

SOCIALIST PARTIES OF AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND

and Review

SOCIALIST
PARTIES
OF
AUSTRALIA and
NEW ZEALAND

JULY, 1946. No. 12.

Socialism or New World Reconstruction ?

An audience of 100 listened to a debate between the Melbourne Branch of the S.P. of A. and the New World Reconstruction Movement on the above subject.

THE S.P.A.

Comrade C. Sanders, opening for the S.P. of A., said that this debate was not an academic one—Socialism was a practical proposition. Orthodox parties, both Right and "Left," had failed to improve the workers' lot. He defined Capitalism as a social system in which two classes existed—the capitalist class, owners of the means of production, and the working class, the non-owners, who could only exist by the sale of their mental and physical energies. They were exploited by the Capitalists who lived in luxury through the existence of surplus value. Wages were equivalent to the cost of living of the workers. Productivity had skyrocketed, yet the real wage, what you could buy for your money, had remained constant for many years.

Tracing the historical evolution of society from primitive communism through slave societies and feudalism to the present system, he showed that Capitalism was not something eternal or required by "human nature." To-day, it was inseparable from crises and wars—the system itself controlled the capitalist class. Whatever their "good" or "bad" intentions, they were forced into steps which inevitably led to war.

Socialism, a system of society based on common ownership and democratic control of the means of production by the whole of society, was the only alternative. Russia was not a socialist, but a State-Capitalist country; the various Labor Governments aimed at a reformed capitalism, not at its abolition. Under Socialism, there would be no wages, nor banks nor money, the principle would be "from each according to his capabilities, to each according to his needs."

As for the New World Movement, its charity abounded in airy abstractions. Reference to "the people" were meaningless—we were not one "people," but lived in a class society with class antagonisms and the class struggle as predominant features. The N.W.M. charter stated that "liberation cannot be achieved by force." To this the Socialist replied that "Might was Right." The Movement used words such as "Justice,

Freedom, Truth and Happiness." As long as a small class of parasites controlled the coercive machinery of the State, there could be little "freedom." We aimed at conditions where there would be neither "justice" nor "injustice."

The charter claimed that "money must serve men." Money was merely a means of exchange, and no juggling with the currency could change the status of the workers—that of being an exploited, a subject class. Society was not "at the mercy of private money power." Big monopolies were independent of banks. By capitalist standards, banks were just as "honest" as the shopkeeper. Their profit was made on the difference in rates of interest for depositors and borrowers.

THE N.W.R.M.

Mr. C. K. Cutting, in his reply on behalf of the New World Reconstruction Movement, said the purpose of the debate was to understand the other man's point of view. Mr. Sanders really hadn't studied their charter, had taken single pillars of it, torn words from their context, instead of examining the charter as a whole.

They agreed with many things in the first part of the S.P.'s speech, but their program was more practical. The subject of the S.P. was "Common Ownership and Democratic Control," but nowhere did they specify what form of control. The N.W.M. had a practical plan, including P.R., Initiative, Referendum, and Recall, and boards where workers would have a share in industry, profits, and management.

The S.P. had only a General Philos-

ophy, the N.W.M. was specific. In their second pillar they advocated "common ownership of key industries to be controlled by the people" with co-operative ownership of all other industries. Mr. Sanders had given the impression that the N.W.M. claimed this could be achieved under Socialism, but that was not their view. What was needed was a definite vision, something concrete, rather than an "ill-defined abstraction like Socialism." Mr. Cutting dealt with their seven pillars of reconstruction with practical proposals which presented in all a "Christian Co-operative Democracy."

In their political pillar, they had safeguards against bureaucracy—control upwards of the people, instead of downwards by the State. The S.P. had not proposed any machinery, hence had no guarantee that Socialism would not bring bureaucracy and regimentation. Justice and Truth existed, whatever Socialists might say. They did not deny the existence of the class-struggle, but "there was no need to ram it down people's throats." A people's world, "a world worked out on a draft based by science and common sense" was necessary. He knew that many of the "supposed oppressing class," leaving out the inner ring of 15 men, would gladly cooperate in a New Order.

Answering the S.P.'s objections, Mr. Cutting stated that they "would use pressure" of the people to get the New World. The old order was changing, the intelligentsia was turning left. They agreed that money would ultimately be unnecessary, but it was utopian to talk about that now, when people didn't even grasp fundamentals. A co-operative banking system was realistic. Sanders did not understand banking—had he read any reports of the banking commissions? Financial barons had agr-

(Continued on page 3 col. 1.)

DEBATE: "Can the Housing Problem be Solved under Capitalism?"

AFFIRMATIVE: Mr. T. H. Atkinson (President, Builders and Allied Trades Association).

NEGATIVE: C. Sanders (Socialist Party of Australia).

ASSEMBLY HALL, COLLINS STREET, 2nd FLOOR,

WEDNESDAY, JULY 24th, at 8 p.m. sharp.

FREE!
QUESTIONS!
PUBLIC INVITED!

S.P.A. — Melbourne

Censorship and Socialism

A READER OBJECTS

To the Editor "Socialist Comment."

Dear Sir, I read your article on "Banned Books" (S.C.R. May, 1946) with amazement. It seems to imply that you are for complete freedom of speech and expression when in power, grant the right to opposition newspapers. In fact you would support the right of even Fascists to indulge in anti-Socialist propaganda to be read and distributed.

And what about pornographic books? Would they be allowed under Socialism?

I hope I've got you wrong—such a view seems sheer madness to me.

Yours faithfully,

"ANTI-FASCIST,"

Melbourne.

REPLY:

No, you haven't got us wrong. The S.P.A. with its Companion Parties stands for complete freedom of speech and expression. This right is especially extended to those of our opponents with whom we most violently disagree.

Our reason for taking this point of view is briefly these:

It was John Stuart Mill who, in 1849, in his essay "On Liberty," stated the classic case against censorship of any kind. There ought to exist the fullest liberty of professing and discussing, as a matter of ethical conviction, any doctrine, however immoral it might be considered. (Everyman, Ed. p. 78)

Mill did not support an abstract concept of "freedom" but maintained that suppression was harmful to society as a whole. With this attitude, we agree. From the inception of the S.P., we have always encouraged opposition, our platform is always open to our critics to state their case. The reason for this is simple. If, as we believe, we are to be sound, it can only be shown to be so by rational argument; if, on the other hand, we are mistaken, we ought to be grateful to our opponents for saving us from wasting our time.

But the issue goes further. Socialism can only come when a majority of workers understand, and desire it, and are organised for its achievement. These workers must have learned for themselves, they must think for themselves, they must examine our arguments and work out the answer for themselves. We cannot do it for them. We are ready on a silver platter to the workers; all we can do is to discuss and argue the matter out with them. No useful purpose whatsoever can be served by suppression of anti-Socialist opinions.

Naturally, the Stalinists and our "Anti-Fascist" readers take a different point of view. They have repeatedly urged the suppression of anti-Socialist propaganda. But what, exactly, are "Fascist" in the eyes of the C.P.? All their arguments whether they be real Fascists, Catholic Action, or other Party Socialists, have at one time or another been dubbed either "Trotskyist" or "Fascist." The word is heretofore of meaning, to them it means simply "anybody who disagrees with us." Exactly

the same applies to the daily press, in its cry for "action against subversive elements" and "red" propaganda, they lump everyone together.

However, as the Trotskyites themselves stand for the smothering of "anti-working class" meetings, they have no legitimate complaint when they receive the same treatment. We have not forgotten Trotsky's articles in Kronstadt, nor that the Bolsheviks immediately disclosed the Constitution Assembly (on January 5th, 1918)—a body they themselves had demanded. Reason? They were in a minority!

Apart from the benefits to society of unencumbered discussion, we, as a minority, would merely be making a rod for our own back should we demand the suppression or censoring of other minority views.

Capitalism and complete freedom of opinion are incompatible. Social excesses—causing from "public morality" to the war effort—are always forced by ruling class to impose or tighten censorship.

"Anti-Fascist" should think for a moment what complete freedom of expression to-day would imply. It would mean an abolition of the libel laws—based on property rights, the scrapping of incitement to disaffection laws, etc. This alone shows that Capitalism MUST in some way limit "freedom."

RUNNING A DAILY

And what of the finance required to start a daily paper? In Australia, £500,000 would be the absolute minimum. A daily paper which tried to present the working class point of view would have:

1. To acquire its own paper supplies, i.e., to fight against capitalist monopoly.
2. To set up its own international news agencies or rely on the present pro-capitalist monopolies.
3. To reject all advertising, or give way to the pressure of its capitalist advertisers.

Newspapers, like everything else under Capitalism, are run for profit. Whatever the "honorable" intentions of its founders, if a paper is to survive it MUST support either private capitalism or cash in on the pillage of the Stalinists and support Russian State legislation.

With the growth of the International Socialist Movement, of course, the position will be improved and a real Socialist daily could be started. This, however, implies a large membership of the Companion Parties which is prepared to pay a relatively high price for its own daily. A Socialist Paper being able to rely on advertising, would not be able to sell at the same price as its capitalist rivals.

What our reader means by "lies and distortion" is not clear. The selection of news to be printed from that received—enough to fill a couple of novels daily—automatically involves some "distortion." But the point is that, in order to produce a reasonably correct judgment, one must read ALL points of view. For

instance, were we writing an article on "Catholic Action," we would read (a) the Stalinist papers and pamphlets; (b) the Catholic papers; (c) get information from the "Protestant" tract societies, etc., and finally weigh the information against our own experience.

Then, and then only, would we have reduced "distortion and lies" to a minimum.

WHAT IS PORNOGRAPHY?

You ask: "What about pornographic books?" Strangely enough, Sergeant Munro, of the Vice-Squad, avow part of the answer when he stated to the report "We were the Rats" case "he did not know the meaning of the word 'pornographic'." As the original article pointed out, morality is not something immutable—it is determined by social conditions and the economic structure of society. As for the individual interpretations of words such as "pornographic" this again is subjective depending on the environment and education of the person concerned.

Thus, "pornography" to a member of the latter-day Saints would have an entirely different meaning than to a Socialist.

We cannot possibly lay down what a Socialist society will do in this respect since their ideas will again be forgotten. However, it should not be forgotten that so-called pornographic books can only find a market in a society where sexual starvation and mis-education are a consequence of economic oppression.

And what are Socialists, to say of bourgeois morality? Capitalism conceives and encourages the carnage of millions; the starvation and displacement of other millions; the constant exploitation and poverty of the world's working class. It not showed that these effects of capitalism, but protests against a couple of nudes, a bedroom scene, a few "dirty" jokes. What a scale of values! What a "morality!"

After a few "pornographic" articles, are likely to be forgotten words.

One thing, however, we can state now: There will be no POLITICAL censorship of any kind under Socialism, which MUST support either private capitalism or cash in on the pillage of the DEMOCRATIC CONTROL" of the means of production, Democracy does not merely mean the "rule of the majority"; it implies also adequate safeguards for the Socialist Movement. If, when the international working class has seized power for Socialism, under-stand fully the consequences and implications (quite a different thing from our reader's conception of "action in power") a minority wishes to adopt a return to poverty, war, and the exploitation of the workers, would not be placed in the way. Should such an anti-Socialist minority be foolish enough to attempt an armed revolt, matter of course, would be a different

A diversity of opinions as to how a particular problem under Socialism should be solved will naturally exist and society will give full protection to

(Continued on page 3, col. 1.)

"SOCIALISM OR NEW WORLD RECONSTRUCTION"

(Continued from page 1)

vated the various economic depression. Profits of banks were "stored up in hidden reserves" and the low 5 per cent. dividend was only a blind to fool the unwary.

SUMMING UP

Sanders, summing up, said there was no need for all this elaborate paraphernalia. The problem under Socialism was the simple one of producing and distributing so that everyone would get the highest possible standard of living, and banks, money, etc., would then be useless. The workers to-day ran society for the benefit of a parasitic class, why couldn't they run it for the benefit of everyone? The nebulous N.W.M. program was for "all the people," still very wrong for the workers. The word "left" was meaningless—capitalism was still very strong and far from passing. He challenged Mr. Cutting to "name any organised powerful movement for the abolition of capitalism." Socialists were a tiny minority.

It was "nonsense to say that Banks created Credit." How could they go bankrupt if they did. Socialism, the only alternative, would not be imposed by a bureaucracy, but would only come when the majority of workers everywhere understood and desired it. They must then organise politically capture the State machinery and introduce Socialism. It was the task of the workers themselves no one could do it for them.

Mr. Cutting claimed that Credit and Banks would not exist for ever in the New World but were necessary as counting houses for a certain time. The facts about International Control of Finance and Creation of Credit were easily accessible and he could provide the necessary evidence. Only small banks had crashed.

A co-operative bank which provided money interest free would benefit workers in building houses, etc. Banking Commissions were not "bank" as Mr. Sanders had stated. The McKenna Commission had proved the existence of "hidden reserves," and how could Socialists explain that no bank ever paid excess profits tax?

H.

CENSORSHIP AND SOCIALISM

(Continued from page 2)

any minority which desires to convince the majority, one hundred per cent. unanimity is not desirable, even if it could be achieved.

Today, when the next war looms already on the horizon when the next slump promises to be the possibilities of preceding one while the possibilities of a full and free life increase with every new invention, it is YOUR task to make this free life a reality. WE can do nothing for you—YOU are the workers, class, MUST DO THE JOB YOURSELF.

Only under Socialism will you live as a human being, only Socialism can give you freedom, including freedom of speech. And it will mean freedom of speech, by establishing it, YOU will have TAKEN FREEDOM FOR YOURSELF.

H.B.

FEAST AND FAMINE

The two cuttings below, taken from the Melbourne Herald, 7/6/46, require no comment. They should, however, provide workers with food for thought, even though bodily requirements are such that death may abolish hunger by eliminating the hungry.

STAFF DINNER WILL NOT BE FEAST

The Premier (Mr. Cain) denied to-day suggestions that the State dinner on Monday night at Parliament House to celebrate Victory Day would be an extravagant feast.

"The Government," he said, "has adopted a middle course, and the menu will be reasonable. We will not be over-feeeling the already well fed."

About 300 people are expected to be present.

A copy of the menu was not available to-day, but it is believed it will include oysters, fillet of whiting, roast duckling, art asparagus, dessert and coffee.

TWO DIE FROM EXPOSURE

Two men found dead to-day—one on a vacant allotment and the other in public gardens—are believed to have died last night from exposure.

Harold Edgar Lorey, of no fixed address, invalid pensioner, was found dead on a vacant allotment in Church Street, Richmond.

Police investigations showed that he had been sleeping in the open. William Marshall, 46, of Creswick Street, Footscray, was found dead in the Riverside gardens near Alexandra Avenue.

TEST YOUR SOCIALIST KNOWLEDGE

WHO WROTE THIS?

"Without the conscious will and the conscious action of the majority of the Proletariat there can be no Socialism." Answer on page 4.

COMMUNISTS AND NATIONALISATION

The following paragraph appeared in the "Metal Trades Journal" (1/5/46), the official organ of the Metal Trades Employers' Association:—

"SOCIALISING CAPITALISM OR CAPITALISING SOCIALISM?"

Sir Clive Ballieu, President of the Federation of British Industries, and big-shot London shareholder in the B.H.P.

is among the "latest recruits to the New Socialism" in Britain, according to Lester Hutchinson, M.P., writing in the London Daily Worker.

Sir Clive Ballieu is one of the Labor Government's appointees to the new Capital Issues Committee. Other members of the Committee are: Lord Kennet, Babbington Smith, a director of Glyn Halls, Mr. H. V. Berry, formerly assistant general manager of the Union Discount Co., "respected in the City of London and in the Fabian Society," and Sir Clarence Sald, Vice-Chairman of the Midland Bank.

It is difficult to know at the moment," Lester Hutchinson comments, "if we are socialising big business or if big business is capitalising us."

Notwithstanding the Communist "Daily Worker" observation, Communists in Britain and Australia are still hawking for Nationalisation. Read our pamphlet, "Nationalisation or Socialism," if you would understand the question.

CITIZENS' RIGHTS COMMITTEE

A Challenge

The newly-formed Citizens' Rights Committee held its public meeting at Chatsworth, N.S.W. on June 26th last. The chief speaker, Dr. Frank Lout, outlined somewhat hazily, the aims of the C.R.C. At the conclusion of his speech questions were asked, but he deftly evaded many of them. When a motion was tabled, a member of the S.P. of A opposed it, and issued a challenge to Dr. Lout to debate the question. That the Citizens' Rights Committee is worthy of working class support."

The Mayor, who chaired the meeting, insisted that the challenge be put in writing. The party has since written to Dr. Lout as requested.

Watch for results. Announcement will be made later.

PARTY NOTES

S.P.A.—SYDNEY, P.O. Box 2291, G.P.O. meets Tuesdays, Room 99, Station House, Rawson Place.

S.P.A.—MELBOURNE, P.O. Box 1440-M. Meets every Tuesday, Temperance Hall. Fortnightly Lectures. See "Age," "Argus" Meetings Column every Saturday.

AUSTRALIAN BRANCHES

SYDNEY—F.O. Box 2221, G.P.O.

SYDNEY BRANCH—Meets Room 99, Station House, Rawson Place, "everyday" 8pm.

MELBOURNE—P.O. Box 1440, Elizabeth Street.

MELBOURNE BRANCH—Meets 1st and 3rd Mondays, at 8pm, at Room 12, Temperance Hall.

For other activities, see "Age" Meetings and Lectures Column every Saturday.

LITERATURE

"Western Socialist," official organ of the companion parties in U.S.A. and Canada.

"Socialist Standard," official organ of the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

"Socialism," "Questions of the Day."

Other Socialist literature obtainable on application.

Family Allowances 3d.

Beveridge Reorganises Poverty, 4d.

"Nationalisation or Socialism?" 9d.

Socialism and Questions of the Day 1/6

If We Are To Survive 3d.

Socialist Manifesto (S.P. of Canada) 6d.

Principles and Policy of S.P., 4d.

Socialism 4d.

War and the Working Class . . . 4d.

Write for free samples of literature.

Answer to Who Wrote This?"

Rosa Luxemburg, in Die Rote Fahne, November 20th, 1918, in Poul Troeblich's "Luxemburg," p. 298.

£150,000,000

**THE CAPITALIST
CLASS**

SPENT £150,000,000

**ON
THE BIKINI BOMB
TEST.**

The S.P.A. wants to spend some money, too, but we want it to provide mental dynamite to shatter capitalist ideology.

Send donations to

S.P.A., BOX 2291,
G.P.O. SYDNEY,

Or

S.P.A., BOX 1440M,
MELBOURNE.

DON'T DELAY.



S.P.A.

S.P.N.Z.

OBJECT.—The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

The Socialist Parties of Australia and New Zealand hold:

1. The society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nations, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. THE SOCIALIST PARTIES OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND therefore enter the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged Labor or avowed Capitalist, and call upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under their banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment, apply to nearest address.

HERE'S YOUR OPPORTUNITY!

The Socialist Party will send Speakers to any Organisation to explain the Socialist view on any subject affecting working class interest

**Ask Your Party.
Ask Your Trade Union.
Ask Your Organisation.
TO FORWARD YOUR
REQUEST.**

**WE WILL DO THE REST:
AND REMEMBER
IT COSTS YOU NOTHING.**

Published by W. J. Clarke, Box 2291,
G.P.O., Sydney, and printed by Premier
Printers, 65 Abchurch Street, North Sydney.

COMPANION PARTIES

S.P. OF CANADA: P.O. Box 1751,
Winnipeg, Man., Canada.

S.P. OF GREAT BRITAIN: 2 Rugby
Street, London, W.C.1.

S.P. OF NEW ZEALAND: P.O. Box
62, Petone, and P.O. Box 1929,
Auckland.

PETONE MEETINGS: See local
press.

AUCKLAND MEETINGS: Econom-
ics and Discussions Class,
every Monday, 7.30 p.m., Car-
penters Union Rooms, Union
Bank of Australasia Buildings,
East Street, and Karangahape
Road.

WORKERS SP. OF U.S.: 27 Dock
Square, Boston 8, Mass.