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## CURRENT NOTES

### I. THE WORLD ECONOMIC CRISIS:

A WRITER in a New South Wales business journal recently stated that Australian wool exporters should make use of the increased demand for wool and hides which the Soviet Union intended to make during the course of the second Five-Year Plan. He pointed out that Russia would be buying up ever-increasing quantities of primary products during the succeeding years of the Plan until, in 1937, she would absorb the whole of the world's wool surplus. From these facts he drew a very peculiar "conclusion"—namely, that this increased demand for raw materials represented the beginnings of a revival in world trade—a revival which, although commencing in the Soviet Union, would rapidly spread to the rest of the world and bring about that rise in commodity prices which the capitalists have been expecting for so long. We thank the writer for admitting that the Soviet Union is at present the only country whose production and consumption are increasing, but we would wish him to consider the facts a little more deeply before he proclaims that the end of the depression is at hand.

The period of the greatest economic depression in the capitalist world has coincided exactly with the period of rapid expansion in the U.S.S.R., which is the only Socialist country. If we compare the present industrial output of Russia with the year 1928 as the standard (represented by 100), we find that in 1932 the index was 218.5. A similar comparison reveals that in the capitalist world as a whole produc-

tion has shrunk to 67, while in the most powerful capitalist country, U.S.A., it has fallen to 57. Since 1928 also, the Soviet Union has grown from fifth place in industrial output to second place, just behind America.

So it is not to be wondered at if, during its second Five-Year Plan the Soviet Union increases its needs, especially of consumption goods. But, in the light of the above, it would be surprising if such an increase in demand could be proved to be the herald of a general improvement.

All the facts indicate, on the contrary, that the depression has entered a new phase, which is quite definitely leading to a violent outcome—to a violent attempt at solving the problem of the depression for the capitalist world. We will consider briefly some of the more important of recent events and attempt to trace their connection with this new phase of the depression.

### The World Economic Conference.

This international conference was held recently in London in an attempt to order the world in such a way as to end the depression. After a sitting lasting a few weeks, it was almost unanimously adjourned until some future date. Quite obviously very few of the participants believed in the end that future meetings would prove of any value. The conference met at a period when the economic rivalry between the great imperialist powers was becoming particularly acute. Britain was engaged in a currency warfare with the United States. By means of depreciating her



own currency during the previous 18 months, Britain had obtained such an advantageous position that American economy had been severely hit, not only in its trade with Britain, but in its trade with those small countries which had followed Britain off the gold standard. Thus the American delegation came to London with proposals for the stabilisation of the dollar with relation to the pound. But, scarcely had the delegation, headed by Hull and Pitman, arrived in London, when the development of events in America led to a radical change of policy. Inflation became necessary in order to bolster up the threatened complete crash of American economy, and Roosevelt despatched the assistant secretary of State, Moley, to speak against stabilisation. At the same time, Hugenberg came from Germany with a shameless plan for war on the Soviet Union, Germany to take the lead in return for a big share in the spoils. These abrupt changes resulted in a continual change of direction at the conference, which "moves like a ship without a rudder, driven by the contrary forces of the hurricane of the crisis."

Events such as these were of almost daily occurrence. Insuperable obstacles arose on all sides. The only delegation with any really concrete proposals for economic expansion was that from the Soviet Union. Litvinov pointed out that if his country were sure of "lengthened credits, normal conditions for Soviet exports, etc.," it would be able to absorb 1,000,000,000 dollars' worth of goods in the near future (£200,000,000 at par). This proposition had a profound effect on the conference—in fact, the question of American recognition of the Soviet Union became very important. But the very demand for the division of markets, which brought the conference together, prevented the participants from taking part in this offer. The conference failed completely to solve any of the problems confronting it, and served rather as a sounding-board, indicating the tremendous aggravation of the inter-imperialist antagonisms.

For example, the *Daily Telegraph*, which is in close contact with the British Foreign Office, wrote regarding the refusal of America to stabilise the dollar with the pound:—

"The effect of the world conference may be very serious. That fact will be represented to Washington in the clearest pos-

sible manner. *The gravity of that situation would lie in the fact that Great Britain in that event could then hardly resist the pressure which would seek to drive her into a united European front against the United States*" (20/6/33).

These are the expressions of outspoken military war applied to economic struggles.

The situation in Germany and Central Europe as a whole will be dealt with separately later on. For the present we can merely touch on two aspects of the depression which are of considerable importance at the moment—Roosevelt's plan in America and Japan's dumping campaign.

### The American "Brain Trust" and Roosevelt's Plan.

The American Government for the past few weeks has been attempting to put into operation a nation-wide economic plan, which is the product of the so-called "brain trust" of professors and financiers. The plan is hailed as being the saviour of the "economic nationalism" of America. It is an expression of the general collapse of American economy. In the first place, it is an attempt by the big industrial trusts and financial corporations to seize the whole of the home market for themselves. In normal times it pays these trusts to permit small manufacturers to control a very small percentage of the market, for the extra plant and machinery necessary to meet *all* of the demand, especially of more finely made and less standardised goods, would be too expensive to maintain during the periodic crises which have always occurred under capitalism. But this depression has brought about a big change. The big groups of Rockefeller and Morgan are struggling for their lives, and must therefore crush out completely their smaller competitors. Hence General Johnson's "Blue Eagle" campaign, which aims at subjugating all industrial concerns in U.S.A. to the power of Morgan and Rockefeller. The plan has a deeper significance than this, however. It includes schemes for absorbing the unemployed, reducing the hours of work, and reducing wages. The unemployed are being drafted into "labor camps" under the control of military officers. The working week has been shortened in order that speeding-up may be carried out at an even more intensified rate. Wages have been greatly reduced as a result of the great inflation which has taken place. It is claimed



that 2,000,000 unemployed have been "absorbed."

Already the working class is putting up a stern resistance to these attacks. A wave of strikes has broken out. In Philadelphia two strikers were killed and many wounded. In St. Louis there is mass picketing of the factories. In Chicago 70 factories were recently reported to be on strike.

It is true that this plan coincides with an increase in industrial activity. For example, the textile industry is producing 56% more than last year. The index of activity in the iron industry (1928=100) rose from 14 up to 53. The production of automobiles has risen from 100,000 to 200,000. But the basic industries concerned with the production of means of production (especially the building and engineering industries) are at a lower level than last year. The growth in the foundry industry is due to the increased demand resulting from the expenditure of 287,000,000 dollars in naval construction. Then again production has been stimulated largely by the inflation, for it is a law of inflation that it is better to possess goods, motor cars, houses, etc., rather than money, which is considerably depreciated.

These factors explain the increase in industrial activity—war preparations and inflation, the latter being a prelude to an inflationary boom which must inevitably end in a great smash such as that seen after the Great War.

This, briefly, is the position in the U.S.A. The latest moves of Roosevelt tend towards a centralisation of the State power in the hands of the ruling class—a subjugation of all outside interests to those of the powerful financial and industrial groups. These preparations are of supreme importance in view of the great danger of war. Assuming that war does not break out in the immediate future, the American policy of inflation will lead not to "the development of the crisis into the less intensified form of the depression, but the development of the crisis into another and more violent convulsion."

#### Japan's Bid for Supremacy in Asia.

Japan is at present conducting a powerful struggle for overseas markets. Japanese imperialism has been enabled to carry out a policy of dumping in China, India, Australia, and even Europe and America, as a result of its peculiar domestic conditions. First, the yen has been depreciated by 60%. Second,

wages and production costs are extremely low; in fact, despite the great fall in the value of the yen during the past two years, wages have been still further depressed during 1932-33. Real wages have, of course, fallen enormously. As a result of this advantage, Japan has been able to compete successfully with England on the textile market. Since August, 1932, Japan has been able to export more textile products than England. This process has been greatly assisted by the impoverishment of British and colonial workers during the crisis, who thus form a ready market for low-priced goods. This factor is clearly seen at work in Australia at present. Goloshes are produced in Japan at a wages cost of 1d. per pair. Australian and British companies find it almost impossible to compete under these conditions. Japanese manufacturers in the textile industry have been enabled to make record profits in some cases.

But the position of Japanese imperialism is fundamentally unsound.

Despite the tremendous dumping which is going on at present, the actual volume of exports has not appreciably increased, except perhaps in the last few months. The main point is that goods have been sold at abnormally low prices in foreign countries. The failure to increase the volume of exports is seen in the following figures:—

Foreign trade in million of yen.  
(Monthly average.)

1929	175
1930	119
1931	93
1932	113
1933 (Jan.)	107

The volume increase does not make up for the drop in sales prices. And this fact is one piece of evidence of the fundamental weakness of Japanese Imperialism—a weakness which has been largely masked by the inflation. The war in Manchuria has been a heavy burden on the State economy. This burden has been largely borne by plundering Manchuria, but at present the treasury shows a considerable deficit. Nevertheless, Japan occupies a peculiar position at present. First it has been able, by means of the measures outlined above, to maintain its production at about the level of 1929. Again, America has been prevented from declaring war on Japan because of the latter's invasion of China, by the fact that Japan in Manchuria imposes a



solid military bar between the Soviet Union and the Chinese Soviets. Also, America is in a poor strategic position with regard to Japan from the point of view of naval warfare. But Japan cannot go on indefinitely as at present. The very fact of the low wages and inflation at home, upon which the conquering of new markets depends, means that the growth of the revolutionary movement is extremely rapid. The pre-conditions for revolutionary crisis are rapidly maturing in Japan.

### Conclusion: "Economic Nationalism."

Japanese imperialism has named its present policy in Asia "the application of the Monroe doctrine in Asia." Roosevelt's plan in America is hailed as a triumph of "economic nationalism." Hitler is aiming at "national autarchy" in Germany. British capitalism hopes for nothing less modest than "Empire unity." What is the real meaning of these terms?

They mean that, as a result of the crisis, every capitalist country is attempting to stabilise itself at the expense of others. By means of high tariffs, low wages, and inflation, they are attempting to monopolise the home market as a preliminary to winning further markets overseas. Particularly in the case of Germany (as we shall soon see) an attempt is being made to be entirely self-supporting. Old copper and zinc mines are being reopened by means of State aid. The automobile industry is being artificially stimulated, and unnecessary and unproductive roads built. In all of these countries the whole internal economy is being prepared along military lines. This is openly stated in America. The whole policy of internal autarchy in the capitalist countries is indissolubly linked with preparations for war. But the process reveals the inner contradictions of capitalism in the clearest light. For by inflating the currency and reducing wages in order to dump goods in new markets, the ruling class reduces the purchasing power of the home market and thereby undermines the basis of dumping.

Socially, the plan of "national autarchy" produces the material conditions for unrest. It results inevitably in a growth of the revolutionary working-class movement, which is the only way by which all these contradictions can be solved.

## II. THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION: THE WAR DANGER:

We have considered very briefly the more important changes in the structure of capitalism which have taken place in the last few months. It will be seen that, with the narrowing of its economic stability, capitalism has been forced into a series of desperate manœuvres which merely increase the existing contradictions. These contradictions are very clearly revealed in international policy. We will deal here almost exclusively with the situation in Germany, for Germany is, so to speak, in the key position of Europe at present. Lack of space prevents a complete consideration of the international situation.

### Germany: The Foreign Policy of Fascism.

Hitler's foreign policy is the same as that of any capitalist politician. Germany is an imperialist country, and remains so despite all ranting about the "national revolution." Germany therefore is pursuing a desperate aggressive policy towards its neighbors. Hitler boldly proclaimed that he wished to form a Central European Fascist State. He has very good reasons for wishing this. Since the onset of the general world crisis the Danubian States have formed the most profitable trading area for Germany. For example, in 1931 Germany's exports to the five Danubian countries amounted to 10.11% of its total exports, but accounted for a surplus of 465.9 million marks, while its total trade gave a surplus of only 35.9 million. That is, the Danubian countries were the only ones with which Germany had a satisfactory trade balance.

The road to the Danube lies through Austria. Hence it is that Nazi propaganda is directed especially towards Austria. But Austria has powerful and influential allies in Italy and especially France, who will not consider the possibility of a union between Austria and Germany. Hence Nazi activities in the Austrian frontier make the possibility of a general European war very acute. The activity of France has resulted in the almost complete isolation of Fascist Germany. At the World Economic Conference, Hugenberg brought forward in a very crude manner the proposal that the European powers should form a united front against the Soviet Union, using the German army as their main weapon and paying Germany with the Polish corridor. Poland was to have the Ukraine "when it was





conquered." However, the project was far beyond the immediate possibilities of French and British foreign policy. Their antagonisms are at present great enough to make such a united front extremely difficult. In addition, Poland adopted the very "uncompromising" attitude of despatching extra armed forces to the corridor. Recently Nazi activities on the Austrian, French, and Danish frontiers, together with a whole series of violent acts in the Saar basin, Danzig, and on the Swiss border have assisted in the isolation of Germany. In addition, the Czechoslovakian and Italian armies, which are constantly kept within a few hours' march of centres, form a very practical bar to the "autarchic" aims of German Fascism.

On the Eastern frontier lies the Soviet Union. Germany would, above all, prefer war on Russia, and is at present conducting a campaign of anti-Soviet incitement even more vicious than usual. A great lie is being told of the state of the German collective farmers in the Volga region. They are depicted as persecuted "brothers in distress." Hitler is said to have contributed 1000 marks from his own pocket for some mythical fund to relieve their distress. The valuable thing about the campaign is that it admits openly the appalling distress among Germany's agrarian population.

Hitler is openly preparing for war. Munition factories, unproductive roads, forced labor camps, provocative acts on all frontiers, etc., all are a preparation for a most bloody conflict.

**The Internal Situation of Germany.**

When Hitler came to power he had a whole host of promises behind him. He was going to free Germany from the Versailles treaty. The peasants were to be freed from the bonds of interest slavery. Unemployment was to be relieved. Profit-making was to be done away with, and small enterprises aided at the expense of the trusts. His promises are now in pitiful ruins. From the earliest period of his rule he did nothing about the burden of Versailles. Instead, he said that he would fight against it by "peaceful means." His promises with regard to interest slavery have not been kept. Instead of reducing interest from 6 to 2%, he has reduced it to 4½% only. The "peasant leader," Darre, who so violently condemned Hugenberg for reducing it to 4½% only, now declares that Hugenberg's law will be observed. With regard to profit-making,

the most shameful deceit has been practised. An absurd one-day boycott of Jewish stores was carried out during the early days. But now the originators of the slogans, "abolition of unearned income," "nationalisation of trusts," etc., and especially Herr Feder, of the Ministry of Economy, have announced that this programme must be scrapped, and proclaim instead that "our economy needs peace"! Fascism's agrarian policy is similarly disastrous for the great masses of poor peasants and the workers. To "stimulate" German primary production, prices of butter, etc., have been raised several times. This has given great profit to the wealthy farmers, but is disastrous for the poor peasants, who feel particularly the abrupt rise in prices.

All these factors have resulted in a great feeling of disillusion with Hitler. This fact is indicated by the new wave of terror which commenced in the middle of July. This new terror differs from that of the earlier period by the fact that it is directed not only against the revolutionary working class, but against a much wider social mass. Discontent among the storm troops is tremendous, and quarrels and fights frequently break out. This change of attitude is well shown in the following statements. First, an old member of Berlin Storm Troops:—

"I and all the older members are certainly dissatisfied with the present state of affairs. There can be no talk of there having been a revolution. As a matter of fact, things are just the same as before. All that we have had is a change of bureaucrats."

Also, a leader of Berlin Storm Troops declared:—

"It is happening more and more frequently that old S.A. (Storm Troop) men obtain leave in order to look for work. They, of course, believed hitherto that the new State would find them work, and now feel that they have been deceived."

Things have reached such a state that the leaders have been compelled to declare that any criticism of the present party is criminal. All members of the party are now compelled to sign the following declaration:—

"I am aware that I must refrain from any criticism of the measures of the Government, the party, and the leading men. I know that otherwise I shall be brought not before a party court, but before a penal court."



This extraordinary document forced upon the rank and file is a clear indication of the disintegration among the Nazis. This decay and growing revolt is of great importance. It relieves to some extent the pressure on the revolutionary vanguard, and also enables them to obtain a greater response in their anti-Fascist activities. Nevertheless, the wave of terror is at its height, and is marked by such bestialities as beheading victims in groups of four or more at a time, etc.

The revolutionary workers are constantly at work. They are getting a much better response to their appeals for strikes, etc., especially along the Rhine and in the big ports such as Hamburg. There can be no doubt that the disintegration among the Fascists and the increasing activity of the revolutionaries mark a big step towards the maturing of the revolutionary crisis.

Lack of space prevents a satisfactory account of the latest developments in all international spheres. However, without exception, there is a serious advance in political tension—foreign and internal.

### III. THE SITUATION IN AUSTRALIA:

Australia is conducting on a smaller scale an economic policy comparable to that of almost all capitalist countries at the present time. A great deal has been said in the press to prove that the depression is lifting in Australia. Unemployment, it is said, is decreasing. But the great bulk of the decrease is due to the wide application of the work-for-sustenance schemes in every State. Then, also, as a result of tightening up of regulations with regard to permissible income, many unemployed workers have been forced off sustenance, and, as they do not register at unemployment bureaux and no longer appear on the sustenance lists, there has been a "reduction" in the number of unemployed—on paper alone. An unemployed worker who is off sustenance is no longer unemployed, according to the capitalist class. In a number of cases the ranks of the unemployed have been considerably increased. For example, 300 girls were recently dismissed from the Lincoln Knitting Mills.

A recent increase in wool prices has been hailed as a sign of recovery. But this is the season of greatest demand for wool. In addition, Japan, which is at present engaged in extensive military operations in China, is buying up large quantities of wool for war pur-

poses. It has been pointed out that the Soviet Union will need more wool during the Second Five-Year Plan. There is no reason to suppose that the rise in prices will be general or permanent. It should be remembered that precisely the same thing happened at the same time last year (and was hailed as an indication of returning prosperity). In actual fact the basic industries, such as building construction and engineering, have shown no increase, and in this way resemble the corresponding industries in other countries. That is to say, the industries which form the real basis of industrial improvement are remaining in a stagnant condition. It is perfectly true that there has been an increase in the output of war material from Maribyrnong and Lithgow, and that the budget about to be presented will include the laying-down of a new cordite and munition factories. But we must not imagine that the increase in the production of explosives and poison gases means that a country's economy is in a healthy progressive state.

The attacks on wages and working conditions which were such a feature of the first years of the crisis have been continued in the past few months. The Australian bourgeoisie is at present making use of violent agitation against Japanese dumping in order to find an excuse for increasing tariffs (thus raising commodity prices) and lowering wages and working conditions even further. They openly state that Australian industry cannot compete with Japanese unless "conditions are created whereby competition can be conducted on an equitable basis." A particularly shameless example of this propaganda is seen in the attempts made by certain employers to infect textile-workers with a violent anti-Japanese feeling. The Rev. D. Daley and Mr. M. Hannah, representing the "Get a Move On Society," recently spoke to a meeting of 700 employes (mostly girls) at the Richmond Pelaco factory. They told these girls that they "enjoy a liberty of which you should be proud," despite the bad working conditions, low wages, and constant speed-up which is the rule in this factory. It is necessary to combat such attempts to gain the support of factory workers by explaining that these same smooth-tongued individuals propose to combat the Japanese "menace" by measures (high tariffs, wage cuts) which will directly cause a lowering of the living standard of Australian workers.



In the past few months there has been a considerable increase in strikes. The splendid struggle of the Melbourne unemployed against forced labor is dealt with in a separate article. A number of unemployed actions on the job (such as that at Merrylands, N.S.W., on 28th August) show that the unemployed are entering the struggle against capitalist brutality in increasing numbers, and, above all, under rank-and-file leadership. The meat workers have conducted a persistent struggle against the new chain-system, with its accompanying speeding-up and reduced wages. At present they are to return to work, the official leadership of the union having capitulated to the demands of the employers. Nevertheless, the militant attitude of the rank-and-file is a sure indication that the fight is not yet over. The struggle at the State Coal Mine, Wonthaggi, is still in progress. The miners have been confused and misled by their union officials, but have persistently shown their willingness to fight. A rapid strike move (which was almost completely successful) among 1200 miners at Kalgoorlie recently showed that the workers there have a big basis for militant struggle. A number of other strikes, which have been successful in some cases, have taken place.

In general it may be said that the Australian workers are beginning to reply to the attacks of the employers. So far most of the struggles have been isolated. But nevertheless rank-and-file leadership has been well to the fore.

However, the necessary task of forming a united front of employed and unemployed has not been accomplished. In the Melbourne dole strike the Trades Hall succeeded in maintaining this split, and thus prevented the unemployed from winning their full demands.

The Labor Party, especially in N.S.W., is faced with growing dissatisfaction amongst its members and supporters. The disgraceful manoeuvres of the "inner group" and the struggles between various factions have disgusted large numbers of the rank and file. The spectacle of Lang "appealing" by petition to the King against "unconstitutional" acts by the Stevens Government must be a bitter sight for the workers who followed Lang in his "rebellious" days. In Victoria the recent by-election at Polwarth threw interesting light upon the manoeuvres of the Labor Party. In an attempt to catch votes, Tunnecliffe made a great noise in Parliament about certain police scandals and dishonest practices by manufacturers who supplied sustenance clothing. Now that the election is over, all enquiries have been shelved for the time being, and the Labor Party is not making any protest. The matter will be dropped—and some new one taken up next election-time.

War preparations in Australia and the struggle against war are dealt with elsewhere in this issue.

—Ian C. Macdonald.

### "THE MENACE OF FASCISM," John Strachey (Victor Gollancz, 7/6).

WHAT is Fascism? Is it a new philosophy, a new politics? What is the common ground of Hitler, Mussolini, and the embryo Fascists—Sir Oswald Mosley, General Blamey, and Eric Campbell? What is its economic basis? What constitutes its mass basis? What allows it to grow? What can prevent it? To what does it lead?

All these questions are clearly and brilliantly answered in "The Menace of Fascism." John Strachey, nephew of Lytton Strachey, was, in 1930, Labor member of the House of Commons and Parliamentary private secretary to Sir Oswald Mosley. He has, therefore, special qualifications for the task. It is evident, too, that the last three years have increased those qualifications. Once an idealist sentimental reformist, Strachey has now reached reality.

This book is recommended to the University Brown Shirts, Silent Knights, and to the Empire League of Honor. If they must fight, is it not to their advantage to know what they are fighting for? Hitler's atrocities have destroyed the religious weapon. The U.S.S.R.'s advance to the position of strongest world power has badly damaged the loyalty to the British Empire theory. It may be fairly assumed that the British people, under the leadership of the working class, would similarly grow stronger.

Let the Fascists openly recognise that they fight for a parasite class, against the progress of man. Their masks of Loyalty and Religion have become publicly ridiculous.

—G. P. O'Day



# THE FIGHT AGAINST FORCED LABOR

THE general principle of work for sustenance, on extended terms of payment as compared with the rates usually offered, calls for a review of the unemployment position which has given rise to this situation.

Unemployment began to take its place as a problem of first political magnitude in this State with the development of the depression in 1928-29, and, with a steady increase of those without regular work, has remained in the forefront ever since. At first unemployed workers were able to return to industry, or at least had prospects of doing so after a short period of idleness, but as the situation became steadily worse, and weeks of unemployment drew out into months, the unemployed, organizing as unemployed for the first time in this State, raised demands for Government assistance, and by mass protest meetings and demonstrations were successful in forcing the Government to grant a measure of relief. The first assistance given took the form of a hand-out of food from depots established in the various areas. This sufficed for a time, but with continued unemployment it soon became no longer sufficient to maintain the unemployed workers and their families.

As clothing bought before unemployment was now becoming threadbare and in urgent need of replacement, and there was no prospect of work or money to effect this, the demand for clothing was made the central feature of further representations to the Government, backed by the use of mass demonstrations, supporting deputations, mass meetings, etc. To meet this situation the Government introduced a scheme of rationed relief work, giving each unemployed man two or three months' laboring work with one of the Government Departments. The hand-out system of relief was never popular with the men or their wives. "Take what you are given" was the slogan of those in control of the depots. No consideration was given to the needs of different types of families and their dietary needs. The resentment against the treatment meted out at the depots finally flamed into open revolt. Depots were declared black and picketed. The Government capitulated to the demands of the unemployed,

and introduced the system of sustenance orders on tradesmen, by which the men were given the right of selection from a varied number of commodities. The scale of sustenance was then fixed at 5/- for single men, and 8/6 for married men, with the addition of 1/6 for each child.

The first inkling of changing Government attitude to the relief of unemployment and the dole was obtained when Mr. Webber, M.L.A. for Heidelberg, Honorary Minister in charge of Sustenance in the Hogan Government, broadcast the details of a proposed work *instead* of sustenance scheme, under which single men would receive £40 per annum and married men £70 per annum in return for work performed. (Note the similarity between this proposal and the terms now being worked for—single men £31/4/, married men £52 per annum, plus family allowances to a maximum total of £110/10/-, with an average of £75/8/- per annum.) On the basis of this statement, a huge propaganda campaign against the dole and in favor of work was launched through every publicity channel in the hands of the employing class. The rates put forward as compared with the then rates of sustenance payment tended to make the scheme popular with the unemployed, but the real intention of the Government was disclosed when, while the scheme was yet before the House for discussion, the Budget was also introduced. It provided money sufficient to cover sustenance or work *at the existing rates only*, and when finally adopted this is exactly what the greatly lauded and "generous" scheme amounted to!

The onus of giving effect to the provisions of the new law was shirked by the Government and thrown upon the local authorities, the Municipal Councils. The unemployed were immediately up in arms against the introduction of a scheme which meant two days' work for the same amount of money, replacement of permanent employes by dole-workers, and an intensification of the unemployment position instead of an improvement. As a result of this widespread hostility, no immediate effort was made to enforce this scheme. Just at this period, December, 1931.-March,



1932, the eviction of unemployed workers from their homes, which had been going on through the period of depression, and which in isolated cases had been successfully resisted by mass action of the unemployed, took on a mass character, and thousands in the metropolitan area lived in constant fear of being thrown out on to the streets. The demand for no evictions became more insistent, and the response of the unemployed to fight against them became so solid that no agent in Port Melbourne, for instance, would take up eviction proceedings. The police, even after using their firearms, were compelled to replace the furniture of an unemployed worker at Reservoir who had had all his belongings thrown into the street. This solidarity of the unemployed forced the Government to grant a further concession of 8/- per week for rent. At the election immediately following, the Hogan Government made way for the U.A.P., with Argyle at its head.

In all of these earlier struggles of the unemployed the official trade union leadership played the despicable rôle of splitters and betrayers of the unemployed workers. They first of all opposed the formation of a mass unemployed organisation by dividing the unemployed into union groups and, failing to stop the growth of the mass organisation, set up an opposition organisation under their own leadership in order to divert the militancy of the unemployed into useless channels. Again the unemployed were betrayed by the T.U. officials, who actively collaborated with the Labor Government, and their official recommendation was that the starvation terms should be accepted, because, they said, if the Labor Government were defeated the unemployed would be even worse off. The demand of the unemployed for direct representation on the Trade Union Council was answered by the batons of the police, secreted in the hall to prevent the unemployed gaining their end when the Council sat to consider the question. The Labor Party in power showed itself to be incapable of handling the question of unemployment. The longer they were in office, the more openly did Cabinet members come forward with proposals in the interest of capital. All the forces of the State were used against the workers in any fight for better conditions.

The only gains made by the unemployed during Labor's term of office were achieved as the result of open struggle *against* the

Government and all the forces at its disposal. The hypocrisy of the Labor Party's avowals of principle are clearly exposed by their open advocacy of the £70-£40 work instead of sustenance scheme while in office, and their present attitude to practically the same scheme sponsored by the Argyle Government.

Months went by without any attempt to apply generally the work-for-the-dole, and, as a result, the unemployed were lulled into a sense of false security. The campaign popularising the scheme continued, and preparations were made for its enforcement. Isolated, unorganised, or poorly organised sections of the unemployed were selected for attack, and the militants sent to the bush on relief work. With the ground carefully prepared, the most backward of the local unemployed were called up, and finally all the unemployed in the area were forced to take work. In spite of the careful preparations made by the Government and the Municipal Councils, the initial attempts to make the unemployed work for the dole met with strong opposition in many areas, the work was declared black, strikes organised, mass demonstrations held, and many effective protests made; but by June this year, in practically the whole of the outer suburbs and many of the country areas, work for the dole was in operation. Meanwhile, many thousands of workers had been cut off the dole per medium of permissible income regulations, which were introduced under the cloak of an increase in sustenance rates to 6/- for single men, 14/- for married men, with 1/6 per child. Those who remained on the dole received a slight improvement, though the general position was worsened; the cost of the new scheme to the Government was *less than the old*.

The Municipal Councils, authorised by the Hogan Government as the organs to apply work-for-the-dole, had in practice proved to be inefficient mediums, owing to the fact that the areas where there was the greatest unemployment and greatest need to introduce dole-work, if the scheme was to be successful, were the areas where this was most difficult, owing to the political and mass pressure that the unemployed were able to bring to bear on councillors, and thus tie their hands. To meet this position, the Argyle Government established new authorities, the Public Assistance Committees, over which the public have no control, who are given the task of enforcing



and administering the Unemployment Relief Act under direct Government supervision. Reinforced with committees less responsible to public opinion, mass pressure and influence, the Government immediately began preparations to bring the whole of the unemployed within the scope of the work-for-dole scheme, and, in an effort to disarm effective resistance, came forward with a new scheme of rationed relief works at rates showing a slight increase over existing sustenance rates. The increased rates offered, however, were not sufficient to break down the hostility of the unemployed. The work was declared black, and when the first call-up was made, the reply of the unemployed in all areas left no doubt as to their readiness to fight the Government, only a small fraction accepting the terms and going on to the job. Strong local rank-and-file committees were elected, and a central rank-and-file strike committee set up to co-ordinate work in all areas. The greatest struggle yet put up by the unemployed in their own defence rapidly developed. The unemployed of Fitzroy, Collingwood, South and Port Melbourne had all been called upon to work three weeks after the first call. Not one man in Port had accepted work, and only about 15% of the workers in the other areas were on the job. Mass meetings and demonstrations locally and in the city were organised. The jobs were picketed, and in spite of increasing police terrorism and intimidation, the front of the unemployed remained solid. Active relief committees were organised in all areas, support rallied from the workers in industry and the shopkeepers in the localities. The response was sufficient to ensure that the strikers would not be starved on to the job.

At the end of the third week the strength of the strikers was further augmented by the solidarity action of the Preston and Reservoir unemployed, who had been working for sustenance since the previous December. They joined the strike for the minimum demands of the Central Strike Committee—two days' work for single men, three days' for married men, and *pro-rata* increase for children. Their lead was followed in the next week by the unemployed at Blackburn, Tunstall, and Mitcham, while the men at Carlton, North and West Melbourne were called for work but stood solidly behind the strikers. Threats of eviction, intimidation, and gaoling of those carrying out the various tasks necessary for

the successful conduct of the strike (collecting relief, speaking, picketing, and demonstrating) all failing to break the front, the Government was forced to amend drastically its proposals and give the unemployed substantial increases in rates as the basis for the general application of the work-for-dole.

The part played by the Trades Hall during the struggle was very shameful. They were forced to take part only through fear of losing their influence over the unemployed. The Central Strike Committee was the real leader of the strike. Nevertheless, the Trades Hall excluded it from all negotiations with the Government, and thus helped to a certain extent to stifle the voice of the unemployed. They were deliberately slow in calling for general union support for the strike, and, despite the large sum which they were supposed to have collected from the unions and union members, they distributed only a miserable pittance. They refused to support the demonstrations planned by the Strike Committee, referring to them in terms very similar to those used by the Police Commissioner. Above all, they made no attempt to get into close contact with the unemployed. They tried their old game of dictating from above and "representing" the workers, without paying any attention to what those workers were saying and demanding. The result of this was seen very clearly in the attitude of the great bulk of the unemployed to the Trades Hall. It was often spoken of with contempt and rage. The unemployed, on the whole, realised that the proper organs of struggle are rank-and-file committees in close contact with the mass of the workers. And they are not likely to forget this very important fact.

The history of the recent struggles of the unemployed can be well viewed from a study of the concessions won:—

1. Hand-out—  
Anything local authorities would give.
2. Sustenance—  
Single men 5/-, married 8/6, child 1/6.
- \*3. Sustenance—  
Single men 6/-, married 11/-, child 1/6.
- \*4. Work for Sustenance (Council)—  
Single men 6/-, married 11/-, child 1/6.
- \*5. Govt. increase, work for sustenance—  
Single men 8/-, married 14/-, child 2/6.
- \*6. Strike concession, work for sustenance—  
Single men 12/-, married 20/-, child 2/6.



## 7. Present demand—

Single men 21/6, married 32/6, child 3/6.  
\*Plus wood and clothing issue and 8/- rent in special cases.

In order to carry on the campaign for these demands, the workers engaged in the recent struggle have organised dole and relief-workers' councils on the lines of the rank-and-file form of organisation they utilised during the strike, with local councils in each area, with sub-committees to look after legal, relief, and social activities, fight evictions, and organise action on the job to stop any attempt to victimise individual workers or worsen job conditions as a whole.

The position of the unemployed to-day is not such that we can say the fight is over. As a matter of fact, the position with regard to the general tightening up of regulations which is now taking place means that further unemployed workers will be deprived of their sustenance. As examples of the methods be-

ing adopted to reduce rates, these cases from an outer suburb are cited: One man with 26 fowls in his backyard is cut 2/6 per week. Another earning 5/6 one night a week at a picture show is classified as a casual worker, and is cut off sustenance. A third, with ten children, is entitled to £2/2/6 per week. Now that the eldest, for whom he cannot draw sustenance, is receiving £2/12/- in work, he has been cut off sustenance and has been compelled to evict his daughter in order to be eligible for continued sustenance. These cases and many others of a similar kind show clearly that it is necessary for the unemployed to maintain and extend the organisation which they set up during the strike. There can be no doubt that the apparatus which served them so well during the peak of the struggle preparing them for the bigger struggles and will be just as necessary in carrying on and conflicts yet to come. —James Lincoln.

## NOTES ON AUSTRALIA AND THE WAR DANGER

THROUGHOUT the capitalist world to-day, feverish preparations are proceeding. The capitalist class finds it impossible to conceal any longer the fact that war is the way by which it will attempt to solve the problems of the depression. For almost two years hostilities in North China and Manchuria have been flagrant, and the working masses of Japan and China have been brutally oppressed in the interests of the robbery policy of Japanese imperialism. Japan is blatantly militaristic. The naval manœuvres performed recently before the Emperor showed that 161 warships could be put into action the instant they were needed. Since the 1930 review, the total tonnage of vessels fit for active service has grown from 702,000 to 847,000 tons—an increase of 21% in three years. The number of aeroplanes advanced from 80 to 150, but, according to official statements, the navy has control of many times this number. U.S.A. is carrying out a record naval building programme. £63,000,000 has been allotted for immediate construction, and 50 new vessels are to be laid down. It is cynically stated

by the Government that this programme will provide employment. Careful analysis has shown that the undeniable increase in American industrial output is occurring almost entirely in those industries concerned directly or indirectly with war requirements. Such industries as the engineering industry have shown no such increase.

The production of the means of destruction and not of the means of production is the order of the day. Britain has at present 54 warships on the stocks. The public is kept supplied continuously with war propaganda—the Hendon air display, the Aldershot tattoo, and the naval festivities at Chatham are widely advertised with the object of popularising the various “arms” of national “defence.” Daily press reports indicate that in Central Europe political tension exists to a degree almost unheard of before. Britain, France, and Italy unite in giving Austria permission to raise a special auxiliary force of 8000 men “for one year only.” It is freely admitted that the outbreak of war seems an almost hourly possibility. Finally, the attempts at disguising



war preparations with disarmament conferences, etc., have been discarded, and the world economic conference has failed dismally.

In these circumstances it is only to be expected that Australia is making *her* preparations for war—that is to say, the Australian capitalist class is strengthening its apparatus of butchery and class oppression. Under cover of a vast cloud of militarist propaganda—"Pity the poor economy-cut army!"—practical preparations are rapidly being made. Fresh coastal defences at Darwin, Sydney Heads, Fremantle—all important centres in the event of war—are being prepared or are already installed. Demands are being made for 16-inch guns to displace the 9.2 guns at the three latter places. The navy has been considerably strengthened. Destroyers and cruisers from the British navy are to be brought to Australia to "replace" vessels which are supposed to be obsolete. In actual fact, they will supplement the Australian and New Zealand fleets which are at present manœuvring in New Zealand waters. A sloop is to be built at once, at a cost of £200,000. Hawker "Fury" aeroplanes, capable of achieving a speed of 210 miles per hour, have been ordered to replace Wapitis purchased only a year or two ago. Steps are being taken to mechanise the army. It is in this direction that certain important advances have been made. The Government has decided that the expense of providing mechanised units with motor vehicles, as well as tanks, etc., is at present beyond its means. It has therefore undertaken the provision of tanks on condition that the members of the unit provide motor cycles, trucks, etc. The Defence Ministry Report states that the A.S.C. in Victoria and N.S.W. will be entirely mechanised for the coming training season.

The importance of these moves is obvious. In the first place, they indicate a most significant relationship between the forces of peace and those of war. The forces are at present raised on a voluntary basis; but it is a natural conclusion that in future all civil industries and services will be organised on a basis of utility in war time. Rifle clubs throughout the Commonwealth have changed over from long-magazine to short-magazine Lee Enfields—the latter type being that most used on active service.

Conscription is as yet in embryo, but it nevertheless exists, and is growing. It is seen

at its greatest stage of development in U.S.A., where the unemployed are being driven into forced labor camps directed by military officers, and where, moreover, industries have been dealt with under the National Industrial Recovery Act, which gives the State exceedingly wide powers over all the important industries, and compresses the workers within a rigid code of working conditions, wage agreements, etc. The importance of such moves is apparent if the imminence of war is kept in mind. Certain newspapers have remarked on the similarity between this statute and those of the war period. The kinship of NIRA and DORA (the infamous Defence of the Realm Act) is all too obvious.

Though on an infinitely smaller scale, Australia is moving toward the same end. Another important aspect of the system of voluntary subscription of motor trucks and cycles is that the nucleus being formed is comprised of soldiers who belong to the middle classes rather than to the proletariat—i.e., *men who have a more or less direct interest in war as a solution of the crisis*. This tendency must nevertheless be considered in any analysis of the war preparations in this country, for there is no doubt of the fact that it is a part of the policy of the Defence Department to exclude "unreliable" elements as much as possible from these initial preparations.

Coincident with these alterations in the organisation of the armed forces, the apparatus for the production of munitions and supplies is being perfected. Extensive additions are under construction at Maribyrnong. New machinery, capable of producing such complex implements as tanks and armored cars, is being installed. Some of these latter have been made by private firms. Ammunition for naval guns is now manufactured at Lithgow. Thus the "sinews of war" are being rapidly strengthened. Finally, an organised campaign is being carried on with the intention of popularising warlike pursuits. A big Navy and Army Week has been mooted. Attempts are being made to popularise military training by marching uniformed men with brass bands through suburbs, by increasing the social activities centred in the drill halls, by making camp life more attractive. Military officers complain that it is difficult to get workers to attend these camps, as they receive only 4/- per day. An attempt will, therefore, be made to gain the assistance of the employers in pay-



ing them the basic wage whilst in camp. Again the connection between the employing ruling class and war preparations becomes clear!

From the above necessarily brief outline it will be seen that Australia is by no means lagging behind her neighbors in preparing for "justifiable" bloodshed. It is impossible in this short space to indicate more than the general tendencies. We can now consider the other side of the matter—opposition to war.

Throughout the world there is a powerful anti-war movement. This reached its highest organisational form at the great Amsterdam Anti-War Congress held last year, at which over 2000 delegates, representing 30,000,000 people, discussed the war danger, methods of fighting against war, and a programme of action. The congress revealed that the working class is the chief bulwark against war, and occupies the clearest and most uncompromising position. Nevertheless, certain sections of all classes are actively concerned in the movement. But because it suffers most from the ravages of war, and because it faces the war danger with the clear realisation that it has nothing to gain from the conflict, because it is exposed most directly to the brutality of capitalist exploitation, the proletariat must necessarily take the lead. This is true in every country. It will be of particular value, therefore, to examine the attitude of the Australian Labor Movement to the whole question of war.

There is at present a fairly large and active anti-war movement in Australia, but this movement has been completely ignored by the A.L.P. as a party. In N.S.W., the movement has been stigmatised as "red," and thus an excuse provided for refusing to join in. With a few exceptions, the "left" Labor politicians of the Lang Party, in opposition to the rank and file, adopt a similar attitude. We quote below a letter received from the Canterbury Anti-War Council. This letter was sent to the *Labor Daily*, which failed to publish it after a period of several weeks. It was then sent to us. The letter has been slightly abridged by the deletion of those facts not relevant to the necessity for organisation.

To the Editor.

Sir,—As one who has consistently supported the Labor Movement for a great many years, I would like you, through the columns of your paper, to state where the A.L.P. stands with regard to the Anti-War Move-

ment. To me it appears that such a question should be above the confines of any sect, religious, political, or otherwise, yet I find it stated by responsible members of your leagues that they will only oppose war if such be the policy of the A.L.P.

This attitude calls for clarification. Where do you stand on the war question? If opposed to war, what measures have you taken to organise resistance thereto? If you are opposed to the principle of war, then why isolate your resistance within your own party?—why, indeed, give such a movement a political bias at all? There are thousands of people in this State who, whilst opposed to Labor politics, are even more opposed to war. These should be met on such common ground. Again, I venture to say, the mass of the workers of this State look to the Labor Party to effectively combat participation in new world conflicts. A big responsibility is yours; with the collapse of the world conference, the conflict of clashing imperialism becomes accentuated. A tremendous struggle for world economic supremacy is on. . . .

That war is inevitable was recognised by those in responsible positions long ago. Close on two years back Mr. Gordon Bennett, in an address to Australian manufacturers, stated: "We are as near to war to-day as we were in 1912," and recommended them to so organise their factories that they could be adapted to war purposes without delay. This has to a large extent been done. Remember, in the newer type of warfare, the entire nation becomes a disciplined tool, every activity of life becomes an integral part of the machine, and the most vital spots, therefore the most dangerous, are in your midst. The civil populations suffer most in these murderous onslaughts.

Realising all this, and the apathy of the organisations of the working class upon the subject, I sometimes wonder if the story of 1914 will again be repeated, and the various organs of labor attach themselves to their respective imperialisms in slaughtering the members of their own class, who, like themselves, permit themselves to become mercenary tools of their masters, the great international groups of imperialist financiers who contrive, no matter who wins or loses, to amass mountains of wealth from seas of human blood.

To my mind, the duty of labor is plain—to co-operate with the great international anti-



war movement inaugurated at Amsterdam several years ago, and which has since spread throughout the world. This movement embraces peoples of every shade of thought, such as Professor Einstein, Maxim Gorky, and Bernard Shaw, and hosts of others, from ministers of religion to rank atheists, all united on the one principle of unyielding opposition to war.

Again I ask—where does the A.L.P. stand?—Yours sincerely, Canterbury Anti-War Council, per H. Lawrence, Press Correspondent, 2/8/33.

This letter is important for several reasons. First, it is not merely the expression of an individual; countless class-conscious workers are asking themselves these questions to-day. The writer has put the fundamental questions with admirable simplicity: "Where do you stand on the war question?" "If opposed to war, what measures have you taken to organise resistance thereto?" This was the voice of the class-conscious proletariat. Many of these workers are looking to the Labor Party for a lead. And the Labor leaders have let them down! The trade union leaders have ignored their appeals for guidance. The lead they give resembles that of the Gilbertian player, Toro, who led his regiment from behind. This is the letter's significant feature. The rank and file has been betrayed by the leaders, and fears that "the story of 1914 will be repeated." Thus the Anti-War Movement is faced, at its coming Congress, with the need for winning the support of the masses of organised workers. The rank and file of the trades unions and the A.L.P. leagues and branches must be drawn into the struggle, for they are the decisive section in the campaign. The trade union and the factory are the ultimate stronghold of the anti-war movement. Without proper organisation in these, it is foolish to hope for success. It is necessary to point out the power of organised labor in the unions and factories. It is necessary to stress

the importance of linking up the economic struggles of the workers with their struggle against war. Both proceed from the same cause—from the capitalist crisis, and from capitalist exploitation.

If the anti-war movement isolates itself from the masses of organised workers, then it will be isolated from the decisive section of the workers, and will remain almost pacifist—not to say futile—in character. It should not be deterred by the hypocritical attitude of the Labor Party. In England, for example, the Independent Labor Party has proposed that, in the event of a declaration of war, the slogan of a general strike against war should be carried into effect. This sounds very "left" and "very revolutionary," but is entirely meaningless unless the close relation between war preparations and wage cuts, speed-up, etc., are explained to the workers. It is not surprising that the trade unions in Great Britain are hesitating over this proposal. Once again the necessity for organising around every-day demands forms the basis of successful antagonism to war.

Hence the importance of this letter. It demands from the A.L.P., which still has influence over decisive sections of the workers, an explanation of its attitude to war. The N.S.W. A.L.P. has openly declared that it will not support the existing anti-war movement. It thus declares itself to be, in actual fact, on the side of the ruling class in the event of war—for purely formal protests against war without organisation around concrete demands are mere wordiness. The anti-war question is one which is exercising the minds of the workers at the present time. It is inseparable from the general struggles of the Australasian working class. "To the mines and to the factories" is the only correct slogan to-day. Otherwise the anti-war movement will be without a firm basis.

—J. Hunter.

### HOW WAR IS PREPARED:

In his speech to the Millions Club on Monday, September 25, Sir George Pearce told in some detail how the "defence" preparations had been elaborately prepared for in conjunction with the Imperial Government. He made it perfectly clear that these arrangements had been proceeding over a period of years, but that the time had now arrived when it was

necessary to have the direct support of the "people." His announcements were followed two days later by one making it clear that compulsory military training is to be reintroduced in order to get sufficient trained cannon fodder with which the capitalists will "defend their interests not only in the event of armed invasion, but from that other form of 'aggression'—an 'attack on trade.'" Thus is war prepared.



# INDUSTRIAL ACTIVITY IN THE SOVIET UNION

## Introduction.

THE writer visited the Russian and Ukrainian Soviet Republics at the end of last year as a delegate to the 6th Mendeleef Assembly. This was a Conference of Chemists, and was attended by over 3000 delegates from all over the Union, one party coming from Vladivostock, another from Armenia, and quite a big delegation from Leningrad. The Conference was held in Charkov—administrative centre of the Ukrainian Republic.

The invitation received by the writer was a personal one, and was a courteous act of the "Committee for Promotion of Applied Chemistry" of the State Planning Commission, prompted by the editors of a Leningrad metallurgical journal to which the writer had contributed an article. As an official delegate, and later for services rendered as a consultant in a metallurgical capacity, every opportunity was afforded of visiting engineering and metallurgical works, and only limitation of time made it impossible to take advantage of the proffered visit to Magnitogorsk. There was no indication whatsoever of any interference with or surveillance of the writer's movements, and really, a few days in Russia is sufficient to indicate how futile are such suggestions. It was soon obvious that one was not even an object of curiosity, much less a subject to waste time on by putting somebody to watch one's movements. No, visitors are not so important as perhaps they would sometimes like to feel, and in general, Russians can spend their time much more profitably than by following about people who do not even know the language, and so could do little harm even if they were so minded. But one thing, on the contrary, was very obvious—namely, that foreigners were treated with every respect. On the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the Revolution, although the writer had no ticket, he ultimately reached the consular platform in the centre of the Square simply by saying to each policeman who tried to divert him, "Foreigner from Australia." The little Russian he had learned came in useful on such occasions.

## What Is It All About?

Since leaving Moscow at the beginning of last December, the writer has been in Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, England, Canada, and U.S.A. And everywhere he has been met with eager questions: "Does the Press give us a right impression of Russia?" "Are the people in Russia starving?" "Has the five-year plan failed?" To all these questions a careful, unbiassed observer can truthfully answer—No! But then so many people think they are careful, unbiassed observers, and the writer may have no better claim to be so classed than many others who have left Russia with quite opposite opinions to his. In fact, is it possible to be unbiassed in this matter? In reality, is it not necessary to declare for or against? And so in despair, so many people say, "What is it all about?" "Is there really any difference?"

There is undoubtedly a difference. For, having passed through Canada, U.S.A., and England on the way to Russia, and having seen in those countries hopelessness and pessimism—just the same as had been left behind in Australia—the unparalleled enthusiasm and optimism of Russia came as a refreshing change.

There the papers—the very atmosphere—was full of big industrial schemes—schemes which were actually in course of being carried out. Industrial undertakings on a scale paralleled only by those of the U.S.A. in times of prosperity—being initiated and carried out by people who but 15 years before were classed as the most backward of Europe—illiterate, down-trodden peasants. And all this industry without "private" enterprise.

For the first time in their history these people are getting a chance—they have looked round at the capitalist world and have decided that that is not good enough for them—and so they have set out on unknown and unchartered seas, to lead the people of the world to a better and higher view of life. Their ways are not our ways—but ours are old and theirs are new—so, according to the general laws of progress, it is more likely that theirs are the ways of the future—ours those of the past.



In any case, the capitalist world is so sick that at least we should examine the conditions which seem to be leading to such healthy development in that vast area comprising eight republics and many nationalities where a truly Socialist economy is in process of construction. It can surely do no harm, and may do much good, to try to see things as others see them. After all, the human race is developing, and all history shows that occasionally groups of people have had to readjust themselves. Unless we are sufficiently arrogant and pessimistic to think that we have at last attained the highest level, it will be evident that we must take stock of our ideas. We must see whether it is not high time that some of our accepted institutions, conventions, moral codes, and motives for behavior in general be subjected to severe overhauling.

Humanity moves, as it were, from one level to another. For long periods it lives more or less at one level. Then it begins to erect ladders to climb. And in the climb some are above others, but all are essentially of the plane from which they are ascending. But at the last rung a new level is reached—an entirely new vista opens up. Those on the upper rungs of the ladder see that on the new level they will not have the advantage of being so much "above" those on the plane below. They therefore try to prevent knowledge of these new vistas from travelling back to the masses. But such knowledge gradually leaks back, opposing factors on the level below cause unrest, until the desire to attain those new fields of culture and life win the day—those holding the ladder are thrown down, and the whole mass moves upward to new realms. So it has been throughout time, and so it has recently happened in the Soviet Union.

### How Is It Different?

What is the new vista which has opened up? It is a vista in which the degrading spectacle of man exploiting man has no place—where all work for the good of all—where the function of machines is to release man from labor and not to make a monetary profit for the "owners" of those machines—where man freed from labor is at liberty to follow cultural pursuits—where the fear of want is banished, and the law of the forest is at last no more. The prospects of such a vista are indeed inspiring, but, having attained the new

level, all old ideas must go into the melting pot, for a new organisation is needed. And those who lead on the lower level are not necessarily the best to lead on the higher level—in fact, those very qualities which served them below unfit them for leadership above. Hence the struggle to maintain the old conditions; but change is a law of nature, and whilst man can learn those laws and use them, he cannot alter them. And so in the fullness of time, first here then there, as conditions become right, the change takes place—willy-nilly.

Since the change from Feudalism-Capitalism to Socialism has occurred in the Soviet Union, it will be interesting to see in what respects this has altered the industrial outlook. It is obviously no answer to say that the present rapidly increasing economic activity in Russia is due to the leeway which these backward people had to make up. For there are other backward peoples—in Europe, Asia (India and China), and Africa; and yet in none of these countries do we find that the capitalist debacle has given rise to conditions which cause rapid development. Rather are they included in the capitalist depression, because they are the exploited nations which, in prosperous times, supply the raw materials for capitalist industry. And since the latter is operating at a slower pace, obviously the demand for raw materials is less.

No, there is something different! It is this: For the first time in recent history the means of production (raw materials, machines, and land) belong to the community as a whole, and therefore the natural resources can be organised and utilised to best advantage. No longer can individual land-owners block an irrigation or hydro-electric scheme because their land will be flooded. If the land is better flooded than not—then it will be flooded. No longer do private individuals "save" the surplus profits from other peoples' labor and then "lend" such surplus to induce more labor to increase the surplus. Instead, the production of materials is organised—labor is no longer a commodity to be bought—every man (or woman) gets his fair share, and there is sufficient work organised to give everybody the opportunity to earn his living.

But, people say, there will be no incentive to progress. Such people are still on the lower level, the new ideas and motives have not yet entered into their minds. Man is essentially



competitive in spirit; free him from the anxiety of earning a living in the present and future, and he will do his self-appointed task in quite a different spirit from that which actuates him at present. He will become part of a big scheme. He will not let his fellows down. His part will be well done—he will endeavor to do it better than the other fellow. So life becomes a big game—and everybody becomes interested in it and gives vent to his individual personality. Naturally not literally everybody—but sufficient to make for progress.

### What Is Being Done?

Lenin very early conceived a scheme for the electrification of the country. His keen analytical mind saw that in electrical energy only was there an unfailing source which required a minimum of human labor, both for its generation and for its distribution. Hence, wherever possible, hydro-electric stations are being erected. The first was the Volkovstroy, near Leningrad; the latest the Dniepvostroy, in which each of the nine units is equivalent to the whole station at Volkovstroy. At Charkov a plant was in course of erection which will make turbo-generator units (complete) of 50,000 kilowatt capacity (the total capacity of the Yallourn station is 75,000 kilowatts). It should be noted too that since these hydro-electric stations have been built out of current savings, so to speak—i.e., the workers have given their services in exchange for the commodities required for living—the only costs of current generation will be the comparatively low running and depreciation costs—it will not be necessary for the “capital invested” to earn a profit.

The country is being covered with a network of transmission lines linking up the various giant generating stations. Thus the hydro-electric scheme at Dniepvostroy is connected with the coal power plant in the Don Basin. Each district is utilising the type of fuel occurring locally. Hence Moscow is now generating current from local brown coal, instead of utilising black coal, which formerly had to be transported 1000 miles from the Don Basin coalfields.

Heavy industry is being grouped so that the waste products (including steam and heat) from one may be the raw material of another. Thus at Dniepvostroy there is a chemical plant, aluminium plant, electric steel plant, and ferro-alloy plant. The writer

visited all these, as well as the power station. At the time, the aluminium and chemical plants were not completed, but from time to time English journals report the completion of and commencement of operations at several of the incomplete plants he visited.

### Conclusion.

From this brief sketch of the changed outlook of industrial activity in the Soviet Union, it will be evident that it is not just something which is of passing interest. It concerns not only those who, like the writer, are engaged in technological pursuits, but everybody. The planned economy which has been developed challenges the “go-as-you-please” and “Devil-take-the-hindmost” competitive economy with which we are all familiar.

It is significant that the Soviet Union is the only country of those the writer visited during the past year in which more and more people are devoting their time to pure and applied scientific research. Everywhere research institutions are springing up, well equipped and well staffed. When the remark was passed in one such institution devoted to the study of refractory materials, that Western countries were spending less and less on research because “they had no money,” the director commented, “Our country is not so rich that we can afford to economise on research.”

It behoves all scientific workers seriously to consider where our present system is leading, and at least to give careful consideration to the Socialist method of planning the industrial (and also social) activities of the community in which we live. The bugbear which has scared many—namely, the possibility of planning the lives of individuals—simply does not exist. One of the greatest difficulties in connection with the completion of the five-year plan was that labor was too free to wander and change as it wished. There was no difficulty in finding something else to do for those who did not like the work they were doing. Consequently, it will be seen that a Socialist planned economy by promoting industrial and cultural development on a social basis gives ample scope to that freedom of life which, under the capitalist system, is for many almost non-existent. It is particularly necessary at present to avoid being misled by the fact that during the transition from the Tsarist régime to the new social order, severe restrictions have had to be placed on those who would endeavor to frustrate the change.



These are but temporary expedients. Similarly, the views of those people who travel to Russia and are dissatisfied with the absence of certain conveniences to which they have in a generation become accustomed should be analysed. The fact that they are absent is most probably attributable to the backwardness of the Tsarist régime—for it has not been possible to overtake completely that backwardness in 10 years of intensive reconstruc-

tion—and in any case it has been “necessities such as factories and power stations before personal luxuries.”

The writer left the Soviet Union with the firm impression that the underlying philosophy of Communism, with its high aims for improving the cultural and material conditions of life, holds out a bright light of hope for the world, and heralds the dawn of a new era.

—Professor J. Neill Greenwood.

“Revolutionary zeal is the antidote to laziness, routinism, conservatism, apathy of thought, slavish adherence to tradition and to the beliefs of our forefathers. Revolutionary zeal is a life-giving force which stimulates thought, spurs on to action, throws the outworn into the limbo of forgotten things, and opens the portals of the future. Without such zeal, there can be no advance.”—Stalin.

“Communism equals Soviet Power plus electrification of the whole country.”—Lenin.

## NEW ZEALAND STUDENT ACTIVITIES

WE were expecting an article from our comrades in Wellington, New Zealand, dealing with the situation in that country. The article, however, failed to arrive, the reasons being very obvious, as the following will show. Our New Zealand comrades have been engaged very busily on “domestic” affairs, which reveal just how hypocritical our Governments are, and, especially, how carefully our “liberal” educational establishments support the present system of starvation, unemployment, and brutality.

Three small students’ papers recently commenced publication in the more important N.Z. universities. The editorial boards of these papers quite openly placed themselves on the side of the working class. To date we have only seen one of these papers, “Student,” of Victoria University College, Wellington. All of these papers have been suppressed—in

the case of “Student” by the combined action of the University Students’ Association and the Professorial Board. “Student” only saw three issues, the last of which was produced despite the “ban” imposed by the students’ body, which stated, among other things, that “there is already a periodical in the University, ‘Smad,’ and it is superfluous to publish another. You have no reason to believe that any contribution which is controversial will be refused. Articles are judged purely on their merit, and if they have any intrinsic value they will be accepted. You must agree that there is a definite tendency on the part of your committee to publish only articles which state the opinion of which you are in favor.” This monstrous attack on freedom of speech (“Student” is the official organ of the Free Discussions Club) is couched in terms very familiar to those who have already realised the wretched hypocrisy of the ruling class.



The journal "Smad" has confined itself to the production of harmless nonsense for some considerable time, and it is a blatant lie to assert that controversial articles (i.e., articles which put forward a working-class point of view) would have any chance of acceptance. Articles are judged on their "merit" forsooth!

The issue of "Student" which appeared following this action stated: "We appear in no cheap spirit of defiance. After all, the issues before us are simple enough. In response to student request, to fill a long-standing need at the University, the committee of the Free Discussions Club decided to bring out a magazine entirely student-produced, which would broach serious problems in a non-controversial manner. Because we believed that in this day and age issues are so clear that a man must take sides, that the old-style agnostic liberalism leads only to defeat, we embarked definitely on an editorial policy. That policy is well to the left. Editorially, 'Student' has taken its stand with the N.Z. working class; it studies the problems and fights working-class battles as they find reflection at the college. We do not deny that 'Student' has committed itself to this policy; but by no means and in no respect whatsoever does this mean that opposing opinion will not be published. Let those who charge this read the magazine carefully. They will see that not only are opposition views represented, but that they are fully encouraged. We want nothing so much as full discussion of the momentous issues about us; but we maintain our right to draw conclusions for ourselves."

It will be seen that the editorial board does not attempt to confuse the issue as the other side attempts to do. It points out that it has taken up the working-class view in opposition to that of the capitalist class. It does not shrink from the free expression of opinion as long as it is honest and serious. For example, this third issue contains a discussion on the subject of special police in times of strike. One student explains why he would be a special, while another shows why he would not, and so on.

But this really free and genuine expression of opinion raised a howl throughout the most reactionary circles of New Zealand. And this howl was headed by the worthy "teachers" and "leaders" of the New Zealand Universities. The Professorial Board put forth its

policeman's hand, banned the paper for ever, and seriously reprimanded the editor. The chairman of the Board, Professor Gould, in a manner similar to his satellites of the Students' Association: "He did not think the magazine was a desirable publication, and one of his reasons was that it was not of a literary quality that would do credit to the college. . . . His opposition to the paper was chiefly because it was shockingly edited" (*N.Z. Herald*, July 31). The Hon. R. MacCallum, M.L.C., said that "there was a feeling abroad that the college contained an element that made for lawlessness." Dr. D. M. Stout said that "the question arose whether the four or five students who held extremist views should be 'sent down.' He thought it would be much better to keep them at the college, as the other students would have a beneficial effect on them"! These statements seem to emanate from a police court rather than from a "seat of learning."

The character of the "beneficial effect" promised by Dr. Stout can be gauged from a quotation from a letter received by the *N.Z. Truth* (June 7) from a student of the college: "If our student friends persist much longer in their agitation, you will probably be publishing accounts of their being chucked into the trough." The same paper publishes a number of statements by "prominent public men" attacking the "rabid reds." These writers are mainly ex-Major-Generals, big business men, and leaders of the Fascist organisation—New Zealand Legion. Thus the circle of accusers is completed—on the one hand, the intellectual flower of New Zealand, and on the other the would-be Hitlers of the country.

One and all they have revealed their fear of anti-capitalist activity among the N.Z. workers. They cloak their references to the subject under the old story of "attacks not only on the Empire, but on everything they hold sacred." All they hold sacred are their money-bags, and they are determined to keep their clutches on those money-bags at the expense of the working class by starvation, by vicious attacks on militant workers, and ruthless suppression of all opposition views.

We greet our New Zealand comrades heartily, and congratulate them on the fine struggle they are putting up against the forces of reaction.

—Editorial Board, *Proletariat*.



# RELIGION IS OPIUM FOR THE PEOPLE

"RELIGION is opium for the people." Thus Marx described religion as one means by which the ruling class has attempted to keep in subjection the masses which produce its wealth. Through religion the bourgeoisie has sought to explain to the worker that his miserable conditions are the will of God, to console him for his sufferings on earth by the promise of a reward in heaven, and to cajole him into obedience of its self-protecting laws and decrees by the threat of everlasting hell fire.

It is argued by bourgeois philosophers and theologians that religion is innate in man—that he cannot live without it. This is the false theory of thinkers whose task it is to explain the immutability of capitalist social relations and institutions. In reality, religion developed at any given period as a reaction to external circumstances which man at that time was unable to understand or to control. This explanation of the origin and nature of religion will be the subject of a later article. At present we will see that it is true by considering the history of religion in the past century and a half in France and Britain.

The dominant philosophy of the rising French bourgeoisie at the end of the 18th century was materialistic. This attitude was a direct reflection of the struggle of the developing industrial economy against the restrictions of the outworn feudal system, not the least part of which was the dominance of a wealthy, feudal Church. The issues were clear-cut and easy to understand. The bourgeoisie believed that, to overcome the Church, it must abolish religion. So God was dethroned and the Goddess of Reason took his place. The bourgeoisie, helped by the proletariat, was victorious. It conducted a vindictive struggle against the Church, which seemed annihilated. But the line of bourgeois development was now no longer clear-cut. The bourgeoisie found itself faced by an indefinite future. Moreover, it found itself in company with a proletariat which the struggle had made partly conscious of proletarian aims, and which was now to learn that Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity were not for it, but for its exploiters. In the face of this changed position, the new rulers turned away from

their erstwhile Goddess. Robespierre acknowledged by decree "the supreme being—and a few months later the curates emerged from their cells and opened their churches." Later Bonaparte signed the Concordat with Rome.

Then followed a period in which the Church flourished. But with the rapid expansion of capitalism, intimately connected as it was with the accelerated scientific progress, in the latter half of last century, there followed a drifting away from the Church. The bourgeoisie felt all-powerful, reassured by its apparently complete control over nature. It had no need for supernatural ideas to explain the phenomena of its existence, which seemed to consist in the immediate execution of all its plans. Materialism, a mechanical materialism, became the dominant philosophy. Religion and science were in conflict, and at this period science won the day. In France the Church went into a decline. When, however, the process of capitalist expansion was checked as the contradictions within the system became more manifest with the restriction of the field of competition, the bourgeoisie, faced by inexplicable crises and barriers, became less sure of its mechanistic explanation of nature and reverted to philosophies which allowed for the inexplicable. Their helplessness is reflected in the mysticism of modern bourgeois thought, and it is manifest also in the pitiful attempts of some of their best scientists, like Eddington and Jeans, to "reconcile" science and religion. The popularity of the Church is returning among the French bourgeoisie.

But, while the attitude of the ruling class has shown these remarkable variations towards religion, it is certain that it had never ceased to encourage the spread of religious beliefs among the working class and the lower strata of the middle class. Voltaire, who served as the model for the atheistical French bourgeoisie, said, "The common people need religion as a whip." This injunction was carried out by the atheist rulers, whose "reasoned godlessness" did not prevent their ruthless opposition to all forms of working class activity.

In Britain the same general changes took place. During the expansive period of British capitalism the materialism of the dominant



thinkers found expression in the Rationalist Movement, which was essentially an intellectual protest against religion in so far as it appeared to these enlightened sons of the middle class to be disgraceful that archaic religious doctrines should be taught while science had discovered the glorious truth. But the Rationalists never came to an understanding of the social basis of religion. They were and are zealous upholders of the capitalist State, with its system of social relations which is the basis of modern religion. "Bourgeois 'Liberal,' 'Freethought,' and 'Rationalist' societies in the English-speaking world commonly declare themselves to be rigidly 'non-political,' and depart from this as do the anti-clerical French Freemasons, only to outdo the orthodox in their patriotic defence of the established order. Charles Bradlaugh in England, the best and most personally courageous advocate of Freethought the British bourgeoisie ever produced, was also its principal champion against Socialism and Revolution in the 1880's. Similarly, Robert Ingersoll in America was a pillar of the Republican Party."

And both in Britain and America during the whole of the materialistic period, a large section of the ruling class continued to support the Church. So it appears that the Rationalists and Liberals were really supporting the interests of one section of the ruling class against those of another. Indeed, the fact that Huxley, one of the great leaders of "Freethought," advocated religion for the masses reveals the real nature of their protest.

During the whole of this period the Church was helped to spread its influence among the masses. The liberal movements did not extend to the masses. Instead, by keeping the people in ignorance of science, by stultifying the minds of working class children with an educational system, the aim of which has been to train them to be willingly exploited, and which has only developed a wider training as it has become necessary to equip the worker for more complex tasks, by facing the worker at every turn with reverence for God (and their authority) through the press, literature, entertainments—by these means has the ruling class aided the Church. The Church, too, offers the worker what seems generous help. This charity, like all charity, is designed to prevent the worker learning to help himself. This fact is made plain by the churchmen in our midst when they raised cries of protest

recently against the appalling housing conditions which exist in Melbourne's industrial suburbs. Their reason is given by themselves—that such conditions made these suburbs "hotbeds of Communism." These men mean by Communism any action *on the part of the workers* to better their conditions.

But the conditions under which the working class has developed have made the task of the bourgeoisie in forcing religion upon him more difficult. By taking the worker out of contact with elemental nature and surrounding him by machinery, the exploiters have made him less credulous. The worker who starts and stops a machine by a touch on a lever, and to whom a breakdown means that something has gone wrong with some part of the machine, has less need of a god to explain the machine and its defects than has the peasant to explain the "vagaries" of nature. Also, the capitalist-imposed narrowness of his existence forces him to occupy himself with his own position, which he comes to recognise as being due to his economic suppression as a wage slave. He is, therefore, predisposed to be irreligious—a fact which causes the Church to cry out in great travail. But so long as the worker remains ignorant of how he can overcome this suppression, so long as he feels helpless against his oppressors, just so long is he a prey to all the subtle devices those oppressors put in his way to keep him in ignorance. Religion is one of these devices. It offers him an "explanation" of his position and the hope of a better deal "beyond."

But in the course of events more and more workers are forced by their own experiences to realise that, by struggling in mass fashion for their wants, these are obtainable. The worker comes to understand that this mass struggle is the way to improve his lot on earth; he loses interest in a promised heaven.

The ruling class makes tremendous efforts to prevent this awakening. The Church plays its part, especially vigorously in such a time as now, when, together with the whole capitalist class, it openly fears the growing reaction of the workers who find themselves bearing the brunt of the crisis, and therefore joins in the attack on Communism, all working class activities, and upon the Soviet Union. There, where the connection between the State and the Church has been severed, where Church property has been declared to belong to the people, where religious worship is absolutely free, the Churches of capitalist lands



see to their horror that, although free to do so, the people, beyond a few, do not support the Churches, which are being closed as their congregations vanish. Of course, the clergy in our midst ascribe this to a persecution of religion by the Soviet Government, in spite of the evidence of innumerable visitors who have returned from U.S.S.R. In reality it is due to the economic freedom of Russia's workers, to their freedom from all the pernicious claptrap of the bourgeoisie, and to their ready response under these conditions to the intensive anti-religious propaganda campaign which is being conducted. The opposition of the Church to the Workers' Republic is in complete harmony with the opposition of the imperialist powers. That its nature is not altogether of a religious character is well shown by the Pope's frantic call in 1930 for united pressure of all governments to secure the "restoration" of freedom of worship and of "Church property." In 1932 he called on not only Catholics and Christians, but on all who believe in God to "unite all our forces in one solid, compact line against the battalions of evil, enemies of God no less than of the human race."

But its opposition to the Soviet Union is not an isolated example of the imperialist rôle of the Church. Religion has been used to "justify" slavery in America. In their savage penetration of Africa, India, China, and the Pacific Islands, the imperialists have made use of the Church, and have declared their mission to be a christianising one. They have made use of religious differences between the natives, particularly in India, where Hindoo and Mahometan are set against each other when it is necessary to disguise some imperialist activity or to distract attention from another. In the Great War every combatant made use of the Churches as recruiting agencies, and from their pulpits men were implored to go forth to "defend the right." God fought on both sides.

The capitalist nature of the Church has a firm foundation in its wealth. The Church of England, subsidised by the English Government, which pays the Parliamentary salaries of its bishops, collects tithes from the farmers of England. It owns several coal mines and a large interest in several breweries—to give only small items of its wealth. The Churches of Australia—Catholic, Church of England, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist—are

owners of huge properties acquired with the offerings of the people. The Salvation Army deserves special mention as the most hypocritical of them all. Its millions of property the world over has been bought with the pennies of the working classes among which it works in such a manner that the man who has fallen into its charitable hands can never forget the degrading, miserable experience. The wealth of the Roman Catholic Church is proverbial—wrung for the most part directly from the earnings of the workers. The personal fortunes of many leaders of the Church should serve to warn their followers that not only the poor are "blessed."

Every Church is a propaganda agency of the ruling class. In the Middle Ages it was practically the only one. Now it has been abundantly supplemented, but it remains as a powerful weapon. It teaches the wealthy, the exploiters, to be "charitable"—"thus providing a justification for exploitation and, as it were, a cheap ticket to heaven likewise" (Lenin). They are zealous upholders of the *status quo*, or of such modifications of it as seem essential for its continuance—for example, more charity to the workers to keep them from struggle. They teach, but, of course, do not and cannot practise the brotherhood of man—exploiter and exploited. The completely capitalist nature of the Church is well shown in Germany where it has become an essential part of the Fascist régime of terror. In each capitalist country one religion or sect has usually been singled out for special State recognition—the one most suited to the peculiarities of the country—that is, that one with the greatest mass following, as, for example, Roman or Greek Catholicism in the predominantly peasant countries of Europe. But the existence of various Churches leads to rivalry between their followers—a rivalry made use of and developed by the clergy to keep masses divided. This is clearly seen in the traditional Catholic versus Protestant bitterness.

In Australia the Church is not directly connected with the State, but the ties which bind them are many. The Church is free from taxation. It gathers wealth as the main official marriage bureau. Its undeniably great wealth, mainly in the form of property, is protected by the whole mechanism of the State. It is represented at State functions. It is encouraged to conduct religious instruction in



State schools in school hours. Its educational establishments have official recognition. In the country the State school often serves as the Church too. The ministers of the Churches have special civil status, including freedom from conscription laws. The State aids the spread of religion in every way possible. In State elementary schools working-class children are taught to "serve God," to reverence the Church and its priests; the teaching of science is rudimentary, and all criticism of the Church is kept out of school books. Such literature as the children read at school and are trained to read later almost invariably takes the Church for granted, even if it does not extol its virtues. The spectacle of a special service to the Victorian Police Force given last July in a Melbourne Cathedral is very significant. There the leader of the Church of England in Victoria more or less consecrated the police as protectors of society from dangerous influences. That the most prominent part of police activities during the past year has been the breaking up of working-class meetings and demonstrations—that is, the protection of capitalist relations (and of Church property)—is well known to the archbishop. Here again is solidarity between the State and the Church. (In passing, the fact should be mentioned that this same reverend gentleman last year openly stated that the war in Manchuria was to be welcomed as it helped Australian industry.) That the Church will again take up its function as recruiting agent in the event of another war is beyond all doubt. Already it is concerned about Australia's "inadequate defences."

It is abundantly clear that the Church stands for the maintenance of the existing conditions; that it supports the interests of the capitalist class. In the face of this fact what is the attitude of a class-conscious worker or intellectual to be towards the question of religion? The original Social Democratic revolutionary standpoint was that religion should be a private matter in so far as the Church and all religious teaching should be absolutely independent of the State. The earlier Social Democrats took atheism for granted as an essential part of a consistent working-class outlook. To-day the general renegade character of the Social Democracy is shown in its attitude to religion, which, though it is obviously a strong anti-working-class force, they regard as a matter for the individual to decide

for himself. Another attitude to adopt is that of the Rationalist. As stated above, these people are essentially of the middle classes. They once led a strong movement among the middle classes. However, since the development of capitalism to the point where it is tottering—to the point where it has become clear that only the suppression of the working-class movement can save it—the Rationalists have almost ceased their militancy. But the attitude of the Rationalists is shared by many more enlightened workers, who, of late years, have formed the bulk of Rationalist audiences. They hold that religion is entrenched among the people because they are ignorant. To free them from its grasp, education, and education *alone*, seems necessary. But such an attitude is based on the narrowest conception of religion. It does not realise that religion has a social basis, and no other than a social basis. "The roots of modern religion are deeply embedded in the social oppression of the working masses, and in their apparently complete helplessness before the blind forces of capitalism, which every day and every hour cause a thousand times more horrible suffering and torture than are caused by exceptional events such as war, earthquakes, etc." And it is only by removing this apparent helplessness that religion can be fought successfully. "No amount of reading matter, however enlightening, will eradicate religion from those masses who are crushed by the grinding toil of capitalism and subjected to the blind destructive forces of capitalism, until these masses, themselves, learn to fight against the social facts from which religion arises in a united, disciplined, planned, and conscious manner—until they learn to fight *against the rule of the capitalist in all its forms*" (Lenin, "Religion," p. 20).

That the freedom of the masses from capitalist rule does free them from religious beliefs is being abundantly proved in the Soviet Union. The fact that this condition is necessary makes the fight against religion subordinate to the whole fight against capitalism. But does this mean that nothing should be done against religion? Certainly not. It is absolutely essential to point out to the working class the rôle of religion. But it is essential that the working-class fighter should be one who works "not by means of abstract, purely theoretical propaganda, equally suited to all times and to all places, but concretely—on the



basis of the class struggle actually proceeding—a struggle which is educating the masses better than anything else could do” (Lenin, “Religion”). It is necessary to do everything possible to enlighten the workers about religion, to help the spread of anti-religious literature. It is necessary to point out the rôle of the Church in the every-day events of the workers’ lives. For instance, it usually happens that the clergy pray and preach for the peaceful settlement of all industrial disputes—for harmony between employer and employee. Here the identical policy of the reactionary trade union leaders is repeated. This forms a basis for exposing the Church. But it is essential that the working-class opponent of religion does not adopt the anarchistic attitude of attacking the Church on every possible occasion. It would be definitely against the interests of the workers to bring up religious matters during a strike. This would lead to a

split, and experience has shown that the employer uses this very device to smash strikes. This attitude is the direct result of realising that the struggle against capitalism as a whole is much more important than the struggle against its part—religion. And, arising from this realisation also, the value of a worker who, while fully prepared to work actively in the working-class movement, has not yet given up his religious beliefs, is recognised to be equal to that of other religion-free workers so long as his religious remnants do not influence his activities to any extent. They are unimportant, and will probably be lost in the struggle. And it is certain that, having freed themselves from the yoke of capitalist economic and ideological suppression, the workers will become free of religious superstitions as they learn to construct their own Socialist society.

—R. Nixon.

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## DIALECTICS AND IDEOLOGY

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IN a previous article we outlined briefly the fundamentals of Marxist philosophy, but we made only casual remarks as to how Marxism, both as a politico-revolutionary theory and materialist philosophy, has withstood the test of actual practice; how dialectical materialism has found its justification by the recent events in the historical world arena; and how dialectical materialism has found its confirmation in recent scientific developments—in other words, how the theory and practice of Marxism have actually merged into one another. For theory now is inseparable from practice. But, in attempting to present our case, we will be forced to dwell upon the problems of ideology in general, and those of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in particular. This is inevitable, since bourgeois philosophy and the science which follows in its train have denied their own revolutionary heritage, and have reverted to idealism,\* which is that weapon by means of which the bourgeois thinkers hope to undermine historical materialism. This idealist and sub-

jective philosophy is playing a reactionary rôle, in so far as it attempts to undermine the belief in science, and it denies the possibility of understanding objective reality; whereas the latter is the source of the proletariat’s unshakable conviction of the inevitability of the fall of the old order and the building of the new.

### Bourgeois Ideology.

By ideology in general we mean all the manifestations of intellectual life processes, and these, as has been pointed out by Marx, reflect the social consciousness of a class. This social consciousness is based on social conditions of existence, and the latter, in turn, corresponds to the economic structure of society. Thus, broadly speaking, philosophy, science, and literature will reflect the methods of thought, aspirations, sentiments, and moods of a class which expresses them per medium of its spokesmen—that is, scientists, philosophers, writers, etc. But the dialectic of historical process does not permit the view that this ideology is eternal, “fixed once and for all”; but, on the other hand, it forces one to regard it as being in a continual process of change, since this ideology changes with the

\*“Idealism in philosophy is more or less a crafty defence of clericalism—a doctrine which puts faith higher than science, or on a level with science, or which in general allots a place to faith” (Lenin).



shifting of class forces in society. When viewed in this light, many perplexing inconsistencies and contradictions (themselves reflections of the contradictions of bourgeois society) of bourgeois ideology become disentangled and intelligible.

Thus bourgeois ideology can be subdivided into three successive phases, these being purely arbitrary lines of division:

(a) Protestantism and Atheism, the former corresponding to the great peasant struggles in Germany in the sixteenth century against the landowners and the seventeenth century English Revolution; and the latter appearing during the eighteenth century life-and-death struggles of the French bourgeoisie against absolutism.

(b) Bourgeois liberalism and agnosticism corresponding to the epoch of expansion of bourgeois method of production.

(c) "Modern" idealism and bourgeois Fascist ideology—or denial of its own heritage, developed in the epoch of the decline of the capitalist mode of production, coincident with imperialism and proletarian revolution. The former two are essentially *progressive* epochs of bourgeois ideology.

### Protestantism and Atheism.

The great religious movements of the sixteenth century, which threw Europe into such violent convulsions, were merely reflections of violent class struggles which were undermining the foundations of medieval feudalism. These class wars between the rising petty bourgeoisie and peasantry against the feudal exploitation assumed a religious mask. But this religious camouflage represented an important ideological weapon, because the class struggle against Catholicism was at the same time the struggle against one of the most powerful feudal institutions—the Catholic Church. Where the politico-economic basis of the petit bourgeoisie was strongest, Catholicism was swept out of existence. Thus the North of Germany is an industrial country, and there Protestantism dominates till today. The South of Germany is still peasant, has many feudal relics, and Catholicism is still intact. Thus we see that religious revisionism was one of the ideological weapons of the rising bourgeoisie.

Another manifestation of the same phenomenon is Puritanism and the English Revolu-

tion. There the class nature of these struggles manifested itself even more strongly. Unprecedented violence marked the attempts of the French bourgeoisie to free itself from the political domination of the landed aristocracy. The bourgeoisie, then a revolutionary class, utilised materialism as a militant weapon in order to fight the ideology of feudalism—that is, religion and theology. Let us hear Lafargue:

"The bourgeois revolutionists of 1789, imagining that France could be de-christianised, persecuted the clergy with unequalled vigor; the more logical of them, thinking that nothing would be accomplished as long as the belief in God existed, abolished God by decree, like a functionary of the old régime, and replaced him by the Goddess of Reason. . . ."

Thus the ideology forged by the French materialists (Encyclopedists — Helvetius, d'Holbach, etc.) found its full expression as a class weapon of the bourgeoisie. This ideology denied the interference of a super-human force with man's activity. To them everything observable was in man's existence; man's history was the result of man's own activity. They were unable, however, to explain what determined this activity. Another source of their limitations lay in the fact that the general level of scientific knowledge was low at the time.

Thus the bourgeois ideology in its revolutionary epoch served the function of discrediting the past, and set itself to paint the new and coming world in contrast to the crumbling old world. But as soon as it had consolidated its power after the destruction of feudalism, the bourgeoisie found to its horror that class contradictions had not been eliminated from society, but merely class shifting had resulted. It had hitherto appealed to the proletariat with the slogans of liberty, equality, and fraternity; none of these would it grant—none of these could it grant.

This realisation revealed to the bourgeoisie social forces which wanted to go further than themselves. These new forces began to be more dangerous than the relics of the deposed old. To come to agreement with the latter became a necessity to the bourgeoisie. With this, therefore, their ideology was bound to become more and more diluted.



### Bourgeois Liberalism and Agnosticism.\*

The nineteenth century witnessed the unprecedented spectacle of capitalist progress and expansion. It also bore evidence of tremendous achievements in the domain of natural science. But the very nature of the class position of the bourgeoisie prevented the possibility of similar progress in social sciences. This is especially true of political economy, when, during its "classical" (that is, scientific) period, the Physiocrats, Adam Smith and Ricardo, attempted to make an objective study of the economic phenomena and to search out the general laws of production.

"But since the machine-tool and steam régime require the co-operative efforts of wage workers alone in the creation of wealth, the economists confine themselves to the collection of facts and statistical figures" (Lafargue). In other words, the science becomes purely descriptive. But it was even doomed to lose its youthful innocence when it was confronted with proletarian criticisms. Let us hear the secret revealed through the mouth of a bourgeois economist: "That labor is the only source of wealth appears to be an idea which is no less dangerous than false, because it unfortunately plays into the hands of those who opine that all wealth belongs to the laboring classes, and the portion which the others reserve has been stolen or robbed from them." The scientific truth that value is produced by labor simply does not suit the bourgeoisie." (Quoted from Marxist Study Course, No. 1.)

Thus during the period of greatest optimism of its class rule—that is, during the epoch of liberalism (granting of concessions to the proletariat)—the bourgeoisie was unable to grant complete freedom to its official spokesmen.

"If philosophical determinism reigns in the natural sciences, it is only because the bourgeoisie has permitted its scientists to study freely the play of natural forces which it has every motive to understand, since it utilises them in the production of its wealth; but by reason of the situation that it occupies in society it could not grant the same liberty to its economists, philosophers, moralists, historians, sociologists, and politicians, and that

\*"Agnosticism is a vacillation between materialism and idealism—that is, in practice vacillation between materialist science and clericalism" (Lenin).

is why they have not been able to introduce philosophical determinism into sciences of the social world" (Lafargue).

For the above reason the physicist obtains full freedom, the biologist half freedom, and the philosopher no freedom at all to pursue his studies in the quest for knowledge; while simultaneously, the economist is given the task of providing an apology for the capitalist system, the sociologist the task of clouding the class issues of capitalist society, and the historian the task of distorting and misinterpreting historical phenomena in order to find an apology for imperialist plunder. Thus physics is the first science to become really materialistic, but its materialism suffers from many deficiencies, owing to the fact that its philosophical and social environment is hopelessly theological and idealistic. Thus, in rebellion against idealism in science, the physicists became victims of "mechanism." This failure on their part permits us to understand why, later, physics was doomed to pass through a "crisis." Both biologists and physicists were necessarily subjected to the influence of materialism. This, of course, could not be sympathetically regarded by the bourgeois class in whose employ they were, and with whose class interests it collided.

"Modern materialism is so flatly opposed to the mental state of this class that bourgeois ideologists naturally regard it as intolerable and improper; as something which is unworthy of orderly minded people in general, and of respectable men of science in particular. It is not surprising that all these respectable men of science consider themselves morally obliged to free themselves from any suspicion of sympathy for materialism. Often enough, they denounce it all the more vehemently in proportion to the degree to which, in their own special researches, they incline to adopt a materialist outlook" (Plekhanov).

It took a long time for Darwin to decide whether he should publish his "Origin of Species," because he foresaw it would deliver a deadly blow to religion. But agnostic Thomas Huxley was a "double-faced" agnostic; on the one hand, he would conduct polemics with bishops against religion, and, on the other hand, he advocated the study of the Bible in the elementary schools.

Thus we see that the liberal bourgeoisie ceases to be "liberal" as soon as its class interests are concerned, and that even during its most prosperous times their science and



philosophy are permeated and limited by the narrow horizon of its own class outlook.

### Period of Decline.

This was further accentuated during the period of decline of capitalist economy. On the one hand we witness the breaking down of the whole of the economic basis of capitalism, and on the other an unprecedented growth of the parasitism of the capitalist class as reflected by the rentier or bond-holder class. The advent of imperialist war, the world crisis, and Fascism complete the picture of political and economic chaos, and, of course, this must exert a profound influence on contemporary bourgeois ideology. The stage is reached when the bourgeoisie is directly faced by the revolutionary proletariat on the one hand, and on the other by successful building of Socialism in the Soviet Union.

The beginning of the twentieth century was marked by complete revolutionisation of physical science. Its exponents made most vital and profound discoveries in practical physics by having *unconsciously* utilised the dialectical method. But having achieved this, they are horrified by the fact that these discoveries do not (and, of course, could not) agree with the materialism of the nineteenth century—that is, mechanism. They see themselves compelled to abandon materialism precisely because of their ignorance of dialectical materialism. This ignorance results from the hostility of the bourgeois class to dialectical materialism, and precludes the physicists from acquainting themselves with this philosophy. Thus they renounce materialism and embrace idealism. Hence a “crisis” results in modern physics.

“Recent physics fell into an idealist swamp mainly because the physicists did not know dialectics. They combated metaphysical materialism and its one-sided ‘mechanisation,’ and by so doing they not only threw the water out of the bath, but the child as well. By denying the immutability of the elements and the properties of matter known hitherto, they ended with the denial of matter, the denial of the objective reality of the physical world” (Lenin, “Materialism and Empirico-Criticism”).

“Thus matter disappears and formula remains.”

But to say that only ignorance guided them would be to absolve them. The declining bourgeoisie demanded of its spokesmen jus-

tification of “spiritual values” against immoral materialism, so that the dethroned deity could reclaim again its rightful place in the heaven from which it was so rudely ejected by the bourgeois scientists of the preceding generations. “The philosophy woven into the new physical theories is entirely conditioned by the ideological needs of a ruling class approaching its doom, which is afraid of truth and asks for any weapon that might stay the advance of proletarian materialism” (D. S. Mirsky).

This glaring reversion to idealism is the most important symptom of complete disintegration of bourgeois ideology, and it permeates all the avenues of knowledge and philosophy. Yet there is another factor which influences these developments. The decline of capitalist rule is marked by the growing pessimism of this class. It needs a spiritual comfort. Science is not only able to give it to the bourgeoisie, but spells their veritable doom. The bourgeoisie is seized by a panic, the physician has diagnosed a fatal illness; it cannot believe this—it dares not believe this. The bourgeoisie goes to consult a quack. It is thus able to obtain consolation. The fortune-teller, the “economist,”\* the herbalist, the astrologer, the “intuivist,”† acquire an increasing importance in the bourgeois scheme of things. This debacle is completed in the Fascisation of the capitalist State.

### Proletarian Ideology.

“The interests of the proletariat are diametrically opposed to the interests of the dominating classes, but they are in complete accord with the objective course of social development and with the interests of the whole humanity” (Lapidus and Ostrovityanov). The above quotation puts into a nutshell the whole position and the historical mission of the working class in society to-day. This, of course, profoundly influences the ideology of the proletariat. Its historical roots are again to be found in its material mode of existence.

The birth of the proletariat coincides with that of Capital. Its appearance is accompanied by unheard of violence. “The expropriation of the immediate producers is affected with ruthless vandalism, and under stimulus of the most infamous, the basest, the meanest, and the most odious passions” (“Capital”). In its infancy it is compelled to fight the capi-

\*Major Douglas. †Bergson.



talist class, but it is only able to wage the struggle because the objective conditions weld them into a class—that is, a portion of the population with interests in common. “The great industry masses together in a single place a crowd of people unknown to each other. Competition divides their interests. But the maintenance of their wages—this common interest which they have against their employer—unites them in the same idea of resistance—combination. . . . The combination at first isolated, . . . (form into) groups, and, in face of constantly united capital, the maintenance of the associations becomes more important and necessary for them than the maintenance of wages. In this struggle—a veritable civil war—are united and developed all the elements for a future battle” (Marx, “The Poverty of Philosophy”).

Moreover, the very nature of co-operation between the wage workers and the socialisation of labor developed by the capitalist industry itself, create the necessary prerequisites for a higher social order—that is, Communism.

Thus, the class ideology of the proletariat is that of immediate social producers. Their rôle in society is essentially progressive, while the ideology of the bourgeoisie is that of the appropriators of wealth. That is to say, once having fulfilled their historical mission, their ideology is in essence anti-social. The inherent contradiction of capitalism is that social production co-exists with individual (that is, capitalist) appropriation. This contradiction leads to a point when “The centralisation of the means of production and the socialisation of labor reach a point where they prove incompatible with their capitalist husk. This bursts asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated” (Marx, “Capital”). This is, of course, coincident with the interests of the proletariat—the grave-diggers of capitalism. It is the dialectics of history!

Proletarian ideology is the conscious reflection of this dialectics. But by being a conscious reflection, it at the same time becomes the powerful ideological weapon of the proletariat. This ideology is forged in the actual process of struggle of the proletariat for emancipation, and thus becomes an integral part of this struggle. No other conception of this ideology can be propounded. It does not present itself from some higher heavenly power, nor is it “ready made” by learned men.

Marx’s rôle consists in this—that he presented the proletariat with a method which is consistent with the objective reality of the social world; *but its importance lies in the fact that it not only interprets this world, but, above all, it offers the means whereby this world can be altered in agreement with the interests of the proletariat.*

Dialectics is not a formula, it is movement. Hence it cannot be separated from activity, but is an integral part of it, and the expression of conscious activity in its rational form. Therefore, it precludes “philosophical detachment” from actual practice; but, on the other hand, represents the fusion of the two. Dialectics thus represents the most complete and the highest method of thought as yet attained by human beings. This powerful weapon in the hands of the proletariat spurs on the advance of this class, and with every victory so attained the proletariat learns how to apply the weapon of dialectics ever more effectively.

Dialectical materialism has brilliantly justified itself in the realm of history, which has witnessed a number of social revolutions in our era, one of which has already culminated in the successful democratic dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union. The profoundest social changes which we have witnessed prove once again that social life is not determined by some abstract ideological factors, but by material conditions of production and by their bye-product—the class struggle. Nobody nowadays seeks the explanation of the occurrence of great war in causes other than economic. The “learned” critics of Marxism have “proved” that revolution is impossible, owing to the fact of its incompatibility with human nature. These “thoughtful” philosophers were convinced by a real revolution about its “possibility” not so much by its logical proofs as by the rude shocks it inflicted. The international proletariat at the end of temporary stabilisation of capitalism begins, once again, to storm the capitalist fortress. The capitalist society has entered a blind alley, of which the only exit is Communism. The principal task of the world proletariat to-day remains the revolutionary conquest of political power.

This line of development of capitalist society was foreseen about eighty years ago by Karl Marx. Sixteen years ago the prediction of the greatest thinker of the nineteenth century came true when the Russian proletariat, under the leadership of the Communist Party,



overthrew their bourgeoisie. To-day, it becomes the question of practical politics in all the countries of the world. Communism becomes a life question for millions of workers and for the progress of society at large. In this way Marxism has survived all "crises" which were implied by various quacks from the camp of the bourgeoisie and its numerous spokesmen in the labor movement.

In spite of this, it is still alive, and presents an unparalleled example in history of being able to rally around its banner millions of

human beings. What a magnificent spectacle! At first, in the history of humanity it was a scientific viewpoint embracing in one tremendous synthesis all the problems of knowledge as well as questions of social life and history; now it becomes the property of the masses.

Humanity is passing out of pre-history into history, "from the kingdom of necessity into the kingdom of freedom."

—S.R.

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## OUR UNIVERSITY

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IT is the custom in radical circles to decry Universities as "class institutions," whose function is to serve the bourgeois State to the detriment of the working class. From time to time the University of Melbourne has been criticised by its own Labor Club, but up to the present the attack has been merely sporadic. It is the intention of this article to state the case against Universities more succinctly, and, by reference to our local institution, to marshal as many facts as may be to support the general thesis.

One might begin by examining the traditional conception of a University. In academic circles it is contended, and, such is the power of self-deception, generally believed, that the University is constituted for the pursuit of truth—often spelt with a capital "T." The theory is that, all ulterior and contingent circumstances disregarded, professor and student will discover and fearlessly proclaim what they consider to be the truth of any situation, whether scientific, religious, or political. And they will do this whatever obloquy they may bring upon themselves, whatever persecution or social martyrdom. That is to say, if, in their fearless voyaging through the seas of thought, they should discover the truth of the Marxian theories, they will immediately become revolutionaries, and seek to overturn the State for the benefit of mankind.

No very profound acquaintance with Universities is needed to realise the absurdity of this position. Any history of Universities, and particularly of their functioning in the twentieth century, will refute it at every page. In

war-time, the Universities of belligerent nations follow—indeed, they often lead—the jingoistic fervor of the people. Learned doctors produce literary, scientific, and philosophical proofs of the greatness of their race and the depravity of their enemies; historians employ their genius to show the righteousness of the national cause. The published war-time speeches of our own professors (available in the University library) give an excellent illustration of the way in which these earnest seekers after truth pander to the national arrogance. If every University is right, then truth must be many, and not one—a proposition repugnant to most philosophers. No, this truth theory will not do at all. It is so absurd that one can only wonder at the childlike faith of those who accept it.

The contrary position, and the one which it is the intention of this article to justify, is that the function of a University is to train and mentally condition men to be servants and supporters of the bourgeois State. It is not contended that this is done consciously and with Machiavellian deliberation. The curricula of the faculties are not under the direct control of a secret council of capitalists, who decide our fate while grimly chewing their fat cigars. It is not simple coercion that determines the function of any institution. Rather it is the resultant of a number of forces, some obscure, some plain for all to see. The necessity for preserving and increasing State grants is one clear influence. The desire of the Science and Economics staffs to serve the State in public capacities is another. Again, it is important to the social status of



University men that they should conform and be respectable, for if they fail in that, their professions are in jeopardy. These are only a few of the ways in which the ruling class guides and directs University thought to safe conclusions, curbs its enthusiasms, checks what it calls its extravagances, and in general moulds undergraduates to be ornaments of their chosen professions, and good members of society. They will teach us to think, will they? They will lead us in the search after truth? Tackle the average undergraduate, and you will see in what way they have succeeded.

This is a strong indictment, but it is not wanting in facts to justify it. Perhaps the best method of demonstration would be a piecemeal review of schools, faculties, and student activities.

To begin with the school of Philosophy. Here, if nowhere else, does one expect to find reason enthroned, and truth fearlessly proclaimed. At first sight, one is not disappointed. The staff is above suspicion. No deliberate perverting of youthful thought here, no forcing of tender minds into rigid moulds, no suppression of truth and elevation of falsehood. But after a little quiet meditation, one is not quite so sure. The intention is good, certainly, and there is no lack of hard logic. But where is the laborious digging about the roots of society that one is led to expect? Where is the laying bare of the causes of human behavior, of social misbehavior? Where are the full-blooded philosophies that would emerge from such an analysis? There is none of this apparent at all. Nothing but cloudy speculations about the nature of God and of the word "is," together with tentative suggestions that the real world is not what we think it is at all, but is what we would think it is if we could think as straight as God thinks. This sort of thing bears much the same relation to flesh-and-blood reality as does "Alice in Wonderland," and it seems for many to exert much the same kind of fascination. Indeed, the analogy goes deeper. Idealist philosophy bears the same relation to State authority as does Lewis Carroll's fantasia to parental authority. Both are administered to naughty rebellious children to keep them quiet, and if the children happen to like that sort of thing, the result is perfect peace—the peace that passeth understanding.

Of course, you are allowed to ask questions, but the answers, when intelligible, are apt to

be diverting rather than informative. For instance, if you ask the simple question, "What is the State?" you are told to read Bosanquet, who reveals to you in a kind of esoteric mystery exactly what the State would be like if it were not the State at all, but a kind of demi-paradise. Which, as has been said, is as interesting as some of the Hatter's remarks at the mad tea-party, and about as intelligent. The intention is good, but one cannot help feeling that there is a mistake somewhere, and that reason, instead of being enthroned, has been embalmed. And so the enquiring and rebellious mind is beguiled with fairy tales, and those dangerous secrets—the nature of the State and of the springs of human behavior—remain in safe keeping.

Now for the History school. It must be remembered in this connection that history is a dangerous explosive when properly understood. It was a knowledge of history that sent the throne of the Tsars toppling, and set up a Socialist State that is admitted by the daily press to be a menace to the world. If the working class had never learnt to read history, there would be no Communism, no twentieth century ferment. That is why history is so carefully administered to school children. If they ask why Wolfe captured Quebec, they are told that he would rather have written Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard"—a fact perhaps more interesting to a child, but scarcely of equal value in determining his future conduct toward the Empire.

It is not surprising, then, since the teaching of history is a social menace, to find that in the University it is not taught at all—unless, perhaps, you are disposed to regard as history a very competent catalogue of events, interspersed with entertaining stories, all without very much attempt to answer the question—why? Surely facts do not become history until they are linked together by an interpretive philosophy. Not that they are worthless, even of themselves. They have the value that attaches to the picturesque: they are like some old tapestries showing the loves and the sports of kings—delightful things to have on your walls, and quite in keeping with your standing as a good citizen. But facts are not history. History is dynamite, and must on no account be allowed within the University precincts. You may think out interpretations for yourself, if you like, but if you state them publicly, you are likely to be called a "baboon"



and a "buffoon," as happened to a student of this University who stated his theories with more enthusiasm than tact.

As with Philosophy and History, so with Literature and Law. Shelley was a rebel, they say, but he was only a poet. You can be a rebel too, provided that you only write poetry. And look what a fine lesson Law has for you. There is no need to worry much about social conflict. All is under the rule of law, and law works according to an abstract principle of justice, which is an attribute of God himself. How lucky we are to be under divine patronage!

But there is the school of Economics. This is a study of commercial affairs, which are also the chief concern of politics. Here, surely, there will be critics, iconoclasts, architects of the new order. But at the outset one is faced with a surprising disclaimer. Economics is not a formative science, it is merely positive. It does not discriminate between good systems and bad, nor ask the question—"What ought to be?" It merely points out the truth about what is. This would be bad enough if it were true, for there is no point in discovering the truth if you don't know how to apply it. But in any case, there does not seem to be any real effort to discover the truth, except when it is palatable. A lecturer in Economics I., on starting the year's work, is in the habit of including among his introductory gambits the statement: "You will be invited to consider the fallacies in the theories of Karl Marx . . ." (verbatim). Not—"You will be invited to study the theories of Karl Marx," because in that way you might discover a dangerous truth.

If the department of commerce were honest with themselves, they would admit that their function is not to develop the science of Economics, but to train men for business, train them to serve the bourgeois State. For such it is necessary to veil the naked truth. When a man has once seen the naked truth, he is no good at business again.

As for the "technical" faculties: they exist, of course, in order to keep the essential technical services going, and they do their work very efficiently. But the thesis of this article still applies—indeed, it applies here more aptly than anywhere else. Capitalist society must have men who can remove appendices and build bridges. And these men, in order to work well, must be quiet and amenable, and, above all, they must never question the established order. In other words, they must never

be allowed to think. It has to be admitted that this end has been achieved very adequately. Two circumstances have conspired to prevent the intellectual development of medical students and engineers. In the first place, they are of necessity subjected to mental drudgery of a mechanical kind, which leaves them very little time for more general study and thought. In the second place, they are isolated from the rest of the University in a way which prevents them from even understanding the problems which plague the more enlightened Arts student. A law student cannot be said to be educated in any real sense, but he does get some glimpse of horizons wider than those of his profession. This is scarcely ever true of medical students and engineers, with the result that it is in these faculties that Fascism is emerging in its most developed form. This must have been clear to any witness of the "lake incident" in 1932, in which most of the participants were medical students.

Something remains to be said about student activities. There can be no doubt that the societies exercise a powerful influence on undergraduate thought, for they provide facilities for independent thought and research, free from the doubtful advantage of professorial leadership. All societies have met with at least a superficial tolerance, although, alone among the societies, the Labor Club has been refused direct financial support. But this tolerance has its limitations. When the "All For Australia" League tried to suppress two radical editors of *Farrago* in May, 1931, in a way that can only be described as organised hooliganism, a member of the professorial board lent his enthusiastic support to the venture, even chairing the meeting which was responsible for the worst excess of mob activity. In May, 1932, the suppression of free thought by mob violence was in a large degree due to implied encouragement from the Professor of History, while the actual throwing of the victims in the lake was suggested, almost in so many words, by the Registrar. In April, 1931, E. Tripp was refused permission to speak at the University, on the grounds that he would "depict Soviet Russia as a paradise," and in the same week the Rev. Father Hackett, S.J., was suffered to describe the Soviet Union in terms so fantastically horrible that even the Liberals were disgusted. In short, you are allowed to say what you like, provided it doesn't matter. There is no tolerance in times of emergency.



All these facts support the thesis that the function of Universities is to produce servants and supporters of the present order. But how is this to be reconciled with the opinions of professors and the like, who honestly believe that they are engaged in the pursuit of truth? The two theories are not difficult to reconcile. The fact is that there are at least two different kinds of truth. There is a truth for the middle classes, because for them everything which tends to support their interests, increase their security, or flatter their sense of power is true. And there is also a truth for those who have nothing to gain from capitalist society, and nothing to lose but their chains. Truth for such is to be found by reading the cypher of history, so that they learn their true relation to society, the nature of the deadlock which threatens to involve them in war, and also the means of their salvation. Certainly the professors are seekers after truth, but it is the middle-class truth they pursue: the truth that made England rich and Englishmen

poor, the truth that wasted Europe in 1914, the truth that has succeeded, in this twentieth century, in making life for the majority hardly worth the living. Professorial truth has a pretty record.

The nett result of all this is that the University exercises an oppressive class function, even when the students are least aware of it. That this need not necessarily be so is shown by the occasional radical activity of Universities in other countries—notably in Cuba recently. This being so, it is the business of the Labor Club and of all clear-thinking men to oppose the middle-class “truth” of the Universities, and to promulgate the other truth, in which are the germs of freedom.

—Colin Fraser.

[The Editors of *Proletariat* welcome any discussion on and criticism of this article which is written by a student. If they consider that some valuable discussion will result, they are quite willing to publish any communication they may receive.]

## RAISE HIGHER THE FLAG OF SOCIALIST CULTURE!

ON May 10 last, the square between the Berlin Opera and the Berlin University presented a strange spectacle. Student detachments in the uniform of Nazi Storm Troops, with torches in hand, surrounded a huge pile of books which the Nazi authorities ordered should be burnt. Motor lorries drove up with fresh baskets full of literature. The bands struck up, and as the flames seized the pile of books there arose to heaven the hymn of Germany's emancipation.

All this took place in front of the Berlin University, where 120 years ago Fichte delivered his speeches “To the German People,” in which he called upon them to fight against Napoleon, but defended the heritage of the French Revolution. For Fichte never forgot that he once wrote: “From now on (since the French Revolution) only the French Republic can be the fatherland of an honest man.” And from their pedestals the statues of Alexander and Wilhelm Humboldt looked down on this conflagration. Alexander Humboldt, the founder of the Berlin University, fostered the spirit of the epoch of French

Enlightenment and set himself the task “to study the progress of the spirit of the times, the progress of enlightenment, philosophy, and science.” He was a liberal courtier, and strove to raise the Prussia of the junkers to the level which the bourgeois world of the West had attained. Wilhelm Humboldt was a great natural scientist, and had mastered the scientific knowledge of his time. Before the eyes of these two eminent Germans, the German students, egged on by the authorities, made a bonfire of the literature which they considered to be hostile to the “German spirit.”

That they burnt the works of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin is not surprising. It is obvious that all they can oppose to the great scholars who lit up the way for humanity is yelping and mediæval fanaticism. The study of modern Communism is the *memento mori* for those who wish to turn back the wheel of history. The Fascist *Tägliche Rundschau* warned the authorities against prohibiting the works of Marx, pointing out that it is impossible for a man to-day to get a clear idea of the course of economic development without a knowledge



of Marx, even if one holds the teachings of Marx to be false. For this the paper got the reward it deserved. It was suppressed, and was only able to appear after it had promised not to give expression to such disagreeable truths again. The Fascist youth are not satisfied with destroying the literature which predicted their inevitable end. They are burning the feeble offshoots of bourgeois democratic culture that appeared in German literature in the St. Martin's Summer of the Weimar period. Stefan Zweig, Heinrich Mann, Döblin—writers who desired in their works to defend democracy—were committed to the flames just as Remarque, Gläser, and other writers who sought to describe all the horrors of the World War. Neither Remarque nor Gläser have indicated the revolutionary way out of the *cul de sac* which imperialism has created. The fact, however, that these writers described to the cannon fodder of tomorrow the fate that is awaiting them sufficed to call forth the profoundest hatred of those circles who see a way out in a new imperialist war. We do not know whether, together with the Communist, democratic, and pacifist books, the works of natural scientists, who were either driven from the university or left it of their own accord as a protest against the triumph of mediævalism, were also burnt. The bulletin from the German Book-Burning Front states that the works of Freud were committed to the flames, but does not mention the names of the great physicist Frank, and the chemist Haber, who during the war discovered a process for making artificial nitrogen, and provided Germany with the poison gases necessary for the prosecution of the war, and who has now been compelled to go with sunken head and a feeling of shame on account of the ruling class whom he served so well.

Marx once wrote that the spirit which in the brain of the philosopher builds up a philosophic system, is the same spirit which, with the hands of the worker, builds railways. These words were written by Marx in his youth, when he had not yet finally freed himself from the influence of idealistic philosophy. But in spite of their idealistic husk, these words contained a profound truth. There can be no State with a big industry, there can be no State which promotes technique, in which creative scientific ideas in any sphere are destroyed. The German bourgeoisie, which combats with fire and sword the spirit in the

sphere of sociology, in the sphere of the natural sciences, because it is incompatible with the "German spirit," thereby says that this German spirit has become incompatible with any progress, even in the sphere of technique. And, as a matter of fact, the seizure of power by the German Fascists is a proof that the bourgeoisie of this leading country despairs of the possibility of further development on the path along which it has developed hitherto; that it is seeking to save itself with the aid of alchemy, which has always gone hand in hand with autodafes and inquisitions.

The bonfire of books erected in front of the Berlin University was not merely a crazy trick on the part of a crowd of drunken students who have never loved books and who prefer to imbibe truth from beer barrels. The bonfire in front of the Berlin University is the fire showing to the whole world the limits which humanity has reached. We Communists have always said that capitalism in its death agonies destroys all that still remains of greatness and value in bourgeois culture. The bourgeois intelligentsia of the West would not believe this. They pointed to the development of technique and natural sciences in the capitalist countries. The agents of the bourgeoisie sought to maintain the influence of their masters over these intellectuals by telling them that the dictatorship of the proletariat gives no freedom for the development of scientific thought, because it sees in every scholar and savant a representative of the bourgeoisie. Now even the blind can see who was right. In the Soviet Union the old scholars who in the past were closely connected with the bourgeoisie, and the majority of whom even to-day have not yet adopted the standpoint of Communism, are working and enjoying the appreciation and support of the Soviet Power and of the whole country. The work of our chemists, our physicists and biologists, our geologists, is followed with keen attention by the whole country. Our country is proud of them. And the Communist Party, the leader of the land of the Soviets, calls upon its members to learn from these old bourgeois scientists; the Soviet Government rewards their achievements as achievements in the interests of the country which has bound up its fate with the advance of science. We Communists do not blindly take over the achievements of bourgeois culture. Communism is the culture which is built by emancipated labor on the basis of dialectical material-



ism. Communism leads the fight against the legacy of idealistic philosophy. Whilst, however, the German black hundreds to-day burn the works of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin in order to-morrow to burn the works of Darwin, we, on the other hand, are publishing translations of the works of the great idealist, Hegel, in order to study the way along which humanity came to Marxism. *Communism is not afraid of idealistic teachings, for it vanquishes them ideologically and by actions.* Communism builds its structure for the future on all the great achievements of the human spirit in the past. Fascism destroys the germs of the future lying in modern bourgeois science in order to kill the fruit of revolution in the womb of the bourgeoisie. If it should succeed in this, then pregnant Germany is bound to perish, for no development is possible, even for the bourgeois world, in the straight-jacket of mediæval obscurantism, in the claws of savage nationalism. This obscurantism is incompatible with modern technique and industry. This savage nationalism is bound to lead to disastrous war. From the bonfire which was lit in front of the Berlin University there arises not the smoke and fumes of burning paper, but the pestilential stench of the rotting German bourgeoisie.

But no matter how Fascism may rage, it will not achieve its aim. The economic and social development of Germany is far too advanced to be driven back, even with fire and sword, into the middle ages. This development has created those social forces which will overcome renaissant mediævalism. The blind fury which drives the Fascists to the demonstration of burning books is not a proof of their strength, but of their sense of weakness. They indulge in wild excesses, for it is only in the excesses that they see a chance of salvation. These excesses show to all people

to whom the cause of human culture is dear, to whom the achievements of the human spirit are dear, where are the saviours of this spirit, where the force is that will rescue the heritage of Fichte and Hegel, the heritage of Helmholtz and Haeckel from the Fascist inquisitorial fires. This force is the force that protects the heritage of Marx and Engels from the modern barbarians, and proves the truth of the words of Marx that the German Labor Movement is the successor of classic German philosophy.

Public opinion in the Soviet Union, in face of the bonfires on which the works of German progressive writers are burnt, will not forget for a moment what humanity owed in the past to the spiritual life of Germany. Public opinion in the Soviet Union will not believe for a moment that with the bonfires which flared up on the night of the 10th of May there disappeared Germany's capacity to serve the development of human culture. Public opinion in the Soviet Union will not permit Germany to be identified with the crazy Fascists, no matter how much they may claim to be the representatives of the "true German spirit." Public opinion in the Soviet Union knows that those capacities which made Germany the leading country will also in the future make it the leading Socialist country.

The burning of the heaps of books in front of the Berlin University signals to the public opinion of the Soviet Union not the decline of culture, but the decline of bourgeois culture. It means that the flag of Socialist culture must be raised higher, that the men of science must make common cause with the working class which is building Socialism, for the working class is the only power which creates the preconditions under which the new great culture of humanity arises.

—Karl Radek.

## LABOR CLUB ACTIVITIES, 1933

**T**HOUGH the Club has passed through no crises this year of the kind experienced early in 1932, it has remained quite as active, and has, if anything, become more stable. It still presents the character of an active core rather than a broad front—a condition which can, to some extent, be explained, though not justified, by the fact that the University practically excludes members of the working class.

The main opposition is indifference, the A.F.A. League having gone the way of the Conservative and Liberal Clubs, and the Young Nationalist Organisation being almost completely dormant. Such indifference the Club has been doing its best to overcome.

**MEETINGS.**—Regular weekly meetings, once an ideal, have now become a realised programme. Attendances this year have been



fair; at lunch-hour meetings the average audience has been about 100, at ordinary evening meetings about 50, while debates and combined meetings have attracted larger audiences. Addresses and discussions at these meetings have dealt both with specific facts and with broader trends and policies.

Addresses of the former type have dealt principally with conditions in the Soviet Union and in Melbourne itself. We have had the good fortune to hear three people who have arrived back from the Soviet Union—Comrades Blake and Mrs. Baracchi, and Professor Greenwood. The two former speakers gave us accounts of the educational system and the conditions of art respectively. Comrade Blake's lunch-hour address, and more especially his amplification of it at the Easter Conference, gave us a good idea of the nature of student life in a proletarian State. Mrs. Baracchi, with her fresh pictures of the artist's life, the artistic training of children, etc., also left us with some living impressions. Professor Greenwood's address consisted mainly of a theoretical advocacy of social-economic planning, there being a reference only at the end to the will to carry out such planned activity as he had experienced it in the Soviet Union. This leaves us all the more eager to hear from Professor Greenwood of his experiences in the Soviet Union and in Europe and America, when he has time to speak to us at greater length.

Accounts of conditions in Melbourne have been given us by Miss Muriel Heagney and Dr. O'Day. Dr. O'Day's description of the health of working-class children in Melbourne at the present time was most informative, and very significant of the degree of capitalist exploitation and collapse. His address aroused great interest, and the meeting resolved unanimously "that we express our support of the movement to prevent the deterioration of child life, and our willingness to help it in any way." Members subsequently attended the conference called to organise the movement. Conditions of a different kind were described by Comrade Ralph Gibson when, under the title of "Hitler and Blamey," he gave us an account of the struggle for free speech on the streets at Brunswick and elsewhere, and showed it as part of the struggle against the growth of Fascism in Melbourne.

On the subject of broader social trends, the two debates held near the end of last term should be noted. Against the Young Nationalists' Organisation the Club affirmed "that the

suppression of the working class is essential to capitalist government." The large amount of historical fact and the social theory it implies were convincingly put forward by Comrades Ralph Gibson, Nicholls, and Finger, and the debate was won by the Club. In our annual debate against the Debating Society, however, we lost by a narrow margin. Our team (Comrades Manton, Nicholls, and E. White) took the negative against the proposition "that Fascism can maintain and consolidate its position."

Apart from an effective attack on political idealism by Comrade Nicholls and an account of the trials of the British engineers at Moscow by Comrade Watt, the remainder of the meetings held so far this year have dealt with one aspect or another of the question of war.

WAR.—It is in the attempt to emphasise the danger of an outbreak of war, and to promote and consolidate opinion against it, that the Club this year has spent a considerable part of its energies. The first three evening meetings of the year were devoted to the question. At the first, Comrade Ralph Gibson outlined the state of war in the Far East, and the position of the Soviet Union with regard to it. At the following meeting, Comrade Wright, of Sydney, in an address which, despite the rantings of *Farrago*, was exceptionally clear and well reasoned, took us into a wider field, and outlined the present war preparations and political groupings on a world scale. He concluded by criticising the sentimental pacifist arguments that had been brought forward at the meeting of the Debating Society on the previous evening, where the motion "That this house will, under no circumstances, fight for king or country" had been carried; and by stressing the need for organised resistance and an organised attempt on the part of the working class to overthrow the system that leads to war. At the third meeting, held on the evening before Anzac Day, Comrade Burton, the president of the Club, spoke in protest against the exploitation of Anzac Day for the purposes of militarist propaganda. This followed aptly upon the resolution of protest against the nature of the University Anzac ceremony which had been sent by the Club to the S.R.C. last year.

At the Easter Conference, where the nature and causes of war were discussed, a resolution was passed against imperialist war, in which it was stated that the Conference recognised "that such wars are fought for markets and supplies of raw materials," that "until capi-



talist society is finally replaced by Socialism, there will be continual danger of war," and that "only organised resistance to war preparations can effectively hamper the war plans of the imperialists." The resolution was published in part in the *Herald*, and in full in the previous (Anti-War) number of *Proletariat* (page 23). On April 22 the Club took part in the mass Anti-War Conference in the Bijou Theatre (reported in the same number of *Proletariat*), at which the Victorian Council Against War was formed. The resolution adopted by the World Conference at Amsterdam last year was moved by Comrade Burton. Comrade Nicholls spoke on behalf of the Club.

On May 9, a combined anti-war meeting was organised at the University together with the Students' Christian Movement and the International Relations Society. The speaker was the Rev. J. T. Lawton, and a united front resolution was carried. On the suggestion of Comrade Ian MacDonald, a provisional Anti-War Committee in the University was appointed. With the co-optation of other members, a permanent University Anti-War Committee was subsequently constituted, with Comrade Nicholls as its secretary. This committee has since held lunch-hour meetings, and had its articles published fortnightly in *Farrago*. The Labor Club has willingly helped this committee in any way possible.

CONFERENCE.—The five-day conference held at Mt. Dandenong at Easter gave members of the Club a greater opportunity for discussion among themselves. Delegates from the Young Labor Group and the Youth Section of the Friends of the Soviet Union were also present, and gave the conference a broader basis. The numbers fluctuated between 30 and 40. Comrade Wright was invited from Sydney to act as conference leader. He led study-circles on "The Crisis," "Fascism," "The Labor Parties," and "War," and, in addition, gave us as an opening address an analysis of the situation in Germany. He led the conference in a very real sense of the term, and his unerring relevance and masterly control of discussion were among the chief factors in making the conference a success. Apart from Comrade Blake's address, which has been referred to elsewhere, the remaining three dealt more with policy. Ian MacDonald gave an interesting account of the agrarian position in Australia, and showed what the policy of

the Farmers' Unity Leagues must be in the consolidation and emancipation of small farmers. Comrade Innes, of the Socialisation Movement, opened a heated discussion on the socialisation policy of the left wing of the A.L.P. Comrade Sheppard gave us the academic view of Australian Socialism, and attempted to show the inevitability of gradualism. In discussions lasting deep into the night, a large amount of ground was covered, and many members returned with their political attitudes much more firmly grounded than before.

PROLETARIAT.—Needless to say, the publication of this magazine is one of the Club's most central and important activities. The intention has been to make its publication more regular this year by the publication of a fourth issue at the end of the year. The arrangement of examinations, however, may still render this impossible. Our circulation now appears to have stabilised itself well above the 2000 mark. Compared with this figure, sales inside the University are ludicrously small. However, it has never been the Club's intention to compete with *Hotcha*, and we can only regard this shortage of sales as symptomatic of that intellectual indifference to the central social problems which the Club is earnestly trying to dispel. Quite a wide circulation has been developed in other States, and we hear that *Proletariat* is one of the most widely read magazines of a Socialist character in all New Zealand.

EXTERNAL ACTIVITIES.—As can be seen from the above account, the Club's activities are centred mainly within the University, but it maintains also a connection with the movement outside. The invitation of members of other organisations to the Easter Conference, participation in Anti-War and Child-Deterioration Conferences, and, above all, the wide circulation of *Proletariat*, are evidences of this. In addition to this, the Club has been able to grant a small amount of financial assistance to the International Labor Defence, the Workers' International Relief, and the Central Strike Committee in the recent struggle against work for sustenance. Also, coaches in English have been provided for members of the Jugo-Slav workers' organisation. Thus, by its activities both inside and outside the University, the Club attempts in its small way to play its part in the fight for Socialism. —Q. B. Gibson.