



SOCIALISM

&

CHAOS

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SOCIALIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

The Socialist Party of Australia

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.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

The Socialist Party of Australia Holds:

That 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 labor alone wealth is produced.

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.

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.

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.

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

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, 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 all privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

That as 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.

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labor or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labor, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

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



Socialism

or

Chaos?



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Preface

All over the world, Labor Governments have been swept into power, or have made gains at the polls. The world is going "left," we are told.

What need then to restate once more the case for Socialism? Has it not been adequately stated by the various "Labor" and "Communist" Parties?

We answer: NO! What you hear day by day over the air, or read in the press is not a case for or against Socialism; but a case for or against State Capitalism. "Socialism" is one of those words that have lost their meaning by being misused. Anything from a Government controlled coal mine, to the system of totalitarian State Capitalism prevailing in Russia, is mis-labelled Socialism.

The Socialist Party of Australia, and its Companion Parties in New Zealand, Great Britain, Canada, and the United States, have never made the mistake of confusing Capitalism, whatever name it may operate under, with Socialism. It is regrettable to have to spend so much time on showing what Socialism is NOT, rather than on what it IS, but illusions on this subject are widespread, and one of the main obstacles hindering the growth of the genuine Socialist movement.

Your experience, as a worker under various "Labor" governments ought to show you that the Labor Party does not represent the interests of the working class. When in office, it behaves like any other Capitalist party—it runs Capitalism, when you go on strike, you are branded as "trouble makers," you are told that you are "harming the nation."

Have you forgotten the wage cuts under Scullin? The shooting and imprisonment of strikers under the Hogan State Government? The fines, and threats of military impressment used against strikers under Curtin? The conscription of labor? The constant appeals for "national unity and increased production" under Chifley?

The AUSTRALIAN LABOR PARTY, appealing to the workers and to the small shopkeepers, is a reformist organisation. In spite of using socialist phrases from time to time, to allay the impatience of the more militant sections of the Trade Unions, it makes its electoral appeal on the basis of the present system, and it administers that system when it gets into power. True, it nationalizes some industries, but, as we shall show you, nationalization has no connection whatever with Socialism. It merely means the substitution of one set of exploiters for another.

We need not spend too much time on the so-called LIBERAL PARTY (formerly U.A.P.) which is the party of big business. It has opposed all demands of the organised workers, whenever in power, has called out the army to break strikes, and pursues at all times a reactionary anti-working class policy. Its claim to represent all sections of the "nation" is a futile one. Workers should have, by now, learned from experience that there are TWO classes in Australia, as in all capitalist countries, and that any compromise between the working and capitalist classes is sure to benefit the latter.

The COUNTRY PARTY appeals to the farmers, as the "backbone of the nation," but in practice, serves the interests of capital invested in pastoral and agricultural enterprise.

What of the self-styled AUSTRALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY? Do they not aim at Socialism? Are they not the most militant, both in the Trade Unions and in the political sphere? The answer, again, is: NO!

The A.C.P. is a party of reform, seizing upon every possible grievance of the workers to get members. Its program is a hotch-potch of immediate demands dressed up in militant phrases. Its final aim is the establishment of a State Capitalism in Australia, similar to that existing in Russia.

All the worst features of Capitalism exist in that country—a large class of workers labouring for wages, a small privileged class living in ease and luxury on the surplus value extracted from the workers. Interest-bearing loans, ruthless exploitation through piece work (Stakhanovism), a complete absence of democracy, a callous secret police—these are but some of the features of State Capitalism in Russia.

The A.C.P. like "Communist" Parties everywhere, twists its line at the behest of the Russian ruling class. It served as a scabbing and strike breaking agency after it had changed its line three times in the second World War. Now, when the interests of American Capitalism clash with those of its Russian rival, it poses again as a militant organisation, but the workers will not forget that it was one of the main agencies in the filching of hard won Trade Union rights and in the watering down of awards.

The future for the workers looks black indeed. A slump is inevitable, and once more we shall see the tragic spectacle of the grey army of unemployed queuing up at the labour exchange. In this pamphlet we shall try and show you why Capitalism must lead to depressions, show you that they are inevitable as long as you permit this crazy system to continue.

The third world war is all ready looming on the horizon when these lines are written. Conferences and pacts could not

prevent the last blood bath, they will not prevent the next one. We do not know what the line-up will be, but you can bet your bottom dollar, that in a few years you or your children will be asked to fight once more "for Freedom." The atomic bomb, which was only a beginning in the development of even more horrible weapons of destruction, did not put an end to war, on the contrary, its discovery meant a holocaust unparalleled in the history of mankind. Whatever the alleged issues of the next war, whatever the slogans—we of the Companion Parties of Socialism are not prepared to take sides in quarrels between rival capitalist classes. We refuse to murder workers of other countries—their interests are identical with our own. We know, **WHICHEVER SIDE WINS — THE WORKERS ALWAYS LOSE.**

If you believe that wars can be avoided while Capitalism continues—read these pages and learn why war is inevitable under the present system. We, who address these words to you, are but a handful, who have learned from experience not to waste our time chasing the 1001 will o' the wisps that crop up year in year out. We have realized that Socialism cannot be achieved by short cuts. We said, from the beginning, that what had taken place in Russia was not, and could not be, a Socialist revolution. We opposed the first world war, "declaring that no interests are at stake justifying the shedding of a single drop of working class blood." We opposed Fascism and Nazism, explaining their reactionary capitalist nature, and maintaining that only Socialists could really fight them. We opposed the second world war, holding that it, too, was an imperialist conflict, and while Nazism could be defeated militarily, its roots could never be eradicated by war.

This pamphlet, necessarily brief, shows you WHAT Capitalism is, and that it is no longer necessary. It shows you what Socialism is, and that IT presents the only alternative to poverty insecurity, and war.

If we can interest you in Socialism, if we can show you that, unless the workers everywhere understand, desire, and organize to get it, they will continue to suffer from Capitalism in peace and war, then we shall have taken a step forward on the only road that leads to Peace and Plenty for everyone—regardless of race or sex.

You, the workers of Australia, with your comrades in other countries, have the fate of the world in your hands. What will you do? Will you, as hitherto, sit down and be told by "Leaders" what is good for you? Follow reforms that leave you no better off? Will you put up with poverty in the midst of plenty till the next war comes along, and you are conscripted again?

Or will you wake up, find out for yourself what is wrong with the present system, and then organize politically to put an end to war and exploitation, misery and madness.

WE cannot do the job for you—it is in YOUR hands . . . The most we can do is to put the Socialist case.

As for the rest, it is up to YOU what the future will be:

SOCIALISM! OR CHAOS?

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,

SOCIALIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA.

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Socialism or Chaos?

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

What is Capitalism?

When you are approaching your twenties, and begin to realize what sort of a world you live in, you seldom ask yourself whether this world has always been thus. Going to work for an employer, buying goods in the shops, using money, fighting in wars with countries you may know little about — all this seems quite natural. Yet, our present system, CAPITALISM, is not very old. Compared with previous societies it is but a brief episode. We have had Capitalism, if we take our dates from England, for about 200 years. Men have lived and worked in quite different societies—for thousands of years they existed happily under primitive communism, then there were slave societies, then feudalism—and now capitalism. Thus, our present society is something that evolved, something changing—not a system essential to 'human nature'. We cannot here describe its evolution, nor can we analyse it thoroughly. The essential features are universal. On them is based a complicated super-structure of ethical, moral, religious, judicial, artistic and personal beliefs. The *basis* of Capitalism is the same all over the world, the specific *form* it takes in a particular country is determined by many factors, such as the special historical development of that country, its geographical and economic position, and the struggles of the workers there. Here we only deal briefly with the *basis* of Capitalism.

The first thing that strikes us is that goods are produced not because people need them, but because a profit can be made from their production. Factories stop running if the owners can no longer make a profit. This seems obvious—yet it is rather strange. Bread is baked, not because people are hungry, but because a profit is made from it, houses are built not because people want a roof over their heads, but because someone is able to realize a profit from them. Whether the articles produced are of any real use to the buyer is again a different matter. If the owners can convince buyers that a few drops of oil of cloves, mixed with coloured water, is the perfect remedy for all aches and pains, and if they can sell this concoction at a profit, it will be manufactured.

All goods produced have one thing in common—they can be exchanged for money. Such goods are called *commodities*. Now this fact seems perfectly natural to most people today, yet it is a typical feature of Capitalist Society. Under the previous system, Feudalism, while there were some goods produced for sale, the vast majority were produced for immediate use, for consumption by the man or family who made them. Exchange mostly took the form of barter and money played a minor role. The majority of the people never saw any money during their lifetime.

Most of you today think in terms of 'Nations' and 'countries.' It is 'your' country you think you are defending, it is 'your' firm, 'your' exports and imports, 'your' job. But look a little closer. If "country" is to mean anything, it means the productive resources located in a particular geographical area. What are they? They are the land, the factories, the means of communication, the mines, etc. Now most of you have no stake whatever in a factory. You work there when there is a boom, and stand at the gate trying to get work when there is a slump. The job is not yours either. The sack is always around the corner, whether you've been working there for five or fifty years. Your imports may consist of a few cigarettes from the States your exports perhaps of a parcel to a friend overseas.

YOU don't own the country, your share in it is only to be seen under a microscope. The country is owned by the people who own the factories and mines, the mills and the railways. They, while not producing anything themselves, employ you. They have an ever-increasing monopoly in the means of production. You probably see only their hired representative, the manager. He seems all-powerful. But he is not. He can get the sack too. The real owners of the means of production are a small class of people, the capitalists, who today have interests in every industry and often never see the factory they own.

You also have a stake in the country—you think. You may if you are lucky, have a second-hand car, own or rent a house with a little garden, have a hundred pounds in the bank. You consider you are well off. Are you? What will happen if you lose your job? How long can you hold out? And what are your possessions in comparison with those of your employers? You may have 2, or 20 shares—they have thousands. As long as you are forced to work for a living, you are a worker, whether you have horny hands or shiny pants, whether you have a room in the slums or a house in Suburbia. You may be in the ranks of the better-paid workers, perhaps you are going to start out on your own. You'll find yourself up against giant cartels and monopolies with terrific economic resources, well-organised politi-

cal pressure groups, with the press, the radio, and 'public opinion' influenced by them. You may keep your head above water—then, at the best, you are but a distributing agent for the big combine.

No, it is not *your* country. It is *theirs*.

You have to live. As you don't own anything except your mental and physical energies you are compelled to sell these. You can only sell them to those who can employ you and pay you a wage. Willy-nilly, you try to sell them to the owners of the means of production. They hire you to work in the factory and the office—but they retain the ownership rights. When you're on the job, you're as near to 'your country' as you're ever likely to be. You are free to live a life of leisure and luxury—but this freedom is purely theoretical. The fact is that you have to work for wages almost all your life and that you get just enough to keep you efficient for the particular job you are doing. The majority of the population is in the same position. They are the *working-class*. The others, the owners who can, if they want to, live on their income, are the *capitalist class*.

These are the most outstanding features of Capitalism. We can now define it: *Capitalism is a social system based on the private or state ownership of the means and instruments of production by the capitalist class, the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced; the production of commodities for profit and the employment of the workers for wages by the capitalists, or the state, as the "National Capitalist."*

You'll see that Socialists have a different way of looking at things. They are not satisfied to hear that 'everyone has a chance' or that the workers are 'free.' They look for realities, for the social relationships existing between human beings. To them, 'Nations' and 'countries' are abstract words. They talk and think in terms of *classes*.

These are the fundamentals of capitalism. A lot of confusion is caused by the fact that the emphasis on these fundamentals may shift from country to country. For instance, the means of production may be owned by individuals, or they may be owned by giant trusts or the State. It is one of the tendencies of Capitalism that ownership is ever concentrated into fewer and fewer hands. Year by year the big cartels and monopolies are on the increase, the big fish are gobbling up the little fish, the barrier between the classes becomes higher and the chance to climb that barrier more remote. The State tends to become the universal employer. But the State is NOT the Community, rather is it the executive committee of the capitalist

class as a whole. Capitalism remains, whether run by individuals, trusts, or the State. Already in 1892, Frederick Engels, who, with Karl Marx, was the founder of Scientific Socialism, wrote:

"But the transformation, either into joint-stock companies and trusts, or into State ownership, does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces. . . . And the modern State, again, is only the organisation that bourgeois society takes on in order to support the external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments as well of the workers as of individual capitalists. The more it (the modern State) proceeds to the taking over of the productive forces the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. *The workers remain wage-workers—proletarians.*" Socialism, Utopian and Scientific, Andrade's Edition, page 42. Our Italics.)

We shall return to this point under "State Ownership."

CHAPTER II.

Our Indictment of Capitalism.

Capitalism was founded on the blood and misery of the expropriated peasants, on child labour, robbery and violence, on the ruthless exploitation of workers under conditions so horrible we can hardly believe them today. Yet in spite of this, Socialists recognize that it was historically necessary, because it developed the technical resources of the world and placed men for the first time in a position where they could be the master of nature. Modern industrial development is due to capitalism and thanks to it we are in a position to produce a maximum of food, clothing and shelter with a minimum of effort—if society is reorganised on a socialist basis. But, as we have seen, systems of society evolve. They are not static and unchangeable. Having fulfilled their purpose, they must give way to the next system. Capitalism is no longer progressive, whilst it can solve the problem of production it cannot give a satisfactory answer to the problem of distribution.

Fundamental Contradictions

Gone are the days when people produced in their own homes, with their own tools, and where production was a synonym for individual craftsmanship. Giant factories and intricate machinery are the order of the day. The conveyor-belt, time-study, pre-fabricated houses, synthetic materials; these are the symbols of capitalism today. Have a look at a factory anywhere, in any coun-

try. Production is based on co-operation, every worker contributing some small share to the finished article. No man can look at a car and say "I made that car." Production is overwhelmingly SOCIAL and the last traces of individual craftsmanship are disappearing ever more rapidly. As Engels puts it:

"Production has become a *social* act. Exchange and appropriation continue to be *individual* acts, the acts of individuals. *The social product is appropriated by the individual capitalist.*"

What are the consequences of this contradiction?

a. "Severance of the producer from the means of production. Demnation of the worker to wage-labor for life. *Antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.*"

b. "Unbridled competition. *Contradiction between socialised organisation in the individual factory and social anarchy in production as a whole.*

c. "On the one hand, perfecting of machinery, made by competition compulsory for each individual manufacturer, and complemented by a constantly growing displacement of laborers. *Industrial reserve army.* On the other hand, unlimited extension of production, also compulsory under competition . . . Unheard of development of productive forces, excess of supply over demand, over production glutting of the markets, crises every ten years, the vicious circle: excess here, of means of production and products—excess there of laborers, without employment and without means of existence." (F. Engels: Socialism Utopian and Scientific, Andrade's edition, pages 49/50. Engels' Italics.)

Other contradictions, bound up with this fundamental one exist.

Wealth—Poverty.

Unemployed—Idle factories, materials.

Compulsory idleness amongst unemployed—Enforced over-work amongst employed.

Glorification of leisured class—Denunciation of workers as 'slackers'.

Prohibition of theft by Government—Army used for wholesale robbery from foreign capitalists.

Condemnation of Murder—Glorification of War.

Poverty Amidst Plenty—Periodical Crises

The most amazing thing about the second World War was surely the fact that in spite of the industries in every belligerent country being geared to produce weapons of murder and destruction, yet the world's population was still clothed and housed and fed—that is, of course, the workers badly and insufficiently. This is the most obvious demonstration of something that Socialists have hammered home for years, and with which even most capitalist economists have been forced to agree: The mechanical means are at hand to ensure an abundance of *all* of the necessities and *nearly all* of the so-called luxuries of life. No longer is it a question of having to wrest a meagre living from nature. Yet, in peace and war, boom and slump the workers are poor. Capitalism condemns the *working class to live on a low subsistence level, and, in relation to productivity, a relatively declining one.*

What is the cause of poverty? Here we have to make a brief excursion into economics. (cp. "Socialism"—S.P.G.B.)

Everything today has a price, including the mental and physical energies of the worker (Labour power). This price fluctuates with supply and demand. It is not determined by this, however. Prices are determined by value, around which they fluctuate. Value we define as the amount of socially necessary labour embodied in a commodity. What then is the value of the workers' labour-power? Obviously it is determined by the labour embodied in those commodities required to produce it, i.e., food, clothing, shelter and other things required to keep the worker going. Wages, therefore, in the long run, are determined by the cost of subsistence. They fluctuate with supply and demand and can be influenced to a degree by trade union action.

We can now answer our question. The workers as a class are poor because they get wages which are just sufficient to allow them to continue to work. Whilst there is unemployment, wages can never rise for long above this point. They cannot fall too much below it or else the worker would be unable to continue on the job. Hence poverty amongst plenty is inseparable from Capitalism.

Every few years Capitalism produces a crisis. These are due not to any natural causes such as drought or famine, nor would anyone claim that the needs of the population are satisfied. Factories are at a standstill, unemployed roam the streets, hundreds of white papers are produced by leading economists. From Free Trade to Tariffs, from Inflation to Deflation, from State Control to unrestricted Private Enterprise—every 'plan' has been tried. None has had a lasting effect. No wonder that one of the fore-

most capitalist economists, Jevons, was finally compelled to ascribe crises to spots in the sun!

Capitalists might like to solve these crises. But they are not caused by the evil machinations of individuals. They cannot be solved by good intentions.

What is the cause of crises?

We have seen that the workers all over the world get in wages just enough to keep them going. But they produce much more than they get back, they produce a tremendous quantity of goods for the profit of the owners. **THEY SIMPLY CANNOT BUY BACK WHAT THEY PRODUCE.** Large incomes flow into the pockets of the capitalist class, they live a life of ease and luxury, but even so they themselves are unable to consume the surplus. They invest money in industry. Competition forces them to introduce new machinery in order to increase their output and cut their wages bill. Thus, as the years pass by the quantity of goods increases but the number of workers which produce them decreases. The displaced workers are thrown on the industrial scrap-heap, get the dole, and can buy even less than before. Markets are over-stocked.

Under Capitalism it is quite impossible to know how much of each article should be produced. "The market" is something mysterious and anarchical. While the boom is on, production is expanded in order to raise profits. Then, the point is reached where the surplus can not be absorbed. Orders are reduced everywhere, wages are slashed, factories shut down. This further reduces the buying-power of the workers. It is a vicious circle.

Permanent Unemployment

During the war years, we heard a lot about 'full employment. Already today there is unemployment. There will be more. War has increased the general productivity of industry, and the next crisis is likely to be more severe than any preceding one. The spectacle of bread-lines and soup-kitchens, of the dole, of 'susso', will be repeated. Capitalism and Full Employment are incompatible. For the last twenty years, in every capitalist country in the world, we have had permanent mass unemployment. Many of the unemployed were young people just entering the labour-market. Is it not a sufficient condemnation of Capitalism that only when millions were at the front and other millions making the sinews of war, unemployment vanished temporarily? In 'normal' times unemployment is inevitable under Capitalism. The reasons are much the same as those for the occurrence of crises, i.e. unceasing introduction of new 'labour-saving' machinery as a *constant* factor, and feverishly expanding output in a wild scramble for profits as an

aggravating factor, giving rise to particular periods of severe unemployment. But there is another aspect . . . and this is why Socialists say Capitalism *needs* unemployment. What would happen could it be abolished? Wages would rise, there wouldn't be a wild scramble for jobs, the threat of the sack would be ineffective. Your experience in the war years where this condition prevailed to a certain extent will tell you what would be the result. Thus, a *permanent army of unemployed is necessary to capitalism.*

Capitalism and War

War is inseparable from Capitalism. This is not a doctrine of despair, but a mere statement of fact. War, in the modern world, is but a continuation of 'peaceful' trade rivalries by violent means. In every country the capitalist class produces both for the home market and for export, and we have seen that the workers at home can't buy back what they produce. The capitalists *must* export. They export to the undeveloped countries where capitalism as yet has not dominated the local economy. But again, they are caught in a vicious circle. On the one hand, production for export increases by leaps and bounds, on the other hand the world market is ever shrinking. They not only export consumption goods but also production goods such as machines, rolling-stock, etc. And, with every machine exported, they are cutting the ground from under their own feet. The countries they export to, begin to establish their own factories, produce their own goods—also for export. Take India, for example. For years, British Capitalists were able to use India as a market for cotton goods. But machines for making cotton goods were also exported, and now Indian Capitalists are in a position to produce cotton, to export it, and to enter into competition with the very firms that originally exported goods and machines to them!

Let us note, in passing, that the rise of a nationalist capitalist class in the so-called 'backward' countries is usually accompanied by a cry for "National Independence from Foreign Exploitation." If this independence is gained, it may mean increased profits for the capitalists there, but the workers have merely exchanged the foreign exploiters for local ones. They may have spent years in fighting for an independence which leaves them as badly off as before.

Shrinking world markets—expanding production. The struggle for the markets that remain, for the strategic positions, for trade-routes, raw materials (oil, rubber, cotton, metals, etc.) grows fiercer year by year. Finally the stage is reached where the capitalist countries, which, due to historical and geographical conditions, started late in the race, have to 'Expand or Explode.'

The System and the Individual

We must transgress here for a moment to deal with a common mistake which has led to a lot of muddled thinking. We say Capitalism *needs* unemployment, *causes* war. They are *inseparable from production for profit.* This is often taken to mean that we are accusing *individual* capitalists. Such is not the case. Individual capitalists differ in their personalities to the same extent as workers differ. We are not concerned with their good, or bad, intentions. In trade unions and economic struggles, we come up against 'soft' and 'hard' bosses—just as the non-socialists do. But this has no connection with an analysis of a social system.

Whether Capitalists are charming or revolting, whether they are 'progressive' or 'reactionary' has little influence on social development. It is the economic and social laws of the capitalist system which control their actions, and the Capitalists, being a superfluous and parasitic class, taking little or no part in production, often have not the slightest understanding of what is going on around them.

Let us take War. Wars are not caused by individuals, by 'the merchants of death,' by 'evil men,' by 'mad dictators.' While such people may accelerate the development towards war, while they may take advantage of existing economic rivalries and national hatreds to provoke wars, yet, these rivalries exist *independently of them.* Capitalists, as individuals, could all be pacifists—yet wars would continue. A good case could be made out to show that the majority of capitalists today are opposed to war, since they consider, rightly or wrongly, that the expense and destruction involved nullify any territorial or economic gains which might be won. But they are caught up in a system which takes little note of their intentions, and whether they are 'bellicose' or 'peace-loving' makes no difference in the long run. Economic rivalries continue, and they are finally forced into a position where they either have to abdicate in favour of a foreign ruling class, or declare war.

They *may* wish for peace, a high standard of living for the workers, happiness for everyone—but these things are absolutely incompatible with class ownership and commodity-production.

De-humanization and Increasing Irrationality

Socialists are not blind to the ethical and moral aspects of society. However, they realize that to talk of 'better human beings' or a 'change of heart' is putting the cart before the horse. Capitalism fosters and encourages anti-social tendencies; with poverty and degradation it breeds greed and crime. From the cradle to the grave, the majority of society has not the

slightest chance of *living*—they merely *exist*, and very badly at that. Human beings are not recognized as such—they are tied to the factory and the office, their energies are valued like all other articles, as something to be bought and sold. In a society based on the class ownership of the means of life by a small parasitic minority, everything is judged in terms of the balance-sheet. Capitalism, symbolized by contraceptives and atom bombs, commercializes the most personal relationships.

"The bourgeoisie... has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his 'natural superiors,' and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash-payment.'" Thus wrote Marx and Engels in the "Communist Manifesto."

Capitalism has induced the workers to subscribe wholeheartedly to its phoney values. The slogans of the Capitalist class—'making good,' 'starting from the bottom,' 'being a good citizen,' are inculcated from the earliest moment. The head-fixing industry—the schools, the family, the radio, the cinema, the press and the pulpit—has made them believe that they should be humble rather than proud, that they are 'inferior,' that the experts 'know best.' It has discouraged independent thinking.

You are told that 'Socialism means Uniformity and Regimentation.' Look around you. Capitalism, in every one of its aspects means this, and encourages the shoddy and the shabby, the mediocre and the substitute. Everything, for the workers, is cheap and nasty. A look at any suburban street will show you what uniformity means!

Capitalism, by perverting and suppressing man's social behaviour, by docketing, labelling, categorizing, pigeon-holing every action and every emotion, by refusing millions of young people an outlet for their sexual desires, by making greed and shady dealings essential virtues if you are to 'succeed,' by robbing the workers' life of all variety and colour, leads directly to increasing irrationality. Mental disturbances and crime are on the increase, and this will continue as long as Capitalism lasts.

How, when millions are deprived of everything but the barest necessities, when other millions have not even got those, can we be surprised at this? Moralising about man's 'wickedness,' or about 'bestial nations,' will not solve the problem. Sadism-finding pleasure in inflicting pain—such as is manifested in varying degrees in Concentration or Detention Camps everywhere, is not due to any inherent biological or 'national' perversity. Workers who try desperately and blindly to find some escape from their drab and dreary lives, where they are always kept in subjection, turn to such means of escape.

We have dealt with a few aspects of Capitalism. Such important questions as WASTE and General Inefficiency, had to be left out of account. But enough has been said. *Capitalism has outlived its usefulness, is a brake on progress, breeds poverty and unemployment, is inseparable from war, reduces the workers to appendages of the machine, is incompatible with a life worth living, and must be abolished if humanity is to survive.*

CHAPTER III.

What Is Socialism?

Socialism as a system of society is based on three essentials:

1. Common or social ownership of the means and instruments of production—mines, factories, land, transport, etc.—and their democratic control by and in the interests of the whole of society.
2. Production for USE, and not for profit.
3. Distribution of the wealth thus produced on the principle: FROM EACH ACCORDING TO HIS ABILITIES; TO EACH ACCORDING TO HIS NEEDS.

Certain consequences follow from this definition: Socialism is CLASSLESS and INTERNATIONAL. It cannot be imposed by a small minority on an unwilling population. It is incompatible with dictatorship. As the workers' interests all over the world are the same, i.e., the dispossession of the Capitalist class, and as Capitalism in its international ramifications is destroying the last vestiges of backward economy in the East and the Balkans, giving rise to the same problems, so Socialism must be world-wide. Socialism in one country, or national socialism, is a contradiction in terms.

While we can outline the essentials of Socialism, and can also put forward general principles on which the moral and ethical ideas of such a society will be based, we have always refused to provide an exact blueprint of every detail of Socialism. This has led to the charge of 'being merely destructive' or 'not being practical.'

The charge is not justified. Even if we wanted to, we cannot provide a Socialist blueprint, for two very good reasons. First, it is obvious that OUR conception of what this or that detail might be MUST be coloured by present-day, capitalist ideas. Socialists live in capitalist society, are influenced by it, and cannot escape from it into an ivory tower. Hence our ideas would needs be distorted by present-day concepts.

Secondly, to lay down rigid schemes today is futile because of the time factor. What will be the social conditions when Socialism is established? How far will State Capitalism have evolved? What new inventions and ideas will be available? These are questions we cannot answer definitely. For instance, a short time ago, only a handful of specialists were concerned with atomic energy. Today, the possibility of this being used for industrial purposes exists, and while Capitalism has only employed it as a weapon of destruction, its possibilities under Socialism might be tremendous. It could reduce the working day, provide increased leisure, make whole industries obsolete. Tomorrow another revolutionary discovery may be made. In brief, the social and economic conditions, the technical possibilities of today, are likely to be quite different from those at the time of the Socialist Revolution.

Socialism will give rise to problems of its own. It does not offer you an earthly paradise flowing with milk and honey, where all friction will be abolished. These problems will be dealt with by Socialist society.

We do assume then, simply, that people living in a rational society will be able to deal with their problems in a rational manner. This statement seems to annoy quite a few. Let us see what lies behind this assumption: Socialists—and Scientists generally—maintain that people at birth are neither 'good' nor 'bad,' that they are 'neutral,' that their character and behaviour is shaped by a combination of *Social Environment and Hereditary Biological Factors*. The biological factors, however, are not fixed. They again are conditioned by environment. But even those that are constant, can be controlled to an increasing extent by man. Bio-chemistry has shown us that the functions of the glands and the hormones can be artificially influenced, that we can change 'character' by the injection of drugs, that we can now attack insanity. Under Socialism, science will be untrammelled and the possibilities it offers are beyond our wildest dreams.

If, then, we alter the environment radically, if Education, Public Opinion, and Society, all advocate and teach Social Behaviour, such behaviour will become commonplace. We do not place any reliance on men becoming angels—but under Socialism, if you did something for the community you would benefit yourself.

Now, many objections to Socialism spring from the strange notion that people would behave in an absolutely insane manner. Perhaps we may quote a personal experience: At a Socialist meeting there was an old gentleman who seemed interested. Came Question Time. With a worried frown, he asked—and he was perfectly sincere—"But, Mr. Speaker, what would you do if everyone wanted to fly to the North Pole at the same time?"

Everybody smiled. It wasn't really funny. In an extreme form, he had put the sort of question we get again and again. Both assumptions then—that Socialism will be unable to solve the problems that will arise under it or that Socialism will automatically have a pat answer to the most unlikely contingencies—are false. Socialism, in the final analysis, gives men A CHANCE TO LIVE AS HUMAN BEINGS. We say that *given* a sane society, which permits mankind to lead a full life, makes social behaviour the order of the day, provides food, clothing and shelter in abundance, identifies for the first time the interests of the individual with those of the community—*given Socialism*—men will behave as rational beings and will NOT all desire to fly to the North Pole at the same time.

What Socialism Implies

With the end of Capitalism, all capitalist relationships will vanish. International production for use under common ownership, implies the abolition of buying and selling. In a classless society there will be no one to sell to and no group of people to buy from. As there are no employers or employees, as exploitation of man by man will be ended, there can be no wages system. Wages, of course, mean that somebody is working for somebody else—they imply rich and poor, two classes. To talk of wages under Socialism is ridiculous. *...Wherever you have Wage-Labor and Capital you have Capitalism.* Money will also vanish. It has not always existed, and with common ownership there is no need for it. The State will wither away. It arose with the advent of class-divisions and private property. It is not something standing above society, benevolently regulating everything for 'the common good,' but rather is it a coercive power used to enforce and uphold the rule of whatever section of the Capitalist class has the upper hand. It maintains 'law and order,' but this term is but a misnomer for Capitalist property interests. Other coercive forces, such as the army, navy and police force, will also vanish.

The terrific waste of Capitalism due to its social anarchy and the impossibility of planning, will disappear. The vast horde of workers engaged today in producing senseless luxuries for their masters, or engaged in administering Capitalism, will be diverted to productive industry. There will be no bank-clerks, commercial travellers, advertising copywriters, domestic servants, etc.

Science at last will be able to make real progress. Every new invention that further eases work and reduces the hours of labour will then be a real blessing, instead of today where so-called labour-saving devices put but a greater strain on the worker and lead to technological unemployment. "Man, at

last the master of his own form of social organisation, becomes at the same time the lord over Nature, his own master—free.” (F. Engels.)

Economic changes of such revolutionary character will be followed by changes in the moral, ethical, artistic and sexual ideas of society. If we had the space, we could give some outline of these changes. But, on the whole, what Frederick Engels wrote about changes in sexual relationships is a perfect answer to those who are worried about blueprints:

“What we can now conjecture about the way in which sexual relations will be ordered after the impending overthrow of capitalist production is mainly of a negative character, limited for the most part to what will disappear. But what will there be new? That will be answered when a new generation has grown up: a generation of men who never in their lives have known what it is to buy a woman's surrender with money or any other social instrument of power; a generation of women who have never known what it is to give themselves to a man from any other consideration than real love, or to refuse to give themselves to their lover from fear of economic consequences. When these people are in the world, *they will care precious little what anybody to-day thinks they ought to do; they will make their own practice and their corresponding public opinion about the practice of each individual,—and that will be the end of it.*” (Origin of the Family, Current Book Distributors Edition, page 56, our italics.)



PART II.

CHAPTER IV.

Some Questions

Having briefly examined Capitalism and Socialism, we can now answer a few common questions.

(cp. also “Questions of the Day,” issued by the Socialist Party of Great Britain. We do not wish to copy this booklet, and therefore, we have, as far as possible, avoided questions answered there, and when we mention them, it is merely in the form of brief statements rather than full answers.)

What Is The Difference Between Socialism and Communism?

None. The two words are synonymous—one means SOCIAL, the other COMMON ownership.

Briefly, at the time Marx and Engels wrote the Communist Manifesto, 1847, they called themselves ‘Communists’, in order to distinguish scientific Socialism from various utopian schemes flourishing under the name of ‘Socialism.’ Throughout their works, however, they used the two expressions indiscriminately and never suggested that there was any difference. Later, Engels used Socialism exclusively.

With the advent of Bolshevism to power in Russia, the various political parties that were formed under the spell of the Russian Revolution adopted the name of ‘Communists’ and posed, in contradistinction to the Social-Democratic parties, as revolutionaries. Gradually, as it became increasingly difficult to hide the fact that Russia was evolving a tyrannical form of State-Capitalism at breakneck speed, the Communist International put across the idea that there *is* a fundamental difference. Wages, wage differentiations, stocks and shares, increasing class-distinctions, piece-work, rouble-millionaires—all these are explained away as features of SOCIALIST society. The slogan of the Russian constitution—“to each according to his WORK”—is palmed off as a Socialist slogan. All these features, they tell us, will disappear in the higher stage—Communism. With the tremendous means of propaganda at their disposal, and the magic spell which the word ‘Russia’ casts over millions of workers, this idea has become widely accepted.

It has not the slightest basis in fact, or in the theories of Marx and Engels. The Communist Parties are neither Socialist nor Communist, they are parties representing the interests of the Russian bureaucracy and their aim is State Capitalism.

Is State Ownership Socialism?

No. State ownership or control of the means of production (variously labelled ‘State Socialism,’ ‘National Socialism,’ ‘Socialism in one country,’ ‘Public ownership,’ ‘Nationalization,’ ‘Socialization,’ etc.) bears no relation to Socialism. The basic features of capitalism remain. “The workers remain wage-workers—proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with.” (Engels.)

State Capitalism, which is the correct term, is a development of Capitalist society, going hand in hand with the squeezing out of the smaller fry, the concentration of wealth into fewer hands, the increase in gigantic horizontal and vertical combines, trusts and monopolies.

Whether the worker is exploited by the State or by a private employer makes little difference to him, as working conditions are much the same. As for the individual capitalist, nationalization is often in his interest, whether he realizes this or not. He exchanges stocks and shares for bonds carrying a fixed interest. While the profit may be smaller, it is steady and guaranteed by the Government. It is also noticeable that many industries are being nationalized after they can no longer be run at a profit by private employers. The coal industry in England is a case in point.

The confusion arises from a false identification of 'The State' with 'The Community.' The modern state is only the executive committee of the ruling class, and represents *their* interests, not those of the workers.

Whether, on the whole, State Capitalism is 'progressive' is an academic question. Socialists point out that while the label changes, the contents remain the same. (For a detailed treatment of this, see the pamphlet "Nationalisation or Socialism?")

Why Are There So Many Different 'Socialists'?

It is not hard to find the answer. The most reactionary politicians, like Hitler, called themselves 'National Socialists.' Russia, with glaring economic inequalities, a complete absence of democracy, is labelled 'Socialist.' The Labour Parties everywhere are dubbed, or claim to be, 'Socialist.' This is no pure accident. On the one hand it is a good sign. It reveals the desire of the workers, a vague and confused desire, for a different society. On the other hand, this desire is used by the ruling class in the hope of taking the sting out of the genuine socialist movement by labelling schemes of reforming Capitalism 'Socialism.'

Up to now, they have succeeded to a large extent. How many workers all over the world have become cynical and fed up with any kind of politics because they realized that under their 'Socialist' governments they are as badly off as before.

How many of the alleged 'Communists' of Germany—five million strong—joined the Nazis because they wanted 'action' and were tired of talking? Hitler, in his conversations with Rauschnig (see: Germany's Revolution of Destruction) pointed out that it was quite easy for the Nazis to make converts from the Communist Party.

Don't be taken in by labels, by window-dressing! Always ask yourself: what are the real social conditions in any given country? Is there buying and selling, wages, money, banks? Are there classes? If so, Capitalism prevails. What interests

do its alleged working class parties really represent? Do they engage in compromise, in wire-pulling? Do they promise to abolish unemployment and poverty without overthrowing the present system? Do they appeal on a programme for patching up Capitalism? If so, they stand for Capitalism.

These are the questions you must ask yourself. Only thus, equipped with socialist knowledge, can you distinguish between the real and the sham.

CHAPTER V.

How Do We Differ From Other Parties?

The founding of the S.P.G.B. in 1904, and of its companion parties at a later date, was no mere dispute over words. Readers should look up Chapter 1 of 'Questions of the Day,' where the events leading to the founding of the party are dealt with.

First, the companion parties of Socialism are the only political organisations firmly based on a definite set of principles. They are the only parties that clearly define the END (Socialism) and the MEANS by which to achieve it. Means and ends, in our opinion, cannot be separated.

Our opponents on 'the left' fall roughly into two groups: The obvious reformists and the 'revolutionary reformists.' None of them would agree to our definition of socialism—"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." Some would add 'common ownership of the means of exchange' which sounds harmless enough, but really implies buying and selling, and with this, money; with money, wages; with wages employers and employees—in fact negates a CLASS-LESS society. Others would object to 'democratic control.' The obvious reformists — Labour Parties — are the larger parties. The smaller group comprises parties and individuals who believe that you can advocate 'Socialism' and at the same time have a programme of immediate demands. They are such parties as the Independent Labour Party in England, the groups comprising the Trotskyist '4th International' etc. The Stalinists zig-zag between these two groups. To a superficial reader these must seem Socialists. Do they not analyse and condemn capitalism? Certainly. But their conception of Socialism is different from ours, and, in the final analysis, turns out to be nothing else but State-Capitalism dressed up in various shades of red.

How To Get Socialism

There are three fundamental prerequisites for the establishment of Socialism:—

(1) The means of production must have developed to such a stage that they can be used to provide food, clothing and shelter and all necessities of life for all mankind, and can be operated by the workers. This *economic* prerequisite, Capitalism has achieved, and it no longer constitutes a serious problem.

(2) The majority of workers must understand what Socialism is and what it implies.

(3) They must organise to get control of the machinery of the State in order to introduce Socialism. (This does not mean that the majority of the workers must be members of the Socialist Party.)

These two SOCIAL prerequisites are not present today. Socialism, as understood by Marx and ourselves, cannot be imposed from above on an ignorant or unwilling population. "All previous historical movements were movements or minorities or in the interests of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority in the interest of the immense majority." (The Communist Manifesto, Workers' Educational Bureau Edition, page 37, our italics.)

Now let us glance at some other theories:—

The Reformists

We need not spend much time on the obviously reformist organisations, such as the Labour Party. (Cp.: "Is Labour Government the Way to Socialism?") Their object is to make capitalism work in the interests of the workers by partly controlling it. It can't be done. At times, in order to attract votes, they use platitudinous phrases of a socialist nature. Their record, however, speaks for itself. But what of those parties that seem to be more revolutionary, that profess a Socialist objective? We have already seen that their 'Socialism' is but a thinly veneered State Capitalism. Their argument runs as follows: "We must have a mass-basis. In order to get this, we must attract the workers. But the workers aren't interested in long-range objectives, they want immediate improvements—higher wages, shorter hours, family allowances, free medicine schemes, etc. Then, having thus got a mass following, we shall use it to introduce Socialism."

The only difference in reformist programmes is one of degree. When the avowedly capitalist parties, will, say consider

an old age pension of 30/- a week adequate, the Labour Party makes the 'socialist' demand of 35/-. The 'Communists' immediately set up a wild howl and demand £2/5/—not to be outdone, the Trotskyists and other 'militant' groups will show how r-r-revolutionary they are by demanding £4 and a sliding scale. In the end, the old age pensioner gets 32/6, by which time prices have probably risen so as to make even this meagre increase ineffective. Every organisation claims to have achieved a great victory.

These parties often attract a mass-following, but it is on a purely reformist basis. *A party can never move faster than the understanding of its members.* Appeals for 'United Fronts' and 'Progressive Policies' are tactics which lead, sometimes, to success—not success for the socialist case, but success for the leaders in these organisations. Instead of emancipating the workers, they only emancipate themselves. Their members are only united on the vaguest phrases—there is no guarantee that they will ever desire socialism. Should the party suddenly decide that NOW was the time to start propagating Socialism—and up to now it has always been 'to-morrow'—the mass-following of reformists would melt away.

Our fundamental objection, then, is this: Workers attracted on such a basis will not desire socialism, will lose all interest they might ever have had; will waste years and years advocating some petty reform, only to find that wherever they 'cure' one evil of capitalism, two others crop up in its place. It is also noteworthy that many of the reforms advocated by 'left' organisations are put into practice by avowedly capitalist organisations which are thus able to claim credit for them.

For a full analysis of the socialist case, and of the nature of reforms our readers are referred to the chapter 'Social Reforms' in 'Questions of the day.'

Where Leaders Lead

In addition to placing their trust in reforms, all other organisations believe in leadership, and often account for the obvious failure of reformist policies by saying: "You had the wrong leaders! If you had good, MILITANT leaders—well—things would have been different!" This line of reasoning is a speciality of the Communists and Trotskyists.

We do not advocate following any leaders—"good" or "bad." Leaders can only flourish in an organisation which doesn't know what it wants, or where it is going. Only with ignorance at the bottom can there be leaders. As a matter of fact, the word is a misnomer. Leaders never 'lead' in the sense that they

suddenly are able to impose ideas on the majority of their followers. They merely *reflect* the ignorance of their following, and use this ignorance. A leader can't be an educator, for, were he to teach his followers, he would automatically undermine his own position. Thus it is in the interests of leaders to keep the membership docile and ignorant.

In the Companion Parties of Socialism, there is no leadership, but there is a delegation of function. The Executive does what its name implies—executes the will of the whole membership, by which it is controlled. Branch Secretaries, Editorial Committees, Parliamentary Candidates, etc., are all responsible to the party as a whole, and if the membership disagrees with any of their actions, they can be replaced.

"Democratic Centralism."

A special form of leadership theory is that of Lenin mislabelled 'Democratic Centralism.' This conceives of the socialist party as an elite, a small minority. This small minority must be composed of 'professional revolutionaries,' and must be rigidly organised on the principles of a general staff. The masses, which according to this theory, can never understand Socialism, are to be used by the party. The elite, ruthless and unscrupulous, will 'take charge' when a 'revolutionary situation' arises, and will impose Socialism on the masses. The party is urged to use any trickery to achieve its ends.

Stalin, and Stalinism, is the logical outcome of such a concept. A party rigidly controlled from the top must have a general, who becomes the dictator. Now, whatever else Socialism means, it certainly means Democracy, i.e., majority rule *with the fullest possible safeguard for the expression of minority opinion*. And, if we have learnt anything from Russia, it is surely that we have been right when we say that Socialism cannot be imposed on the workers against their will. Even where the economic conditions are ripe for it, the workers must still understand what this tremendous social change means.

Trotsky and his followers, while they repudiate Stalin, claim to be the inheritors of Lenin. Whether they are or not, their theories and practices are just as dictatorial and anti-Socialist as Stalin's are. In passing, it may be noted that this theory with its contempt for the masses, its concept of a specially trained elite, comes very close to the Leader-principle of the Nazis.

There are, of course, many other alleged roads to Socialism. We have not the space to deal with them here. The above, alone or in conjunction with secondary points, represent the most important ones which are opposed by

The Socialist Attitude

The Companion Parties of Socialism

Reject anything short of socialism—a classless, international, fully democratic society based on the common ownership of the means of production, production for use and the principle: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

Reject any conception of Socialism which implies rule by an elite, a clique, a minority or personal dictatorship.

Reject the idea that means and ends can be separated, that trickery, lying and political scheming can be used to achieve Socialism.

Reject the concept of the "lesser evil" and are opposed to the philosophy embodied in "half a loaf is better than no bread," which leads to opportunism and political compromise.

The Companion Parties of Socialism hold that—

The majority of workers must understand what Socialism is, what it implies, and must desire it. They must organise politically to achieve it.

They must get control of Parliament and the machinery of the State and transform these coercive powers into means of emancipation.

The emancipation of the working-class must be the work of the working-class itself, and cannot be brought about for them by leaders.

The Socialist Party must reflect these principles. It must be entirely democratic, opposed to political trading and constituted of Socialists only.

The interests of the working and the capitalist class all over the world are irreconcilably opposed to each other, in peace or in war.

Political parties express class interests. The Socialist Party expresses the interests of the working-class. Hence it opposes all parties that work, openly or otherwise, for the continuance of Capitalism. It maintains that unity must be based on socialist knowledge and rejects temporary alliances, boring from within, and united fronts with non-socialist organisations.

If we were to express our views in one sentence, we would say: **YOU CAN'T HAVE SOCIALISM WITHOUT SOCIALISTS.** The business of a Socialist Party, then, is to make Socialists. Therefore, our programme, immediate and long-range, is always Socialism—and nothing else.

The Day To Day Struggle

During the last few decades, capitalists, especially the big firms, have increasingly recognized that to increase the efficiency of the worker, it is better not to drive him too hard—or, rather, to drive him harder but don't let him see it.

Canteens, health services, recreation facilities, music while you work, houses provided by the firm—these are on the increase. Are we to conclude that the capitalist class has gone 'soft', that these facilities have arisen out of the goodness of their hearts?

Nothing of the kind. The latest lackies of Capitalism, the 'industrial psychologists,' or 'efficiency experts,' have transformed exploitation into a fine art. They have shown that *improved conditions—up to a certain point—lead to greater efficiency and to increased profits*. A longer working week, for example, is usually accompanied not by a RISE but rather by a FALL in output. These improvements are a two-edged weapon. They make the worker more 'contented,' i.e., more servile and less likely to 'give trouble.' If a worker lives in a company-owned house, on which he has to pay instalments, he will be very reluctant to strike or leave his job. He is tied to the factory. Provident funds, etc., achieve the same purpose. In spite of large initial expenditure (often saved in taxes) these improvements pay profits in the long run. They reduce the labour-turnover, decrease the danger of strikes, eliminate inefficiency and absenteeism by a health service in the factory and so on.

By cutting the cost of subsistence they often lead to actual wage-reductions.

Thus, even on the industrial field, many of the alleged beneficial reforms are of a dubious character.

On the job, the main fight should always be for increased wages. In this struggle, socialists take part at all times, both inside and outside their trade unions.

At the same time, they point out that this struggle grows increasingly difficult, that the strike-weapon tends to lose efficiency, that, at best, such activities can act as a brake on capitalist tendencies, but can never attack the cause or arrest the development.

The spread of socialist understanding and the rise of the general level of class consciousness, will, long before there is a majority of socialists, induce the capitalist class to grant increased wages and better conditions in the vain hope of staving off socialism.

Political Reforms

We have already partly dealt with this, and here make only a brief statement and give extracts from the chapter 'Social Reforms' in 'Questions of the Day.'

We distinguish between reforms of an industrial nature, i.e., brought about by economic activities in the factory, on the job, and political reforms brought about by legislation. We have shown that an appeal on the basis of a reform programme cannot lead to Socialism.

Capitalism can be compared to a poodle dog. You can shave off the front part of the poodle, or its back, you can let it grow a new fancy coat, dye its hair, or tie coloured ribbons all round. Yet—it was a poodle and it will remain one and behave like one, whatever external alterations in its appearance take place. So with Capitalism. In spite of the 1001 reforms on the statute book, the *essential position of the workers and the basis of the system is not affected*.

It is not the business of a Socialist Party to reform capitalism or to help it to "solve" insoluble problems. Our job is to make enough socialists so that they can abolish it. We do not maintain that NO reform can be of benefit to the working-class. Hence we are not opposed to reforms *as such*. Nevertheless, quite a few of the political reforms which seem to be of working-class benefit, turn out to be not so when examined closely.

"Reforms such as Unemployment and Health Insurance, Old Age Pensions, etc., are designed to relieve the pressure on the local authorities, and, incidentally, pacify the workers by removing the pauper stigma. Such measures being organised on a national scale, spread the burden over the entire Capitalist class. They are thought to be more economical and to simplify the work of administration." (Questions of the Day, p.19.)

Better education in practice means increased efficiency *or* a profit-producer.

A National Minimum Wage means the sack for the less efficient workers, similarly, agitation for 'less taxes' or 'cheaper houses,' or 'cheaper food' sound very attractive. However, as wages are finally determined by the cost of subsistence, it is clear that "a reduction in the cost of living means a reduction in wages."

PART III.

CHAPTER VI.

The Question of Unity

We have attempted to show you the difference in the object and policy of the Socialist Parties to that of other organisations. Objections to Socialism we cannot deal with here, but we shall examine more closely the two most common criticisms of our position.

"Granted," says our critic, "that there is a real difference between you and the others, surely you have yet some things in common and could unite for *specific* objects?"

The Companion Parties of Socialism do not revel in isolation for its own sake, as our critics assume. The pleasures of being a voice in the wilderness are purely imaginary. It is not because we are sectarians that we refuse to unite with non-socialists, but because we believe we have profited by the mistakes of other organisations.

Let us look a bit closer at this 'United Front.' In order to be united and to present a common front, the parties must be *united* on some basis. Now, this basis cannot be Socialism, as the front was not formed for that purpose. It is opposition to some particular effect of Capitalism—it may be war, or unemployment or fascism. Divergent political elements have sunk their differences for the time being. But sooner or later Capitalism throws out a challenge to them and they are forced to take a definite stand on some subject quite different from the one they united on. Usually *they break up quicker than they were formed.*

Again, if Socialists were to join such a front, they would be in a small minority, completely swallowed up by the others. Thus they would be unable to control or even considerably influence the organisation. Hence they might be committed to actions of not only a non-socialist, but actively anti-socialist character.

Further, such organisations deal only with effects but never with causes. Even if they succeed in removing one particularly glaring evil, two others crop up in its place, or, the very same evil re-appears again! How much better to employ the time thus wasted in chasing will-o'-the-wisps in propagating Socialism, which will remove Capitalism with *all* its evils!

To summarize: Unity can only be established on a sound basis. This basis is lacking in a United Front, which is a misnomer. The organisations are usually ineffective, and even if

they achieve their object deal only with effects, not with causes. Socialists would have no control over the organisation.

But our objections go deeper. When we examine the history of 'Unity at any price,' we find that it often leads to, or encourages *the very evils which it is intended to oppose.*

Are We Armchair Philosophers?

Our critic is not convinced. Even if he admits our case up to now, he will still shake his head and say: "Yes—but—the workers want something NOW and you can't get over that. You are armchair philosophers studying the intricate problems of Marxian economics while the workers want higher wages!"

We agree that the workers want something NOW. But, and that is the point—WHAT do they want? The unpleasant truth is, of course, that they do NOT desire Socialism but THAT THE MAJORITY OF WORKERS EVERYWHERE STILL SUPPORT CAPITALISM. They feel that something is wrong. They desire peace and security. In order to get these, they try every political party which promises to give them these things. When they have tried one, and it has failed, as it must fail, they 'give the other bloke a go.' This may seem a crude analysis of elections, but it is true. At election times, up to now, the issue has always been: WHO shall administer Capitalism? HOW shall it be administered? The difference between the actual performance of all parties is very small. It is a case of Tweedledum and Tweedledee. The only issue they are really divided on is whether the capitalist system should be administered with a dash of state control or not. The intentions of the Labour Party may be the very best—it may desire real improvements for the workers. But the record of all Labour Governments brings home the fundamental point *that capitalism simply cannot be administered in the interests of the working class, whatever party is in control.*

The issue then, is simple, once we analyse the problem which faces the Socialist. On the one hand a party based on a reformist policy, uttering vague socialist phrases, grows quickly and achieves power. On the other hand, you have a Socialist Party which appeals on the one demand—Socialism—and which grows very slowly. What then are we to do? Can we not achieve Socialism and *at the same time* attract a large number of workers on a programme of immediate demands?

This question can only be answered by looking at the fate of those organisations which have tried the policy. Not only have they all failed to bring Socialism any nearer, but they have even made the way to Socialism more difficult. The most outstanding example is surely the pre-Hitler German Labour

Movement. One of the strongest 'left' parties in the world was the Social Democratic Workers' Party (S.D.A.P.) The theoreticians of the Social-Democrats—Karl Kautsky, Hilferding, Otto Bauer, etc. — were at times amongst the most brilliant interpreters of Marxist theory. The party had strong trade unions to support it. Yet it collapsed like a house of cards and the Communists did no better. This has been cited as the 'failure of Marxism.'

What are the facts? If we examine the ACTIONS of the party, if we turn from the dazzling flights of theoretical fancy of their monthly organs whose readership was confined to a few, to their popular daily press, read by millions of workers, we can see one of the main causes.

It is apathy and cynicism on the part of the rank and file. Where was the difference between the Social Democrats and the avowedly capitalist parties? Did they not ally themselves with the Junker generals, with the Catholic Centre Party, and with the senile militarist Hindenburg? Their 'alternative' to Capitalism was... Capitalism. They had been given a chance to run the system. They *had* run it, on the only basis it can be run.... a capitalist basis. They had not been built up on a policy of demanding Socialism, but one of reforms. Six million unemployed in Germany, two million in Britain, ten in the U.S.A., 300,000 in Australia... these were the results of capitalism, not of the particular administration of it by 'progressive' or 'reactionary' parties.

Yes, the Social Democrats HAD the mass basis. They had not 'isolated' themselves, they had been 'practical.' And the result? To the misery of Capitalism administered by Social-Democrats, the workers preferred the misery of State-Capitalism administered by the Nazi gangsters... at least they would give them work and bread!

The Social-Democrats had taken a 'short cut'. Their following consisted of millions of workers, who, on May 1st, listened to revolutionary sounding phrases and shouted: "Workers of the World Unite!" Certainly, there were Socialists within their ranks, who believed that they should 'work from within.' Whether they have learnt their lesson only the future will show.

"Armchair philosophers" had become "practical politicians" and Socialism had been put into cold-storage. One day perhaps—but not now. The more 'practical' the party became, the shadier its political opportunism. No wonder their supporters were apathetic. No wonder Hitler could attract so many despairing workers with his promise of 'Action.' (Of course, we are not maintaining that the Social-Democrats *caused* Nazism. But their activities, and even more those of the Communist Party, helped to pave the way for it.)

Even if the whole German Labour Movement had been in a 'United Front' the result would not have been different. As we have seen, the causes of all the evils of capitalism are left untouched. Workers who have joined them also become apathetic and disillusioned. They've 'had enough of talking.' Thus, fronts "against Totalitarianism" make the workers prey for any political charlatan with a glib tongue. In the final analysis, instead of fighting it, they lead workers into a state of mind where they are *more susceptible to totalitarian propaganda.*

These then, are the consequences of taking 'taking a short cut.' We also would like to take one... but up to now all the alleged royal roads have led *away* from Socialism instead of towards it.

There is simply no alternative to the task of making Socialists. This is the most important lesson of the history of all reformist organisations. The charge of being 'armchair-philosophers' then, really means that we are not opportunist. To this we plead guilty.

But still... is there nothing we can do in the meantime? Are the workers to sit down and have their wages reduced? Are they to starve while Capitalism lasts? This, if we were to believe our opponents, is our attitude. We have already shown that the charge rests on the failure to distinguish between economic and political demands. First of all, it should be obvious, that even if we wished to avoid the day-to-day struggle, we HAVE to take part in it. It is not something created by socialist agitators, or something we can ignore, but part and parcel of capitalism. *Socialists, take part in every struggle in the economic field to improve conditions. They are as militant as anybody else.* But they realise that this struggle can never lead to the emancipation of the working class. They point out its limitations. That's why they are members of the Companion Parties of Socialism. The function of the *party* is to make Socialists, to propagate Socialism, and to point out to the workers that they must achieve their own emancipation. It does not say: "Follow us! Trust us! We shall emancipate you." No, Socialism must be achieved by the majority of the workers acting for themselves.

CHAPTER VII.

Is There Any Hope?

There are, at the time of writing, five Companion Parties of Socialism. The first one, the S.P.G.B., was formed in 1904. It is still a very small organisation, and its younger companion parties are even smaller. The sympathetic critics shrug their shoulders and exclaim "You may be a 100 per cent correct, but you'll never get anywhere."

Let us first look at the party from which the S.P.G.B. sprang, the Social Democratic Federation. Here we had the same old story—reformist policy combined with phrase mongering. Before the first World War, the S.D.F. was a large organisation. Today it is dissolved. Thousands of workers joined its ranks, to leave them disgusted and cynical. Its members got swallowed up by the first world-war which it supported, those that remained fell under the spell of the Russian Revolution. The S.D.F. is gone. The S.P.G.B., 'the impossibilists,' remains.

Those inclined to pessimism do not realize that we have made considerable progress. The party started off in a small bedroom, and it was said it wouldn't last for six months. It started off in an atmosphere of extreme hostility, its members were dubbed cranks and lunatics, its speakers were victimised and thrown into the pond at Hyde Park in 1914.

Today, the atmosphere is different. It has permanent headquarters; was able to carry on propaganda right through the second World War, which it opposed. Even at the height of the blitz there was no victimization, but large crowds and attentive audiences. Our papers are read all over the world. Yet, you will say our progress has been slow.

"It is true that this party has had little success. The main hindrance to Socialism is the entrenched position of the capitalist class, with their wealth, their control of the political machinery, and their power over propaganda, but an additional cause of the lack of progress of Socialism is the lack of comprehension on the part of various other people who have not understood that there is only one way to get Socialism. The whole field for Socialist propaganda has been confused by people who have said, and got others to believe, that the administration of capitalism, by Labour people, or by people calling themselves Socialists or Communists, is Socialism. That confusion has made Socialist propaganda doubly difficult." (E. Hardy, S.P.G.B., in a Debate with Mrs. B. Wootton." Should Socialists support Federal Union?" page 33.)

The party was badly battered by the first world-war, when many members had to go 'on the run.' The gradual disappearance of the belief in a "Socialist" Russia has left many workers in a hopeless, disillusioned mood. Thus we have had our time cut out in explaining what Socialism is NOT, rather than being able to concentrate on positive propaganda. Another reason for our slow growth is the fact that we do not indulge in emotional fire-works, but appeal to the reasoning powers of the workers. We emphasise that we cannot 'lead' the workers to Socialism, that they must do the job themselves. Thus we lack the glamorous aura of others.

Fundamentally, the reason for our slow growth lies in our conception and advocacy of Socialism, our lack of opportunism, our adherence to definite principles. The party is controlled democratically by its members. It is not perfect. There are differences of opinion, and personal factors assert themselves—though to a much lesser degree than in other parties. Yet, there has never been a split. Individuals have left, but they have not been able to take a sheep-like following with them, as we have no 'leaders.'

However, if we hoped to achieve Socialism ONLY by our propaganda, the outlook would indeed be bad. But it is Capitalism itself, unable to solve crises, unemployment and poverty, engaging in horrifying wars, which is digging its own grave. Workers are learning by bitter experience and bloody sacrifice for interests not their own. They are learning very slowly. Our job is to shorten the time, to speed up the process.

What Socialism Can Mean To You

We do not ask you to accept anything we have said. Be critical. Think for yourself. Examine our position, read our literature, ask your questions, come to our meetings!

If, then, we can convince you that we must deal with *causes*, that the abolition of Capitalism, private or State, and the establishment of Socialism is the only alternative to misery and mass murder, you will know what to do.

In our ranks you will find no self-styled leaders who do your thinking for you. There is very little glamour. There are no soft jobs, but plenty of routine work. Yet, being a Socialist DOES give you something NOW. The more Socialist understanding you acquire, the more will you be able to know the HOW and WHY of social development. You will hold the key to the door leading to peace and plenty for all mankind. A door that can only be opened when your fellow workers have the same key. Every new member you can get, every worker who becomes interested, is a step forward.

Socialism is a complete philosophy of life. It will affect your every day behaviour, and bring you into conflict with 1001 capitalist values which have been drummed into your ears. You will realize that your personal emancipation is bound up, indissolubly, with that of your class. You will see that your enemies are not the German, Japanese, Russian or other workers, not the Jews or the Aliens. That your enemy is always right next to you. It is the Capitalist class, not just one section, like the landlords or the bankers, but the whole lot—a class of parasites, void of any social usefulness.

When you become a Socialist you will exchange the sonolent escapism of Hollywood, the smug complacency of the Press and the pulpit, for knowledge of what the world is really like. You will shed your blinkers. Reality won't be very nice.

You will become impatient with your fellow-worker—but never forget that you, too, had to learn by bitter experience. You will have moments where everything seems hopeless, when you'll say: "What's the use?" But, strangely enough, you will carry on. We who are addressing these words to you are also members of the working-class. We write, and study, and speak in our spare time, after we have been exploited. WE don't claim any miraculous powers, we are not infallible authorities. Many of us had the same illusions as you may have now. Some of us, for a long time, thought that the Labour or Communist Parties were the workers' hope.

We wanted something now. We have learned better. NOW we want Socialism, and we know we can't get it through anybody else, that we must convince YOU—the majority.

When you tell us we lack numbers, we say, with Marx: "Numbers weigh only in the balance if united by combination and led by knowledge." (Inaugural Address, 1st International.)

When you tell us: "THEY will never learn!" we reply: "THEY? We are part and parcel of them, no better, no worse. We are workers and have learned—why shouldn't others do the same?"

Examine our case. Think for yourself. Then, maybe, the day will come, when you'll say: I am a Socialist.

And when *that day* comes, neither the Socialist Party nor anybody else need tell you what to do.

YOU WILL KNOW.

Book Reviews

"QUESTIONS OF THE DAY" (Publisher: S.P.G.B.)

An amazing lot of information has been crammed into the 107 pages of this attractively got-up booklet. Many of the questions uppermost in the mind of the worker are here lucidly analysed. Social Reforms are discussed, and, by means of many examples, their role in the development of Capitalism is shown. The booklet contains interesting histories of the British Labor, Liberal and Conservative Parties, besides dealing with the question of Russia and the "Communist" Party. Religion and Fascism are also discussed.

To this reviewer, however, the most valuable chapter is the one on "The Founding of the Socialist Party." This deals with the events of 1904 in the Social Democratic Federation; the fight of a small body of workers within that Party to make it a revolutionary one, and their realization that this could not be achieved from within. It shows for what reason the principles of the Companion Parties of Socialism were framed. The chapter provides invaluable lessons for the Socialist.

A slip occurs on page 89, in "Socialism and Racial Theories" where the "Australian Maori" is mentioned.

"NATIONALIZATION OR SOCIALISM?" (Publisher: S.P.G.B.)

There is little doubt that the majority of workers when they hear the word "Socialism" think of State control or ownership of industry. This pamphlet shows that Nationalization is not a socialist measure, nor in the interests of the workers. An excellent chapter on "The Passing of Competition and the Rise of Monopoly" provides a bird's-eye view of the development of British Industry. Other chapters show that sections of the Capitalist class, when expediency demanded it, have been the most avid advocates of Nationalization. "As a matter of history measures of nationalization have been the work of Liberal and Tory Governments and not of Governments which were, or claimed to be, hostile to capitalism." (p.45). The question whether there is a permanent tendency towards nationalization is also discussed. The pamphlet shows that workers under nationalization are not better off, and provides ample evidence, from the profits of nationalized industries that they "are not essentially

different from private ones—both kinds are a means by which the capitalist obtains his property income, out of the surplus value produced by the working class." (p.50) After dealing with "Compensation or Confiscation" and Marx's attitude towards the whole question, the booklet says: "All of these never-ending experiments in the control of capitalism leave untouched the working class problem of effecting a change of ownership, from private ownership to real ownership by the community and democratic control by the community." (p.67).

"IS LABOUR GOVERNMENT THE WAY TO SOCIALISM?"
(Publishers: S.P.G.B.).

It is heartening indeed to compare the get-up of S.P.G.B. pamphlets of only a few years ago, with this latest production. While the contents are the main thing, an attractive appearance is something not to be forgotten. In respect to modern lay-out and presentation, Socialists rather lagged behind till recently, but the books reviewed here show that this factor will no longer be neglected.

There are many members of the Australian Labor Party who, while admitting that it is not a socialist organization, yet maintain that it is an "instrument for achieving Socialism." This idea is carefully examined here. In a chapter "The Evolution of the Labour Party" we have a brief history of the British Labor Party, from its inception to the 1945 elections.

Of special interest to Australian readers will be the references to the record of some Australian Labor Governments.

The conclusion reached by this analysis is that "Labour supporters—as can be seen from the election addresses and speeches of Labour candidates—largely fail to appreciate the nature of capitalism. They do not see that the evil results of capitalism are the necessary result of the private ownership of the means of production and distribution. They believe that a Labour Government can keep capitalism but remove its evil consequences. This is a belief that actual, bitter experience will show to be an illusion." (p.24).

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Socialist Party of Canada:

P.O. Box 1751, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Socialist Party of Great Britain:

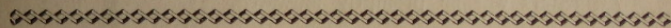
Rugby Chambers, 2 Rugby Street, London, W.C.1, England.

Socialist Party of New Zealand:

P.O. Box 62, Petone, New Zealand.

Workers Socialist Party of U.S.A.:

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