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# THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

Vol. 2

SYDNEY, N.S.W.

No. 9

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# THE COMMUNIST REVIEW

*A Magazine of the Theory and Practice of  
Marxism-Leninism.*

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# The Communist Review

Vol. 2, No. 9

SYDNEY, N.S.W.

September, 1935

## *A Congress Which Has Begun a New Epoch of Soviet Democracy*

The Seventh All-Union Congress of Soviets summed up the results of the construction of Socialism in the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics and opened up a new epoch of Soviet democracy. The whole of the work of the Congress was carried on with a comparison made between two lines of world development, namely, the line of development of the Socialist world, and of the capitalist world.

On the eve of the Sixth Congress of Soviets, Comrade Stalin delivered a speech at the Sixteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, in which he pointed to the fact that an historic change had taken place in the development both of the capitalist countries and of the U.S.S.R., but a change taking two opposite directions.

"While the turn for the U.S.S.R.," said he, "meant a turn towards a new and more important economic advance, for the capitalist countries it meant a turn towards economic decline. Here, in the U.S.S.R., there is increasing progress in Socialist construction, both in industry and in agriculture. In the capitalist countries, there is a growing economic crisis, both in industry and in agriculture."

More than four years have passed since this turning point; years of uninterrupted struggle between the two antagonistic social systems (a struggle which does not, however, exclude a certain collaboration between the U.S.S.R. and the capitalist countries, a certain collaboration for the maintenance of peace). And the further events advance, the more powerfully has this contrast between the two lines of development displayed itself.

In the U.S.S.R., during the recent years, the Five-Year Plan has been fulfilled in four years, and a classless Socialist society is being successfully constructed there. The U.S.S.R., which was a backward and agrarian country in the past, has been transformed into an advanced country, with highly-developed

industry, has been transformed into a country of metal-lurgy, heavy engineering, tractor construction, etc. Un-employment has been abolished and poverty has vanished from the villages once and for all. The kulaks have been crushed, and the petty-commodity peasant farms have been reorganised into artels in their overwhelming majority by the collective farm (collective farms) on Socialist lines. The collective farm system has been victorious finally and irrevocably, and this implies that the basic masses of the peasantry have finally, under the leadership of the proletariat, severed themselves from capitalism, and taken the path to Socialism. At the Seventeenth Party Congress, Comrade Stalin summed up the results of these all-round and ever-growing developments in the U.S.S.R., and was already able to declare that "the Socialist system is the only dominant and the only commanding force throughout the whole of our national economy." As against this upsurge and the Socialist reconstruction taking place in the U.S.S.R., the position in the capitalist countries is that an economic crisis is raging, which is unheard-of in its depth and its devastating after-effects. Class contradictions are growing sharper. In a number of countries the pre-conditions of a revolutionary crisis, the pre-conditions for the proletarian revolution, are ripening. At the same time, the dominant classes are reorganising their ranks and attempting to head off the proletarian revolution by passing over to open Fascist methods of Government. Fascist Germany and the military Fascist cliques in Japan have taken the path of open preparations for war against the Soviet Union, while Japan has seized Manchuria and Northern China. The threat of a new imperialist war, and primarily of war against the Soviet Union, hangs over the world as an immediate danger. At the Seventeenth Party Congress, Comrade Stalin summed up the results of the decline in the capitalist system, which is growing deeper in all capitalist countries (in spite of the fact that the economic crisis began in 1932 to pass over into a depression of a special character) and declared that:

"... the victory of Fascism in Germany must be regarded not only as a symptom of the weakness of the working class and as a result of the betrayal of the working class by Social-Democracy, which paved the way for Fascism; it must also be regarded as a symptom of the weakness of the bourgeoisie, as a symptom of the fact that the bourgeoisie is already unable to rule by the old methods of Parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy,

and, as a consequence, is compelled in its home policy to resort to terroristic methods of administration—it must be taken as a symptom of the fact that it is no longer able to find a way out of the present situation on the basis of a peaceful foreign policy, as a consequence of which it is compelled to resort to a policy of war."

The estimation made by the Bolsheviks of the historic moves being made on the international arena was that there was an increase in the power of Socialism, a growth of the forces of the proletarian revolution, and a weakening of the forces of the bourgeoisie, in spite of their temporary victory over the proletariat in a number of countries. As opposed to this estimate, the Social-Democratic leaders, as is well known, prophesied that "a counter-revolutionary epoch," a lengthy period of the undivided domination of Fascism, was coming on, and advanced as a reality two illusory dreams of the capitalists regarding the beginning of "a thousand years of the domination of Fascism."

But only a year has passed since the Seventeenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. was held, and the line of the Communists has been splendidly confirmed, while that of the Social-Democratic leaders has been smashed to bits by the whole process of historic development, and particularly by such tremendous events as the armed struggle in Austria, the armed battles in Spain, which grew into an uprising and the struggle for Soviets in Asturias, the revolutionary upsurge in the U.S.A., the growth of the national liberation movement in the colonial countries, and, what is of exceptional importance, the important successes achieved by the Communist Parties in the struggle for the united front against Fascism, the danger of war, and the capitalist offensive.

And at the Seventh All-Union Congress of Soviets, the Bolsheviks were fully justified in pointing to the further steps taken by capitalism towards its downfall, and to the speeding-up of the development of the world revolutionary crisis, which finds its most powerful mainstay in the growing power of Socialism in the Soviet Union.

As far back as the First All-Union Congress of Soviets, Comrade Stalin set before the Soviet State the mighty task of "developing into a serious international force, capable of influencing the international situation, and of altering it in the interest of the toilers." This task has now been translated into life.

Now, in his report made to the Congress, the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, Comrade Molotov, contrasted in full the two lines of world development, and posed the question of the importance in principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R. and of its importance, "as a State which is growing **uninterruptedly** in the economic and cultural spheres, and as the only State untroubled by crises."

And this is really so. For six years we have seen the continuation of the world economic crisis of capitalism, which has developed on the background of the sharpening general crisis of the capitalist system. In spite of the fact that the crisis has passed into a depression of a special kind, the capitalist countries have **not emerged from the economic crisis**. For the growth of industrial production in the years 1933-34 was only so by comparison with the lowest point reached in 1932.

As for the economy of the U.S.S.R., it has been all this time **uninterruptedly** on the upsurge. And it is precisely in the year 1934 that it achieved its victory in respect to the metallurgical industry, which Comrade Orjonikidze, Commissar for Heavy Industry, reported to the Congress, a victory expressed in the fact that the U.S.S.R. has assumed first place in Europe as far as the production of pig iron is concerned, having reached a figure which is 208 per cent. of the 1930 figures. Comrade Orjonikidze was able to report that in these years, when capitalism was undergoing a very deep economic crisis, "heavy industry in our country has **uninterruptedly** continued its triumphant march forward, and has increased its production by comparison with 1928 by **more than four times**," whereas the U.S.A. remains on a level equal to 67 per cent. of 1927, Germany 81 per cent., France 84 per cent., and Great Britain 104 per cent.

While a very deep agrarian crisis has continued to rage throughout the whole of the capitalist world, and efforts have been made by the capitalist Governments to artificially reduce agricultural production for the sake of enriching the large-scale land-owners and kulaks, the U.S.S.R., thanks to the victory of the collective farm system in the village, is undergoing an all-round advance in agriculture, while in 1934 a turn took place, which indicated an advance in the sphere of cattle-breeding, a fact which enabled Comrade Molotov to declare that the recent decline in cattle-breeding is "a stage passed by" as far as the Soviet Union is concerned.

The general rise in the economy of the U.S.S.R. and the uninterrupted work of the Government and the Party to increase the defensive power of the Soviet Union have, in their turn, conditioned a speedy growth of the power of the Workers and Peasants' Red Army, of its technical equipment, of tanks available, and of aeroplanes construction, of the defensive fortifications on the borders of the U.S.S.R., and a growth of the Soviet Navy.

The political might and the revolutionary power of the Red Army are invincible. The Red Army sets itself the task of so learning how to utilise the technique at its disposal that no other army in the world should be equal in this sphere to the strength of the Red Army. The task set is being successfully fulfilled.

The Army of the Soviet Union is a mighty instrument of peace. Under these circumstances, the German Fascists or the Japanese military clique, who are the chief instigators of war, need to weigh very carefully the following words uttered by Comrade Stalin, before they dare to undertake an adventurous onslaught against the Soviet Union. At the Seventeenth Congress of the C.P.S.U., Comrade Stalin declared that:

"... there can hardly be any doubt that a second war [Comrade Stalin had in view the intervention of the imperialist States in 1918-20.—Ed.] will lead to the complete defeat of those undertaking such an offensive, to revolution in a number of countries in Europe and Asia, and to the destruction of the bourgeois land-owning Governments of these countries."

The two lines of world development are no less striking in the sphere of social relations.

In spite of the fact that the economic crisis has passed into a depression, the astronomic figures of unemployment in the capitalist world do not decline. Everywhere in the capitalist countries there is a decline in the percentage of productively engaged workers, while in some countries, in the U.S.A., for instance, there is an absolute decline in the number of workers engaged in industry. The army of chronically unemployed, numbering millions, has no prospects whatsoever of ever again returning to production under capitalism. The passage to the depression is being brought about at the expense of the direct and indirect robbery of the workers (through the reduction of real wages by inflation, and the intensification of labor) and of the peasants, town and petty-bourgeoisie, and of the oppressed

colonial peoples. Alongside of this, tremendous profits were received in 1933, and especially in 1934, by the capitalist trusts, and even in the heaviest years of the crisis (1930-31), 32,000 million dollars were paid to the parasites and rentiers in the shape of dividends. The burden of militarism (which, in Japan, for instance, amounts to almost half of the State budget) has never, since the first imperialist war, been so unbearable as far as concerns the toiling masses in the capitalist countries.

In the U.S.S.R., on the other hand, further transformations have taken place in the social structure, as a result of which the Soviet Union has become a Socialist country, not only because the foundation of Socialist economy has been constructed there, but also because the majority of the population have finally linked up their lives with Socialism. The capitalist elements in the U.S.S.R. have almost completely been abolished in 1934, amounting altogether to 0.1 per cent. of the total population, and numbering 174,000 people (while in 1928 the urban big and petty bourgeoisie constituted 4.5 per cent. of the total population). Comrade Molotov declared at the Seventh Congress that the bourgeois elements in the U.S.S.R. have remained "in the nature of some memory." The total number of proletarians (workers, office employees, etc.), on the other hand, has increased from 26 millions in 1928 to 47 millions on January 1, 1934 (correspondingly their relation to the total population has increased from 17.3 per cent. to 28.1 per cent.). And the collective farmers and the handicraftsmen in the towns, who have been drawn into co-operative forms of work, and who together constituted 2.9 per cent. of the population in 1928, amounted to 45.9 per cent. of the population in 1934, while the individual peasant sector in the village has been relegated to secondary position.

"And so now we can say that **Nep\* Russia has become transformed into Socialist Russia.** Our country has become transformed. In the main the great task set by Lenin has been fulfilled. The vow given at Lenin's tomb eleven years ago by Comrade Stalin has been fulfilled."—Molotov.

The toilers of the Soviet Union, however, know that their Socialist fatherland is growing wealthier, and that their standard of living is rising uninterruptedly.

\* Soviet Russia of the period of the New Economic Policy, when the capitalist elements were allowed certain limited facilities for development.—Ed.

The Second All-Union Congress of Collective Farmers bears clear witness to the tremendous steps taken by the Soviet Union in the direction of achieving a well-to-do and cultured life for all the toilers on the basis of Socialism. But the main thing which both the Congress of Soviets and the All-Union Congress of "shock" collective farmers showed, was that tens and hundreds of thousands of talented organisers of the new life have arisen from among the masses of toilers. Wide masses of brigade leaders, tractorists, milk-maids, combine operators, and farm directors have developed and continued to develop, people who but a few years ago had seen nothing further than their own little farm, and who are now learning to manage large-scale Socialist production and to think and to solve problems from the State, proletarian point of view, and to rise to participation in an active political and cultural life, on the basis of the collective farm Socialist structure.

And the women collective farmers have also developed so far as to participate in the active struggle for Socialism, for a life which is well-to-do, and for the achievement of Bolshevik collective farms. It is not so long since these women were forgotten and held down by the backward character of their farms and by lack of culture. But now they are in the front ranks of those who are building the new happy life of the collective farm. There is a point included in the new statutes recommended for the agricultural artels (collective farms), which entitles women engaged on collective farm work to two months' leave prior to and after childbirth (to be paid for out of the funds of the collective farms). Where, in any capitalist country which cries about its "civilised character" and its "culture," are social measures possible on such a scale? Where can the peasant woman count on receiving but one-hundredth part of the care which she is receiving in the Soviet Union? Nowhere. Only in the U.S.S.R., in the land of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the country where the toilers enjoy extensive democracy!

The two lines of world development are no less clearly displayed in the national question as well. Whereas capitalism seeks a way out by robbing the colonies (the seizure of Manchuria and the North of China by Japan, the war of Italian imperialism against Abyssinia, etc.), and in national oppression of every kind, the Bolshevik Party, armed with the teachings of Lenin and Stalin on the national question, brought about, after the October Revolution, the unification of the peoples of the former Tsarist Empire into the impregnable Union of

Socialist Soviet Republics. Successful steps are being taken to abolish the inequality of the nationalities which were formerly backward and oppressed, and which, under Soviet Power, have entered on a period of stormy economic development. An unheard-of development is taking place of the culture of the numerous people which populate the U.S.S.R., culture which is national in form and Socialist in content. Whereas in the colonial countries we see the ripening of the revolutionary hatred of the toiling masses against the imperialist oppressors, and the growth of national liberation wars, as well as the growth and the development of the Chinese Soviet State and the heroic Chinese workers and peasants' army, at the same time the peoples of the U.S.S.R., who joined together on a voluntary basis are full of revolutionary Soviet patriotism. And this Soviet patriotism is the clearest expression of the tremendous international importance of the proletarian dictatorship, which is the mainstay of the world proletarian revolution.

At the congress, dozens of delegations of the national republics that constitute the U.S.S.R. gave reports about the victories they were achieving. Delegations from the Ukraine, Georgia, Tadzhikistan and Tataria brought figures to show that the path traversed by the peoples of the U.S.S.R. under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party is the path of the development of their Socialist industry, of the establishment of mighty industrial states. This is a path where for instance the engineering industry of the Ukraine, which in 1912 produced commodities valued at 83 million roubles, in 1934 under Soviet Power had a total production of 2200 million roubles. This is the path where the best among the collective farmers, shock workers on the collective farms in the Ukraine, the North Caucasus and other regions in the U.S.S.R. each earned 2½ to 3 tons of grain and 1500-2000 roubles of clear income for the labor days\* earned during the year. The best collective farmers in the Karbardino-Balkar region earned 4700 poods (about 80 tons) of agricultural products for the year 1934. This is the path where during the last two years about 250,000 collective farm women have been ad-

\*A labor day is the norm of work per day fixed to be done by each collective farmer. Work done above or less than this norm is counted as a fraction more or less of a "labor day" to the credit of the collective farmer. The share of the collective farmer in the net income of the collective farm is calculated on the basis of the number of labor days he has to his credit in the course of the year.—Ed.

vanced to responsible positions, while the circulation of the central and regional newspapers in the Ukraine amounts to two millions.

And the other path along which, for instance, the Polish imperialists have compelled the Ukrainian people in the Polish state to take, is the path along which the Ukraine is transformed into an agrarian and raw material appendage of Poland. It is the path of poverty, unemployment, of a half-starved existence, and of mass executions. It is the path where the national culture of the Ukraine is destroyed. It is a path where eight millions of the Ukrainian population in Poland have 300 miserable Ukrainian schools, and only two daily newspapers, while the circulation of these papers, according to the "Novy Chass," gives place even to the circulation of papers among the Eskimos.

But the oppositeness of the two lines of world development was most sharply displayed on questions of democracy as they affect the toilers.

Soviet power, as the State form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, from the very moment that it arose, in the fire of the October Revolution, ensured the very highest type of the development of democracy, one unknown in the world (the right of all toilers over 18 years of age to electoral rights, complete equality for women, etc.). From the very first moment when it came into existence, Soviet power embodied democracy for the toilers, implying that the widest masses of workers and peasants are drawn into the management of the State, and that the exploiters are suppressed by all the measures at the disposal of the State power. In the past, the special features of this proletarian democracy (including the special features of the electoral system, namely, indirect, open, and not completely equal elections) ensured that the proletariat played a leading role in relation to the small peasant owner in the economically backward country, and ensured that the widest masses of toilers would be trained by the proletarian vanguard in the difficult task of the management of the State.

From the very beginning, it was clear that these limitations of electoral rights were of a temporary character. Furthermore, in the Party programme, on Comrade Lenin's suggestion, the following paragraph was included, which indicated the further line of the Party in the direction of further democratising the electoral system, to the extent that the social structure of the Soviet State altered:—

"The task," it stated, "facing the Party of the proletariat is to carry on uninterruptedly the suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, to carry on a struggle of ideas against the deeply-rooted prejudices regarding the unconditional character of bourgeois rights and liberties, and at the same time to explain that when we deprive certain people of political rights, and when we undertake any limitations whatsoever of freedom, these are necessary exclusively as temporary measures in the struggle against the attempts of the exploiters to defend or to restore their privileges. To the degree that the objective possibility of man exploiting man vanishes, to that degree the necessity of applying these measures will also disappear, and the Party will strive to narrow their scope and to abolish them altogether."

The alteration in the social structure of the Soviet Union (the tremendous growth in the numerical strength of the proletariat, the abolition of the kulaks, the victories of the collective farm system and of social property) have at the present time rendered it necessary to introduce alterations in the Soviet Constitution, and to make it correspond to the changed social relations in the U.S.S.R. And only bourgeois philistines do not understand the consistency of the Bolshevik line in this question. It was on Comrade Stalin's initiative that this question was dealt with at the February (1935) Plenum of the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. With supreme Leninist-Stalinist simplicity and clarity, points were formulated, regarding the necessity for introducing alterations into the constitution of the U.S.S.R. in the direction of (a) the further democratisation of the electoral system in the sense of replacing the not fully equal by equal elections, indirect by direct elections, and open by closed elections; (b) the more exact definition of the social-economic basis of the constitution in the sense of making the constitution correspond to the present correlation of class forces in the U.S.S.R. (the establishment of a new Socialist industry, the abolition of the kulaks, the victory of the collective farm structure, and the establishment of Socialist property as the basis of Soviet society, etc.).

The proposals made by the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. were unanimously adopted by the congress, following a report made by Comrade Molotov, and opened up a new epoch of Soviet democracy.

What does the adoption of these decisions signify? What is meant by the new epoch of Soviet democracy?

The new epoch of Soviet democracy is the recognition of the fact that N.E.P. Russia has become Socialist Russia, that Socialism in the U.S.S.R. has achieved victory finally and irrevocably, that social property, recognised by Soviet law as sacred and inviolate, has achieved victory in fierce struggle against the hostile class forces. In the Soviet Union the road is opened up to a full life for all honest toilers, and to the degree that the classless Socialist society is successfully built up, and the last of the capitalist elements are destroyed, to that degree does the time come closer when all limitations whatsoever over general electoral rights will be abolished.

The equalisation of workers and peasants in the electoral system of the Soviet State is an expression of the fact that the workers and collective farmers are now engaged in the common cause of Socialist construction. This equalisation is at the same time an instruction calculated to do away with all distinctions whatsoever between the workers and peasants, and to destroy the contradictions between town and country.

The term "the new epoch of Soviet democracy" is at the same time the clearest expression of the fact that the bourgeois order which is developing from bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism to the undisguised terrorist domination of capital over the toilers, under the Fascist flag, has already a "foot in the grave," whereas in the Soviet Union "the growth of the proletarian State and of its certainty of victory are to be seen in both the small and large State reforms and in the alterations in the electoral system now proposed."

Hence, in the Soviet Union the replacement of "many-stage" methods of the election of the higher Soviet bodies (the "indirect" method) by direct elections, and closed by open elections, as the expression of the indissoluble connection of the Soviet Government with the masses, of the tremendous confidence in the Government by the masses of the people, as the expression of the authority of the Soviet Government in the eyes of the widest masses of the toilers, and of the efforts of the Soviets to place the work of their bodies under the increased control of the workers and peasants, and to still further develop self-criticism and to check the links between the organs of Soviet Power and the widest masses of the people. Hence, the adoption by the Soviet Government of all that is best in the

universal, direct, equal, and secret electoral law, and hence the idea of a sort of Soviet parliamentarism.

And precisely because the capitalist world is doomed to destruction and even bourgeois statesmen see this fatal doom and recognise the proximity of proletarian insurrection which will overthrow the domination of the bourgeoisie and destroy the system of private property, wage-slavery, landlord oppression, and national and colonial oppression—precisely for that reason is capitalist reaction so wild and ferocious throughout the world, and just for that reason has Fascism become so brutal in Germany, Poland, Japan, etc., and so irreconcilably hostile to even formal bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliamentarism.

At one time, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when the bourgeoisie advanced to power by driving the feudal landlords away from the helm of State, they proclaimed the slogan of "Liberty, equality, and fraternity." This freedom was freedom for the few, for the rich. This equality was the equality of the commodity owners, the equality under which the capitalist was considered "equal" to the workers. This fraternity was the fraternity of the capitalists, who jointly exploited the workers and toiling peasants. And even the limited formally democratic rights (freedom of the press, strikes, assembly, and trade-union organisation, etc.) were achieved by the workers and poorest peasants at the cost of revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie. But as far as the advanced workers were concerned, equality had only one meaning, namely, that of struggle to destroy classes, for Socialism. But the bourgeoisie have always used the bayonets of their armies against those really fighting for Socialism and for the abolition of class domination, proclaiming the principle of private property, the sacred, inviolate foundation of bourgeois democracy. And now, along with the progressive decline of capitalism, the turn has also come of formal bourgeois democracy and bourgeois parliamentarism, which, in the conditions of the direct threat of the proletarian revolution, had become useless and a hindrance as far as the preservation of bourgeois domination is concerned.

The democracy of the electoral system of the last century bore testimony to the certainty that the bourgeoisie felt in their own power, and in their own ability to subordinate the toiling masses to their class will, and to present their own bourgeois interests as the will of the "people as a whole."

The crisis of bourgeois democracy began with the epoch of imperialism as an epoch of parasitic, rotting, and dying capitalism. It became sharpened in the period of the general crisis of capitalism, in the period when the world became split into two systems. And it has assumed exceptionally sharp forms in the period when the advantages of the Soviet system, of planned Socialist economy, have shown themselves with all their force, and when, on the other hand, it has become clear that the bourgeoisie can artificially extend the existence of the rotten and decaying capitalist system only by methods of civil war directed against the working class, by the organisation of military penal servitude for the workers, by methods of Fascist terror and by stirring up national and race hatred. Under these conditions, the development towards Fascism has become the basic line of the development of modern bourgeois States.

But Fascism, without distinction as to its national forms, lays bare the existence of bourgeois power as that of the open terrorist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. Bourgeois power loses its last remnants of the appearance of being a Government "of the people," and openly exposes the character of Fascist power as being directed against the people, as one adopting the most hateful methods of government (White terror, concentration camps, the abolition of the right to strike, and of the freedom to organise in trade unions, etc.).

It is difficult to overestimate the world historic importance of the decisions made by the February Plenum of the C.C. of the C.P.S.U. and of the Seventh All-Union Congress of Soviets, and it will become clear in the not far distant future, in the still greater stormy growth of the love and loyalty of the workers and toilers throughout the world to their Socialist fatherland, to the land of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the most powerful and freest country in the world.

The task facing the entire international Communist movement is to make full use of the international importance of the Seventh All-Union Congress of Soviets, so as to organise the passage of the world working-class movement to a counter-offensive against the attacks made by Fascism and the capitalists, and against the war danger, into a counter-offensive carried through on the basis of the united front, and of a wide, popular anti-Fascist front of struggle. The alterations introduced into the Soviet Constitution are a most powerful blow directed against Social-Democratic ideology, and they must be utilised

to expose the reformist agents of the bourgeoisie within the working-class movement. They smash up the last arguments advanced by the Social-Democrats to defend the so-called above-class but in reality bourgeois democracy, a democracy which is advancing towards Fascism everywhere.

The Social-Democratic press presents a picture of complete helplessness and confusion. The majority of the Social-Democratic papers attempt to pass over in silence the world-historic decisions made by the Seventh All-Union Congress of Soviets. Others of them limit themselves to publishing the resolutions of the Congress regarding the further democratisation of the electoral system in the U.S.S.R., without making any comment.

However, it should be stated openly that the majority of the sections of the Communist International have not as yet made use of this confusion existing among the Social-Democratic parties, have not made use to a tenth part of what they could, in their struggle to win the majority of the working class against the bankrupt "socialism" and "democracy" of the Second International, of the mighty weapon given to the world proletarian movement by the decisions, which open a new epoch of Soviet democracy in the U.S.S.R.

The Social-Democratic leaders are making use of the weak activity being displayed by the Communist Parties, and are attempting to concoct a new system of "arguments" in defence of bourgeois democracy, and to discredit the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is the only real widespread democracy for the toilers.

Thus, the Menshevik interventionists, following on the heels of the bourgeoisie, are attempting, for instance, to prove that the decisions of the Seventh All-Union Congress of Soviets serve to "proclaim and rehabilitate the principles of that very 'formal democracy' which, since October, 1917, was counterposed to the principles of 'Soviet democracy.'" (See the "Socialist Vestnik.")

Your labor is wasted, Messrs. hirelings of the capitalists!

The formal democracy, which the proletariat overthrew by its uprising in October, 1917, will never come back to life again in the Soviet Union, for it was based on the domination of the bourgeoisie, in its turn based on the sacred principle of private property, masked by democratic institutions (the Constituent Assembly), and by universal, direct, and secret suffrage.

Soviet democracy, on the other hand, differs fundamentally from the formal democracy of the bourgeoisie, and is the dictatorship of the proletariat which operates proletarian violence against the bourgeoisie, and directs the toiling masses in the reconstruction of the whole of the national economy and of culture as a whole, on Socialist foundations. The basis of the Soviet system is Socialist, social, and not private property. Social and not private property is sacred and inviolable. And when all that is best in the universal, direct, and secret ballot is fully introduced into life in the Soviet Republic, it takes place on the basis of the Soviet system, and serves to strengthen still further the dictatorship of the proletariat, to render social property more firm, to construct Socialism, and to abolish classes.

At one time, many years ago, the passage of the Soviet Union to the new economic policy (N.E.P.) caused hopes to rise in the hearts of many capitalists that the U.S.S.R. would return to the lap of capitalism. And now the contemptible leaders of Social-Democracy and the counter-revolutionary Menshevik interventionists are feeding themselves with hopes of the re-establishment of "formal" democracy in the Soviet Union, i.e., of the re-establishment of bourgeois democracy. In vain, the illusions of the capitalists connected with the passage of the Soviet Union to N.E.P. were very quickly shed. How many weeks, if not days, will the present illusions of the Social-Democrats last? It is true that none of the Social-Democratic hacks take seriously what they write. This version serves only one purpose, namely, that of supporting the democratic illusions which the masses are losing. Maybe those backward sections of the workers who are not well up in politics will believe that the U.S.S.R. is turning back to the formal (i.e., bourgeois) democracy so beloved of the Social-Democrats.

But can we conceive that any wide masses of workers in the capitalist countries will believe that the Soviet Union is abandoning the Soviet democracy, which has destroyed unemployment in the towns, and poverty in the villages, and ensured an uninterrupted advance in the standard of living of the toiling masses, as well as their participation in the management of the State, and the complete reorganisation of the whole of national economy and culture on a Socialist foundation? Of course not! And this argument about the turn of the Soviet Union to formal bourgeois democracy bears clear witness to the helplessness of the Social-Democrats in their struggle against Communism, in

the struggle against the Soviet democracy being put into operation by the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union.

The Social-Democratic press, taking into account the extreme weakness of the version they put forward, are hastening to make use of purely Trotskyist arguments in the struggle against the Soviet Government. The equalisation in the electoral system between workers and peasants is, they allege, an attempt made by the Bolsheviks to rest on the peasants, as against the workers, and implies, allegedly, that the reform is "to the benefit of the village and, what is more, to the village as a whole, including the peasant proprietors," and that it can "be interpreted as a desire to attract precisely the kulaks" (see the paper of the Polish Socialist Party, the "Robotnik"). Added to the foul anti-Soviet lie about "attracting the kulaks" as being the essence of the alterations in the Soviet Constitution are the still more hypocritical doubts of the "Robotnik" as to "whether the individual peasants in the Soviet Union, who still constitute 35 per cent. of the agricultural population, have the right to vote"!

Can there be any doubt that even the most backward Social-Democratic workers will expose this anti-Soviet onslaught of the Social-Democratic press, and will clearly see that the equalisation of the rights of the workers and peasants in the Soviet Union is the result of the fact that the overwhelming masses of the former peasants, of the former peasant proprietors, have taken the path of the collective farm life, the path to Socialism, whereas the kulaks, who have been smashed up and abolished as a class, and the former kulaks can only obtain civil rights again if they become re-educated and prove that they will work honestly, as toilers and not as exploiters? This equalisation is a factor which will assist in still further abolishing the difference between the town and the village, between the workers and peasants, by transforming them into toilers in a classless Socialist society.

However, it is useless seeking for consistency in the arguments of the Social-Democrats, contradictory as they are. These arguments are all good if they serve one purpose, namely, that of counter-revolutionary struggle against the Soviet Union. Therefore, after only just announcing their "discovery" to the effect that the Bolsheviks are abandoning the principles of Soviet democracy and are returning to the principles of formal

democracy, or to the effect that the reform allegedly means attracting the kulaks, the Social-Democratic writers are attempting to convince their readers that the democratisation of the Soviet electoral system is of "no practical importance." And here they give themselves away as open agents of the bourgeoisie in the ranks of the working class, as counter-revolutionary fighters for the overthrow of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and for the restoration of capitalism in the U.S.S.R.

Previously the Social-Democrats speculated on the indirect, not fully equal, open and not universal, electoral system in the U.S.S.R. Now they can no longer speculate in this regard. It must be recognised that nowhere in the world is there such a universal electoral system as in the U.S.S.R., since only an insignificant handful of exploiters in the land of the Soviets are debarred from the right to participate in the elections. Whereas, in "democratic" France, for instance, one-half of the population (women) have not got the right to vote. In addition, young people under 21 years of age, people who live in France but born in the colonies (and French at that), foreigners, and soldiers are debarred from participation in the elections.

In the "democratic" U.S.A., young people from 18 to 21 years of age also have not the right to vote, while in the Southern States of America negroes are, in fact, deprived of the right to vote (for an educational qualification is required), while in various States, a property qualification or a payment of an electoral tax is required, and this excludes the unemployed from participation in the elections. But even among those who have the right to register their votes it is usual that slightly more than 40 per cent. make use of their right, whereas in the Soviet Union we see an unheard-of growth in the activity of the electors. In the 1934 elections to the Soviets, 93 per cent. of the town electors, men and women, registered their votes, while the corresponding figure for the village was 83 per cent.

As regards democratic rights and voting by the people in Fascist countries (Germany, Austria, Poland, Italy, etc.), the bourgeoisie there have transformed these into a foul comedy, the success of which is ensured by bayonets and by the employment of savage, unbridled, nationalist demagoguery. The whole system of the Soviet elections ensures competition at the elections between the shock workers ("udarniks") of Socialist industry, agriculture, and Party work, and ensures the free election of the most popular and most beloved fighters for

Socialism, the best of the best builders of the classless society.

The Social-Democratic leaders have now to declare themselves openly in favor of those very features of the bourgeois democratic system, the introduction of which into the Soviet Union would imply a step towards the restoration of capitalism, namely, freedom of the press for the bourgeoisie, and freedom for bourgeois political parties to participate in the elections. The Social-Democrats thereby would like to do away with the basis of the proletarian dictatorship, namely, the employment of violence against the bourgeoisie, and the leading role of the proletariat in relation to the toilers as a whole, for the destruction of classes and the construction of classless society.

But every worker clearly understands that the U.S.S.R. is surrounded on all sides by capitalist countries, that freedom of the bourgeois press (and, what is more, for bourgeois parties) is freedom for the capitalists to bribe the unstable elements among the toilers, and to deceive them by their bourgeois ideology. The influence of the bourgeoisie in the U.S.S.R. is not exhausted by the existence of 174,000 kulaks, speculators, etc. Remnants of capitalism have continued to be maintained in the consciousness of the masses (and not only of individual farmers, but also in the consciousness of collective farmers and even of the backward sections of the proletariat). The contrast between the town and country, and, what is more, between physical and mental labor, have not yet been abolished. The struggle is a fierce class struggle against the anti-social, anti-State, anti-collective farm relics in the consciousness of the people, and this means the protection and strengthening of social property, the basis of the Soviet system, by the organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat—and this struggle has assumed still greater importance precisely now, in connection with the victory of social property.

The decisions of the Seventh Congress of Soviets regarding certain alterations in the Soviet Constitution throw a clear light on the political and theoretical struggle waged by the Party, headed by Comrade Stalin, against the anti-Leninist line of Zinoviev and Kamenev, who have slid down to the camp of counter-revolution, and against the counter-revolutionary Trotsky.

Zinoviev distorted Lenin when he attempted to introduce the thesis of the "dictatorship of the Party."

What did this thesis imply? This thesis counterposed the Party to the Soviet Government, the Party to the dictatorship

of the proletariat. Fundamentally, this thesis proclaimed a break between the Party and the broad masses of non-Party workers and peasants, and excluded the possibility of developing Soviet democracy. This thesis is Social-Democratic, counter-revolutionary slander against the Soviet Government.

Following Zinoviev, his fellow-champion in the struggle against the Party, Kamenev, declared that the vitalising of the Soviets would lead to the "lower rungs of the Soviet system being swamped by the petty-bourgeois elements." And Trotsky's "theory" to the effect that the system of War Communism is characteristic of the whole transition period by no means allowed for the development of Soviet democracy.

It is only the untiring struggle of Comrade Stalin against the counter-revolutionary Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc, which advanced the thesis to the effect that it is impossible to build Socialism in a single country, not believing in the revolutionary power of the proletariat and of its ability to take the lead over the peasants, that made it possible to bring about the destruction of the anti-Party groups and to victoriously build Socialism and to announce a new epoch of Soviet democracy at the Seventh Congress of Soviets.

Messrs. the Mensheviks are attempting in their struggle against the Soviets and against the dictatorship of the proletariat to make use of the remnants of the capitalist elements, and the relics of capitalism in the consciousness of the masses which have been smashed up (but not as yet finally wiped out). Hence their dissatisfaction at the way Soviet democracy is being carried through to the end, and is serving to strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat, to destroy classes, and to destroy the relics of capitalism in the consciousness of the masses. When the Social-Democrats come forward in favor of freedom of the press for the bourgeoisie, and in favor of making bourgeois parties legal, they are carrying on a desperate struggle against the dictatorship of the proletariat in the U.S.S.R., for the restoration of capitalism, and of bourgeois domination. The toiling masses of the U.S.S.R., on the other hand, led by their mighty Bolshevik Party, and by the mighty leader of the world proletariat (Comrade Stalin), are making a tremendous step forward to the classless Socialist society.

History has passed its sentence, namely, that the cause of Socialism, the cause of the U.S.S.R., the cause of Lenin and Stalin, is invincible. And the miserable, contemptible Social-Democratic leaders will not be able to stop this triumphant

march of Socialism which is taking the place of the bloody Fascist barbarism of capital, which is in a frenzy in its vain efforts to extend the domination of the bourgeois slave system, doomed as it is to death.

## *The Labor Party's New Moves*

By R. DIXON

The declining support of the working class for the Labor Party has become the source of much alarm in both reformist and bourgeois circles. Mr. Lang rages at it, "moderate" Labor deplores it, and the capitalist press fears it. Several solutions are offered. Mr. Lang is certain that the solution rests in the continuation and extension of his leadership and policy; the capitalist press and some Labor Party circles are equally certain that the solution is bound up with the removal of Mr. Lang and his replacement by a more "moderate" leader, a la Forgan Smith.

Such quack remedies, however, are futile, for the disease of the Labor Party is incurable. Its decline is the product of its past and present policy, which takes as its point of departure the permanency of capitalist relations, and which has the purpose of working within the boundaries set by capitalism to improve and perpetuate the system. Having taken up the cudgels on behalf of capitalism, and being bound body and soul to that system, the disintegration of the Labor Party proceeds inevitably with the collapse of capitalism.

The decline of the Labor Party has been rapid since the Premiers' Conference of 1931. At that time the Labor Party constituted the Government in four Parliaments out of the seven in the Commonwealth. Included in those four were the most decisive points in the economic and political life of the country, namely, the Federal, New South Wales, and Victorian Governments. Added to this was the fact that in the Federal elections of 1929 and the N.S.W. elections of 1930 the Labor Party was swept into office with the largest majorities recorded up till that time.

With these factors in its favor, the Labor Party was called upon to deal with the capitalist crisis. Never once, however, did it approach the questions from the standpoint of the working

class, from the point of view of the class struggle. The slogan "Equality of sacrifice" was raised. Then came the infamous wage-slashing Premiers' Plan, prepared and endorsed by the Labor Governments. It proclaimed the equal right of all the oppressed and exploited to carry the burdens of the crisis and the sanctity of capitalist profits. Thus, the real meaning of the slogan, "Equality of sacrifice."

The announcement of the decisions of the Premiers' Conference of May-June, 1931, was received with mixed feelings in the ranks of the working class. Large sections at first refused to believe that the Labor Party had so betrayed them. But as the application of the Premiers' Plan commenced to make itself felt in the pay envelopes, as the weeks, months, and years began to pass and the conditions of the masses worsened, so the full extent of Labor Party duplicity has more and more impressed itself in the minds of the workers.

If the Labor Government produced the Premiers' Plan and took the first steps to apply same, they were not allowed to complete the process. Within twelve months of the signing of the Plan, the Labor Governments had all been replaced by openly bourgeois Governments. These latter proceeded to vigorously apply the provisions of the Premiers' Conference.

In preparing the Premiers' Plan and taking the first steps in applying it, the Labor Party rendered a service of untold value to the ruling class. This was its task. The way was smoothed for the attacks the employers were determined to launch. Had the Labor Governments continued, then the Labor Party itself would have been wrecked by internal strife, whilst its mass influence would have been destroyed. As it is, there has been a very serious undermining of its mass influence.

Thus, the Premiers' Plan is an important signpost on the downward path of the Labor Party. One could say, quite correctly, that it was a turning point leading to a steeper decline. Its effects are not being reduced with the passing of time, but are manifesting themselves more acutely. This is recognised very fully within the Labor Party itself. Thus, Mr. Lang, in his recent speech to delegates from Labor Party leagues and trade unions, after suggesting that the next Federal Parliament (which he hopes will be controlled by the Labor Party) may have to face a situation similar to that of 1931, declared: "If we do get a situation like that, we don't want another Premiers' Plan." ("L.D." Aug. 1.) This dismal note has much truth in it. "Another Premiers' Plan would mean the end of the Labor

Party." As to the likelihood of a repetition of the events of 1931, that is a subject for another article.

The next important issue in the decline of the Labor Party is the internal dissension and split within the organisation.

The main struggle is that between the Federal and N.S.W. State organisations. It is confined, in the main, to the leadership, and takes the form of two cliques struggling for control. No basic questions of principle are involved. Both groups start from the standpoint that the economic crisis is primarily a crisis in finance, which must be overcome within the structure of capitalism, and each proposes nationalisation of banking as the solution.

It is true that Lang and the N.S.W. Labor Party raise the issue of the Premiers' Plan as if it were the basis of the dispute. This, however, is an attempt at evading responsibility. It is poor, very poor, deception. Lang participated equally with Scullin in the production of the Premiers' Plan and no amount of lying will erase that fact.

The struggle between the rival cliques within the Labor Party was going on for a number of years prior to the commencement of the economic crisis in 1929 and the actual split, which was precipitated by the expulsion of Theodore from the N.S.W. State Branch, took place several weeks prior to the Premiers' Conference of May-June, 1931.

There is no doubt, however, that under the pressure of mass resentment to the Premiers' Plan the dispute was sharpened. Lang did all possible to hide his infamy, and manoeuvred to divert the resentment of the masses against Federal Labor, to undermine its authority and thereby create the conditions for his control of the Labor Party on a Federal scale. For a period some success attended his efforts, but only for a period. To-day his chickens are coming home to roost. The workers are coming to realise the part he played in the production of the Premiers' Plan. This, together with the suppression of criticism and democracy within the N.S.W. Labor Party, has facilitated the succession of rank and file revolts against "Inner Group" control.

The issues in the dispute between the Federal and State Labor parties, which are mainly personal, are not understood by the masses in the Labor Party. The mutual recriminations, charges and counter charges have, however, revealed much of that putrefying mess of opportunism and intrigue, which thrives within the Labor Party, to the masses, thus hastening its decline.

A third factor in the decline of the Labor Party was the abject capitulation of the N.S.W. Labor Government in May, 1932, to the pressure of the Federal Government and the demand of Governor Game that it resign.

In the months leading up to that event Lang excelled himself in "fighting" speeches. He shouted: "The revolution is here," threatened that "if they force me far enough I will go the whole hog," told the workers that he was fighting their battle and that the time was arriving when they must "stand by him," etc. The atmosphere was laden with class tenseness and the workers were "standing by." Then the moment for action came. The bourgeoisie threw overboard its sanctified and purified constitution, revealed capitalist dictatorship in its brutal open form and removed the Labor Government from office. Overwhelmed, the Labor Party submitted meekly and mildly. But in so doing it did untold damage to its prestige. The workers were disgusted, whilst the petty bourgeoisie deserted. A strong stand by the Labor Party in that situation would have raised the fighting enthusiasm of the workers to new heights and have swept the vacillating petty bourgeoisie behind it. This would have meant, however, the calling of the working class into struggle—the launching of a general strike, in which the workers were in the mood to engage. In face of such a movement, no government could have stood, particularly the Stevens outfit, which eked out a very precarious few weeks as it was.

It was of struggle, however, that the the Labor Party was more afraid than anything else. It resigned and called upon the workers to take no action, but to await the ballot—to yield to the capitalists who had torn up the constitution and baulked the law which they so persistently demand the workers shall respect.

In taking that step the ruling classes did irreparable harm to the constitution and at the same time gave the workers a lesson in class struggle. They revealed the truth that "real class rule . . . lies outside of Parliament" (Lenin). In that one action a remarkable impulse was given to the undermining of the faith of the masses in the "rock-bound, all-powerful" parliamentary system, in "true British democracy" and bourgeois law and order. Since then the declining interest of the masses in parliamentary elections has been the source of much comment in the bourgeois and Labor Party Press.

If the faith of the masses in parliamentarism is undermined then this only accelerates the decline of the Labor Party, for it is nothing more than a parliamentary machine. Thus, two facts stand forth prominently from the events of May-June 1932: Firstly, that the cowardly retreat of the Labor Party disgusted and repelled the workers. Secondly, that the Philistine confidence of the masses in parliamentarism received a rude shock, which, in turn, reacts upon the Labor Party, hastening its decline.

Added to these three factors influencing the decline of the Labor Party, the Premiers' Plan, the split in the Labor Party, and the dismissal of the Lang Government, is the work of the Communist Party, which has persistently exposed Labor Party treachery and shown the path to the realisation of the class aims of the working class.

The mass work of the Communist Party has improved enormously, particularly in the trade unions. The trade unions provide the real mass basis for the Labor Party and to work correctly in them leads inevitably to a further undermining of the Labor Party. This is precisely what is happening. The trade unions are being strengthened rapidly as a result of revolutionary work, but the Labor Party has declined still further.

Thus, a transformation is taking place. For years the working class held faith in the Labor Party and believed in parliamentary action. The politicians seized on to this and always they have raised the cry, "put Labor into office and it will right the wrongs." This slogan was frenziedly raised in June elections 1932 (N.S.W.), in the Federal elections September 1934, in the N.S.W. elections May 1935, but the response was disappointing. The Labor Party nowhere could arouse interest and enthusiasm. Lang bewailed this seeming inertia; he berated the working class for deserting the Labor Party, and blamed the unemployed for the election defeats. As is usual, however, he could not see the wood for the trees. Inertia had not settled upon the labor movement. Activity was growing, initiative increasing and enthusiasm rising, but on the industrial field. The impotency of parliamentarism and the uselessness of depending on the Labor Party to improve conditions, was and is impressing itself on the workers. From parliamentarism they turn, more and more, to dependence on their organisation and industrial strength. This process is of fundamental importance. It bears witness, not only to the decline of bourgeois democratic illusions amongst the masses, which is in itself of vital significance, but, above all, it

emphasises the Left swing of the masses, which is the most characteristic feature of the movement to-day.

The enthusiasm and energy once displayed in elections is now to be seen in the unions. The marked revival of trade unionism is patently obvious to even the most superficial observer. A new upsurge of working-class struggle is taking place, and the moving force, the driving spirit of this development is the revolutionary movement. The strike wave is mounting to new heights and the solidarity and enthusiasm of the masses is growing.

The ruling class and the Labor Party are seriously alarmed at this development. The more so in view of the dangerous economic situation. Precisely because the capitalists know only one way to try to solve their economic difficulties, namely, attacking the wages and conditions of the toiling masses; so, the present mood of the masses, their determination to resist further inroads on their wages and conditions, is a grave menace. "Another Premiers' Plan" is almost unthinkable, especially as the Labor Party shows no sign, as yet, of recovering from the last.

The Labor Party must be rehabilitated, its attractiveness increased, and parliamentary illusions restored in the masses. To this end the New South Wales organisation has decided on a two-years' campaign for the next Federal elections. Pennies are to be collected, campaign funds established, and the attention of the workers is to be riveted on returning a Labor Government.

The real meaning of this perfidy is best revealed in the remarks of Mr. Lang to the meeting of representatives from Labor Party leagues and trade unions, held July 31, 1935. He stated that each week there was some instance or other where workers in industries and factories were "prepared to back up their officials with direct action, if necessary, in a demand for better conditions. Many sections of the unemployed have shown their ability to take a determined stand against the worsening of their conditions."

"While only straws in the wind, these incidents show that the campaign of fear with which the newspapers have kept the workers quiet, is losing its effect." He then went on to point out that this "reawakening determination to fight must be organised with a view to the next Federal elections."

These remarks are self-condemnatory.

The numerous strikes may be likened to straws which show

the way the wind is blowing, but it seems Mr. Lang cannot read his straws. It is not so much "the campaign of fear with which the newspapers have kept the workers quiet" (whatever that means), which is passing, but rather, the stultifying, reactionary influence of the Labor Party.

The strike wave is rising, the will of the masses "to fight" is growing, the class issues are becoming clearer, whilst the reactionary role of the Labor Party is more and more evident to all. The wind which is blowing is forcing flames of revolt, not of reaction. To imagine that the "reawakening determination" of the masses "to fight" can be diverted into an electoral campaign for the Labor Party is to have the imagination of a fool.

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There have been periods in the earlier history of the labor movement when there was a reaction to the Labor Party. On the eve of the war a marked turn of the masses from the Labor Party was noticeable. This was accompanied by a rapid growth in the influence and organisation of the I.W.W. Following the war the decline of the Labor Party was even more marked, and the O.B.U. movement reached considerable dimensions. Anarcho-syndicalism, however, is a tendency which is incapable of carrying the struggle against capitalism through to the end. It was but a phase in the labor movement, and was unable to hold the masses. Hence, after a period of time, the Labor Party was restored and strengthened. That, however, cannot happen again. The main difference between the past and the present is the existence of the Communist Party. To-day, when the masses turn from the Labor Party, they turn towards the Communist Party. There will be no return to the Labor Party, as in the past.

## *The Democracy of Socialism and the Dictatorship of Capitalism*

By E. W. C.

"Humanity is now forced to choose between Socialism and Fascism." These words, used by Comrade Pieck in the course of his speech to the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern, are made the subject for a leading article in the "Sydney Morning Herald" of August 5. "A Choice of Serfdoms" is what this phrase is construed to mean. Socialism and Fascism are lumped together as "two despotisms," and "none of the groups which favor such systems has any right to denounce the others. That right belongs only to those who believe in constitutional democracy." Furthermore, "for the left wing to hold up hands of horror at Fascist excesses is the merest hypocrisy. It is not the excesses they lament, but only the fact that they themselves are not in a position to commit excesses of their own." (Vide "S.M.H.")

Lenin (in "Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution") writes: "From the vulgar bourgeois standpoint, the concepts 'dictatorship' and 'democracy' mutually exclude each other. Not understanding the theory of class struggle, and accustomed to see on the political arena only a petty squabble of various bourgeois circles and cliques, the bourgeois conceives the dictatorship to be the repeal of all liberties, of all guarantees of democracy, tyranny of every kind, and all possible abuses of power in the personal interests of the dictator." ("Marx, Engels, Marxism," p. 129.)

Hence, according to the "S.M.H.," Socialism or Fascism represents "a choice of contrasted forms of slavery" compared with constitutional democracy. We are told that "fortunately for Britain and the Empire the issue need never present itself." "The British character, reflected so faithfully in British institutions, has an instinctive dislike for violence. . . . It prefers, in short, to keep to the middle course." Presenting the matter in this light is first of all an attempt to bolster up the failing confidence of the masses in bourgeois democracy and to deny its Fascisation. Secondly, it is an attempt to cover up the fact that even in the democratic countries of capitalism, including Britain and Australia, the overwhelming majority of the popu-

lation are enslaved and can only be liberated under Socialism.

The basis of this enslavement is private property, the division of society into classes—the ownership by a small group of financial magnates, capitalists, and big landlords of all the vital and important means of production, which enables them to exploit the wage-labor of the working class, as well as the toil of the poor farmers.

It is well known, of course, that private property, exploitation, and class division were not created by capitalism, but were already established prior to its development. The slaveholding system, which arose following the break-up of primitive communism, was the first class society. In this social system the class of slaveholders, which constituted a minority, exploited and held in bondage the mass of slaves. The slaves, body and soul, belonged to their masters, and the latter, to maintain their domination, found necessary the creation of a special force. The State arose as a power of coercion for violently imposing the will of the ruling class upon their subjects.

Chattel slavery eventually gave place to feudalism, and the slave State gave way to the feudal State. Within the feudal system, capitalist productive relationships developed, and became economically dominant. The rising capitalist class, finding its further advance barred by feudalism, entered into armed conflict with the nobility, and was finally triumphant.

The victory of capitalism over feudalism, however, did not bring an end to private property, exploitation, and class division. Exploitation of serfs by the feudal lords gave place to exploitation of wage-laborers by the capitalists. The class struggle continued in a new form between the two great classes—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The feudal State was transformed into the capitalist State, and retained its character as a power of coercion, serving the ruling bourgeoisie in violently imposing its will upon the masses.

In their struggle against the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie enlisted support from the democratic masses by advancing demands for secret, universal, and equal suffrage, etc., but once having gained the ascendancy, the bourgeoisie turned from these slogans towards reaction in politics.

However, during the epoch of industrial capitalism, up until the beginning of the twentieth century, bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism served the bourgeoisie as the best method of perpetuating its class rule. The masses were kept in subjection in a way that seemed to correspond to their own will. With

freedom of speech and freedom of the press proclaimed, and with secret, universal, and equal suffrage said to exist, it appeared that the masses had the possibility of determining how, and by whom, they would be governed.

That this is no more than an illusion is clear when we consider that all the best halls, etc., are owned by the bourgeoisie, who can—and do—refuse their use to the workers. All the best printing presses, supplies of paper, etc., are likewise in the hands of the capitalists, and, in addition to this, freedom of speech and press is further restricted for the workers by laws of libel and sedition. As for universal and equal suffrage, the fact that the bourgeoisie enjoys monopoly of ownership in the means of production ensures its continued domination, and Parliament is made a very effective screen for concealing this class rule. With possession of all the means of creating ideology (schools, church, press, wireless, etc.), the bourgeoisie strives to create a respect for the law, the basis of which is protection of private property.

But even during the most peaceful period of development, ideological forces and deception alone could not guarantee the continued rule of the bourgeoisie. The growth of capitalism proceeds by concentrating the wealth into fewer and fewer hands, whilst an increasing proportion of the population is reduced to the position of wage-slaves and semi-paupers. Respect for the law is not strong enough to prevail against hunger and want; more and more are the sacred rights of private property violated. Here the other side of the bourgeois dictatorship operates. The police, the courts, and the prisons are brought into play against transgressors, and when discontent and unrest take on a mass character, such as strikes and demonstrations in times of crisis, it is no uncommon thing for the army to be called into action against the masses.

The contemporary press is very fond of reasoning that this is a phenomenon peculiar only to some other countries, and could never happen in Britain or Australia, because of our alleged dislike of violence, etc. The "Daily Telegraph" of August 8, in setting out to prove something along these lines, unconsciously provides us with evidence in contradiction. It states: "When the metropolis of the Empire was in the dismay of a general strike, the choicest of all British regiments, Grenadier Guards and Coldstreamers, were used to give to the bourgeoisie its confidence in perfect social security." And in another part: "During the war, in which some nations had

revolutions and others suffered serious army mutinies, our only military disorder culminated in one volley of shots fired on Sydney railway station." Such candor, even though it does arise from stupidity, is refreshing in a leader-writer on the "D.T." staff. It clearly reveals what the bourgeoisie actually rely upon to maintain their rule, and shows bourgeois democracy as but a velvet glove concealing the steel hand of bourgeois dictatorship.

If democratic methods of rule best served the bourgeoisie during its period of ascendancy, they no longer serve it so well in its period of decline. Throughout the world to-day, the revolutionary crisis is maturing, and the indignation of the broad masses against the rule of capitalism is growing. The capitalist class is no longer able to maintain its dictatorship by the old methods of parliamentarism and bourgeois democracy in general, and is being forced to resort to open terrorist dictatorship. In some countries, of which Germany is the most recent, the Fascist dictatorship has been established. This was made possible mainly by the treachery of Social-Democracy, which kept the working class divided. In all other countries, the general line of the bourgeoisie is towards Fascisation. High-sounding phrases about preferring the "middle course," the "stability of British institutions," and so on, only serve to cover up this fact. One of these "British institutions"—the Parliament—recently passed a Seditious Bill that, according to Dr. E. R. Walker, of Sydney University, is "the most daring encroachment yet made upon the liberty of British subjects."

Not only in Britain, but here in Australia, we lack no evidence to prove the Fascisation of bourgeois democracy. The "Workers' Weekly" was banned from the post; it was refused carriage over the railways in Victoria and South Australia. Thousands of copies of "The Red Leader" were burned by the authorities, and its registration also taken away. Just recently packages containing "Soviets To-day" were destroyed in like manner. Revolutionary literature is not permitted to enter the country. In this way further restrictions are placed upon the already limited freedom of the press. As for the freedom of speech, never very widespread because of the absence of halls for the workers under capitalism, this also is being further curtailed by police intimidation of landlords renting rooms to militant organisations. When we come to consider the franchise, the action of the Stevens Government in imposing the

£25 deposit on the eve of the elections is recent history. When is added to all this the amendments to the Crimes Act, the prosecution of Devanny (publisher of the "Workers' Weekly"), the proposed Disloyal Organisations Bill in N.S.W., and the attempt to deal with "unlawful bodies," there is abundant material showing how Fascism grows organically out of bourgeois democracy. The growth of Fascism is the reaction of the bourgeoisie to the rising militancy of the working class. The reactionary measures outlined are but the reverse side of the picture of increased revolutionary activity of the Australian working class, reflected in a turn towards militant trade unionism and a steady growth of the Communist Party.

We agree with the "Herald" that a Fascist dictatorship would mean "serfdom," would mean "slavery," for the majority of Australian people, because it would mean the continuation of the present capitalist exploitation. It would mean the intensification of that exploitation to its utmost limits, with forced labor camps the rule rather than the exception. It would mean the repeal of all liberties for the masses and the dissolution of their organisations, trade unions, political parties, and even benefit societies. It would mean a reign of terror and violence unrestrained by law, and directed against the toilers in general and their revolutionary leadership, the Communist Party, in particular.

This is what the Fascist dictatorship would mean for the people, but for the handful of big capitalists, who still continued to dominate the State, it would mean, temporarily at least, increased wealth and profits.

But the Fascist Dictatorship is not an inevitable stage in historical development. Its establishment by the bourgeoisie can be prevented by the organised power of the working class once it succeeds in overcoming the split in its ranks and attracting to its side other non-proletarian strata of toilers. The split in the ranks of the working class is perpetuated by the Labor leaders who refuse to forsake the united front with the bosses for the united front with the Communists. In France, where the Communist Party and the Socialist Party have united their forces, the working class has won to its support considerable sections of the petty-bourgeoisie and Fascism is effectively being checked from coming to power.

As for Socialism being a "tyranny" under which "mankind would be precisely as comfortable and confined as the inmates

of Long Bay gaol" (vide "S.M.H."), if the "Herald" would substitute the word bourgeoisie for mankind we would agree, for Socialism sounds the death-knell to private property and exploitation. It proclaims the maxim: "He who toils not, neither shall he eat." No wonder then that the few hundred parasites, who at present eat of the fruits of the toil of millions, shudder when they contemplate the approaching revolution.

Socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, makes no pretence at being a democracy for all, for rich and poor alike. What it does claim to be and what it is in reality is a true democracy for the toiling masses. "Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, democracy is proletarian democracy—the democracy of the exploited majority based upon the restriction of the rights of the exploiting minority and directed against this minority." (Stalin: "Leninism," vol. 1, p. 46).

The Soviet Constitution stresses the fact that it is a prime duty of Soviet power to guarantee the toilers real freedom to express their opinions and for this purpose to place the press and print shops in the hands of the working class and the poor peasants. To place at the disposal of the toilers halls suitable for meetings and to assist the workers and poor peasants in every way in the matter of their free organisation. Furthermore, the Soviet Constitution grants the right to elect and be elected to the Soviets to all toilers of the age of 18 years and over. There are no discriminations on sex or nationality. The only restriction imposed is upon former exploiters of labor and the officials of the old regime most hostile to the workers. The number of such elements disfranchised in 1934 constituted no more than 2.5 per cent. of the total adult population. In the 1934 elections to the Soviets, 92 per cent. of those entitled to vote took part in the cities, and 83 per cent. in the country. This voting is entirely voluntary, and unlike in our "democratic" Australia there is no 10/- fine for failing to participate. Describing the democracy of the Soviet system, Lenin wrote:

"The Socialist character of Soviet democracy consists, firstly, in the fact that the toilers and the exploited masses are the electors, while the bourgeoisie are excluded; secondly, in the fact that all bureaucratic formalities and restrictions of election are eliminated and the masses themselves determine the manner and times of election and enjoy full freedom to recall their deputies; thirdly, in the fact that the best form of mass organisations of the

vanguard of the toilers, the proletariat in heavy industry, is created, which enables it to lead the largest number of exploited, to draw them into independent political life, educate them politically on the basis of their own experience, so that for the first time we have an approach to a state of affairs in which actually every member of the population learns to rule and begins to rule." (Re-quoted from Molotov's Report to 7th Congress of Soviets on Constitutional changes.)

This is actually being realised in the Soviet Union to-day. In 1933 in the R.S.F.S.R. (The Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic) alone 1,500,000 people were drawn directly into the work of administering the State through the Soviet Sections, in addition to this over 2,000,000 more were activated in work of various kinds connected with the Soviets.

Proletarian democracy is a million times more democratic than bourgeois democracy. When the "Herald" sneeringly refers to the "principles of liberty" as being "old fashioned," let it be clearly understood that this is true only for narrow capitalist circles which more and more favor discarding all pretence at democracy and establishing the naked terrorist power of capital over the toilers by a Fascist dictatorship.

To the broad masses of the world the "principles of liberty" are not "old fashioned," and they will resist stubbornly all attempts upon their hard won democratic rights, whether such attempts are made by armed Fascist bands, or whether by reactionary legislation of Parliament. The working class will fight on against capitalism, against Fascism, and for the victory of Socialism.

## Australia's Anti-Militarist Tradition

### Part II

" . . . Thirty, Forty, Fifty Years Ago"

By J. N. RAWLING.

As we have seen, the struggle against militarism, during the years 1911 to 1914, although widespread, was mainly individualistic and spontaneous in character. This outcome was due, on the one hand, in its spontaneity, to the fact that twenty years of Labor Party politics have not curbed the independence nor quenched the militant spirit that the peculiar Australian economic conditions and the industrial struggles and traditions of a quarter of a century had begotten, and, on the other hand, in its individualism, to the additional fact that the Labor Party, the only widely-accepted unifying force within the working class, had itself mobilised the workers on the political field in support of compulsory military training. It was the Labor Party that was responsible for the placing of the yoke of compulsory service upon Australia's youth—not merely because it passed the Act, but, more important, because it took upon itself the task of herding the workers like passive sheep into the militarist pen.

So the fight was won by the militarists for compulsory training, and the coming of the World War set the seal upon that victory. But the anti-imperialist tradition was not dead, and it, together with the experiences gained in that fight, led to the growth of the influence of the revolutionary organisations which led the victorious struggle against conscription in 1916 and 1917. That anti-imperialist and anti-militarist tradition takes us back at least fifty years. Let us have a glance at it.

Before the Great War Australians had been sent overseas to fight on three different occasions: on March 3, 1885, a N.S.W. contingent left Sydney to take part in the Sudan Campaign; in 1899, upon the outbreak of the Boer War, all six Australian States sent troops to help the British imperialists to take the two South African Republics from the Boers; and, in 1900, another Australian contingent was sent to take part in the suppression of the Boxer "Rebellion" in China and the sacking of Peking.

In 1882, Gladstone, the Liberal, sent his fleet to bombard Alexandria and there began that British occupation of Egypt,

the ending of which was often promised but has not yet been performed! Arabi and the Egyptians were defeated and Egyptian independence ceased. Almost immediately there was a rising in the Sudan under the Mahdi, who made rapid headway. An Egyptian army under the British General Hicks was completely wiped out and it was decided to withdraw all garrisons from Sudan. General Gordon was sent to Khartoum to evacuate the garrison there. Gordon, however, was killed before a British relief expedition arrived. It was while Khartoum was being besieged by the Mahdi's troops that Italy, with British encouragement, occupied Massawa in Eritrea, beginning, in East Africa, that imperialist advance which, in 1935, has brought it within sight of the goal of dismemberment of Abyssinia. It was for the purpose of taking part in this Sudan Campaign that Acting-Premier W. B. Dalley undertook to send his N.S.W. Contingent.

The opposition to the sending of this contingent was widespread, but was not altogether due to anti-militarist feeling. For, as we have pointed out in previous articles, the republican sentiment was very strong in Australia fifty years ago, and, as a result, anti-imperialism was often merely anti-British-imperialism. We find republicans supporting the seizure of New Guinea and making of the British refusal to annex that country another argument in favor of creating an Australian Republic. Still, the popularity of the republican ideal was a reflection of the radicalism, the democratic aspirations and the sturdy independence of the masses of the people—a huge proportion of whom had sought a new world out here which would be a refuge from old-world tyranny. The thousands of escapees from the hell's dungeon that was mid-nineteenth century capitalist England or the expatriated victims of British oppression in Ireland, could not but feel a burning hatred of imperialism, militarism and oppression and all their works and a glowing sympathy with the Sudanese fellahs and nomads rightly struggling to preserve their freedom, and have a healthy contempt for the hypocrisy that placed upon the brow of imperialist banditry the halo of a crusade.

At any rate the opposition to Dalley's proposal was strong. Mass meetings were held everywhere protesting against the sending of Australians to Africa. One of those meetings was held at the Queen's Statue, Sydney, on Monday, March 2, 1885. According to press reports, 3000 were present when the meeting

opened at 8, and by 9 that number had risen to 5000. The meeting was organised by the Secular Association (Freethinkers) which was very strong in Australia at that time and which contained many Socialists. Two resolutions were carried. The first ran thus:

"That this meeting condemns the action of Mr. Dalley in offering the troops of this colony to the British Government for service in the Sudan, without first consulting the representatives of the people; and further stigmatises Mr. Dalley's action as unconstitutional and tyrannical."

The second resolution read as follows:

"That the foregoing resolution be forwarded to His Excellency the Governor, with a request that it may be transmitted to the British Cabinet in London."

This second resolution was moved by Thomas Walker, a well-known freethought lecturer and later a member of parliament in West Australia. At the close of the meeting three cheers were given for the "Evening News," the only paper represented at such an important meeting of the working classes in Sydney.

Both resolutions, it is stated, were carried unanimously.

Mr. T. Walker took a prominent part in the campaign against the sending of troops. The Government and the militarists were endeavouring to whip up enthusiasm and, after Dalley's offer of troops, jingoistic meetings were held in the Sydney Town Hall and the Exhibition Building. At these meetings precautions were taken that no opposition be allowed voice. The Sunday after the big Exhibition meeting, Mr. Walker addressed an enthusiastic and crowded meeting in the Theatre Royal. The "Evening News" favorably and fully reported the address. The war in the Sudan was an unjust one, said the speaker, who proceeded to give a review of the position there. He spoke of Arabi who "on the one hand was fighting for freedom and for patriotism, a son of the soil fighting for his fatherland," while "on the other hand were English soldiers fighting to protect a few purses in the pockets of the money-lenders." Arabi had been defeated and captured, and now the fight was being taken up by the Mahdi. Gordon had been sent and Gordon was killed—but Gordon had no right in the country nor did the troops who were being sent there to avenge his death have any right there either.

Dalley and his propagandists were saying that it was "a war for the suppression of slavery"—an excuse that sounds

familiar in these days, just fifty years later! But, said Walker, it is a war for a title for Mr. Dalley. "It is again," he said, "a war for the pockets of England. When General Gordon was under the pay of the Khedive, I will admit that he issued a proclamation against slave hunting at the same time that he bought slaves for himself, and recognised the right of ownership to such property. But, when he went into the service of the English, all previous treaties and proclamations relating in any way to the suppression of the slave trade were annulled, and a proclamation was issued restoring all the rights, or, I should say, the wrongs of slavery. It was to give them their rulers and the slave trade back, so the English might depart in peace, that Gordon ventured in the Sudan." It is only necessary to add, to-day, that across the Red Sea, which is surrounded by British territory on every hand, the slave-trade still flourishes and that there has arisen to take the place of Chinese Gordon another crusader, Benito Mussolini, to free East Africa of slaves!

Walker's Theatre Royal meeting carried a resolution ("with only three dissentients") condemning the action of the Government and subscribed the money for the publication of the lecture.

In Melbourne, too, there was strong agitation against the sending of troops. The Victorian Government did not send a contingent, but the jingoes were there who would have supported such action and who did support British aggression in Africa and Dalley's proposal in New South Wales. A weekly paper with a large circulation and a great deal of influence was the "Liberator," organ of the Secularists, published in Melbourne, and far more radical than are the freethought papers of to-day. This paper carried on a persistent campaign against the Sudan War and against the local jingoes. Joseph Symes, the well-known free-thought lecturer and propagandist, was its editor. He put forward a "modest proposal" that ought to have delighted the hearts of Australia's imperialists. The Anglican Bishop of Balarat was one of the "soolers-on." He spoke of the "noble errand" of the British troops who were to ensure that, in the Sudan, Turkey would be "superseded by the strong, pure and enlightened domination of a Christian Empress (he meant, of course, the "fat old lady with the fat hands"—Victoria.—J.N.R.), to the benediction of millions of down-trodden peasants and groaning slaves." Thus!—Just as in 1914, or in any other year you like to mention, it is impossible to change—"bishop-nature"! As Christ once said: "It is easier for a camel to pass

through the eye of a needle than for—a bishop to change his spots!"

Symes' "modest proposal" to gentlemen of this ilk was:

"Now, if the Dalleys and others in Australia really cannot contain themselves, really must have a little bloodshed, I would oblige them. Let the Governments of the several colonies buy them arms and ammunition; and let them and all the bishops and parsons who consecrate murder turn out and go to the desert; and then let them blaze away at each other until there is not one left to tell the tale; and then a grateful country will erect a monument to their memory where they fall. I would, myself, pronounce a funeral oration over their remains, and congratulate the colonies upon this novel manner of getting rid of the dangerous elements pervading society."

The same Joseph Symes issued through his paper an "Address to Australians," which was widely circulated, being reprinted in, among other papers, the Sydney "Evening News" (28-2-'85). The "Address" was an appeal to the people of Australia to refuse to support the British in Africa in any way. Parts of it deserve quotation:

"... Do you imagine that the Old Country is in danger? Is this Sudan affair, suppose you, an invasion of England? If not, why offer help? Is the war a just one? Consider the whole case. The Britons have no right in Africa in the Sudan or in Egypt. Why would you help them? **If you help any, it should be the poor Africans who are suffering from British injustice and oppression.** My advice to you is, don't go; don't offer yourselves. The quarrel is an unjust one. There is nothing good or noble about it. It is a wanton and atrocious raid into a foreign land, and your sympathies should be with those who are now defending their country against British rascality. Suppose the British were invading N.S.W. or Victoria... would it be acceptable news to you that the Mahdi was offering his aid to your invaders? Think over it!... If there is any manhood in you, side with justice, not with the robbers... The Tories of the Old Country are the meanest of mankind. They live by plunder and rapine... By helping England in this most unjust war you assist to murder and rob a down-trodden race in Africa. And you do worse than that. The English are your countrymen. They are poor and despairing. They are poor and war makes them poorer... Could you, can you, show so little regard for your kith and kin in the Old Land, as to help to make them

poorer? You will do more. You will rivet their fetters the tighter. They are slaves of aristocrats and priests. Every foreign war but postpones their day of emancipation. Every war exalts the enemies of the poor. And for Australasia! Do you want to have national debts... to be taxed and robbed here as you were in England? Then go to war... Who is to get the glory?... your glory? To be shot in an unjust cause; to have a leg shot off; an arm; a sword-thrust; to return to a grateful country, disabled, a wreck for life; despised, left to beg... Such is the soldier's glory... If your rulers want war, let them go alone. He who will not fight when he ought is a coward; he who fights when he should be at peace is a bully... It is murder to kill in any cause that is not just; and it is murder for you to kill unless you know your cause is just."

There, amid what was, perhaps, unclear in aim, was definitely expressed the view that the workers of Australia and Britain had something in common with the victims of British imperialism wherever they may be. The oppressors of the British workers, he showed, were strengthened by a victorious foreign war—he was a preacher of "defeatism" fifty years ago. We, to-day, also understand that we must work for the overthrow of our own ruling class during a war and that the natural allies of the working class of imperialist countries are the subject peoples of colonial countries.

At that time, however, Australia was in process of becoming an imperialist country, too. During the 'eighties, Australian capitalists were clamoring for the annexation of New Guinea. Britain was not ready then to do so, and the Queensland Government, with McIlwraith as Premier, took the initiative. Gold was discovered in southern New Guinea in 1878 and miners flocked there. In April, 1883, McIlwraith sent the police magistrate at Thursday Island to annex "so much of the island as was not already in the occupation or possession of the Dutch." That action was repudiated by the British Government, but, during '83 and '84, there were avalanches of propaganda on the necessity and desirability of annexing New Guinea. In the latter part of 1883, an Intercolonial Convention was held in Sydney and the annexation was the principle subject to receive attention. The Churches were prominent in the united front, and the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, sitting in Assembly at the same time as the Convention, passed the following resolution and sent it to the Convention:

"The Assembly resolve to express their satisfaction that the Governments of the various Australian colonies are taking such vigorous action in favor of the British annexation or protectorate of the islands adjacent to Australasia, and most strongly to deprecate the landing of French convicts on the New Hebrides, or even the allowing of these islands to come under French authority or influence, which would without doubt greatly hinder the progress of missionary work in the islands, increase the evils produced by the labor traffic and blight the hopes which this Church entertains that before long all these islands now so open to missionaries shall be brought to the saving knowledge of the Gospel."

Thus did the nascent Australian imperialism have the support of the Church in its first imperialist adventure. Indeed, opposition to it there was little. As we have already pointed out, bourgeois republican sentiment was anti-British rather than anti-imperialist and the workers of the time, although militant in their own struggles were not concerned to raise a commanding voice against Australian imperialist ventures. Papua, or southern New Guinea, was annexed in 1884. Some voices, however, were raised and amongst them those of Symes and the "Liberator." In an article in that paper, Symes asked, appealing "to the poor":

"Suppose New Guinea annexed or 'protected,' what is that to you? Does it bring each of you a parcel of land? Does it make you any richer? Does it help you in any way? If so, there may be some excuse for the great meetings you have held and the great enthusiasm you have shown . . . If New Guinea is annexed, so much worse for the poor population there, but no better for the poor in Australia. Great land-sharks will go there and get possession of all the land and become owners of what you foolishly helped them to steal. But where is your benefit? If you do steal, why not secure the advantage for yourselves and children, instead of stealing just to gratify and enrich the cunning?"

The nationalist character of much of the opposition to the Sudan Campaign may be gauged by the fact that the great amount of feeling that in '85 found expression against British aggression in the Sudan was not called into activity against the beginnings of Australian aggression in New Guinea in '83 and '84. Even to-day, thousands of workers fail to realise that Aus-

tralia is an imperialist country with its own colonies and spheres of influence and investment.

However, opposition to Dalley's venture into the Sudan spread. The Sydney "Bulletin" voiced opposition. Resolutions were passed by many different organisations. Much opposition was aroused amongst the miners of Newcastle and even the "Sydney Morning Herald" was forced to state that "the quarrel may be unjust and the action of Dalley illegal, but we are bound to support it." There was not much enthusiasm apparent at the departure of the troops and no other Australian colony attempted to send a contingent.

Australia's next militarist adventure was the Second Boer War, 1899-1902. On this occasion, all of the States sent troops, the first to arrive in South Africa being a detachment of N.S.W. Lancers. These men had left Sydney on March 3, 1899 (the 14th anniversary of the departure of the Sudan Contingent, which the newspapers hastened to recall), for England, where they were to undergo training with British regular troops at Aldershot. Their commanding officer was Captain Cox, who was later known as "Fighting Charlie," who became a general during the Great War and who, half-way through the Boer War, volunteered for service in China—a regular imperialist. When the Boer War broke out, he endeavored to persuade the 102 men of his command to offer their services in South Africa. He was only successful in persuading 70 of them—the remaining 32 returned home: a rather inauspicious beginning of Australia's contribution.

In this war, too, the bishops showed that they believed that God was on the side of the big battalions. They took part in recruiting, and blessed the objects that the fighting was going to attain: the acquisition for British millionaires of the Kimberley diamond mines and the carrying of "civilisation"—a la Mussolini to-day—to the inhabitants of a few more thousand square miles of African territory. As Cardinal Moran, in his address to the Catholic soldiers leaving for Africa (January 14, 1900) said: "You are about to enter upon a campaign in which, by your valor and discipline, you hope to win unfading laurels for the name you bear, for the empire whose battles you fight, and for Australia, who, with a mother's fond affection and a mother's pride, will watch from afar your deeds of heroism."

On October 17, 1899, the Premier of New South Wales (Mr.

Lyne), who had just taken office, moved the following motion in the Legislative Assembly:—

"That it is a matter of urgent and pressing necessity that the House should forthwith consider the expediency of equipping and dispatching a military force for service with the Imperial Army in the Transvaal."

By a majority of 65, the House agreed to consider the matter one of urgency. Amongst the minority of ten were Arthur Griffith, W. A. Holman, J. Norton, and D. Watkins.

The first speaker in opposition to the proposal during the ensuing debate was Mr. W. M. Hughes. He asked: "Is there an hon. gentleman in this Chamber—I had almost said is there a man in the country—who, if the empire were in danger, would not be ready to defend it?"—and built up his argument to prove that the empire was no more in danger than it was in 1885, when troops were sent to the Sudan. Thus did Hughes give promise in 1899 that he would be ready to support the empire if it were "in danger"—a promise he was only too ready to keep in 1914.

(To be continued)

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## *The Banning of Political Books and the Fight Against It*

By J. D. BLAKE

The Lyons Government is adopting a policy of consistently preventing the importation of all books and literature of a revolutionary political character. Attempts are made to prevent the importation into Australia of any works which even remotely come within the category of revolutionary material. The Customs officials and the Government have repeatedly refused to supply a list of banned books. However, as a result of agitation the Book Censorship Abolition League in Melbourne was able to secure the right to peruse the list of banned books, but were prevented from taking any notes whilst doing so; consequently it is difficult to publish a complete list of all banned books. Nevertheless, the perusal of the "prohibited" list of "seditious" works at the Customs House shows that before December, 1933, 66 books were placed on a "consolidated" list of prohibited seditious works; between Dec. 1933 and October 1934—79 books and publications were added to the list, and between October 1934, and January, 1935, another 12 books, etc., were added, making a total of 91 added in 13 months, an average of 7 per month.

These figures give some idea of the extent of the prohibition of the importations of revolutionary literature which is actually taking place, and what a serious effect this must have upon the further development of the revolutionary working class movement in Australia.

The recent intensification which has taken place in the banning is undoubtedly connected with the rapid growth in influence and organisation of the Communist Party and the revolutionary movement generally. The Party has now grown into an important political force in the country with powerful influence in the trade union movement and amongst the working masses generally. This growth is undoubtedly worrying the Lyons Government, which in turn is attempting to limit the possibilities for further growth of the revolutionary movement and to cripple activity in one sphere after another. Hence the book prohibition is an attempt to break the contact between the Australian and the International movement and to deprive the Australian movement of supplies of Marxist-Leninist literature.

The following books taken at random from the banned list indicate the effect of the book censorship policy upon the movement generally:—

"Class struggle in Britain in the epoch of Imperialism"—Fox.

"The Colonial Policy of British Imperialism"—Fox.

"Communist International"—Periodical.

"Inprecorr"—Periodical.

"Communist Review"—C.P. G.B. Periodical.

"The next step in Britain, Ireland and America"—E.C.C.I. Publication.

"Party Organiser"—C.P. G.B. Periodical.

"Programme of Young Communist International."

"United War Against War"—British delegation to World Anti-war Congress.

"Foundations of Leninism" and "Problems of Leninism"—Stalin.

"Lenin on Ramsay MacDonald."

"Lenin's Theses on Bourgeois Democracy."

"Communist Party and the Crisis of Capitalism"—Manuilsky, etc., etc.

These books are all valuable weapons in the theoretical arsenal of the revolutionary movement and are vitally important for the further development of the movement in Australia.

At the same time the censoring of books has aroused tremendous hostility amongst all sections of the community in Australia, and particularly in Melbourne the campaign against the ban has embraced wide circles of people from the working class, petty bourgeoisie, and all kinds of liberal elements. The following quotations from the leading daily papers in Melbourne give some idea of the extent of the movement:

The "Star," February 4: "Professor Charteris advised members of the Australian Institute of Political Science Summer School to read Palme Dutt's 'Fascism and Social Revolution.' Cries of, 'It's a criminal offence,' greeted the mention of the book. . . . 'It is absurd to ban it,' Professor Charteris said, 'because it is so extremely opposed to the forms of government of Italy and Germany. Our censorship is a terrible nuisance.'"

The "Star," January 23, 1935: "A motion condemning the Australian censorship of overseas books was agreed to by the General Council meeting with which the Science Congress concluded this afternoon. The motion also called for revision of the

ban on many books which are allowed to circulate in England. The motion, which had previously been agreed to by the economics, history, education and agricultural sections, reads: "Since all books are subject to the laws concerning defamation, obscenity and blasphemy, it is desirable that they should be admitted without censorship into Australia, and that, as a first step toward this end, no book on any historical, political or economic subject that is freely circulating in Great Britain should be subject to censorship in Australia." (Dr. J. V. Duhig, of Brisbane, and Mr. J. B. Brigden, director of the Queensland Bureau of Industry, were quoted in the newspaper as condemning the censorship.)

The "Star," February 27: "Last night's debate in the Melbourne Town Hall on the abolition of the political censorship of books was attended by the largest audience that has ever listened to a debate in Australia. Because of the limited seating accommodation, which was extended to hold a crowd of nearly 3000, several hundred people had to be turned away. Mr. MacMahon Ball led the team which argued in favor of the abolition of political censorship. Mr. L. E. B. Stretton and Mr. Eugene Gorman, K.C., supported him. On the opposition side were the Rev. Hagenauer, Mr. Oliver Gillard and Mr. Norman O'Brien (leader). Sir Harrison Moore was the chairman."

The "Herald," January 12 (leading article): "If public opinion cannot influence the Federal Government to take a more enlightened view of the censorship of books, perhaps the strong protests made by scientists assembled in conference in Melbourne will have some effect. The limits of an intelligent censorship are exceeded when men engaged in purely scientific work are driven to make public protest."

The "Age," March 22: "The following motion was agreed to by an overwhelming majority at the Centenary annual conference of the Australian Natives' Association, which ended to-day: "That in the opinion of this conference, the existing method of censorship of books and publications coming into Australia is unsatisfactory. It is of opinion that books and publications circulating freely in Great Britain should be admitted to Australia, and that the Minister for Customs should make public the reason for prohibiting any literature from the Commonwealth."

The campaign against the censorship has been reflected in the Press not only in Melbourne, but in Sydney, Brisbane,

Hobart, Adelaide, Perth and scores of country newspapers; even the "United Australia Review," organ of the U.A.P. in N.S.W., had the following to say in its issue of June 25: "One cannot understand a policy which allows obscure officials to ban and burn books which have been accepted in other parts of the world as of high literary value."

In the recent Fawcner by-election, in Melbourne, the candidate of the U.A.P. stated: "The present book censorship could be improved, particularly for political works, as there should be the utmost freedom of the exchange of economic and social ideas."

These quotations, many of which originate from bourgeois elements, indicate the enormous pressure which has been brought to bear in the process of the mass campaign, and in particular this is the result of the mass protest movement which has developed in the ranks of the workers in the unions and from various working class organisations. The A.R.U., A.E.U., the Trades Hall Council, and many other unions have carried resolutions condemning the censorship and collected thousands of signatures on a petition demanding the abolition of the censorship. A plan is now under way for the organising of a conference of industrial, political and cultural organisations opposed to the censorship to plan the further steps in the mass campaign to compel the Lyons Government to abolish the censorship on political works.

On March 26, the chairman of the Censorship Board, Sir Robert Garran, said: "Political books are banned in Australia, not by the Commonwealth Censorship Board, but by the Minister for Customs and the officials of his Department, generally without any reference to the board." This statement is significant in view of the fact that on numerous occasions recently the customs officers in Melbourne have stated to prominent booksellers that political books are not censored by the Customs office, but by the Attorney-General's Department, which means that the censorship is operated not under the Customs Act but under the Commonwealth Crimes Act, thus providing another example of the use of this infamous piece of legislation against the working class.

The fight for the abolition of the book censorship and against the Crimes Act is a struggle of vital importance to the working class movement and the mass movement against the ban must be raised to new high levels—developing a mighty wave of protest from every union and working class organisation—such

a movement that will compel the Lyons Government to allow every book of importance to the workers to freely enter the country.

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## DISCUSSION ON QUESTIONS FOR THE ELEVENTH CONGRESS OF THE C.P. OF A.

### *The Question of the Labor Party*

By J. B. MILES

In the contributions to our pre-Congress discussion and in the discussions at our Congress the Labor Party will receive much attention.

All our experiences, correctly understood, but particularly our experiences of the past two years, have demonstrated the importance of mass work by the Communists, especially in the unions and factories, as the all-important work of the Party to win the workers for struggle, to expose the role of the Labor Party and to build our organisation and win greater numbers to our leadership. The work among the unemployed and relief workers and the development of mass activity against the war danger and Fascism also exercise an important influence upon the growth of our Party and assist effectively to undermine the influence of reformism.

The Tenth Congress of our Party, held in April 1931, recorded as "First and foremost among our achievements our work among the unemployed." We were then only beginning to penetrate the industries and it was not till later that year that the Party fraction in the Minority Movement was able to have the "Red Leader" launched to assist in the development of militant unionism.

The Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee, held in March 1934, recorded a considerable improvement in our trade union and factory work and a growing influence in the unions, but we still had to refer to "the disparity between the role of the Party in the struggles of the unemployed and the employed workers." We could claim that we prepared and led the struggles of the unemployed, but among the employed we still came to the struggles from the outside. Since the 4th Plenum we have witnessed the further consolidation of our influence in the Miners'

Federation, the successes at Wonthaggi, the development of the shop committees in the railways, etc., the growth of the rank and file movement among members of the A.W.U. in North Queensland and West Australia, a number of smaller strike movements in the minefields successfully led under Communist influence, the strengthening of trade union fractions in many towns, especially Sydney, Newcastle and Melbourne, the winning of a number of major and minor trade union offices, and a strengthening of our influence in the Trades and Labor Councils.

At the Fourth Plenum the low level of our work on the waterfront and amongst the seamen was noted. Since then we can point to slight improvements, and the influence of the Communists is not insignificant in the seamen's strike. However, there is great unevenness in our work from union to union and from district to district of our Party even in the same union. This requires special attention in our discussions. Meantime, we can note the fact that amongst the waterside workers, in whose union the Labor Party exercises great influence, there is little, if any, extension of our influence.

Before proceeding to discuss some aspects of the reaction of the Labor Party to our growing influence in the unions and continued success among the unemployed (Wallsend, South Coast N.S.W., Adelaide, etc.) it has to be noted that the movement against war and Fascism affords similar lessons. The united front work by the Communists in the fight against war and Fascism, the successful State and National Conferences, the great successes around the struggle for the release of Kisch and Griffin and the August demonstrations, have also profoundly influenced the followers of the Labor Party and have brought forth manoeuvres from the A.L.P. Executives.

Several years ago, when the Communist Party was little more than a propagandist body, the Labor Party realised that it could not continue to successfully play its role of watch dog for capitalism and chief social prop of the exploiters' system if the Communists had contact with the followers of the Labor Party. The A.L.P. executives and conferences, in all States, and the Federal body, excluded Communists from membership of the A.L.P., and later prohibited, so far as possible, its own members from participating in organisations thrown up by the masses in defence of the Soviet Union, to defend class war prisoners,

for struggle against war and Fascism, militant organisations of the unemployed, etc.

In the period prior to our Tenth Congress and later, the A.L.P. and the Labor Government of N.S.W. carried on the most vicious campaign against the unemployed, the movement for militant unionism and the Communist Party. Lies and slanders were reported in the columns of the Labor Party press in all States, while the Communists received special attention from the State forces. The N.S.W. A.L.P. set out to organise its sectarian Unemployed Labor Workers organisation.

These methods are not wholly abandoned in any State and are not modified in Queensland, but since then the Labor Party, as well as our Party, has learned from experience. The problem for us is to learn to understand more clearly, to react more quickly, to improve our organisation to carry out mass work and to raise the level of our mass propaganda, so that we will further reduce the gap between the influence of Communism and Communist organisation.

There is another gap to be bridged. Our influence in the day to day struggles of unemployed and employed, in the organisations of the unemployed and in the unions, is much greater than recognition of our Party as the Party of the working masses. Thousands of workers who accept our leadership on trade union questions and in strikes vote for the Labor Party. They are influenced by "lesser evil" ideas; they think the Communists have no chance; they do not yet understand that the strength of the Communist Party on all fronts is more important for them than which of the other parties occupies the offices of Government.

At the same time the Labor Party is not blind to the growing influence of our Party in the Parliamentary elections. The Labor Party also realises that while it is able to poll an enormous vote compared to our candidates, its own organisation is declining, enthusiasm is absent from its benches, more and more do the unions treat its financial appeals with contempt, and it fears the day when the theory of the "lesser evil" will lose effect.

The Labor Party, particularly in N.S.W., has commenced to manoeuvre in a subtle way to try and stem the growing Communist influence and to recover its position among the masses. After a series of election defeats and because it realises how the Communist Party grows through its successful leadership of the daily struggle in the unions, factories, relief jobs, unemployed organisations and in the mass movement against war and

Fascism, the Labor Party pays lip service to struggle, to immediate demands and is more subtle in relation to the Communists.

In analysing the State election results the Lang Party tried to explain its defeat by charging the unemployed with deserting it. Possibly Stevens got a few votes on the basis of his "prosperity" claims, but the most significant feature in the election figures was the increased Communist vote.

Soon after the elections the State Council of Unemployed held a most successful conference. This conference was widely representative and militant in character. It worked out a concrete programme, and during its deliberations welcomed the letter of greeting and solidarity from the Communist Party and decided to write to the N.S.W. A.L.P. executive requesting a similar declaration and united action in the interests of the unemployed. The A.L.P. did not reply to this letter from the unemployed masses, but neither did it indulge in any form of direct attack.

During the struggle against the slave camps on the South Coast of N.S.W., the A.L.P. executive not only did not come out openly to try and split the united front which developed between the C.P. and A.L.P., it defended the opposition of the unemployed to the slave camps. Of course, the desire of the A.L.P. to discredit the Stevens Government plays a part here.

During this period the State Council of Unemployed has been supported by the Trades and Labor Council in the demand for better conditions, for a rent allowance, and there has been common action against the extension of relief work into industry and against the Returned Soldiers' Preference Act.

This has caused the A.L.P. to give greater space in the "Labor Daily" to the struggles of the unemployed and to reports of evictions. The A.L.P. also launched its proposal to organise a committee representing the State and Federal parliamentary groups, the Labor Council and the A.L.P. Executive "to hear representations from the unemployed and to have the case presented to the responsible Minister or other authority concerned. It would be the means of giving the unemployed an effective voice, and the whole weight of the Labor movement could be thrown behind them in the protection of their interests." Propaganda meetings have also been held by the parliamentarians and some trade union leaders, and a series are planned throughout the State. The A.L.P. is putting forward the programme of the Unemployed Councils.

A decision of the Labor Council to work with the State Coun-

cil of Unemployed in propaganda and to raise cash in the unions and on the jobs for this purpose by means of 3d. stamps, was countered by the A.L.P. calling a meeting at which it was decided to issue 1d. stamps to raise funds for the next Federal election. At this meeting the leader of the Lang Party in the Federal House, Mr. Beasley, said: "The campaign initiated last Sunday on behalf of the unemployed was an instance of the work to which the movement could direct its attention, and achieve something definite for those in distress."

The contrast between the talk of to-day and the actions when in office is partly that of a party in opposition, but the main object of the present line of propaganda and efforts at organisation is to regain lost prestige, to try and hinder the growth of our influence.

Our Party fraction, supported by militant unionists, has avoided sectarianism and has prevented the A.L.P. from wholly using the Labor Council for its own ends. No enthusiasm has been engendered by the A.L.P. campaign on unemployment. But it would be a mistake to assume that the A.L.P. cannot succeed to revive illusions about its readiness or ability to assist the unemployed. The A.L.P. is manoeuvring because it feels our influence and knows it is losing mass support.

By continuing to raise the level of our work in the unions and in the organisations of the unemployed, which calls for still better fraction work, there will be no doubt about the outcome.

During this period of A.L.P. manoeuvres the Wallsend struggle developed, and because our Party was able to lead that struggle and developed the united front in the course of the struggle, the prestige of our Party stands higher than ever. We can assist the masses to test the sincerity of the A.L.P. campaign on unemployment in the course of struggle. These people who profess to doubt the sincerity of the Communists must be given the opportunity to participate in organised struggle with the Communists, who do sincerely want to aid the unemployed to gain their demands.

In relation to the trade unions, the A.L.P. is also manoeuvring. During the Miners' Federation elections last year, the A.L.P. tried to assert itself and defeat the Communist Party by hysterical sectarian outbursts, but the solid work of union building carried out by the militant unionists led by the C.P. could not be overcome by the combined efforts of Lang, Baddeley and the "Labor Daily."

The Communists still receive attention from the reformist press and from their platforms; the ban on militant organisations continues, but the crudely sectarian method has been dropped in N.S.W. In the "Labor Daily" there now appears regularly columns of trade union news, including news about the work of militant unions and leaders. Headlines are run across three and four columns. The "Labor Daily" is out to try and regain lost prestige among the trade unions for itself and the Labor Party. Lip service is paid to struggle in leading articles. In the issue of June 7 we read: "The cessation of work by the men engaged at an ironworks establishment at Leichhardt, although it affected only a small number, is a development of immense importance to the Labor movement, not only because of the fundamental issue involved, but by reason of the demonstration of an awakening among the men still in industry to the fact that the time is overdue when they must intensify the struggle to maintain what remains of the conditions that several generations of unionists have established. To anticipate sufficient enthusiasm to restore the political machine to the position where it can curb the present industrial anarchy is to hope for the hopeless, until the soul of struggle is revived in the unions, to make them again the fighting machines they were, instead of mere legal automatons to take the witness stand in arbitration and compensation claims."

We see here the hope that militant unionism can be revived and turned to account by the A.L.P. in parliament. But there is lip service to the militancy which is growing under the leadership of the Communist Party, and the question is: Will the A.L.P. succeed to sidetrack militant unionism, or will the influence of the A.L.P. continue to decline? There can be no doubt about the answer but we must work for it. The whole Party must become conscious of the importance of the trade unions, of mass work, of the united front of struggle, and improve the practice in the light of our experiences. Lang also makes his concession to the strike wave. At the A.L.P. meeting which set the task of selling 1d. stamps, Lang said: "Each week is reported some instance where the workers in a factory or industry are prepared to back up their officials with direct action, if necessary, in a demand for better conditions." ("Labor Daily," 31/7/35.)

We see, then, that our turn to the unions and the better combining of factory activity with work in the trade unions is

building our Party and causing serious concern to the Labor Party leaders. The correction of sectarian mistakes, our work in the unions and the building of still stronger unemployed organisation, our continued success in the struggles of the unemployed and our improved position in the struggles of the employed, the winning of positions in the trade unions, a real strengthening of the trade unions as organs of struggle, has really challenged the domination of the Labor Party. To win the masses we must win the trade unions as well as establish ourselves in the work places. When we have won the trade unions we will have undermined the main base of the Labor Party.

In relation to the struggle against the war danger we see similar manoeuvres. The movement is a mass movement in which Communists are a driving force. Many, including prominent members of the A.L.P., recognise the mass character of the organised anti-war movement and reject the bourgeois and A.L.P. assertions that it is the Communist Party. The Labor Party feels that here also it is losing ground, and it manoeuvres. In Victoria it set up, through the Trades and Labor Council, its movement against war as a means to offset real opposition and to propagate its "defence of Australia" policy, really a preparation to participate in the next imperialist war.

In N.S.W., while rejecting the approach of the C.P. for united action to organise anti-war demonstrations, the Labor Party comes out in the "Labor Daily" claiming to be "A Mighty Voice Against War," to be "even more awake" than during the Great War. It refers to shadow bodies making sporadic outbursts and calls on its branches to function as anti-war units.

At a recent meeting of the Marrickville branch of the A.L.P., where there is a strong opposition to the present executive, W. McNamara, one-time leader of the A.L.P. Socialisation Groups, said: "It should not have been left to the Communist Party to take the lead in the anti-war campaign." This opportunist did not expose the executive for its refusal to participate in this leadership with the Communist Party; what he does is to voice, as many are doing, the realisation that the A.L.P. is losing ground because the Communist Party is leading the mass opposition to war and is winning the A.L.P. rank and file to the united front against war and Fascism.

The Labor Party never was and never will be a mighty voice against war, but it has a strong demagogic voice which can be silenced only in so far as our Party is able to win the unions,

the A.L.P. rank and file, and the petty-bourgeois masses to struggle against war and Fascism and for peace, freedom and culture.

Into the movement against war and Fascism there have been drawn large numbers of Labor Party members, many branches, and a few leaders. This is good, but the unions must be won for the struggle against the war danger and this demands from us better work to link the struggle for better conditions of life and labor with the struggle against the war-mongers.

In our examination of the mass work and our organisation to carry out that work much unevenness will be disclosed in the work of the whole Party in relation to particular unions, in the work of districts in relation to the same union and in the effect of our work upon the Labor parties in the various States. While making every allowance for differences in local conditions the solution lies in raising the ideological level of the Party in the backward areas and in the unions where we lag, in rapidly adding to the numbers of leading cadres, and improving the organisation so as to place the best forces into the decisive spheres.

## *West Wallsend Relief Workers' Strike and Its Development*

By R. DARRELL

The movement which has developed around the West Wallsend relief workers' strike, and which has to-day developed into a wide mass movement throughout N.S.W., is of particular importance at the present time for the whole of the labor movement.

It is important because of the wide united front which has developed, beginning with the relief workers and spreading rapidly to the trade unions, mines and workshops; it is important because of the political content which has been introduced and linked firmly with the economic demands of the unemployed and relief workers; finally, it is important because the great mass of the workers see in the Returned Soldiers and Sailors' Preference Act very definite attempts by the war-makers to cripple the trade unions and other organisations of the working class.

The movement contains many rich lessons for the revolutionary and working-class movement.

The strike at West Wallsend arose as follows: The Lake Shire Council decided to carry out to the full the edict of the Minister of Labor and Industry that conditions would have to be altered to allow for a higher standard of efficiency at a lower cost from the emergency relief workers who were employed throughout the Shire. Orders were given that the gangers' jobs would be carried out by the relief workers themselves for an extra two shillings per day over relief rates, as compared with £4/19/6, payable under the union awards. All jobs that carried marginal allowances were given to men selected by the boss, and the roster that had previously operated was discontinued.

Under these conditions, steps were taken to to organise the workers to struggle against the attacks of the Government and council. Meetings were held in West Wallsend area, and efforts made to lead the workers in struggle against the new conditions, but the reformist leadership (Craig, Webb, Pearce, Britt) at that time were able to persuade the workers to accept the new conditions under protest. There was no protest, however, most of the leaders taking jobs as gangers, having been selected by

the boss as being the most capable of getting the standard of efficiency that the new conditions demanded.

The Party fraction carried the struggle on to all jobs within the area, with the result that the workers' attention was directed to the leadership of the reformists, and it soon became apparent that with correct work, this leadership would be exposed and the way made clear for the line of organised struggle put forward by the State Council of Unemployed and Relief Workers.

This opportunity arrived when Craig gave a distorted report on the August conference held in Sydney in 1934. He was challenged and exposed at a Northern District conference held later in Newcastle. The exposure, put forward by W. Oliver, resulted in Craig, Webb and Pearce being brought before the Management Board of Miners (to which union they belong) at the request of the D.C. of Unemployed and Relief Workers, to explain their anti-working-class conduct. The matter was smoothed over at the Board, but the minute explaining same was rejected by a mass meeting of miners, employed and unemployed, held at West Wallsend. A further mass meeting was held in West Wallsend, and W. Oliver explained the decisions of State Conference, and assisted by local workers, further exposed Craig, Webb, and the line of the reformists, with the result they lost one position after the other to the militants. They have since tried to gain a footing in certain stages of the development of the present struggle, but the workers showed in no uncertain manner that they are finished with them, and we saw Webb, secretary of Seaham No. 2 miners, cheap ganger, one time leader, having to be brought off the job by the pickets.

At first the workers in West Wallsend area, remembering the sell-outs of the past, were slow to respond to the call for strike action, and although the reformist leadership of the past had been exposed, and a militant line accepted in words, it was not until the provisions of the Returned Soldiers and Sailors' Preference Act were enforced that a majority of the workers decided to resort to strike action. The militants carried the line of organised struggle right into the mass of workers affected, gave the lead to set up a broad strike committee, led the workers on the picket lines, led against police intimidation, and by their attitude gained the respect and co-operation of all the workers who are participating in the struggle.

On July 10 a mass meeting was held, and the relief workers of West Wallsend area, numbering 630, decided to strike. Imme-

diately the workers asked for assistance from the State Council of Unemployed and Relief Workers, and W. McKenzie was sent to the area to assist in the dispute. At the mass meeting the demands of the men were formulated as follows:—

(1) That the Shire Council shall not apply the provisions of the Returned Soldiers and Sailors' Preference Act in the matter of marginal rates whether in the appointment of gangers or any other marginal rate appointments, and to ensure this, all work carrying marginal rates shall be on a bonus system to be determined by the men on each job along with gangers.

(2) Right for the men who were deducted pay on the last dispute in relation to the matter of morning tea and who have been deducted two to six hours, to make up that time, and in future 10 minutes to be allowed men to take morning tea.

(3) Payment of all money due to the men who have performed work carrying marginal rates in the past and who have been denied such money.

(4) Gangers or other men not to be allowed to perform two or more marginal rate jobs at the one period.

(5) Shire Council to observe and pay marginal rates for all works that carry a bonus under the Gazette covering the work.

(6) Men on all scales to be permitted to do their work in a nine-day period each fortnight, to permit them at any time within the nine days to have one or more days in which to seek other work or make up time lost for other causes.

(7) Council to provide bicycles for the use of timekeepers, or in addition to paying prescribed bonus for this work, to grant an allowance of 1½d. per hour to the timekeepers for using their own machines. Runners also using bicycles to be paid 1½d. per hour.

Following the adoption of this programme of demands, a wide strike committee of more than sixty workers was elected and a plan of work decided upon. The examples and experiences of Wonthaggi, Lysaghts, Melbourne dole strike, Concord West, were all examined and taken into account by the striking workers, who made use of these experiences in order to strengthen the movement.

The strategy and tactics, worked out concretely by these workers, took this form. It was recognised that the strike must not be the end of the movement, but that the aim should be to consolidate in the strike centre and to broaden the movement to the trade unions, workshops, and to the whole of the unem-

ployed movement in New South Wales.

Special study was made in arriving at this conclusion of the Communist Party's analysis of the Returned Soldiers and Sailors' Preference Act. The most vital sections of this Act read:—

Section 3.—“Notwithstanding anything contained in the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912 or any Act amending the same, or in any award or industrial agreement made thereunder, every employer shall give preference in employment in any profession, business or industry to a returned soldier or sailor who is capable of effectively performing the duties of such employment. . . .”

Section 12.—“Every employer desiring to obtain employees shall apply to the labor exchange nearest to the place at which the employees are required if there be a labor exchange within 20 miles of that place, but if there be no labor exchange within that distance, shall apply to the repatriation committee nearest to that place if there be a repatriation committee within 20 miles of that place, and if there be no labor exchange or repatriation committee within 20 miles, to the sectional committee representing his profession, business or industry. . . .”

Section 13.—“When an application is made by an employer or by a sectional committee to a labor exchange or repatriation committee, the officer in charge thereof shall give preference in opportunity of employment to returned soldiers and sailors registered for employment in the profession, business or industry in respect of which the application is made and who are available for employment.”

Holman's Secret Memorandum of 1916 is no more infamous, treacherous or anti-working class than the provisions as set out in the Soldiers' Preference Act, and this the comrades realised immediately, recognising in the attempt of the Government to apply this Act further attempts at economic conscription, providing as it does for the smashing of the trade unions.

This placed the strikers in the position of making the repeal of this Act the main point in their programme of demands, and deciding that the fight was not simply a relief work strike, but a fight of the whole of the working class.

This was done very effectively by members of the strike committee and the State Council of Unemployed, when, in conjunction with the unity committee of the Newcastle Trades Hall

Council, the following programme was drawn up and endorsed by special conferences of trade unions, workshop committees, unemployed and other sections, called by both Newcastle and Sydney Trades Hall Councils in addition to the demands of the strikers:—

1. Continuance of works in the Lake Shire and elsewhere at award rates and conditions.
2. 100 per cent. increase in food relief.
3. Non-application of the Returned Soldiers and Sailors' Preference Act inasmuch as it violates the principles of trade unionism.
4. Abolition of the Permissible Income Regulations, which compel returned soldiers and sailors and others to maintain unemployed members of their families on their small pensions and inadequate incomes.
5. Weekly rent allowance of 12/- to be paid to all impoverished returned soldiers and other workers in order to save them from eviction by the War Service Homes Commission and other mortgagees.
6. Garnishee Act to be amended to exempt all wages that are below the basic wage.

From this programme it will be recognised that the strikers and also the working-class movement generally recognise that the returned men are their class comrades, and proved that objection was not being taken to increased living standards for their returned mates, but that the objection was taken to the attempt to divide and split the working class in preparation for war and for increased profits for the Australian capitalists.

During this period great enthusiasm was being manifest in the West Wallsend area, where several marches and successful demonstrations were held. So great was the enthusiasm and mass pressure that the Lake Macquarie Shire Council decided to support the demands of the strikers and to fight with them to force the Government to repeal the Act.

Some idea of the enthusiasm can be gained from the fact that at each march and demonstration, upwards to 1000 men, women and children were present marching, in some cases, 16 miles.

In the first three days of the strike over £70 was actually collected, whilst a very large amount of money was guaranteed by the trade unions, among which the Miners' Union guaranteed £250 and the Newcastle Ironworkers £100.

State-wide demonstrations were held on August 4, and despite very bad weather were well attended. Mass and public

meetings have been held in all areas and localities, without exception wholeheartedly supporting the demands of the strikers and the programme adopted by the wider movement. A State-wide petition to the Governor of New South Wales has been initiated and is nearing completion, calling on the Governor to intercede with the State and Commonwealth Governments, in having the millions of pounds which are proposed for war preparations divided into channels which will provide for better living conditions for the unemployed, and also in support of the demands of the unemployed.

A public meeting was held in Newcastle Town Hall (which was unable to hold the crowd present), and which was addressed by trade union leaders, shire and municipal aldermen and mayors, the clergy and the unemployed, as well as the strike committee, the speakers being unanimous in support of the demands. From this meeting a wide and representative deputation was elected to wait upon Mr. Hawkins, of the Government.

In the course of the struggle the Government has done a series of somersaults. When the strike first took place, the Government announced through the capitalist Press that the matter was one between the Lake Shire Council and the strikers.

When, under mass pressure, the Lake Shire agreed to support the strikers' demands, the Government declared it would withdraw the scheme from the Shire, "as the Shire Council was incompetent," but actually as a means of alienating the support of the remainder of the Lake Shire relief workers, and so forcing the West Wallsend strikers to capitulate.

The Government also announced that food relief would not be issued, but faced by mass demonstrations and undoubted support, again capitulated. The strike leaders correctly summed up this threat as a bluff, by pointing out that £50,000 worth of work would be wasted, and as against £3000 in wages the Government would have to pay £2000 in food relief each week. In any case, the strikers declared "the movement is no longer one of 680 men versus the Government, but of the working class against a Government of starvation and war."

The Government capitulated and starting dockets were offered, but were refused by the strikers, and again the announcement was made that the scheme would be withdrawn. At the same time a fake and bogus petition was issued (alleged by special hirelings to come from the Cardiff and Boolaroo unemployed) to the unaffected areas of the Shire in terms indicating that they were satisfied with the scheme as operating.

Once again the strike committee summed the position up correctly, and, issuing a special bulletin, had all areas repudiate the bogus petition.

The Government, finally recognising that the workers' ranks cannot be divided by these means, and that under capable leadership their ranks were solid, have announced that the scheme will not be withdrawn.

The Government has not yet done retracting. For the whole period of the struggle the Government and Hawkins have consistently refused to meet a deputation of the strikers. The latest announcement at date of writing indicates that Hawkins will meet the Northern deputation, consisting of strikers, trade unions, unemployed, councils, and clergy, on August 22.

The A.L.P. executive are running true to form in this movement. The strike was of no consequence until the movement began to take form and develop, and then, when the wide popularity and enthusiasm with which the demands were greeted became a clear indication of the magnitude of the movement, the executive moved, not to support the movement, but to divide the trade unions and unemployed and to divide even the ranks of the unemployed themselves.

Special discussions and commissions were held by the A.L.P. executive, on the outcome of which was the adoption (in words) of practically all of the demands put forward by the State Council of Unemployed, which has been the leading body of the very great mass of the unemployed for a considerable period. But the A.L.P. executive did not mention the State Council, nor did it call on the leagues and members to organise under their fighting banner. Instead, the "Labor" Party executive directed the leagues to become unemployed units.

The A.L.P. leadership also carefully noted that the workers were rising everywhere against the war danger, and due to the mass pressure the executive came out with their "definite" policy on war. At the same meeting which decided the "definite" policy, the executive rejected the proposals of the Communists for united action to rouse and organise the masses of the workers against war. The "definite" policy of the A.L.P. consists in "legislation to take the profit out of war," and for the leagues to become anti-war units.

Why did the A.L.P. executive, if it is really against war, not accept the proposals of the C.P. for united action? Why did not the executive, if it is against war, not call upon the workers to

rally behind the anti-war councils and the mighty Anti-War Movement?

The A.L.P. executive stand not as champions of the unemployed and as leaders of the masses against war, but as splitters of the ranks of the workers definitely aiming at dividing the ranks of the workers. Therefore they stand with the war-mongers.

And what is the decision of the A.L.P. executive on the call for united action between the unemployed and the trade unions and employed workers? Their decision was that the unemployed are a lot of "mendicants," that the June conference, the greatest unemployed conference yet held, and called by the State Council, was "bogus," and that the only way out was "to begin now. Pay your pennies. Help us return our candidates to the Federal Parliament two years hence."

But this is not the attitude nor the decisions of the A.L.P. rank and file. In Sydney, State electoral organs and leagues have welcomed the offer of the Communists for united action against war, and have taken part, despite the executive ruling, in the demonstrations, whilst a good response is shown to the call of the strikers.

In the North, the newly-formed Northern Assembly (leading Northern organ) of the A.L.P., on being approached by the C.P. for united action in support of the strikers and unemployed demands and against war, accepted the proposals. From the branches in the unemployed councils, the A.L.P. workers are assisting in every way with the strike and the unemployed demands, actually coming to the unemployed councils and the strike committee asking for petitions and canvassing for signatures.

Everywhere the same situation exists. The A.L.P. rank and file are overriding the ban of the executive and fighting with their workmates—and, after all, this is the place where the united front in action counts.

By correct tactics and work in the Newcastle area, good improvement is shown in the rebuilding and reactivation of the unemployed councils.

The C.C. has pointed out, and it has been recognised that in turning our faces to the factories and unions we have neglected the unemployed. This has been overcome to a very large extent, and in the process of the movement no less than six unemployed

councils have been either rebuilt or reactivated in Newcastle area.

Correct tactics and work in this respect have meant that in these places the unemployed and relief workers have been a tremendously powerful organising factor in assisting to develop the whole movement, whilst the loose organisation of the unemployed has become very much strengthened.

In this respect, much has yet to be achieved in other centres, and more particularly in Cessnock. Here the unemployed movement is very weak, and this has meant that the Party Section Committee has been forced to handle all of the local detail questions in the whole movement.

Without correct fraction work and real collective leadership it would have been impossible to develop the movement. Good fractioning, correct tactics and work have led to the improved unemployed situation in Newcastle. Bad fractioning and work have led to the bad situation of the unemployed in Cessnock. Bad fractioning led to a serious situation developing in West Wallsend. Here Party members were too busy, running here and there and doing a lot of work. Plans were not worked out to the end, and individualism replaced collective activity.

A whole number of cases could be cited, but the point to remember here is that the fraction must work out its plans to their conclusion and actually become the nerve centre of the mass movement guiding and activating the widest number of sympathisers and workers in the campaign. On this rests the fate of the struggles of the workers.

Hundreds of thousands of leaflets have been issued—twelve special strike bulletins have been issued—over £500 has been collected—unemployed organisations and relief workers throughout the State have been rallied by the State Council of Unemployed—trade councils and trade unions have been rallied. The miners have struck a 1¼ per cent. levy in the North, and are considering strike action in support of the strikers. The strike centre is as solid as the day they struck, enthusiasm and work has turned "Westy" into a live town once again. The workers everywhere are realising that capitalism is the cause of unemployment and that the cure for their present troubles is Soviet power and Socialism. This shows the correctness of our strategy and tactics.

The whole movement still rests on the Communists. Everywhere their efforts must be intensified. Better fractioning in

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the unions, more attention to the unemployed, further exposure of the A.L.P. leadership, and more attention to the rank and file members, tirelessly explaining our united front proposals and working with these workers will spell victory.

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The strikers' demands must be won, and the struggle for the unemployed demands raised still higher. The Returned Soldiers and Sailors' Preference Act must be repealed.

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