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DEFEND *your* FREEDOM

by **R. DIXON** PRESIDENT
AUSTRALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY



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DEFEND YOUR FREEDOM

R. DIXON

It has always happened in the history of this country that when our liberties and our standards of living were in danger the working people of Australia rallied to repel the attacker.

Since the election of the Menzies-Fadden Government on December 10, 1949, we have seen a remarkable growth of unity among the workers.

Instinctively, Labour and Communist Party members and their supporters felt that the Menzies-Fadden Government was a menace to the rights and interests of the labour movement.

In the history of Australia, as of Britain, France, America and other countries, the working people played a major role in the development and extension of democratic liberties. In particular they fought for and won the rights of freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of association for the labour movement.

These rights are now under fire.

The programme of the Menzies-Fadden Government means not only reduced standards of living but also the sweeping away of freedoms vital to the working class; freedoms without which the labour movement cannot effectively carry on its organisation and its industrial and political work.

More precisely, the declared programme of the Government is to:

- Declare the Communist Party an illegal organisation and dissolve it;

- Ban other organisations the Government suspects and dislikes by branding them "substantially Communist";

- Remove Communists from trade union positions and make it unlawful for union members to elect Communists to the leadership of their unions;

- Strengthen the powers of the Arbitration Courts to suppress strikes;

- Introduce military conscription of the youth and suppress the peace movement.

This whole programme, which savours of fascism, is designed to reduce the working class movement to a shambles.

First to be attacked is the Communist Party, the vanguard of the working class.

Those who believe that the attacks of the Menzies-Fadden Government will stop with the Communist Party are due to be sadly disillusioned. This Government believes that if it can crush the Communist Party the resistance of the trade unions to the attacks of big business and the Government will soon be broken and the workers will be forced to submit to the encroachments of the employers and the pro-fascist policy of the Government.

The defence of the Communist Party, therefore, is the cause of the working class as a whole.

The implications of the Government's policy go further than that. The history of fascism in Germany, Italy and Japan shows that the destruction of the liberties of the people in those countries started with the suppression of the Communist Party. The trade unions followed, then the Labour parties, religious bodies and all organisations and persons with views opposed to the Government's.

It is worthwhile recalling that in the course of the elections the leader of the Country Party, Fadden, demanded the suppression of the Communist Party and in the next breath said that the Labour Party was the "twin of Communism."

What must be realised is that freedom is indivisible. It is impossible to submit to the forfeiture of the rights

and liberties of the Communists and yet preserve the liberties of others. Those who believe in liberty, whether they support the Communist Party or not, in their own interests must oppose the repressive policy of the Government.

A GOVERNMENT OF BIG BUSINESS

Soon after the elections Prime Minister Menzies claimed that his Government represented not only those who voted for the Government but also those who voted against it, and he called for the support of all sections of the people. The fact of the matter is that the Government represents only a handful of those who voted for it. It is a Government of the wealthy capitalists, and they constitute only a minute fraction of the population.

Menzies himself was connected with a number of companies in the Collins House-B.H.P. monopoly group. Under criticism in parliament he took steps to make it appear to the public that he had disposed of his shares in these companies and severed connections with them. But there is no more consistent spokesman for B.H.P. in parliament than Menzies.

External Affairs Minister Spender is linked with Australian-American big business. He is listed as a Director of the American-controlled Goodyear Tyre and Rubber Company.

R. G. Casey, who is after Menzies' job as leader of the Liberal Party and Prime Minister, is connected with mining and engineering companies.

Senator McBride is a director of the Adelaide Steamship Company, the pastoral firm of Elder, Smith and Company and is also a wealthy grazier.

Fadden is a shareholder in a number of firms in Queensland and runs the largest accountancy business in the Northern State.

This list could be continued to cover many other members of the Liberal and Country Parties. Suffice it to say, however, that these parties are linked in a thousand

ways with the big financial, industrial and grazing interests in Australia and with British and American monopoly concerns.

All the talk of Menzies and Fadden that they stand for small free enterprise, was put forward in the elections as a smokescreen to hide their own connections and those of their parties with the men who control the banks, steel, sugar, coal and shipping industries, with those who dominate from behind the scenes, the economic and political life of this country.

With the economic crisis developing, small free enterprise will be crushed by the big monopoly concerns and the farmers will be saddled with a burden of debt that will force them to work for the banks for the remainder of their days, or leave the land.

The small businessman, the farmer and in general the middle class people who voted for the Menzies-Fadden Government, will find that this Government is a menace to them as well as to the workers.

Insofar as the workers are concerned, this Government is their mortal enemy; it is the clenched fist of the men of the trusts.

No sooner was the Menzies-Fadden Government elected than employers began a new attack on the conditions of work and the living standards of the workers.

The coal barons moved for the introduction of machines in pillars, showing no regard for the fact that this would increase the accident and death rate in the industry. They attacked the miners' pension scheme. Meanwhile, the Government called for the abolition of the darg.

On the waterfront the shipowners adopted a most provocative attitude to the workers and forced a number of strikes.

Spokesmen for the employers called for the reintroduction of the 44-hour week and, in general, demanded the speeding-up of the workers.

Although the Government proclaimed to the electors its intention of putting "value back into the pound", the elections were no sooner concluded than big business, elated at the success of the Liberal and Country parties, raised prices all along the line and not the slightest protest came from the Government.

The Menzies-Fadden Government is a Government of big business. It was brought to office in order to speed up the preparations for war in co-operation with the American warmongers, and by a series of fascist attacks on the workers to break their resistance to the employers' offensive on wages and conditions.

Coinciding with the provocations of employers against the workers and their moves to undermine conditions, the Government is preparing to attack those three great freedoms, so essential to the labour movement, freedom of speech, press and association.

AN AUSTRALIAN WORKERS' PARTY

The Liberal-Country Party leaders declare that the Australian Communist Party is "un-Australian", is "subversive" and in the words of the Prime Minister, Communism is not a "legitimate philosophy."

Let us briefly consider these charges.

The Communist Party arose in this country as a political association of Australian working men and women. It was a product of decades of development of the labour movement, in the struggle against capital. In the first place the working people, in their efforts to improve their lot and to secure some measure of social progress, organised in trade unions. These efforts met with bitter opposition and repression from the employers and the governments of the day. Then, as now, strikes were denounced as the work of agitators instead of justifiable struggles to improve the miserable wages and bad conditions of the workers.

The workers soon discovered that the trade union struggles, important as they were, were insufficient to achieve their aims. Political organisation and struggle

were also necessary. They formed the Labour Party in the false belief that it would achieve social justice for them

The Labour Party did not solve the problems for the workers, it only complicated them still further. It was a reformist party and its policy helped to develop and strengthen Australian capitalism. The financial and industrial monopolies thrived under the Labour Government and doubt and division grew in the labour movement as a result of the Labour leaders' policy, weakening the working class

The Labour Party—with its reformist policy—failed the working class, and the most advanced and sincere members of the labour movement reached the conclusion that only with the coming of Socialism could the working class men achieve their aims.

The first Socialist organisations were immature and weak. Then, in the year 1920, the Communist Party was formed and gathered in its ranks and around it the most capable, sincere and loyal elements from among the Australian workers.

The Communist Party inscribed on its banner the emancipation of labour, and the establishment of a Socialist society.

In the years since 1920 the Communist Party has grown into a powerful political organisation with thousands of members, with its own newspapers and with a splendid record of struggle on behalf of the working class.

From this brief outline it will be seen that the Communist Party was born and nurtured by the Australian working class. Contrary to the slanders of Menzies, Fadden and the capitalist newspapers, it is an Australian political party which bases itself upon the aims, needs and interests of the working class, which defends the cause of all Australians exploited and oppressed by capital, that is, the workers, farmers, and middle class people.

THE GROWTH OF COMMUNISM

It is sheer nonsense for Prime Minister Menzies to say that Communism is "not a legitimate philosophy."

Communism is a science. It is the science of the working class struggle to free humanity from the thrall of capitalism. The founders of scientific Socialism were Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Contrary to all official and liberal science, which defends wage slavery, the theory of Marx and Engels "declared relentless war on wage slavery." (Lenin.)

The doctrine of Communism provides mankind with a complete world outlook which cannot be reconciled with any form of exploitation, oppression, superstition or reaction.

In the year 1917, 160,000,000 people in Russia broke from capitalism and established, for the first time in history, a Socialist State. Today, in the year 1950, more than 800,000,000 people, or more than one-third of the population of the world, have turned their backs on capitalism and embraced Socialism.

Never before in history has a social science been grasped by so many people in so short a time.

These facts show that Communism is the most powerful doctrine, or philosophy, in the world today. It is all powerful because it is true. Communism shatters the false theories and ideas of capitalism.

It is noteworthy that Messrs. Menzies and Fadden do not attempt to combat the basic ideas of Communism. They rely on abuse and slander. They appeal to an audience that has been conditioned by the capitalist press, an audience whose ignorance of Communism and whose political prejudices incline them to believe even the most fantastic, untruthful and villainous charges against Communism.

But truth asserts itself. More and more Australians, seeing through the smokescreen of lies and slander, are coming to understand that the future of our country is not with capitalism but Socialism, not with the present ruling class but with the working class.

At the General Election on December 10, 1949, the Communist candidates contesting the Senate received a total of 87,958 votes. This vote registered in face of slanders, threats, provocations and terror, was the largest vote ever recorded for the Communist Party in the country.

A check on the voting for the House of Representatives also showed that for every first preference vote given the Communist candidate, there were two or three voters for the Labour Party who broke with the Labour Party "How to Vote" ticket to give the Communist candidate their second preference.

That means that approximately 250,000 people either voted outright for the Communist candidates or indicated their sympathy by giving the Communist candidates their second preference.

These facts show that the Communist Party is growing in influence and strength in this country. It will continue to grow, despite the Menzies-Fadden Government and its projected assault on the liberties of the Communists.

These figures also show that the Government, in its threatened ban on the Communist Party, aims to deprive 250,000 Australians of the right to think and speak in favour of Communism and to support the Communist Party.

INTERNATIONALISM

The Communist Party, as we have already pointed out, bases itself upon the national needs and interests of the working people, and defends the national independence and sovereignty of our country.

The Communists are also internationalists, much to the consternation of big business.

The cause of Socialism is international. Wherever capitalism exists, there workers are exploited and oppressed and the class struggle is being waged. The historical mission of the working class in each country

is the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a Socialist society in which the fields, factories and workshops are socially owned and exploitation and oppression are abolished.

The Communist Party believes in the solidarity and co-operation of the Australian workers with the working people of other lands in their struggles against capitalism, in defending the freedom and independence of their countries and world peace.

We openly declare our support for Soviet Russia, where the working class, after overthrowing capitalism, has established a Socialist society. Not only have the workers of Russia shown the working people of all lands how to achieve political power, but in the 32 years of the existence of the Soviet Union they have demonstrated the vast superiority of the Socialist system over capitalism.

Soviet Russia recognises the equality of nations and is anti-imperialist. It leads the struggle for durable peace in the world.

Consumed with fear and hatred of their own working class, the capitalists of all countries, under the leadership of the American billionaires, are preparing for war against Soviet Russia, the Socialist fatherland of the workers of the world.

Because the Australian Communist Party opposes the war plans of the capitalists, because we strive for the independence of Australia and lasting peace in the world and to this end co-operate with the working people of other lands against the aggressive, war plans of the imperialists, we are charged by the capitalists with being subversive and un-Australian.

It is clear, however, that the traitors to Australia, the Quislings and Petains, who would betray our national independence are to be found, as in World War II, not in the ranks of the working people, but among the capitalists. They are to be found among the leaders of the Liberal and Country parties and among those Right-

wing Labour leaders who support the policy of subordinating Australia to the war aims of the American imperialists.

STRANGLING THE TRADE UNIONS

The trade unions in Australia have about one and a half million members. The unions are independent, self-governing organisations of the workers. With the exception of a few unions under Right-wing control, the leadership of the unions, contrary to press propaganda, are elected by secret ballot. All major decisions of the unions, including the calling of strikes, are taken only after the rank and file have fully discussed and voted on the issue.

The trade unions, therefore, are not only most democratic, but the way in which they conduct their business and take decisions educates their members in the understanding and practice of democracy.

It is not difficult to understand, therefore, that the working class is the main bulwark of freedom in Australia. The workers have everything to gain by the further expansion of democracy and everything to lose by its restriction.

Moreover, as the result of countless agitations, struggles and strikes, the unions succeeded in forcing an improvement in the lot of the working men and women of this country, in reducing the hours of labour, increasing wages and bettering conditions of work. They did all this in face of the bitterest opposition from the employers.

Thus the trade unions have performed a mighty job of work which, from one side has brought benefits to the majority of Australians, and on the other, has earned the fear and hatred of the capitalists.

The Menzies-Fadden Government, acting on behalf of the men who control the big financial and industrial concerns in Australia, is now planning a general assault on the rights and liberties of the trades unions; as a prelude to attacking living standards and conditions of work.

In what way will the legislation proposed by the Government to (a) expel Communists from positions they may hold in the leadership of trade unions, and (b) to make it unlawful for the members of unions to elect a Communist or militant worker to a trade union position—in what way will these measures affect the unions?

The unions will cease to be the self-governing organisations they are now. They will be told what to do by the State, and the State is the instrument of the employers. The union members will be deprived of the right to elect the officials they want to lead their organisation. Only people acceptable to the Government and the employers will be allowed to contest official positions in the unions.

The Government also aims to deport militant trade unionists and Communists who were born outside Australia.

Furthermore, it proposes to dismiss Communists from the public service and to support victimisation of militant workers from private employment.

To implement these plans, Mr. Justice Reed's Security Service, set up by the Chifley Labour Government, is to be strengthened and will send its spies and agents among the workers in all main industries. The riff-raff of society—pimps, morons, perverts, and convicted criminals and stooges of the bosses, are now being recruited to this organisation.

THE RIGHT TO STRIKE

The Government intends going further than even these measures against the rights and liberties of the workers. It aims to deprive the workers of the right to strike. Legislation is to be prepared providing for:

- (a) Secret ballots before strikes;
- (b) Seizure or freezing of union funds;
- (c) Gaoling of strikers and their leaders.

The right to strike is fundamental to the unions and their continued existence. Deprived of the right to strike the workers would be helpless before the attacks of the employers. They would be unable to defend their standards of living or prevent victimisation. They would be at the mercy of those who exploit them, the capitalists.

The gains of a hundred years of trade unionism are now in danger of being swept away by the Menzies-Fadden Government.

One hundred years ago the workers were fighting for the right to organise in trade unions in order to improve their miserable wage. Employers and governments sought by brutal repression to strangle the growth of the working class movement; strikes were illegal. Union leaders, described as "agitators," "Communists," "Socialists," or "anarchists," by the ruling classes, were gaoled or deported. The Tolpuddle martyrs, for instance, were deported to Australia in the 1830's for striving to improve the terrible conditions of agricultural labourers. Unionists were victimised and union funds and property seized.

The fascist trend in the Government's policy is revealed in the proposed measures against the Communist Party and the trade unions.

Over the last ten years the trade union movement in this country grew rapidly in number, unity and fighting strength. As a result it has secured considerable gains for the workers. The major factor in the strengthening of the unions and the gains made was the work and leadership given by the Communists in the unions.

If the unions are deprived of the leadership and organising ability of the Communists, the Government believes it will be easier for the employers to get away with their attacks on the workers' conditions and standards of life. Hence their plan to shackle the unions and deprive unionists of the right to freely elect their leadership.

The working class movement must realise that democracy and living standards go together, that the one is necessary to the other.

WAR OR PEACE

The Menzies-Fadden Government intends to clamp down on the movement for peace that is gaining so many supporters among the people. The peace agitation is dangerous for the foreign policy of the Government and its plan to speed up preparations for war. Hence the Government hopes to quell the growing opposition to war by crushing the forces organising for peace.

Military conscription is to be imposed on the youth of Australia as part of the preparations for war. Traditionally the Australian labour movement is opposed to conscription, and this, too, is causing the Government serious concern.

The chief danger of war comes, as we have already said, from the American imperialists. World War II, which impoverished most of the world, brought record profits to American big business. Faced with economic crisis, the Wall Street millionaires started the "cold war" and with it, a new armaments race, and are hell bent on a Third World War directed at Soviet Russia and the People's Democracies.

The war madness that has seized the American ruling class may be gauged from the decision of President Truman to proceed with the manufacture of the hydrogen bomb. Peace lovers throughout the world are appalled by this decision.

The hydrogen bomb is said to have a destructive power of from 10 to 100 times that of the atom bomb that destroyed Hiroshima. American scientists declared that the hydrogen bomb "is no longer a weapon of war, but a means of extermination of whole populations." (S.M.H., 6/2/50.)

The American warmongers try to mask their aggressive intentions by accusing Soviet Russia of being the "menace to peace," of having "aggressive designs," etc.

The persistent Soviet advocacy of peace and the concrete proposals made by the Soviet Government to the United Nations Organisation to ensure the preservation

of peace, have thoroughly exposed the falseness of the war propaganda of the American billionaires.

The Soviet Government proposed the following measures to preserve peace:

- (1) The outlawing of the atom bomb;
- (2) Universal disarmament;
- (3) A peace pact between Soviet Russian, America, and Britain.

The American Government rejected these proposals out of hand. The British and Australian Governments, subservient to the policies of Wall Street, did likewise.

The whole course of events shows clearly that the centre of the war danger in the world today is American imperialism.

How do the arrogant monopolists of America and their spokesmen visualise the conduct of World War III? Their view is that the people of Britain, France, Italy, Belgium and others in Europe and also of Australia, should give up their youth as cannon fodder, whilst America supplies the armaments.

This view was stated in a very precise form by no less an authority than Mr. Clarence Cannon, Chairman of the U.S.A. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee. In urging the allocation of funds for the arming of Western Europe, he said:

"The U.S.A. must be prepared to equip soldiers of other nations, to let those nations send their sons into the holocaust so that we will not have to send our boys."

Thus, the American warmongers hope to fight the Third World War that they themselves are preparing with the youths of other nations.

This is not the viewpoint of an isolated politician. It is the very essence of American policy. American arms have already begun to flow into Western Europe to arm the youth of those countries for the war the Yanks are planning.

Is Australia to become a party to this criminal policy?
This is the question which immediately confronts us in this country.

The policy of the Liberal-Country Party Government as expounded by External Affairs Minister Spender is to subordinate Australian foreign policy and interests to the United States on the plea of "co-operating" with America.

In the Pacific the Menzies-Fadden Government is striving for a Pacific Pact in which America is to play the leading role. The Pacific Pact would supplement the Atlantic Pact. It would be an alliance for war against Soviet Russia and the People's Republic of China.

In Asia, Spender declares, the Australian Government is ready to co-ordinate Australian policy with that of America, or, in other words, accept American leadership.

In Australia the Government declares its policy is to remove all barriers to American capital investment, including double taxation, a policy which will increase American interference in the internal affairs of this country.

Subordination of Australia to the imperialist policies and war plans of America—this is the essence of the Government's policy.

Australia is in danger of losing its freedom of action in every field, and at the same time, its independence, if the Menzies-Fadden Government's policy is persisted in.

The cause of peace and Australian independence, in the present situation, are closely linked. It is not sufficient merely to desire peace and independence; these are things that must be fought for and this calls for organisation, determination, and leadership.

As the danger of war increases, more and more restrictions are placed upon democratic liberties.

War and repression go hand in hand.

Under the Chifley Labour Government, Mr. L. L. Sharkey, General Secretary of the Communist Party, was gaoled for making a statement opposing war against Soviet Russia and advocating peace.

There is a warning, in the sentencing of Mr. Sharkey, for all Australians. If he could be sentenced to three years' gaol for opposing war then the right to freely advocate peace is in danger.

The Menzies-Fadden Government intends to restrict in every way the activities of the peace devotees whilst allowing full freedom for the advocates of war and conscription.

There can only be one answer to these measures and that is the mobilising of all peace lovers into a mighty united movement for peace and the linking of the fight for peace with the defence of democratic liberties.

WHY MENZIES WAS ELECTED

The defeat of the Labour Government at the elections came as a shock to many Labour Party members and supporters.

How is this defeat to be explained?

The Labour Party was defeated because of the policy of the Labour Party leaders, of Chifley, Evatt and company. Their policy strengthened capitalism and weakened the working class.

The Federal Labour Government held office for eight out of the ten years 1939-1949. They had control of the Senate and were supported by Labour Governments in most of the six States.

Truly, the most favourable circumstances in which to give effect to Labour's policy.

During the period of the Labour Government it was private enterprise which thrived and not the working class. Some figures to illustrate this:—

In the ten years 1939-1949 the number of factories in Australia increased by 10,434, an increase of more than one-third. In the same period profits, interest and

rent accruing to the capitalists jumped from £338,000,000 to £895,000,000, a colossal increase.

These figures prove, beyond all doubt, that in the period the Federal Labour Government was in office, there was an amazing growth of capitalism in this country.

Although the trade union movement grew in numbers and strength in the ten years 1939-1949, this was despite the Labour Government. The policy of the Labour leaders instead of uniting the workers caused division in their ranks.

It is necessary only to recall the coal strike and the measures the Labour Government took to defeat the miners, such as the freezing of union funds, the gaoling of trade union officials and the use of the military forces, in order to show that the policy of the Labour Party leadership was directed against the working class and caused disruption and disunity.

We raise these matters not in order to rub old sores, but because the working class must learn the lesson of the elections of December 10; that the success of the Menzies-Fadden Government was achieved because of the disunity brought about in the working class movement by the policy of the Labour Party leaders.

WORKING CLASS UNITY

Unity is essential if the working class movement is to succeed in achieving its demands and aims.

This conclusion is all the more important because the forces of disruption are still at work in the Labour movement. Right-wing elements on the Sydney Trades and Labour Council, for example, not only rejected the proposals for unity against the Menzies-Fadden Government, but declared in favour of the Government's plan to ban the Communist Party.

Moreover, there is growing support in Right-wing circles for the setting up of a Trade Union panel as a basis for collaboration with the Government and as a

transmission belt to carry the reactionary ideas and proposals of the Government into the trade union movement.

The trade union demand for a £10 basic wage and an immediate £2 interim increase, is also being sabotaged by these people.

The labour movement has already suffered serious setbacks because of the policies of the Right-wing Labour leaders.

The working class cannot afford the luxury of disruptors and splitters in their ranks.

Collaboration with the Menzies-Fadden Government would be treachery to the workers. It is impossible to be at one and the same time on the side of Menzies and on the side of the working class. It must be one or the other. Either for the working class or for Menzies. Either for working class unity or against it. There is no middle course.

Today every struggle and every discussion in the labour movement leads to the single conclusion that the working class must be united, irrespective of party or religion, for the struggles that lie ahead.

The Communist Party is the party of working class unity. We have always stood for unity, and worked to realise it in the struggles of the workers against capitalism.

Today, with the Government and the employers attacking standards of living, liberties and peace, working class unity is more necessary than ever.

All barriers to unity must be swept aside. Past differences must not be permitted to disrupt the united front of the workers against the employers and the Government. Those who try to prevent unity, whether they be in the leadership of the Labour Party, the unions or in the factories, must be spurned and isolated by the working class.*

The Menzies-Fadden coalition Government is not a strong government. It is ridden with dissension on economic, political and personal issues. Serious differ-

ences developed over the petrol issue. Revaluation of the £ is another matter that is tearing the coalition apart.

The Government cannot solve the basic economic problems looming up before it. The only issue upon which it is united is on opposition to the working class movement.

More than anything else the Government fears united resistance to its policies from the working class movement.

Providing the workers unite their ranks in the factories, industries, unions and localities, they will be so strong as to paralyse and defeat every reactionary move of the Menzies-Fadden Government, and ultimately to bring down the Government.

Working class unity is the way to victory.