

SOUTHERN ADVOCATE FOR WORKERS' COUNCILS

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CONTENTS:

| | |
|--|----|
| What Should the Workers Do? | 2 |
| The I.W.W. and Capitalism To-day .. | 3 |
| The GENERAL STRIKE | 4 |
| The ORGANISATION OF LABOR | 5 |
| Mismanagement Starves Europe | 6 |
| What German Workers Face | 7 |
| INTERNATIONAL DIGEST | 7 |
| The DOLLAR CRISIS | 17 |
| Anti-Bolshevist Communism in Germany—Paul Mattick | 20 |
| CURRENT COMMENT | 25 |
| The New Resistance in Russia | 23 |
| Communist Practice Exposed | 30 |
| CONTROVERSIAL | 31 |
| MAY DAY in U.S.A. | 32 |

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Reactionary

Politics in Unions

REACTIONARY POLITICS IN UNIONS

BEGETS
 CONFUSION
 DISRUPTION
 BODY SNATCHING
 PHONEY STRIKES BY STALINISTS.
 BEGETS
 SCABBERY
 BY REACTIONARY A.L.P.ers
 NO UNION PRINCIPLES ARE INVOLVED
 YET
 N.S.W. IS THREATENED WITH
 INDUSTRIAL HOLD-UPS BY STALINISTS

Its happened at last. It had to come. The boil-over has occurred. For months past there has been verbal explosions and mental disturbances at the Sydney Trades Hall. Room 32, official headquarters of the Labor Party, had the fitters, and trade union official became parjicky.

The steady and successful penetration of members of the Stalinist party into the official Labor party; the commos' control of several key unions, and their arrogant defiance of the Trades Hall Council; the mass attacks on public meetings, and the prevention of free speech and public assembly; the stealing of the May Day procession and turning it into a Russian demonstration, which was responsible for many unions refusing to march, has been responsible for this hullabaloo at the Trades Hall.

Violence begets violence. Duplicity and cunning often breeds an opposition of a similar character. Nazi methods give rise to other Nazi parties. This is what is happening in Sydney.

The Stalinists had not only infiltrated into many A.L.P. branches, but had captured the official jobs in some. This led to the Central Executive of the Labor Party withdrawing the charter of the Katoomba branch and expelling the members. There was much protestation by the expelled members that they were not communists, but the official organ of the "Communist" party, the *Tribune*, spilled the beans and came out in de-

fence of the Katoomba branch, and supported the expelled members. This caused many rank and file members of the Labor party to raise their eyebrows and exclaim: "Ah, that is enough."

At the A.L.P. Conference, which began in Sydney on June 14, Mr. Milliss, the ex-secretary of the Katoomba branch, was accused of making nasty speeches against Mr. Chifley, and "illegally enrolling members." The work of the Stalinists in the A.L.P. branches has stirred up all the reactionary elements in the Labor Party, and motions have been carried demanding a purge of all A.L.P. branches. They have also adopted the consorting act. Acting along the same lines as the Stalinists, who expel members found associating with "undesirables," so the Labor Party will now expel members who are guilty of associating with "known communists." If this dog-fight were confined to the political field it would be truly amusing and nothing to worry about, but it has been carried into the industrial arena.

Owing to the Stalinists activity in the unions, and very often their moves have nothing to do with the trade union movement, such as "body-snatching"; motions asking for cash donations to all sorts of organisations; appeals for the union to buy a bundle of "communist" party literature for distribution; demarcation questions which should never arise in an industrial union. During the last

N.S.W. State elections, the "communist" party circularised all N.S.W. unions asking for a cash donation to the "communist" party campaign fund. This caused many bitter debates. Some union secretaries just threw the correspondence from the commos into the waste paper basket. When the secretary was asked by the Stalinists whether he had received any correspondence from the "communist" party a ding-dong dust-up generally took place. As a consequence important union business was neglected.

The Stalinist groups hold a "fraction meeting" before the union meeting and decide upon a plan of campaign. These people, who prate so much about fascists and reactionaries, are prepared to turn a union meeting into a turmoil rather than see their party line rejected. On several occasions fistieuffs have occurred and the meeting closed. Many Stalinists in the trade unions are just fanatical worshippers of Moscow, and all who disagree with them are branded as fascists and reactionaries!

Arising out of this sorry state of affairs in the trade union movement, which did not exist before the advent of the "communist" party, an opposition reactionary committee has come into existence—the A.L.P. industrial group. This group is composed of loyal supporters of the Labor Party, with a good sprinkling of Catholic Actionists. Taking their cue from the Stalinists, this group holds pre-union meetings and draws up plans to defeat the commos. When these two groups clash serious union business is neglected. The Stalinists, by their disruptive tactics in the trade union movement, and often trying to launch a phoney strike, have been responsible for bringing out into the open, and stimulating them with new life, all the reactionary and scabby elements in the Labor movement!

The Engine Drivers and Firemen's Union wanted three members of the Rubber Workers' Union to join the F.E.D.E.A. The rubber workers refused, and the F.E.D.F.A. threatened to withdraw their members, which would have thrown 1500 men out of work and closed down the Dunlop rubber works at Drummoyne, Sydney. No argument

with the boss, no fight for improved conditions, no challenge to the power of the State just a body-snatching stunt by the E.D.F.A. The Disputes Committee of the Trades and Labor Council decided that "it would, if necessary, instruct unionists to fill the jobs left vacant by unauthorised strikers." A scabby action, certainly, but following on this great, Mr. Lane, secretary of the E.D.F.A., stated that "if the Labor Council carries out its threat to supply no labor, the E.D.F.A. would cut off the supply of electricity to the whole of Sydney by withdrawing its men from the power houses. If the Council could have supplied men to take their place we would take action to stop the whole of the coal production of the State." Well, might we ask: "Where is unionism at?" No union principle involved, no labor conditions at stake, no challenge to the master class, yet over the body-snatching of three men the whole State of N.S.W. was in danger of coming to a stop. The Labor Council was guilty of a scabby action, but the E.D.F.A. was guilty of a violation of the first principles of industrial unionism!

It is such stunts as above—it cannot be called a strike—that gives encouragement to reaction to raise its ugly head, and gives the excuse for fascist gangs to come out into the open and bare their fangs! Already there is a fascist-like outfit organised in Sydney called the "People's Union," and it has advised the Government that at any time it is ready to come to its aid. If ever the New Guard is resuscitated in New South Wales the Stalinists will be responsible. By such anti-working class stunts are scabs encouraged.

Whenever they are charged with breaking-up public meetings and suppressing freedom of speech, they reply in their official organ, *Tribune*: "The Communist party believes in freedom of speech, but not for fascists." This simply means that all those opposed to the "Communist" party are fascists!

A political ignoramus, by the name of Darby, who represents the tony suburb of Manly in the State House, was disturbed at the shortage of spuds in Sydney. When the wharfies refused to unload same, he called a mid-week protest meeting in the Sydney Domain. The Stalinists sent out a call and attacked the meeting in force. No official of the wharfies was present, and the wharfies union had nothing to do with the demonstration against Darby. It was a real, commo gangsters' riot. Several women were present and used unparliamentary language, and many men who had no connection with the wharf. According to newspaper reports, all sorts of lethal weapons were used. Darby and his supporters were rescued by the police and had to receive hospital treatment.

Darby could not have got scabs if he had called for them. If he had got them they would not have got through the wharf gates. If they had got through the crew would not have allowed them aboard the ship. If they got aboard the firemen would have refused them steam. If they got steam, the Storemen and Packers' Union and the Road Transport Workers' Union would not have handled the spuds. If they got transport they would not have reached the depot. If they had, the snops would not have handled them, as they would be declared black, and, they say, there is no profit in spuds for the

shops. On top of all this, the potatoes belong to the potato controller, and any one else handling them without his authority would be guilty of stealing!

The Stalinists knew all this, but they had to give a meeting that would have been a fiasco and a wash-out, great publicity, and made Darby and his support-

ers little heroes.

That the Stalinists do not go further in their gangster methods is because they have not got the power. If ever they gained power in Australia, well, I leave it to the imagination.

—Norman Rancie.

(See Realistic Comment, p. 29)

WHAT SHOULD THE WORKERS DO ?

The role of a REVOLUTIONARY workers' organisation must, of necessity, be more than merely utilising the laws of the capitalist market in favor of the commodity labor-power; in any case the market is no longer free to the expression of market laws. A change in capitalism has taken place which it is very noticeable the Arbitration Court in Australia is very much aware of. The controlled-market economy, with its price-fixing, including the pegging and fixing of wages (the price of labor-power) has been accompanied by corresponding political alterations.

The role, then, of a revolutionary labor organisation MUST include of necessity WITHIN itself (and yet not be subject to the organisation (in its industrial union character of an organisation waging the every-day struggle), but only subject to the workers' revolutionary understanding of their REAL objective) the means to OPPOSE the political alterations now evident in capitalism.

Workers' Councils, composed of direct representatives or delegates of factory, shop, and job units, are thus POLITICAL—not to be confused with "parliament politics"—in that they are essentially the means to marshal the POLITICAL and ECONOMIC force to abolish the wage system and thus destroy commodity production and capitalism.

Workers' Councils are motivated by the Objective of a Workers' Commune to replace the present State of capitalism.

The General Strike (see article in this issue) is a political weapon in line with the needs of to-day as the OPENING phase of marshaling the economic power of the organised workers to oppose the power of the State and the minority which now control, by virtue of their ownership of the means of production, the majority.

The organisation-fetishism of what is known as the Australian Labor movement, with its duality of trade and industrial unions and Labor Party, or the Communist Party, or—yes—even the Socialist Party, that a clear thinking minority must bow to the will of the majority does not differ from capitalist democracy in its practice.

Clear thinking realistic workers will pursue a policy in line with their Objective: the abolition of the wage system and the establishment of a Workers' Commune, they will steer clear of any entanglements with the A.L.P., Catholic Action, or the Communist Party. They will actively work for SOLIDARITY within the workers' ranks on the job and implement codes of conduct in the UNION that will successfully oppose laws and pressure from without.

Clear thinking workers have no time to waste interminably bickering and dickering over an Arbitration Court Log under the present controlled-market economy. They will be busy getting on with the job of bringing into being a Workers' World, which implies CLASS action BY the working class. Factory and job organisation is more important than organising by trade skill or even by industry. Solidarity in the UNITS where workers are together is most essential.

What is there so good about this capitalist world that the Labor movement should be concerned that it works?

What is there so good about the so-called "official labor movement" that it should be fostered and maintained? As a LABOR movement it has already been destroyed by the capitalistic change from a purely market-economy to a controlled-market economy. It is now a pro-capitalist movement fostering a national State capitalist economy.