

## **`To the Electors': West Sydney Federal Election: The International Socialist Party**

The electoral battle-day draws nearer and nearer, and while the bourgeois politicians are hurling at one another columns of words that are meaningless in their essentials, the International Socialist Party presents a concise statement of the true position of the working class—the only section whose interests it represents or desires to represent; a statement of fact which is a withering indictment of both the old parties.

### **The Working-Class Position**

It is not necessary at this stage to enter upon a lengthy resume of the developments which led up to the era of Capitalist Production. It is sufficient for us that that system is here, with all its conflicting interests and resultant antagonisms and class divisions; that the Capitalist Class—a very small section of the people—holds control of all the material means of wealth production—land, machinery, mines, mills, factories, ships, etc.; and that, in order to provide Food, Clothing, and Shelter (the essentials to the pursuit of Life, Liberty, and Happiness) the main body of the people, the Working Class, must get access to the means of wealth production. This access is only permitted when the workers consent to forfeit to the 'owning class' at least two-thirds of the amount of wealth their labor produces—in other words, when the working-class is agreeable to receive back in the form of wages about one-third of the wealth created by the working-class alone. And thus it comes that even in a new country like Australia—up to recent years essentially a land of primary production—we have a great propertyless working-class, and a few wealthy 'owners'; a great working class sowing the grain and gathering the harvest, but owning none of it; operating every machine, and owning no machine; building the palaces on the hilltops and living in the hovels of the slums; tending the sheep, and shearing the wool, and carrying it to the railways, and manning the fleets that sail northward year by year, and yet compelled to wear clothes that are shoddy; a working-class that piles the warehouses of Capitalism from floor to ceiling with life's necessities, and sees its own children often go hungry in the midst of plenty—often ill-clad in the bitter months of winter weather.

Year by year the middle class diminishes—the small business man is undersold and ruined on his own ground by the great concerns of Capitalism—the Horderns, Lasseters, etc.—and the small man is thus driven into the ranks of the propertyless wage-working class. The real capitalist class also diminishes in numbers, but grows in power, while the changing conditions make for greater insecurity—a greater degree of misery, of oppression, of enslavement, of debasement and exploitation—for the working class, as well as for the small business man.

Only the transformation of the capitalist private ownership of the means of wealth production into Social Property—and the transformation of the production of goods into a Social Production—(and this is what Revolutionary Socialism stands for)—carried on for and by Society, can make wealth production a source of the highest public well-being instead of a source of misery and oppression.

This Social Transformation does not mean only the liberation of the proletariat, but of the whole Human Race—which suffers under the conditions of to-day. But it can only be the work of the Working Class, because of other parties (in spite of the minor disputes between themselves affecting individual interests) stand on the basis of Private Ownership in the means of wealth-production, and do not attack the economic foundations of Capitalist Society with its established class interests.

The struggle of the Working Class against Capitalist exploitation is necessarily a political struggle, growing out of and reflecting the industrial struggle. The economic organisation of the Australian Working Class must go hand in hand with revolutionary political action. The industrial unions—great only in numbers, but weak by reason of their sectionalism—must

come together in one great united organisation whose every interest will be identical and whose final object will be to take and hold that which belongs to the workers; an organisation that will, as Eugene Debs has said, 'Strike together, vote together, and if necessary fight together.' An industrial organisation that will marshal its forces for the locking-out of the Exploiters, and that will aim at capturing the machinery of Government to give 'constitutional' endorsement to the will of the Working Class ...

### **The Labor Party**

The Labor Party comes into the contest with a twin cry—a cry for working-class support, and a cry that it does not stand for the Working Class alone, but for all classes.

The Labor Party was born of the strife of 1890; it was the revolutionary political product of a great industrial disaster. When the sectionally-organised waterside and maritime Unions had gone down before the Law-backed fury of the combined Employers and the Class Government, we turned our eyes in the direction of political action, and at the polls we hurled the strength of our defiance at what is now the Fusion Party. While our Unions had been shattered, our voting strength remained; and 1891 gave us a numerically-strong party in N.S.W., while in other States parties were formed and grew as time went on, giving still further expression to the revolt of the Working Class.

How that political revolution was side-tracked, how the machinery of Labor leaguism was made to subserve middle-class interests; how—designedly or stupidly or both—the Labor ship was steered for the breakers, how it wrecked and smashed on the rocks and shoals of Capitalist Politics, is now a matter of history. And now, having openly repudiated the idea that it is a party of the Working Class, you never find the Labor Party taking sides with the workers when industrial wars are waged, but you do find its members filling the role of strikebreakers at critical periods when industrial solidarity alone can make for victory ...

### **Will You Vote For Human Freedom**

The Socialist Party asks only for the votes of those who recognise that we stand for the Working Class. If you are against the Working Class; if you believe you ought not to get the wealth your labor creates; if you believe that the deeds done against the Working Class by the Fusion Party were quite right; if you think the Labor Party is Right when it advocates putting you in jail if you strike; if you believe in turning the Labor Unions into docile bodies to be controlled by representatives of the Capitalist Class; if you believe in strike-breaking and wholesale blacklegism—then you will vote for either of the old parties and against Socialism.

If you are conscious of your own class position; if you desire to 'abolish all class antagonisms by abolishing the last of the systems of human exploitation'; if you know that 'the historic mission of the Working Class is to redeem itself, and, alone of all classes in the social evolution of the human species, to accomplish its own redemption together with that of the whole, and not at the expense of any portion, of mankind'; if you recognise that 'this is the noble aim that swells with pride the breast, and sweetens the present bitterness of the lot of every Proletarian who is conscious of his class distinction and the obligation it imposes upon him'—then we claim your vote for the Socialist Party, whose candidate in this contest alone stands for Human Freedom.

The Selected Candidate of the Socialist Party,  
H.E. HOLLAND

Has a clean fighting record of 20 years in the militant Working Class Movement in Australia.

Vote For Him.

Harry Holland Collection, Item P5/1/1512. Reprinted in David Lovell, *Marxism and Australian Socialism before the Bolshevik Revolution*, pp.276-78