

The WESTERN SOCIALIST

JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM AND THE WESTERN HUMANISM

OFFICIAL NOTICE

THE WESTERN SOCIALIST is published by the World Socialist Party of the United States and the Socialist Party of Canada. Subscriptions, donations, articles and correspondence for insertion in THE WESTERN SOCIALIST should be addressed to the World Socialist Party, 27 Dock Square, Boston 8, Mass., or Socialist Party of Canada, P. O. Box 751, Winnipeg, Man.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

3 ISSUES 25c — 12 ISSUES \$1.00
LIFETIME \$10.00

ABOVE RATES INCLUDE POSTAGE

Bundle Rates on Application

A Letter From "Down Under"

Fellow workers of the U. S. A.:

Just a few lines to let you know how things are panning out in this part of the "United Nations". There must be thousands of your G. I. fellows who strolled around this Country when the boss sent you on your enforced holiday after "Pearl Harbor" and, I suppose, many of you who took an interest in politics wonder just how things are "Down Under". In case you made no pen friends here, let me help you out a little.

MacArthur's Buddy

John Curtin, Labor Prime Minister, who became such a close buddy to MacArthur went the latter skipped over this way after the Philippine fiasco, has passed on. He is remembered chiefly now for his ANTI-CONSCRIPTION policy WHEN HE WAS A YOUNG MAN and his PRO-

CONSCRIPTION policy when he was TOO OLD TO GO HIMSELF. In the hustle of war, you may not have known these things because, when you fellows were here, all political parties, other than the Socialist Party of Australia, were cashing in on the blood bath. They made lots of money out of it; for instance, the Communist Party, which before the war was mooching along on petty handouts, gathered enough from the war chest to purchase buildings and printing plants worth thousands of pounds.

The Federal Labor Party, with Ben Chifley now in the saddle, still rides rough-shod over the mob as it did during the war years.

What Goes on Down Here

Since the war finished there has been some interesting developments. The Labor Government has virtually scrapped the old Arbitration system administered by "qualified" Judges and has substituted a bevy of "Conciliation Commissioners" who are supposed to smell out Industrial Disputes before they start and "fix" them up pronto. These highly paid fellows are mostly ex-union officials or Labor politicians and you should see them "conciliate". "Constitutional limitations" prevent them from doing "what they'd like to do" and so their faces are saved and, incidently, so are the bosses' profits. The main functions of basic wage and hours fixation are still left in the hands of the Judges who sit back and contemptuously survey the antics of those who displace them.

As with all previous alterations in the Arbitration system the result is similar. Industrial disputes dominate the post-war scene and while the Federal Labor Government pursues a policy of "let the slaves burn up their war-time savings" in the hope that an improverished working class will prove more amenable to the requirements of the current capitalist readjustment, the State governments adopt a more drastic and impatient policy.

"Labor and Liberal rule the same
The only difference is in the name"

Ironically enough, in the two states where there has been a show down between the workers and the Government, namely, Victoria and Queensland, the governments have introduced similar anti-working class legislation. Yet, the Queensland government is Labor and the Victorian government is Liberal. Don't be misled by the name Liberal: it is nothing akin to the old English Liberal Party; it is the quintessence of Australian conservatism. You probably noticed that there were four main Parties here; the Liberals, the Country Party, the Labor Party and the Communist Party. The difference between the Liberals and the Country is very slight. The Country Party has a bit of a back-bloc bias to catch the vote of the man on the land.

If you read our "Socialist Comment", (official organ of the Socialist Party of Australia) you will have seen some reference to the nature of the emergency legislation passed by the Victorian Liberal and the Queensland Labor Governments. It was believed, at the start, that the acts were more of a gesture than an intention. Whatever the case, the Queensland Labor Government lost no time in dispelling any doubt as to its intention. And believe us, there's nothing outside of Hitler and Stalin, that can compare with a Labor Premier when it comes to Union busting and strike smashing.

"A Coup De Cop"

Here is the essence of the Queensland Labor Government's Act. The Arbitration Court is all-powerful in regard to industrial disputes and yet at the same time it can declare itself impotent to grant improvements. It is beyond criticism and can construe any action, statement, argument or criticism as being contempt of itself. There is NO APPEAL from its slavish dictums a condition eminently suitable to the ex-labor officers who embellish its benches with even more aplomb than their judicial confreres.

Behind it, is the Police State of the Labor Party as was proven during the recent Railway dispute when, overnight, Labor Premier Hanlon handed over the State to the police. Newspapers and radio-stations were forbidden to publish or broadcast statements or resolutions relative to the strike.

Picketing and assemblies at certain places were punishable: on the spot, by batons; in the Court, by heavy fines and jail. But as one writer put it, "Hanlon's Coup de Cop should prove to the Capitalists that his exhibition, demonstrates the possibility of THEIR EXPROPRIATION overnight. The lessons of history may be forgotten for a time but — they are never lost.

In Queensland, the Labor Government received full support from the Tories; in Victoria, the Liberal government had the tacit support of the Labor Party, so much so, that the Tory Premier agreed to give prior notice to the Labor Council of his intention to proclaim the Act. As usual, both governments claimed that they were merely protecting the "poor innocent workers" from that Big Bad Wolf, the Communist Party. In each case, the government had a double win: they busted the strike and used the Communist bogey to butcher the Unions.

Communist Duplicity

..As usual, the Communists came out with their fiery slogans, their declarations to fight until their demands were granted, etc., and, as usual, the "fight" was declared off with the promises unfulfilled. Some gains were made but much less than was declared to be the object of the strikes. This, of course, is common to most industrial disputes but one thing stood out with regard to Queensland, namely, the demand for the rescinding of the "Emergency Powers Bill". The Communists were very insistent that this Bill be expunged from the Statute Book.

There were two outstanding reasons for this; the first being that while

the Bill stands, the opponents of the Communist Party can hold the comrades partly responsible, because they told the workers to PUT THE LABOR PARTY INTO POWER. The second reason, (and probably the most galling) why the Communists want the bill out of the way is to make easier their task at the next elections when they will once again advise workers to vote for the anti-working class Labor Party. Incidentally, it was pointed out, in the "Socialist Comment" March 1948, that the Communists support much more rigorous anti-strike legislation in the U. S. S. R.

Power Drunk

Perhaps the most significant feature of Labor Governments, apart from their drastic enforcement of existing powers, is their incessant striving after greater powers by altering the constitution. At present, the Federal Labor Government is seeking a constitutional amendment to confer wider powers on Parliament in regard to rents and prices. It has already legislated for the Nationalization of Banking but this Act is being challenged in the High Court of Australia, which body has the judicial job of interpreting the Constitution, subject to approval by the British Privy Council. The decision of the High Court is being awaited at the time of writing.

We mention these two points to emphasise Labor Party greed for power. This power-grasping becomes more menacing when one considers how Labor Governments of Australia have used already, existing powers against the working class. Yet our Communist friends tell us that we should support the extension of Labor Party power, presumably, we take it, that it would make dictatorship so much easier if the Comrades ever make the top.

Dope Peddlers Arrive

As we write, we are being inflicted with the presence of an old crony of yours in the person of Cardinal Spellman who is cashing in on the

growing antagonism towards the Soviet. At the Melbourne Town Hall, he told us:

"Soviet Russia, our war ally, has not remained our ally for peace.... The free countries had permitted Soviet Russia to continue her policy of persecution and slaughter...." (Sydney Morning Herald, May 4, 1948.)

This globe trotting peddler of Opium de Vatican conveniently forgets the deprivations of his little Catholic Dictator Dollfus of Austria, his benign Benito Mussolini who, with the benediction of the Holy Father, poison-gassed the helpless Abyssinian peasants in their defenceless native villages.

His Fellow-traveller, a Monsignor Sheen, told us that we had but one choice — Catholicism or Communism. Such a statement upset the Protestant Hierarchy which has already been much embarrassed by the inane rambblings of the "Red Dean." What a future to contemplate — Rome or Moscow, a Black Pope or a Red one. As Australia has been ruled for many years by a priest-ridden Labor Cabinet, there may be something in the prognostications of the "riverind gentleman". These globe trotting purveyors of the Red Bogey with characteristic guile omit to mention that they kept the "bogey" on the ice when Stalin was playing ball with them during the recent blood bath.

The Unions

When the Communists were on the band-wagon muscling in on the war racket they made fair headway here and many of the Trade Unions are now officered by Communist officials. This gives the Party many advantages such as control of union funds, control of union publications, and representation on the various trade union councils. Labor Party union officers are hampered by having to support and apologize for the anti-working class legislation of the Labor governments. In spite of the Party differences, Labor and Communist supporters run around together advocat-

ing support for the nationalization of banks and the Government's Constitution referendum.

Since the war the chief concession wrung from the ruling class here is the forty hour working week; in most cases, it is a five day week. Nominal wages are higher than pre-war but the purchasing power is much lower. The governments are trying to cajole into the country as many immigrants as they can to increase the competition for jobs so that the slaves cannot obtain too many advantages from the comparatively favorable labor market. The White Australia Policy forbids the entry of colored workers so that, at present, the boss is denied the use of the reservoirs of cheap Asiatic labor which is literally waiting on his door-step to be exploited. (It is said that when MacArthur had his "army of occupation" here he wanted to bring in a million Chinese workers but the traditional fear of the so-called "Yellow Peril" swayed the government against it).

While most workers here think "the population is too small" for "the safety of the country" they frown on any attempt to fill the spaces with Europe's rejects. Like "Dan McCan" they regard everybody as "furriners" who comes from any place but that from which they or their forebears originated. But they still talk of the "Four Freedoms".

Socialism

The outlook for socialism is much the same. Most workers are duped by the Liberals, the Laborites, the Country Party or the Communists. And as there is little difference among these outfits that means that most workers here, as elsewhere at present, are anti-socialist. They thus become easy victims of the "Red Bogey" propaganda of the Liberals, the empty slogans of the Communists and the mealy platitudes of the Labor Politicians. Catholic Action and Communist intrigue play a big role. And so the bewildered workers fly round in endless error, pushed from pillar to post,

and are kidded that the best place for the boss is on their backs.

Under such confusing conditions we pursue our course of converting workers to a socialist outlook; a slow task, a difficult one, but a worthy one. As elsewhere, much of our time is taken up clearing away the mental cobwebs, dispelling the illusions, and preparing a basis for the understanding of Scientific Socialism. Our labor is not all in vain and the future is brighter than the political shadows portend.

We'll write you again sometime so if you're interested in what is happening down this way, keep an eye on "The Western Socialist" or request a free sample copy of the "Socialist Comment" from The W. S. P.

Yours for socialism,

A. N. AUSSIE

Sydney, Australia.

YOU are invited to attend . . .

SOCIALIST SEMINAR

August 22 to Sept. 6, 1948

(LABOR DAY WEEK END)

at

National Headquarters

27 Dock Sq., Boston 8, Mass.

::

Two weeks of

- LECTURES
- CLASSES
- DISCUSSIONS
- OPEN AIR MEETINGS

::

IMPROVE YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF
SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

Combine LEARNING with RECREATION
Trips to Museums — Educational Tours
Socials — Outings — Seashore

::

Write Promptly for details and to enable us
to arrange for economical accommodations.