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Reports to Eleventh

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The Communist Review

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ELEVENTH PARTY CONGRESS

Report on the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International

By L. SHARKEY

COMRADES.—Years after Marx and Engels issued the slogan "Workers of All Lands, Unite," Engels commented: "Few indeed were there to respond to this slogan, when it was issued in the 'Communist Manifesto' of 1848."

We, who were privileged to attend the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern, were enabled to see the realisation of this great slogan in life. There was assembled the living embodiment of proletarian internationalism, the representatives of the proletariat of no less than 76 countries, of all continents, united together in Lenin's World Party, our great Communist International. There mingled the representatives of the liberated proletariat of the Soviet Union with the representatives of the working class of the imperialist "mother" countries, of the oppressed colonial countries, with the deathless fighters of the Chinese revolution and the Chinese Soviets, with the heroic fighters from the lands of Fascist horrors. Many were the accounts of supreme heroism, of unselfish sacrifice, of unparalleled stubbornness in the class struggle.

The Seventh World Congress demonstrated the growing world unity of the proletariat, the unity in both theory and practice, the unity in struggle, the unity based on the great teachings of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin, the theoretical and organisational unity achieved by the Communist International which binds together in one united army hundreds of millions of toilers from all parts of the globe. Were Engels but with us to-day he would be able to amend his declaration of May Day, 1890, to the effect that the proletariat of Europe and America are united against the landlords and capitalists, and that the proletariat of the whole world, of all countries and races are marching towards ever-greater unity, destroying with mighty blows all obstacles placed in the way by the bourgeoisie and their reformist agents who operate within the ranks of the workers' own organisations.

The Seventh Congress demonstrated the growing might of

Contents

	Page
Reports to the Eleventh Congress of the Communist Party of Australia, December, 1935:	
Report on the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International (By L. Sharkey) ..	1
Report on the Struggle for the United Front, Against War and Fascism (By J. B. Miles) ..	10
Report on the Economic Struggles and the Tasks of the Communists in the Trade Unions (By R. Dixon) ..	28
Australia's Fights for Democracy, Freedom, and Progress (By J. N. Rawling) ..	43
The Situation in the Countryside (By T. E.) ..	53
The Tasks of the Party in Western Queensland (By S. W. Hook) ..	62

the Communist International. Seventeen new Parties placed applications before Congress for affiliation to the Comintern.

The figures of membership were approximately, at the time of the Sixth World Congress, three and a half millions, and at the Seventh Congress more than seven millions, and this despite the fiendish terror waged by Fascism against our Parties in many countries, and the great increase in the number of illegal Communist Parties since the Sixth World Congress. Perhaps even more striking was the proof of the immense growth of the influence of the International, of all of the Parties, and particularly in such countries as France, Austria, Spain, China and others. The Austrian Party, a small organisation confronted by a tremendous Social Democratic Party, since the February insurrection, has become the leader of the Austrian working class, whilst the Spanish Party which at the time of the overthrow of the Rivera dictatorship was a small sectarian Party of 800 members, is now a Party with 19,000 members at the time of the Congress, with a tremendous influence and experience of struggle.

We come to the Chinese Communist Party. At the Thirteenth Plenum Wan Min mentioned that there were 250,000 Red Army soldiers despite the fearful conditions that exist in Kuomintang China. Since Wan Min made his report at the Thirteenth Plenum, Soviet territory has been doubled and the regular soldiers of the Red Army have been increased to half-a-million, with the support of one and a half million partisans. There are tremendous historical victories being won by the Chinese Communist Party.

The German delegates gave reports not only of the heroism of the German comrades, but claimed that the German Communist Party was distributing more printed literature among the working class than when it was a legal Party.

The growth of Communism cannot be more clearly shown than in the theoretical unity displayed at the Congress. The opportunists who attempted to drag the International back to Menshevism and Social-Democracy have been routed. The understanding by the Parties of Marxism-Leninism has grown, thus steeling the membership against the deviators and bringing ideological unity. A profound unity was thus the feature of the Seventh World Congress, showing that serious steps have been taken towards Lenin's objective of building a "monolithic world Party," a Party of a new type.

Congress noted the strengthening of the Soviet Union and its ever-growing role in revolutionising the masses throughout the world.

All of these facts destroy the legends circulated that the

revolutionary will of the workers is weakening, to the effect that the Comintern was collapsing and such-like rubbish, purveyed by renegades and circulated in the bourgeois and reformist press.

If our Congress can only achieve one small part of the burning enthusiasm of the Seventh World Congress, if comrades could have but witnessed the amazing receptions to Comrades Stalin, Dimitrov and other of our leaders, and demonstrations at the mention of the name of Thaelmann, we will indeed leave here with renewed enthusiasm for the accomplishment of the tasks that confront us.

The Congress was faced with the task of giving an answer to the pressing problems dictated by the whole international situation. You know that the Thirteenth Plenum declared that the world was closely approaching a new round of revolutions and wars. The Seventh Congress was faced with the approach of war and the victory of Fascism in a number of countries, together with the growth of Fascist methods in all capitalist countries. The antagonisms between the imperialist powers are sharpening. Congress noted the various imperialist antagonisms, between France and Germany, Italy and Britain, U.S.A. and Japan, and many others. Overshadowing all of these imperialist antagonisms is the main, inner imperialist antagonism, that between British and United States imperialism, whose interests are in conflict in every part of the globe.

The fundamental antagonism in world politics to-day is, however, the clash between two social systems, the antagonism of the capitalist States to the Soviet Union.

Capitalism, engaged in terrific economic warfare, struggling for markets, unable to solve the economic problems confronting it, emerging from the greatest economic crisis in its history, not to a boom period, not to a restoration of pre-crisis levels, but considered on a world scale, to a period of prolonged depression, which eventually, sooner or later, will culminate in another gigantic crisis, faced with the growing revolutionisation of the working class and revolt of its colonies, seeks a way out of its difficulties through war and Fascism. It is prepared to resort to the mediaeval barbarism of Fascism and the slaughter of millions in new wars in an endeavor to prolong the life of a doomed system of exploitation.

To the Seventh World Congress, therefore, was presented the problem of finding the correct methods whereby the workers can struggle successfully against war and Fascism. The key to the situation, Congress determined, lay in the application of the tactics of the united front. Some comrades think that to speak of the united front is to talk platitudes. It is not. It is

the prerequisite to victory. The temporary victory of Fascism in Germany became possible because of the split in the working class, caused by Social Democracy. This shows the importance of healing the breach in the workers' ranks.

On the other hand, the Congress had before it the French experiences. These showed the possibility of a broader application, which becomes possible also because of the turn of the broad masses of the working class towards the united front with the Communists.

The workers themselves learned lessons from Germany, which revealed to them the class nature of Fascism which, in Dimitrov's words, is bestial chauvinism and bourgeois violence against the workers and peasants, against all toilers and sections of the intellectuals; it is the dictatorship of the most reactionary groups of finance capital. Dimitrov's definition scotches several theories to the effect that Fascism in Germany represented petty-bourgeois or lumpen-proletarian dictatorship. The effect of the German events was shown in Spain, Austria, and the forcing of the French Socialists, by mass pressure from below, to enter into a united front with the Communists.

The possibility of a broader application of the united front tactics arises also from the situation within the labor movement.

Since the Sixth World Congress international reformism has sustained terrible blows. Its leading sections, German and Austrian Social-Democracy, have been destroyed, revealing the bankruptcy of reformist policy to large strata of the workers.

The Second International experiences a crisis.

I think, comrades, although we cannot say that it exists on the same level as in Europe, that there are signs of disintegration and crisis in the ranks of the Labor Party in Australia. Further than this, there are many factors influencing the Australian working class and making it possible for us to launch out for a broader application of the united front tactics. As Dimitrov said in his speech, we are not going to stand on the bank and watch the stream flowing by, but we are going to jump into the stream and swim. Things that seemed impossible to us years ago, to-day, because of the changed situation, have now become quite possible.

However, the Congress, in the words of leading speakers, due to all these factors, declared we are nearing the end of the reformist domination of the labor movement. When I heard those words pronounced I can tell you it raised my enthusiasm. I think, comrades, with these words in our minds, and when we think of the situation here in Australia and think of the numbers of victories referred to by Comrade Miles that al-

ready we have been able to achieve in the working-class movement, the large vote for Comrade Orr, etc., then we can say this signals also the end of the reformist domination of the labor movement in Australia. These are the swallows that herald the approach of spring.

The united front of action, showing that the proletariat is capable of struggling against monopoly capital, which oppresses the non-proletarian strata, wins their sympathy and opens the way to the People's Front of struggle against Fascism and war.

This is the broad general line of the Comintern as visualised by the World Congress.

Tendencies exist in the minds of some comrades towards contrasting decisions of the Sixth World Congress with those of the Seventh, and to adopt a view that the Sixth Congress decisions were "wrong." Such tendencies must be resisted. Comrades who tend towards such views, it seems to me, have failed to note the changes in the situation, the differences in that, at the Sixth Congress, we were on the eve of the world economic crisis, in a period when reformism was the pacemaker for Fascism, preventing and strangling strikes, and assisting Hitler in Germany by its "lesser evil" theories. They fail to note the change in the correlation of forces between reformism and revolution in the intervening period and the defeat of German and Austrian Social-Democracy, the strengthening of the forces of revolution everywhere, and the turn of the masses to the united front. These factors, together with the advance to Fascism and war, lead to an elaboration of our united front tactics and open new possibilities before us. This by no means denies the fact that many mistakes were made by the Parties in applying the tactics of the Sixth Congress, and that subsequent experience has discovered new forms for the broadening of united front work.

In the united front struggle, there arises the demand for one Party of the proletariat in each country, and from this, one International. We, Communists, have always been for one united Party of the proletariat. But it must be a revolutionary party; class-collaboration with the bourgeoisie must be rejected. In the course of the united front struggle and in connection with the crisis of Social-Democracy, a differentiation in the leadership of Social-Democracy appears. The beginnings of this differentiation are noticeable in the A.L.P. We support the lefts.

So that is the main perspective, the main task for us, placed by the Communist International; to secure the unity of the masses in the fight for immediate demands, against Fascism and war. We all agree that this perspective applies to Australia.

We decisively reject the Kavanagh "theory" of "Exceptionalism." Fascism, Comrade Dimitrov said, is not the ordinary succession of bourgeois Governments, but is the **substitution** of one form of the bourgeois dictatorship for another form.

An important method by which the ruling class establishes Fascist dictatorship is by laws restricting democratic rights, the press, organisation, and the right to strike. We, in Australia, are faced with the possibility of illegality, of the Crimes Act, and licensing, etc. Whilst the bourgeoisie has not yet succeeded in establishing a mass Fascist organisation here, we must organise united action against these measures of Fascisation. We are also menaced by the war danger.

We know that we may be declared an unlawful association—we see the Crimes Act, the licensing of the seamen. Dimitrov dealt with the growth of Fascist measures of the bourgeois State and how this led to Fascist dictatorship. It is our task to struggle against all these measures; for the preservation of democratic rights.

If British imperialism goes to war, then the Australian bourgeoisie will be drawn into the conflict—so we see that all the things brought out in Dimitrov's report apply to Australia just as they do to any other country.

We must adopt certain tactics in view of the decisions of the Seventh World Congress. The Congress must make decisions upon this. decisions upon our affiliation to the Labor Party.

Affiliation to the Labor Party—we know that we have proposed this before; but we do not propose now to approach the Labor Party in a mechanical way, that of merely sending a letter and receiving a letter back, but we must organise in order to have this affiliation accepted; in a manner which I have attempted to outline. We must see that the proposals are acceptable, and are accepted by the majority of the members of the Labor Party.

We must not allow any Fascist reactionary candidate to get into Parliament if it is possible for us, by any means, to prevent it. If we have to elect a reformist, even a member of a bourgeois democratic party, we must do it to keep a reactionary Fascist out of Parliament, because the Fascists, with their demagoguery, make great use of positions in Parliament.

To-day, in the social democratic parties throughout the world there is a differentiation caused by the tremendous urge of the workers to struggle against capitalism, war and Fascism, and this reflected itself in the ranks of the Social-Democratic leaders.

This is why we were able to broaden our conception of the

united front—and those leaders who are moving to the left, we must assist them to become the dominant forces within the social-democratic parties. In this way we work towards the united front, towards a united party of the proletariat in each country, towards one united international.

In regard to one party. This does not mean to say that we are going out to-morrow morning to bring Mr. Lang and Scullin into the Communist Party, but at the same time, the question is raised by workers coming to us and asking us what we think of one party. We explain, certainly, the Communists have always been in favor of one party, but there is a split in the ranks of the working class, and this has been caused by the class collaborationist policy of the leaders of reformism, and to have one party it must be based on revolutionary principles, on working-class principles.

That is what we have to achieve in the future. As Comrade Dimitrov said in his report to the Seventh Congress that, to-day, in the question of winning over the working class, we have not to think of it in the manner that we thought of it previously, i.e., we have worked in the Labor Party before, and after about six months we have won over 20 comrades, and we thought we had done a good job. The position, as placed before us by Dimitrov, was not to win over 20 or even a hundred, but we had to win over tens of thousands, millions of the proletariat.

We must think of the mass here in N.S.W. who still vote for the Labor Party—how are we going to approach them and get in contact with them?

Dimitrov devoted an excellent section of his report to the question of tactics where a reformist government is in power. He spoke of the Scandinavian countries. It is true he did not mention Australia, but I think that the comrades will agree that what he had to say about the Scandinavian countries applies equally to us in those States where A.L.P. governments hold office. He proposed that we take up the points outlined in their election programmes, popularised amongst the masses in the election period, and bring forward proposals for the united front on the questions contained in the election proposals.

The possibilities for this existed in Queensland, as well as Tasmania and Western Australia. The comrades have been advised to, and yet they have done very little. We must get on with this job and work out a united front programme. Some comrades in Brisbane replied that the Forgan Smith Government did not have a programme, and the comrades thought that that had finished the matter and it was not necessary to find out what

the masses expected from the Forgan Smith Government. However, I think we can convince them of their error.

The Seventh World Congress, comrades, declared that we must be successful in building the united front, which will mobilise hundreds of thousands of toilers against the outbreak of war and Fascism. Dimitrov brought forward an important point. Comrades imagine because we are going to approach the Labor Party in a somewhat different way that the role of the Communist Party becomes less. This is incorrect. Actually, as the days go by, as war and Fascism become more menacing, the tasks placed on the revolutionary leadership of the working class become greater. Dimitrov said that in order to achieve victory over Fascism, a strong revolutionary party was necessary; not only a strong revolutionary party—he said it must be a party that was prepared to take action, a party that was prepared to take really decisive action.

When we look at the Party at the moment—even with the successes we have achieved in recent times—we must say that we require a rapid growth of the Party if we are to achieve the tasks set us. Are the 3000 members sufficient? Are they sufficient for the tasks that we visualise in the light of the decisions of the Seventh World Congress? This is not nearly sufficient.

Our brother Party in Canada was able to state that there had been an increase in the membership in the previous six to nine months of 2600 members. The American Party in the last year increased the membership by eleven to twelve thousand (practically one-third of the membership was gained in the last year). The British Party has got over 3000 new members. Our growth is decidedly slow by comparison.

On the minefields, where our influence is great, the Party is not growing nearly rapidly enough. If we are going to fulfil the tasks set us by the Seventh Congress, we must increase our membership—double it, treble it. We cannot bring forward anywhere figures on this question that will compare with the figures of other Parties.

There were other reports given besides Dimitrov's. There was the report of Manuilsky, which showed us the final and irrevocable victory of Socialism—the comparison he made between the Socialist system and the capitalist system showed that there was only one way out of the crisis. I have not time to deal in detail with the report.

Ercoli raised many important questions—what we have to do in defence of the Soviet Union. We read in the press reports of the increasing provocation of Japanese imperialism against the Soviet Union.

The Seventh World Congress, in the words of Ercoli, made more concrete the proposals for the defence of the Soviet Union than the Sixth Congress. The Communists must organise the soldiers of the imperialist armies to desert to the Red Army and to ensure the victory of the Red Army.

We all know of the fight of the Soviet Union for peace. Ercoli dealt with a number of questions which included the pacts concluded by the Soviet Union with outside countries. He dealt with the pact between France and the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, and that such pacts, so long as they did not infringe the basis of Soviet power, were in the interests of the proletariat. He also showed the difference in the policies of the proletariat where it is still struggling for power and where it is already victorious.

I want to emphasise also one of the questions brought up in the struggle against war and Fascism, and that is the question of the youth. America and Britain were able to report victories in the struggle for the youth. We did little indeed. Work amongst the women is another sore point with us. Anti-militarist work also.

On popularising of the decisions of the Seventh World Congress: I am of the opinion that the masses of Party members do not yet realise the importance of the Seventh Congress, or we would have a greater distribution of the literature of the Seventh Congress. Dimitrov's speech—how many did we publish? Two thousand! I think we should have published no less than 50,000 and had them placed in the hands of the working class. Even now it is not too late for the Party members to get busy. Here we have one of the best weapons possible to assist us in winning over Labor Party workers.

The Seventh World Congress affirmed its adherence to the principles of proletarian internationalism, and, in the words of Manuilsky, when reporting for the C.P.S.U., the Seventh Congress also pledged itself to the last drop of blood in the fight for proletarian internationalism, for the great invincible banner of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin.

Report on the Struggle for the United Front, Against War and Fascism

By J. B. MILES

THE Tenth Congress, our last Congress, took place in 1931 in the depths of the crisis in the capitalist world, while in the Socialist world the workers and farmers were heroically carrying out the tasks of the Five-Year Plan. Then life itself had shattered the social-democratic theories about capitalism. You remember in the prosperous years Australia sent Labor delegations to America. The theories of the organised growth of capitalism peacefully into Socialism were being eliminated from the minds of the workers.

In the period since, the success of the Five-Year Plan and the advancement under the second Plan—the victory of Socialism—has made the Soviet Union a mighty world power.

During the period capitalism passed through phases of the crisis into the "peculiar" depression, imperialist antagonisms have developed to much more dangerous levels, and the question of war has sharpened acutely. The general crisis of capitalism has become accentuated. There has been a growth of Fascism, intense preparation for imperialist war, for a war of intervention, the class struggle has become more intense, hence the characterisation of the present as the eve of wars and revolutions. We must regard all this as a sharper way than we did at our Fourth Plenum, in the light of the decisions of the Thirteenth Plenum.

The social-democratic ideas, about capitalism, about the possibility of building Socialism, were defeated not only by life, but by the struggles of the Communist Parties, especially the C.P.S.U., and its leader, Stalin.

We had a right wing within this Party, they were defeated not merely because Australia showed all the symptoms of crisis, but by those in the Party who were learning to become Bolsheviks, who were learning how to teach Marxism-Leninism. If we drove the right wing out of the Party it was not only because of the Five-Year Plan and the crisis of capitalism; it was because we defeated them politically before the Party and its supporters.

Although there is no longer a right wing, the right danger

is not completely eliminated and will always demand our vigilance so long as capitalism exists. But we can build a Marxist-Leninist Party in the struggle against the "left" and the right.

The Communist Parties, it is recorded by the Seventh World Congress, have become strengthened. We can claim, while recognising all defects, that this includes ourselves. In connection with this we should bear in mind what Comrade Sharkey had to say about whether or not we are coming to the conclusion that the Sixth Congress was wrong, whether or not we were wrong in the past.

Despite mistakes in this country our influence grew and, though too slowly, so did our Party.

In West Australia in 1931 the Party was in a very sorry condition. We were able to send a comrade there, and since then there has been a real growth, a District Committee has come into existence, and there is a Party paper.

In North Queensland in 1933 we were able to set up a District Committee, to organise a new District, whose growth in membership and in some other directions, if it had been repeated throughout the Party, has been such that Comrade Sharkey would not need to express quite such serious thoughts about the slow recruiting.

In Victoria the Party has become much stronger. In 1932 some of the Victorian comrades, particularly the leftists, thought that, because we could not meet with similar success in this State in elections against the reformists, that they must be superior to the Party in New South Wales. We said then that the struggle between the Communists and the reformists here is due to the struggle of the Communist Party and its growth, that their position was due to the fact that they were not yet seriously challenging the reformists. Since then the growth of the Party has brought about this challenging of the reformists in Victoria and a similar reaction on their part, as in N.S.W., to split the workers.

In District 1 the growth is relatively very substantial, many Section Committees to-day are more than the equals of the District Committee of 1931. In District 2 the Party grows, although there is an exceptionally serious cadres problem.

In District 3 one might put it this way, that in spite of the very pronounced weaknesses there the Party has not been prevented from growing, has not even prevented trade union leaders from entering the Party.

In 7, well, 7 (Darwin) has grown so as to be able to send delegates to this Congress.

No. 5 is the outstanding problem so far as the Party Districts are concerned. We will have to make a search into the

Party and the possibilities in District 5. We should have a powerful group of Communists there when comparing the situation to Western Australia.

Tasmania. Well, comrades, it is really a difficult case. It is a long way, and in attending to those places which are more immediately important we have only twice been able to send anyone there. We will have to send someone there to get behind the barrier which stands between the Party and the workers of Tasmania.

Comrades, the further advance of our Party--the necessary rapid growth--and success in the struggles of the masses, depends on our ability to take up the tasks in the struggle against the capitalist offensive, for better conditions for the masses, the struggle for peace and defence of democratic rights.

The menace of war is real and immediate. Because of the accentuation of the class struggle, because the profits of the capitalists are lower, because there are bankruptcies, because, despite the improvement in some countries, foreign trade continues to decline, and because of the drive that the capitalists make in preparation for war, to increase profits by seizing and plundering foreign countries.

Time does not permit any attempt to enter into detail about the focus points of possible conflict. There is the world-wide antagonisms between Britain and the United States, they come up against each other everywhere. In China, where Japan is making war and preparing to attack the Soviet Union. The situation in North Africa, the rearming of Germany with the open assertion of the Fascists that they intend to regain colonies, to extend to the East, the attempt to form an anti-Soviet bloc, the leading role of Britain in the effort to form this anti-Soviet bloc.

The resolution that we have prepared defines Fascism. Comrade Sharkey has also spoken about this so I think I will emphasise that you follow his advice by studying Dimitrov, realising the significance of the quotations in the resolution and paying attention to what he said. It is necessary to be fully conscious of the fact that war and Fascism are twins, that the main instigators of war are the Fascist powers, more particularly Germany, which is characterised by the Seventh Congress as the most reactionary type of Fascism.

We have to improve our ability to show the workers what it will mean to them here should Fascists be able to seize power. When we are speaking in defence of democratic rights, when we are showing the workers that Fascism is a menace in Australia, explain to them what real Fascism means. At the same

time exposing the responsibility of the reformists for the Fascist victories.

We combat the idea that Fascism is impossible owing to British or Australian traditions, although we can utilise many of these traditions in defence of democratic rights.

There are evidences here of Fascist demagogy in the way that attacks are made on Parliament. We do not admire Parliament but between Fascism and Parliament we will defend Parliament. In connection with the dismissal of Lang, then we had not learnt to distinguish between our opposition to reformism and defence of democratic rights.

The Fascists also speak against finance capital. While we have quite correctly made approaches to the Douglas Credit followers, in the ideology of these people there are links with Fascism, especially the leaders. In Germany, the propaganda against chain stores and some alleged action against chain stores has been evident. I have noted talk against chain stores and a number of letters in the daily press even in this country.

Peace Policy of U.S.S.R.

For the struggle against war and Fascism it is very essential that our Party familiarise itself with the peace policy of the Soviet Union, and that each one of us should become capable of carrying the peace policy of the Soviet Union to the masses. We can show to the masses that Socialism means peace, this is the basis of the peace policy of the Soviet Union, we can point to the coolness in the face of provocation of this proletarian power. We can explain that this is not capitulation because of any weakness, we can show that side by side with this cool refusal to be provoked, there is a preparation for defence of the workers' fatherland. The U.S.S.R. has become a mighty power; the Red Army is a real army, an army which will give a shock to any bourgeois armies which are sent against it.

The peace policy of the Soviet Union is strengthened by the fact that it has tremendous support throughout the capitalist world. This emphasises for us the necessity for defending the spearhead of the world revolution.

The Soviet Union carries out the teachings of Lenin, taking advantage of the contradiction between the sections of the bourgeoisie. An outstanding act in this connection is that brought about by the fact that the rearmament of Germany, the evident intention of Germany to make war, caused France to turn her eyes to the Soviet Union, and because of the menace of German Fascism, in the interest of peace, in the interests of defending the land of Socialism, the Soviet Union entered into an understanding with France for defence against an aggressor.

About the League of Nations. We must remember why the League of Nations came into existence it was set up to maintain the "order" which was brought about following the last war. The sharpening of the imperialist antagonisms, the close approach of war, caused some powers to develop a definite drive to war, Japan, Germany, Italy. It is true that the League was unable to do more than talk about Manchuria, it did not do much more or any more about South America, and it has only done a little more about Abyssinia. But there really did take place, because of this drive to war by the most aggressive powers, a real differentiation within the League. The most aggressive countries left it, Japan in 1932 and Germany in 1934, so that the League becomes a certain obstacle to the plans of these powers that immediately drive to war. The League can be used to postpone the outbreak of war. The Soviet Union takes this into account and joins the League of Nations.

Study Each War

In connection with the struggle against war, our last Central Committee meeting took up the question of the necessity to study each particular war. Since the Central Committee meeting, discussions I have heard and reports emphasise the importance of this. It is only to be expected that workers and those who have just entered the C.P. and have not yet attained clarity, because of their opposition to war readily listen to talk about having nothing to do with war in general.

If there was hesitation in our own ranks about Abyssinia, there was the utmost confusion throughout the ranks of the working-class and there still is.

What was the position in South America? A war between vassal states representing imperialists on both sides, Britain and U.S.A. What is the situation in China? Most complicated. Imperialist Japan is carrying out an aggressive war of plunder in China. Some of the Chinese armies have resisted this imperialist aggression, others or the same have attacked the Soviet territories. On the other hand there are Soviet territories carrying on a war for the revolution.

In Abyssinia, what is the position? I think we had better repeat it although the Central Committee meeting took place not so very long ago. The war by Italy is a robber war, it is an imperialist colonial war of plunder, it is directed against the Abyssinian people and against the vital interests of the Italian people. On the other hand the war of the Abyssinians against Italian Imperialism is a national war. It is a just war, it is a national defensive war.

On the National question, in "Questions of Leninism," Com-

rade Stalin says, "The revolutionary character of the national movement under circumstances of imperialist oppression does not obligatorily presuppose that there are proletarian elements in the movement, and that there is a revolutionary or republican programme, that the movement has a democratic basis."

So that it may be a most backward country, so long as it is a struggle against imperialist aggression it is an obligation of those who claim to be anti-imperialist that they oppose the aggressor. We must take an active position against imperialism, against the chief aggressors of war, but guard against being caught in an imperialist war by misleading slogans. Neutrality for us is impossible. Maybe sometimes if one explains more clearly what one means by neutrality we might agree. Even the use of the word boycott is most dangerous. What do they mean when they say to boycott both Abyssinia and Italy? Whatever the intention, Fascist Italy is assisted. We stand for positive action against Italy, positive assistance for Abyssinia.

Let us consider some possible cases. If both sides are imperialist, for example, South America, if there should be an outbreak between two imperialist rivals, what would neutrality mean in the strict meaning of the word? It would mean sit back and allow the situation to develop into world war. We would have to take up a positive position, a position to give assistance to our comrades within each of the imperialist countries who are following the Leninist line of turning imperialist war into civil war and for the revolution. Of course, we are neutral as to who wins between two imperialisms under which we do not live. If we are involved in imperialist war we are for the defeat of our own direct oppressors, to facilitate the seizure of power. If the war is a war of colonial plunder then we must take a position of opposition to the plunderers, for victory for the attacked and defeat for the aggressor. If the war is a war of intervention, then, comrades, our duty is most positive action against imperialism, the most positive assistance to the land of Socialism. To show that here again there is also a difference: In an imperialist war what is our proposal as far as the army is concerned? To fraternise, to stop the war, to turn upon the real enemy. In the case of an imperialist intervention we will not stop at fraternisation, we will encourage the soldiers to join the Red Army, to use their weapons in the opposite direction to that when they first entered the war.

With reference to Australian war preparations, there is a section in the resolution but I have not time to go into details

about the evidence of the preparations for war. There are comrades here who can take up this question.

Overcome the Split in the Workers' Ranks

Our main consideration must be to overcome the split in the labor movement on the question of opposition to imperialist war and in defence of nations against aggression.

Because the Communist Party for a long time has sounded the alarm about war we were to a degree alert and carrying on anti-war activity. The Anti-War Movement grew. When the war danger became more immediately evident, as the situation in Abyssinia developed, the Labor Party began to come out with its anti-war programme. Since then it has been talking about the leads which it has given, about its activity. Even before the Abyssinian situation became so pressing, the Labor Party was already feeling the growth of Communist influence and the mass sentiment for united struggle against war. As the line of the Anti-War Movement, as the stand taken by the Communist Party, gained more and more support, the Labor Party began to feel that if it did not try to have an independent position the Communist influence was going to grow still more tremendously. Therefore they got out their "Labor's Case against War and Fascism."

When this was published our attitude was to the effect that this contained certain decisions upon which unity is possible for the struggle against war and Fascism. The Communists, the organised reformists, the Anti-War Movement could come together, seizing upon some of the decisions for unity. We met with some successes; not nearly so many as was possible, because we have not got rid of the remnants of sectarianism as the Seventh Congress pointed out. But the influence of the Communist Party and Anti-War Movement continued to develop. We showed that some of their decisions, if really applied, mean opposition to imperialist wars of plunder against colonial peoples. Because of this they carried on a desperate campaign to widen the split in the labor movement and they concentrated on Victoria. There the Communists are growing stronger but are not so strong as in New South Wales, there are the headquarters of the Federal unions who support the Labor Party. There the possibility existed for centralising the campaign to continue the confusion and to combat the line of the Communists, the line of the Anti-War Movement. But they were not wholly successful. A study of the A.C.T.U. Conference shows that if the Communists really set out to take advantage of their growing influence, to plan and organise for these meetings, we can achieve substantial results; that if this planning is properly carried out, rather surprising

people will support us, they will support us because of our evident strength, because of the strength of our case, and because they are not definitely prepared to sell out, they are wondering which way the stream is going to flow in the future. I happened to be over there, although not as a delegate, and I have heard something since about one who was a delegate.

At our last C.C. meeting one of the difficulties in relation to this question of where the reformists are going and the determination of our tactics about the process of differentiation arose in regard to a local leader of a union. Some district comrades argued that we had rather overestimated the possibilities of co-operation with this worker, but later when I attended the District Conference, not myself or anyone who was in Victoria at the time, but one of the leading Communists of the district told the story of this worker over in Victoria. He supported the fraction. Why? Because of the influence of the Party and the seeking for some possibility of discussing and working with him.

At the same time, comrades, in connection with "Labor's Case" we had to call for the sharpening of the struggle against the policy of "defence of Australia." In Victoria where the struggle was centred for the time being, there was not sufficient propaganda against the Labor Party's line of defence of Australia. We are not absolutely in all circumstances opposed to the defence of Australia, but to put in the programme defence of Australia, necessarily means being committed to defence of capitalist Australia in any war.

We can say to the Labor Party leaders, if you really want to defend the people of Australia, we are with you in this sense, let us get together, to defend the working class. Let us put it to the reformists; you talk about believing in defence of Australia, well, instead of voting credits for the defence of Capitalist Australia, when you are the government, what about arming the working class?

These questions have to be considered by us on the basis of class against class. What is the class position. What particular line is in the interests of the class? Just as we examine the situation as to what kind of a war is it in some other country, so we must examine this question here. Defence of Australia is played upon by the reformists to mislead the workers and mobilise them behind a policy that is in the interests of the Australian imperialists. If a world war broke out, defence of Australia will again be used. Already the propaganda is being carried on by the reformists.

In connection with the problem of sanctions. There have been some weaknesses. These emphasise the necessity for

clarification. There was a tendency to make a wrong distinction between economic sanctions and military sanctions. It is quite correct, in a given situation, for Communists to be able to bring about agreement about economic sanctions. That is no reason why a Communist should retreat from defending the full implication of sanctions, remembering always that we are in support of collective sanctions, not alleged sanctions by Great Britain.

There were other errors, in some places under the pressure of circumstances, i.e., the A.L.P. propaganda. It could possibly be said that the centre itself did not exercise sufficient care against this development, by insisting on presenting the question of independent working-class action first and foremost, and sanctions in a secondary position. Further, on every question that we have to put before the workers, we must find out if there is a way of presenting the question so that we have a sympathetic ear at the beginning. Some of our comrades started to talk first, even to attack on sanctions and consequently raised a barrier. Let us speak first about peace and unity in action against war and if we show that we really stand for peace, what is our peace policy, and especially about unity, then, at least the workers will listen more readily on the question why we support sanctions as against the "neutrality" attitude of Mr. Lang and company.

To do our full share in the struggle to avert a world war, to prevent Fascism coming in Australia, to prepare the masses for power, demands the clarification of the issues, the drawing of the masses into united struggle, and the strengthening of the Communist Party.

The United Front

About the united front: Here I want to briefly clear up a little background because there have been evidences of misunderstanding. How did this split come about? The reformists have been accusing the Communists through the years of being the cause of the split. It is true that we were guilty of sectarian errors, consequently we did not develop so rapidly towards the healing of the split. The Communists never caused the split in that sense. When in 1914 it was shown that there was a rotten abscess in the labor movement, a canker that had eaten into it, it became necessary to learn the lessons of the struggle that the Bolsheviks had to carry on in Russia against opportunism and that this should be developed internationally. The future of a united working class depended upon the revolutionists breaking with the bankrupt Second International, and in 1919 the Communist International was formed. The perspective for revolution was great but except in the Soviet Union the revolutionary movements were defeated. The social-democrats were

able to regain control of the labor movement, because of the economic and political developments. The Comintern saw that the Communists were not winning mass support, were not growing with sufficient rapidity as early as 1921 and the question of the united front was taken up sharply.

If the united front, as has been suggested by one comrade, is just the struggle against sectarianism and consequently goes right away back to Engels, why does the word appear with such sharpness? Why is it brought forward as a slogan? Sectarianism appears in more ways than one. Even a single party of the workers could make mistakes, sectarian errors, so far as the masses are concerned. If we have any lessons to learn before the period of 1914 up to the formation of the Comintern about the united front, it is its correct application, although the term was not used by the Bolsheviks. We have to study the history of the Bolshevik Party and not to try and confuse the fact that Engels was an outstanding opponent of sectarianism with the question of the united front in the present period. It became necessary to develop the united front tactic to overcome our isolation, to win the workers for struggle and away from reformist control. It became necessary to carry on a continuous struggle against the errors within the ranks of the Communist Party, against sectarianism which prevented the united front from being welded and further developed. Doctrinairism had to be broken down. We had to learn to become flexible, to see new developments, to see the possibility for unity with those who disagreed with us on principle. We have learned that all too slowly, but we are learning it. In recent years we have had some experiences that have, as it were, dealt such a shock that there has been a further shedding of sectarianism. There has been a greater willingness to see, to take in, and to learn the lessons, the lessons of the defeats in Germany, in Austria, Spain and also the lessons of the united front development in France, to see that united struggle and only united front struggle can isolate treacherous reformists and drive the Fascists back.

Support for Unity

In order that we will be able not only to overcome sectarianism but to develop a united front with the rapidity that the situation demands and with the rapidity that in the opinion of the Comintern is possible, and that we here think is possible, we must study the question of differentiation within the reformist movement. There are two camps to be found here; differentiation does exist. To understand its basis, the most important thing is that the ideological basis of the programme and tactics of reformism has collapsed. Under the weight of the economic crisis, the influence of the victory of Socialism in the Soviet Union, the les-

sons of the terrors of Fascism, the outlook of the masses is changing. They can see that the split led to the Fascist victory in Germany. They are beginning to realise that the working class needs unity. The world struggle on behalf of Dimitrov penetrated into Australia and was taken up, that was an international movement, international unity in action. There are Labor Party leaders who unite with us on some questions, in many localities we have united front successes.

Here I want to refer to the need for us to study more and more the experiences of 1917. Spain and Austria may not be the only countries that will be faced with a favorable situation and will not be able to accomplish what the Bolsheviks did in 1917. So we must study why it was that the Bolsheviks were able to seize upon a certain situation to smash the bourgeoisie and take power. Why could it not be done in Austria in Spain? When such a situation comes for us, whatever modifications it has, it will come as a revolutionary crisis. We want to have not a Spanish or Austrian experience but the Bolshevik experience. (Applause.)

Comrades, with us, as elsewhere, the united front makes headway, despite the reformists who oppose unity. They cannot stem the movement towards unity. This change in the consciousness of the workers affords great possibilities for us. At the same time, while we must take the fullest advantage of the possibilities of support for the united front among the reformists, we must increase the criticism of those who continue to oppose the united front. At the same time we must sharpen the propaganda against capitalism.

It is not without foundation that in electioneering, for example, the workers have said, "Why don't you say something about Lyons, why don't you say something about Stevens?" The fire was concentrated on reformism and to-day while directing blows at those who are opposed to unity, let us remember what we have said before on the question of how. And certainly how is not answered by merely criticising the reformists who still appear to the mass of workers to belong to the labor movement, and failing to direct our criticism against capitalism.

A word or two about some questions connected with the understanding of the united front. In the course of the preparation for the Congress we have come across some difficulties.

What is the united front? If we understand what we are talking about, I do not mind so much if common action between two unions is referred to as a united front. We can speak of the very broad front of proletarians and other classes, not only as the People's Front, but as a united front. Unless we understand the united front that the Communists have been concerned with

so many years, to be basically and essentially, united action carried out by Communist and reformists, the united action of the working class, then we will make mistakes. We cannot have it said that the united front and the People's Front are just a matter of terms and that has been said in the districts in the course of developing the discussion for this congress.

This is important for more reasons than one. First of all because the proletarian united front must be the backbone of the broader front. When the other sections in society who suffer under capitalism see the strength of the working class, then there will be less likelihood of them going back and forwards. When their problems bring them to the working class, when we attract them by defending their needs and they sense the strength based on unity between the Communists and the reformists, they will be more likely to adhere firmly to the broader front, the People's Front.

On the question of trade union unity in this country. Some clarification is necessary. The trade union movement in Australia is united in a certain sense. We have not got a red centre and a reformist centre, so that the problem of trade union unity is not like that in France, where the powerful reformist and red trade union centres have been brought together. However, there is not a complete absence of this problem here. We have the problem of the P.W.I.U., a red union, small, but not insignificant. We need to be careful in choosing phrases about the trade unions; we want amalgamation, common action by the unions. If we do speak of trade union unity, and sometimes it would be all right to use that phrase, let us be clear that we do not mean the same thing as the international struggle for trade union unity between the R.I.L.U. and I.F.T.U. and trade union unity in France. We are confronted with the problem of playing our part here to bring about international trade union unity.

Unity for Immediate Demands

If we are going to develop the united front it must have a definite content. What must the content be? The immediate political and economic demands in defence of the working class and of all toilers.

The trade union discussion will deal very concretely with this. I think that we have many lessons to learn from our own experiences as well as the international experiences, to be able to get really down to those slogans that do arise out of the vital needs of the masses. It was not just good organisational work that resulted in the success of the united front candidate on the South Coast of New South Wales. It was the vital needs of the unemployed, the miners and mechanisation, and some vital needs of the people as citizens, since it was a municipal election.

The main emphasis on the development of the united front organisation, of agitation for it, is placed upon the locality. Let us consider our own experiences. It could be said that we should have been able to develop this ourselves more sharply than we have done on our experiences before the Seventh World Congress. We have written to the Labor Party and other central bodies here and there. But where has the movement really developed? In the localities, in Wallsend, on the South Coast, in certain A.L.P. branches in Victoria and elsewhere. Comrades can bring out concrete evidence.

Away with Sectarianism

The question of setting up non-partisan bodies, of getting away from Communist narrowness which is a form of self-satisfied sectarianism, must receive our close attention. Let us consider this in relation to the reformist splitters. It is possible to gauge the breadth and the mass contact of our Party, of the various non-party bodies, of the various united front tendencies and movements, from the reaction of the reformists to these movements and their success or failure in splitting. Just consider Victoria, where we were faced, even before the war issues became so acute, with the fact that the reformists were already beginning to sharpen their splitting tactics in the way we were so familiar with here, against the Communist Party and they were able to get away with a good deal. There we see the growing influence of the Communists and the efforts of the reactionaries to stem that influence, and because there is not sufficient strength on our part, they meet with a good deal of success despite our growth.

But consider the broadly based defence campaign round Kisch and Griffin and the Beatrice Taylor campaign. These really developed in the localities and the unions. There were really broadly based campaigns about Wonthaggi developed in the unions and factories and in the localities; there was a really broadly based campaign on the South Coast developed against the slave camps and for the united front candidature; there is a really broadly based campaign by the miners against mechanisation in the pits and lodges, in other unions and in the localities; in many cases in the unemployed struggles, and, here in New South Wales, in defence of democratic rights.

What is the experience in these as far as the reformist splitters are concerned? They are busy but they cannot come out with their excommunications and their bans. They dare not do it. In some cases dozens, even scores, of A.L.P. branches are known to participate, in some cases the central Labor Party bodies participate because of the breadth of the movement.

When we plan carefully, go to the masses, avoid sectarianism, and organise, we get results.

One of the lessons we have to learn, as far as fractions are concerned, is that we cease to regard them as odd man jobs and see that our fraction members in important non-party bodies become real revolutionary politicians.

An unemployed paper, called "The Torch" of recent date, shows what can be done. It adds to the South Coast, the Wonthaggi and the mechanisation experiences, that the elements of the People's Front are already appearing. Here we have a meeting in the interests of the unemployed around the question of the rent allowance and other unemployed demands. Who attended that meeting? The A.L.P. representatives from the Parents and Citizens' Association, a member of the Communist Party, another member of the A.L.P., the unemployed, Douglas Credit, the Deputy Mayor of Bexley, the Mayor of Hurstville, secretary of Chamber of Commerce, Mortdale; State Council of Unemployed, Hurstville Baptist Church, and the R.S.S.I.L.A. A committee was elected comprising A.L.P., U.A.P., C.P., the local Chamber of Commerce, R.S.S.I.L.A., War Service Homes Purchasers' Association, Douglas Credit, and the unemployed and relief workers, etc. This was possible because their programme arose out of the vital needs of the masses.

When we move amongst the unemployed organisations and the trade union organisations to secure endorsement for the united front we need to learn better how to concretise the proposals. We launch a campaign and we get a great many endorsements and then things seem to slow down. In all localities the same demands may not be used, or if they are similar, they need to be placed in a still more concrete form.

I was struck with a formulation by Comrade Pieck in his report on weakness in propaganda and in organising the united struggle. We have dealt with this, but we have never put it in quite the same way. Pieck says: "There is still too much naked agitation and too little initiative in the organisation of real struggle." The P.W.I.U. has been engaging in naked agitation against the A.W.U.; we have done the same against arbitration. It was good stuff. But have we broken down Arbitration? Not at all. We have been carrying on naked agitation proving the bankruptcy of the theories of reformism and the superiority of the theories of Leninism.

How are we going to put the theory of Leninism into practice? There must be more concrete work and initiative in the organisation of struggle. Because of this tendency to naked agitation, our comrades concentrate more upon the bankruptcy, futility, or treachery of reformism than on how to get united

action, how to organise the united front on the basis of the most immediate demands.

About some mistakes that still appear in our documents, for example, the District 2 resolution at the recent Conference.

Instead of speaking in such a way as to show that it is the duty of the Communists to assist the work through the fractions and help to build the non-party movement, it is put here as though the task of the Communists is to take up the work directly, as though the non-party body is the Party with another name.

In Victoria we had to criticise comrades because of the language used towards people in the reformist ranks who showed some tendencies in our direction. The reformists had started organisations as a result of the development of the militant opposition against war and the Victorian comrades called this movement an "outfit." This is one example, others could be found. Without fearing to put forward comradely criticism we must learn how to avoid most carefully any semblance of attack upon friends and partial supporters.

The differentiation in the reformist ranks calls also for the mobilisation by us, through our activity, of the utmost support for those Left leaders in the real sense of the world, within the Labor Party.

United Front in Elections

In regard to elections, although they are not an immediate problem, something must be said, they might develop at any time. There is need for a more careful selection of constituencies from the point of view of opposing the capitalist parties. We must also strive for united front candidates, and careful consideration be given as to whether we should stand in constituencies where the Labor Party candidate is very popular and somewhat to the left. We can propose joint meetings to select the candidate. We know what can be done on the South Coast. We have to be very careful to campaign for allocation of preference. In the Federal sphere and in New South Wales it is not difficult, we are prepared to call for definite support for the Labor Party candidates. We will call on the workers in South Australia to vote for the Labor Party. In Queensland, Victoria, and West Australia there will be need to work out details to show the workers we do not favor a capitalist government and that a Communist member will strengthen the Labor Party as government or opposition. Not to raise any barriers but to break down any that yet exist between us and the Labor Party workers. We have to learn not to concentrate our attention

solely on Party candidates. United front candidates might belong to no party (e.g. the South Coast). A very simple programme could be accepted. Immediate trade union and unemployed demands, defence of democratic rights and the struggle against war.

There may be Fascist candidates. The Centre Party showed its face on the last occasion in N.S.W. Here we will have to consider who are the other candidates and the matter of transferring our preferences, above all to vote for the Labor Candidate. We will vote for some other candidate who supports bourgeois democracy against the Fascist candidates.

About the Labor Party in office. In Tasmania the Party does not grow, but the unemployed struggles do show the possibilities of development of mass action for some of those things which the Labor Government promised to the masses. In Queensland and W.A. much remains to be done to organise united demands that the Labor Governments carry out such promises as are in the interests of the masses.

More and Better Work Among Youth and Women

About the youth. I remind you of what the Seventh World Congress points out—that the Fascists were able to penetrate the ranks of the youth. The bourgeoisie pay attention to the youth here, and we are only beginning to be able to develop the practice of getting the members of the Y.C.L. and the youth in the Communist Party going into the existing youth organisations. The Sixth Congress of the Y.C.I. raised some new perspectives about the future of the youth work. We have only recently received the decisions.

In this district, in Victoria and in Newcastle, we are really getting some fine types of young men and women into the League and the Communist Party. The task then is to help to develop the League. I would be the last to say that the C.C. has done all that might be done, but I say again that if all the leading Committees gave as much attention to the League from week to week, as the members of the C.C. give to the National and District 1 Committees, that the League would develop far more rapidly than it does.

In regard to women. Frankly, we must admit that of the number of parties who have made little or no progress we are included. It is true that we have a paper and have succeeded to maintain it, and the circulation and financial position is relatively good. Just consider the problem of cadres of women. There are a few more in the party than in 1931, but from the point of view of leading women, the position does not differ much from 1931. Here, I think, we are much at fault. We must seriously set out to try and bring about a change in this

situation. Women are being brought to the Party, but the problem of cadres is very serious.

I emphasise to the Y.C.L.'ers, to the women comrades, to the delegations as a whole, to give some consideration to dividing your time in discussion so that we can have a broader discussion about the work amongst the youth and the women. It may be said also about the women that if other districts would begin to give the attention that is given here and in Victoria, we would develop more rapidly.

The movement of the masses towards the united front which is developing is deeply founded. Experience has shown that the most heroic struggles of the Communists and the militant sections of the working class alone is not sufficient; successful struggle can only be carried on by the united front struggle against capitalism and against war and Fascism.

We are faced with a much more complex situation than even before. That gives rise to tremendous organisational work. Is the Party well enough organised to carry out these tasks? My experience of the districts shows that there is a healthy realisation that this is not so. Steps were taken to bring about an improvement. In Victoria we find that one of the keys to the development of the Party is the section committees. Here I do not want to take up the problems of organisation, which will be dealt with by another member of the C.C.

How can all the tasks be taken up if we do not improve our knowledge and organisations? In District 2 there is a major problem of cadres. There is growth of the Party, influx of comrades from the pits and steelworks and important trade unionists, but very slow development of cadres. The raising of the whole political level and the training of Communist leaders is imperatively demanded by the complexity of this situation.

More Knowledge—Better Organisation

Rapid changes are coming over the labor movement, more rapid changes will take place. It is a politically complicated movement and quick reaction is necessary. We have indicated that the C.C. did not act quickly and correctly to the dismissal of Lang. We know that the Party did not react quickly enough, as a whole, to the Abyssinian situation, and to the attack on the C.P. and the F.S.U.

In order to bring about this quick reaction, what is necessary? The raising of the political level and the improvement in organisation. The raising of the political level will give the possibility of correctly estimating and drawing correct conclusions. It will lead to the rapid transmission of these correct directives throughout the length and breadth of the Party, and

there will be one whole process of rapid mobilisation of the Party as a result.

This complex situation and the rapid changes cause the Communist International to sharply emphasise the need to get rid of narrowness and doctrinairism towards questions. The ranks of the Party were not completely free of a doctrinaire attitude about mechanisation based upon some passages of Marx about the progress and development of capitalism in the period of rising capitalism and so the same conclusions were drawn for the period of imperialism. Mechanisation does not mean progress, but the wiping out of whole communities and mass misery and starvation. That is not progress. There was also evidence of doctrinairism in connection with the Abyssinian situation.

In the struggle against war our main slogan is the peace slogan. Our tactic is that of the united front and we must hammer away at unity, unity, unity everywhere and all the time—unity against capitalism, unity in action for whatever may be in the immediate interests of the people.

While the main slogan in the struggle against war is the peace slogan, the main slogan of the Communist International and of the Communist Parties remains the struggle for power. We are on the eve of a new round of wars and revolutions, the conditions for bringing about the end of capitalism are maturing. The premises for a revolutionary crisis are maturing on an international scale. At any moment we may be confronted with the question of concretely preparing for power. So that is our main slogan, the struggle for power. Propaganda for power and for Socialism must be carried out, must be combined with slogans that will mobilise the masses for struggle.

I want to emphasise the content of the lengthy article by myself that appeared in the "Weekly" in connection with the Pre-Congress Discussion and what was said by Comrade Sharkey about popularising the Seventh Congress. What he said was emphasised for me by my Victorian experiences in preparation for the Congress and from the point of view of the level everywhere.

Although something has been done, it is very inadequate. Our Party has developed in the struggle against opportunism. If we realise fully what this means and how, since 1930, the decisions of the Comintern and our own Party have been popularised and carried throughout the Party, thus assisting our development, then, you will take seriously the question of popularising the decisions of the Seventh Congress and this congress in the immediate future. To do so is to bring about what is possible—a much more rapid development of our Party. (Loud Applause.)

Report on the Economic Struggles and the Tasks of the Communists in the Trade Unions

By R. DIXON

COMRADES,—The resolution on the trade union question before Congress outlines the position of the Communist Party on the basic questions of the trade union movement; it presents a programme for the reorganisation of this movement, for the sharpening of the struggle against the employers and to defend and improve the conditions of the workers; it has in mind the final aims of the movement to overthrow capitalism.

The fact that a resolution of this character is submitted is indicative of the growth of militant unionism and of the Party in Australia. At the Tenth Congress of the Party it was impossible to present the question in this manner. Then the Party was weighed down with sectarianism, was isolated from the main body of the labor movement, from the trade union movement. The problem then was to connect the Party with the trade union movement.

In the four years and six months since the Tenth Congress we came to grips with sectarianism, changed our approach to the trade unions, and improved the work to such an extent that to-day we are no longer isolated, but are directly connected with the unions.

Four and a half years ago the reformists completely dominated the trade unions. To-day we are in a stage where this domination is passing, where the trade unions are going over to militant unionism.

That four and a half years has also seen the rise in the struggles of the workers. The ebb which took place following the defeats of 1929 is passing, a decided hardening in the resistance of the workers is to be noted. The struggles are rising to a higher and higher level. The militancy of the workers is growing and so, also, is militant unionism.

These two processes, the growth of militant unionism and the rising level of struggle, are linked together, each reacting on the other and stimulating a general advance. That must be clearly understood if we are to comprehend the tasks that confront the Party in the present situation.

We are living in conditions when the graveness of the war danger, the growth of Fascism, as well as the process of revolutionisation of the workers demand the rapid fulfilling of the main strategic task of the Party, of winning to our side the majority of the working class. The solution of this task will be found in great class conflicts which are now developing, and which provide the chief method for winning to our side the majority of the workers. If the great struggles which are developing will be the chief method for winning to our side the majority of the workers, then the trade unions are going to be the organisational form that will hasten this process and help in its consolidation.

The period since the last Congress has also seen a change in the position of capitalism. From the lowest depths of the crisis capitalism in this country has entered into the depression. Already in quite a number of industries production has either exceeded 1929, or else is approaching the levels of 1929. For instance, production of iron, coal, pig iron and steel, already exceeds that of 1929. In the rail industry it approaches the level of 1929. In the building industry it is still less than half that of 1929.

In spite of the fact that production is approaching the levels of 1929, there is not, however, the "prosperity" that existed at that time, nor the indications of it. Things are still far from normal. World trade is one-third of 1929, and the indications suggest there will be very little improvement, precisely because every country is attempting to improve its position by exploiting to the limit the home market, erecting ever higher tariff barriers, excluding the products from other countries.

The improvement in production has led to no improvement in the conditions of the working class. It is claimed by the Lyons, Stevens and other Governments that prosperity is returning. They have produced some figures relating to industry to illustrate this. The real test of prosperity, however, is not to be found in statistics, but in the lives of the people, it is to be sought in the economic security and happiness of the masses. It requires only to walk through the working-class suburbs to-day to see that there is no prosperity for the masses, that there is nothing even approaching the 1929 level. On the contrary, the conditions of the workers can be described only as deplorable.

The improvement since 1932 has taken place at the expense of the workers. Take the mining industry. Coal production

in New South Wales to-day exceeds 1929, but the number of workers in the industry is nearly 9000 less than then. In the rail industry 24,000 workers have been dismissed throughout Australia, in that period. In general, unemployment to-day is four times greater than it was in 1929, whilst the wages of the workers are approximately 25 per cent. lower.

Thus whilst production is near the 1929 levels, and whilst the profits of the various big capitalist concerns, if examined, would show that in many instances they exceed 1929, the living standards of the masses are far below the level of 1929.

Rationalisation

The most intense drive has been made not only against the wages, but also to speed up the workers by the rationalisation of industry. In other words, there is taking place what Comrade Stalin described at the Seventeenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. as an increase of the exploitation of the workers "by increasing the intensity of labor." It is very important to understand the significance of this statement of Comrade Stalin. There are those who say that when the Communists oppose mechanisation of the mines they oppose social progress. They should define what they mean by social progress. Can progress be estimated in terms of the destruction of whole towns and villages, of the ruination of the livelihood of thousands of people? Is unemployment, poverty, hopelessness, degeneration, and the degradation which goes with those things a measure of social progress? We Communists say that it is not. Mechanisation in the coalfields means all that.

Some of the people opposing us quoted Marx in support of their position. They confuse two things in the Marxian analysis—the raising of the productivity of labor and the intensification of the labor process. Marx declared that increased productivity of labor enabled the workers to "produce more with the same expenditure of labor in the same time." He described intensification of labor as "increased expenditure of labor in the same time, increased strain put on labor power, a denser filling in of the pores of labor time." It is this latter which characterises rationalisation.

It is true that there are certain progressive features about rationalisation. Its essential purpose, however, is the intensification of the exploitation of labor, or, in the words of the resolution before the Congress, the "extracting of the last ounce of strength and efficiency from the workers."

Rationalisation can proceed with or without the introduction of machinery. Since 1929 that which has characterised

the process of rationalisation has been not so much the introduction of new machinery as the reorganisation of the work in the various industries with a view to speeding up the workers, that is, it takes a form of change in the labor process, the elimination of unnecessary workers, the placing of more work on the workers engaged in the industry.

What is the result of this? The possibilities of production has increased, but there has been no lightening of the burden of toil for the masses, it has become more brutal. The improvement in production has not led to greater economic security, but to a greater instability of employment and the existence of a mass permanent unemployment. It has led, not to an improvement, but to an absolute worsening of the living standard of the masses. Mass unemployment has come to stay, it will press down the scales in the labor market and cause a still further deterioration in the conditions of the workers in general.

In view of these circumstances, is it not correct that we should wage a fight against rationalisation, even if it means new machines? If we did not take it up, and take it up resolutely, we would be deserting the position of the workers.

The Shorter Working Week

In the mines the slogan was raised against mechanisation. There, the miners were prepared to wage a struggle on this issue. I do not think, however, that we should raise the slogan, "against mechanisation" in other industries, but, rather, the slogan must be "against rationalisation," raising demands for the shortening of the working week and an increase in the pay of the workers.

The resolution draws attention to the urgency of campaigning for a six-hour day and £5 minimum weekly wage. It would be wrong to adopt rigidly these demands. The Communists in each industry will raise demands in accordance with the needs of that industry and the possibility of developing struggles around them. In the railways and some other industries the demand is raised for a 40-hour week.

The campaign for a shorter working week is very important. The degree to which it is taken up will exercise a great influence upon the growth of militant unionism in the future.

Within the next few years the shorter working week should be realised in a number of industries. Consequently, our main demands in connection with the economic needs of the masses should centre around the question of shortening the working

week and an improvement in wages. That does not mean, of course, that we neglect other issues, such as wage reductions or worsening of conditions. Rather than excluding them, the campaign for the shorter working week presupposes the taking up of those issues.

There have been suggestions that the shorter working week should be introduced, but with a reduction in wages. That must be opposed by the Communists. It means spreading the poverty that goes with part-time employment over the great mass of the workers in industry; it is nothing more than a sharing of work. The demand for the shorter working week must be combined with the demand for an increase in wages.

If rationalisation is to be effectively combated, special committees, or the shop committees, should take up the struggle against speed-up. In 1928 and 1929 the Labor Council in N.S.W. conducted a very strong campaign against piecework and the bonus system. In the intervening period there has been a tendency to neglect these issues. They should be taken up once again, with a view to organising struggle, to this end proceeding with the establishment of small committees or even the drawing together groups of militant workers, charged with investigating the methods being employed to speed up the workers, with the issuing of materials exposing speed-up methods, and proposing a line of resistance to it. If that is done, concrete resistance will develop in a whole series of industries.

It is essential to link closely the struggle against rationalisation with improved work amongst the unemployed. Closer relationships are necessary between the unemployed organisations and the trade union movement. Only in N.S.W. is the situation in any way satisfactory. Here militant leadership has been established in the unemployed bodies and, at the same time, they have been connected with the trade union movement through the Labor Council. As a result of this the whole movement of the workers in this State has been strengthened considerably.

In other States an unsatisfactory condition exists. The level of the unemployed movement is below that of N.S.W. Much of the success in N.S.W. was due to the fact that a central leadership was established, which really studied the problems of the unemployed and was capable of answering every question affecting them.

In Victoria, the Communists were unable to develop such a leadership. At one stage the unemployed were under militant leadership, but it was the Trades and Labor Council in that State which commenced to answer the questions of the unem-

ployed, and finally they came under its leadership.

The demands of the unemployed for social insurance, for full time work and award rates of pay must be more effectively campaigned for by the whole trade union movement. What do we understand by social insurance? It is a system established by the Government from a fund that should come from further taxing the rich, together with allocations from the State, out of which payments are made providing for unemployment, sickness, injury, and old age pensions, etc. We must emphasise that the fund is to come from the State and taxation of the rich, precisely because the Governments in discussing this question are proposing to further tax the wages of the workers.

There is urgent need for a system of social insurance in this country, and it is necessary that the Communists take the matter up, explaining simply to the workers our proposals, and organising union support for same.

The Economic Struggle

Now to an analysis of the strike movement.

What is characteristic of the strike movement in this country to-day? Firstly, the strike wave is becoming stronger, and in its rise is influenced to an increasing extent by the revolutionaries, who give to the struggle better organisation, thus increasing the possibilities of victory.

The second thing is that there is a tendency on the part of the workers to go over to the offensive, to struggle to improve conditions. This is another reason why the demands for an improvement in wages and a shortening of hours are tremendously important. The seamen have taken up the struggle for the shortening of their working week, and in other industries the demand for increases in wages and a shortening of the working week is growing. The fact that the struggles show increased signs of the offensive indicates the higher level at which they are proceeding.

Thirdly, the struggles are marked by increased interference on the part of the capitalist State.

The difficulties in the strike struggles are becoming greater, mainly because the employers have centralised their organisations to a greater extent, and have the full support of the State apparatus, and because of the prevailing mass unemployment.

This demands of the Communists better preparation of the strikes, better organisation of the struggles once they have commenced, a higher level of manoeuvring in the process of the struggle, the ability to draw in new forces, and to secure

alliances with other sections of the working-class movement. In order to get a clear understanding of these problems it is necessary to examine some lessons of the seamen's dispute which are of outstanding importance.

The first indication of the likelihood of a shipping hold up was in November, when some inkling of the nature of the award to be delivered against the seamen was obtained. Preparations were commenced. It was pointed out that the seamen would be fighting the strongest groupings of Australian finance capital, that the Government would probably apply the provisions of the Transport Act and use all its power to break the strike. Further, that, as the experience of the "Murada" dispute had revealed, the officials would oppose action and do all possible to break any strike. It followed from this that if success was to be obtained strong support was necessary both on the waterfront and elsewhere, that the collection of relief and development of publicity must be organised.

When the award was discussed by the seamen the officials proposed acceptance. Despite this, the seamen declared almost unanimously for strike action, a fact which bears witness to their discontent. Strike committees were elected in several ports. Immediately there was powerful reformist opposition brought to bear upon the strikers. The A.C.T.U. executive called a conference of unions affected and carried a resolution proposing that the seamen return to work and submit their demands to the Court. Offsetting this was the support of the miners and the declaration of the N.S.W. Labor Council for moral and financial support for the seamen.

The A.C.T.U., under pressure, later agreed to support the seamen financially. It has, however, consistently sabotaged the struggle, trying to force the seamen to return to work and submit their claims to the Arbitration Court.

The next development was the application of the Transport Act by the Federal Government against the seamen. Sections of the reformist officials seized upon this to try and drive the seamen back to work.

Such, then, is the situation. Not only are the seamen fighting the most powerful groups of Australian finance capital and the Federal Government, but also there is strong opposition to their struggle within the labor movement.

As against this, the seamen are displaying real mass solidarity and firmness. Amongst the workers elsewhere there is great support, in spite of the attempts of the reformists to sabotage. The application of licences by the Federal Govern-

ment served not to weaken, but rather to strengthen the determination and solidarity of the seamen.

Strike Tactics

The tactics employed by the seamen are also interesting. They decided, first of all, to involve only the interstate ships, those affected by the Dethridge award, delaying an extension to the intrastate ships which work under a different award. It was considered inadvisable to involve these ships because they were not affected by the award, they represent the weakest section of the seamen, and, past experience has shown, generally returned to work very quickly, the ships are more easily manned than the interstate, and finally they could help provide relief.

It was necessary later to extend the struggle to the colliers as these were carrying coal to be used on ships with scab crews. At the same time the idea of extending the strike to other sections of the seamen has not been abandoned and may take place at any time.

Extension of the struggle to the miners also arises. Already some of the mines have been involved in the struggle. They came out on strike in sympathy with the seamen because they were called upon to hew coal that would be used on scab ships. Now discussions are taking place as to an extension of the struggle to the coal industry, which can lead to a general strike in the coal industry. Meetings will take place before the miners resume and it is possible that there will be no resumption.

Obviously the whole weight of the revolutionary movement must be thrown behind the seamen, and also the miners, should they come in, in order to help bring their struggle to victory. Plans must be worked out immediately detailing the form this assistance must take. The line of the plans should be: Firstly, on the coalfields and in the areas where the seamen are affected, to secure the widest activation of the strikers along the lines of the Wonthaggi struggle, in the collection of relief, in the development of mass publicity, in organised picketing.

Secondly, elsewhere to arouse the widest solidarity and the support of the workers in all industries for the struggle, organising the collection of relief in all places where the workers are to be found. Efforts should be made to get the trade unions to pass either compulsory or voluntary levies in accordance with their constitutions. Where levies are voluntary, then the militants in the workshops must strive for a 100 per cent. collection

and arouse a spirit of opposition amongst the workers to those who refuse to contribute.

Thirdly, draw the women into activity. The wives of the strikers and other women should participate in the collection of relief and development of strike organisation. To secure this on an extensive scale it may be necessary to insist on certain forms of relief being distributed only to the women, and then propose to them that they should participate in some form of activity. As far as the strikers are concerned, it should be a condition that they must be active in the struggle in order to obtain relief.

Very much will depend on the outcome of the struggles. Victory will give an impetus to the strike movement and will revive the confidence of the more backward workers in trade unionism.

Another question also arises. The struggle will reveal the strength of the militants in the trade union movement and, no doubt, the ruling classes will intensify their drive against the Party. Hence the campaign in defence of democratic rights becomes more important than ever. Efforts will be made to drive the Party into illegality. In March we come before the Court. In the meantime the drive to increase the support of the workers for the Party, and to raise finance in order to defend the Party, must be intensified.

A liberal approach to the question of illegality cannot be tolerated. Over a period of months now there has been evidence of the neglect of elementary questions of conspiracy, an unsatisfactory taking up of the proper organisation of illegal methods of work. The present situation demands that every Communist give much more attention to this question than in the past.

Lessons of the Struggle

Now to some further lessons of the seamen's dispute which will be quite important for us in future strikes.

First: In connection with the preparation of the strike. Whilst aware of the developments prior to December, nevertheless, the militants were not in a position to really prepare the dispute. This was due to the fact that the seamen spend most of their time on the ships, to the time factor, and to the reformist control of the union. This latter was by far the most important. Johnson and Clarke were opposed to struggle, and consequently were not concerned with preparing for it.

What form must strike preparations take in the future?

Certainly organisational preparation of the workers within the unions and the industry, the development of Party organisation, and the commencement prior to the strike of an extensive publicity campaign, with the object of increasing the determination of the workers concerned, of winning the support of other workers, and the sympathy of the middle classes and farmers.

Next, the unions concerned to establish a fighting fund prior to the strike commencing, either by imposing a levy or taking up collections.

Further, the commencement of discussions with other unions in the industry and with trade union centres, with a view to obtaining their support, financially and morally, in the event of struggle. This aspect must be emphasised as it is underestimated very much. Amongst the seamen there was a tendency to ignore other unions likely to be affected and to treat the A.C.T.U. with contempt. This much must be always kept in mind, that militant unionism has become a very responsible force in the labor movement. Hence, when entering into struggle it cannot, for a moment, ignore those who may be allies, who will render some support in the carrying through of that struggle. The reformists hold in their hands the majority of the leading trade union positions, and their support is, at times, vital. This can be secured, if necessary, by mass pressure which can place them in the position of having to support the struggle. The seamen's struggle has demonstrated this quite clearly. The A.C.T.U. at one stage declared against the strike, but, under pressure, was forced to agree to render at least financial support.

Thus, when entering into struggle, the militants must be very much concerned with obtaining support from the various unions.

That does not mean, of course, to slide to the position of the reformists. Rather they will slide to our position. The fights in the future will, to an increasing extent, be led by militants, and when the reformists support them they are supporting the strikes we are leading. If, on the other hand, the reformists in certain conditions should develop struggles, the Communists will not hesitate to go to their assistance, to be their allies, but will resist all efforts directed towards preventing bringing the struggle to a successful conclusion for the workers.

As an example of how to prepare strike struggles the miners' experience in the mechanisation campaign is invaluable. Prior to the struggle commencing, the miners carried on a widespread publicity campaign right throughout the country. They prepared not only the workers but the people of the coalfields, they

carried on a campaign in the press and informed the workers from one end of Australia to the other what was happening in the mining areas. There you see both the ideological preparation of the workers for that struggle and the winning of allies before the strike began. In addition to that, they carried on an energetic campaign to unite all of the unions in the industry. Discussion after discussion with the representatives of other unions likely to be involved was carried through with a view to a common front against mechanisation.

The second conclusion to be drawn from the seamen's struggle is the great weakness of the revolutionary movement on the waterfront. The waterside workers have had the Transport Act imposed on them and yet in the struggle the seamen are waging against it the watersiders limit themselves to financial support. This is an indication of the low level of Communist work carried on amongst that section of workers. In 1928 the waterside workers were defeated. They have not recovered from that setback. In working amongst the waterside workers in future it will be necessary to tirelessly explain the reasons for the defeat in 1928, to expose the official sabotage of that struggle, combining this with explaining the conditions under which a successful struggle can be conducted.

The third question is that of relief. This is one of the most important matters, and yet one of the most neglected. Relief has been sought in too narrow a way, it has been collected in tens of pounds when hundreds were wanted. Well over £3000 per fortnight is required to provide the most meagre allowance for the seamen—that will not be obtained by utilising methods as in past unemployed battles.

The extent to which the relief was underestimated was revealed at one or two centres where a distribution on the eve of Christmas was not even discussed. It was forgotten that the strikers may like a little money in the Christmas period. Such lack of initiative, such inattention to the every needs as well as the traditions of the workers on the part of the Communists is to be deplored.

In the next weeks the collection of relief must be tackled, not in the narrow way of the past, but in a much bigger way. It is a problem for the whole of the Communist movement and for the trade unions.

Hence the need to establish union levies and a drive in the industries to see that the levy is collected. Relief committees must be established in the various localities, drawing in both the women and the unemployed to assist.

The next problem is that of publicity. Publicity generally has been underestimated, its significance is not understood by leading Communists. Publicity is not just merely the matter of a leaflet or two to the strikers—the objective of publicity above all should be to swing public support behind the strikers.

All materials for mass consumption must be prepared in a simple, concrete, but direct way. In the seamen's strike the capitalist press published much material, and the wireless has been made use of. Nevertheless, the position is unsatisfactory. Statements for the press were not as carefully thought out as is necessary, and, of course, many of the things which did appear were distorted.

To organise publicity on a wider scale, full page advertisements could be inserted in daily papers, which state in a few direct words the case of the workers who are on strike. Posters, stickers and leaflets should be produced.

The leaflets issued in the seamen's dispute were all too long, the points were not well thought out, and so the main issues were lost in verbiage.

Publicity was also a great shortcoming in the sugar strike. The A.W.U. came out with a vicious slander against the Party, they forged documents and printed them in the papers, and submitted lying statements to the press right throughout Australia. When the Communists in North Queensland discussed it, they considered that the A.W.U. was discredited to such an extent that it was unnecessary to reply to the attacks. Such a view is wrong even if the question is seen only from the point of view of the sugar workers. It was a bigger issue than this, however. The audience of the A.W.U. was the whole of the people of Queensland—even of Australia, and these people have the right to expect an answer. The Communists in Queensland must answer every attack and brand every slander of the Party—they must do it in a big way—counting their audience in scores of thousands and not in dozens.

That is how the question of publicity must be placed everywhere.

Fifthly—the seamen's struggle emphasises the unequal development of the strike movement and the growth of militant unionism. The miners and the seamen are the two most militant unions in Australia. A great gap exists between them and the other unions, and particularly rail workers, which are a vital section.

In future it will be necessary to intensify the drive among

the more backward sections of the workers to strengthen the spirit of unionism among them, and with a view to arousing their class solidarity and determination to struggle.

This unequal development is further revealed in the different positions in the States. In N.S.W. there has been a rapid advance of militant unionism, the capturing of many positions in trades councils and unions. In other States there has been a lag in this direction. Take the position in Victoria. On the Labor Council the militant fraction has been strengthened, there is a considerable improvement, but the whole development in Victoria is far too slow. Next to N.S.W. Victoria is the most important industrial State in Australia. More than that, from the standpoint of the labor movement it is the stronghold of reformism. Only recently the emergency congress of the A.C.T.U. was held there in order to put it over the Communists on the war question. Had that congress been held in N.S.W. the position may have been reversed.

The activity of the reformists in Victoria is having a retarding influence on the development of the struggles in other parts of Australia. It is essential, in the interests of the whole Party, that the Communists overcome this state of affairs.

In Queensland the A.W.U. dominates the labor movement. It is a powerful factor hindering our advance in that State. There exists among trade unionists and Labor Party workers great opposition to the A.W.U. bureaucracy. The tasks of the Communists in Queensland are, first and foremost, to carry on a consistent constructive campaign inside the A.W.U. for broader democracy and workers' control, and, secondly, to consolidate organisationally the opposition to the A.W.U. official domination within the trade union movement and Labor Party.

This means to work and plan with these people, as to how to conduct and develop a huge drive against the A.W.U. officials.

Finally:—The seamen's strike raises very sharply the need to reorganise the trade unions. The division of the workers organisationally into various craft unions is a source of real weakness when the workers are struggling. Much has been said in the past about this so I will refer you to the resolution and what has been written on the question at other times.

International Trade Union Unity

A few words on the problem of international trade union unity.

The Red International of Labor Unions is seeking an agreement with the International Federation of Trade Unions, which will lead to the uniting of both organisations, to the establish-

ment of one international trade union centre, and the realisation of trade union unity in every country.

In 1928 the A.C.T.U. carried a resolution proposing to both internationals the calling of a world congress, with a view to establishing one world trade union centre. The A.C.T.U. declared then its intention of refraining from affiliating with either body until unity was secured.

It is necessary that this matter be raised once again and along somewhat similar lines to 1928—that is, calling on the I.F.T.U. to agree to an all-in world trade union congress for the purpose of establishing one centre and policy on the basic problems before the working class.

It seems I will have to close my remarks. There are many questions I have not been able to take up which should be dealt with in the discussion.

The main body of my report dealt with strike strategy. The Political Bureau felt that this was essential. We must give more attention to this question than we have in the past, precisely because of the fact that the struggles conducted to-day proceed mainly under our leadership. There is a qualitative change taking place in this particular field. Earlier the struggles conducted and led by the Communists were much smaller, and, in many cases, were even apart from the unions. To-day the struggles are much bigger and are led mainly from the unions. In view of this, we have to develop to a much higher level our knowledge and understanding of strike strategy.

We speak of the domination of the trade union movement coming to an end. It is necessary to clearly understand what is meant by this. Organisationally the position of reformism in the trade union movement is still more extensive than our position, but ideologically the Communists have already demonstrated their superiority, and our policy is becoming the dominating policy in the trade union movement. When the workers want to fight, they come to us. When they desire leadership, they look to the militants. This places upon us great responsibility, and people with responsibility cannot afford to be flippant. A clear understanding of the tasks confronting the revolutionary movement is necessary. The rapid development of Party organisation is essential. The all-round improvement of militant leadership is vital. All these things are connected with the acquirement of a deeper understanding of Marxism-Leninism, of the revolutionary theory of the labor movement.

We are members of a splendid Party, which already has a

great fighting record in the Australian labor movement. When one looks over the Districts and Sections he is convinced that here are gathered into one organisation the most intelligent and talented workers in Australia. There is missing, however, a deep knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, there is absent that understanding of dialectics which gives firmness as well as flexibility in the leadership of the workers.

It is essential in the forthcoming period to fully equip the Party members with the invincible weapons of Marxism-Leninism. This will be the guarantee of victory.

Australia's Fights for Democracy, Freedom, and Progress

By J. N. RAWLING

Introduction.

ONE of the most misused and prostituted words in our or any language is the word "patriotism." We have often been told of Dr. Johnson's dictum that it is the last refuge of the scoundrel. So it is—but that is no definition. It is not to define patriotism to tell us that the most consummate villain in the community, albeit disguised in broad-cloth, top-hat, and a halo of respectability, is the loudest in his protestation of "patriotism." It is true, however, that into the hands of the high-priests of capitalism, and of its scribes and pharisees, the masses of the people have placed the keeping of the ideals of patriotism and accepted from them its definition.

So, for centuries the peoples have been taught, and have been only too ready to believe, that he, on the one hand, is patriotic who waxes rich out of the sufferings and blood and tears of the thousands who die. That he, on the other hand, is equally patriotic who dies that the former might continue to live in riches and comfort. In other words, patriotism, like everything else within a class society, has come to have different meanings for different classes. For the exploited masses, it has meant the suffering of exploitation and oppression without murmuring and the being willing to die to maintain the rule of their own particular masters. It is, as "Smith's Weekly" seriously put it a few weeks ago, the being proud that in one street in Sydney is concentrated the control of more financial resources than in any other street in Australia. For those masters, it is the wearing of appropriate clothes, the waving of flags and the being grateful, to the extent of some few stone memorials, for the existence of slaves willing to die that they might live. Patriotism has meant the being faithful to the dictatorship of the ruling class.

Is it any wonder, then, that revolutionaries have scoffed at patriotism? Or that some have gone to the other extreme of attempting to inculcate in the minds and hearts of the masses, contempt for everything connected with love of country, its customs, traditions and past achievements? But there is a real meaning in patriotism. There is something of value, some-

thing lasting, something fundamental. It is the task of revolutionaries to rescue patriotism from those who have prostituted it. We define it anew and give it a warm reality so that it becomes an inspiration. We wrest it from those who have usurped it and say: **Patriotism is the love of our country and its people from whom has been stolen their birthright: the full enjoyment of the wonderful resources of their country and the material and cultural products of their toil; it is the determination to help to win that birthright and, having expropriated the expropriators, to build in our country a classless society; it is the remembering of the deeds of our fathers who fought and died to gain the rights and liberties they have handed down to us; it is the determination to safeguard, even unto death, those rights and liberties that they gained for us; it is to understand that the toiling masses are the country and the custodians of its ideals and culture. That is our conception of patriotism!**

Will not the workers of Australia be more determined to maintain their democratic rights and liberties when they understand that their own fathers suffered and often died that their children should be freer and happier than they? To-day, all over the world, the masses are faced with Fascist barbarism which threatens to wipe out all the gains that have been made by our fathers for hundreds of years back. So to us falls the task, in the course of the struggle, to usher in a new classless society, to maintain the gains of the past. In France, the revolutionaries have claimed the "Marseillaise" as their own battle-hymn and the safeguarding of the gains of the Great Revolution as their own task. Britain, whence most of us or of our fathers have come, has its revolutionary traditions of heroic struggles for the maintenance of liberties and the gaining of others. Shall we allow all of those to be taken from us? To Australia the traditions of revolt against oppression and fight against tyranny were transplanted, and here were built up new traditions of independence and hatred of tyranny. The democratic gains that were their fruit are threatened to-day—many of them, alas! for the memory of our fathers who fought in the past, already taken! It is our patriotic duty to preserve what we have and regain what we have lost—for the sake of our children, the memory of our fathers and the welfare of our country, now in the hands of usurpers!

It is the purpose of this series of articles to re-call some of the struggles of the past—in which our fathers took part—and to relate at what cost were bought the benefits that we often so lightly value to-day.

I.—The Fight Against Transportation

Until 1840, Australia, or as it was then called, New South Wales (including the three eastern States and the S.A. and N.T. of to-day), was one vast prison, to which England sent its criminals. Many of these were political prisoners, who had revolted against the Combination Laws and other repressive legislation in England, Scotland and Ireland. They brought a tradition of independence and revolt against oppression that was to become a vitalising force in Australia. Others were "criminals," merely because they refused to starve in an England which had condemned them to starvation or because they were superfluous in an England where the land had been taken from them by the Enclosure Acts and where the new machines and factories were being worked by women and child labor. These also formed an element of independence in the population of their "adopted" country.

By 1840, there was a fairly large free population, including three classes: **the rich pastoralists**, who had come over in the early years and gobbled up the best land—the Macarthurs of Camden, for example; **the emancipists**, that is, freed convicts, many of whom were wealthy, having become squatters or merchants; and **the free settlers and immigrants**, the tricklings of whom grew into a broad stream after the discoveries of gold around 1850. Amongst the immigrants of the 'fifties were many political refugees and deportees from Britain and Europe, including Irish revolutionaries, English Chartists, and German and French veterans of the revolutions of '48—the whole constituting another leaven to produce an independence that made possible the gaining of many victories for freedom and democracy in the years that followed.

According to Sir Henry Parkes (in his "Fifty Years of Australian History"), who landed as an immigrant in Sydney in July, 1839, the population of the whole country then was only 114,386. Land was selling for 12/- per acre and 95,312 acres were under cultivation. £442,504 worth of wool were exported (7,213,584 lb.), the number of sheep in the colony being, in 1843, 4,804,946. Imports amounted to about £2½ millions and the exports just under £1,000,000.

Wages were low, the cost of living high. Parkes found a job, washing sheep, assisting in reaping and laboring generally, for the princely wage of "£30 a year, and a ration and a half, largely made up of rice." Bread was up to 2/8 per 4 lb. loaf and a soup-kitchen was established for the poor and unemployed!

The big pastoralists, in whose hands the Government of the Colony was, favored the convict system, for it gave them free labor. But opposition to "transportation," that is the bringing of convicts to Australia, had been growing. The new immigrants, the small business men in Sydney, Melbourne and Hobart and the working class were bitterly opposed to it. As a result, an Order-in-Council was issued by the British Government, on May 22, 1840, putting a stop to the transportation of convicts to Australia.

But the question was not settled by that Order-in-Council, and the pastoralists and reactionaries, led by W. C. Wentworth, continued to agitate for a revival of transportation. Before 1843, the Legislative Council, the only legislating body for the Colony, was purely a nominee house. But in that year a new Constitution came into operation, making it partly elective and partly nominee, the suffrage being on a high property qualification. Amongst the first representatives elected were W. C. Wentworth (for Sydney) and John Dunmore Lang (for Port Phillip).

The first Council under the new Constitution was predominantly in favor of the renewal of transportation. It is of interest to note that even on this question—as in all class questions—the halo of holiness was requisitioned. Throughout history the most dastardly and reactionary proposals and causes have been sanctified and their opponents branded as criminals, degenerates, and everything that is evil. So, W. C. Wentworth and his followers were the custodians of all the virtues and of civilisation, while Lowe, Piddington, Parkes, and the other "antis" were branded as "Socialists" [equivalent to the "S.M.H.'s" "bolsheviks" of to-day], blasphemers, "caring for neither God nor man," and their followers were called a mob.

In 1848, year of momentous happenings in Europe, fresh elections took place for the Council. Robert Lowe (afterwards Viscount Sherbrooke) was the Liberal candidate and he was successful in defeating one of the sitting members: William Bland.

The 1848 elections had strengthened the Liberal and Anti-Transportation Party in the Council. But the Government had already requested a resumption of transportation and the Legislative Council had presented (14/9/47) an address to the Home Government "expressing [its] willingness . . . to concur in the introduction into the colony of convicts holding tickets of leave or conditional pardons," provided that an equal number of free immigrants be sent out at the expense of the Home Government. The latter immediately took advantage of the

request and decided to send out more convicts. There was great unity manifested amongst the masses of the people and determination was widely expressed that the convicts would not land. Dr. Lang was in England at the time endeavoring to get immigrants for Moreton Bay, and the leader of the movement against the revival of transportation in Sydney was the newly-elected representative of Sydney in the Council: Robert Lowe.

He was supported by Henry Parkes, who was very active in organising public meetings. The slogan of the people's movement was: "**Neither coolies, cannibals nor convicts!**" "Coolies" referred to Indians and Chinese which were being introduced as cheap labor; "cannibals" referred to South Sea Islanders, a boatload of whom had already been brought from the New Hebrides for the same reason. The sequel to the decision of the Government to revive transportation was the solidifying of the widespread opposition to the whole convict system into a mass movement representative of nearly 100 per cent. of the population—a movement that not only defeated the Government's proposal, but showed, too, that Australia was no longer a penal settlement, but a self-conscious community determined to work out its own destiny. It was Australia's 1776, and speakers were fond of comparing Earl Grey, Secretary of State for the Colonies, with Lord North, and themselves with the representatives of the 13 States. A people's movement was standing determined and opposed to Downing Street, the pastoralists, officialdom and the Government House clique, headed by the Governor Fitzroy—the "hoary lecher," as Dr. Lang called him.

In Melbourne the first move was made. A deputation there to the Governor was so determined that orders were given that, when the convict ship destined for Melbourne reached there, it was to be sent on to Sydney. This was done. On June 8, 1849, the convict ship "Hashemy" anchored in Sydney Harbor. Immediately, arrangements were made to hold a huge public meeting for June 11. Parkes went round distributing handbills, and on the day of the meeting all the shops and places of business closed their doors. The meeting, which for many years was known as the **Great Protest Meeting**, took place on the site where now stands the Lands Office. It was in sight of Sydney Cove and of Government House. In Sydney Cove, could be seen from the meeting, the convict ship with the red-coated guards pacing the decks. What made the scene more dramatic and roused the participants in the meeting more enthusiastic was the fact that there were five immigrants ships in the har-

bor which had just arrived during the previous two or three days. With their 1250 free immigrants, they seemed to be standing aloof and waiting to see whether Australia was to be free or no.

The meeting assembled, the people expressing their determination that the convicts should not land and the crowd was not diminished by the pouring rain. The numbers were variously estimated at from 7000 to 12,000. Detachments of the 11th Regiment of the Line were brought to Government House and the guards there doubled. Troops went, too, to the Queen's Wharf, not far from the meeting, and the two warships, usually anchored in Farm Cove, were brought round to Sydney Cove and anchored in a position to command the meeting-place, or to see any signal that the Governor might give from Government House. Said an onlooker, "A second Bunker's Hill was imminent."

Lowe was the principal speaker and he received a tremendous ovation—"from 10,000 throats," says the same onlooker, "issued a volume of sound which struck terror into the heart of the cowardly Governor." The speaker said it was not an isolated question but a class question. Convictism was the "most degrading slavery" that was a "sequence of that oppressive tyranny which had confiscated the lands of the colony for the benefit of a class, who had felt their power—they were not content to get their land alone, without labor they were worthless and therefore they must enrich themselves with slaves." And he continued: "Let us send across the Pacific our emphatic declaration that we shall not be slaves—that we shall be free . . . I can see from this meeting that the time is not far distant when we shall assert our freedom not by words alone. As in America oppression was the parent of independence, so will it be in this colony. . . . And so sure as the seed will grow into the plant, and the plant to the tree, in all times and in all nations, so will injustice and tyranny ripen into rebellion, and rebellion into independence."

It was a "masterpiece of eloquence," we are told, and it "echoed in Government House and re-echoed in Downing Street, reminding Earl Grey that he was following in the footsteps of Lord North and repeating the mistakes of 70 years previously which lost the American colonies to the British Empire."

The following resolution was unanimously carried:

"We, the free and loyal subjects of Her Most Gracious Majesty, inhabitants of the city of Sydney and its immediate neighborhood, in public meeting assembled, do

hereby enter our most deliberate and solemn protest against the transportation of British criminals to the colony of New South Wales.

"Firstly.—Because it is in violation of the will of the majority of the colonists, as is clearly evidenced by their expressed opinions on the question at all times.

"Secondly.—Because numbers among us have emigrated on the faith of the British Government that transportation to this colony had ceased forever.

"Thirdly.—Because it is incompatible with our existence as a free colony, desiring self-government, to be made the receptacle of another country's felons.

"Fourthly.—Because it is in the highest degree unjust to sacrifice the great social and political interests of the colony at large to the pecuniary profit of a fraction of its inhabitants.

"Fifthly.—Because, being firmly and devoutly attached to the British Crown, we greatly fear that the perpetration of so stupendous an act of injustice by Her Majesty's Government will go far towards alienating the affections of the people of this colony for the mother country.

"For these and many kindred reasons—in the exercise of our duty to our country, for the love of our families, in the strength of our loyalty to Great Britain, and from the depth of our reverence for Almighty God—we protest against the landing of British convicts on these shores."

As the meeting broke up, Governor Fitzroy, to show he was not afraid, rode out of the Government House grounds in his state carriage, attended by mounted orderlies with drawn swords. Before he got far up Macquarie Street, however, he was attacked and stoned by the crowd leaving the meeting. He was forced to retreat and, we are told, "at length safely entered the gates, with a blanched face, amidst a shower of stones."

The guard was called out with fixed bayonets, but the crowd dispersed quietly. The Governor evidently saw that the people were in earnest. The convict ship was sent on to Moreton Bay.

But the "Great Protest Meeting" was not merely a flash in the pan. The movement was consolidated and did not intend resting content with one victory. Ninety per cent. of the immigrants, many public men—leading solicitors, etc., most of the shopkeepers, and all the workers, supported the anti-transportation movement. Many other public meetings were held, and events showed that all this vigilance was necessary, for Earl Grey would not take "No" for an answer! The new Legis-

lative Council had passed a resolution (1/6/49) refusing to agree to the renewal of transportation. Earl Grey would not accept this as final. Then came all the great public meetings, but Grey took no more notice of these than Lord North took of the Boston Tea Party. Again, a petition circulated and signatures were collected: 36,589 signatures against the resumption of transportation and there were only 525 for! Then, after a three nights' debate, the Legislative Council passed a resolution that "no more convicts ought under any conditions be sent to any part of this colony." This was carried unanimously, because the few opposed were not willing to show their weakness and withdrew when the vote was taken. Yet, when two public servants expressed themselves as in favor of transportation, they were publicly thanked by Earl Grey!

In March, 1851, Earl Grey, in a speech in the House of Lords, replied to the petition that had been sent. He said:

"The inhabitants of N.S.W., when they calmly view the working of the system, will, I am persuaded, see it for their interests that convicts should be sent to parts of the colony. I agree that convicts should not be sent to Sydney or Melbourne or any of the more considerable towns or even the more thickly populated country districts, but they might be sent with immense advantage to large tracts which are now becoming covered with sheep." Revival of transportation was thus again foreshadowed.

In the meantime, the Australasian League had been founded, the Sydney branch being formed upon the initiative of delegates from Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) and Victoria. The Council of the League was set up in Sydney. The aim was the "final and complete emancipation of these colonies from the system of transportation." The Executive was empowered to act for all the colonies in case of emergency. That emergency was considered to have arrived in 1851. On July 29 of that year, a huge public meeting was held in Malcom's Circus, under the auspices of the League. The purpose of the meeting was to pass a motion appealing direct to the Queen, asking for the dismissal of Earl Grey and for the honoring of former promises that transportation should cease. Charles Cowper was in the chair. Great indignation was expressed at Grey, who had said that "he would not at once comply with the prayers and representations of the colonists, because when the Council should be reorganised, and the anti-transportation cause should no longer have the support of the Port Phillip members, a resolution favorable to the reception of convicts might be passed, or steps might be taken to cut off the northern district, and erect it into

a penal colony." But the meeting made it clear that they would not tolerate transportation to any part of the colony. "We must never rest satisfied," said Cowper, "until Her Majesty's Government has revoked the Order-in-Council . . . and until all the Australian colonies are also rescued. We are acting for all these colonies!"

Another speaker was James Norton, a leading Sydney solicitor, who cited the experiences of Ceylon which constituted, under British rule, a "truly shocking history of tyranny and misrule." Other speakers were: J. E. Josephson, Henry Parkes, Gilbert Wright, C. Kemp, G. K. Holden, John Lamb, Robert Campbell, Archdeacon McEncroe—all prominent in Sydney political and professional circles. Three resolutions were carried unanimously: (1) demanding the dismissal of Grey and the honoring of the Government pledges; (2) adopting the petition to the Queen; (3) pledging the League not to relax its exertions and to accept no solution except the withdrawal of the Order-in-Council which authorised resumption of transportation.

During the year or so before this time there had been the beginnings of great changes in Australia. Gold had been discovered, first in N.S.W., and then in Victoria. These discoveries were already bringing immigrants to these shores, and, soon, a broad stream of gold-seekers from all over the world was pouring into Australia. This had the effect of putting a different complexion on the question of transportation and even some of those who wanted cheap labor changed their minds. For example, Wentworth (whose name was greeted with groans at the meeting mentioned above), and Macarthur both, in 1851, expressed themselves as opposed to transportation, although they had advocated it in 1850, and had issued a pamphlet to counteract the effect of the unanimous vote of the Council against transportation. Their change was regarded as a death-bed repentance and one speaker said in this regard: "The morals of the community might be contaminated by the presence of convicts, so long as their services in the sheep-walks could put money in the pockets of their selfish employers; but it is quite a different thing when it is found that virgin gold is to be picked up in these wilds. They are now foremost in denouncing the idea of convicts coming to share their gold with them."

These meetings showed the unanimity and determination of the masses of the people. They were held not only in Sydney. In Hobart and Melbourne huge meetings were held. The attitude of the people of Australia was not to be mistaken: Australia was to cease to be a penal settlement; Australia was to become a free community to work out its own destiny; con-

victs were no longer to be the source of cheap labor for avaricious pastoralists. The abolition of transportation was a necessary pre-requisite for the struggle for democratic government. The spirit of the Australian masses was recognised and, in 1852, transportation was finally abolished. That spirit was exemplified in the statement of a speaker at the Sydney meeting of July 29:

"One other course is before the colonists. We may yet find it necessary to do what other colonists have done before us" — — —
and "great cheers" we are told greeted this pronouncement!

(To be continued)

The Situation in the Countryside

By T. E.

Situation of Country Workers

THE economic offensive of capital continues to take heavy toll of the country workers. Taking advantage of the unemployed, many capitalist farmers are reducing wages and conditions to unprecedented levels, and the unemployed, denied relief work or dole, are forced to accept them or starve. Effective use is made of the Permissible Income Regulations by the State Governments on behalf of the employing class in lowering the living standards of the rural workers. In many country districts the conditions of rural employment are even worse than those of relief work. In New South Wales, the Stevens Government is still driving country workers out of the country towns into slave camps to live under barbarous conditions.

The result of the continuous offensive of agrarian capital and the Governments against the country workers is the reduction of the unorganised country workers to relief and slave-camp conditions of labor. It can be truly said that poverty and slavery are rampant in the rich countryside of Australia.

Small Farmers and Town Middle Class

Despite the part played by primary production in preserving Australian economy, poverty and ruin still descend upon the majority of toiling farmers. A very small proportion of the value of farm production passes into the hands of the small and middle farmers as living income. Thousands have been driven from the land—either starved off or forcibly evicted—and thousands more are compelled to seek relief work, chipping weeds in the town gutters whilst the weed takes possession of their farms.

Of approximately 400,000 farmers in Australia, over half are in a state of abject poverty, and the overwhelming majority are in bondage to capital, living in a state of slavery. It is not hard to visualise the condition of an average dairy-farm family milking 30 to 40 cows and living on an income of 15/- a week. They are chained to the cows 365 days of the year, and have neither time nor money for a holiday. On the Atherton Tablelands, in North Queensland, the total income of the majority of dairy

farmers does not reach £150 a year; yet out of this they have to meet tax and interest payments.

It is not hard to understand the effect of the impoverishment of the majority of farmers and of the rural workers upon the home market. This is especially noticeable in the small country towns, and is shown in the decreasing turnover of the shops and stores and in the growing impoverishment of the lower middle class and artisans. True, the economic improvement since 1932 is evident in a number of country towns, marking the transition from the crisis to "a depression of a peculiar kind." In the country, the peculiarity of the depression lies in the fact that for the great masses intense crisis conditions still prevail, as the foregoing indicates, whilst considerable investments of capital are taking place in a number of industries. New buildings are springing up in the main towns—new bank and other business premises, chain stores, homes for Government and other officials. The expenditure of relief and loan money on public works, sewerage, and water supply is also creating a certain amount of business and industrial activity. The improvement in the profits of the upper strata of the country bourgeoisie, especially the squatters, merchants, etc., has given an impetus to the motor and luxury trades and an increase of capital investments in a number of directions.

Let us consider the inevitable consequences of these economic developments in a country town such as Wagga, N.S.W.: Among the new buildings are premises for Coles Ltd., Anthony Hordern's, and four rival motor supply firms. Despite the preparations being made by the old shops—improvement and extension of premises—to meet the competition of the big invaders, ruin must inevitably overtake the small firms, and in the process the wages and conditions of the shop assistants will be severely attacked. A number of garage proprietors and motor mechanics will suffer at the advent of the four rival motor supply firms, who will take from them the greater part of their business. The boom in the local building trade with the advent of the new firms must suffer a severe reaction on the completion of the present cycle, so that those engaged in the building industry will once again return to the army of unemployed.

Let us take another illustration of the nature of the economic improvement—the town of Griffith, in the South-West of N.S.W. Here is a town of phenomenal growth during the past few years, where the relative boom is now already coming to an end. The building boom has produced a number of new shop and bank premises, two theatres, and a fine residence for the rural bank

manager. The new shops have greatly intensified the competition between the shopkeepers—introducing no less a firm than Moran & Cato; the rival theatres are engaged in a bitter struggle against each other (not without benefit to the local population); and the establishment of the rural bank as a governing authority over the investments of Government capital in the irrigation area is looked upon as a bad, rather than a good, omen by the settlers. It is significant that in such a building boom as has taken place in Griffith the only small residences erected were the tin-and-bag humpies of the unemployed.

The final burst of "prosperity" is the construction of a sewerage scheme carried out under relief conditions. This is but an additional investment of finance capital, adding to the interest toll taken from the population.

The Movement of the Masses

From a condition of almost complete disorganisation following the break-up of the Australian Workers' Union and the degeneration of other unions, the country workers are fighting their way back to organisation and to a revival of unionism. At Shepparton and Mildura, in Victoria, the movement of the workers is rapidly gaining strength with the aspiration of the fruit workers to better wages and conditions and for adequate unemployment relief. In Mildura—of which particular mention is made because of the terrible Fascist pogrom against the militant workers in 1931—the spirit of unionism has been revived to such an extent that the formation of a Trades Council is now under way. In Wagga, N.S.W., trade union activity is reaching a level which also makes possible the formation of a Trades Council as a trade union centre and a lever for raising the trade union movement throughout the whole of the Riverina. When we consider that in Wagga and the surrounding district such unions as the A.R.U., A.F.U.L.E., A.W.U., United Laborers, Shop Assistants, Hotel and Restaurant Employees, Postal Workers, Municipal Employees, etc., already exist, that the Pastoral Workers' Union has membership in the district, and also a number of unemployed and relief workers' organisations exist, we cannot underestimate the significance of the increasing interest in unionism and other organisation.

In Queensland, in the sugar industry and to a less extent in the pastoral and cotton industries, the movement of the rural workers is characterised by the growing influence of militant unionism in the struggle against the employers and the A.W.U. bureaucracy. In the sugar industry in North Queensland the

class struggle has sharpened to a considerable degree, despite the influence of the reformists, and although the recent strike was defeated, militant policy is more firmly supported than ever, whilst the onus of defeat rests, in the sight of all, upon the shoulders of the A.W.U. officials and the Labor Government. Significantly, this strike did not give rise to a wave of armed strike-breaking from the middle-class population, as in the waterside workers' strike in 1925 and the unemployed struggle in Cairns in 1932. The middle strata are not now so responsive to the interests of the Colonial Sugar Refinery and the banks.

The turn to unionism and the rise of militancy of the country workers is also giving an impetus to the united front. In the Riverina, N.S.W., where the movement of the country workers is under the direct leadership of the District Committee of the Party, progress is being made without conflict between the Labor Party and the Communists, and differentiation within the trade unions is practically non-existent. Here it is unlikely that the workers will attempt to climb back up the slippery dip of reformism which had so disintegrated their organisations and dumped them powerless into the hands of their merciless enemies. So there is arising a new and stronger movement of the country workers which will achieve a unity and strength greater than ever.

This brief review of the movement of the country workers indicates the possibility of building a firm proletarian united front in the struggle against the capitalist offensive and, if the connection of the State trade union centres with the country branches and provincial centres is strengthened, we shall have a movement of great power, capable of building a still greater popular people's front.

The Movement of the Middle Strata

The question of the people's front leads us back to a further consideration of the situation of the middle strata—the small and middle farmers, town middle class, artisans, and professionals. A brief retrospect of the political history of the past six years will demonstrate the political importance of this class.

In 1929 began a decided swing from the Nationalist and Country Parties to Labor, which culminated in the overwhelming victories of Federal and State Labor Parties in the elections of 1929 and 1930. This movement was undoubtedly influenced by the turbulent strike struggles of the workers—later diverted so successfully by the reformists into Parliamentary channels.

But, alas! the terrible betrayals of the Labor Governments in conducting a vicious onslaught against the masses of the

people soon brought the middle strata back under the influence of big capital. In N.S.W., the introduction of the Transport Act in the space of a few weeks transformed thousands of the middle strata from supporters or neutrals into raging Fascists, arming and organising in preparation for a forcible overthrow of the Lang Government and civil war against the workers who supported it. The Labor Governments were quickly disposed of—Beasley & Co., of the Lang Labor Party, administering the coup de grace to the Scullin Government, and Governor Game conferring the Order of the Boot upon the Government of J. T. Lang. The middle strata were once more simmering with political excitement, mobilised behind the open parties of capitalism—the United Australia Party and the United Country Party.

The three and a half to four years of U.A.P. and U.C.P. Government has again disturbed the middle strata, and once more they are on the move. They are beginning more and more to understand the identity of policy of the Labor Party, U.C.P., and U.A.P. They are beginning to see the one thing common under all existing Governments—the increasing impoverishment of the masses, on the one hand, and the growing enrichment of the upper strata of the bourgeoisie, on the other. They feel the competition of big capital and the growing pressure of the banks.

Before proceeding to an examination of the movement of the farmers, let us review the agrarian policy of the three parties being simultaneously applied by their respective Governments—the U.A.P. in N.S.W., the A.L.P. in Queensland, and the Country Party in Victoria. Each Government supports firmly the whole structure of capitalism, with preference to the finance, industrial, and land monopolist interests. What does big capital require in the way of an agrarian policy? First of all, finance capital, as represented by Government investments in agriculture in land purchases (the buying back at boom prices of land gifts to the early aristocracy), investments in shire and municipal councils, roads, irrigation and other public works, and advances to settlers, etc., requires of the Government the collection of interest on its investments. As far as rates and taxes are concerned, numerous though they are, this is a simple matter. But the securing of interest on advances to settlers is a more complicated matter. Firstly, this process has given rise to a maze of legal enactments and State apparatus—Debt Relief Acts, Debt Adjustment Acts, Rural Relief Act, etc., and corresponding boards which secure the collection of farm income and its disbursement by the State. Secondly, there is the practice of raising money for farm relief by food taxes and plundering of the State Treasury, which is paid over to the Debt Adjustment

Board for payment of farmers' debts, with preference to finance capital. Thirdly, we have the policy of State marketing, which maintains high prices for produce consumed in Australia, thus guaranteeing that, with the majority of producers on the lowest possible standard of living, farm income is sufficient to meet the demands of finance capital. These are the three main features of agrarian policy under all Governments serving the interests of finance capital.

What does merchant capital (becoming more and more fused with industrial capital) require of an agrarian policy? Above all, it requires the widest possible gap between farm and retail prices, and none can deny that the difference between the average of 7½d. a gallon for milk received by the producer and the minimum of 2/4 paid by the consumer in Sydney is possible only with the assistance of the Milk Act introduced by the Lang Government and administered by the Stevens Government with the support of the Country Party in the interest of the powerful milk-distributing companies. Or, consider the Colonial Sugar Co., the big tobacco companies, and the jam and fruit processing combines! Even the confectionery companies, whose main raw material is sugar, are given the benefit of cheap sugar, thus sharing with the C.S.R. the loot taken from the cane farmers and workers and sugar consumers. The power to thus exploit producers and consumers is conferred upon the big merchant-industrial capitalists by a wide range of State and Federal legislation.

But a different state of affairs is met with when the farmers have occasion to purchase industrial commodities. Here the industrialists are protected by high tariffs and forms of monopoly and are able to charge exorbitant prices for machinery, implements, spare parts, and other iron ware and fertilisers. Needless to say, this whole policy is influenced by the connections between the big bank, merchant, and industrial capitalist groups.

This policy explains why the middle strata are turning away from the U.C.P. and U.A.P. The question then arises: Where are they turning? Here we must turn to an examination of the farm movement, which exercises a profound influence in Australian politics.

Perhaps the best indication of the main tendencies in the farm movement can be demonstrated by a few quotations from farm papers. Mr. W. Bagshaw, vice-president of the Wheat-growers' Federation, Western Australia, in a front-page article in its official organ, says:

"Farmers, disgusted with past political treachery, have rejected political action as a means of obtaining their objectives. I have written much against politics as I have found them, but my writings have been aimed chiefly at the inertia of our politicians and the fact that there is no discipline, no immediate power to which they are subject, in the interests of the people who send them to Parliament.

"There is nothing wrong with political action itself, but something sadly wrong with the way we, as farmers, have used it. If farmers control their representatives—put them into Parliament with a programme to legislate for and instruct them to vote with either party who will put such legislation through and refuse to endorse any member who once 'rats' on the growers, then I say that farmers can gain their objectives by political action. . . . I recommend that you call a special conference immediately; that you change the constitution to permit of political action; and that you put Union candidates in the field, under the absolute control of your Union, by the New Year."

Another: "There is a feeling throughout the country districts of South Australia that there is a big need for an independent political organisation that will have its control in the country and will champion a policy more in keeping with the true aims of the majority of farmers."

These two quotations express the feelings of the great majority of the farm masses, as well as those of large numbers of the country town middle class. Just how far the W.G.U. will proceed as an independent political entity will be seen in the State elections this month (February 15). But there is no doubt that if it does succeed in getting its own representatives into Parliament, there will be an immediate stimulus to farm organisations in other States tending in the same direction.

In estimating the above tendency in the farm movement, it is impossible to draw definite conclusions as to its ultimate outcome because of the great ideological confusion existing in the farm movement and the rapid process of disintegration within the farming class.

Whilst the above tendency towards independent political action is showing itself, there are also other tendencies which cannot be ignored, chief of which is expressed in the influence of Douglas Social Credit ideas within the farm organisations and the large vote for this party in country districts in the last Federal elections.

As yet there is no evidence of a swing back to the Labor Parties, although attempts are being made to win support for

the Curtin leadership in certain parts of the country. The disintegration of the Labor Party in the countryside has gone deeper than in the industrial centres, rendering it almost impotent as a political force. The weakened condition of the trade unions, the lack of local organisation and rank-and-file activity in the A.W.U., the cancellation of the rural awards, the heavy election defeats of the past, and the disintegration of the working-class movement in the country districts generally under the leadership of the Labor Party are contributing factors to the present state of disintegration of the Labor leagues and to their weak influence over the country masses.

Nevertheless, many of the old rank-and-file fighters of the Labor Party are still active in the farm movement fighting against reactionary influence, and just as in the trade unions the rank-and-file Labor Party workers join with the Communists in furthering militant policy, so in the farm organisations will Labor Party farmers join with Communists in fighting for a militant policy in the farm movement and become strong enough to attract masses of farmers of other political affiliations to the support of a militant policy and programme.

Taking into account the general economic and political situation in the countryside—the growing impoverishment of the masses of toilers, and their turning back to unionism and militant struggle, the precarious position of the middle strata and the changing relation of class forces manifested in the growing conflict of the middle strata with the big capitalists and their Governments, and the radical tendencies growing within the farm movement—we must come to the conclusion that a mighty movement of the people is in the making.

In shaping this movement into a mighty people's front against the economic offensive of capital, war, and Fascism, the main tasks of the Communist Party are: (1) To take the initiative in establishing a united front with the Labor Party workers in rebuilding the trade unions and other economic organisations of the country workers, connecting them with the trade union centres and, in the process, winning them to the support of militant trade union policy. (2) To take the initiative in establishing a united front with Labor Party and Douglas Credit farmers in organising a militant farm movement within the existing farm organisations, capable of winning the majority of exploited farmers over to a policy of (a) militant struggle against the exploitation of finance capital, merchants, etc. for a programme which will raise the income of the impoverished farmers to a minimum of £150 a year, and end evictions and forced sales; (b) establishing joint action with the movement of the workers

against the merchants, distributing companies, etc., for reduction of retail prices and for the development of producers' and consumers' co-operatives, on the basis of existing marketing boards. (3) To connect the Movement Against War and Fascism with the workers and farmers' organisations in the country districts in such a way that the economic struggle of the masses will be connected with the struggle in defence of democratic rights and for the maintenance of peace. (4) To carry on a consistent propaganda for Socialism, based especially on the popularisation of the achievements of the Soviet Union in contrast with the degradation and poverty of the toiling masses in capitalist Australia.

If, in all our work, we raise sharp, concrete slogans against the reactionary Governments, slogans linking Lyons, Menzies, Page, Stevens, Spooner, Bruxner, Dunstan & Co. directly with the economic offensive, the attack against democratic rights, and with the drive towards war, we will stimulate the hatred of the masses against the existing Governmental regime and accelerate the process of disintegration within the political and economic organisations supporting it.

On the other hand, we must maintain a critical attitude towards the leadership of the Labor and Douglas Credit Parties, not forgetting for one moment the capacity of the bourgeoisie to use such people to head off the discontent of the masses and to maintain the rule of capital under Labor Governments, as in Australia, or under a Douglas Credit Government, as in Alberta. Our criticism of the Labor and Douglas Parties must be mainly a criticism of policy, patiently exposing that which serves the interests of capital, or which permits of graft and corruption in the interests of capital, and, on the other hand, pressing for that which can be of benefit to the masses and organising with the Labor Party workers and farmers to actually struggle for their demands.

Along this path, armed with the resolutions of the Seventh World Congress and the Eleventh Party Congress, the Communists and their supporters can confidently proceed to the winning of the majority of the country population for struggle against the forces of capitalist reaction—for a Soviet Australia, for a world of peace and happiness for the toilers.

Tasks of the Party in Western Queensland

By S. W. HOOK

IT was frequently pointed out in the pre-Congress discussion that the organisational development of the Party in the pastoral industry has lagged considerably behind that of the urban areas. Briefly, most of the comrades writing on this subject agreed that this is due to the extraordinary, scattered nature of the industry, the nomadic habits of the pastoral workers in pursuit of employment, and, finally, the sectarian mistakes that have been made.

There is a difference between the tactics required by the Party in New South Wales and in Queensland. It is clear that in the former State good work is being done in the building of the united front. The Pastoral Workers' Industrial Union conferences, and the fact that resolutions have been sent from the shearing sheds to the Australian Workers' Union Convention, endorsing the P.W.I.U. proposals, bear witness to the fact that Party enemy No. 1 is being cast out of our ranks in the pastoral industry in N.S.W. Further, P.W.I.U. activists are advising workers who for various reasons will not join the P.W.I.U. to link themselves up again with the A.W.U. and struggle for union democracy and the united front against the capitalist offensive, and raising the slogan "100 per cent. unionism."

But what of the pastoral areas in Western Queensland, where there is already 100 per cent. "compulsory" unionism, and where the reformist officials are using the preference clause to split the workers and oust the militants? The miserable betrayal of the 1930-31 strike by the officials has resulted in the Queensland pastoral workers, who have militant traditions, dating back to the 'nineties, temporarily becoming "defeatist."

Before 1935 there were no Party units in Western Queensland, but in the early months of the year a few comrades from N.S.W. set up units in Charleville, Dirranbandi, Barcardine, and Winton. In these centres the Party has steadily gone forward, but there are dozens of towns and villages in Western Queensland, in which reside thousands of pastoral workers, hundreds of whom voted Communist in the last Federal elections, but which yet contain no organisation of the Party, and in most cases not even contacts to distribute pamphlets, etc. In the four towns in which the Party had established organisation, Bushworkers' Committees soon sprang up. For a time the secretaries of these committees corresponded with each other, and were thus

able to co-ordinate the work on some matters. This meant a successful result in a campaign of agitation, waged against the officials, who had shelved a claim for compensation by two shearers, who had been poisoned with arsenic, contracted whilst shearing sheep. The mass pressure was so great that finally the workers were given compensation without even a doctor's certificate.

Following this, a demand for the abolition of the use of arsenic in the industry received good mass support, and in the districts where the bushworkers' committees were functioning, 350 signatures to a petition to the Premier of the State, demanding the abolition of the use of arsenic, were collected. It was generally found that every shearer or shed hand approached readily signed the lists. Ever since, the Queensland "Worker" has given columns to this question, and the Government has conducted extensive inquiries on the subject of arsenic in wool, which proves that the pastoral workers will rally to demands that affect their every-day health and conditions, and that unity in action will find a reflection even amongst such reactionary reformists as the officials of the Queensland branch of the A.W.U.

It is plainly evident that the majority of the members of the Queensland branch of the A.W.U. are "fed up" with the bureaucratic control of their union, the strike-breaking and victimising tactics of the narrow clique in control of the branch. They realise that class-collaboration is driving back their standard of living. Whilst the prices of wool are soaring, they have witnessed with dismay the Forgan Smith Labor Government granting concessions to squatters and bankers, in the form of liberal reductions on starving stock from drought-stricken areas, the spending of thousands of pounds on improved watering facilities, whilst the toiler has suffered reductions at the hands of the Arbitration Courts, and a serious shortening of the shearing season with a consequent lack of employment, owing to the same drought conditions.

Comrade Miles drew attention to the unevenness of our work in the same trade union, and in many cases in the same district. His statement is very applicable to District 9, where the Party has spread its organisation and influence throughout the sugar industry, whilst in the pastoral industry—and there are thousands of square miles of pastoral areas in District 9—there is only one unit. This uneven development resulted in an opportunity for successful strike action by the shearers and shed hands being allowed to pass last August-September, when there

was a dearth of shearers and shed hands in Queensland. Wool prices were soaring, the blowfly busy, and the squatters wanted to catch the October wool sales. At the same time the shearing season was in full swing in N.S.W., and it would, therefore, have been impossible for the officials to recruit scabs to break a Queensland strike, and the sugar workers were engaged in their heroic struggle. Moreover, a shearers' strike would have divided the attack of the officials and the Government, and would have, in all probability, meant a victory in both areas, and the smashing of the stranglehold of the A.W.U. officials upon the rank and file.

The Bushworkers' Committee Movement has proved itself to be too narrow and sectarian to effectively organise the pastoral workers in Queensland. The committees certainly attracted the sincere and militant elements, but they also isolated them from the rank and file A.W.U. members. The sugar workers have demonstrated that it is possible to organise the workers on a militant basis from within the A.W.U., and it is clear that the line they are following must also be adopted by the pastoral workers. The fight for union democracy must be co-ordinated between the two industries. The present defeatism and apathy must be overcome, regular meetings, and rank and file committees established in every town in the west.

To do this, Party units must be rapidly organised, and these units must develop militant illegal contacts in every shearing team, to ensure that propaganda reaches the workers, as at present the contractors indulge in a great deal of intimidation and victimisation against the known militants. When the rank and file committees are established it will be necessary to send delegates to the most central point, to a conference, at which a central co-ordinating committee will be elected. Likewise with the Party, a central leadership must be set up in Western Queensland, as at present half of the pastoral districts are in District 9 and half in District 3. The headquarters of both these Districts are hundreds of miles away from their pastoral units, so that, at the present, there is no co-ordination of Party work in the pastoral industry in Queensland. A new district committee or section committee attached direct to the Central Committee would ensure a rapid advance of both the influence and organisation of the Party in the west, and in winning the Queensland pastoral workers for a militant trade union policy.

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