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Monthly



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COMMUNIST ★ REVIEW ★

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MAY DAY, 1939

By Edgar Ross



COLLECTIVE ACTION OR—

By E. W. Campbell



BURDEN OF TAXES

By Economists

MAY

1939

COMMUNIST REVIEW

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

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THE NEWS REVIEWED

COLLECTIVE SECURITY OR ELSE



MOVEMENTS on the checker board of world affairs follow each other today with breathtaking speed.

In rapid sequence Spain, Memel, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania and Albania have been swallowed up in the maw of fascism.

Poland, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey appear to be the next victims in the line of aggression.

Spain received its death blow at the hands of Chamberlain and Daladier who were partners to the Casado conspiracy against the Negrin government. But any hopes that they had of weaning Franco from his German and Italian allies must have been dispelled with Spain's signing of the "Anti-Comintern Pact."

Czechoslovakia as an independent entity did not long survive Munich. In September Chamberlain professed to accept Hitler's assurances that with the occupation of Sudetenland his last territorial claims in Europe had been satisfied. But the sycophantic press had barely got through congratulating Chamberlain the peacemaker before his dictator friend in a most annoying manner and without as much as by your leave marched right into Czechoslovakia and smashed the beautiful illusion.

Memel went down leaving scarcely

a ripple on the surface.

The Lithuanian government, following the suicidal policy of "Don't Tease the Beast," caved in to the Nazi demands with hardly a word of protest.

The significance of Memel passing into German hands is likely to be overlooked owing to the comparative lack of fuss which accompanied the event.

Memel commands the sea approaches to Leningrad, Helsingfors, Stockholm and Riga. Its conversion into a German naval base threatens not only the Soviet Union but also the security of Finland and Sweden.

Hungary and Rumania still remain territorially intact but just how far their independence extends is a matter for conjecture. The former has entered the "Anti-Comintern Pact," lured on no doubt by visions of playing a jackal's role to Germany's lion. The latter has signed a trade agreement with Germany the full scope of which is not yet known. Both will yet live to learn that those who play with fire are bound to have their fingers burned and may count themselves lucky indeed if they escape the fate of their Austrian and Czechoslovakian neighbors.

Albania is amongst the most recent victims of fascist aggression.

This small kingdom at the entrance to the Adriatic Sea was swooped on by Italy and overrun in a night by Mussolini's Blackshirts. Albania has been under Italian influence for years.

During the last war Britain had plans for partitioning the country. This was opposed by Italy who insisted upon an independent state, with the idea, of course, of converting it into an Italian protectorate.

The Italian plans reached fruition in 1927 when King Zog sold his country out and signed a so-called defensive alliance with Italy.

Italy has had complete control of Albania's foreign trade, which only amounts to a scant million a year, and through loans advanced has exercised complete domination over the country's economic life.

The motive behind the latest coup was not then economic, it was purely political, and can be seen in true perspective only if viewed in light of Italian fascism's long range policy of redividing the world in partnership with Germany and Japan.

Albania occupies a key position at the entrance to the Adriatic. In the full possession of Italy it constitutes a direct menace to Greece and Yugoslavia.

In his lightning descent upon the kingdom Mussolini acted with the same scant courtesy to Chamberlain as did Hitler in his march on Prague.

The Anglo-Italian agreement which Chamberlain so humbled himself to obtain was supposed to ensure the maintenance of the status

quo in the Mediterranean. Albania's continued "independence," if not expressly guaranteed, was at least implied. In any case it was set out quite definitely that no attempt to change the existing balance of forces would be made without prior discussions taking place between the signatories.

But, for the fascists, agreements are only entered into to serve their immediate needs, promises are only made to be broken. This is a truth which Chamberlain still professes to disregard. At least on the eve of the attack on Albania, when all the world knew what was pending, he blandly informed the British House of Commons that the government had no official confirmation of the rumors and thus could not say how the Anglo-Italian agreement would be affected.

Well, the rumors have been confirmed; Albania has fallen, and the Anglo-Italian agreement has become just another scrap of paper to join the litter of the Munich declaration in the diplomatic dustbin.

Yugoslavia and Greece are not to be envied. The former, particularly, is in a most invidious position; the jaws of the axis pincers may now close on it at any moment. With Italians entrenched in Northern Albania and the Germans in Southern Austria, Yugoslavia is in no position to resist attack. The axis powers have gained another foothold in Europe which brings the whole of the Balkans within easy grasp. Italy has gained another vantage point, bringing com-

plete command of the Mediterranean closer.

By the time this reaches print the map of Europe may be further modified. Great pressure is being exerted on Poland by Nazi Germany.

For weeks now German troops have been massing on the Polish frontier. The danger must be very grave because Mr. Chamberlain has once more voiced the ominous formula, "the government has no official confirmation of rumors of attack."

On this occasion the British Prime Minister went a little further and declared that in the event of any action clearly threatening Polish independence which the Poles consider it necessary to resist with their national forces, Britain feels bound to lend the Poles all the support in her power. He went on to add that his government had consistently advocated the adjustment of differences by negotiation and that he still thought that there was no question which was incapable of peaceful solution.

Hitler at Wilhelmshaven soon after this made known that he had different views regarding the efficacy of discussion.

If British statesmen said all problems should be discussed at a conference, he declared, I would reply: You had fifteen years to discuss them, but you did not do anything. We would achieve nothing if we waited another fifteen years to solve our problems through talking shop methods. Our methods are better and safer.

The "Times" hastened to clarify Chamberlain's speech by pointing out that it does not bind Britain to defend every inch of Poland's frontiers, that it does not blindly accept the status quo but, on the contrary, implies that adjustments are necessary.

For this the "Times" received a mild rebuke at the hands of the Foreign Office which issued a statement decrying any suggestion that Britain's pledge to Poland was thus limited in scope.

However, this little piece of by-play should deceive no one. During the September crisis the "Times" printed a leader which suggested that Czechoslovakia should be made a homogeneous state by the secession of alien population to Germany. It was then taken to task by the Foreign Office, which published a denial that this represented the views of the British government. But within a few days it came to pass just as the "Times" foreshadowed.

Once again it appears that the "Times" has correctly construed Chamberlain's remarks, despite Foreign Office disclaimers.

Four days after he made the statement in question, Chamberlain repeated it almost word for word in reply to debate in the House of Commons. If the independence of Poland is threatened, he said, he did not doubt that the Poles would resist. Then, his declaration meant, Britain and France would immediately go to their assistance.

Some people look on this as a turning point in British policy, see

in it a departure from the policy of appeasement and a move towards collective security on the part of Britain. This illusion is perhaps strengthened by the fact that Chamberlain himself persists in terming his declaration a great departure, plus the talk about the Soviet Union being drawn into a peace bloc.

However, before jumping to any such optimistic conclusions it is as well to analyse the situation much more carefully.

In the first place the axis powers, Germany and Italy, are engaged in the redivision of Europe against the interests of Britain and France. The last named powers have so far refrained from any effective action to resist this process. This does not signify that the British and French ruling classes welcome the advances made by the fascist countries. On the contrary they greatly fear the growing power of Germany and Italy, but they fear even more the democratic movement of their own peoples, at home and in the colonies; they fear the influence that Socialism in the Soviet Union has on this movement.

It is this greater fear of the masses and a hatred for Socialism which has led the ruling classes of Britain and France to retreat before fascist aggression. Behind the policy of appeasement there has been the constant hope that the spearhead of aggression could be turned away from the west and to the East—against the Soviet Union. The Chamberlains and Daladiers

have never ceased working towards this end.

In September, Czechoslovakia was sacrificed and the French system of defensive alliances in Central Europe destroyed in the hope that this would at last turn Hitler to the East.

But Hitler showed no great inclination to pit his strength against the mighty U.S.S.R.

Since September all the blows have been delivered in the other direction.

To try and reverse this Chamberlain and Co. gave it out that they were favorably inclined towards a peace bloc which would include the Soviet Union.

A little later it was announced in the press that this idea had been dropped because the Soviet Union was in no condition to embark upon a major struggle, that her transport system was disorganised, her air fleet obsolete and so on. All this, however, failed to elicit the anticipated response from Hitler, indicating a change in the immediate direction of his drive.

There has since been renewed talk of a peace bloc which would take in the Soviet Union. In reply to a question concerning the government's attitude towards co-operation with the U.S.S.R., Chamberlain stated in the House of Commons on April 4 that Britain welcomed the co-operation of any country, whatever its system of government, in resisting aggression. But it is significant that Chamberlain does nothing to further such co-operation.

In the case of the threat against Poland nothing has been done to draw in the Soviet Union. Chamberlain has left the door wide open for another Nazi coup. He has stressed the fact that the British pledge holds good only if Polish independence is threatened and providing the Poles themselves offer resistance.

The immediate German demands do not threaten Polish independence and with the pro-Nazi Beck in command are not likely to be strenuously resisted.

The Nazis are demanding:

- (1) The solution of the Danzig problem in a manner agreeable to Germany.
- (2) Provision of German controlled communication to East Prussia.
- (3) Regulation of German minority question in Poland.

These demands could be met within the scope of the Chamberlain formula. Certainly they menace Polish integrity, since the winning of them by Germany would merely be the prelude for an attempted march on Warsaw in emulation of the march on Prague. It is probable that the resistance of the Poles would be greater than that of the Czechs, but Chamberlain would discover that it was then too late to act. But whilst these demands so clearly threaten Poland's future integrity they offer no immediate threat to her independence,

thus the Chamberlain pledge does not apply.

Chamberlain would be pleased to see Germany with a frontier adjoining the Soviet Union, which is another reason to doubt his sincerity in pledging British support for Poland. Chamberlain's latest manoeuvre has done much to restore his waning prestige in Britain. Liberal and Labor politicians almost without exception have joined in the chorus of acclamation, the movement towards a broader united opposition to the National government has been temporarily weakened. All of which serves the cause of British reaction.

The peace forces must not be tricked by such manoeuvres. Whilst seeing the factors impelling British imperialism towards certain measures to check fascist aggression from encroaching too far upon their own preserves, we must also see how much is to be gained by them if Germany in the West and Japan in the East can be soiled on to war against the Soviet Union. We must make it clear that we concur with the opinion expressed by the Journal de Moscou that "what is required is not merely unilateral assistance or the promise of aid to this or that victim of aggression but a collective agreement destined to strengthen the security of all states small and great alike."

The sands of peace are running out fast. But there is yet time to prevent a world-wide war. However, it is more than ever now a case of collective security or else —

• TWO LABOR CONFERENCES •

TWO Labor Party Conferences were held in Sydney over the Easter holidays. One reflected the growth of the progressive wing in N.S.W., and the other, the declining influence of Lang and the "inner group."

"Today, we are the strongest State branch of the Australian Labor Party." With these words, President, Mr. F. O'Neill, opened the Conference of the progressive section.

Of the 139 delegates present, 65 were representing 42 unions, and the remainder represented 38 metropolitan State Councils, 15 country State Councils and 4 District Assemblies.

These organisations, it was claimed, represented more than 200,000 trade unionists and 240 Labor Party branches.

The Lang Conference has been referred to as a mass meeting, and although some of its delegates really did represent labor organisations, it is a fact that the 500 "delegates," who were claimed to be in attendance, have not been accounted for.

It is also a fact that the twelve members of the bogus rail "union" were part of the 500, but who or what they represented is shrouded in mystery.

Transcending all other questions at the moment are those concerning foreign policy and defences, and it was on these issues that the two

Conferences came into sharpest conflict.

The Conference under the leadership of Mr. R. Heffron, M.L.A., adopted the concrete foreign and defence policies of the recently held A.C.T.U. Congress. The essence of these policies is collective security and democratic, efficient defence, independent of the reactionary, squabbling, muddling Federal government.

The Lang Conference produced no defence policy beyond the abstraction "that the defence of Australia against aggression should be developed to the maximum efficiency possible."

In the absence of any concrete or independent proposals, it can only be supposed that the Lang Conference was prepared to subserviently tail along behind Page, Hughes, Menzies and Company.

But the extreme example of bankruptcy was shown in Lang's "foreign policy" speech in support of debunked "isolation."

"We do not want anybody's territory and nobody wants ours," said J. T. Lang, as though wishing to commit political hari-kari.

If "nobody wants ours" why advocate, even abstractly, "the defence of Australia against aggression."

On Saturday, April 15, the secretary of the New Guinea Mining Association, Mr. H. T. Allan informed us:—

"We were very worried last Sep-

tember. We knew that Japanese ships were patrolling of our coast."

Maybe J. T. Lang imagines that those Japanese ships were on a pleasure cruise.

Stressing the need for an Anglo-French-Russian military alliance in the House of Commons in April, Mr. Vernon Bartlett declared:—

"Russia was a great Pacific Power.

"Australia, New Zealand and Canada all touched the Pacific. It would be commonsense for Britain, Russia and France to act in concert in the Pacific."

But any commonsense which J. T. Lang ever had has evidently been drowned in his hatred of the Soviets and Communism.

His paper, the "Century," is now working overtime trying to justify "isolation."

"The Labor Party realises that in any world war very little help could be expected from overseas," it states. Help certainly could not be expected if "isolation," which leads to world war, is persisted with. But what if an Anglo-French-Soviet alliance is established; what better and more fruitful help could Australia expect than the continued Chinese counter-offensive?

What use then, for Lang to falsify opposition to "isolation" as meaning advocacy of "sending Australians to fight overseas?" On the contrary, and late as the hour, Collective Security is the only means of keeping Australia from war, either overseas or at home.

Continuing, the "Century" claims that "collective security is the road

to war. It is the policy of Maxim Litvinov and the Comintern."

One might imagine from this that it is not the Berlin-Rome-Tokio axis which is instigating war, but Litvinov and the Communists.

How ridiculous, but so is "isolation," which hates the Soviet more than fascism, and Communists more than fascists. And to cap it all, the "Century" now tells us that Lang's policy "is not isolation."

Lang's "isolation" policy is encouraged because he falsely sees the immediate struggle as one "between Communism and fascism." If this were so, how to explain Chamberlain's guarantees to Poland, Rumania and Greece? Surely J. T. Lang, even, will not suggest that Neville Chamberlain is accepting obligations to these nations because he wishes to protect Communism from fascism?

Both Conferences demanded economic improvements in the lives of the people. The Heffron Conference was most concrete. Among other issues, it emphasised as immediate and urgent the struggle against high food prices and rents, and against the unprincipled, profit-hungry practices of the monopolies.

More important though, was the discussion on how to make the economic improvements a reality.

The Heffron Conference was all for unity, and also most tolerant in seeking ways and means. It finally decided to request the Federal A.L.P. Executive to call an "all-in" conference of both N.S.W. sections, the decisions of such Conference to be binding on both.

MAY DAY, 1939

Edgar Ross

THERE is an old German legend which sets out how on the last night of April witches, fairies, spirits and all those other mysterious beings in which the old German race believed meet on a high mountain and there the spirits of Summer struggle against those of Winter, the spirits of light against those of darkness . . . and when the sun rises upon the 1st of May the power of darkness and Winter is broken, and Spring is here. . . .

Such is the spirit of May Day, which harks back to the Golden Age of natural man, child of Nature, naked, harmless, good-natured, honest and considerate, knowing no private property, no exploitation, no organised violence—happy and contented in his primitive communism.

Under such conditions the coming of Spring after the rigors of Winter, shared equally by all, was the signal for dancing, singing and joyous rites as happy people looked forward to the bounteous harvests to come.

How different today! May Day, 1939, is nothing if not a day of struggle—a day which looks forward—only after incessant struggle—to a return to the joy of primitive communism made more secure and more stable in its exuberance by the harnessing of machinery our forefathers never dreamt of to the

task of unlimited material and cultural development.

Dominating the stage today is the grim truth that that is a goal which cannot be attained without unceasing activity to end exploitation. Emancipation is a hope expressed on May Day—a hope realisable by organised demonstration against a governing class, persistent challenge to the existing order, preparedness to fight and conquer. . . .

With its roots deep in antiquity, May Day has grown richer in great traditions, gathered meaning with the passage of the years—years which have seen primitive communism give place to class society, witnessed the growth of feudalism and is superseding by capitalism, ushered in the proletariat, and built the first socialist citadel in a capitalist world.

The primitive feasts celebrating the coming of Spring—the struggles of slaves for freedom—the revolt of serfs against masters—the strikes for better working conditions in factories and mines—wars, international and civil—revolutions for emancipation. Such are the elements of which May Day is made.

As far back as 1381 the peasants of England, led by Wat Tyler, Robert Cave and John Ball organised on a national scale to resist feudal oppression. Class privilege was denounced in that famous couplet,

*"When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?"*

Even capitalism, at the height of its arrogant power, could not completely destroy the May Day of the people, albeit forcing it to change its form. A grim note entered the unrestrained joy. Determination to struggle against exploitation took the place of carefree pleasure as the dominant note of "the Day."

May Day in its modern form dates from the 'eighties of the last century, when the struggles of the workers became crystallised in the demand for a shorter working day. Assembled under the influence of Marx and Engels, a great gathering of workers from many countries in Paris in 1889 discussed the need for concerted action on an international basis.

An international demonstration for the Eight-Hour Day! International trades union unity—May Day! Already, the American Federation of Labor at its Congress at St. Louis in 1888 had decided to stage a similar demonstration on May 1, and the date was selected for the international demonstration.

In 1890 successful May Day demonstrations were held in the principle towns of Europe and America, despite attempts at suppression by the ruling class, which recognised the tremendous significance of this indication of growing working-class solidarity. In 1891 the International called for a stoppage of work.

The following year saw May Day firmly fixed as International Labor

Day. New demands soon found their place in the demonstration—protests against brutal militarism, the call for universal suffrage and democratic rights.

At the Zurich Congress in 1893 came the emphasis that the struggle for such demands as the Eight-Hour Day must be linked with a protest against class rule and a call for social change—for the new order in which all could live at peace with one another and exploitation would be no more.

The coming of the First World War found May Day once again on the defensive owing to the betrayal of leaders who attempted to adapt the working-class movement to the service of capitalism. May Day became the rallying point of an injured internationalism, the Day when the peace-loving peoples called for the ending of imperialist barbarity. In Australia it was the hub of the fight against military despotism.

The success of the working class revolution in Russia once again brought to the fore the message of hope, and May Day resolutions everywhere sent fraternal greetings to the toilers in the new Soviet State, with pledges to carry on the struggle against capitalism and follow in their footsteps. . . .

Time marches on. In the Soviet Union May Day has become a Day of joy and triumph at the success of the building of socialism, but capitalism elsewhere challenges the growing unity and militancy of the masses. In its most aggressive, be-

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cause desperate, form of fascism it prepares again to drown the world in blood.

An international ideological challenge to all progressive philosophies and peoples, fascism and the developing struggle against it dominate the May Day stage of 1939, with, hanging over all, the threat of an all-embracing Second World War.

The fight for shorter hours, crystallised in the demand for a 40-hour week, is still of the essence of May Day, but it has become increasingly realised that the "final struggle" is at hand, wrapped up in the fight against fascism and war.

On May Day, 1939, then, we demonstrate anew our challenge to the "rights" of private property, affirm our solidarity with the oppressed classes of all countries, and look forward to a new civilisation

with the elimination of capitalist-class rule. We bite our teeth with determination to wage relentless war against those who stand in the way.

Concretely, we send congratulatory greetings to the workers of the Soviet Union and pay homage to it as the Socialist Fatherland, and a message of hope to our comrades resisting fascist aggression in Central Europe. We call for united action against those who would railroad us into a reactionary war and intensify our efforts to rid Australia of governments which flirt with fascist enemies and woo the makers of war.

The history of May Day tells us of our final triumph. Its message is one of hope, nay, of the knowledge that the future is ours in spite of terrorism, persecution and fascist butchery.

SAM AARONS ON SPAIN

II.

AFTER 32 months of bloody and bitter warfare, every minute of which teems with epics of heroism, with hopes and victories, with treacheries and defeats, the flag of renescent Spain is trampled underfoot by the jackboot of reaction. The effort of the people to lift the country and themselves out of the slough of semi-feudal reaction has come to naught for the time being, but only after pro-

digious exertions by the combined forces of world reaction.

As was to be expected, the fall of Barcelona and the overrunning of Catalonia, with the consequent loss of the quarter million strong Republican Army by internment in France, was the beginning of the end. Resistance in the Centre was bound to collapse and Madrid, besieged and heroically resisting for two and a half years was ignomi-

ously surrendered without firing a shot, except against their best and most determined compatriots, by General Miaja. This man, who had gained world-wide fame and approbation, proved wanting under the hammer-blows of defeat, and entered into a conspiracy with Franco and Chamberlain. He carried out his part of the compact by turning his guns and aeroplanes on his best troops and opening the front to the fascists. In return he was enabled to leave Spain with his son, who had been for a long time a prisoner of Franco.

So today Spain is at peace, but what a peace! It is the peace of the graveyard, broken only by the frequent volleys of the executioners as they butcher the tens of thousands taken from the jails and executed by drumhead court martial. Their graves are a never-to-be-forgotten tribute to that grand old democrat and man of peace, Chamberlain, to Munich and appeasement. For surely no greater and fouler blot has ever stained that much befouled and chimerical thing, the escutcheon of the British Empire than Britain's role in the Spanish struggle.

It is obvious now that, right from the inception of the Generals' Rebellion, Franco, Hitler and Mussolini have been getting all necessary help from Chamberlain. Indeed, it was one of the mistakes of the Spanish government and people—an easily understandable and forgivable mistake in the circumstances—that they thought by letting the world in

general, and Great Britain in particular, know the true facts of the invasion, common humanity, but more importantly self-preservation, would force the untying of the fetters which had been placed on her by France and England. All Spain realised that Mussolini's victory would strike what might be a mortal blow at these two Powers. They could not believe that Chamberlain's hatred and fear of the people could be so great that he would destroy not only Spain but Britain herself if necessary, in order to allow fascism and reaction to remain in the saddle.

It is obvious that by far the greatest single factor in the defeat of the Spanish people was the terrible inequality of armaments due solely, of course, to "non-intervention." The government had four major victories during the war: Guadalajara, Brunete, the Aragon and Teruel. On each occasion, due to good staff work and the great superiority of our human fighting material—but on each occasion we were robbed of the fruits of the victories by the lack of artillery, tanks and planes necessary to push to our final objective. And on each occasion that Franco achieved a major success this was the decisive factor.

But this is by no means the whole story. In addition there were on more than one occasion instances of treachery in high places. It is well known that the Republicans had to rely on those few high army officers who remained loyal to their trust. One of these was General

Pozas, one-time head of the much-hated civil guard, who was Commander of the Army facing Franco when he broke through to the sea in April of last year. While, of course, I am not in possession of all the facts, the events at that time speak for themselves.

Franco's attack commenced west of a town in the Aragon (Belchite) which we had captured in August 1937, some eight months previously. While even good fortifications might not have enabled us to hold that position in the face of the overwhelming mechanised attack, the only ones available to our troops were those captured from the fascists when the position was taken! And these obviously faced the wrong way!

From Belchite to the sea — some 100 miles away—where we arrived some weeks later, after the retreat had developed into a rout, there were absolutely no fortifications whatever, no prepared lines to which the Army could retreat and hold. The result was that until we reached the natural obstacle of the wide and swift-flowing Ebro River, the mechanised divisions of Mussolini hardly suffered even a momentary check. Yet the war had been in progress then nearly two years. At the best the failure to provide fortifications was criminal, at the worst, treachery.

Fascist aerial activity had never up to then been so overwhelming, yet our planes were not seen during the whole retreat. Ominous incidents occurred of reinforcements be-

ing sent to stem the fascists, without a single cartridge between the lot of them.

In Barcelona, coincident with the defeat, there was unearthed a plan to sign "peace" terms, which meant unconditional surrender, in response to which the political parties and trade unions mobilised 350,000 demonstrators on to the streets in a few hours, who demanded a continuance of the struggle.

Due to the inspired leadership of Modesto at the Ebro, and the sterling fighting capacity of the rallied troops, Franco was held at the River. In the rear, Negrin acted with a vigor uncharacteristic in Spain, and got rid of the defeatists in the government.

General Pozas was removed, together with many of the heads of the various military and government departments. Their eventual fate I do not know; one can only hope that the punishment fitted the crime, for crime it was. The situation was saved for the time, but Spain had been cut in two, and all hopes for a purely military victory disappeared.

The defeat of democracy can be summed up as being, in the main, due to the following causes.

1. By far the most important, the aid given to the fascist powers by Chamberlain and Daladier; and the refusal of the right of the Spanish government to buy arms to defend themselves — "Non-Intervention."

2. The lack of sufficient well-trained reliable army officers of the

people, and the consequent necessary dependence on the Monarchist-trained officers and technicians, many of whom proved traitorous, and nearly all weak and capitulatory under defeat.

3. Lack of that essential fighting unity in the early days of the struggle, when the diversity and divergent aims of the political parties caused irreparable delay in the welding of the People's Front and militias into a simple fighting force against fascist aggression. (This was the significance of the Trotskyist intrigue that delayed for months, in 1936 and 1937, what could have been a decisive blow against Franco.)

4. The backward state of Spanish economy and the semi-feudal condition of a large part of Spain, which has been responsible for that lassitude and lack of initiative characteristic of Spanish life.

5. The centrifugal tendencies due to the old Monarchist repression of the divergent nationalities within Spain, causing friction between the weak Central government on the one hand, and Catalonia, the Basques, etc., on the other.

It is obvious that the real purpose of the Italian and German conquest of Spain is now to be made public—it is part of the attempt of the fascist Powers to achieve world domination. Hence there will be no evacuation of the foreign troops, in spite of the solemn promises of Mussolini to Chamberlain.

This will be in accordance with the needs of Franco, who cannot follow any other policy in Spain but one of iron repression. The Spanish people, undoubtedly at the moment war-weary, will never submit to fascism. Nor can reaction do anything to solve the basic problems of Spanish life.

The land question is paramount; the old landed aristocrats and the church will be handed back their huge estates—the toiling peasantry will once again be reduced almost to the position of serfs.

The right of autonomy for the non-Castilian nationalities will be withdrawn; Catalonia's industries will again be made subservient to the interests of semi-feudal reaction.

The politically advanced workers and middle classes, with a tradition of decades of struggle behind them, intensely educated during the war years, have an undying and uncrushable hatred of fascism. They will never be complaisant material for fascist demagogy.

Spain has been temporarily defeated, but not all the firing squads, the gaols, the secret police, not even the armies of occupation of Hitler and Mussolini, nor the obscurantism of the church, will be able to keep the heroic Spanish people on their knees. They will rise again, and very soon; they will throw off their oppressors and take their rightful place in the forefront of the peoples struggling against reaction and treachery, for bread, peace and freedom.

(Concluded.)

Taxation's Changing Burden

STATISTICS SHOW HOW THE WORKERS AND MIDDLE CLASS ARE PAYING MORE IN TAXATION WHILE THE RICH ARE PAYING LESS.

The following is the first of a series of articles written for the "Communist Review" by a group of young economists, whose researches are of particular interest, giving as they do statistical data that can be of great use to speakers, writers, etc., connected with the labor movement.

WHEN we examine the taxation figures of recent years, we can see clearly how the lower ranges of income have had an increasing burden thrown on them.

In the tables below taxes have been divided into *Direct* and *Indirect*.

Now, direct taxation (such as income tax, estate duty, land tax and so on) is generally paid by the people with higher incomes. For example, most income tax comes from people with incomes of over £250 per annum.

Such taxes, then, are generally in accord with the "golden rule" of taxation, because they fall on those best able to bear them.

An exception in direct taxation, however, is the Wages Tax. This is a direct tax, but it is paid by the wage earner, and is obviously a vicious tax, since it falls on that part of the community that is *least* able to bear it.

As their name indicates direct taxes are easy to trace. The taxpayer knows exactly what he is paying over a certain period in direct taxation. Income tax, land tax, and so on, are payable annually and the

amounts easily ascertainable. We often hear people complaining about the high income tax they must pay, but it is much rarer to hear such strong complaints about the tax on tobacco or beer. This is simply because the taxpayer does not know exactly how much he is paying in taxation on his beer or tobacco or films. You would find it almost impossible to calculate how much tax you have paid on your tobacco or beer over the past 12 months.

For the distinguishing feature of an indirect tax is that the person who pays the tax can pass it on to the consumer in the price of a commodity or service. Thus, the brewer pays heavy excise duty, but he includes the duty in the price of the beer he sells, so that the tax is ultimately borne by the consumer of beer.

There is another point worth bearing in mind when considering indirect taxation. It is obvious that any tax on necessities bears more heavily on the lower-range incomes. Thus, a tax on flour, tobacco, etc., is felt much more by the man earning about £4 a week than by the

man earning £10 or over, for a bigger proportion of the former's income is spent on these necessities.

But many—indeed most—of our necessities are taxed in Australia today. To mention only a few—the flour tax, and the heavy bounties on butter and sugar which, though not collected by the government, are similar to taxes. Then there are the heavy indirect taxes on certain things that, though not strictly speaking necessary to life, are considered by the community as conducive to their present standard of civilisation—such as tobacco, beer, pictures, racing and other entertainments, petrol, tea, cloth.

Moreover, since the greater number of people in Australia and other capitalist countries are in the lower-income ranges, it follows that most of the money collected from such taxation of necessities will be paid by these lower incomes.

Thus, it can be seen that indirect taxes break the "golden rule" of taxation that it should fall most on those best able to bear it.

Bearing the above facts in mind, we will be able to see clearly from the following tables the importance of the great increase in direct and indirect taxation on the working class over the past few years.

COMMONWEALTH			
DIRECT		£ 000	
	1927-28	1937-38	
Income Tax (paid by receivers of incomes of over £250)	10,165	9,399	
Land Tax	3,027	1,368	
Estate Duty (paid by inheritors of estates exceeding £1000)	1,752	1,873	
Wartime Profits Tax	(Dr. 112)	(Dr. 1)	
	14,832	12,639	
	26.1 %	18.3 %	
INDIRECT			
Customs (duties on imported goods, tea tobacco, petrol, cloth, motor cars, spirits, etc.)	41,447	32,973	
Excise (taxes on beer, spirits, tobacco, etc., produced in Australia)	—	15,410	
Sales Tax (taxes on most goods; food and other essentials exempt)	—	8,024	
Flour Tax	—	3	
Entertainments	359	—	
	41,806	56,410	
	56,638	69,049	
N.S.W.			
DIRECT		£ 000	
	(Actual)	(Estimate)	
Stamp duties (mainly transfers of shares, property, etc.)	1,676	1,449	
Probate and death duties	1,597	2,461	

	N.S.W. £ 000	(Actual) 3	(Estimate) 2
DIRECT			
Land Tax		6,382	6,430
Income Tax		—	2,725
Special Income Tax		—	19
Family Endowment Tax		—	—
		9,658	13,086
		89.7 %	75.1 %
Wages Tax		—	3,250
		—	18.7 %
INDIRECT			
Betting Taxes		115	250
Totalisator Act.		201	125
Racecourse Admission Tax		136	90
Entertainments Tax		—	100
		452	565
Licences		615	442
		10,725	17,343

Thus, in the Commonwealth budget, direct taxation which in 1927-28 provided 26.1 per cent. of the total, provided only 18.3 per cent. in 1937-38.

Moreover, those taxes paid mainly by the rich have not merely provided a smaller proportion of the total, they have actually decreased. So, despite rising profits every year, the rich are paying less out in taxation.

This is conclusive proof that the present Federal and N.S.W. State governments legislate to benefit the rich and to put an increasing burden on the poor.

In New South Wales direct taxation of the kind carried by the higher incomes provided 89.7 per cent. of the total received in 1927-28. But in 1936-37 (the last year for

which detailed figures are available) this percentage had dropped to 75.1 per cent.

This is explained by the appearance of the Wages Tax, which provided no less than 18.7 per cent. of all taxation revenue in New South Wales.

The implication of all this is clear.

Over the last 10 years there has been a marked reduction in the amount of the workers' weekly wage which he can use to buy goods and services. On the other hand, there has been a noticeable increase in the burden of government expenditure—largely for interest to bondholders and various forms of subsidy to capitalist producers—which has been thrown on the workers.

PAGES FROM THE PAST

By J. N. Rawling



A series of documents illustrating Australia's Social and Economic History, with special reference to the working-class movement and the struggle for democracy. Edited with introductions by J. N. R.

Period II.— Free Colony and Self-Government, 1823—1856 (Continued)

3—POLITICAL FERMENT (Continued)

UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNIONS IN TASMANIA IN 1834

Below follows the conclusion from last issue of the editor of the "Hobart Town Courier's" comment on unemployment in Tasmania in 1834.

This painful state of affairs is not confined to one class of workmen. Masons, painters, and various other callings are similarly situated. Among others we may mention a very respectable man and a good workman, a painter, who arrived with many others in the "Lady East," and has never yet been able to obtain more than one fortnight's work. He has in consequence, in order to

obtain a subsistence, collected a box of musical glasses, on which he happened to learn to play in England, and with which he goes about from house to house to amuse different families for a small gratuity. He is exceedingly clever as a performer, and we should rejoice to see him patronised by the gentry of the place. For as music in itself is one of the

most innocent of all amusements, so recreation is never more pleasing or laudable than when its gratification

can thus be made to conduce to the welfare of others.

—"H.T. Courier," 14/3/1834.

ANOTHER COMMENT

Mr. Lightfoot says we have been multiplying the tailors of Hobart Town by nine—on the contrary, we fear he has been dividing them by

that digit, under the impression of Billy Button's maxim that nine tailors make a man.

—"H.T. Courier," 21/3/1834.

THE EMPLOYEES' CASE

To the Editor,

Sir,—After the very able and impartial remarks you inserted in last week's "Courier," regarding journeymen tailors, no further notice would be taken of Mr. Lightfoot's letter, was it not intended in an indirect manner to defeat the object of a petition which 32 industrious tradesmen have addressed to His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor, complaining of the interference of prison labor, and praying that as the petitioners were induced to embark for this colony under representations made at home, and that too by and under the sanction of the government, they would greatly advance their circumstances and benefit their families by emigrating here, and that His Excellency would be pleased to take their distressed case into consideration and afford proper relief.

We shall attempt to show where Mr. Lightfoot is wrong, and let the public draw their own inference.

1.—The petition to His Excellency was signed by 32 journeymen tailors, 16 of whom are married and have 40 children to support.

2.—Among the number are many who understand their trade well.

3.—The wages now allowed to free men by Mr. Lightfoot may with great industry enable a journeyman to earn 30/- per week, but then he must be a first-rate workman and work from 12 to 14 hours a day.

4.—The present wages of journeymen tailors are not so high as those received by carpenters by 20%. Mr. Lightfoot says that a tailor sits comfortably at his work in all weathers, while others are exposed to the inclemency of the weather. But the fact is notorious and well-known to Mr. L. that of all trades that of a tailor is most injurious to health; he sits cross-legged for 12 to 14 hours a day without any exercise, whereas the carpenter, by constant exercise preserves his health unimpaired.

5.—Mr. Lightfoot charges the trade generally with being lazy, dissipated fellows, but upon due inquiry it will be found that there are in proportion as many sober and industrious men among the tailors as amongst any other class of tradesmen.

6.—It is not correct that his journeymen struck for higher wages in November last. Mr. L. had in the course of one year reduced his wages

thrice. The fact is that no journeyman tailor ever heard of that strike until it appeared in Mr. Lightfoot's letter.

7.—It is not correct that the meeting held by the journeymen tailors at Mr. Priest's handed about amongst Mr. Lightfoot's men a paper enjoining them to stick up for their privileges and no longer to allow masters to make a property out of the sweat of their brows. There was certainly a note sent to Mr. Lightfoot's shop inviting the men to attend the meeting, and if possible to obtain the same wages as other masters gave, but the object

and business of that meeting which Mr. Lightfoot lays so much stress upon was to form a benefit society to afford assistance to men off work, to the sick and aged; and but for the misfortune of its members being out of employment must have been a great good to the trade. We are very sorry to trouble you, but had we said nothing, the public might and would have believed the statements in Mr. Lightfoot's letter, and we hope this is the last time we shall trespass on your kindness.

—Signed by 32 petitioners.

—"H.T. Courier," 21/3/1834.

AN EARLY TASMANIAN UNION

Prospectus
of the

Hobart Town Mechanics and
Tradesmen's Benefit Society
Instituted January the 24th, 1833.

Each member on admittance, to pay to the funds 10/-, and 3/- per month.

The benefit of this Society to be given to the sick members, is 15/- per week.

Upon the death of a member £10 sterling, to be paid towards defraying funeral expences.

Upon the death of a member's wife, towards the same, £5.

Persons desirous of entering, may apply to Mr. Puncheon, Wheat Sheaf, Argyle St. Articles to be seen at the bar.—John Strickland, Sec.

—"The Trumpeter" (Hobart),
3/12/1833.

IN PRAISE OF AUSTRALIA

In the 'forties many immigrants were becoming good Australians. But many could not forget the land of their birth and yearned to be back there, from this land of exile. Here is one who in an unusual manner was growling at the land of his adoption.

HELPING THE LAME DOG OVER A STILE

Dear Sir,—I have a cousin who has a horrid and inveterate practice of beginning rhymes on various subjects which he never finishes. Not a verse is ever completed. I have done all I can to convince him of his folly. If a man cannot finish a verse, why

does he begin it without a better knowledge of his ability and means?

My cousin, three weeks ago, began what he calls "Stanzas in Praise of South Australia." Day after day I found these "stanzas" in the imperfect state I have mentioned. As

I want to shame him out of his imbecility of purpose, I have finished off what he began as well as I could, and I now send it to you to fill up an unforseen gap in your valuable paper. I hardly need add, that the lines in parenthesis are those only for which I am responsible.

Yours, etc.,

Adelaide, July, 1843

W.

Hail South Australia! blessed clime,
Thou lovely land of my adoption;
(I never meant to see the spot
If I had had the slightest option.)

Hail charming plains of bounteous
growth!

Where tufted vegetation smiles.
(Those dull, atrocious endless flats,
And no plain less than thirteen
miles.)

Hail tuneful choristers of air!
Who open wide your tiny throats.
(There's not a bird on any tree
Can twitter half a dozen notes.)

Hail glorious gums of matchless
height!

Whose heads the very skies per-
vade;

Whose tops and trunks yield vast
supplies

(But not a particle of shade.)

WAR IN THE AIR

Here is a remarkable cutting from an Adelaide paper in 1843. Two men, Bankhead and Harding, claimed to have invented a machine that would fly! Its influence on war, they thought, would be such as to wipe that scourge off the face of the earth. Little did they know of the character of "statesmen" and capitalists who would follow them. Here is their letter to the "Adelaide Observer."

AERIAL CARRIAGES

Sir,—. . . It is high time, sir, that the blast of the war-trumpet should

Hail far-famed Torrens, graceful
stream!

On whose sweet banks I often
linger,

Soothed by the murmur of thy
waves;

(And plumb the bottom with my
finger.)

Hail June, our grateful winter
month!

Which never bring'st us wintry
rigours.

And when sweet February comes
(It finds us steaming like the
niggers.)

Hail balmy rains! in showers come
down,

To do both town and country
good;

(To give to each on reaching home
The blessings of a ton of mud.)

Hail land! where all the wants of
life

Flow in cheap streams of milk and
honey;

Where all are sure of daily bread
(If they can fork out ready
money.)

Hail South Australia! Once more
hail!

That man indeed is surely rash
Who cannot live content in thee,

Or wants for anything (but cash).
—"Adelaide Observer."

cease. When the power of destruc-
tion shall have reached its maximum,

surely the eyes of men will be opened to its folly and absolute absurdity; and hostile nations, beleaguering armies, and rival and invading powers will acknowledge that their thirst for conquest or the enlargement of their territorial kingdom, springs from those passions of our nature which it is wise to suppress; that the tendency of war is always injurious; and that the gratification of revenge is a principle in direct opposition to reason and religion and degrading to the image of God . . . As a destructive engine our pneumatic aerial machine would be in itself sufficient

to change the face of the world, and destroy all traces of the present system of warfare. By the law of gravitation falling bodies acquire momentum according to the square of the distance, and in their descent from a great altitude, without the application of projective force, would be terribly destructive; but the discharge of missiles from receivers of condensed air would pulverize the strongest fortification, or sink the combined navies of the whole world without chance of escape . . .

—Bankhead & Harding.

Adelaide, August 1, 1843.

FROM ENGLISH TO AUSTRALIAN COMPOSITORS

A Warning

In 1839, the Trade Council of the Australian Society of Compositors sent a warning to the compositors of England: that there was unemployment in Australia and that compositors coming to Australia would not find work, or, if they did, they would receive small wages and be used to break down the conditions of workers in Australia. Unfortunately, the letter was sent to Mr. Tegg, who had a son in Sydney. And this son was a master printer. Mr. Tegg, senr., sent the letter to Mr. Tegg, junr., and the latter sent it to the reactionary "Sydney Gazette," which published it—making a violent attack upon it, its authors and unionism generally. Whether the letter was published in England, I do not know. It runs as follows:

Sydney, N.S.W.

March 16, 1839.

Sir,—I am Instructed by the Trade Council of the "Australian Society of Compositors," to forward to you, for your information and guidance, the enclosed Letter, which may be relied on as a true statement. I have the honour to be,
Sir,

Your Obedient Humble Servant,
Peter Tyler,
Secretary.

To Mr. T. Tegg,
Cheapside

To the Compositors of the
United Kingdom.

Sydney, N.S.W.

March 16, 1839.

Gentlemen,—Being aware of the many misrepresentations which have found their way to England, by means of the Colonial Newspapers, relating to wages, etc., of Journeymen Compositors in this Colony; and in order to prevent your being duped, as many have already been, this Council feel it their duty to their Brethren at

home, to furnish them with the following plain Statement of Facts, which may be depended on as the real state of the Trade in this Colony at the present time, viz.—

There are six Newspaper Offices, and two Jobbing Offices; fifteen Publications are issued weekly, besides *The Government Gazette*; the Papers are made up very light, set in large type, and have at least from a page and a half to two pages of standing Advertisements in each Publication. The Jobbing Offices are, as may naturally be supposed, on a small scale, Mr. Tegg employing four hands, and two apprentices, and Mr. Trood (a gentleman lately arrived from Taunton in Devonshire) one hand only. The present strength of the Businesses (including Free Compositors, Assigned Servants, and Apprentices) is from eighty to ninety now actually Employed; there are several Compositors following other occupations, and two or three out of Employment. The Wages vary from 35/- to 40/- per week, which when placed in juxta position with the wages paid at home, and taking the necessaries of life into consideration, cannot be considered as an adequate remuneration for our labour. At certain times, there is a surplus quantity of work, and at these periods they would employ an extra number of hands; but most of the Offices are so stinted as to space, type, cases, and so forth, that it is impossible they could employ another; in fact, an increase of work in one Office causes a decrease in another. House-rent in this

Colony is exorbitant, one small Room is let at from 5/- to 6/- per week, and the meanest hovel from 7/- to 9/-. There are so many Emigrants arriving almost daily, that Provisions of all descriptions, and Necessaries generally, are fast increasing in price.

This Council, therefore feel themselves bound to inform you, that there is not at present a necessity for a single additional hand in the Colony;* they therefore consider the reports circulated by the Master Printers here, as intended to cause a surplus number of Workmen, and thereby obtain labour on their own terms.

It may be thought by some of our Brethren in Great Britain, that Sydney, Hobart Town, Launceston, Swan River, Port Phillip and South Australia (at which places there are Printing Establishments) are within a day or two's journey of each other; but this Council further beg to inform them that there is not another Printing Press within 600 miles of Sydney; and that there is actually more difficulty at times in getting to some of the above-mentioned Settlements, than to England, so that Masters are well aware that when Compositors have once landed in Sydney, they must remain at least for some time. We have the honour to subscribe ourselves, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servants,
The Trade Council of the
Australian Society of Compositors.

* As an evident proof of this, the Compositors latterly (after mature deliberation) could not muster strength enough for a

strike to raise their wages to a level with other mechanics here, who may not receive three-fourths of a Compositor's wages at home. About three months ago, three Compositors arrived here, two of whom, Mr. J. Haydon, and Mr. B. Isaacs, were engaged by an eminent bookseller in London (Mr. Tegg), for his son, a master printer here, who had previously received some Compositors from

home; but to their astonishment when they presented themselves to their expected employer, his answer was—that he was not in want of anyone; and they had therefore to find employment the best way they could. About twenty Compositors have arrived within the last twelve months from various parts of the world. Five more are at present landing, and three more are daily expected by the 'Orient.'

A PEOPLE'S POET LAUREATE

Henry Parkes constituted himself a kind of Poet Laureate to the democratic movement of the forties. Here are two extracts from his verse which, if not high poetry, has sincerity and feeling. The first is an extract. The second was, in his own words, "written in the early part of 1851, when a Conference of Delegates from the Colonies was held in Sydney, to promote the objects of the Australian Anti-Transportation League."

Though born beneath a brighter sun,
Shall we forget the marvels done
By soul outspoken, blood outpoured,
By bard and patriot, song and sword?
Forget how firm and true our sires
(Still lighted by their battle fires)
'Gainst kingly power and kingly crime
Long struggled in the darkened time?
How in a rolling sea they stood,
Whose every wave was freeman's blood?
Shall we forget the time of strife
When freedom's only price was life?
Shall Cromwell's memory, Milton's lyre,
Not kindle 'mong us souls of fire?
Not raise in us a spirit strong—
High scorn of shams, quick hate of wrong?

A LEAGUE HYMN

Come, brothers, come! the new-born
South,
Whose brow is flushed at thought
of shame,

Victoria, in her radiant youth,
Sends forth her sons to guard her fame.
And she, the trampled martyr-child,
Who sits upon our coast, and weeps,
Like Lamb's sweet Rosamund defiled—
Tasmania 'midst her two-fold deeps:
She, beautiful Tasmania, hath
The bearers of her eloquent plea,
The champions of her sore-trying faith,
Before thine alter, Liberty!
We meet in peace, with high disdain
Of stratagem or base intrigue,
Our rights, as freemen, to maintain;
As brothers, true, we join the League.
Brothers! may Heaven's own breath
pervert
Her soil, if, recreant of them all,
Eldest Australia fail to assert
Her children's rights, at freedom's call.

But no! to swell our traitor-
No future scribe, nor bard unborn,
Shall dash the name of New South
Wales
With satrap's jeers or patriot's
scorn.

Come, brothers, come! We rouse us
now,
'Gainst wicked schemes and base in-
trigue;
With hearts to dare, and hands to
do,
We join Australia's glorious
League.

STRIKES OF 100 YEARS AGO

It has been impossible, considering the circumstances under which these documents have been prepared for publication, to present them, in the later period, in chronological order. But I do not imagine that the unavoidable chopping about has destroyed their interest. Another difficulty has been one of selection. There are numerous interesting and valuable documents that need resurrecting and they should be at the disposal of students of Australian social history in a handy form. A source book is necessary. In the meantime these few documents that we are here reprinting are invaluable. Most of those we have published lately have never been quoted, and have been rarely seen, since they were originally printed in the old newspapers. The 'forties and 'fifties are an important period and I find it hard to drag myself away from them. Yet at the same time, I am anxious to get to the 'eighties and 'nineties, when I shall be able to publish documents that have never before been published in any form—valuable human and social documents.

Next year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the **Big Strike of 1890**. Let us look now at a few strikes of a much longer time ago—of one of which we ought to celebrate the centenary next year.

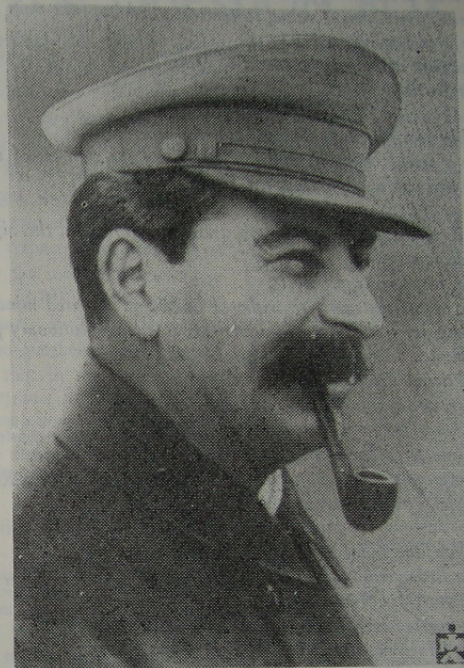
THE STRIKE OF 1829

In 1829, there were three newspapers. One of these was **The Australian**, W. C. Wentworth's paper, which appeared on Wednesdays and Fridays. Its issue of December 2 consisted of only one sheet—and it contained the following announcement:

To His Patrons.—The Public.
The Editor of *The Australian* begs leave to apologise for the form under which that Journal is this day presented to them; but when assured, that in causing *The Australian* to be published as a sheet of Advertisements in this instance, he has only been acquitting himself of a duty towards all Employers of

Mechanics, and Others in New South Wales, He feels the utmost confidence, that a discerning Public will not alone pardon, but approve of a course, by deviating from which he would have been instrumental in establishing an improper precedent, and have been compromising *their* interests to serve *his own*.

(Continued Next Issue.)



STALIN

*All over the world
They are reviling one man, the enemies of the people,
Dubbing him the murderer of little babies, the betrayer of the revolution.*

*The vulgar press is dragging his name through mud, the great friend of the people.
Professors and long-haired intellectuals, whose time is up, are putting on an assumed air of foolish superiority,
Or sneering ill-at-ease: fearful of surrendering their paltering little individualities, their precious poses.*

*The big bosses are spitting unavailing venom,
Giving great advertisement value, to their bearded imp, the vain squabblers,
the injured innocence,
Because they are afraid of the sword of Stalin,
The Soviet Justice.*

*Why do they fear this one man, and not the other?
Because he is steel, the father and big brother of the workers of the world,
of the invincible Red Army, the Five-Year Plan.*

*The puny dictators, wedded to death, tremble before him, the big brother,
in piddling wrath,*

Wrent their fury on stray objects.

*The wrecks of the system, with withered limbs and tortured minds,
The beaten-up Jews, the cheated middle classes, the revolutionary peasantry,
the exploited workers, the oppressed nationalities,*

*The International Proletariat,
Know him every day more their friend and comrade.*

*For he has mastered the tradition of Marx, Engels and Lenin,
He is uncompromising Limb of the victorious Party, of World Revolution.
Against Soviet Power there will be no appeal.*

*They fear him, the silent one, the unscrupulous one,
For he is no little scribbler, no vain talker, no senseless screecher
He is more powerful than they.
He, the big-hearted one, the invincible will of the Party,
Has mastered their weapons, has excelled them, has built up an unbreak-
able Union which cannot be destroyed,
And those, raging in impotence, revile this sword of Justice,
For it will break up Empires, destroy Oppression and liberate the twisted
and broken suffering of humanity,
The great life armies which will laugh at death.*

—Gerald Peel.



THE QUESTION BOX

Q.—*The Labor press having recently given W. M. Hughes a pat or two on the back, does this imply that the leopard has changed his spots?*

A.—Not at all. Mr. Hughes is still Mr. Hughes. Let us hear what three judges, two living and one dead, have said about him.

First, in respect of his attempts to undermine the independence of the Judiciary. In 1917, in the course of an argument in the Arbitration Court upon another matter, counsel remarked that in the collieries dispute of 1916—

“The Commonwealth government in its wisdom appointed a special commissioner, Mr. Justice Edmunds, to deal with the matter, and, as we all know now, with instructions to concede the men’s demands.”

Mr. Justice Higgins thereupon remarked:—

“The Prime Minister wanted me to act as commissioner under those instructions, and I refused. . . . It would have injured the prestige and influence of the Court irretrievably if I had. Mr. Justice Edmunds has said clearly that he did not regard himself as an arbitrator in the matter, but was there to grant what the men asked for; and it was a most baleful precedent.”

Mr. Justice Higgins later declared that Mr. Hughes sent to him a written statement of the demands of the miners that were to be conceded. Further government interference between court and disputants finally led the judge to resign from the Arbitration Court in 1921. He felt that—

“The ground had been cut from underneath his feet.”

In announcing his retirement, he said:—

“My resignation is due to my opinion that the public usefulness of the court

has been fatally injured.”

When the first Commonwealth Labor government relinquished office, Alfred Deakin had likened Mr. Hughes to an urchin that had to be “dragged screaming from the tart-shop.” On his propensity for clinging to the Executive power in face of the popular will and his own pledges, as well as for abusing that power, Judge Beeby, then Minister for Labor in N.S.W., observed in the Melbourne “Age” of January 11, 1918:—

“The acceptance by Mr. Hughes of a commission to form a new government ends one of the most sordid chapters in the history of Australian politics. As soon as the referendum was over, there was but one thing to do. The only course open to any man with a sense of national honor was to tender unconditionally his resignation to the Governor-General and live up to the declaration which he made while the fight was on. That declaration was, ‘I cannot and will not attempt to carry on the affairs of Australia unless conscription is carried.’ Conscription was not carried, but instead of acting up to his statement, the Prime Minister began a series of manoeuvres with the intention of escaping from the consequences of his declaration.

“The one insuperable obstacle . . . was only the leadership of Mr. Hughes. If he had frankly accepted the situation and withdrawn for the time being from Ministerial office, we might have been able to evolve a strong Ministry. . . .

“ . . . Many of the powers taken and exercised under the War Precautions Act were not really necessary for war purposes, and were regarded by large numbers of people who supported the National Party in the last election as harsh and unnecessary interference with personal liberty.”

Finally, Beeby said:—

“I suspended all criticism in the matter until we knew definitely what Mr. Hughes intended to do, although I had no doubt that, in spite of his pledges, he would continue to be Prime Minister.”

In 1917, Mr. Hughes attempted

to prolong the life of the Legislature (elected for three years by the people) until the end of the war or until October 8, 1918. The narrow Labor majority in the Senate blocked his way. Suddenly Senator Ready of Tasmania, whip of the Labor Party in the Senate, resigned his seat. Judge Foster (then Mr. A. W. Foster) has given us an account of events leading to this resignation in "What Happened to Ready?"—

"February 26.—Mr. Hughes arrives in Sydney per train. Mr. Lee (Premier of Tasmania) arrives in Sydney by boat. They went there to talk about wheat and hops—at least that's what we're told.

"February 27.—Mr. Lee and Mr. Hughes finish talking about hops and return together to Melbourne.

"February 28.—Mr. Earle and Senator Ready arrive in Melbourne by same boat from Launceston, and Messrs. Hughes and Lee arrive from Sydney. Lee proceeds to Tasmania the same day. Hughes and Earle dine together at Parliament House.

"March 1.—Senator Ready throws up his £50 a month job to live on air; does not inform his party of his proposed resignation, but goes straight to Jensen. Resignation reaches President of Senate one minute past 6 p.m.

"Then within the next 17 hours, Earle, who is in Melbourne, resigns his Tasmanian seat (this must be in writing to the Speaker in Tasmania). Speaker informs the Governor of Tasmania, who informs the Premier, who calls a meeting of the Executive Council. Mr. Earle (in Melbourne) is asked to accept nomination. Executive Council then elects him. Tasmanian Governor certifies to Governor-General in Melbourne that Earle is duly elected. Governor-General issues certificate to the President of the Senate. Mr. Earle waiting on the doorstep at 11 a.m. on March 2 to be sworn in. Was there ever such a busy 17 hours?

"Mr. Tudor thought these things and Senator Watson's disclosures looked fishy, and moved for a Royal Commission to inquire; but Hughes and the Fusion weren't anxious for the disclosures, and would not permit any inquiry.

However, two of the Fusion's own supporters were so satisfied that something very underhand was going on that they brought the whole Parliament to an

abrupt end by voting against their own government."

In respect to Mr. Hughes's methods of turning a minority of the Legislature into a majority without consulting the people, the above-mentioned Senator Watson also related in Parliament that he had an interview with Mr. Hughes, who asked him what stood in the way of his coming over to the party supporting the government.—

"I replied, 'the labor movement.' He said, 'Why more you than myself, Chris Watson, George Pearce, and others who are equally attached to the labor movement?' I said I could not discriminate in that way, as it was within their rights to act as they thought fit. They had been resting for many years in the lap of the labor movement, and had seen many years of public service; whilst I stood at the threshold of my public career. He asked me did money stand in my way, as I would lose nothing by coming over to them, and stated that he had never deserted any man who who had stood to him. I replied that I had too much regard for the movement to act in any way in opposition to its interests or betray its confidence. I said, 'What would the men of Newcastle think of me were I to do anything contrary to the wishes of the party to which I belong?' He said, 'If you don't like to live in Newcastle, we can find you another place.' . . . I replied, 'Oh, I could not think of that.' He then suggested that I should resign my seat and allow the vacancy to be filled, promising that a position would be found for me. I stated that I could not think of deserting the movement and leave my mates in such a crisis, as I had always tried to act straightforwardly, and be able to look my associates in the face."

During the war, the Fisher government was succeeded by the very fishy governments of which Mr. Hughes was the head. A sardine, as the Japanese say, always stinks at the head. And Mr. Hughes was the head of these governments. Ascending once more to the animal kingdom, we repeat: this leopard does not change its spots.

MORE BABIES ?

By "Gordon"

"SINGLE?"

"Yes, madam."

"Are you sure?"

"Why, of course!"

"H'm. You have a married look about you!"

The suppliant for the position of housemaid to Mrs. Bell-Potts flushed as she cast an instinctive downward glance at her legs and feet. Cheap stockings. Clean, but shabby shoes.

Mrs. Bell-Potts settled herself more comfortably into her throne-like chair. HER feet, encased in pink satin slippers, rested on a brocaded footstool.

"All right, you needn't squirm. I wasn't thinking of your clothes. There's something in a married woman's face. And there's plenty of them looking for work these days. They all tell the same story. Still, I believe you. Where are you living?"

"In Richmond, madam."

"With your people?"

"No, madam; in lodgings. I come from the country."

Mrs. Bell-Potts gave the girl a final searching stare. "All right. I'll take you, although I don't think much of your references. You can put your hat on again. I never could study people properly under a hat."

The short straight bob vanished under a piece of blue felt with a faded ribbon and a perspiration stain round the back rim.

"You know all that's necessary for the present, I think. I'll want you here early tomorrow morning."

"Yes, madam."

"What is your name?"

"Helen, madam."

"Ah, that's a sensible name for a maid. No fal-de-lals about it. And you understood clearly what I said about outings and late hours?"

"Yes, madam. I don't care for late hours anyway."

Mrs. Bell-Potts turned to the severely uniformed lady's maid, who, throughout the interview, had been assiduously manicuring her fingernails. "A cigarette, Anne, please."

Silence, while the little silver box was passed over from the dressing table.

"I have good reason to be very careful who I take into the house these days." Mrs. Bell-Potts had the air of one about to make a momentous statement.

The girl politely inclined her head.

"I must not be subjected to any annoyances in the next few months, however trivial. There must be absolute peace and harmony in this establishment. My doctor's instructions."

"Yes, madam."

"I'm going to have a baby."

"Oh."

"Well, is there anything startling about that?"

"No, certainly not, madam!" The

girl gave a tentative smile. "It's just . . . interesting."

"Interesting, eh?" Mrs. Bell-Potts very nearly smiled, too. "Well, interesting or not, it's a fact. Now you know why I'm so exacting about certain things. There's no reason why I should have told you that yet, but it might help you to behave yourself. I'll be engaging a nurse soon, but, just the same, Anne and you will have to be very kind to me. It's a very big ordeal for a woman, as you'll find out for yourself some day no doubt. That's all. See that you're here in good time tomorrow. Anne will show you out."

"Goodnight, madam, and thank you."

"Goodnight."

An hour later the girl entered a dingy room in Richmond. A young man, good looking and muscular, was seated at a plain deal table. The evening paper was spread before him, but he was looking at the door as it opened. She did not speak until she had taken off her overcoat and hat and hung them behind the door.

"I got it, Bob."

He did not reply. His stare was searching, not a little resentful.

She perched herself on the table near him. Her air was confident, mature. A different woman to the one who, but an hour ago, had stood trembling on the thick carpet of the Toorak boudoir. Mrs. Bell-Potts would hardly have recognised her.

"You're in for a lonely time, Bob." Her hand settled on his clenched fist lying on the table.

"I'm not thinking of that!"

"You will be tomorrow."

"So you begin tomorrow?"

"Yes. I'll only see you once a week, and then only for a few hours."

He swore softly. "Back to service, eh? Even being married couldn't keep you out of it!"

"Bob, dear, it's no use starting that all over again. There was nothing else . . ."

He tensed a knotted forearm. "Look at that! And it has to lie here, doing nothing . . ." in one violent movement he grasped her by the wrist and shot up her sleeve, exposing her own white and shapely arm . . . and let that go out and toil! Why? In the name of Hell, why?"

"Bob, you're hurting me!" She slid forward on to his knees.

"You're not being fair, dear. You agreed there was nothing else for it until you got a job."

"Or until you crack up!"

"Silly! I'll be all right for two months yet."

He relaxed, but the bitter twist never left his lips. "Yes, I suppose I've got to take it, too. You'll get decent tucker, anyway. Only, when I get thinking . . ."

"Shs! Don't think. We can't help ourselves."

Embraces. Kisses. A few tender phrases whispered with their lips close to each other's ears.

"It's funny, Bob. She's going to have a baby, too."

"The Hell she is!"

"She told me so. I've got to be very kind to her; not upset her in

any way. I've got to remember that I'll probably know all about it myself some day. Gosh, if she only knew! Did Billy wake up while I was out?"

"Not a whimper. I put my coat over him, though. It's cold tonight. Anyway, I hope that old hag has four kids, all at once!"

"Don't be vicious!" She jumped up, and going to a little distance, stood in profile to him with outstretched arms. "You can't notice it yet, can you?"

His glance travelled over the still girlish figure.

"No, but you will soon. And

there's the morning sickness."

"I'll get round that. You're not very encouraging!"

"Come here, kid."

She came and stood before him.

"Do you have to call her 'madam'?"

His expression troubled her. "No. Just Mrs. Bell-Potts. It's a funny name . . ."

"Well, see that you don't. Because she's not worth a hair of your little head. I'd sooner I'd never . . ."

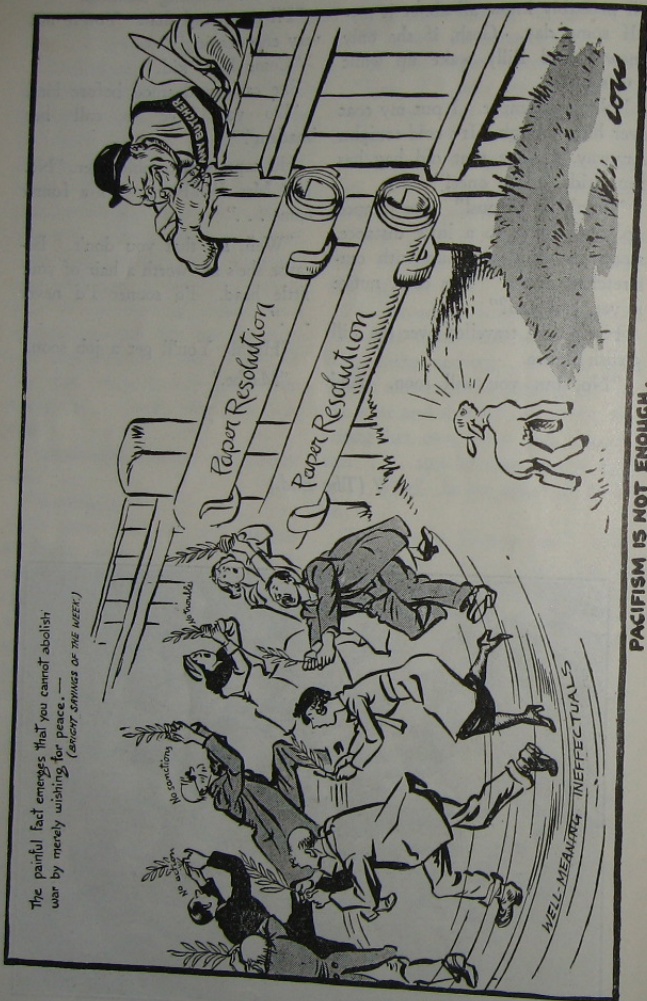
"Hush! You'll get a job soon."

"Maybe."

(The End.)



More Babies For U.S.S.R.



The painful fact emerges that you cannot abolish war by merely wishing for peace. — (SHOWY STRIPPER OF THE WEEK!)

PACIFISM IS NOT ENOUGH.

From "Low's Political Parade," Cresset Press, London, 1936.

Overhauling Our Language

Kevin Connolly

We wish to call special attention to this article, contributed by a Melbourne writer.

TWO recent events indicate that the attention of leading committees of the Communist Party and of Communists generally will be turned more steadily in coming months on to the question of better political education, agitation and propaganda.

Last year, our Communist Party held its first national "school" for intensive theoretical training. Since then, the new definitive "Short History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union" has been published in Russia. In Australia, the Sydney "school" should lead to a much better scheme of theoretical study (see "C.R.," February issue, p. 95); while in Russia, the publication of the "Short History" will mean nothing less than a transformation of the whole system of political education (see "Communist International," No. 12, Dec., 1938, p.67). Outside Russia, the "Short History" is expected to "become a manual not only for active Communists, but also for all advanced workers" ("Inprecorr," 1939, p.68).

The achievement of higher standards of political knowledge among the rank and file of Communists and advanced non-Party people is thus one of our principal tasks from 1939 onward. It is not an academic task

remote from real everyday problems, but an actual job as important as our political and economic struggles. As Communists know, improved theoretical knowledge enables the political and economic struggles to be conducted more efficiently, and this practical experience, in turn, raises the theoretical standards of those participating.

Intimately connected with political education, agitation and propaganda is the efficiency of the language we use, whether in conversation, discussion, speeches, articles, pamphlets or other published matter. What we should do, now that both opportunities and occasions for theoretical improvement are likely to become more common, is to combine our work in this field with a painstaking overhaul of our language.

Communist writers in particular have a heavy responsibility to keep pace with the theoretical tempo, and clear their minds and their writings of habits and formulas which are likely to become more than ever detrimental to the working-class movement.

Nothing is more certain than that bad writing and speaking, which we have been in the habit of tolerating from—or inflicting on—others, will be shown up glaringly as the level

of political education rises. The time to set about making an improvement is, therefore, right now; and it is in the hope of stimulating thought and discussion on this problem that these notes have been written.

First, there is what may appear to some as the sentimental side. In English, we have an excellent native tongue, with a grand tradition. One of the most noble threads in that tradition is the pure English that has been spoken and written in defence of human values and against barbarism, despotism and exploitation. Down the years, in England, America and Australia, are scores of men who, in magnificent English words, have protested against brutality, corruption and other essentially inhuman deeds and practices.

Many are well known to us—Swift, Paine, Blake, Cobbett, Lincoln, Whitman and the rest. The writings of many others have been forgotten for years and are only now being unearthed (cf. J. R. Rawling's publications of early Australian documents and newspaper articles). In England they have been digging out such long-forgotten articles as Thomas Hodgskin's "Labor Defended Against the Claims of Capital," published in 1825. Here is a paragraph showing how Hodgskin used English:—

"I am certain, however, that till the triumph of labour be complete; till productive industry alone be opulent, and till idleness alone be poor; till the admirable maxim that 'he who sows shall reap,' be solidly

established; till the right of property shall be founded on principles of justice, and not on those of slavery; till man shall be held more in honour than the clod he treads on, or the machines he guides—there cannot and there ought not to be either peace on earth or goodwill amongst men."

No Communist can be satisfied today as he reads our newspapers,icals and pamphlets that we have preserved more than an atom or two of the special heritage of our native tongue. It is true that our language, marred as it often is by hackneyed phrases, jargon and carelessness, is preferable to the stale conceits and lazily varnished falsehoods of leading articles in the daily press or statements by Mr. Lyons and his lieutenants. The spurious, syncopated prose of our most highly-paid bourgeois leader-writers rings like a cracked bell from columns headed with pious aphorisms. But the degraded writing of others is no extenuation for us. The working class and all democratic people should feel themselves under an obligation to keep their English pure. For Communists, the inheritors and joint trustees of the real human tradition, purity of language should be a matter of honor.

So much for sentiment. But what of the practical side? How is this purity of language to be achieved and maintained? More important still, is there a practical reason of sufficient force to justify a serious cleansing and overhaul of our political, agitational and propagandist

language? Yes, there is a practical reason; and it can be summed up in the single word—*efficiency*.

Dimitrov, in his reply to discussion at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, dealt with the problem. He told the story of an unemployed meeting he attended in Berlin not long before Hitler came to power. After a Nazi speaker had made an effective, but demagogic speech, a Communist speaker mounted the rostrum. "Comrades," he began, "the Plenum of the Communist International has just closed. It showed the way to the salvation of the working class. The chief task it puts before you, comrades, is to 'win the majority of the working class.' The plenum pointed out that the unemployed movement must be 'politicalised.' The plenum calls on us to raise it to a higher level."

"Could such a speech appeal to the unemployed?" asked Dimitrov. "Could they find any satisfaction in the fact that first we intended to politicalise, then revolutionise, and finally mobilise them in order to raise their movement to a higher level?"

The delegates to the Seventh World Congress enjoyed the story. Their laughter showed that Dimitrov's point was appreciated. He concluded with the following fundamental advice:

"When writing or speaking, always have in mind the rank-and-file worker who must understand you, must believe in your appeal and be ready to follow you. You must have in mind those for whom you

write, to whom you speak."

That is point number one. The reader or hearer must understand. We must avoid using the jargon to which so many of us have become accustomed. As long ago as November, 1937, the "Communist Review" put it this way (p. 29):

"Very often we take things as a matter of course which most of all make our readers rack their brains, things which it is our duty first of all to explain to them. In the publication of every book and pamphlet we must take account of the fact that for many readers this is perhaps the first book, the first pamphlet, that tells them about our ideas. After reading the first book or pamphlet, they will either want to find out more about us or they will say with disappointment: 'It's some sort of mysterious language that I don't understand.' Each product of our propaganda must stand on its own legs, must possess vitality and completeness and must be comprehensible when taken by itself. We must always bear in mind that at the present time our propaganda is addressed to many non-Marxists."

Unless we write plainly, as these two quotations suggest that we should, our work will lose efficiency. But we can lose efficiency also by using too many of the stock phrases and "clitches" which are far too frequent in Communist publications.

Every hackneyed phrase has the same history. It appears first as a phrase of more than ordinary force, and is therefore well justified. The greater its novelty and effectiveness,

the more frequently it is likely to be used by other writers or speakers. Finally, by some trick of dialectic, the phrase that was originally full of meaning and significance becomes worse than empty. It detracts from the force of the statement in which it occurs.

Unfortunately, as H. W. Fowler says, "the purpose with which these phrases are introduced is for the most part that of giving a fillip to a passage that might be humdrum without them." In this, naturally, they fail altogether. Stock phrases simply "lose their punch."

A brief glance through the "Communist Review" yielded the following list of phrases that we could do without:—

"Marks an important milestone," "played a decisive role," "is due in no small measure to," "fiendish war-mongering plans," "granite foundations," "raising a slogan," "raise illusionary ideas," "trenchant criticism," "bitterly assailed," "a clear-cut mandate," "dropped his bomb-shell," "ridicule was poured," "panic seized," "forge unity," "bids fair to accomplish," "a striking commentary on," "today more than ever," "financial jackals."

One of the worst examples was: "Suffice it is to say that dire predictions of disaster have failed to even-tuate."

What we must remember is that the hackneyed phrase gradually comes to mean nothing at all, and can even annoy and confuse.

Readers will be able to supplement the list with other phrases well

known to them—"fascist hordes," "fascist hangmen," "cohorts of reaction" and other specimens down to "emissaries of blood-stained fascism who raised their criminal hands, etc."

Such phrases, as used by Communists, are true. There are fascist hangmen. Fascism deserves the strongest language we can use, and it is unlikely that many of us are artists enough to find words adequate to its enormities. But we must beware, all the same, of using these phrases that may now mean so little. In all our agitation and propaganda, we must think twice about every word we use. Let us, at all costs, steer clear of the stereotyped phrase.

As Communists, we understand the "vile conduct of the Trotskyists." But if we refer baldly to Trotskyist activities in such a phrase, we invite misunderstanding and perplexity. Many of the expressions which we know are justified, many of the combinations of adjective and noun (i.e. the glorious party of Lenin and Stalin, the workers' fatherland, the proletarian vanguard) are by no means comprehensible or justifiable—in the real immediate sense—to the generality of that broad front of democratic people on whom the basic alternatives of barbarism or civilisation in the future depend. Let us think of them continuously as we write or speak.

Next there is the *impact* of language, which is connected closely with the use of trite phrases. No one can read Lenin or Stalin without noticing the superb impact of their

language. They do not use stock expressions. They build up to each point that they make. Their arguments are deductive and logical. When the problem is more than ordinarily complicated, their logic becomes dialectical. Their conclusions burst in the reader's mind like a depth charge accurately timed. What a difference between writing such as theirs and the general run of Communist writing both in Russia and outside!

Their lesson is that we must plan our writing more carefully. Many of us who naturally feel strongly about something are apt to let our feelings slip into our writing without much calculation. We are not "objective." We speak of "fascist pimps" and so on, forgetting that the feeling which naturally expresses itself in such a phrase should, for any political effect, be induced in our readers. Much of our passion explodes on the surface of our paper. We do not produce propagandist depth charges which detonate in the minds of our readers. Yet for our agitation and propaganda to be efficient, depth charges are what we must provide. The force of much of our writing is dissipated in our very words. Good wine needs no bush. To recount the criminal acts of a Chamberlain is more effective than to label him a criminal.

The next point is unnecessary formality. Many Communists who write for our organs seem to feel that the mere circumstance of writing for publication in the Party press obliges them to write in a certain

style. Others—much more numerous—evidently have a similar feeling when they sit down to write a report or discussion notes for an internal Party meeting (branch, section or conference). This feeling leads to the use of what might be called "Party language" which, consisting largely of pretentious jargon, is neither good Communism nor good English. Let us rather be good Communists and write good English. If, for example, there is an item to be written on a certain subject, in which information is to be given and action urged, let us do this in plain language without trimmings. We must not try to "round it out" into an important-looking piece with statements and paragraphs which are not necessary.

In cases where the item is of such weight that it must be given a leading position in the paper or organ, the subject matter should be properly prepared. (A short item will generally be properly displayed, and the writer should not imagine because he has written only 150 words that the importance of his work will not be appreciated.) We must avoid such things as occurred in a recent "Workers' Weekly," when an article which had, for policy reasons, to occupy the first position in the paper, was obviously ill-prepared, and therefore padded out with paragraphs that were weak and superfluous.

Superfluous paragraphs are a particular case of the *non-essential* things which must be rooted out of

our writing. Our general rule should be to trim ruthlessly all that is not absolutely needed. Phrases can be shortened, words can be eliminated, repetitions can be avoided—and the force and purity of our English will improve. Here again one can only give a few examples of what might be done. The phrases for which alternatives are suggested all come from the "Communist Review":—

"It is said to mean"—"it means"; "has no intention of"—"does not intend"; "whether or not"—"whether"; "foreshadowing as it does"—"foreshadowing"; "were not entirely in the nature of a bombshell"—"were not altogether a surprise"; "at the present time"—"at present"; "is indicative of"—"indicates"; "is bound to"—"must"; "it was only a short time ago"—"not long ago"; "to bring about a change"—"to change"; "in order to"—"to."

Most Communist writers, if they examine their work carefully, will find many words which can be eliminated. We must break ourselves of bad habits.

Two other features of our language should be mentioned. The first is the use of such phrases as "no one can doubt that," "it cannot be doubted," "it is obvious," "it is clear that," "there can be no doubt that," "it is certain that," "of course," and such words as "plainly," "undoubtedly," and "obviously." In general, these phrases and words carry no weight and are useless lumber. We cannot persuade people of the truth of our statement by beginning with a phrase like "it is obvious that," or

by introducing an "of course." Such phrases and words should, in 99 instances out of 100, be eliminated.

Secondly, let us have a close ban on phrases like "in regard to," "in connection with," "as regards," "touching on the matter of," and "on the question of." Usually these phrases indicate loose thinking. By using them, we ask our readers to bear something vaguely in mind while we expound some proposition which is related to it. This is not a clear, logical procedure, and we should give it up, except where it is really justified. In general, we shall write far more convincingly of a thing directly, than by placing it somewhere on the sidelines.

Some words are overworked (e.g. "menace," "sensation," "outstanding," "ill-fated," "matter"); we often write "owing to" instead of "because of"; we are always saying "prior to" or "previous to" instead of "before"; "while" is too often used as a conjunction instead of "and"; we have a great tendency to use "stated" instead of "said"; "for" frequently appears as a conjunction in place of the correct word "because"; we use far too many superlatives; and too many of us (as the editors of our principal organs know only too well) have what might be called the "very" habit. These are all things that we should clean up.

Finally, Communists must not be afraid to use figurative language if it is brief and striking. Lenin, the level-headed, logical genius of the revolution, knew the value of figurative language. Take any of his

writings, say the 6th volume of his "Selected Works," and you will come across such examples as:—

"The Socialist - Revolutionary Party has betrayed you, comrades peasants. It has betrayed the cabins and sided with the palaces." (p.386).

"It is said that we cannot get along without the financial support of England and France. But that support supports us as the rope supports a hanged man." (p.162).

Lenin also shows how the effect of words which, by constant use, we have been gradually robbing of their meaning, can be brought to mean something again. They will regain

their force if they are used with great economy. Perhaps one such phrase in an article will achieve an effect that 2000 words of screaming cannot achieve. One can imagine an article of about 1000 words in which the phrase the "dark hangmen of Munich," if it were the only phrase of such outspokenness, would have a most considerable and arresting effect on the reader.

The last point is humor. We need humor—badly. But we must not have elaborate jokes or poor jokes. If our laughs are built on too complicated or private a pattern, we may as well forget them.



Kisch with Australian writers.

SOCIALIST DISCIPLINE

More Discipline, Better Conditions for Soviet Workers. Text of New Decree.

MOSCOW, December 30.—Laying down rules for higher discipline in work and improvements in State social insurance, the new decree published today and signed by the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R., the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Executive Council of Trade Unions reads:

In the Soviet Union, workers and employees do not work for capitalists but for themselves, their Socialist State, the good of the whole people. In factories, transport, administrations, the overwhelming majority of workers and employees labor honestly and conscientiously, giving the example of shock work and work of value, strengthening the fatherland's power and defensive capacity.

But side by side with these honest and conscientious workers there are certain irresponsible, backward elements who, because of their unjustified absences, lateness and poor work, are useless in enterprises. Their infractions of rules, frequent change of factory, undermine labor discipline, gravely prejudicing transport and all national economy. Trying to get as much money as possible they do the least possible work for the State. Infringing Soviet laws and rules they utilise them for their personal interests.

Dismissal for violation of labor rules is generally not effective punishment for those guilty of unjustified absence, as in most cases they immediately find employment in other enterprises.

Taking advantage of the law in application which lays down the right to holidays after five and a half months' work in one enterprise or administration, the malingers and slackers go from one enterprise to the other getting two holidays a year and thus arrogating the rights of conscientious workers.

Often living places built by factories and concerns for their workers are occupied by persons who have left these enterprises of their own free will or have been sacked for infringing labor discipline. There is hardly any differentiation between distribution of places in rest homes and sanatoria, payments of insurance bonuses for temporary disablement and allocation of pensions to conscientious workers who have done service in factories and administrations

for many years and those who violate labor discipline. Certain trade union, economic and judicial organs have shown impermissible connivance, a connivance counter to the interests of the people and the State, towards infringers of labor discipline. All this has led to a situation in which irresponsible workers have been able to live at the expense of the people and the State whilst doing hardly any work, and this has provoked justifiable protest from the majority of workers who are urging certain changes in existing rules of work and social insurance so that in future honest workers be distinguished from slackers and that only those who work conscientiously receive encouragement, not those who undermine labor discipline and change their place of work too often.

Holidays for pregnancy and child-bearing have also been greatly abused. Certain women have contrived to get work in factories and administrations shortly before their confinement with the sole object of getting a holiday at State expense and not resuming work.

The Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R., the Central Committee of the Communist Party and Executive Council of Trade Unions enact: To engage managers of enterprises and administrations together with trade unions in an energetic campaign against all infringers of labor discipline and rules of work in enterprises and administrations. Against everyone who does not fulfil his duties honorably, whether worker or employee. The law demands dismissal of workers guilty of unjustified absence, a demand which must be respected without any lapse. Most workers do a seven-hours day. The State demands, and is insisting, that the working day established by law be respected thoroughly and without exception. To arrive at work late, leave early for meals and return late for them, quit before the whistle blows and slack during working hours—all this is the most insolent infraction of labor discipline, a violation of law, impeding and weakening the country's economic power and the wellbeing of the people. Managers must impose the following sanctions on workers guilty of such infraction: warning, censure, censure with threat of dismissal, transference to lower-paid work for three months or degrading. A worker guilty of three infractions during one month, or four during two con-

secutive months, must be dismissed for violation of the law and labor discipline.

Heads of factories, administrations and public services failing to apply measures for strengthening labor discipline or against those guilty of unjustified absences, malingers and slackers in accordance with this decree, will be held responsible and incur sanctions up to and including dismissal from their posts and indictment.

A month's notice must be given by workers leaving their employment of their own free will.

If dismissal takes place without sufficient reason, compulsory unemployment pay must be made for a maximum of twenty days based on average wages; factory and administration directors, shop councils and tax and dispute commissions must examine complaints of unjustified dismissal within the three days following deposition of the complaint; for judicial organs this delay is extended to five days.

Indemnities for temporary disablement—except those for pregnancy and confinement—are to be paid to trade union workers at the following rates, according to uninterrupted attendances in factories and administrations: over six years, 100 per cent. wages; three to six years, 80 per cent. wages; two to three years, 60 per cent.; up to two years, 50 per cent.

Trade union workers under 18 years will receive the following indemnities for uninterrupted attendance: over two years, 80 per cent. wages; up to two years, 60 per cent. Apprenticeship in schools, works and factories is counted as uninterrupted attendance in the same enterprise.

For trade union underground workers, employed in mineral industries, coal extraction or doing preparatory work in mines, indemnities will be:

For uninterrupted attendance of over two years, 100 per cent. wages; up to two years, 60 per cent.

Trade union workers regularly employed since January 1, 1936, in concerns started up after January, 1933. Indemnities for temporary disablement will be: Five years' attendance, 100 per cent. wages; three to five years, 80 per cent. For non-trade union workers these indemnities will be halved—except for pregnancy and confinement.

Workers dismissed for infraction of labor discipline or any offence and those who leave of their own free will be entitled to temporary disablement benefit after working for six months in another enterprise.

Workers living in State apartments or

those belonging to administrations or social organisations who give notice after publication of this decree or who are dismissed for infraction of labor discipline or any other motive will be expelled within ten days through administrative channels without any obligation to assure other lodgings.

Right to holidays will be given to workers showing eleven months regular work in a factory or administration.

In addition to annual holidays, a holiday for confinement, 35 days before and 28 days after will be accorded; State indemnity for this period is determined under conditions already outlined.

Places in rest homes are reserved for workers who have done regular service in the same enterprise for over two years.

As regards those employed by individuals (domestics, employees of concessions) there is a special ruling of the stipulations of this decree.

Pensioners with over five years' regular service in an enterprise or administration are entitled to a place in a special sanatorium for pensioners before their pension is finally regulated. Disablement pensions are fixed according to service, age, sex and kind of work.

Attendance will not be taken into account when disablement due to occupational sickness or injury during work occurs before 20 years of age.

Pensioners who continue to work after receiving a pregnancy pension will get this independent of their wages. Neither are monthly incomes up to 100 roubles earned by invalids of first and second category doing work at home taken into account.

On the whole pensions are high in the U.S.S.R. Certain pensions, however, were allocated at a time when wages were lower than at present.

Because of this, independent of the time of allocation of State social insurances, pensions must not be lower than from 40 to 75 roubles a month.

All savings made by the social insurance fund as a result of the application of this decree must be utilised by the unions for building workers' homes, creches, children's gardens—apart from using sums allocated by the government for this purpose.

This decree enters into effect on January 1, 1938.

Signed: Molotov, President of the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R.; Stalin, Secretary of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Communist Party of the U.S.S.R.; Shvernik, Secretary of the Executive Council of Trade Unions.

NEHRU'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

W. Woods

THE life story of Jawaharlal Nehru, written in prison under great odds, is, apart from much soul searching and tedious family detail, a stirring account of India's national struggle. It breaks down the barrage of lies and censorship served as news in the daily press, shows a new India, fighting nationally and internationally for independence.

Nehru, born 1889, descendant of a long line of Kashmiri Brahmans, educated at Harrow and Cambridge, called to the Bar in 1912, has for the past decade held high office in the Congress Party.

After 20 years' bitter struggle against his country's oppressors, half of which has been spent in gaol, Nehru says with undoubted authority:

"The British government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom, but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually; we believe that India must sever the British connection and attain complete independence."

Nehru claims that the inhuman exploitation of modern capitalism, added to the already crushing burdens of the feudal princes and landlords, means the destruction of his people. The Great Mutiny of 1857, he says, with its resultant massacre

of the Indian people, was the first fruits of capitalist penetration.

"Since then, India has been a vast prison house. . . . Watching the workings of an Indian prison, it struck me that it was not unlike the British government of India. . . . In prison one begins to appreciate the Marxist theory that the State is really the coercive apparatus meant to enforce the will of the group that controls the government.

The "group," of course, is British vested interests whose super profits in recent years amounted to 100 per cent. and even 150 per cent., "while semi-naked women (Jute workers), wild and unkempt, worked away for the barest pittance."

Musing in prison upon the benefits of Western civilisation, Nehru points to the plight of the small landholder and landless peasant, who form the greater part of India's 350 millions.

Ground down by greedy landlords, agents of native and British rulers, their lands seized in lieu of rents and taxes, the peasants are either driven to become wage slaves in the big cities, or remain as serfs of the feudal lords. From land hunger rise famine, plague and widespread illiteracy, "after 300 years of western contact."

Railways, roads, telegraphs, science? "Welcome and necessary . . . but are they not designed . . .

to strengthen the Imperial hold and capture markets for British goods? . . . The British preserved all the out-of-date feudal customs and relics they could find in the country . . . made it difficult for us to get out of their shackles." (Feudal.)

To set Hindu against Mahomedan, caste against caste, to fan the dying flames of age-old feuds, was child's play to British diplomats, says Nehru.

He shows us the shameful plunder of the war period—1914-1918—plunder of men and materials which led to famine and plague taking their toll in millions. In the intense struggle that follows Congress learns to "go to the masses." It leads, and as Nehru frankly admits, misleads the people. New leaders arise and old ones (Gandhi) are forced to take notice of the masses.

Nehru paints a graphic picture of a frightened government of martial law, and "gaol-going of some 30,000 civil resisters in a two months' campaign."

"Suddenly, early in 1922 . . . we in prison learnt to our amazement and consternation that Gandhi . . . had stopped the aggressive aspects of our struggle. . . . After months of strain the government breathes again, and for the first time takes the initiative"—initiative so fierce that six years must elapse before India recovers from the blow.

1928: Nehru, returned from a tour of Europe, is closer to socialism, and moves Congress with him. The masses, seething with discon-

tent, are preparing for the Simon Commission.

Simon, we are told, is to find a way of resolving the deepening conflict between vested interests and the interests of the Indian people, a way satisfactory to both parties.

Sir John, not being a Solomon, is unable to effect a fair division, but does succeed in dividing the heads of many thousands of Indians, who, in honor of his visit have learnt three words of English: "Simon go back."

At Lucknow, where a vast crowd assembles to "welcome" Simon, "long lines of charging cavalry" bear down upon the passive Indians, while the Simon Commission "crept secretly away."

From the Southern Cape to the North West Frontier, India is on the move. Nehru, in gaol again, records the grim struggle: In Peshawur, courageous Pathans stand passively before machine-gun fire. . . . Hill tribes dodge British bombers sent to destroy villages in lieu of taxes . . . "Garwhali soldiers refuse to fire upon the people . . . tens of thousands imprisoned . . . ten years for carrying national flag . . . some people thought that the last days of British rule had come."

London is perturbed. The Round Table Conference proposes New Freedom for India. "Indian delegates are tied up with British Imperialism, look to it for advancement, protection."

Nehru scorns the "New Freedom"—"A glorified Indian state," he

charges, "With provincial autonomy . . . High above would sit . . . the All-Highest-Supreme Dictator . . . with complete power to do what he wished . . ."

"And a great debate arose in England between the donors (of freedom) and those who, horrified at such generosity, objected to it."

But Nehru! Surely such revolting hypocrisy could emanate only from the "Wise men of Munich." What! The Supreme Dictator was—Lord Irwin; Lord Irwin is . . . is . . . Lord . . . Halifax . . . is the saintly betrayer of Spain, Austria, and the Czechs; while his partner and mentor in crime is one of the "donors" — Neville Chamberlain himself, who gloats "that they had done their best to surround the proposals (Freedom) with all the safeguards that the wit of man could devise."

India's answer, with Nehru at the helm, was a mighty People's Front under the banner of Congress.

1935-1936 saw Congress out to

win its way to legislative power over fierce and treacherous opposition and under the "All-Highest."

Nehru has seen both father and mother succumb to the blows of the military, his best friends exiled or killed, and now his wife lies dying of the brutal prison regime—for all this he concludes that the struggle is worth while—it is greater than he. While still dangerously under-estimating the role of the city proletariat in the struggle—giving pre-eminence to the peasantry—Nehru, the nationalist disciple of Gandhi has become an internationalist.

Speaking in the name of the vast toiling masses, he points the way:—

"If we claim Independence today, it is with no desire for isolation. We are perfectly willing to surrender part of that independence in common with other countries, to a real international order . . . through such a system world co-operation . . . world peace can be reached."



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We are opening a "Letters to the Editor" page in the "Communist Review" and invite our readers to give us their views on any subject of current interest.—Editor.

"N.Z. LABOUR FACES EMERGENCY"

"NEW Zealand Worker," an active member of the Labor Party in that country, after reading Comrade Watson's above-titled article in our February issue, and citing it at some length, goes on to make important proposals as to "what is to be done." Among other things, he writes:

In Comrade Watson's summing up, he says: "N.Z. Labor is facing an emergency, two months after its greatest victory. The combined attack of the 'financial Francos' of London, the big business backers of the Nationalist Party in this country, the Trotskyist 'Fifth Column' within the Trade Union movement and all its enemies on a common front, face it with a very grave situation. If reaction can force it into a retreat, then the enemies of Labor hope to turn that retreat into a rout. It is possible to meet the emergency only by pressing forward with Labor's election programme, cleaning out the bureaucratic enemies of the government in the State departments (of great importance is Lefeaux, the Governor of the Reserve Bank, appointed by the Bank of England), making the rich pay in order to meet the developing crisis, and mobilising the initiative and energy of the

workers and the people, rather than attempting to hold them back."

With the summing up I agree, but I think what has to be done, can only be done if the New Zealand people understand *how* and *why*, and I continue with some suggestions for organising all our forces to reach the people:—

Utilising the experiences of the Australian Labor movement, to assist the New Zealand Labor movement. Utilising the experiences of the New Zealand Labor movement to assist the Australian Labor movement. Preventing Australian reaction and New Zealand reaction from organising. In short, to strengthen the Labor movement throughout New Zealand and Australia, and save the New Zealand and defeat the Australian government.

How can we, the class-conscious workers, prevent the retreat?

By first of all understanding that our desires are the desires of the New Zealand people, not the desires of a handful of Lefts. That the workers have a tradition and, when they hear us criticising their Labor government, they believe we are anti-Labor. Our propaganda and agitation must be concrete, positive and simple; we must always put forward

an alternative, no matter how small the issue, when criticising the government.

How can we prevent the reactionaries from forcing the Labor government to retreat?

By organising the whole of the progressive forces to support the government, not in a retreat, not in an attack on the standards of living of the people, but in an attack on the standards of luxury of those who are doing and will do all in their power to halt progress in this country.

By raising the demand more sharply, in our unions, Labor Party branches, C.P. branches.

Immediate removal of all reactionaries from government positions, their replacement by staunch Labor supporters, who will, by their loyalty, ensure increased production.

By the exposure of Trotskyists like Walsh, who stifle discussion and opposition.

By workers, at meetings, discussing important questions like breaking awards.

By demanding as well as an internal loan, to meet the Public Works programme, higher taxation from those who are sabotaging, from those who reaped higher profits as already pointed out by Comrade Watson.

There are hundreds of people who can be rallied around points such as these, but how to reach those people, how to organise them, how to stimulate them into organised activity—this is the task facing those progressive elements in the Labor movement.

And the first thing to be done is the open offer by Communist branches and individuals throughout New Zealand to assist both individual Laborites and unionists as well as Labor Party branches, to solve their problems.

2. The closer organisational contact between the Communists and the militants, in the unions and Labor Party branches.

3. A better understanding, by all militants and Communists, of the people's problems and how to talk to the people.

4. A serious attempt to organise study groups of all types, not on abstract international problems, but on immediate New Zealand problems, linked with the international ones.

5. Bulletins and written articles in union pamphlets, to put forward the Leftwing viewpoint.

6. Pressure within the Labor Party branches, to organise street meeting campaigns around the government policy.

7. The people have already intimidated, by their vote, that they support the government; let us draw them into active support.

Closer written and personal contact between the Australian Labor movement and the New Zealand Labor movement in order to defeat Lyons; for his defeat is a blow against reaction in New Zealand.

In this connection, I suggest that the Australian Labor movement organise a tour of New Zealand by unionists and Labor Party men (maybe as the guests of the New

Zealand government) before the Australian elections, in order that these comrades can return to Australia and tell the people how much better off they would be if they got rid of Lyons and Co.

In return the Australian comrades can tell us, at meetings and study groups, how they are building unity

against reaction, their mistakes and successes in getting rid of reactionaries like Lang, etc. They can tell us of their fights for free speech, democracy inside the Labor movement, and so on.

All of the possible experiences of the Australian Labor movement must be of value to New Zealand.

A MORE POSITIVE APPROACH

"SOUTH AUSTRALIAN" considers the Communist policy on defence could be more positive. He writes:

We believe that the Lyons defence proposals are making considerable headway, not because the people trust Lyons (rather the contrary), but because they are becoming increasingly aware of the danger to Australia and wish to defend Australia.

We believe that they reason something like this. "There is a danger of Australia being attacked. Lyons is a crook, we don't trust him, but insofar as the labor movement refuses to co-operate with Lyons, are we not being left without arms and trained men for the defence of this country. If Lyons and his policy were gone, we would feel more at ease, but in the meantime, we must do something."

Curtin's statements, Ogilvie's attitude, the rumors about the Queensland Labor Party etc., also play a part.

But the labor movement generally, in refusing to co-operate with Lyons, does not get a sufficiently positive approach to the question. To our mind we need to put the labor movement in the position where it is apparent to the people that the Lyons government is refusing to co-operate with the labor movement.

An ordinary person will agree that it is not in the interests of Australia and Australian security to send iron to Japan, but they do look for soldiers, planes etc., and we cannot close our eyes to the fact that many people will only feel that a policy is a positive which provides for and aims to raise an army and equip it.

If the trade unions could proceed to enrol potential soldiers (also others of non-military age, and women suitable to

maintain essential services) into some kind of organisation under a pledge to serve for defence if the trade union demands are met, we are of the opinion that we would be able to demonstrate that the labor movement could rally tens of thousands around its defence policy, and that it would put an end to Lyons and do much to develop the Labor Party's defence policy.

To our mind, the labor movement could rally, not only tens of thousands to undertake to join the militia, if the trade unions' demands are met, but it would direct the eyes of the whole people to an anti-fascist home and foreign policy in a live way, and that evidence of the L.M.'s ability to raise men for defence would add to its influence on the other vital questions of defence.

If the trade unions took the initiative in obtaining from the members individually, a pledge of their readiness to serve in defence if the trade union demands are met, they would only be translating into concrete fact what is already their general policy.

[We cannot agree with "South Australian's" approach to this question. The issue we are fighting on today is policy and policy is the all-important thing for Australian defence. "South Australian," believing that our approach is not positive enough, proposes that the trade unions "proceed to enrol potential soldiers." But here he gets tied up with the question of technical means for defence and this, no

matter what the intention, can lead to co-operation with Lyons.

Apart altogether from the fact that the scheme for the trade unions recruiting "potential soldiers" is impracticable, why approach the question from this angle at all? We are not opposed to the voluntary

militia. What we want is to change the pro-fascist policy at present being pursued by the Lyons government and with it the command of Australian military forces. This can be achieved only by defeating the government. Hence, policy is the all-important thing.—*Editor.*]

DEFENCE OF AUSTRALIA

CRITICISING those who adopt a negative attitude to defence, C. Newman, of Victoria, writes:

It was the policy of the reactionary British government through non-intervention which prevented the sale of arms to the Spanish government, and is thereby paving the way for a fascist victory in Spain.

It was the same policy, as you say, that secured the capitulation of Czechoslovakia, although they had armaments and a great defence system. Their arms and defence system were of no avail, but the supply of arms was vital to the Spanish government.

Australia does not want to be in the same position as Czechoslovakia, to be bargained away to suit Chamberlain's policy of appeasement to the fascist powers. And that is why Australia needs a real defence policy.

Rearmament will proceed in spite of our approval or disapproval, so is it co-operating or giving the Lyons government a vote of confidence if the Communist Party does not oppose rearmament? But when arms are opposed it reduces our chances of going forward to a People's Front government, because it leaves us open for a vicious attack by our enemies.

Though millions of people don't like it, have not their minds been swung around to the acceptance of rearmament as inevitable because of the aggressive fascist powers?

Then the wily reactionary government point out that they alone are capable of looking after the country's defence in these times of crisis. That the La-

bor Party does not know where it stands and as for the Communist Party it is anti-British, anti-Empire and anti-everything.

In this situation the Communist Party puts forward a clear-cut policy of defence in the way of pacts with the peace-loving countries of New Zealand, U.S.A. and the Soviet Union and helps the campaign to boycott Japanese goods, and supports the Port Kembla wharf laborers in their great fight against loading pig iron for Japan.

This programme is winning increased support and has a good chance of "taking hold of the masses" and so on to a People's Front government.

But it is obviously important that if Australia is to be defended we must have arms, and when the Communist Party says it is against armaments, will not confusion prevail in people's minds?

It is because of the fear paramount in the minds of the people of fascist aggression, that anything that opposes rearmament will suffer and the winning through to a People's Front government becomes more difficult.

[In the April number of the "Communist Review" we dealt with these matters very fully. The Communist Party is not opposed to armaments, as such, but to the Lyons government, which we consider is pro-fascist and must be defeated.—*Editor.*]

THE WORLD SITUATION

L. Sharkey

AFTER the brutal military occupation of Czechoslovakia, the German armies were thrown on to the frontiers of Poland, especially around the Polish corridor, which cuts East Prussia off from the rest of the German Reich.

The town of Danzig, which is a port where the corridor reaches the sea, became the scene of a new "Henlein" movement on the part of the Nazis of the town. They were openly demanding the return of Danzig to Germany.

In Danzig and in Poland, the Nazis among the German minority began to act provocatively, which brought reprisals and collisions with the Poles. Goebels' Press immediately seized on this to shriek about "Polish atrocities" and the "brutal persecution" of the inoffensive, Hitler loving German Poles. The tactics used successfully against the betrayed Czechs were now switched against the Poles.

It must be remembered that the military fascist government of Poland bears a large share of responsibility. Not only did they participate with the Nazis in the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, but for years, Colonel Beck and his government, despite warnings and the opposition of the majority of the Polish population to the Nazis, conducted a definitely pro-Nazi, bitterly anti-Soviet policy. The Poles'

attitude made it easier to dynamite collective security and the Czech Republic. Then they found that the Czech "Maginot Line," on the German frontier, was also the bastion protecting Poland from aggression. In face of the obvious German threat, the Poles began rapidly to mobilise their army and to speak of armed resistance to the Nazis.

The Poles' resistance could turn out to be quite formidable. They have the advantage compared with the Czechs of a much greater population, nearing 35,000,000, as against the Czech 15,000,000. Hence their army would reach the numbers of 3,000,000 to 3,500,000 of soldiers. The weakness of Poland lies in the fact that there are no great natural barriers at her frontiers, although in places there are marshes, where the Polish military hope that the German mechanised army will get bogged. The second and more important weakness is that Poland lacks natural resources and a first-class modern industry of sufficient size. Consequently, much of Poland's military equipment is imported from France and, previously, from the Skoda works in Czechoslovakia.

Fighting alone, the Poles, after a time, would lack munitions and equipment. Backed by the Western powers or the Soviet Union and kept supplied, the Poles would

be quite a problem for the German militarists.

Hitler, in any case, in the event of hostilities, would be faced with using much greater forces than sufficed in non-resisting Austrian and Czechoslovakia. Millions of discontented workers and peasants would have to be conscripted and sent to the seat of war. This would create a grave situation; the probability of the spreading of a Polish-German war to the rest of Europe or of an outbreak of the German anti-fascists would be great, which latter disturbs Mr. Chamberlain's sleep.

Simultaneously, the Nazis were preparing an attack on Rumania and converting Hungary to a vassal State; preparing to wipe off the map, together with Mussolini, all of the small States of Europe.

Mussolini was making warlike threats and demands on France, threatening war in Africa against the French colony of Tunisia and Egypt, the "ally" of Britain, from Italy's African colonies of Libya, where large fascist forces, including Germans, are quartered.

Then followed the Italian descent on the little country of Albania, which captured for Mussolini important ports and part of the Mediterranean; an excellent strategic position for war against Britain in that sea and a further bid to cut the Empire's lifeline.

More than that, Mussolini's Albanian conquest has placed Jugoslavia in the most extreme danger, now encircled by the Italians in Al-

bania and the Germans from the old Austrian frontier.

Chamberlain and Daladier, the apostles of appeasement, commence to take alarm. Their plans were going astray. The caddish fascists weren't playing the game. Instead of directing their aggression against the Soviet Union, they were menacing the Western democracies. Beyond Poland and Rumania, lay not only small European States, but the Asiatic colonial empires of Britain and France, Syria and Palestine, the Suez Canal, Mosul oil, the other Arab "mandates," and finally, India and Indo-China. The Japanese militarists, at the same moment, were seizing Hainan and the Spratley Islands, which are in the line of British and French defence communications; Hainan is between Singapore and Hongkong and adjacent to Indo-China.

After the occupation of Czechoslovakia, Chamberlain let it be known that he felt he had been double-crossed by Hitler. Lord Halifax declared that a "thrice perjured traitor" was at the head of the German State.

The Nazi drive for the conquest of Rumania likewise raised alarm. No doubt, the Cliveden Set would just love to have Hitler on the Soviet frontiers of both Poland and Rumania.

But in view of the fact that the "axis" was driving against Britain and France, the general staffs had a knotty problem to solve. Rumanian oil, Balkan and Hungarian wheat and other important raw ma-

terials would take out of their hands the weapon with which they strangled Germany in the first World War, namely, the blockade.

So they began to consider a guarantee also to Rumania, and, after Mussolini's threat to Greece, which meant that important islands and ports would be seized, Greece and Rumania have been guaranteed.

A patchwork quilt of guarantees, indeed. The guarantees of Britain and France in the West are Belgium and Holland, and Switzerland in particular; because through one or more of these small countries, an attack must be launched on France. Switzerland has been and is "a buffer" between the "Great Powers," lying on the borders of France, Germany and Italy, and before the world war, of the other "great power" that disappeared—the Austro-Hungarian Empire. To that fact as well as its sturdy struggles for independence and democracy, Switzerland owes its existence.

Belgium and Holland are not only for France, but also their ports, in the hands of a first-class power, are a deadly menace to Britain. Napoleon said of them that "they are a pistol pointed at England's heart." In these days of aerial warfare, the threat is even worse, as they would be handy as bases for air raids. In the world war, the French claimed that the British Army in France was often more concerned about blocking the German way to these ports, as well as the French ones, than in helping the

French defend Paris and other centres important to France. Down through history, the British have often fought wars to keep the "low countries" and their strategic ports from falling into the hands of one or other of the great Continental powers. Now, Germany openly threatens Britain by an invasion of Holland and the Dutch forces are mobilised on the frontiers. This helped to bring a tardy, partial recognition of the fact that fascist aggression is directed at Britain and France.

The guarantees are inadequate; peace, it was never more truly said than today, is indivisible. Yet Jugoslavia is left as a tempting prey to the aggressors, so are other small States, including Scandinavia and the Baltic States. Above all, the key to Europe's peace, an Anglo-Soviet pact, as the basis of peace and security, has not been made. This omission, together with the inadequate guarantees, encourages the dictators to defiance, to new aggressions, to putting the "guarantees" to an armed test, which could be the starting point for general hostilities that, once under way, could not be halted. That makes the possibility of war, at the moment of writing, an extremely grave one. Conditions change so rapidly today that it is difficult to see the outcome.

In connection with the Anglo-Soviet agreement, Chamberlain pleads that it is really Poland and Rumania, who are blocking the way, because they do not want the

Red Army on their territories. The Soviet Union has called for an all-in conference of the peace-desiring European States. The British government has seen fit to decline.

The Soviet Union wants real collective security against aggression at every point.

Comrade Stalin pointed out, at the 18th Congress of the Bolshevik Party, that the Soviet Union was not to be used as a catspaw to "pull the chestnuts out of the fire." He pointed out that the disunity of the democratic powers (mainly caused by Chamberlain and the Cliveden Set) was principally responsible for the success of the aggressors. The capitalist democracies wanted to trade with the aggressor and his victims. Above all, Stalin declared, it seemed that they are actually inciting the aggressors to new onslaughts, in the hope that they would become so weakened that the Anglo-French could come on the scene with fresh forces and dictate their own terms. Especially did they hope that this would happen to the Soviet Union. The leaders of the Soviet Union have the task, with the aid of the world working class, of safeguarding the first Socialist State in the world, of guiding it safely past the shoals and quicksands and the snags deliberately placed in its way.

The Bolsheviks know that the plan of the Cliveden Set was to turn Hitler aggression against the Soviet Union. They know that plotting never ceases for the capitalist "grand alliance" of the de-

mocratic capitalist States with the fascist ones against the Soviet Union: the "Four Power Pact."

The Soviet Union wants to see the proofs, not mere words, which are useless these days, that the democracies are sincere in an effort to put an end to aggression. Given adequate assurance, the Soviet Union is prepared to shoulder its share of the burden of putting a final stop to aggression.

President Roosevelt continues to harden against the dictators. He has let them know, during the present crisis, that they faced the utmost hostility from the U.S.A., possibly physical resistance. Then there is the great Chinese offensive against the Japanese, which must be one of the most potent deterrents to the aggressors. The Japanese, who were slated to occupy a large part of the Red Army and the British Navy, in the Far East, are in danger of being knocked out of the picture by the heroic Chinese people. The efforts of the Chinese must be given far greater support than hitherto. The labor movement must organize the utmost assistance for the glorious Chinese fight.

The Chinese must not be betrayed.

Chamberlain has made certain changes in policy. But he has already betrayed the Spanish Republic. He "supposed" that Franco could be won away from the axis. Franco has joined the Axis. Chamberlain believed that the Italian and German troops would be removed

by Franco. More Italian troops are going to Spain and the German Navy takes up positions to attack Britain and France in the event of hostilities.

Chamberlain and France were told that they would have a front to face in the Pyrenees; that Gibraltar would be in danger if Franco won.

Just as the friends of Republican Spain pointed it out, all this happened.

Chamberlain organized Munich, which instead of peace has brought the world nearer than ever to war.

The Communists and the democrats have been proven by events to have been 100 per cent. correct on all of these great issues.

Chamberlain makes a belated and partial effort.

Can he be trusted? May he not be lured to some new Munich, because of his reactionary outlook and background and the interests he serves. There is such a danger. This calls for an intensified fight for the People's Front that will sweep Chamberlain from office, along with his supporter, the Catterra government.

The Rightwing of the Labor Party has played its part in these tragedies. In Europe and Britain it would not organize a united front and expels the Crippses, who advocate the People's Front. In Australia, refusing to countenance unity, the Rightwing helped "appeasement" by its policy of "isolation."

The working class, in these perilous days, must wage a campaign against its own Rightwing, which has a large part of responsibility for the betrayal of democratic Spain; for the whole series of dastardly betrayals of the Chamberlain appeasement policy. Unity of the workers is imperative, a People's Front is urgent if real barriers to aggression are to be erected.

The present stop-gap policy of piecemeal guarantees and keeping the Soviet Union at arms length may prove the final treacherous blunder that precipitates a second world war.

President Roosevelt's latest appeal to the dictators for a 10 years' peace, looks like a last appeal to an armed world on the eve of a new war.



THE ELECTIONS IN W.A.

W. Mountjoy

HISTORY was made in Western Australia on March 18, when the Labor government was returned for the third time. No Labor government has held office previously for more than two three-year terms. There were not wanting people in the Labor Party who claimed that Labor would be defeated at the polls. Indeed, such a negative approach penetrated into the Communist Party and the then W.A. District Committee had to stigmatise such estimations as "defeatist chatter."

The government increased its representation by one and the composition of the Legislative Assembly is as follows: Labor, 27; Country Party, 12; Nationalist, 9; Independents, 2. Labor gained a seat from the Nationalists; the Nationalists won a seat held by an Independent and the Country Party lost a seat to an Independent. Therefore the only party to suffer a reduction in membership was the Country Party. Compulsory voting was introduced into State politics for the first time and the result appears to have been an increase in the majorities (generally speaking) of the sitting members. Local considerations affected the result in some cases and in others the character of the candidates had an effect. The reactionary Francoist, Dorothy Tagney, who gained the Labor selection for Nedlands, fared

badly against the ex-leader of the Nationalist Party. Her attitude over a long period in the Labor Party was such that she did not inspire the average honest Labor worker. T. J. Hughes, Independent from East Perth, had his majority substantially reduced on this occasion, and there is no doubt that, if the Labor candidate had been an active and honest trade unionist, then he would have succeeded. As it was, the selection of a Labor candidate who has no real connections with the Labor Movement (he is a S.P. bookmaker, and connected with the worst abuses of the game) made the seat a gift to Hughes.

Independents opposed to Labor candidates did not fare at all well, but had their greatest successes in the countryside. The most spectacular success achieved by an Independent was that of Mr. C. O. Barker who defeated P. D. Ferguson in the contest for Irwin-Moore. This electorate has its centre in Moora, a well established and prosperous mixed farming town. The area of which Moora is the capital has a reliable rainfall, and is one of the oldest districts in the State. Stud sheep stations and well-established wheat farms make the Moora district the Northam of the midlands. (Northam is the centre of the rich Avon Valley areas about 70 miles from Perth over the Darling Ranges.) P. D. Ferguson is

is one of an old conservative W.A. family and was the deputy-leader of the Country Party. Mr. Barker's programme was remarkable. He advocated a fixed price for wheat of 4/- per bushel, but demanded that it should not be at the expense of the consumer, but that the fund necessary should come from Federal revenue. He trenchantly criticised Lyons' defence policy and claimed that Lyons wanted his 70,000 strong army to suppress the inevitable battles of the workers and farmers against the exploiters. Mr. Barker denounced the supine attitude of the Country Party, which taken by and largely had failed to do anything for the farmers.

An analysis of the voting showed that Barker won the day in 24 out of 40 boxes, but more important was the distribution of the voting. In the older conservative rural areas Ferguson led, but in the newer wheat belt areas and in the main towns, Barker topped the poll.

There was no Labor Party candidate, and indeed a Labor candidate had no hope of winning the seat.

The lesson is that in areas such as Irwin-Moore (and many of the rural seats are of the same character) a progressive farmers' candidate can defeat the representative of reaction. This is an important lesson; it shows that the Labor Party should arrive at an understanding with progressive Independents standing on a programme of advanced demands for the farmers.

It shows that where the Labor has no chance a progressive candidate can win. If there was any doubt about Labor's inability to win important farm seats, Albany and Avon indicate that Labor, because of sectarian limitations in its policy cannot win seats even where they have a better composition than Irwin-Moore.

Avon seat embraces farmers both poor, middle and rich; workers (a considerable number of railmen), and town middle class. The Labor Party put forward as its candidate Mr. J. Tankard, A.W.U. organiser for the area. He was hostile to the farmers, and went out of his way to attack militant relief workers and Communists. His defeat was a foregone conclusion.

In the policy speeches of the party leaders, Messrs. Willcock (Labor), Latham (Country Party) and McDonald (Nationalist), there was little of a new character. The Labor leader relied mainly upon the achievements of his government, which were considerable. Naturally enough, Mr. Willcock claimed. The credit which was due to a large extent to economic revival. He gave, however, some very interesting figures. The State's National Income during the six years of Labor administration rose from £36,000,000 to £48,000,000; the basic wage rose from £3/9/- to 4/1/1 (the highest State basic wage in the Commonwealth); the percentage of unemployed trade unionists declined from 27.1 to 6.1 (lowest in Australia), and 10,000

factory operatives gained employment making the figure 29,000 now engaged in West Australian factories (exclusive of mining, transport, timber, etc.). As well as making possible a five-day week for civil servants, the 44-hour week is now being worked on most government jobs in five days—a demand sponsored by militant workers and Communists in the State.

Mr. Willcock definitely asked for a mandate to liberalise the franchise for the Legislative Council and also guaranteed to revise the financial emergency tax with a view towards its ultimate repeal. It is stated, of course, that the financial emergency tax as such will be abolished, and taxation levied under income tax assessment. There is no definite undertaking, however, that what is now collected under the financial emergency tax will not also be collected as income tax. In regard to the unemployed, Mr. Willcock claimed that today there are 6,700 of whom 95 per cent. are on relief work and enjoying an average weekly wage over the whole period of employment and stand down of £3/3/5. There was one bad feature of Mr. Willcock's programme and it was co-operation with Lyons in the "defence" of Australia. It is also to be regretted that there was not a change of attitude by the government towards the farmers. The opposition leaders concentrated on attacking the government for its work on behalf of the coal and gold miners. They said much about the Arbitration Court being supreme.

But no one was deceived. Under all the talk about the Arbitration laws being enforced on both employer and employee there was concealed a wage-cutting threat. The policy for the farmers enunciated by the Nationalist chief was barren of any constructive suggestion of benefit to the farmers. Measures suggested would benefit only a thin upper stratum of wealthy farmers.

There was more of benefit to the farmers in the speech of the Country Party leader. He promised amendment to section 51 of the Agricultural Bank Act. Pressure of the farmers on the Country Party is increasing. The votes cast by farmers for Mr. Barker—previously referred to—and the Independent opponents of the sitting Country Party members for Mt. Marshall, Katanning, Wagin and York, are to some extent an expression of the opposition of the more Left sections of the farmers to the policy of the Rightwing Country Party members. The aggregate vote cast for the Country Party and Country Party Independents showed the strength of the farming population. The vote was 33,672 as against a Labor vote of 94,456 and a Nationalist vote of 64,753. There was an attempt to make the abolition of S.P. betting an issue, but the broader political questions overshadowed this matter. Generally speaking, people favor the licencing of the S.P. shops, but not their abolition.

The Communist Party entered the field and decided to contest the Boulder constituency, a mining seat,

and held by ex-Labor Premier Collier. Misunderstanding the Party's policy towards elections, the State Committee had not intended to contest any seats—until representations were made by the Central Committee. There was considerable reserve on the part of the State Committee towards contesting the seat and quite a deal of opposition on the part of the goldfields comrades. Undoubtedly Rightwing tendencies were strong amongst the comrades and they were drifting into a position of tailing behind the reformist Labor leaders and capitulating to them. The reason for this was that there was little, if any, work in the name of the Communist Party itself. Goldfields Communists have many achievements to their credit, but lop-sided development of Party activity, characteristic of Western Australia as a whole, assumed here an extremely exaggerated form and in a section of over 80 members there was only one known Communist, Comrade Alliston, the district secretary.

Nevertheless when all the issues were exhaustively explained, the membership saw that the decision to contest the election was not only correct, but very timely.

The Party threw itself into the fray and although the outcome was disappointing as far as the vote was concerned, the campaign itself and the effect on the whole Party made the contest well worth while. The Party programme for the 40-hour week and 35-hours underground was presented to the electors, together

with demands for a £5 minimum weekly wage (with the usual goldfields allowances) and the Party's defence policy. In a single contest, however, the general demands are overshadowed by local questions. But the difficulty here is that the goldfields have been neglected so long that it was not possible in the time the Party had at its disposal to convince the residents that a number of immediate practical questions of benefit to them were capable of quick and easy solution.

A number of matters were taken up, including sewerage, dust, water, etc., but the burning question on the goldfields is the housing question. There is an acute shortage of houses and rents charged for many properties are exorbitant. There is widespread discontent amongst the residents, particularly the women, but the Party on the 'fields was either not cognisant of it or did not consider that it was sufficiently important. No doubt the composition of the membership is to a certain extent responsible for this. There is an urgent need for the Party to recruit both progressive trade unionists who are married men with families and especially their wives. Party women on the 'fields are not sufficiently acquainted with the needs and desires of the miners' wives.

The campaign as such, despite the limitation of time and some minor defects, was well conducted. Radio, leaflets, posters, canvassing and loud-speakers were used. All meetings were good. The conduct of the cam-

paign disposed of the legend that supporters and members would have their usefulness destroyed if they at all were branded as Communists or associates of Communists. There was the greatest friendliness displayed by Labor Party supporters towards the Communists who canvassed for votes. With one or two exceptions, the Labor officials were also friendly. While Communist how-to-vote cards were marked to give the Labor candidate the second preference, a few individuals on the Labor committee pencilled in the Labor how-to-vote cards giving the reactionary candidate the second preferences. This was not the desire of the unionists, as the Kalgoorlie and Boulder section of the A.W.U. (the leading industrial body on the W.A. goldfields) unanimously decided to recommend to the Labor campaign committee that the Communist candidate be placed second on the how-to-vote cards.

As to the result, 308 votes, it was both disappointing and surprising. It was as surprising to our opponents

as to ourselves. What was the reason? Simply that it is not possible to graft an election campaign on a situation not previously prepared. Had the Party on the 'fields carried on independent work of its own, had it taken up the problems of the residents in the localities, had it shown its face in the proper manner, then the result would be vastly different. But the Party learns from its mistakes. No doubt the goldfields Communists will adapt the Party organisation to the real tasks ahead and make it possible to integrate it with the needs and desires of the working people of Boulder. Boulder gave a lesson which should be learned all over Australia as it demonstrated the correctness of the decisions of the 12th National Congress that the Communist Party must itself become more and more a vital independent force in Australia. Without a powerful and politically capable mass Communist Party, it will not be possible to build a strong people's movement opposed to war and reaction.



CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

S. Purdy

In this article Comrade Purdy enters the discussion on Constitutional Reform, supporting Comrade R. Dixon's opposition to unification in the present political situation (see January "C.R.") and opposing Comrade Fred Paterson's disagreement with Comrade Dixon (see April "C.R.).

COMRADE DIXON is opposed to one Parliament, with local governing bodies delegated with certain powers from the supreme body, replacing the present system of a Commonwealth and State Parliaments. Or, to be more correct, he is opposed to such a change in the present political situation.

Summarised, his opposition is based on the assertion that such a change would strengthen the power of the reactionary ruling class and assist the tendency towards fascist methods of rule.

Comrade Paterson's disagreement is based on the contrary assertion that such constitutional change will not necessarily result in a strengthening of reaction, but that it could result in an extension of democracy and the power of the people.

Comrade Dixon traced the growth of Australian capitalism into monopolist, finance capitalism. He showed that the present Commonwealth constitution and the Australian system of government came into existence during the period of capitalist growth and expansion, as distinct from its present state of general crisis when the dominant section of the ruling class is a handful of rich men.

He pointed out that with the alteration in the character of Australian capitalism, the constitution, which served the interests of premonopolist capitalism, does not fully serve the dominant monopolist interests of today. Hence, the desire for its "improvement." Or, in Comrade Dixon's own words:

"With this process of concentration and centralisation of capital, has gone the ever-increasing desire on the part of the rich financial interests to further concentrate and consolidate their political power."

He also gave a number of examples which showed how the process of concentrating this political power had already advanced, even without constitutional change, though not to the extent desired and possible through unification.

Another example of this endeavor to concentrate political power was seen at the Premiers' Conference, held in Canberra on March 31, and in the subsequent formation of the so-called National Council.

There the late Prime Minister emphasised to the State Premiers the need of "imposing heavy burdens on the people of Australia" in the drive to put Australia on a war basis,

and the first of the enumerated tasks of the newly formed "National Council" is "to secure internal security."

Internal security for whom? Clearly for the rich financial interests when the people resist the "imposing of heavy burdens."

The State Premiers are being whipped into line by the ruling circles who are endeavoring to concentrate their political power.

But three of the State governments are Labor governments, while the Country Party government in Victoria is hardly the willing tool of the millionaire combines, wealthy graziers and banking magnates. Even within the reactionary governments of the other two States, there are rebellious elements who represent middle-class discontent, and who are also susceptible to the influence of the working class.

The servile State Premiers are going to meet with more than a little opposition.

The imposition of heavy burdens is not going to be so easy. How much easier it would be with only one centralised government, without the various State governments, which can be an avenue for the people's opposition against the handful of rich men who determine the policies of the present Federal government.

Not once did Comrade Paterson come back to the starting point of Comrade Dixon's conclusion, "the concentration and centralisation of capital," and "the ever-increasing desire to further concentrate and consolidate their political power."

This is the core of the whole question, the desire of the ruling circles to make their political power conform to their increased economic power. To ignore this fundamental starting point is to treat the issue superficially.

Comrade Paterson bases his support for unification on three main arguments.

Firstly, that centralised government will unify the Labor Movement and so strengthen its ability to win economic improvements.

He takes, for example, the workers of a given industry or trade union finding difficulties due to conflicting State and Commonwealth Arbitration Court awards. He also points to State governments which evade the introduction of the 40-hour week, throwing responsibility on to the Commonwealth government, and vice-versa.

Whatever may be said for this line of reasoning, it is not fundamental. Both Arbitration Courts and Parliaments are organs of the ruling class. Whether there be only one Arbitration Court and only one Parliament, or a number, is not the decisive factor. The decisive thing for the winning of economic improvements is the relationship of class forces; the ability and the willingness of the Labor Movement to back its demands with militant class struggle.

Only in certain conditions could a centralisation of Arbitration and Parliament be of benefit, but never under capitalism as an absolute principle.

To take an extreme case to

prove my point. No one would suggest the possibility of a greater centralisation of capitalist government than that which exists today in Nazi Germany. Neither would any understanding and honest person deny that this centralisation has resulted in a greater unification of the German Labor Movement; that it has resulted in the Labor Movement seeing more clearly who and where is the main enemy. It would not be suggested, however, that these factors could compensate for the greater difficulties and terrible sacrifices which are entailed in conducting the class struggle under a fascist regime.

Secondly, Comrade Paterson contends that there is an alternative to reactionary constitutional unification, i.e., a unification which will extend democracy and the power of the people.

But this is only a generalisation. Any referendum under the present government will not be in the interests of democracy. If Menzies, Page, Cameron, Thorby and Company are not in a position to submit a referendum according to their plans, then they will just let it drop. It is absolutely certain that they will not allow the people to vote for a more democratic constitution.

That must be kept firmly in mind. While the present government remains in office it will not be a question of constitutional changes in general, but constitutional changes according to the plans of Messrs. "Handful-of-rich-men."

Comrade Paterson proposes that

we "should try to rally the whole Labor Movement" for democratic constitutional reform.

This, of course, is not impossible, but it is no mean proposition at the moment.

There are far more immediate possibilities which have not yet been achieved. For instance, the reactionary Transport Workers' Act is waiting to be repealed; the Queensland Labor government is still allowed to use the police force to arrest workers for giving publicity to the Japanese boycott; the reactionary Federal government continues in office, and the Labor Opposition has not yet reached the stage of development where it is willing, or able, to take full advantage of the weakness of this government in order to cause its defeat.

Let the Labor Movement first prove itself capable of accomplishing these kind of tasks, then it will be more realistic to visualise Labor winning the sweeping democratic reforms outlined by Comrade Paterson.

There is no easy road to travel, there is no skipping over the various necessary stages of the struggle.

Comrade Paterson claims that by campaigning now for a democratic reform of the Constitution instead of just opposing any proposed changes brought forward by the reaction, we will "be able to choose our own battleground" and "outmanoeuvre the ruling class."

We certainly will not be choosing "our own battleground" if we commence popularising the idea of changing the Constitution while the

present government still remains in office. On the contrary, we will be assisting Menzies, Page and Co. to choose their own battleground.

Further, it is not a question of "outmanoeuvring the ruling class" but mainly a question of the relationship of class forces.

The achievements of Labor up to date show that it has an excellent chance of defeating any reactionary change in the Constitution. But its achievements do not suggest, by any stretch of the imagination, that it is yet in the position to force the democratic changes outlined.

Thirdly, Comrade Paterson is afraid that the feeling of opposition against so many governments is so widespread that the reactionary politicians may be able to secure a change in the Constitution to suit their own ends.

I think that he greatly overestimates this feeling. The opposition and distrust of the Commonwealth government is far more widespread. Not only should it be possible to win the workers and middle classes against reactionary changes, but there are also the weaker sections of the capitalist class who do not wish to give the dominant, monopolist sections greater powers in order to help them send the weaker sections bankrupt.

The history concerning previous attempts to alter the Constitution must also be considered. On almost every occasion the people have refused to give the Commonwealth government greater powers.

A final word. We all agree that the sweeping democratic changes and safeguards advocated by Comrade Paterson would be desirable in the Australian Constitution. It is certain, however, that they could only be inserted if Labor had control of the government apparatus. But on top of that, it would need to be a far more progressive, energetic, and confident Labor than represented by Mr. Curtin and Mr. Scullin. And still further, Labor in Parliament would need to have the support of, and be controlled by, a tremendous and fighting mass movement outside of Parliament.

We will not forget for one moment the need to win these democratic safeguards at the opportune time. But just at present, let us keep our feet on earth.

At the Premier's Conference, on March 31, three State Labor Premiers accepted without opposition the following proposals of the Federal Ministry:

"To impose heavy burdens on the people of Australia," and "to secure internal security" (for the millionaire combines, wealthy graziers and banking magnates.—*S.P.*)

When the Labor Movement is in a position to prevent Labor Premiers from doing such things, so apparently against the interests of the people, then we can begin to think of placing the achievement of such democratic constitutional safeguards as outlined by Comrade Paterson on the immediate agenda.

NEW BOOKS OF INTEREST

Gordon Grant

SAID Winston Churchill (addressing America): . . . there is still time for those to whom freedom and parliamentary government mean something to consult together.

G. E. R. Gedye, in his foreword to his "Fallen Bastions," one of the best Left Book Club selected books to date, comments: "There is still time, but, I think, only just time. That is why, at whatever cost, I had to write this book—while there is time."

The second title to the book is "Central European Tragedy" and I have heard that the American title contains the word "betrayal."

The "bastion" which fell to the attacks of fascism, permitting the destruction of democracies and making easier the domination of Europe by fascists, were first Austria and later Czechoslovakia. The author saw each step in the falls from within the "ring." A swiftly running and stirring narrative told in the first person reveals in detail the terrible history of the peoples crushed under successive oppressions that descended on their countries, and the vilest treachery and betrayal by corrupt leaders. Again is told the heroic defence of the Viennese workers' flats.

Nobody who reads "Fallen Bastions" can ever have the slightest doubt of the callous role played with full consciousness by Chamberlain and Daladier.

Mr. Gedye, for 13 years correspondent for leading English and American newspapers in Central Europe (first the "Times" and later the "Daily Express," the "New York Times" and another leading English daily), is prominent on the honored list of journalists who are determined to write the truth about the world today; who, when their paper's policy or other circumstances intervene, feel bound to publish the whole truth in books.

One sidelight he presents on the strange international conduct of Britain's Prime Minister, who "knew nothing" when the Nazi hordes were about to descend on Austria, but who flew twice to Hitler's aid when it was a question of sacrificing Czechoslovakia (after preparations had been made for the foul action by Lord Runciman on his "submission mission"), is the reported financial negotiations in Berlin between British financial interests, having close connections with the Bank of England, and Nazi banks concerning participation of British capital in the exploitation of Sudetenland. The report was published in July. Munich was in September.

Seipel, Dollfuss, Schuschnigg, von Staremborg, Benes, Otto Bauer, Hitler—big figures and little figures—they all spring to life in this vivid section of the real history of Central Europe today.

There are hundreds of stories of Nazi terror and its savagery. "... plunder, murder, torture, concentration camps, ruined existences, head-hunting..."

Hitler emerges the meanest man in history; a petty, spiteful, humorless creature. With Schuschnigg at his mercy during the sham negotiations, he refuses him permission to smoke, rages at him like a lunatic, tortures him with plans of his intended conquest. Schuschnigg goes back to Austria and is betrayed by his "friends." Schuschnigg conferred with the underground Left leaders—victims of his own fascism. He appeared in a better light than ever in his history—and is thrust into oblivion as the "brown flood" sweeps over his country. His predecessor Dolfuss, the Nazis had shot. They honored the murderer by renaming all Dolfuss streets and squares after him.

Another of the many peeps behind the scenes is given when Hitler, after many delays caused by a faulty war machine, takes the salute of his troops in Vienna. A junior officer of the German army threatens to shoot the staff officers of the Austrian army, whom the Germans have come to "protect." Mr. Gedye reported the incident in his paper. He was also threatened to be shot on the spot if he left the building. His report led eventually to his expulsion from Austria to the freedom of Czechoslovakia of that day.

The heroes were the workers in both countries. They seldom appeared on the streets. The crowds who had gathered to watch the marches were mainly scared, deluded middle class. The marchers—brown shirted or black shirted—consisted largely of criminals.

Russia's position in the Czech crisis is cleared by the author in two short statements, one by Litvinov at Geneva, and a short dialogue between Benes, the Czech President and Alexandrovsky, the Soviet Minister at Prague. Benes had no doubts how Russia would act under any condition of attack.

Mr. Gedye also tells the part played by the Fifth Column in the betrayal of Czechoslovakia.

Out of the horror of it all one is left with the feeling that the people of Austria and Czechoslovakia—many of whose best leaders have been tortured and killed and many of whom suffered terribly from actual bodily attack, starvation, dread of arrest and banishment to the torture camps—are nevertheless still firm and awaiting the day when they will rise and cast off the scum that has risen to the top in the process of decay of a dying society.

Fallen Bastions (V. Gollancz-London), by G. E. R. Gedye. Left Book Club price 3/9. Australian price 24/-.

NOTE.—J. D. Blake's concluding Soviet article, "A New Life for the Young Generation," will appear next issue.

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By J. N. RAWLING

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