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SEPTEMBER, 1934

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and War

The Truth About  
Nationalisation of Banking

The Wheat Growers' Union

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ORGAN OF

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COMMUNIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA  
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# The Communist Review

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SEPTEMBER 1934

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## *The Drive Towards Fascism and War*

(By R. DIXON)

The Federal election campaign has become the occasion for intensifying the propaganda to the effect that Australia is well on the way to prosperity. Both Mr. Lyons and Mr. Stevens shout from the housetops that it was their administrations which brought the "turn in the tide."

It is true that there has been an improvement, but it has been on the basis of a slight upward movement on a world scale—a movement developing very unevenly. It would be the essence of stupidity to suggest, for instance, that either Messrs. Lyons or Stevens were responsible for the rise in the prices of wool, which was a saving grace for Australian capitalism. Also, it would be equally absurd to suggest that Lyons and Stevens are responsible for the fall in the prices of wool which has commenced, and which is causing consternation in the camp of capitalism, leading to the postponing of the wool sales in the hope that by some "act of Providence" wool prices will be maintained, for the fall in prices threatens to prick the prosperity bubble.

Despite the pretence and outward appearance of optimism the ruling class is very uncertain of the future. It has cause to be. The improvement taking place is very slow, unequal and shaky, and does not lead to the prosperity formerly experienced. Comrade Stalin, at the Seventeenth Party Congress of the C.P.S.U., in estimating the improvement taking place on a world scale, stated: "Apparently, what we are witnessing is the transition from the lowest point of decline of industry, from the lowest depth of the industrial crisis to a depression, not an ordinary depression, but to a depression of a special kind which does not lead to a new boom and flourishing industry, but which, on the other hand, does not force it back to the lowest point of decline."

The spokesmen of Australian capitalism realise that there can

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be no return of 1929 conditions. Bruce, during his recent visit, in dealing with what is now aptly called "quotamania" (the placing of quotas on imports), indicated that "at best" Australia could only expect a "standstill" trading agreement with Britain for the next two years and he advised that a drive be made to penetrate foreign markets. This was followed by Mr. Lyons' fear-inspired statement, "I have a feeling there is a crisis ahead . . . we must prepare before the storm breaks." Thus, beneath the surface appearance, extreme lack of confidence prevails in the camp of the employers.

The basis for all this, to a large extent, rests in the measures British imperialism is taking to impose quotas on Dominion imports. To-day, Britain provides the greatest single market for primary products in the world, and is, by far, the largest market for Australian products. In 1928, 42 per cent. of the total Australian exports went to Britain. Hence, it is obvious that any factor tending to restrict or limit the British market vitally affects Australian capitalism.

The changing policy of British imperialism is bound up with the tremendous sharpening of imperialist antagonism and with the frenzied armaments race. Capitalism is rushing the world headlong into the cataclysm of war. Preparation for war abroad and fascism at home is to-day the main element in the policy of capitalist governments. An integral part of the war preparations are the measures being taken by all European capitalist governments to develop extensive agricultural production with the object of encouraging an adequate supply of food in the event of war. The German submarine warfare brought British imperialism to the verge of defeat in the last war. In a future war greater difficulties will present themselves to maintain communications and feed the population. Hence, Major Elliott, the British Minister for Agriculture, and exponent of fascism, announces the policy of "agricultural self-sufficiency." A vigorous programme of agricultural development is being pursued, as a part of the war preparations.

The policy of strengthening the rear in order to wage war more effectively, whilst the main factor leading to the imposing of quotas on imports is, however, not the only factor. There also enters in here the struggle with U.S. imperialism for markets and control of the sources of raw materials, which, to quote the London "Times," is leading to a "new expression of accepted economic policy," namely, to a greater orientation in the direction of those

countries which are the main purchasers of British goods—such as the South American countries, notably Argentine, and also Denmark, in Europe. This "new expression" of economic policy means the jettisoning, to a large extent, of the Ottawa Agreement which, in theory, provided for the home producer first on the home market, the Empire producer second, and the foreign producer third. British policy now means the home producer first, and best purchasers of British goods second.

This policy directly hits Australian capitalism, which by means of high tariffs has so restricted British goods that to-day purchases amount to but little more than one-half of what Britain buys from Australia.

This country is very much dependent on the export of primary products, which comprise 95 per cent. of the total export trade; of this Britain takes 50 per cent. of the wheat export, and between 80 and 90 per cent. of the export of butter, beef, mutton, eggs and apples.

However, there is yet another aspect, namely, the overseas liabilities. Australia's position as a debtor nation, and with its credit at a low ebb, makes it imperative that it exports more than it imports, otherwise it must default. For instance, for the year ended June, 1933, British purchases from Australia amounted to £41,500,000, while Australian purchases from Britain amounted to £23,900,000, which leaves a balance of £17,600,000 in favor of Australia. However, Australian indebtedness in London on interest payments alone reaches approximately £36,000,000 yearly (Australian currency). Hence, despite the £17,600,000, trading balance, Australian capitalism has still to find another £18,400,000 to balance its payment. Unless it maintains a high rate of exports over imports Australia cannot pay. The British policy of quotas brings Australian capitalism once again to the doorstep of bankruptcy and default. Hence the cries of consternation and warning. Hence, Bruce's rush from England to Australia. Hence also the reason why we once again hear familiar terms, such as "industries must be organised to meet the crisis," etc., terms so frequently used in the months leading up to and marking the outbreak of the crisis which, when translated into action, meant the most vicious drive against the working class and culminated in that most infamous product of the Labor Governments—the Premiers' Plan.

The Australian working class and small farmers stand face to face with a more ruthless drive on their living standard—a drive

which will be accompanied by more open and deliberate fascist measures.

Restriction of production will hit hardest the small and middle farmers and will benefit the capitalist farmers. In the United States restriction meant not a lower yield but actually led to increased yield because it resulted in much more intensive cultivation of the smaller areas of land. This applied particularly to the capitalist farmers, who were able to use to a much greater degree intensive method of cultivation, fertilisers, etc.

Restriction is a policy of despair and bankruptcy. It is a monument to the incapacity of the capitalist class and its rule. When hundreds of thousands of Australian workers and farmers are on the verge of starvation, when there is more poverty and want than ever before, the only solution the capitalist class have to offer is to reduce production of the necessities of life—a policy which inevitably leads to greater privation. Nothing could more eloquently portray the rottenness of the capitalist system than this. Nothing could demonstrate more effectively the need for socialism. There is no solution to the crisis within the confines of the capitalist system which would benefit the working class and toiling farmers. Only the power of the Soviets, established on the basis of the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, offers a way out for the exploited and oppressed masses.

The whole situation is hastening the process of disintegration of the British Empire and is strengthening the contradictions between Australia and Britain. It also intensifies the squabbles in the camp of the ruling class. Thus, Dr. Page, the leader of the Country Party, in a recent speech described the British policy as "chaotic" and suggested that "Australia should give a lead to get Britain out of her state of indecision," otherwise, he forecasted the "disintegration of the British Empire." The lead Dr. Page proposes is for a drastic scaling down of the tariff, freer entry of British goods, and even allowing for free trade within the Empire. Such a policy is strongly resisted by the U.A.P. Already in 1931, when the U.A.P. was formed out of the flotsam and jetsam of Australian political life, with Lyons at the helm, it departed from the policy of low tariffs pursued by the former National Party, and thereby created the conditions for a decisive rift between the Country Party and the U.A.P. Since then, every country in the capitalist world, including the "traditional country of free trade," Britain, has joined in a mad

race to build tariff walls. There is and can be no return to free trade for capitalism. The U.A.P., basing itself upon the requirements of Australian finance capital, has become a party of high tariffs. The relations between the Country Party and the U.A.P. will not improve, but must grow worse, whilst ever the C.P. demands reductions in the tariff.

In reply to the British threat and application of quotas Mr. Lyons announces that the policy of the Government is to take measures to penetrate foreign markets and that the Federal Government will seek a modification of the Ottawa Agreement to this end. When it was suggested that this was an "anti-empire spirit" Mr. Lyons bitterly replied, "The obvious answer to the charge that the pursuit of foreign markets is an affront to empire spirit is the long list of foreign treaties already made by Britain." (Commercial Travellers' dinner, July 7.) This is just the point. Britain has pursued a policy despite Australia and against it. What is good for the goose might be good for the gander, but it does not get over the fact that it hastens the disintegrative process within the Empire.

The policy of "tune-in with England," sung with such gusto by Mr. Lyons in 1931, did not find the sympathetic response so fervently hoped for. Hence, the tune now is the search for foreign markets. It is necessary to examine this question.

In 1927, at the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U., Comrade Stalin stated, "The problem of markets is now the fundamental problem of capitalism." World trade improved until 1929, when the capitalist crisis developed.

In 1933 world trade was down to 34 per cent. of 1929, and the problem of markets has become tremendously acute. Every imperialist State is madly striving, by means of tariffs, quotas, and restrictions to drive foreign rivals out of its markets and to seize a part of the others' markets. The intense nationalism in economic policy is accompanied by the unleashing of bloody fascism, the uncontrolled race to build up armaments and the frenzied drive to war.

It is in such an atmosphere as this that Australian capitalism launches out in search of foreign markets—and in doing so turns its face towards the East, where imperialist contradictions are reaching breaking point. Thus, Mr. Latham visited the East only recently on a "mission of peace and goodwill." His "mission" became almost a joke. The hard-headed, coldly calculating Japanese

imperialists, fresh from bloody conquests in China, were convinced that whilst Latham may have had the emblem of peace on his tongue he had a trading agreement in his pocket. To them, as to all other imperialists, including the Australians, peace and goodwill are measured in terms of trade and markets.

However, Mr. Latham, after the manner of a preacher, rebuked them, demanding to know "Why should crude trading and economic relations destroy the amity between nations? . . . peace and goodwill is something which should rise above this." (Latham's speech at official welcome.)

However, there was something more behind Latham's sermonising. He was there to get markets and not to give. Japan is a country which buys from Australia three times more than it sells to Australia. Hence, the balance of trade is enormously in favor of this country. Already Japan had threatened to restrict Australian imports, unless a more equitable trading agreement was arrived at. Japan was, and is, in the position to do all the bargaining. Hence Latham's mission could have been nothing else than a "mission of peace and goodwill." As a trading delegation it had nothing to offer, nothing to bargain with.

What Japan threatens, Italy has already done. The accumulated balance of trade with Italy for this last 10 years amounts to £48,000,000 in favor of Australian capitalism. Mussolini has now called a halt and Australian imports are to be considerably reduced. Germany also has announced the restriction of Australian wool and other products. France, once a great wheat importer, has so developed wheat production that it now has a surplus for export. And so the vicious circle continues and becomes narrower. The knot of imperialist antagonisms tightens and threatens to break at any moment, plunging the world into the abyss of war.

Every country in the capitalist world is restricting imports by means of tariff walls, quotas, etc., and yet the export of goods becomes more vital for every developed capitalist country.

With Australian capitalism becoming more and more involved in the East it is evolving a foreign policy to meet this. The most outstanding feature of this is the growing anti-Soviet campaign. Only a few short months ago Australian capitalism regarded every act of Japanese imperialism with suspicion and fear. To-day, it

has become the champion of Japanese imperialism, justifying its every act of aggression, banditry, murder, provocation, maliciousness, hailing the puppet State of Manchukuo, where 30 million Chinese people are transformed into veritable slaves and are suppressed and tortured under the bloody heel of the Japanese militarists, as a "free and independent State," and are demanding, along with Japanese imperialism, the recognition of this puppet State of Manchukuo, by all the powers.

This sudden change of face finds its basis in the fact that the greatest stumbling block to the penetration and exploitation of the markets of the East is the growing Soviet movement. China is the greatest potential market in the world, and it is that "prize" which all the imperialist bandits are manoeuvring to seize. To-day the Chinese people are taking a hand and are commencing to transform China into a land of Soviets. The slogan of Soviets has become the symbol of freedom and independence to the Chinese masses, who greet it with growing enthusiasm and support. On the other hand the slogan "Soviets" strikes fear, consternation and hate in the camp of imperialism, which is mobilising all the most malignant forces of black reaction against the Soviets.

Japan is the greatest pillar of reaction and anti-Soviet force in the East. This fact, more than any other, accounts for the volte-face of Australian capitalism. When Latham visited the East on his "mission of peace and goodwill" he did not visit the U.S.S.R., which is also situated in the East, and which more than any other country is interested in peace. More than this, the Soviet Union is the greatest bulwark, the greatest single factor making for peace in the East, as well as in the West. One would imagine that if there was a grain of sincerity in the "mission of peace and goodwill" that the Soviet Union would have been that country to which it would have turned first and foremost. But this was not so. The "mission" turned to Japan, which has dismembered China and is even now waging war on the Chinese people, to that country which has engaged in every form of provocation against the Soviet Union in order to obtain a pretext to launch the intervention.

This fact, taken together with the pro-Japanese and anti-Soviet campaign, which has developed since the return of Latham, indicates that the "mission of peace and goodwill" was also directed against the Soviet Union.

The intense drive of Australian capitalism towards the reor-

ganisation of agriculture is being made for the purpose of more effectively waging the struggle for markets. But this struggle leads directly to war—war for a redivision of the world. Hence the increased expenditure on armaments. The Lyons Government allocates £4,400,000 for war purposes. The east coast of Australia is rapidly being fortified to a much higher degree. The railways are to be reorganised on a one-gauge basis. New air routes are being developed, and aerodromes laid down under the supervision of the military. The Melbourne Centenary celebrations are being made the occasion for military displays and for the development of a great wave of chauvinism throughout Australia.

The development of fascism proceeds parallel with the drive towards war. The mad orgies of fascism in Europe have been accompanied by the unloosening of terror on a wider scale in all capitalist countries. New laws are being introduced to deal with working class organisations, and more drastic steps are being taken to muzzle working class agitation and propaganda. Thus, the literature ban is being strengthened. Stevens is preparing his "Disloyal Organisations Bill." Restriction of freedom of activity for the working class is extended to the Domain, where literature sales and collections are prohibited. Attacks are now being launched against the Anti-War Movement and the Friends of the Soviet Union. All of these facts indicate the lines of development—the process of growth of fascism out of bourgeois democracy.

This whole picture reveals the rotten tottering structure on which the prosperity talk is based. It reveals more than this. It exposes the meaning of this so-called "returning prosperity" as—war, fascism, and greater burdens on the toiling masses.

The most despicable role in this situation is being played by the Labor Party. Long ago Lenin stated of the A.L.P. that "it was never a socialist party, even in words." To-day it has gone completely and openly to the side of capitalism, and the bankruptcy of capitalism is also the bankruptcy of the Labor Party. Extreme confusion marks the policy and slogans of the Labor Party. It has become the most extreme advocate of high tariffs for Australian capitalism and of free trade for all other countries. It has worked itself into paroxysms of frenzy at the action of British capitalism in instituting quotas and into a mad rage of white chauvinism against "Japanese competition." It claims the Roosevelt policy as being

identical with the "Lang Plan," and disputes with Stevens over the body. But the main success of the "New Deal" was the "ballyhoo" and to-day Roosevelt is reaping the hurricane of his windy sowing. The masses of U.S. workers and farmers are learning that the "New Deal" means the most colossal robbery of the poor in the interests of the rich. Their resentment is expressed in the greatest strike wave that has ever swept the American Continent and in the greatest mass movement of farmers in U.S. history. The Roosevelt Plan is a plan of fascism, war and robbery of the masses, and in this respect it resembles the Labor Party's policy.

The war programme of the Labor Party is revealed in the resolution proposed by a special committee set up by the last Easter Conference of the New South Wales Labor Party. A section of the resolution reads: "The committee believes that owing to the exposed nature of Australian trade routes, defence would be impossible until such time as Australia is capable of producing within her own territory every necessity for war, and for victualling an army and civilian population for a long period, and recommends that the tariff should be used to provide this security."

They are condemned out of their own mouths.

Tremendous issues confront the working class, and above all its revolutionary vanguard in the present stage of the struggle. Every available force must be seized upon to help wage the campaign to build the mighty united front of the working class for the struggle against fascism and war.

The starting point for this is a more unremitting struggle for the daily needs of the masses, a more consistent and careful yet ruthless struggle to shatter the positions of reformism in the working class—that blighting influence which disarms the workers and paves the way for the victory of fascism and for the waging of imperialist war. But this whole struggle of the working class against fascism, war and the capitalist offensive, is inevitably being carried forward, and must be carried forward more consistently, to the overthrow of the system which breeds poverty, misery, fascism and wars—to the revolutionary destruction of capitalism.

To-day it becomes a revolutionary duty to connect the struggle for the daily needs of the masses with our final aims, with our slogan for the social liberation of the toiling masses—Soviet power.

## The Truth about Nationalisation of Banking

(By L. SHARKEY)

"The Australian Labor Party is not a socialist workers' party, even in words," Lenin declared in reply to the European social-democrats who were attempting to use the electoral victories of the A.L.P. to "prove" that the way of socialism lay through parliament. It was a party of a purely liberal type that fulfilled tasks for the capitalists similar to those carried through by the liberal capitalist parties of other countries. Its main support in the working class is "the trade union officials," who are "everywhere peace-ful and subservient to capital, but particularly so in Australia," declared the great theoretician of the revolutionary working class. These words of Lenin are forcibly brought to one's mind after a perusal of the election declarations of the Labor Party leaders, Scullin and Beasley, and wading through Lang's book, "Why I Fight."

In none of these statements is there one single reference to the necessity for the struggle for socialism as the historic goal of the proletariat, not even a word to show that such a system exists in the Soviet Union, and is rapidly solving all the economic and social problems that so insistently confront the toiling masses; let alone any concrete proposals to show the masses in what manner it is to be achieved.

On the contrary, the propositions put forward by the "socialisation units" of Victoria brought a special declaration of repudiation from the leaders of the Labor Party, even though those making the proposals suffer from parliamentary illusions and appear to imagine that socialism could be achieved constitutionally; who apparently have failed to benefit from the terrible lessons of Austria and Germany, where the workers suffer the penalty of fascist dictatorship as a consequence of similar illusions and faith in social-fascist politicians.

The repudiation of the proposals of the socialisation units

is important because they constitute an open declaration by the Labor Party leadership that no matter if they were to secure a majority in the elections, they refuse to attempt to "use the parliamentary machine" to "introduce" socialism. This follows the suppression of the socialisation units and the repudiation of that "socialisation" verbiage which served the N.S.W. social-fascists as a weapon in the struggle against communism a year or so ago, by the Lang-Beasley Party of N.S.W.

There is not one atom of socialism in the A.L.P. leadership and the socialisation unit members in Victoria must draw the conclusion from the action of the A.L.P. leaders and realise that there is only one party of socialism and one way of fighting for socialism, the way of the Communist Party.

Neither does the Labor Party regard itself as a working class party. In Mr. Lang's book, "Why I Fight," we have the following specific repudiation of any such idea on page 350: "When every section of the Australian people realises the sincerity and purposefulness with which the Labor movement is approaching the solution of this problem, by means of a direct frontal attack upon the principal impediment to the entire elimination of unemployment and poverty—the private banking system—and the substitution of a credit and banking mechanism operating in the interests of the people, then I am confident that Labor will not be regarded as a class organisation, but as a mighty social crusade meeting the support of every Australian with faith in his own country."

Capitalist and worker alike must look to Mr. Lang's Party; it is not a "class" fight, but a "national crusade," there are no class divisions, only "Australians"; the exploiter and exploited can have their interests reconciled by Mr. Lang's nebulous banking proposals. All the mighty class struggles of history in Germany, in Russia, in the U.S.A., in Australia, all these, reflecting as they do the irreconcilable antagonisms of the rulers and the ruled, have no significance whatsoever for Lang. Have we not here the familiar sophisms of all bourgeois politicians, from Winston Churchill to Hitler, from Mussolini to Mr. Lyons—all of which endeavor to veil the class war which rends capitalist society and can only result in the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of classless socialist society? Lang's attitude to classes and the class struggle differs in nowise from that of Hitler with his "United Germany" demagogy.

Instead of the socialist objective of the working class, which certain pseudo-left politicians of the Labor Party were fond of proclaiming a while back, but who so obediently dropped their "socialist" phraseology when the whip cracked, we get the following meaningless fustian on the concluding page of Mr. Lang's book: "The rehabilitation of this land that we love with the spirit of religious faith is a sacred mission that Nature has entrusted to the generation of youth which, at the moment, is living in a twilight of cheated futility; and it is this generation that must take up the torch of community freedom, penetrating its rays into the dark and repulsive corners of our national life." One cannot analyse, in a serious manner, such a stringing together of canting phrases; one can merely dismiss it as piffle.

The Labor Party leaders, then, repudiate the thought that the fight of the working class is the fight for socialism, and repudiate the conception of a class proletarian party, in complete accord with Lenin's declaration that it is not a socialist workers' party, even in words. The fight for socialism is also a fight against the leaders of the Labor Party, as the socialisation units, both of N.S.W. and Victoria, have found by their experience; here we have to deal our main blow at the Labor misleaders in order to clear the ground for the decisive struggle with the capitalist class.

The whole election agitation of Scullin, Beasley and Lang is centred on "socialisation of credit" or nationalisation of banking. This is simply a rehash of a very ancient dish served up by the Labor Party cooks in their decades-old struggle to keep the Australian masses "free" from socialist thought. Mr. Lang's book gives an outline, which we will assume is more or less accurate, of the history of nationalisation of banking; and at any rate it will serve to show the line of the Labor Party in regard to the Commonwealth Bank.

Mr. Lang does not, with unusual modesty, claim to be the father of the government bank idea. In this book, page 115, he ascribes it to an erratic Labor politician of a bygone day, King O'Malley, who first got the idea in 1901, fought Hughes and Pearce on the issue, submitting the proposal to the caucus in 1907. In 1908, at the Brisbane Conference, Holman "submitted the motion that definitely committed the (Labor) Party to the Commonwealth Bank: That this Conference approves the general outline of Mr.

King O'Malley's scheme relating to the establishment of a national bank." In pursuance of the resolution, savings banks were opened in 1912, and in 1913 general business was commenced in all States.

Since then the Commonwealth Bank has existed, and in the light of all the marvellous promises of Lang, Scullin and Beasley of how, if they are returned at the election, the Commonwealth Bank will make the country blossom as the rose, how comes it that, despite its existence, the working class finds itself reduced to its present condition of want? Mr. Lang is very pleased with its early activities, and as an outstanding example of its "service to the people," in his book he goes into ecstasies over the fact that it **financed the war activities of the Australian imperialists.** This is its main virtue in the scribblings called "Why I Fight." A fine piece of service to the workers indeed. He quotes the official history of the bank, written by one, C. C. Faulkner, as follows: "Without the war loans, aggregating £257,000,000, floated by the Australian Government through the Commonwealth Bank, Australia could not have carried on; and when the clash of arms had died away the bank was the agency by which the Government performed the task of reconstruction."

So the main point of the A.L.P. policy, a "national people's bank," merely provided the bourgeoisie with a handy instrument for carrying on an imperialist war. And how did they finance it? By the War Loans, to which, naturally, the capitalist class were ready to contribute heavily, at 5 per cent. interest per annum. So the Labor Party's bank financed the capitalists' war and paid them 5 per cent. for doing it. Further than this, it financed "the wool crop," according to Mr. Lang; sold it to the British Government at 15½d. per lb., and in addition paid the "growers" (i.e., not the workers, the squatters) £20,000,000 extra as a bonus!

No proof is required to show that the Labor Party wishes merely to provide the millionaires with a handy instrument to enrich themselves at the expense of the "people" and the "country," other than these examples set before us by Mr. Lang. Five per cent. on war bonds, £20,000,000 extra for squatters. We have pointed out that nationalisation, whether it be of banks or anything else, was analysed by Lenin as a means of guaranteeing the profits of millionaires, and that the proposals for nationalising the banks are



meant to strengthen the capitalist financial system in order to enable it to weather the economic crisis. Mr. Lang also agrees with this; on page 124 of "Why I Fight," we are informed: "The private banks were forced to lean on the national institution to ensure their own profit."

Now we pose the question: How did the working class fare during those years of war and the activities of the "peoples' bank"? Prices were rising, wages remained low, speed-up was introduced into the factories, the workers were threatened with conscription, and the general conditions of the workers were such that our class expressed its revolt and indignation by the 1917 strike, at the very moment, according to Mr. Lang, that the Commonwealth Bank was performing its prodigies. The Commonwealth Bank was of no use at all to the workers, it was an instrument of the capitalists. Such is the conclusion that facts dictate. Mr. Lang in his apologia for the failure of the bank and the fact that it has failed to do anything in the present crisis, claims that Bruce sabotaged it in 1924. But the immediate post-war years were years of heavy suffering for the workers. Unemployment camps were established in Hyde Park, the domains were over-populated, the night refuges and soup kitchens taxed to capacity, despite the fact that the Commonwealth Bank had financed the capitalists' war, and given £20,000,000 bonus to the squatters.

Bruce "sabotaged" it by appointing a board of private capitalists as controllers of the bank, instead of an individual, Sir Denison Miller, as was the case in the halcyon period described by Lang.

The job now is, according to Mr. Scullin, to appoint a "governor" (policy speech at Richmond, August 13). Scullin and Beasley vie with each other in making promises to the workers; wages are to be restored, pensions increased, good things given to all and sundry, in their policy speeches. All these soap bubble promises depend on credit, according to Beasley. "As I stated earlier, the pivot of the whole plan is the restoration to the people of the control of their own credit, as they control their own post office, their own customs house, their own railways and other essential national facilities."

"Our own customs house"—which has just seized the notes

made by the May Day delegation to the Soviet Union, and which confiscates working class literature!

"Our railways"—which speed-up the workers, cut their wages, worsen conditions in order to pay the bond-holders their pound of flesh despite the fact that the money loaned has already been repaid by the N.S.W. railways.

"Our post office,"—where the employees groan under the burden of wage-cuts, and which increases its charges for stamps, duties, etc., and refuses to transport working class literature; without bothering to ask the opinion of the "owners."

A pity Mr. Beasley did not include "our" Wonthaggi mine, which also belongs to the State.

Mr. Scullin exposes the whole fake, and leaves us in no doubt as to whose instrument the Commonwealth Bank is going to be, when, in his policy speech, he said: "To guard securely against political control or private interference with the detailed working of the bank, the governor would be appointed for a fixed period and be removable only by vote of Parliament, as is the case of judges." Scullin thereby gives full guarantee to the capitalists that he has no intention of acting against the interests of the capitalists.

As for the expropriation of the capitalists, socialist confiscation of the wealth of the bourgeoisie in the interests of the masses, the very idea sends the "honorable" Scullin—who promised everything to the workers, on his "sacred" word and then gave them the Premiers' Plan—into a frenzy of virtuous indignation: "It is suggested by unscrupulous political opponents and ill-informed critics that the Labor Party would confiscate the banks, seize the deposits, and generally commit wanton acts of robbery and pillage. Such allegations are false. They are wicked misrepresentations of an honest party, composed of honorable men. That persons occupying high positions in the community can degrade themselves by uttering such mendacities is beyond the comprehension of true Australians." ("S.M. Herald," August 13.)

Scullin and Beasley both claim that they are going to magically solve all difficulties through the Commonwealth Bank. The simple question at once arises: Why did they not use the bank during the regime of the Scullin Cabinet, of which Beasley was a member, if

it is so simple as they now pretend, in order to fulfil the promises made to the workers? Instead of giving us the Premiers' Plan? Why?

No doubt they will excuse themselves on the plea of a hostile Senate, governors, privy councils, and the King's command; in a word, that the capitalist class would not allow them. But won't the King and the Governor remain, together with the Constitution, in the event of the Labor Party gaining a majority in both Houses? And cannot the Governor dispose of them, just as Mr. Lang went at a nod from the Governor of New South Wales, or the Prussian social-democrats at the behest of a sergeant and ten soldiers?

Capitalism, they say in other words, would not allow them. The actual reason, of course, was that capitalism wanted not "socialisation of credit" but the Premiers' Plan, and this task was entrusted to the Scullin Government to carry out because of its influence over the workers; it could use this influence to carry through the Premiers' Plan with the minimum of resistance. When it fulfilled this task and the danger of the Labor Party becoming entirely discredited became imminent, the "weak" Scullin Cabinet was bowed out by the capitalists.

The experience of Labor governments and their nationalisation schemes, the experience of the Scullin and Lang governments during the crisis, proved conclusively that the Labor Party is a party of capitalist lackies, revealed more clearly than ever before the chasm that divides Labor Party election promises from the performances of Labor Party governments.



## Two Trade Union Conferences

(By S. PURDY)

Two important trade union conferences are to be held shortly, the A.C.T.U. Congress, listed for October, and the Sydney District M.M. Conference, to be held on September 7, 8 and 9.

The leadership of these two conferences reflects the two lines within the trade union movement which at present are coming into sharper conflict than ever before. The first-mentioned, with a policy of class collaboration, of reformist trade unionism, the second with a policy of class struggle, of militant trade unionism.

Reformist leadership attempts to adapt the interests of the working class to that of their "own" bourgeoisie. It repudiates and attempts to gloss over and cover up the opposing class interests of the capitalists and workers. From this follows the policy of reliance on arbitration and parliament, which in turn saps the fighting capacity of the trade unions, and leaves their members to the mercy of the employers and the capitalist State.

Its support for craft unionism divides the trade unionists, allowing craft to come before class interests.

Reformist policy has allowed the employers to successfully improve their economic position at the expense of the toilers. Living standards have declined by 34 per cent. over the last few years.

Militant leadership recognises that the interests of the workers are diametrically opposed to the interests of the bourgeoisie, that the former can only improve their position at the expense of the latter. It recognises in arbitration and parliament instruments of the employers to attack the wages and living standards of the workers; and sees the need for strengthening the trade unions, to make them organs of class struggle in order that their members may be better able to take the counter-offensive for restoration of living standards—for the six-hour day and £5 minimum wage.

It recognises the craft form of organisation as insufficient to meet present conditions. With many crafts engaged in the one industry the conditions of each being attacked from a common source, greater unity is essential; therefore, the militant trade union

leadership supports a policy of industrial unionism, i.e., one union one industry, with the shop committee as the basis of same.

Militant leadership in struggle, when applied to the end, has resulted in victory for the workers, two of the more notable and recent examples being the struggles of the Melbourne dole workers and the Wonthaggi miners.

It follows, from a comparison of these two policies, that with the struggle between classes becoming sharper, the struggle between the reformist and militant leadership within the trade union movement must also become sharper.

The policy of adaptation of the reformists, which in essence means support of the bourgeoisie, reflects the interest of one class; and the policy of militant trade unionism, supporting the class interests of the workers only, reflects the other main force in society. At the present moment we see the A.W.U. bureaucrats, the most openly reactionary section of the reformist leadership, helping the employers at Leadville in their attempt to defeat the struggle of members of the Miners' Federation, which organisation is carrying out the most militant trade union policy of any of the large trade unions. In this struggle between the A.W.U. bureaucrats and the Miners' Federation is clearly reflected the struggle between the capitalists and workers.

The coming A.C.T.U. Congress will be organised with as little publicity as possible on the part of the reformist leaders. There will be no wide campaign on the jobs and amongst trade union members generally, no wide publicity as to policy, etc.

Attempts will be made to foster all the old illusions, as mentioned above.

Excuses will be made for the failure of the arbitration courts and Labor politicians to improve the position of the workers.

There will be no lead given to the rank and file to become active trade union organisers—the wide activation of the Wonthaggi miners and the lessons to be learnt therefrom, has not been and will not be popularised by the reformist officials. The old bureaucratic methods of leadership, which stifle the initiative of the rank and file, continue and will continue to be their policy.

The old reformist policy will be brought forward, possibly with a few trimmings to make it appear different, but it will still be reformist, for the great majority of craft union leaders do not recognise the class struggle, the prosecution of which leads to the

abolition of capitalism and the establishment of socialism.

It is by actions that we judge them, and their actions are those of class collaboration and reformism.

**The preparations for the Sydney District M.M. Conference will take place with the maximum of publicity.**

The revolutionary press, industry and job papers, mass distribution of leaflets—all will be utilised to make trade unionists aware of what is to take place.

On September 7 conference will be opened at Transport House, where the militant industrial leaders will outline the policy. Not only are delegates invited to be present on the opening night, but every worker from every job, in order that he or she can become familiar with the principles of militant trade unionism.

The fallacy of relying on arbitration and parliament will be clearly exposed. Mistakes of the past will be revealed, the lessons from Wonthaggi and other struggles will be concretely discussed for guidance in the future; the need for every trade union member to be an active trade union organiser, on and off the job, will be stressed.

Plans for developing the M.M. policy, recently endorsed by the N.S.W. Trade Union Conference, and later by a conference of A.R.U. sub-branch secretaries and job delegates, will be placed before conference for its endorsement.

Industrial unionism, repudiation of arbitration, preparation for general strike to win back living standards—questions of great moment for all industrialists—will be dealt with concretely and concisely, and a lead given to make them a reality.

The aim of the M.M. Conference is not only to gather together delegates representing supporters of militant trade unionism, but workers who may still be under reformist influence.

Such is a brief review of the two tendencies within the trade union movement and the difference in the two leads which will be given at the coming conferences.

Every communist and militant trade unionist must give these questions the greatest attention. Militant delegates must be elected to attend the A.C.T.U. Congress, to put forward and support an alternative line to the reformist bureaucrats, to expose their deception and mis-leadership of the masses. Militants must intensify their efforts in the remaining time to make the mass rally on September 7 and the conference on the 8th and 9th the success that is possible.

The class struggle is deepening, the workers are going over to the counter-offensive, the conflict between reformism and militant trade unionism is becoming sharper. To ensure the latter complete and final victory demands that every communist increase and improve his or her trade union work. Many weaknesses still exist and must be eliminated in the near future.

Despite the recent N.S.W. Trade Union Conference decisions, as we predicted, the various craft union officials are doing nothing to put them into effect. This responsibility is for the communists and militant trade unionists, and many of our members are not doing all that they could do to this end.

We know of one instance where the shop committee work of our members is the best in Australia, but the union activity and influence of these same members is amongst the worst. This is an indication that these comrades imagine that because they have achieved such good results with job organisation that union activity is not so important, or else in their study of job activity they have neglected a study of how to carry on correct union work.

Shop committees are a step towards industrial unionism, but to achieve the latter, shop committees must be established right throughout a given industry and must have great influence and authority amongst the workers of that industry.

And it is here that our comrades do not carry through the job right to the end. We know that the officials of the unions covering our members referred to are still acting in a manner which fosters and creates craft barriers; and because the members mentioned have not given the same attention to union leadership as they do to job leadership, the bureaucrats get away with their actions, and by so doing, hold back the development of industrial unionism.

Without for one moment slackening job and shop committee activity all communists so engaged must immediately lift their trade union work to the same level. By so doing we will weaken the influence of the reformists and bring industrial unionism so much closer.

In addition to representing the workers in their job organisation, we must also win their confidence and officially represent them by winning trade union positions. When these two spheres of work are combined correctly we will then be on our way to winning the

final victory for militant trade unionism.

A further weakness which manifests itself and makes the growth of our influence slower is the unclarity existing concerning a correct understanding of principles and tactics. Many communists in their trade union work recognise our clear revolutionary principles and final aims, but are mechanical and stodgy when it comes to the tactics of the struggle.

This is totally incorrect. Our tactics must be flexible and must be determined according to the situation at any given moment. If we plan our work correctly we will develop our leadership from one level to another, and improve it; we will continue to develop the consciousness of the workers we are connected with in the same manner; we will be leading the workers step by step to a higher phase of the class struggle.

On the other hand, if our members do not take into consideration the objective and subjective factors on any and every occasion, but endeavor to jump over the various stages, they fall into opportunist and "left" sectarian mistakes, which lead to isolation from the mass of trade union members. We must learn to avoid these mistakes without for one moment capitulating to the reactionary illusions of the workers.

Forward to increased and improved trade union work—for the defeat of reformism and the establishment of the mass militant trade union movement.



## The Wheat Growers' Union

(By T. ENSFIELD)

The splendid militancy of the impoverished wheat farmers, which resulted in the wheat hold-up in West Australia in 1932, in the numerous anti- eviction actions in Victoria and N.S.W., and in the mass desertions from the Farmers and Settlers' Association in N.S.W., is now being side-tracked within the Wheat Growers' Union.

The Union Conference of W.A., held in Perth early this year, showed that the poorer wheat farmers, exasperated by past deceptions, are seeking a militant solution to their immediate demands. The executive, in the main a collection of opportunists of a social-fascist type, with Mr. Boyle at the head, did not dare to openly oppose the militant resolutions of the rank and file, but endorsed them in order to retain their leadership. But with patient cunning the leadership is steering the masses into a harmless legalist position and into the support of the policy of agrarian capital. The clear-cut, simple demand of the masses for a minimum income of £150 a year, and no evictions or forced sales, is being steadily pushed aside in favor of a complicated series of capitalist demands expressed within the general formula of the Rehabilitation Plan formulated by the W.G.U. executive—a plan which seeks to preserve the social and economic differentiation within the farming class.

Already in West Australia approximately 1500 farms have been abandoned, and many others have been repossessed by mortgagees. The lowest, the poorest stratum of wheat farmers has been already peeled off from the farming class and scattered to the four winds.

This wholesale abandonment of the poorest farms, a process which is still taking place, indicates the class division within the Wheat-Growers' Union, and explains the real class content of the Rehabilitation Plan.

The plan demands: (1) A minimum price for wheat consumed in Australia, in order to provide an average price of 3/4 a bushel at sidings. This means a home price of 5/- a bushel on a crop of 136,000,000 bushels, of which 86,000,000 bushels is to be exported at 2/6 per bushel and 50,000,000 consumed in Australia.

(2) Advances to State governments to be used for trans-

forming of wheat farms into wheat and sheep propositions and the utilising of sub-marginal areas now growing wheat only, for sheep farms.

(3) Moneys to be provided to enable States to function a definite plan to rehabilitate farms and farmers.

(4) Legislative action to allow of the farmers' debt position being attacked by the States, with a view to protection against creditors and to ensure a writing down of debts.

In addition to the above, a number of other measures of a similar kind are included in the plan.

On the whole the plan is designed to preserve the position of the upper strata of the farming class at the expense of the consumers and the agricultural laborers, and very little promise is offered to the small farmers, apart from vague suggestions about "arrangements with creditors and writing down of debts."

The main feature of the life of the W.G.U. since the hold-up of 1932 has been the struggle of the kulak leadership to consolidate its influence over the masses and to bring to the forefront the interests of the upper strata. True, it has pandered to the principle of militant struggle, but only in order to hold the threat of a hold-up over the heads of the governments.

However, the crisis has been so deep, and protracted, that greater masses of the wheat growers are falling into a position of urgency and, unless a sharp turn in the wheat situation occurs by next harvest, the mass pressure will enforce a hold-up.

With this possibility in view it is vitally necessary that the party strengthen its connections with the militant wheat growers in order to be in a position to expose any betrayal of the struggle by the kulaks on the executive, to develop a militant leadership capable of carrying the movement forward by breaking with the kulaks and leading the small and middle farmers over to an alliance with the working class.

A mass farm movement, with clear-cut demands, directed against the capitalist exploiters—the bankers, merchants, millers, industrialists and big landowners, will receive the support of the working class and of large sections of the petit-bourgeoisie. But the programme of the Wheat Growers' Union for a home consumption price to be extorted from the worker and small farmer consumers cannot be supported.

The propaganda indulged in by the official organ of the union, which pits the farmers as a whole against the city, putting the

workers in the same position as the capitalist exploiters, is just simply provocation in the interests of the exploiting class.

The working class, the most powerful political force in Australia, will support the impoverished farmers in a struggle for £150 a year, for cancellation of debts, and for no evictions.

The facts must be made clear to the small and middle farmers so that they may choose between the rich farmers—the kulaks—whose policy is to beg at the politicians' feet, while 1500 ruined farmers are driven or starved off their land, and the working class whose organised might is the mortal terror of the exploiters.

The influence of the W.A. union executive has extended to N.S.W. Mr. Boyle has discovered a suitable kulak ally in Major Chantor, president of the W.G.U. of N.S.W., and whom he has succeeded in placing in the presidency of the Australian Wheat Growers' Federation. Space prevents us from going into details, but the manoeuvring of Mr. Boyle can be seen in the following facts: The N.S.W. Union recently held a conference at Parkes, at which, out of 31 resolutions, no mention was made of the demands of W.A. for a minimum income of £150 a year or security of tenure. The whole policy behind the conference revealed the tactical line of the W.A. executive, the side-tracking of the lower strata away from the militant demands of the masses of W.A.

So thoroughly reactionary is the N.S.W. Union that in connection with evictions the following resolution was passed: "That farms which revert to the Crown, or the Rural Bank, or are abandoned, be set apart as additional areas for existing settlers, and that liabilities on them be reduced to a reasonable rent." Dog eat dog!

A further indication of the kulak nature of the N.S.W. leadership is exposed in the attitude of the organiser towards the impoverished districts. When questioned on how many members he had enrolled in a certain district he replied: "I never went there. They are too hard up to pay their membership fees."

No doubt when a few more evictions occur the gentlemen of the W.G.U. will be negotiating with the Government for the lease of the repossessed farms.

Having enrolled approximately 2000, or 12 per cent. of the 17,000 odd wheat growers, in N.S.W., the union now dictatorially sets itself up as "the" organisation of N.S.W. wheat farmers and refuses to lend aid to or support eviction fights outside its own ranks. It takes up the attitude that either the 15,000 wheat growers

outside the union, join the union, or it will refuse to support any struggle on behalf of unorganised farmers. In general, it rejects the principle of the united front, and is attempting to shackle the wheat farmers to its opportunist bureaucracy.

The N.S.W. Union, which arose out of the mass discontent against the kulak Farmers and Settlers' Association, and under the influence of the wheat strike in W.A. in 1932, has fallen into the hands of opportunists, and is now an obstacle to the development of militant farmer organisation.

Because of the probability of a wheat hold-up in W.A. this year it is necessary that the party establish connections with the militant wheat farmers in N.S.W., especially in the south-west. It is also necessary that the connections of Boyle with the N.S.W. reactionaries be exposed to the rank and file of the W.A. Union. In order that the party may influence the movement of the wheat farmers it is vitally necessary that all party members in the wheat districts concentrate their attention upon the task of making contact with the militant wheat farmers and winning them over to the support of the party and the Farmers' Unity League.

A wheat hold-up in W.A. will have a profound influence upon the whole of the impoverished farm masses in Australia. It will also profoundly affect the general political situation, occurring at a time when the agrarian crisis is deepening and the bourgeoisie launching fresh attacks against the toiling masses.

Under revolutionary leadership the hold-up will inspire the scores of thousands of impoverished farmers throughout the whole country and attract them into the path of militant mass action.

The above analysis of the situation places special responsibility upon the party in Western Australia. The link in the agrarian situation is the Wheat Growers' Union of W.A., and the main issue the struggle against the opportunist elements in the leadership. The party must win the small and middle farmers into the fight for: Cancellation of debts and interest payments; guaranteed minimum income of £150 a year; and no forced sales or evictions. We must win the small and middle farmers to an alliance with the working class.

Whilst the main responsibility falls upon the party in W.A. the other districts have also a great responsibility and must prepare for the extension of the farm struggle by strengthening their connections with the farm masses.

## 1917 Strike—Some Lessons For To-Day

(By "NUGAFONOS")

(Continued from last issue)

A study of the attitude towards the strike taken by those three parties to it—the rank and file, the Government and the strike leaders—throws light upon several lessons that the working class must learn. In addition, the attitude and activities of the revolutionary movement give splendid illustrations of what a revolutionary movement shouldn't be and shouldn't do. Let us consider and illustrate these points.

The strike, as far as the rank and file were concerned, was practically unanimous and spontaneous. "Men went out on strike who had only two months of service to fulfil before they could retire on their pensions," says the late Mr. C. von Hagen, in his book, "Social Unrest and Its Causes," "and quite a large number had less than two years to serve to be so entitled, and yet we are asked to believe that there was no cause for dissatisfaction, and that the whole of the trouble was due to 'irresponsible gentlemen'." As von Hagen points out, Government, Press and Church pointed to "agitators" as the cause of the strike. And not only were they "agitators" but disloyalists too! Full advantage was taken of the war and the war psychology to brand the strikers, and especially the "agitators," as in the pay of Germany. To-day it is Moscow gold—then it was German!

"Who is for Australia and the Allies?" asked Fuller's full-page advertisements calling for scabs—"loyalists" was their new name; to what base uses are words put! The "Daily Telegraph" referred to "dumb-driven" unionists, and Beeby, who had not long before changed his political colors from Labor to Nationalist, told them that they were the victims of "ignorant adventurers" and "tools of unscrupulous leaders, who want to undermine the foundations of society."

But, far from the workers being used by their leaders and being led unwillingly into an undesired strike, it was the workers who forced the pace, in spite of the opposition and sabotage of the "leaders"—political and industrial. Their one mistake lay in their failure to remove the leaders and to understand the role the latter

were playing. And that mistake was due partly to their organisation—in dozens of craft-unions, based on the arbitration courts and relying on their officialdom—and partly to the inability of the militant and revolutionary sections and parties to co-ordinate their activities and their propaganda with the everyday struggle of the workers. As a result, the leaders were allowed to go on sabotaging and betraying, carrying out the Government's and the employers' work from their point of vantage until the final betrayal, after which the craft unions drifted back to work one by one and were slaughtered. Mr. Willis' "jungle methods"!

"It had been originally intended," said E. J. Kavanagh, secretary of the Labor Council, on August 4, "to confine the strike to those directly affected by the card system, but this was found to be impossible owing to the general dissatisfaction which existed throughout the railway service due to failure to remedy long-standing grievances and to the limited scope of the Arbitration Act." Not until September did the defence committee invite any union to come out. The "Sydney Morning Herald" (August 8, 1917) tells us that "representatives from the big unions, on their own volition, sought an interview with the Cabinet last night." At that interview, Mr. Willis said: "We are most anxious that something should be done to bring the dispute to a satisfactory termination. We are not here to discuss the merits of the dispute. We met ourselves, and thought that perhaps, even now, at the eleventh hour, we can so put the position as to help you out of the difficulty." The Labor politicians, too, were anxious to "help Fuller out of his difficulty." Mr. J. Storey, leader of the Labor Party, hoped that the "threatened disaster might be averted." "I would be glad," he said in Parliament, "to act my part to put a stop to what threatens to be a disastrous strike." Expressing the fear that there would be a general strike, he said: "No-one would regret such a happening more than would hon. members on this side of the House, and anything that can be done to avert the threatened calamity should be done in the interests of the general public. The parties concerned are standing a good deal from one another. . . . Very much more will come out of a round-table chat on matters of this kind than the 'stand and deliver' attitude which is generally adopted by two bodies one against the other." Thus might a lamb appeal to the lion to have a chat over their differences—more jungle methods!

But Mr. Fuller, rejoicing in the role of lion that had been con-

ferred upon him, desired no round-table chat, nor did he want to be shown a way out—his way out was already prepared and clear before him. The Government welcomed the strike as a political struggle of importance, as a means of curbing the strike wave and for the purposes of at once rationalising the railways and of driving more and more men into the trenches. While Mr. Dooley was deploring a struggle at such a time, "when an attempt should be made to maintain harmonious relations between those engaged in the various industries" (see "Hansard," August 2); while Mr. Dengate, secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, was telling the Cabinet that, if the Commissioners had introduced the card system secretly there would have been no trouble (see "Hansard," Fuller's speech); and while Mr. Mutch was appealing "to the Government to exercise sweet reasonableness" (see "Hansard" again); the Government showed determination to fight to a finish, treating with contempt the self-abasing and crawling leaders, only negotiating with them during the first few days when the workers were militantly showing their determination, and refusing even to meet them thereafter until they should surrender completely! Determination on the part of the Government, coupled with no weak-kneed calling for compromise and sweet reasonableness on the side of the employers brought it victory. Determination on the part of the rank and file, which could have brought them victory, was crippled by the cringing and crawling and the sabotaging leading to open treachery of the leaders.

The Government had an aim in view. The defence committee had none—except to bring the "disaster" to an end as soon as possible and to prevent an extension. The lesson that should stand out crystal-clear is two-fold: pacifism in the class-struggle means defeat, and, as in war, so in the class war, the side that is driven to take the defensive is already defeated. The U.D.C. was ever on the defensive and apologetic. The Government sang with the spirit of victory and defiance. "We, as a Government," said Fuller to the cringing deputationists from the U.D.C., on August 9, already offering terms that amounted to betrayal—we, as a Government, if an extension of the trouble does take place, are prepared to meet it, and will be ready for any emergency." From that position he refused to budge; but listen to a "leader," A. C. Willis, talking to Fuller: "So far as we can learn, and from what we see in the press, the chief reason why this system [the Taylor Card System—"N."] is being introduced is to deal with the

amount of alleged slackness in connection with the work. That may, or may not, be true. We hold no brief for the man who does not do a fair thing at work, and we are not prepared to defend that man. But what we feel is that the suggestions that are made are penalising the whole of the men, the bulk of whom are admittedly reliable and satisfactory workmen. We want to make the suggestion that, if it is a matter of dealing with the alleged slackers, we think there ought to be some way of providing means to deal with cases of that kind, and that the unions involved would have to undertake that they would not defend the men of the class referred to. That appears to be the real reason why it is necessary to exercise some stricter supervision over the work. . . . You know as well as we do that unless something is done the mining and other industries will be involved in a few days. We want to avoid that. That is the reason we are here to-night. We are not here to threaten at all!"—"We feel our responsibility as much as you do" (oh! those "leaders"—"good citizens" all!)—"If the men are prepared to fill in the cards, would that be a way out of the difficulty? . . . If the men are prepared to do it, and to create some reasonable method of dealing with men who are alleged to be loafers?"—That was the Honorable A. C. Willis speaking—not honorable then, made honorable since! There he was showing a united front with Fuller, justifying the latter and promising him that he would try to persuade the men to fill in the cards, the introduction of which had been the determining factor in the decision to strike. No wonder that Fuller decided that he was faced with an easy victory and that his most valuable allies were on the unions' defence committee!

It must be remembered that the strike occurred in the midst of the war. And remembered, too, that that war was not so popular as Holman and Hughes desired. The first Conscription Referendum, towards the end of 1916, had resulted in an overwhelming defeat of the war-mongers. Enlistment had fallen off. The voting and the campaign showed how strong the anti-war elements were and how widespread among the workers was the militancy which poverty, unemployment and increased cost of living were continually increasing. The Government had determined that recruiting for service overseas should be given an impetus. Economic conscription was to take the place of voluntary enlistment. Holman, in his Secret Memorandum, laid down a plan of campaign: curtailment of racing and amusement; recruiting films were to monopolise the picture shows; tightening-up of the censorship; pacifist papers to be harassed; the eligible young men were to



be discharged from the public service, and private employers were to be invited to follow this example.

On the other hand, the press and the employers had been clamoring for action to break the militancy of the workers and to prevent the strikes that were frequently taking place. According to official figures (quoted in the "International Socialist," July 28, 1917), from January to May, 1917, there had been 153 strikes (in N.S.W.), involving the loss of 157,276 working days. In 1916 there had been 344, with 1,157,225 days lost. And in 1914, 1915 and 1916 together, there had been 989 strikes, involving a loss of 2,548,620 days! Unemployment, too, was widespread, and the unemployed were showing signs of militancy. "Seven hundred unemployed met near the Queen's Statue in Hyde Park yesterday afternoon 'to protest against the policy of the Government in closing down public works and thereby throwing thousands of workers out of employment.' . . . Later the men proceeded to Parliament House as a protest against their position." ("Daily Telegraph," last week of July, 1917.) For twelve months previous to the Strike, Frazer, Chief Railway Commissioner, had, according to the "International Socialist," been touring the country telling the people that there were shirkers in the Railway Service who were "not giving a fair day's work for a fair day's pay." ("I.S.," August 11, 1917.) While poverty and unemployment were widespread, and while the unemployed showed no inclination to solve their problems by going to the European slaughter-house, and while the spirit of militancy was rife amongst the workers, the profits of the employers were increasing. According to the Commonwealth Year Book (1916), in 1912 the number of employees in the manufacturing industries was 327,456, and they produced commodities to the value of £148,775,407. In 1915, 321,071 employees produced a value of £169,086,700—fewer employees, greater production.

The position was, as the Government and the employers saw it, that the militancy of the workers had to be crushed and workers forced to the trenches—it was about this time that the attempt was made in England to form a Sixth Australian Division! The war had to be won (the Russian workers had refused to fight imperialist's battles) and Australia had to be made safe for capitalism. The opportunity, that was furnished by the war, of crushing working-class resistance was not to be lost. Fuller, spokesman of Imperial and Australian capitalists, picked up the gauntlet with glee.

(To be continued)

## Youth and the Struggle Against Imperialist War

(By J.F.)

The cracks that were apparent in the economic structure of capitalist stabilisation from its inception have grown into wide fissures, bringing capitalist stabilisation to its end. This crisis has tremendously sharpened the basic contradictions of capitalist economy. It is inexorably driving the imperialist powers towards another predatory war for a redivision of the world. This is reflected in the dispute between America and the European countries (headed by Great Britain) over the war debts question, and the breakdown in the negotiations in the recent session of the General Commission of the Disarmament Conference, leading to its indefinite adjournment. It must not be forgotten that no matter how acute is the tension between the capitalist nations, the deepest, most fundamental and most vital contradiction is that between those powers and the U.S.S.R., between the world of capitalism and the world of socialism.

Consequently the onus rests heavily on the Communist Parties to mobilise a mighty mass-movement against imperialist war. In view of the peculiar situation of the youth of the working and farming classes and of the petty bourgeoisie, i.e. their lack of political and industrial experience, the fact that they are more susceptible than the older workers to the imperialist sentiments they have imbibed at school, and their romanticism, they are the most valuable raw material for the militarists. Thus a tremendous burden is imposed on the Young Communist League, which, with correct guidance from the party, must drive a wedge between the imperialists and the toiling youth.

Firstly, the young communists must actively expose the war plans and imperialist manoeuvres of the ruling class. At the same time they must point out to toiling youth the true nature of imperialist war as a robber war which is conducted in order to secure profits to the victorious capitalist powers, and which brings in its train bloodshed and murder for those "at the front" and low wages, speed-up, misery, hunger and other economic sacrifices for those "at home," as the militarists, of course, will endeavor to make the toiling masses finance the war.

The masses of both the victorious and the defeated powers will suffer the burden of war and no advantage accrues to them from the victory of their ruling class. The exposure of the true nature of imperialist war can only be accomplished by leading the youth in their day-to-day economic struggles, ever seeking to raise such struggles to a higher political level. Thus we will win the political respect of the youth, and in the course of our leading even the smaller skirmishes on the battlefield of the class struggle opportunities will arise for their political enlightenment.

Secondly, the struggle against chauvinism occupies a prominent place among our tasks. Once again this must be done on the basis of the day-to-day struggle, which will demonstrate to the youth that, irrespective of differences of race or color, the real alignment of hostile forces is that of capitalists and workers. Incidents such as that of the Western Australian goldfields riots demand the closest attention, and it must be ensured that such incidents do not occur again. Such terms as "nigger" and "dago" must never be used by young communists, and, in addition, we must strive to eliminate them from the vocabulary of the youth. Chauvinistic provocations, either committed by the capitalists or their "Labor" lieutenants, must immediately be exposed and combated.

Thirdly, the youth of Australia must be rallied into active sympathy with and support of the struggles of the youth of colonial countries for national liberation.

Fourthly, the efforts of the ruling class towards the fascisation and militarisation of the youth must be decisively defeated. The increasing severity in the incidence of bourgeois democracy upon the working-class is exemplified in the case of the youth, in the institution of the "Trainee Apprenticeship Scheme" and Mr. Stevens' "afforestation camps."

The "Trainee Apprenticeship Scheme" is now being strengthened in its application, and in effect seeks to (a) shift greater burdens on to the shoulders of the apprentices by enabling employers to stand them off at will; and (b) closely following upon (a) to place militants at the mercy of the "masters," so that they can be victimised and, if possible, isolated. In short, the chains binding the apprentice are being tightened.

The afforestation scheme also has a threefold significance: (a) it is an extension of the "work for the dole" policy, with all its implications, i.e., further sacrifices imposed on the masses; (b) it is a tightening of the economic grip of capitalism on the youth, thus rendering them more amenable to the economic pressure which

will be imposed, in the event of war, to force them into the army; (c) the camps will sooner or later develop openly into military training camps.

It must be emphasised here that the most effective method of politically educating the youth is to lead them in their daily economic struggles. The dual relation of the economic and imperialist policy of the ruling class that is manifested in the trainee apprenticeship and afforestation "schemes" offers the young communists the widest field of opportunities to employ this most important tactic.

Bourgeois youth organisations (which have a fascist and militarist basis), such as the Y.M. and Y.W.C.A., Boy Scouts, and U.A.P. and A.L.P. younger sets, must be penetrated by the Y.C.L.ers and liquidated; and the best elements in their ranks must be won over to the Y.C.L.

The bourgeois sports organisations, a fertile recruiting field, must receive the same treatment. These tasks entail the improvement of our work in the Workers' Sports Federation, so that this organisation offers more attractive cultural and sporting opportunities than the bourgeois youth organisations.

A heavy obligation rests on the shoulders of the Communist Party and Young Communist League. That is to carry out intensive activity in the armed forces. Some of our best comrades must be allotted to this work; they must lead the economic struggles of the soldier and sailor masses, winning their political confidence and respect, and raise the understanding of those masses to the point where they know upon whom they must use their weapons. All sectarian opposition to this work must be overcome.

Finally, and most important of all, the youth must be fully enlightened as to the danger of imperialist intervention against the U.S.S.R., and they must be organised for a decisive struggle in defence of the workers' fatherland.

In connection with the fight against war several obstacles can be found within the ranks of the working class. First and foremost is the influence of the main social prop of the capitalist system, the Labor Party. It must never be forgotten that these misleaders (just as they did in 1914) will, on the outbreak of war, drop their pacifist opposition to war and become recruiters for the militarists. This struggle is interwoven with the struggle to win the masses from the social fascists for the proletarian dictatorship. This can only be accomplished by the tactic of the United front from below,

based on struggle.

The slogans and principles of the reformists (Lang and Beasley), such as their method of overcoming the war danger by nationalising the armament industry, and their acceptance of imperialist war, together with a steering of the revolutionary energy of the masses into "anti-conscription" channels and the like, must be decisively exposed. Instead, we must raise the class slogan of "Turn Imperialist War Into Civil War."

Closely akin to these misleading slogans is the propaganda of pacifism, which is actively (though not in name) preached by Scullin. This uses as the sole weapon against war, not the abolition of capitalism to abolish the causes of war, but an appeal to reason and goodwill—of the imperialists! This, too, must be cast out of the workers' ranks.

Such "leftist" deviations which manifest themselves in the following statement: "We should desire a war, because a war will create a revolutionary situation," have no place in Marxist-Leninist theory. Behind this, apparently, "left" phraseology lurks a spineless hope for the emancipation of the workers by a kindly Providence or some fortunate chain of circumstances. It shows a fear of having to carry out Bolshevik daily work, and its acceptance would paralyse the struggle against war.

On the outbreak of imperialist war the task of the Bolsheviks is to immediately put forward the slogan of "Turn Imperialist War Into Civil War" and strive for the defeat of their own bourgeoisie. In connection with the principle of "revolutionary defeatism," such anarcho-syndicalist postulates as, "Why should we worry if the Australian capitalists are beaten by some other set of capitalists? They can't give us any worse than exploitation and unemployment, and we've got all that now," must be cast out of our theoretical equipment. In addition, the toiling masses must be fully appraised of the stupidity of such statements. It must be made quite clear to the masses that they should strive for the defeat of their own bourgeoisie in order to weaken capitalism and bring power nearer their grasp.

In connection with the whole of this question, it must be kept in mind that the struggle against imperialist war cannot be separated in a watertight compartment from the general struggle against capitalism; just as the struggles of the youth, although they have, in some cases, their own special demands, are interwoven with that of the adult workers and farmers for the dictatorship of the proletariat and for socialism.