous resolutions of solidarity and support forthcoming, backed up by concrete monetary assistance, and in the case of Wallarah, a definite strike against supplying coal for scab ships, even after the adverse verdict of the aggregate meeting. No, the decision of the mine-workers did not arise because of definite hostility or lack of solidarity with the seamen. The principal reason for their decision was the vacillating, treacherous attitude of the Federal leaders of the maritime unions and the sabotaging policy pursued by the A.C.T.U. officials and the right wing reactionaries in the A.L.P. They felt, due to the actions of these people, that they were to be made a chopping-block, were to be brought out to starve, while maritime unionists were instructed to load coal hewn by scab labor in small pits. This feeling was also fostered by the coal-owners through leaflets, by the capitalist press, and by Judd, Anlezark, and others. In this we assisted to some extent, as will be shown later by our refusal in practice to react sufficiently to the vile propaganda disseminated. However, this was not a decisive factor, although very important.

There have been distinct tendencies on the part of many militants since the rebuff at the miners' aggregate meetings to be apologetic regarding the lead given. We say, comrades, that this lead was absolutely correct: that coal supplies were

depleted, that conditions were favorable for struggle, and if the miners had accepted the lead given the trade union movement would have won the greatest victory in its history. There is absolutely no need to apologise for such a policy. We must boldly proclaim its correctness and banish all semblance of defeatism over the outcome of the aggregate meetings and lay the blame for defeat where it is due.

During the course of the seamen's struggle, and immediately preceding it, many weaknesses were evident. We knew that the seamen would almost certainly struggle against the new award, yet we failed to draw the necessary conclusions from the lessons of the "Murada" dispute and strengthen our position in the various ports and build up machinery in preparation for the fight. This lack of basic preparatory work prior to the strike taking place was a tremendous handicap we had to carry, and it was one of the factors which gave Clarke and Casey, in Melbourne and Brisbane respectively, the possibility of using their positions to undermine the strike.

In connection with the move to call the miners out in support of the seamen, we overestimated, in view of the attitude of the A.C.T.U. officials and the Federal maritime union leaders, the degree of willingness of the mine-workers to struggle in support of the seamen and against further mechanisation of the mines.

We were satisfied in a large measure to depend on Orr and Nelson and others at the top, to assume that because they held leading positions in the Miners' Federation, the outcome of a call to action was a certainty. Even the "Workers' Weekly" put the question in the light of a certainty a few days before the aggregate meetings took place. This assumption on our part that the miners would respond in view of the policy and tactics of the A.C.T.U. officials and leading maritime reformists, caused us to get ahead of the mine-workers, and as a consequence we tended to plan our tactics on the basis of this assumption. We should learn the lessons of this mistake and be more vigilant, careful, and methodical in our analysis of given situations. Being so sure that the miners would be willing to struggle, we underestimated Judd, Anlezark, the capitalist press, and the coalowners. Our failure to reply to this propaganda, to flood the coalfields with leaflets explaining the true facts, undoubtedly had some bearing on the result, although it was not a decisive factor.

Publicity was another weakness evident during the course of the struggle. Johnson & Co., the A.C.T.U. leaders, Moate and Turley, and a whole host of lesser lights out to sabotage

the struggle received columns of space in the "Labor Daily" and the capitalist press to hold forth with their treacherous propaganda. On the other hand, Keenan and the militants received very little space, particularly as far as the "Labor Daily" was concerned. In fact, even when material from the strike leaders was printed, it was quite often distorted. Despite this, however, we can say with truth, as far as the North is concerned, that full advantage was not taken of the possibilities of getting views in the capitalist press. Very few bulletins were issued, and posters and signs and public meetings, with few exceptions, were absent. Moreover, the type of propaganda issued by us was, in many cases, unsuitable. Exaggeration regarding the difficulties of the owners in procuring scabs tended to be misleading and to weaken the struggle for mass picketing. It was, of course, true that the owners experienced difficulties, but not of an insurmountable character. It is also true that the militants must indulge in greater agitational effect in their printed material.

One of the outstanding weaknesses of the seamen's strike was the dearth of mass picketing. Comrades have raised the point that the waterfront stretches over a long distance, and in view of this mass picketing in its true sense was almost impossible. With this we cannot agree. Whilst it is correct to say that difficulties confronted us here, it is not true to maintain that such forms of picketing were impossible. Sections of the waterfront could have been selected where scab ships were being unloaded, and the whole force of the seamen concentrated on these at a given time. The ability to do this had nothing to do with the length of the waterfront, but depended on the degree of authority and discipline exercised by the strike leadership, coupled with efficient organisation. Who will deny this? Very few, we maintain. Did the strike leadership have sufficient authority to achieve this? Yes, comrades, it did. What it lacked was the ability to understand strike strategy and tactics and the organisational forms necessary to put these tactics into effect. This lack of training caused them, as well as the members of this committee, to fail to estimate and understand the correlation of forces in conflict, with a consequent inability to use the weapons at the disposal of the militants with telling effect.

One of the central points in the campaign to extend the seamen's strike was to get the waterside workers out. Of this there can be no doubt. We are all aware that this move was frustrated by the treacherous leaders of the Waterside Workers' Federation. We are also aware that very large numbers

of the wharves were very sympathetic to the struggle of the seamen. Therefore, we must assume that if mass picketing had been engaged in with any degree of success on given sections of the waterfront, alongside selected scab vessels, it would not only have had the effect of intimidating the scabs, but would also have enthused the rank and file of the waterside workers, with the probable consequence of enlisting their direct support for the seamen's struggle, despite the line of their leaders. Moreover, there can be little doubt that it would have influenced the stewards and the cooks instructed to work scab ships by their strike-breaking leaders, Tudehope and Moate.

Comrades, never again must there be such laxity and failure to grasp the significance of this basic work. In all future strikes, where circumstances permit, the discipline of the strikers must be at a much greater level, the correlation of forces must be more clearly understood, and the organisational problems worked out in much greater detail. We must burn these lessons into our consciousness in preparation for the big struggles that are maturing. There are many other questions that could be developed, but I have time only to deal with one in conclusion on the seamen's strike, and that is the question of relief.

In the early stages of the dispute, there was a marked tendency evident to depend almost entirely on the union officials and the Labor Councils in connection with the collection of relief. There was not nearly sufficient mobilisation of strikers themselves for this work. This weakness was partly due to weak discipline, to a sense of security because of the widespread solidarity amongst the seamen, to an under-estimation of the need to demand that every striker if he desired relief must help raise it, a failure to see past the strikers and into their homes, where their womenfolk and children quickly face starvation after a strike commences, and to understand that this situation is not only a basis for disintegration of the strike forces, but is also a potent factor in drawing broad masses of the strikers' womenfolk into the struggle for mass relief. We spoke of this after the "Murada" dispute in the "Communist Review," but the lessons of the "Murada" struggle were not imbibed. The need for widespread mass relief was only just beginning to be understood in the north when the strike terminated. This was reflected in the visits of the seamen to the lodges and towns in the coalfields, to country centres and to the workshops and localities. The results as far as the work had progressed were very enthusing. If this work had been commenced at the very beginning, who can say what results

may perhaps have come from the miners' aggregate meetings? In any case, we can be sure that the miners would have understood more clearly the reason for the seamen's struggle, and a much better feeling and understanding would have been established between the miners and the seamen, with a consequent greater volume of relief.

However, despite many errors and weaknesses, it can be said with truth that the Party emerged from the seamen's strike greatly strengthened. New units were formed, and the militants succeeded in gaining leading positions in the Union. We must not rest on these successes. A critical situation exists in the Seamen's Union. Clarke and Casey are out to split the Union and form State sections. The possibility of a scab union being formed is a real danger. Such a situation would weaken the seamen and make them subservient to the shipowners. This nefarious scheme must not succeed. Unity of all the members within the union is the keynote of our policy and work at the present time. No stone must be left unturned to achieve this unity, coupled with a systematic campaign to get the scabs out of the ships and to fill their places with union members. We can achieve this objective if we mobilise and train our forces for the struggle, if we remain ever vigilant and on guard against the splitters within the union, as well as those outside. The fight may be a lengthy one, but, before we can speak of the seamen struggling again on a nation-wide scale, it must be successfully consummated. We in the north have many weaknesses to overcome in regard to this struggle for unity. Let us make a real beginning to rectify our work.

Now to deal finally with some questions in connection with Port Kembla. As we have said, the Port Kembla metal workers achieved a good partial victory. Let us analyse some of the questions in this regard. Whilst it is true that the strike was precipitated by the dismissal of the ironworkers' job steward, Annabel, to assume that this was the basic cause of the strike would be altogether wrong. The dismissal of Annabel was an effect of certain causes, the match, as it were, that set the smouldering discontent aflame. Actually, the real basis of the strike was the intense speed-up and union-smashing tactics of the Steel Works management, a policy which has no consideration for the workers, and which, combined with increasing hours of overtime, was driving the men to the point of physical collapse and desperation. Annabel, a very fine type of unionist, had been one of the most prominent in the struggle against this intense drive of the steel combine, a steward who insisted on

the observance of the award and the safety first regulations. His courage in this direction had found him warm support amongst his workmates, because it gave expression to their own feelings and desires in connection with the drive on their conditions. Therefore, when Annabel was dismissed for conveying a decision of the men to the management regarding their refusal to work excessive overtime, this action was accepted by the men as a challenge by the company to continue their rationalisation and union-smashing drive.

In view of similar anomalies in other sections of the plant the strike rapidly spread, finally embracing the whole enterprise. The solidarity of the men, considering the weak organisation, was remarkable. Denford, the State Secretary of the ironworkers, attempted to divert the struggle into the Arbitration Court. But the storm of protest from the men, their strong desire for a definite show-down one way or the other, caused Denford to bow his head to the mass pressure. The men were not prepared to trust the Court with their grievances. Fresh in their memories were the cases of some bricklayers, who were dismissed some months before, and whose cases were submitted to the Court, which has not dealt with them up to this very day. The workers did not want, and would not have, such a position in regard to their faithful job steward, Annabel. Their mistrust of the Court as an implement of the bosses was amply borne out, as we will prove later on.

As far as some of the reformist officials were concerned, the chief factor which caused them to embark on leadership of the dispute was undoubtedly the splendid solidarity and determination of the strikers. Refusal to do so would have meant their isolation. However, it would not be correct to say that all the reformists were actuated by this motive. Quite a number of them fought to develop the struggle and consistently followed a policy to achieve broad activity and obtain a hundred per cent. victory. Whilst confining the strike to Port Kembla, which was a basic mistake in view of the strength of the huge steel combine controlling the plant, and the attitude adopted by the Government and the Court, the reformist bureaucracy throughout the trade union movement reacted speedily to the question of relief assistance for the strikers. And while we can say that on the part of many this occurred from a sincere desire to win the best results for the strikers, we must not overlook elements of a desire, on the part of the reactionaries, to win the strike, under reformist leadership, however small the results, and so counterpose it to militant methods of leadership in the seamen's

dispute, aiming, of course, to undermine the militants in the eyes of the workers. The space given in the "Labor Daily" to the strike was tremendous, when viewed in line with the space given to the seamen's struggle. However, the "Labor Daily" material was very general in character, and carefully avoided any reference to organisational problems and methods to be adopted to spread the work over big numbers of strikers, or how to mobilise other groups of workers in support. We must draw the conclusion from this and from the whole line of the main leading reformist officials during the course of the struggle, that the reformist bureaucracy feared an extension, and took every precaution to avert such a happening. Yet it was precisely an extension, to Newcastle in particular, during the early stages of the dispute, that would have spelled decisive victory for the metal workers.

The Steel Combine also worked hard to confine the struggle to Kembla, whilst dogmatically refusing to discuss terms of settlement with the strikers. Proof of this fact is forthcoming from Newcastle. The Commonwealth moulders, two days before the Port Kembla dispute commenced, had interviewed the management regarding the introduction of a 5-shift week, the same as the general practice throughout the Commonwealth so far as moulders are concerned. However, the management refused them a hearing. The men issued an ultimatum, that if the Company, which is a subsidiary of the B.H.P., did not grant a 5-shift week, a 3/- a week increase in wages, and the abolition of merit payments by the following Tuesday, they would down tools.

In the meantime the Port Kembla strike commenced. The Company backed down and granted every demand 100 per cent. There can be no doubt that the fear of the Kembla dispute spreading to Newcastle was one of the major reasons for this capitulation. Then we can take another example. Rylands, another subsidiary of the Steel Combine, had been paying a bonus to men handling certain wire—providing it was used for making nails. These men were doing the same work but received no bonus, because the company maintained the wire was not for nail-making. The men refused to do the work until the extra money was paid. One of their number was sacked for refusing to scab. The others downed tools. So did the next shift that came on. The firm quickly capitulated and granted the demands, including the reinstatement of the dismissed worker. These points are sufficient to show that the B.H.P. was prepared to go to great lengths to avert an extension and defeat the

Kembla men. From the very beginning they consistently refused to meet the men, despite broad pressure from the Labor Movement, the strikers, and the South Coast business men. The men refused to be browbeaten by the Arbitration Court. The threats to take action against the Ironworkers' Union and its leaders, to fine them and cancel the award, did not shake the determination and unity of the strikers. Here we see the most glaring example of the role of the Arbitration Court as the weapon of the employers against the workers. Moreover, we see the bankruptcy of the reformist policy of class collaboration revealed in all its nakedness. According to the very Act the Court operates under, either one of the parties to an award must cite the other before the Court can take any action to cancel an award and deregister either party. However, in this instance, the Court, in rushing to the aid of the Steel Monopoly, did not wait for the owners to cite the union, but actually took action on their own initiative, contrary to the letter of the "democratic, impartial law" to deregister the union in an effort to assist the B.H.P. to defeat the strikers. The Court in actual fact became both the accuser and the judge.

The outcome of this action has been a widespread exposure of the bankruptcy of arbitration amongst the metal workers, particularly at Port Kembla. The question of direct negotiation versus arbitration, of building the unions and strengthening organisation to force terms from the owners, is being widely discussed throughout the metal shops in the north.

We claim that this exposure and consequent urge to solidify the unions is perhaps the most important gain, coupled with the mass recruitment to the unions in Port Kembla, that has been achieved as a result of the strike. We must further these discussions, straining every effort to turn the Ironworkers' Union away from arbitration and direct it on the path of class struggle. However, we need to be very flexible, to attempt this only on the basis of conviction down below, on the basis of a broad exposure of arbitration and the bankruptcy of the policy of class collaboration.

When it was becoming obvious to all that the policy of the leading reformists of confining the strike to Kembla was leading to a stalemate, the line put forward by the militants of an extension of the strike to Newcastle was accepted. The meeting of union executives and job stewards was the best in the history of Newcastle, due to the activity of the militant Trades Hall Council, and, with the exception of one or two backward elements, was enthusiastically in favor of an extension and pledged

itself to immediately organise towards that end. This meeting frightened the B.H.P., which quickly climbed down off the high horse and commenced offering terms.

Port Kembla achieved a victory firstly because of the solidarity and determination of the men, combined with the support of the trade union movement, which was mobilised for relief assistance; and, secondly, because the militant workers, unlike the leading reformists in connection with the seamen's strike, gave of their best unstintingly to mobilise support, to work for an extension and to organise relief, making their first and foremost point the winning of the struggle on behalf of the workers.

We are faced with the problem of giving serious consideration to the question of sectional stoppages and the tactics to be adopted. In this we can have no schematic, well-defined, all-embracing plan. The tactics to be adopted in each case will have to be determined on the basis of a careful analysis of the existing situation. However, the point we wish to make is that, before any sectional stoppage is consciously commenced, the possibilities of achieving unity, of enlisting support, of being able to extend the struggle, must be carefully considered before the struggle is embarked upon. Where it is seen that, after efforts have been made to achieve unity and extend a sectional struggle in a given department or factory, we have not succeeded, and the employers are procuring scabs, we must be fearless, even in the face of opposition from the strikers themselves, in calling for and working in the interests of a return to work, despite the achievement of no results.

We want the union men in the factories, and we must do everything to keep them there if we cannot broaden out the struggle and successfully combat the tactics of the capitalists. The employers can get scabs, as the Victorian meat workers' strike, seamen, etc., have shown. And, what is also important, the bosses are prepared to spend large sums of money to keep these people in the jobs once filled by union men. Many of the Victorian meat workers are still out, although the strike occurred years ago. Hence, if we cannot broaden sectional struggles, create unity, and keep the scabs out by mass militant picketing, we must not hesitate to end the strike in the interests of the trade union movement and the workers generally. However, as we have said before, there can be no hard and fast rule. Each strike will have to be analysed according to the circumstances existing at the time.

Does this mean that we will not organise and condone sec-

tional stoppages? No! comrades, it does not mean that. On the contrary, we must intensify our work of developing sectional stoppages, meetings in departments of a given works, etc., as the basis for the extension of struggles to ever broader strata of the toilers around the questions of immediate concern to them. In doing this we must strive to prepare beforehand for the development of unity of action on the part of other workers in support of the stoppage, we must be flexible and prepared for all eventualities, fearless in calling for retreat when necessary, and active in gaining concessions for the workers, without strikes where possible. In fact, we must say that if a given set of demands can be procured by negotiation without strike action being taken, we should take the line of negotiation and expose the pseudo left militants who demand strike on any and every pretext. To gain concessions for the workers means to gain their confidence and the right to leadership, means to gain the reputation of being sane, astute leaders. This is a very important question. Continually calling for strikes when they are not necessary is no achievement and only leads to isolation. At the same time, we should be prepared to give the call for action whenever the occasion demands it. Unity must be our watchword. To achieve unity in action we must be prepared to make concessions, but not concessions of vital principle, which would lead us into right opportunism, a tailing behind reformism. We do not want unity at any price, neither do we want formal unity at the top without the masses. Unity to be real, effective and dynamic, must embrace the masses of workers down below, and the Communists are prepared to make big concessions and sacrifices to achieve such unity.

In our efforts to achieve unity in action on the jobs and in the strike struggles, we must pay special attention to the A.L.P. Leagues and the Labor Councils. Formal letters and mechanical approaches to the A.L.P. Leagues must be abolished and our work directed towards making friends and contacts with the rank and file of the given leagues on the basis of united front policy. If this is done, free from sectarian errors, coupled with an ability to be flexible and constructive, we will, without a doubt, achieve remarkable results in our struggle for unity. Labor Councils play an important role in bringing closer unity between the various craft unions. A militant Trades Council is half the battle in the struggle of uniting the crafts and extending a sectional struggle to other unions. They also play a decisive role in the question of organising relief. Hence we must give very careful consideration to the question of the

election of delegates to the Labor Councils. Too long has this matter been considered of very little importance. We, in Newcastle, have achieved some successes in this regard, but a great deal yet remains to be done, particularly in the smaller craft unions connected with the mining industry.

Attention must be paid to this work, closer unity must be welded, and the trade unions must be built up and strengthened as organs for conducting the struggle against monopoly capital and its state, against finance capital, which is spreading its tentacles over the whole of Australian industry and commerce.

The utmost unity is necessary for success, as victories, in view of what has been said, are not going to be so easy to achieve in the future. The gloves are off. The class struggle will continue to grow sharper and more violent. We must prepare the Party and the masses for the struggles that loom ahead.

The United Front in South Australia

By M.

"THE Victorian Branch of the Labor Party does well to be adamant in its refusal to give any countenance to Communism." Thus the Adelaide "Advertiser" of April 17, 1936. This organ of the South Australian bourgeoisie urges the "need to divorce the Australian peace movement as rapidly and completely as possible from the Council Against War and Fascism and all similar organisations."

These statements should make clear in whose interests is the division in the ranks of the workers brought about by the Victorian leaders of the Labor Party (an attitude approved and encouraged, to their discredit be it said, by some labor leaders elsewhere). Disunity of the workers means added strength for the capitalists. When, therefore, the capitalist class deigns to approve one side or the other in a workers' controversy, the creators of the division stand revealed.

"Divorce the Australian peace movement from the C.A.W.F."!!—at a time when it is clear to all that united struggle against war is the only hope for the working class, for humanity as a whole; at the end of a period when the Movement Against War and Fascism is the only organisation in Australia which has consistently conducted an active campaign against war and war preparations, which has succeeded in rallying large masses of people to its banner. "Divorce, division, disunity"—these are and have ever been the watchwords of the capitalists in their fight against the working class, and it was as a counter to these that Marx and Engels issued in 1848 the ever-living slogan, "Workers of all lands, unite!"

The slogan is to-day more than ever a clarion call to action. All over the capitalist world there are friction points, even actual wars, any one of which may lead to a new world war, to a war of imperialist intervention against the workers' fatherland. The poison gas spread by Fascist Italy over Abyssinia may easily overwhelm other nations; Fascist Germany, encouraged by the success of Italy, makes renewed threats against France, Austria, and the Soviet Union; militarist Japan presses forward in China and to the attack against the Soviet Union; Great Britain barely conceals her support for the organising of a huge army in Germany, and for Japan's establishment of an anti-Soviet base in Manchuria. To this policy which threatens to enmesh the people pursuing it in bloodier world war, Lyons has pledged Australia.

Australia can be saved from this catastrophe only by united

action of her working class and the Australian masses generally against Lyons's preparations for conflict, linked up with international working-class action against the Fascist aggressors.

Unity of working-class action on an international scale is now not only a possibility but a living fact. It was this that defeated the robbers' peace proposed by Hoare and Laval; carried further, it could have prevented the Fascist military victory in Abyssinia; it can still ensure that no reward is paid for aggression. The Soviet Union, the mighty People's Fronts of France and Spain, stand as powerful supports of international working-class action against Fascism, and round them the workers of the world are rallying.

It is precisely those who stand for international solidarity, for international united action, who in Australia are being attacked by Labor Party leaders and others who wish to replace Marx's slogan with the capitalist one of "Divide"! The proposals for unity are being advanced by those who support both national and international unity, who have proved, in their attitude on sanctions, in step with the majorities of workers everywhere. Those who attack international unity, by preaching "isolation," also attack national unity against war, and rebuff even the generous offers of democratic amalgamation made by the Movement Against War and Fascism.

In these circumstances the position of the anti-war forces in South Australia is of particular importance to all workers. Here the S.A. Council Against War and Fascism is and has been from the outset of its career an integral part of the Australian Movement Against War and Fascism. As such it is by axiom proclaimed a "Communist body" by the A.L.P. executive in Victoria. Yet what was its genesis?

The first move for this anti-war organisation came in 1933 when the United Trades and Labor Council of Adelaide resolved, in view of the menacing war situation, to call a conference of all bodies interested in building up a front against war. At this conference 21 organisations were represented, the overwhelming majority coming from the trade union movement, with representatives from the A.L.P. and the Communist Party. Representatives from each of the organisations attending were elected to constitute the nucleus of a Council Against War, with full power to add to their numbers. At a later Congress where the decision was made to take up also the struggle against Fascism, the A.L.P. representatives were well to the fore. The Council has to its credit steady work over a long period, culminating in the organisation of a successful torchlight demonstration on

August 1, 1935, which brought back some of the spirit of the stirring days of the fight against conscription.

On the principle of collective security, the South Australian C.A.W.F. has from the first stood four-square behind the National Committee. The Trades and Labor Council supported wholeheartedly the line of application of sanctions combined with working-class action against the Fascist aggressor, and although the A.L.P. here made no official declaration on the question, the public and private utterances of individual members left no room for doubt that they were in full accord with the working-class majority throughout the world.

The South Australian delegates to the A.C.T.U. Congress last year returned home disgusted with the failure of the Congress majority to face up to the practical implications of the policy laid down by them for working-class action against war. At the Trades and Labor Council meeting, where the report of the A.C.T.U. Congress was presented, a motion by T. Garland (delegate from the Amalgamated Engineering Union and also secretary of the C.A.W.F.) that "to consider ways and means of further strengthening anti-war organisation in South Australia a conference should be called with representatives from the Trades and Labor Council, the A.L.P., and the C.A.W.F.," was carried.

As a result of this conference, the A.L.P. and Trades and Labor Council issued a call to all their affiliated bodies to affiliate to the C.A.W.F. The A.L.P. proceeded to set an example to its local committees by immediately paying down its affiliation fees for the current year. The Country Conference of the A.L.P. held during the Easter week-end at Gawler enthusiastically endorsed the action of the executive. So far, notice of affiliation to the C.A.W.F. has been received from the Australian Railways Union, the Painters and Decorators', Printers', and Coachmakers' Unions, which were not previously affiliated. Country branches of the A.L.P. have also written to the C.A.W.F. asking what they can do to assist in its activity.

The Communist Party has devoted its energies over this period to bringing about some form of united action against war and Fascism in the localities. For instance, at Hindmarsh, the Communist Party unit asked for a discussion with representatives from the A.L.P. local (Brompton and Bowden) on building an effective anti-war organisation in their area. As a result of this discussion, a conference of local organisations and individuals interested has been jointly arranged. Adelaide City unit has proposed to the City organisation of the A.L.P. the issue of a joint leaflet to workers and other residents in that area.

Active support is therefore forthcoming for the struggle against war and Fascism from the two political parties who influence large sections of the working class. Agreement between these augurs exceedingly well for the future of the united front against war and Fascism. Such unity must exercise a tremendous influence over sections of the people not directly associated with either the A.L.P. or the C.P. of A., by inspiring them with confidence in the strength of the working class and in its ability to organise. An instance is found in the meeting arranged for May 24 in the Adelaide Town Hall by the Women's Non-Party Association, at the suggestion of the Council Against War and Fascism. The meeting was the answer of the women of South Australia to the appeal of the Abyssinian princess.

May Day, 1936, in Adelaide showed clearly the excellent basis that exists for a mighty united front against the twin evils of war and Fascism. The May Day rally in the Botanic Park, organised jointly by the A.L.P. and the C.P. of A. at the instance of the latter, saw the lining-up of working-class political and industrial forces together to celebrate this day of workers' struggle. On the platform were officially-endorsed representatives of the Labor Party, Communist Party, United Trades and Labor Council, Port Adelaide District Trades and Labor Council, and the Movement Against War and Fascism, and the word "unity," whenever pronounced, was greeted with spontaneous applause by the hundreds of workers present.

"An attack against one is an attack against all," were the words of a prominent worker in the trade union movement when asked his attitude to the Lyons Government's attack on the Communist Party. The organised workers of South Australia realise this, and already motions demanding the withdrawal of the charges against the Communist Party and the Friends of the Soviet Union have been carried by the United Trades and Labor Council, Port Adelaide District Trades and Labor Council, Tramway Employees, Sheet-Metal Workers, Blind Workers, Painters and Decorators, Central Council of Unemployed, Port Adelaide General Unemployed, and the **South Australian Labor Party**. The A.L.P. regretted that a donation to the Defence Fund was impossible because of their own financial straits; but the Tramways Union and the Sheet-Metal Workers both made donations. Indications therefore are that the Federal Government will not succeed in dividing the working-class organisations here and thus isolating the Com-

munist Party; a united front is being formed against the Fascist tendencies of Lyons, Menzies, Latham & Co.

Perhaps the most outstanding recognition of the need for united action to defend the interest of the toilers is shown in Hindmarsh. The Brompton-Bowden A.L.P. local is assisting in the organisation of a campaign by the local unemployed association, from which, two years ago, unemployed members of the Communist Party were excluded, because of their political affiliations, at the instigation of a Labor Mayor with the support of Labor Councillors. The A.L.P. local has now extended an invitation to the Party to take part in the campaign.

The barriers are now down between the two parties. What remains is the formulation of a plan for united activity of working-class and other mass organisations against Fascism and war. The forthcoming State Congress of the Movement Against War and Fascism, to which both political parties are affiliated, offers the opportunity for this. Let this Congress on July 13 and 14 see the hammering out of a line of action which can be pursued step by step to the defeat of the war-mongering Lyons Government and of the State (Butler) Government, which is just entering upon the extended life of two years which it had the audacity to vote itself in flagrant disregard of democratic rights.

The development of united action in the localities after the examples already given, within the unions and throughout industry generally, should enable practical experience to be brought to bear in the hammering out of the line. And activity is more than ever urgently needed in the face of the daily threats, ever more menacing, of a new world holocaust, which can only be staved off by clear and direct action against aggression or any preparations for aggression wherever and whenever they occur.

The Treaty Between the U.S.S.R. and the Mongolian People's Republic

THE full text of the treaty of mutual assistance signed on March 12 at Ulanbator between the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic (M.P.R.) reads as follows:—

* * *

The governments of the U.S.S.R. and of the M.P.R., basing themselves upon the relations of unalterable friendship which exist between their countries since 1921, when the territory of the M.P.R. was liberated with the support of the Red Army from the white-guard bands who were connected with the forces which had invaded the territory of the U.S.S.R., and guided by the desire to maintain peace in the Far East and to strengthen and further the friendly relations now existing between them, have decided to establish in the form of the present protocol the gentlemen's agreement between them, existing since November 27, 1934, providing for mutual support by every means in averting and preventing the danger of a military attack, as well as for mutual aid and support in the event of an attack by any third power upon the M.P.R., to which effect they sign the present protocol.

Article I.

In the event of a menace of attack upon the territory of the U.S.S.R. or the M.P.R. on the part of a third power, the two governments undertake immediately to consider jointly the situation that has arisen and take all those measures which should be necessary for the protection and security of their territories.

Article II.

The governments of the U.S.S.R. and of the M.P.R. undertake in the event of a military attack upon one of the contracting parties to render each other every assistance, including military assistance.

Article III.

The governments of the U.S.S.R. and of the M.P.R. regard it as a matter of course that the troops of either Powers, which, upon grounds of mutual agreement, in fulfilment of obligations defined in Articles I. and II. may find themselves upon the territory of the other party, shall withdraw from the said territory as soon as the emergency has ceased, as happened in 1925 with

regard to the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the territory of the M.P.R.

Article IV.

This protocol comes into force from the moment of its signature, and will have effect for a period of ten years from this time.

"Isvestia" on the Soviet-Mongolian Pact

"Isvestia" writes as follows with regard to the Soviet-Mongolian treaty:

The pact of mutual assistance between the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic represents a model example of the undeterred and consistent struggle of the Bolsheviks for peace; it is a shining example of support for a friendly, peaceful people which is heroically struggling on behalf of its independence and its right to exist. The treaty is based upon complete equality of rights and mutuality.

Fifteen years of close friendly relations link together the two peoples. In 1921 these relations developed into a joint struggle against a joint enemy when, upon the request of the Mongolian government, the Soviet government despatched Red troops to Outer Mongolia, which, together with the Mongolian revolutionary people's army, destroyed the robber bands of Ungern-Sternberg, the mercenary of the Japanese interventionists who desired to convert the Mongolian people and Outer Mongolia into a Japanese colony as a basis for eventual attacks upon the Soviet Union by Japanese imperialism. Upon the request of the Mongolian government, the Soviet government, in the same year, gave its consent to a portion of its troops remaining temporarily on the territory of the Mongolian People's Republic. In the beginning of 1925, however, as soon as the situation in the Far East rendered superfluous the further maintenance of Red troops in Outer Mongolia, the Soviet Union, in agreement with the Mongolian government, withdrew its troops. In the note of the Mongolian government of February 27, 1925, in which it "expressed its agreement with the withdrawal of the troops of the Red Army of the fraternal Soviet Union at present on the territory of the M.P.R.," we find the following estimation of the assistance rendered by the Soviet Union:

"The government, in the name of the Mongolian people, recognises with profound satisfaction and gratitude the unforgettable services rendered to the Mongolian people by the Red Army. The Red Army stood by it in the repelling of the plundering oppressors; it helped it along

the path towards the unhampered cultural, economic, and civil development of a modern state and a genuine national government."

The note further stated as follows:

"In the future also the two republics will be linked in sincere friendship and mutual assistance in times of difficulty. Above all, the people and government of our Republic rely on the aid of the Soviet Union and of the Red Army if, against our expectations, circumstances should again arise like those in 1921."

Thus we may see that also in 1925—that is, after the signing of the Peking Agreement with China in 1924—the Soviet Union and Outer Mongolia maintained, then as before, those relations of close friendship and mutual assistance which had developed between them in 1921, and which fully expressed the interests of China. Sun Yat Sen, the great revolutionist, who had devoted his whole life to the struggle for the freedom of the Chinese people, stated, in a communique which was published in 1923, jointly with the representative of the Soviet Union in China, that

"he considered the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from Outer Mongolia neither urgently necessary nor as representing the real interests of China, particularly with regard to the inability of the existing Peking government to prevent a rekindling of the intrigues and hostility of the white-guards against Russia and the creation of a still more difficult situation than the present one after such withdrawal."

The undoubtedly existing interest of the Soviet Union in the security of the frontiers of Outer Mongolia, which is of decisive importance as affecting the security, not only of the Soviet Union, but also of China, as well as the natural obligation of China not to tolerate the conversion of Outer Mongolia into a basis for enemy aggression against the Soviet Union, also found expression in the **Peking Treaty**, from which it clearly arises that the Chinese government also recognises, in certain cases, the right of the Soviet Union to take measures such as the despatch of her troops into the M.P.R. for the protection of her frontiers.

The Soviet Union has remained loyal to her obligation to support the Mongolian people in the defence of its inviolability and independence, as well as to aid it in its economic and cultural development. It is therefore entirely comprehensible that, in

1934, Gendun, the Premier of the M.P.R., in view of the threatening peril of a new attempt at occupation of the territory of the M.P.R., raised the question with the Soviet Government as to whether the latter was prepared, in the event of an attack upon the M.P.R., to render this support. Thereupon, both parties confirmed anew their obligations each to render the other all possible aid in the event of attack by a third party, including military assistance. This agreement was not given written form, but was purely a verbal one, a gentlemen's agreement.

When, in 1935, a series of attacks upon Mongolian territory by Japanese-Manchurian troops took place, the Soviet government repeatedly drew the attention of the Japanese government to her great interest in the conservation of the territorial integrity of Outer Mongolia. Nevertheless, these attacks by Japanese-Manchurian troops assumed an increasingly grave and provocative character, and this in spite of the earnest and repeated warnings of the U.S.S.R. In view of this circumstance, the Mongolian government found itself compelled, in January, 1936, through a government delegation despatched to Moscow, to address the request to the Soviet government that the already existing verbal agreement relating to mutual assistance and the offer of support to the M.P.R. now be committed to writing.

On January 25, the government of the M.P.R. repeated this request. The Soviet government acceded to this request, and on March 12 the protocol was signed, which has been published to-day. This protocol thus represents only the written confirmation of our agreement with the M.P.R. in 1934, which in its turn was only the embodiment and delineation of those obligations of mutual assistance which had already arisen in 1921, upon the basis of a joint struggle against intervention in the form of its white-guard agents. Furthermore, the treaty is in complete accordance with the Treaty of Peking, of 1924, as it is superfluous to produce proof of the fact that the Nanking government is to-day even less capable of guaranteeing the inviolability of the M.P.R. and the security of her frontiers than was the Peking government at the period of the signing of the Peking Treaty in 1924.

The Nanking government has virtually condoned the conquest of Manchuria, Jehol and Inner Mongolia. It offers no resistance whatever to the occupation of the Northern Provinces which is now proceeding. We know that the representatives

of the most extremist and adventurist elements of Japanese military circles wish to set up a new puppet state in northern China, and are carrying on negotiations with individual Chinese generals regarding the formation of an "alliance," an alliance on the pattern of that between Japan and Manchukuo, in order to attempt, with the assistance of these generals, once again to attack Outer Mongolia.

Accordingly, it becomes quite clear that the Soviet government is acting in accordance with all those obligations which are incumbent upon it with regard to the M.P.R., in the interests of peace and in the interests of its own security, without in any way thereby injuring the interests of the Chinese people.

What would the occupation of Outer Mongolia signify for the Soviet Union? We know something of this from the precedent of 1921, when the white-guard bands of Baron Ungern-Sternberg, led and financed by Japanese interventionists, invaded Outer Mongolia. After the capture of Urga, Ungern, obeying the orders of his employers, rallied the numerous remnants of the white-guard bands, who had sought refuge on Mongolian territory, under his leadership, and organized attacks upon the Soviet Baikal Region with the object of cutting the Trans-Siberian Railway and separating East Siberia and the Far East Region from Russia. The occupation of Outer Mongolia by Japanese troops would lead to this.

Stalin's statement, in the Howard interview, that if Mongolia were attacked, the Soviet Union would afford it the same assistance as in 1921, evoked a wave of enthusiasm in the Soviet Union and in the Mongolian People's Republic, and was received with sympathy and understanding by all friends of peace throughout the world. The broad masses of China also saw in this statement a further proof of the firm determination of the Soviet government to struggle for peace, and realised that this attitude of the Soviet government also corresponds with the interests of China, which is sacrificing its forces in the struggle against its aggressors and has been deprived of the possibility of protecting the frontiers of the M.P.R.

The protocol of March 12 is definitely a document of peace. The bitterest enemies of the Soviet Union can find in it not a single word which does not testify that the treaty pursues one single aim: to warn those who covet foreign territory, and to announce to them that the Soviet Union is prepared to render assistance to the Mongolian people in the event of it becoming the victim of an attack by an aggressor. There is no necessity to prove that the peace-loving, small Mongolian people cherishes

no aggressive, imperialist intentions with regard to its neighbours, and that the maintenance of peace in the Far East depends solely and entirely upon the latter.

In this regard, it is interesting to note that the Japanese militarists, who are now once again endeavoring to execute their plan for the conquest of Mongolia, which failed in 1922, are now coming forward in the guise of defenders of the interests of China, in connection with the March 12 treaty, and are demanding of the Nanking government that it protest against the treaty because of its alleged violation of the Peking Treaty of 1924. These demands are backed by the direct threat aimed at the Nanking government of taking "suitable measures for self-defence" if Nanking does not act in accordance with Japanese desires. The official agency of Manchukuo and of the Kwantung staff, the "Kokutsu," has openly stated that, if Nanking is "inactive," this constitutes proof of a "secret agreement" between the Soviet Union and China. In addition, direct threats are expressed against the Chinese government. This only goes to show the unexampled shamelessness of the adventurist elements in Japanese military circles, who appear completely to have lost all sense of reality and who imagine that, because they have the venal North Chinese generals under their thumb, they have already the right to issue orders to the Chinese government, to pretend to speak in its name and to bend it to their will.

We are profoundly convinced that only those Chinese politicians and generals who have linked their fate with that of the Japanese militarists, and who willingly serve, or are prepared to serve, their plans for the partitioning and oppression of China, will have the audacity of opposing, together with the Japanese militarists, this treaty. But these people will be called to order by the Chinese people itself, which is expressing, with an ever-increasing clarity, its will to national emancipation.