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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

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Decisions

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CONTENTS:

	PAGE
Abyssinia and Kaiserie (<i>Karl Radek</i>)	1
The Seventh World Congress of the Communist International and Its Historic Decisions (<i>L. Sharkey</i>)	8
PRE-CONGRESS DISCUSSION	
United Front Perspectives (<i>E. J. Docker</i>)	19
Trade Union Questions (<i>Speech by R. Cram</i>)	24
Unemployment and the Tasks of the Party (<i>"Mac"</i>)	32
"The Final and Irrevocable Victory of Socialism" (<i>A Friend</i>)	39
Australia's Anti-Militarist Tradition—Part III: The Fight Against Conscription (<i>J. N. Rawling</i>)	44
<i>Pravda</i> on the War in East Africa	61



The Communist Review

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December, 1935

Abyssinia and Kaiserie

By KARL RADEK

PREPARATIONS of Italian imperialism for the conquest of Abyssinia continue. Simultaneously the diplomats are seeking behind the screen a "compromise," consisting of Abyssinia becoming not the colony of one imperialist Power but a province for "peaceful penetration" of several imperialist Powers.

It is at this very moment that a Soviet delegation headed by Y. L. Pyatakov, Assistant People's Commissar of Heavy Industry, arrived in Turkey to the opening of a powerful Textile Combine built with the aid of Soviet specialists for the Turkish People's Republic. The Soviet delegation is received with genuine joy by the Turkish authorities and the Turkish people. They are grateful to the Soviet Union for the aid given in the industrialisation of Turkey. The Soviet delegation replies to their greetings with the same joy, because the aid we have given to the Turkish Republic is one of the bricks in the edifice of strengthening Soviet-Turkish friendship.

Between these two facts, between the culmination of the 50-year-old struggle for Abyssinia by preparations for its final enslavement and the friendship between the peoples of the Soviet Union and the Turkish people, whom Tsarist Russia was in the course of 300 years striving to subjugate, there seem to lie centuries. But both events belong to one and the same epoch, to an epoch in which the old world of colonial exploitation and violence is dying in slime and blood, and a new world of co-operation of the peoples is being painfully born.

To the young reader, this comparison of the Turkish Republic, which has lately made considerable headway along the path of progress, although bourgeois progress, with the semi-barbarian kingdom of Abyssinia, which is still a feudal country and which may become to-morrow the victim of imperialist aggression or an object of imperialist barter, may seem strange. But Turkey fought only 25 years ago, defending herself against a pack of imperialist wolves which surrounded her from every side. She was then forced to tolerate on her territory a regime

of capitulation, i.e., a situation wherein citizens of other States were not subject to the jurisdiction of the Turkish law courts. There was a struggle raging on her territory between imperialist Governments, banks, concerns and trusts for the construction of railways, for the exploitation of the mineral wealth. German capital selected Turkey as its future colony which was to supply cotton and oil. It was preparing the seizure of Turkish territory through the construction of the **Bagdad railway**. It decided to make Turkey its land route to India, in order to strike a blow at British imperialism. This was all covered by friendship with Turkey, which subsequently resulted in an "alliance." Actually, however, German imperialism was taking possession of Turkey in constant battle against the Entente. On the other hand, **Tsarist Russia, Great Britain, and France** were coming to terms on the question as to how to divide Turkey amongst themselves. The strivings of Tsarist military feudal imperialism were camouflaged under phrases concerning the emancipation of the Slavs, liberation of the Armenians, the necessity of putting the cross on Holy Sophia in Tsaregrad. British imperialism, dreaming of extending its road across Turkish territory linking Cairo, the capital of the Egyptian colony of Britain, with India, was feverishly working under the disguise of defence of the Christian peoples from "Turkish barbarism." France, which destroyed the domination of the church at the time of the revolution at home, having separated the church from the State at the end of the nineteenth century after a number of compromises, recalled "with excitement" that she had for ages been the protector of the Assyrians and Palestinian Christians, and also the guardian of "holy territory."

Only 15 years have elapsed since **Turkey**, ruined by the imperialist war, had to rise in a deadly battle for independence and defend it with the bared breast of the impoverished Anatolian peasantry, who did not want to become the slaves of the imperialist conquerors of the World War. The only power which supported Turkey in her fight for independence was the Soviet Republic. That fight ended in the defeat of the attempts to turn Turkey into a colony. Turkey became an independent country.

This is all history of the last two to three decades. The imperialist Powers have divided amongst themselves all countries which were not strong enough to defend their independence. The colonial possessions of six great Powers increased in the interval between 1876 and 1914 from 40 million square

kilometres to 81 million, and their population from 273 million to 523 million. **China, Siam, Afghanistan, Persia, Turkey, and Abyssinia** still remained undivided. Imperialism succeeded in turning these countries into semi-colonies, in establishing its spheres of influence within them, in entangling their Governments in a network of secret treaties, in tying golden nooses around their necks in the way of loans. The moment was approaching when these countries had to fall under the blows of modern imperialist armies and become completely the objects of imperialist exploitation.

* * *

Only the representatives of the revolutionary proletariat protested against these strivings of the imperialists to conquer and subjugate the entire world. They smashed all the shrewd imperialist propaganda to the effect that imperialist war would serve the cause of cultural development of the backward nations. Beginning with **Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels**, who made a study of British policy in India, and ending with **Lenin**, who raised his voice against modern imperialism in general and against the imperialist policy of the Tsarist Government in particular, we see one straight line of tearing down all of the arguments of the imperialists. In his article, "**The Future Results of British Rule in India**,"* published in the New York "Daily Tribune," **Marx** wrote in 1853, in reply to the British imperialists who boasted about their building of railways in India, as follows:—

"The British bourgeoisie cannot be made to wish for the emancipation or a real improvement of the social position of the masses of the Indian people, an improvement conditioned not only by the development of the productive forces but also by their mastery by the people. But what they can do is create the material prerequisites for the realisation of these two tasks. And did the bourgeoisie ever do more than that? Did it ever bring about progress without forcing individuals as well as entire nations along the path of blood and slime, desolation and humiliation? The Indians will not reap the fruits of the new elements of society disseminated amongst them by the British bourgeoisie so long as the present ruling classes of Great

* Available as a pamphlet, "Marx on India," price 3d., from Modern Publishers, 191 Hay Street, Sydney.

Britain herself will not be squeezed out by the industrial proletariat or so long as the Indians themselves will not become strong enough in order finally to cast off their British yoke." (Marx and Engels, "Collected Works," Vol. IX, p. 366, Russian edition. My emphasis.—K. R.)

And so Marx and Engels not only smashed the contentions concerning the civilising part played by European capitalism in the colonies, not only considered that the backward nations will reap the fruit of European civilisation only after the victory of the proletariat and after having emancipated themselves from the power of imperialism, but foresaw that the revolts of the colonial peoples will hasten the victory of the proletariat. Foreseeing the result of the Taiping revolt, Marx wrote 85 years ago that:

"The Chinese revolution will throw the spark into the strongly charged mine of the modern industrial system and bring about an explosion long prepared by the general crisis." (Marx and Engels, "Works," Vol. IX, p. 316, Russian ed. My emphasis.—K. R.)

When the representatives of the upper demoralised labor aristocracy defended the colonial policies of the bourgeoisie at the Stuttgart Congress of the Second International in 1907, Lenin attacked them in his articles dedicated to that congress, pointing out that:

"The bourgeoisie is introducing real slavery in the colonies, subjecting the natives to unparalleled abuses and violence, 'civilising' them through spreading liquor and syphilis." (Lenin's "Works," Vol. XII, p. 79, Russian ed. My emphasis.—K. R.)

He wrote with the greatest indignation:

"And under such a state of affairs the Socialists will use evasive phrases about the possibility of recognising the colonial policy in principle! That would be a direct adoption of the bourgeois point of view. That would mean to take a decisive step towards subordinating the proletariat to bourgeois ideology, bourgeois imperialism, which is raising its head with particular pride just now." (Ibid. My emphasis.—K. R.)

The revolutionary struggle of the masses of the people of Persia, China, and India, which had just begun at the time, made Lenin rejoice:

"The class-conscious worker of Europe already has his Asiatic comrades, and the number of these comrades will

grow not daily but hourly." (Ibid., p. 306. My emphasis.—K. R.)

During the World War, which made the colonial yoke more oppressive, having converted the colonial peoples into beasts of burden and cannon fodder, Lenin urged the revolutionary elements of the working class to learn to help the colonial peoples, stating that the proletarian revolution must recognise the right of these peoples to self-determination, no matter how backward they be, and that triumphant Socialism, liberating the colonies, will be able by means of **unselfish assistance** to eliminate the distrust of the backward peoples in the victorious proletariat and link them together in voluntary ties in order together with them to complete the emancipation of mankind.

* * *

Lenin's point of view seemed to the petty opportunists, who regarded themselves as realist giants, a complete utopia, because imperialism was in possession of milliards by means of which it could subjugate the colonial peoples and back up the sound of gold by the rattle of guns. Post-war history has fully answered the question as to whether Lenin was right, as to whether his disciples, with Stalin at the head, were correct. Comrade Stalin said, at the Seventh All-Russian Bolshevik Conference of May 12, 1917, the following:

"We say: Social-Democracy, in so far as it pursues the course of the Socialist revolution, must support the revolutionary movement of the peoples directed against imperialism. Either we assume that we must establish a rear for the vanguard of the Socialist revolution among the peoples who are rising against national oppression, in which case we build a bridge between the West and the East and really pursue a course of the world Socialist revolution; or we do not do that, in which case we are isolated, in which case we renounce the tactics of utilising all revolutionary movement in the midst of the oppressed nationalities with the purpose of destroying imperialism. We must support any movement which is directed against imperialism." (Stalin, "Marxism and the National Colonial Question," p. 50, Russian ed. My emphasis.—K. R.)

Post-war history has splendidly confirmed the viewpoint of the Bolsheviks. Two processes, mutually interlinked, have been developing in the past 17 years in the colonies—a process of decay of colonial capitalism and growing revolutionary strivings

in the colonies conditioned by it.

It suffices to mention that post-war capitalism, shaken to its foundation by the crisis, is unable to increase the export of capital to the colonies. Capital exports to China have practically stopped. Capital exports to India remain either stagnant or diminish. Capitalism has destroyed natural economy in the colonies without having created modern capitalist economy in its stead. It dreads the competition of new capitalist countries, is afraid to risk capital investments owing to the growing revolutionary tendencies in the colonies. The result is colonial decay, growing starvation, and decline. Capitalism, undergoing decay in the colonies, far from eliminating the parasitic feudal slave-owning strata, tries, on the contrary, to preserve its power in the colonies through coming to terms with them.

Post-war history is at the same time witnessing uninterrupted development of the revolutionary struggle of the colonial peoples for emancipation. It suffices to mention several dates as an illustration. **Morocco**—the revolt of 1921-25; **Egypt**—the revolutionary struggle of 1919; **Syria**—the rising of 1919; **Palestine**—the revolt of 1919; **Turkey**—the revolution of 1919-23; **Iran**—the revolutionary uprising in Gilan in 1918; **India**—the revolutionary struggle of 1919-22; **Afghanistan**—the national war of 1919; **Indonesia**—the revolt of 1926-27, the naval mutiny of 1933; **Indo-China**—the revolt of 1930; **China**—the revolution of 1925-27, the wars for Soviets of 1929-35; **Korea**—the revolutionary struggle of 1919-22; **Brazil**—the revolt of 1924; **Chile**—the naval mutiny of 1931; **Cuba**—the revolution of 1933.

In his book on British expansion, which was regarded as a guide-book for contemporary British imperialism, **Professor Seeley** said that when the national self-consciousness of India reaches a level which Italian national self-consciousness had reached in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, it will be no more possible to prevent the national liberation of India than it was possible to avert the national emancipation of Italy. This process of growing national consciousness of the colonial peoples is gaining impetus daily. Many of these peoples are in the process of gaining their freedom in the process of casting off their colonial or semi-colonial yoke.

The more far-sighted representatives of the world bourgeoisie see this. When **Italy, Germany, and Japan** now advance the slogan of redivision of the colonies, when they threaten to

wage war in the name of these slogans, when certain elements among the imperialist powers, frightened by these threats, assert that it is impossible to resist the "sacred right" of any civilised nation to take part in colonial exploitation, history replies to that—You are too late, gentlemen! Not a redivision of the colonies, but their abolition, is on the order of the day. A redivision of the colonies may become the beginning of a new world war which will destroy the entire colonial system. You are playing with fire, gentlemen. The colonial peoples are already in revolt. Their struggle for emancipation will be a hard one. You imperialist gentlemen may for a time drown it in blood, but you will not crush it. You imperialist gentlemen may for a time secure another battlefield, but not a field for tranquil exploitation.

The **Soviet proletariat**, having taken power, freed the colonies of the Tsarist empire. These former colonies are now members of the great Soviet family, jointly building Socialism. They vie with the more highly culturally developed countries of the Soviet fatherland like equals, overtaking their teachers, and adding the treasures of their separate cultures to the general Soviet culture.

But a further stage in the realisation of the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin is beginning. The Soviet Union, having become a great industrial Power, is realising **Lenin's slogan about unselfish aid to other peoples**. To-day we are helping the Turkish people in **Kaiserie** build a textile combine; to-morrow or the day after we shall help other peoples build their industry. We shall do that not as conquerors, we shall do it not in order to extract tolls, but as friends who know that assistance creates conditions for mutual amicability, for co-operation in the maintenance of peace and the promotion of human progress.

Abyssinia is a bloody spectre of the past which has not yet entirely vanished. **Kaiserie** is the banner of the future relations of the emancipated nations.

The Seventh World Congress of the Communist International and Its Historic Decisions

By L. SHARKEY

THE great, historic Seventh World Congress of the Communist

International has given its pronouncements on the extremely complicated problems presented by the present international situation to the world proletariat. What a magnificent spectacle of living proletarian internationalism the 500 delegates from 66 countries, embracing all the continents, presented to those of us privileged to witness this never-to-be-forgotten scene. The burning enthusiasm with which the problems before Congress were approached, the fiery enthusiasm and devotion for the international leaders of Communism, headed by Stalin and Dimitrov, the harmony of views as well as the enormous growth of the forces of international Communism, showed the healthiness of our movement, the soundness of the foundations laid by the great architect who established the Communist International, Comrade Lenin.

What a smashing reply the Congress presented to the feeble slander originated by the counter-revolutionary Trotsky, and since peddled assiduously by the "Sydney Morning Herald" and Solomon Briggs of the whole capitalist world, that the "Communists had foresworn internationalism," the "Comintern had collapsed," and "Stalin abolished the C.I." If such people had a scintilla of honesty, they would criticise themselves and explain to the workers how they had made such a miscalculation and arrived at conclusions at such variance with reality. This, naturally, they cannot do, for the reason that they serve interests hostile and alien to the revolutionary working-class movement, and one contemptible lie of theirs being exploded before the eyes of the whole world, they immediately proceed to invent new slanders, equally baseless and equally contemptible.

The Congress had before it reports by Comrade Pieck on "The Activities of the E.C.C.I." and the magnificent report by Comrade Dimitrov on the unity of the working class against Fascism, the report of Comrade Ercoli on war, and the splendid report by Comrade Manuilsky on the activities of the Russian Communist Party and the progress of Socialist construction in the Soviet Union. It will be noted that of the main reports three were given by representatives of the German, Italian, and

Bulgarian Parties, Pieck, Ercoli, and Dimitrov, thus destroying another canard that the Parties in the capitalist countries had no say in the moulding of the C.I. policy, but simply obeyed "orders from Moscow." The resolution of the Congress on the activities of the E.C.C.I. states that the "operative leadership" of the Sections must be concentrated in their own hands, and "while shifting the main stress of its activity to the elaboration of fundamental political and tactical lines of the world labor movement, to proceed in deciding any question from the concrete situation and specific conditions obtaining in each particular country, and as a rule to avoid direct intervention in the internal organisational affairs of the Communist Parties." In this and related clauses in the resolution the relationships between the Executive Committee (which is itself composed of the "most authoritative representatives of the Parties") were clarified by the Seventh Congress.

The perspectives of capitalist development given by Congress did not differ materially from those outlined by the Thirteenth Plenum that the "world is on the eve of a new round of revolutions and wars," and that this definition is correct is now plain even to the most politically backward, and the day-to-day events on the international field demonstrate the truthfulness of this estimation. One has merely to regard the tense situation precipitated by Mussolini's Abyssinian adventure, among other things, to perceive on what a delicate balance the world is now poised.

Economically, capitalism, by placing the burdens of its crisis (with the aid of treacherous reformist leaders) on the shoulders of the toilers, has succeeded in improving its position. But this does not lead to the restoration of the historic "cycle": boom—crisis—boom. How uncertain the restoration is can be gauged by the position in Germany, where Hitler steadily leads the nation to catastrophe, and food riots are already reported in Berlin. The Abyssinian war is admittedly (by the bourgeois economists themselves) retarding "recovery." Quite a large percentage of the "recovery" is also bound up with the speeding-up of the armament industry, and the whole position shows that even if it were possible to exclude wars and revolutions, capitalist economy is but preparing the way for a still greater economic disaster than that which reached its apex in '31-'32.

The Situation in the Labor Movement

In the labor movement, the Congress noted the tremendous

surge of the toiling masses everywhere towards the united front. The Congress placed in the hands of the Communists the necessary weapons, in the form of the development of our united front tactics, to stand at the head of this mighty movement, to remove all obstacles, to root out all sectarian tendencies and inclinations within our ranks that hindered our approach to these masses, and to heal, with all possible speed, the split in the ranks of the working class brought about by treacherous agents of capital operating within the working-class organisations. The Second International experiences a profound crisis. The masses are dissatisfied and discontented with the politics of collaboration with the bourgeoisie and splitting the working class, as practised by German and Austrian Social-Democracy, the erstwhile leading sections of the Second International, which paved the way directly to the tragedy of the temporary victory of Fascism in these countries. The French workers have grasped the lesson of Germany, and have established a fighting united front between the Socialist and Communist Parties and the healing of the organisational split in the trade union movement, by these means enormously increasing the power of the French labor movement and winning to their side large sections of the "intermediate strata," organised in the mighty "People's Front." These and other experiences of the united front in its practical application gave the key to the further development and unfolding of our united front tactics, as embodied in the striking report of Comrade Dimitrov and the resolution of the Congress thereon.

There is also, in connection with the crisis of the Second International, brought about by all these developments, a differentiation taking place between the sincere elements in the leadership of Social-Democracy and the "old guard" right-wing leaders, who desire to continue the old, catastrophic policies of collaboration with the bourgeoisie. Our united front tactics must be of such a character as to assist in this development, to strengthen the left, and to isolate the right-wing leaders from the masses and help to remove them from control of the proletarian organisations.

Arising from these developments and from the workers themselves comes the demand for "One party of the working class in each country" and "One International." The Congress deliberated on these fundamental questions and gave an answer: "Yes, we are for one party of the proletariat in each country and for one International of the working class." The key to the

achievement of this objective is the broad development of day-to-day united front practical work in the struggle against the economic offensive and against war and Fascism. In these struggles, the apostles of class collaboration will be exposed and defeated and return to their proper flag, that of the bourgeoisie, whilst the sincere elements, not only among the rank and file, but also in the leadership, together with the Communists, will establish one revolutionary international party of our class. The Communists have little to fear that, in such an International, revolutionary Marxism-Leninism would be jettisoned for policies akin to those of the Second International in its heyday, for the Seventh Congress, in its estimation of the situation within the world labor movement, was of the opinion that "the era of the domination of reformism in the working-class movement was approaching its end." Since the Congress, we note the approach of the Communist Parties of Britain and France to the Second International and the British Labor Party for a conference of the two Internationals in order to establish a united International. Thus are the decisions of Congress already bearing fruit.

Of course, the process of the crisis in the parties of the Second International and the development of the united front proceeds *unevenly* and has reached a higher level in some countries than in others. We do not underestimate the strength of the opponents of the unity of the working class, nor must we make the error of imagining that our battle here in Australia is already won. We have much work to do in order to establish the first elementary forms of the united front on a broad scale, i.e., for action around the questions agitating the masses. But we favor *one* party of the workers and fight for the defeat of reformist policies in the working-class movement in order that this organisational unity can be achieved. We will make this clear in our agitation among the workers. Our own Party Congress will consider the question of affiliation to the Labor Party as one of the forms of the united front and as a first step to organisational unity. Comrade Dimitrov dealt effectively with, in pursuance of our united front aims, on what conditions a united front government could be established for the struggle against Fascism and reaction.

Our main task at the moment here in Australia is to establish real, living, personal, daily contact with the workers in the reformist organisations—not merely a mechanical one of writing, asking that they join us in such and such an action, but

that we really make contact with them and their organisations establish comradely relations, and assist them to bring about joint activity in each question affecting the workers.

One of the greatest problems affecting the fate of the revolution is that of the "middle strata," the "white-collar" workers and petty-bourgeoisie of town and country. The main prerequisite for increasing our attraction for these sections is the **united front**, demonstrating that the proletariat really is strong enough and in a position to wage a successful struggle against the financial oligarchy that is strangling these sections of the population. The successful building of the "people's front," i.e. of all those opposed to war and Fascism, depends to a great extent on our success in uniting the forces of the working class itself. This does not mean, pending unity, that we do not strain every nerve in defence of the rights and conditions of these strata and doing our utmost to win them away from bourgeois influences. Quite the contrary is the case.

Thus, comrades, the Seventh Congress was a Congress of the preparation for the victory of the working class over capitalism. The main line of the Communist International for ending the split, which has been made possible by the developments within and without the labor movement, by the continued decay of capitalism and its inability to solve any of the great problems on the agenda of history, the growing militancy of the masses in the face of the advance of imperialist war, and the revelation of Fascist bestiality towards the masses and its political bankruptcy, which have entirely altered the situation that existed even in the recent past period, and which called for different tactics to those which fit the present stage of the development of the world revolution, is thus the establishment of the united front of action, the isolation of the class-collaborationists from the workers, the establishment of one united proletarian party, which in turn attracts the petty-bourgeoisie and wins them for the "People's Front," that is, the concentration of all the forces oppressed by the clique of monopoly capitalists, and supplies the strength necessary for the overthrow of their rule. This line constitutes the main tactical objective of the C.I. in the present historical period, and sets the tasks which we must accomplish in the coming period. Here is the high road to victory, to the decisive victory over capitalism, which, under the guidance of our international executive and the leadership of the great general of the international proletariat, Comrade Stalin, the working class, gathering to its banner all those oppressed by

capitalism, as allies in the struggle, will put an end to all exploitation, to war and poverty, will liberate all toiling humanity, and build the grand edifice of classless Socialist society throughout the entire world.

Communists and War

The Congress had before it a most exhaustive analysis of the war preparations of the bourgeoisie for the repartition of the globe and of the plans for intervention against the U.S.S.R., delivered by Comrade Ercoli.

In defining our attitude to the various possible combinations and wars, Comrade Ercoli laid down the following:—

"During the last century, approximately up to the 'nineties, when the workers' movement was led directly by Marx and Engels, the working class had to take up its position on the problem of war under conditions when the bourgeoisie in a number of countries was still playing a progressive role connected with the development of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Marx and Engels took these conditions into account in each separate case in determining their attitude to a particular war. When the period of imperialism began, this progressive role of the bourgeoisie disappeared, and the wars of the bourgeoisie changed their character and became imperialist wars. Those who have not understood this change and transformation have committed serious mistakes and crimes against the working class.

"The existence of the Soviet Union is a new factor of world historical significance which introduces radical modifications in the character of the entire period of development through which we are passing. All our tactics in case of war must be determined by taking this factor into consideration. Already, in the theses of the Sixth World Congress, it was laid down that in case of war against the Soviet Union, the slogan of fraternisation must give place to the slogan of deserting to the Red Army. In the theses of the Sixth World Congress it is stated that in case of an imperialist war against the Soviet Union . . . the tactics and choice of the means of fighting [of the proletariat] will not only be dictated by the interests of the class struggle in each country, but also by considerations of the outcome of the war at the front, which is a bourgeois class war against the proletarian State."

The Seventh Congress made this resolution more precise by

calling on all toilers by all means and any cost to ensure the victory of the Red Army against the imperialist armies.

"And," declared Ercoli, "if someone asks us what is the meaning of this line and how we shall act in the various concrete cases of war that may possibly arrive, we have only one reply to give—in each case we shall act as Marxists, as Bolsheviks; in other words, we shall begin by an exact appraisal of the concrete situation, of the character of the war that is to be fought, of the relation of class forces at each given moment, of the extent of our forces and the forces of our adversaries, and on the basis of an exact estimate of the position we shall decide our immediate perspectives and the concrete forms of our work."

And all of us must agree that such was the method of Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

The report dealt with a whole number of important problems. It criticised the great weakness in regard to work among women and youth in connection with our anti-war work. Only a few Parties have achieved substantial results on this front, and we must frankly admit that the Australian Party is not one of them. A big problem for our forthcoming Party Congress is to find ways and means of overcoming this gap in our work. The immediate demands play an important role in this respect. The ever-increasing burden of armaments, the speed-up and severe discipline in the war industries—these and other oppressions give us the opportunity for winning the whole of the toilers against the war-makers.

A number of points were clarified, about which our enemies of various shades labor under the delusion that the Communists are vulnerable, that they are acting in a manner that would not be countenanced by Lenin. Among these questions are matters concerning the pacts with France and Czechoslovakia, for example, and it was easily shown that our critics, as is usual with them, have discovered yet another mare's nest. Discussing the question of military agreements, Comrade Ercoli pointed out: "From the point of view of theory, the possibility under certain conditions of concluding an agreement envisaging even military collaboration between the working-class State and a capitalist State is not open to doubt. Lenin wrote about this more than once. In May, 1918, when a proposal for a military agreement was made to the Soviet Republic by the Anglo-

French Allies, the C.C. of the Russian Communist Party rejected the proposal on grounds **not of principle but of simple political expediency**, not considering such an agreement useful in the existing circumstances. Lenin wrote at the time:

"Without renouncing in general the possibility of an agreement with one of the imperialist coalitions against the other in cases where such an agreement, without violating the basis of Soviet power, could reinforce the position of the latter and paralyse the attack of any imperialist Power against it, we, at the present moment, cannot accept a military agreement with the Anglo-French coalition."

"Thus, comrades, the position of the Bolsheviks in regard to this question is absolutely clear. Without violating the basis of Soviet power, but, on the contrary, reinforcing this basis, they do everything necessary so as not to have against them a consolidated bloc of capitalist Powers. They consider, and, of course, quite rightly, that the infantry, cavalry, guns, tanks, and bombing planes of German Fascism are something very concrete, and they strive to oppose them with something equally concrete."

And there is also the example of Marx already referred to, where he supported the military action of bourgeois armies when the objective results of this action were of a democratic nature. And, further than this, Marx favored a war of Bismarck's Germany against Russia in order to weaken Russian Tsarism and feudalism, thereby strengthening the whole of the progressive forces of Europe by undermining the power of the then "gendarme of reaction."

How much more necessary is it, then, for us to utilise such possibilities when it is a question of the fate of the First Workers' Republic that is at stake, the strengthening or the destruction of the chief base of the world proletarian revolution, with whose destiny is indissolubly connected the fortunes of the international proletarian revolution?

Comrade Ercoli dealt with the question of "complete identity of aim" at a given moment between the policy of the Soviet Union, where the workers have already achieved power, and the policy of the Communists and the working class in the capitalist countries, who are still struggling for power. The difference in the situation brings differences in the tactics, whilst, of course, the fundamental principles and the objective of the liberation of

the proletariat and the defence of the Soviet Union remain always the same. Examples of this difference in tactics, arising from the different tasks, can be given from the period of the Civil War. We defend concretely each and every policy of the Soviet Union and each of its actions.

In relation to the armies which the bourgeoisie are massing for the new war, these armies will retain their mass character. The greater the mechanisation, the greater the number of men needed to minister to and operate these machines, both directly and indirectly. The tendency to Fascise the armies must be fought. We demand full democratic rights for the soldiers, and their full right to express their desire for peace. In connection with our struggle for the "People's Front" and for a united front Government, we fight for the transformation of the army into a people's army, for the immediate needs of the soldiers and for the placing of the army under democratic control, including representatives of the working class, and for the elimination of all reactionary and Fascist elements from the army. The attitude of some Parties in calling for boycott of defence against aerial attack was condemned as a mistake. We demand that gas-masks of equal quality to those purchased by the rich be supplied to the poor, and that gas-shelters be built in the working-class quarters as well as in the domiciles of the rich.

And, finally, "Boycott of mobilisation, boycott of the army, sabotage in the factory, refusal of military service, and so on, these are not our methods of fighting war, because they separate us from the masses and can only help the bourgeoisie to strike still more savagely at the Communist vanguard."

We go with the masses of soldiers and win them for the struggle against imperialist war.

The Congress heard the report on the activities of the Russian Party, delivered by that splendid orator, Comrade Manuilsky, whose burning words electrified the whole Congress. Yes, the Russian Party reports to the International as to its work, just the same as any other Party. I have heard that the disgruntled, defeated, exposed opportunists and deviators whisper around the back stairs that "there was too much unanimity at the Seventh Congress and also in the Communist Parties," which they infer, of course, means that the Communists, who face death daily, who heroically defy the Fascist executioners on the very steps of the scaffold—that these are paralysed by fear in the presence of the officials and leaders elected by themselves.

To such miserable straits are these bankrupts reduced!

What is there to "criticise" in the magnificent report presented by Comrade Manuilsky, of the historical triumphs of Socialist industrialisation, of Socialist collectivisation of agriculture, of the thousands of victories achieved in the Soviet Union in every sphere of social relationships, activity, and endeavor? As Comrade Manuilsky declared: "Is it possible to enumerate all our achievements? Huge volumes could not contain the full description of all that is being done in our land of victorious Socialism. But great as these achievements are, they do not satisfy us. We do not measure our strivings by the standards of the pre-revolutionary Russian worker, or by the standards of the workers in capitalist countries. Neither of them can serve as a model for us, any more than the life of a convict can serve as a standard for one who has forced his way to liberty." Neither could the revolutionising effect which these vast achievements are having on the whole of tormented toiling humanity, nor of the great effect on the course of international events of the increasing strength of Soviet Russia be denied.

And the delegates could assure themselves of the truth of Manuilsky's words by stepping out on the footpath in front of the Palace of Trade Unions, where the Congress was held. On the opposite side of the street was the splendid recently completed Metro underground railway station and, alongside of it, a magnificent residential hotel, in the last stages of construction, designed to accommodate hundreds and hundreds of people. And alongside the Congress hall was a sister residential, just being finished, of equal dimensions to the one across the street. That is the construction recently completed on one street corner! And a little way off, work was proceeding rapidly on the Moscow-Volga Canal! Certainly, there was plenty of proof for Comrade Manuilsky's statement and his magnificent contrast of the results of the Socialist way, as exemplified by the Soviet Union, on the one hand, and the results of the capitalist, imperialist, and Fascist ways in Britain, U.S.A., Japan, Germany, Italy, etc., on the other.

As for questions of principle, the reason for our unanimity was the fact that the Parties have grasped more firmly the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin, and are united on the basis of these great teachings. On questions of tactics, the reports of Comrades Dimitrov, Pieck, and Ercoli clarified these, and were accepted as correct by Congress. The Communist International has grown up ideologically. In its early, formative

stages, many alien elements, influenced by bourgeois ideology, were to be found in the ranks of the Party. They attempted to fasten their misconceptions on to the Communist movement, and had to be ruthlessly combated. The ideological campaign waged against the various sectarian, leftist, and right opportunist theories has led to clarity in the ranks of the Communists, together with the rich experience in the struggle gathered by the Communist Parties in the past decade and a half. Such was the cause of the unanimity of the Seventh World Congress, and the unity which is also strikingly manifested in the meetings of the Communist Parties, including the Australian Party. It is the iron unity of people who know what they want and how to get it—by following the path indicated by Marxism-Leninism and the experiences of the Russian Revolution. There was plenty of criticism by the Parties of their own practical work and shortcomings, and also a critical resolution on some of the work of the E.C.C.I.—not the abstract “criticism” of anaemic scholastics and philosophers divorced from the every-day struggle of the Party and the masses, but the self-criticism of those in the thick of the battle, anxious to overcome the shortcomings which hinder and delay the day of victory.

Comrade Manuilsky concluded his magnificent speech in the spirit in which the whole Congress was permeated and conducted, the spirit of living proletarian internationalism, when he declared: “And our Party, our people, our country, trained by Lenin and Stalin, are steadfastly loyal and will remain loyal to the cause of proletarian internationalism, no matter what trials history may subject us to. Every one of us will remain loyal to proletarian internationalism to our very last efforts, to our last breath, to our last drop of blood.”

The Congress adopted a resolution which clearly defines the relationships between the Parties and the E.C.C.I., pointing out that the “operative leadership” must be exercised by the Parties, and that generally the Executive does not interfere in the internal organisational affairs of the Parties, and defining the functions of the E.C.C.I. and the responsibilities of the Parties.

The Congress elected the new Executive, and, amidst thunderous applause, Comrade Dimitrov was nominated and elected as general secretary of the Communist International.

Such were some of the most important decisions and policies of the historic Seventh World Congress, which was a Congress for the uniting of the working-class forces, a Congress which pointed the way to win allies, to assemble the forces for the

impending decisive battles with the bourgeoisie and the gaining of proletarian victory throughout the world. Full of enthusiasm, with unbounded confidence in the leadership of Comrade Stalin and of the helmsman of the C.I., Comrade Dimitrov, and the Executive Committee, the general staff of the world revolution, the delegates dispersed to the four corners of the earth, soldiers of the revolution, to fight and maybe fall for the greatest cause of all history, the liberation of the working class, the freeing of all toilers from the shackles of capitalist slavery, for the consummation of the grand ideal, the establishment of classless Socialist society and international fraternity over the whole world.

PRE-CONGRESS DISCUSSION

United Front Perspectives

By E. J. DOCKER

THE popularisation of the Seventh C.I. Congress decisions, and discussion of their concrete application to Australia, is of the utmost importance, especially in view of the fact that the National Congress is to be held at the end of the year, when the whole work of the Party during the previous period will be critically reviewed and policies for future guidance worked out.

This article only deals with some aspects of our united front work, which, if clearly understood and correctly applied in the various States and localities, should result in the Party spreading its influence and organisation to cover masses of the toilers, bringing them into the struggle against war and Fascism and the capitalist offensive.

Comrade Dimitrov's historic report, which has been enthusiastically received not only in the Comintern itself but by millions of non-Party toiling masses, answers the vital problems facing the working class in its struggle against the bourgeoisie and their Governments. These decisions are very helpful not only for those countries where open Fascist dictatorships have been established, like Germany and Austria, but also where the danger of Fascism is very acute (France) and countries like England, America, and Australia, where bourgeois democracy is still the form of Government being exercised by the ruling class. Even in these latter countries, the danger of

Fascism is to a greater or less degree in evidence.

The keynote of the Seventh Congress was unity of the working class against the terrible danger of Fascism and war. The whole internal and international situation is such that the Australian bourgeoisie are unable to look into the future with any degree of confidence, and are taking measures to strengthen the coercive forces of the State in order to suppress the rising militancy of the working class and its revolutionary Party and mass organisations. These attacks against the democratic liberties of the people go hand in hand with intensive war preparations, working in close collaboration with the war plans of British imperialism.

There are all the indications, strikingly shown in the strength of the anti-war and anti-Fascist movements, and the recent splendid campaign that freed Kisch and Griffin, of a pronounced feeling among the people against war and Fascism. To harness this feeling and give it an effective broad organisational form is the most important task facing the whole labor movement.

The desire for unity expressed by the Communist Party is not a manoeuvre or a piece of deception, but a sincere endeavor to face up to the grave realities of the present situation, and to firmly weld the ranks of the working class and the urban and rural toiling masses, in order to beat back and defeat the economic and political offensive of the ruling class.

Here is a question over which there should not be permitted to intrude party, religious, or other differences. Yet what is the situation? Despite the paramount and urgent need to create unity of all working-class forces for struggle against the coercive measures of the bourgeoisie and their war preparations, we find that the leading bodies of the Labor Party are not only refusing to give assistance to the development of the united front, but are actually working to maintain the split in the ranks of the workers, and thereby objectively lending aid to the forces of reaction. This is the situation facing the Australian labor movement, and one which should receive careful consideration from the members of the Labor Party, both in the branches and affiliated trade unions, and among the tens of thousands of Labor Party supporters.

Despite the hostility of certain Labor leaders to the united front and their efforts to circumvent its realisation, considerable numbers of workers have learned the lessons of the terrible events in Germany and Austria, where Social-Democracy, by maintaining a division in the workers' ranks, prevented the

development of a strong united front against Fascism. In France, on the other hand, where there is unity in struggle between the Communists and Socialists, and a broad people's front has been built up, the Fascists have been repulsed, and the establishment of a Fascist dictatorship, with all its attendant horrors, prevented. This is an object lesson which the workers in distant Australia are learning.

The lessons to be learned from the German and Austrian events which brought defeat to the working class and victory for Fascism, and the growing successful mass united struggle against Fascism in France, must be brought home clearly to every member and sympathiser of the Labor Party in order to strengthen the campaign for the united front and break down the opposition of the Labor leaders.

While it is true that Social-Democracy is rapidly disintegrating throughout the world, its decline is not of an even character. The same is true of the Labor Party in Australia, the peculiarities of which must be clearly understood if correct tactics are to be applied. The Labor Party is not in that relatively strong position of 1930, when strong Labor Governments were in power Federally and in the large State of New South Wales and when the A.L.P. received strong support from the workers and the middle strata in town and village. Yet although the Labor Party has suffered heavy defeats, it has strengthened its positions at recent Federal and State elections and controls the Government in three of the States. While we must not overstate the strength and influence of the Labor Party, and must understand the contradictions working within it, we should nevertheless not underestimate the position it holds.

In 1930 the Communist Party was a weak propaganda organisation possessing pronounced sectarian tendencies, whereas to-day the Party has grown enormously, exercising considerable influence in the unions, factories, Labor branches, and among the unemployed, and to a lesser degree in the rural areas. It is rapidly developing into a mass party. The Communist Party is an important integral part of the labor movement, which must be reckoned with, even though there are Labor leaders who wish to ignore it.

The more successful we are in building the united front of Communists and Labor Party workers and waging a struggle in the localities and elsewhere for the vital demands of the workers, the sooner the mass pressure from below will be generated to compel recognition for the united front from the Labor leader-

ship. One of the most powerful levers for the development of unity in struggle in the localities and districts can be conducted around questions affecting the daily interests of the workers and unemployed. A good example of this is to be seen in the successful struggle conducted at Wollongong in New South Wales against the unemployed camp plans of the Stevens Government. Public meetings and conferences consisting of representatives of the Communist Party and Labor Party, miners' lodges and trade union branches, trades council, and four municipal councils along with the Labor members of Parliament, were held, and plans laid to carry on a campaign and struggle against unemployed camps and for increased relief payments and more employment. Similar good united front activities are being carried on in the coalmining areas against the rationalisation proposals of the coal owners. Added to this is the struggle in all districts against the latest attempt of the Lyons Government to outlaw the spearhead of the working-class movement.

Not only is it possible to build successful united front actions in the localities, unions, and factories to fight against the employers and the U.A.P. Federal and State Governments, but it is also possible to achieve similar successes in those States like Queensland, Western Australia, and Tasmania, where there are Labor Governments in office. In those States, unity in struggle between Communist and Labor Party workers can be conducted in the localities around certain election demands which were included in the election promises of the Labor Parties, but which are not being fulfilled by the Labor Governments. These demands could be connected with the immediate day-to-day local interests of the workers.

The struggle for unity opens up the perspective of affiliation of the Communist Party to the Labor Party. Many workers still regard the Labor Party as a class party of the workers, and regard the Communists as a separate section, as a separate party outside the working-class movement. Many workers ask the question: Why are you not inside the Labor Party? Such questions indicate the profound changes taking place within the Labor Party and the strong feeling existent for a powerful, united labor movement. The differentiation taking place within the ranks of the Labor Party, resulting in ever-growing numbers of the rank and file and local officials being in favor of the united front and coming into opposition to those Labor leaders who are going further to the right against the united front, places the

question of affiliation as a perspective which will get a powerful response not only in the Communist Party, but also in the Labor Party, and among the broad masses as well.

Affiliation to the Labor Party, to be effective, i.e., to apply the maximum strengthening and leadership to the working class, would require to be carried out on the basis of struggle in the interests of the masses and provide for (1) maintenance of the identity of the Communist Party, (2) maintenance of the Party's revolutionary programme, (3) maintenance of affiliation to the Communist International.

The Communist Party states quite clearly that Socialism cannot be achieved through Parliament, and will continue to make this clear in its agitation and propaganda, and strive to organise the workers to conduct a revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a Soviet Australia. At the same time, we firmly believe that realisation of affiliation to the Labor Party will bring with it a tremendous strengthening of the whole working-class movement in the struggle against war and Fascism and the employers' offensive. The question of affiliation is linked with the development and establishment of the people's front, and raises the further perspective of one united working-class party.

The aim of the Communist Party in the present period, on the eve of a second round of wars and revolutions, when monopoly capitalism is striving to extricate itself from the crisis through Fascist terror and imperialist war and intervention against the Soviet Union, is to end the split in the workers' ranks created and maintained by certain Labor leaders pursuing a reactionary class-collaboration policy.

A strong, united army of the workers and toiling farmers will march through victory against the attacks of capital to Soviet power and Socialism.

Trade Union Questions

[From a Speech by Comrade R. Cram to Newcastle Trades Hall Council Party Fraction, October 29, 1935]

COMRADES, in the first place I wish to speak of the political importance of the trade unions and the Trades Hall Council; secondly, the role they play in relation to the economic and political struggles of the workers, and thirdly, the deep-seated traditions that surround them and why we must grasp the importance of these traditions.

In connection with the first point, it might be as well to see what is the estimation of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. regarding the trade unions. Writing on July 3, 1922, to the All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions on the occasion of its Fifth Anniversary, the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. said: "That which made Red October possible was the fact that the banner of proletarian revolt was at the same time the banner of the trade union movement in Russia. The Soviet Republic triumphed over its innumerable foes because the trade unions, which united the whole working class of Russia, gave the proletarian Government all possible support.

"The Soviet Republic of Russia will stand all trials, will triumph over all enemies, because the banner of Communism is the banner of the trade union movement in Russia."

Can such a parallel be used in Australia? Yes, comrades, such a parallel can be used. Before the crisis in Australia, as far as I am able to ascertain, there were approximately 1,250,000 adult workers employed in connection with industry. Out of this large total approximately 850,000 were organised in trade unions. Here you will see that the great majority of the proletariat are members of trade unions! This fact alone is of fundamental political importance. Win them we must if there is to be any successful proletarian revolution in Australia. To think of winning them outside the trade unions, their traditional organisations, of creating other substitute organisations with no traditions, is, to put it mildly, rather utopian. That being so the conclusion is clear! Win the trade unions for a militant policy, for Communism, or face inevitable defeat in the decisive class battles that lie ahead. Does this mean that we suddenly drop all other work, that we neglect the shop committees and workplace activity or the campaigns and organisation amongst the unemployed? No, comrades, it means none of these things. On the contrary there must be a strengthening of this activity,

linking it closely with every current of trade union life, using the shop and workplace committees to build and activate the union branches, to apply the decisions of the union, and to develop industrial unionism. From the bottom through the job stewards and shop committees, must come an ever-increasing stream of problems and requests to be taken up by the unions, so that the branches and the Labor Councils will become real live centres of proletarian activity, well attended by the trade union members, reflecting militant policy and leadership in the economic struggles against capitalism.

A further point to bear in mind when approaching the question of the trade unions and their importance for the proletarian revolution, is the fact that the trade unions are, in the main, the basis of reformism, the very foundation of the A.L.P. The prerequisite for the success of the proletarian revolution is to drive reformism from the ranks of the workers. Where else would you think of starting if not at its main base? To succeed in accomplishing this task in the shortest possible time is of grave importance for the workers of Australia. Success depends largely on clarity amongst the militant workers, avoidance of sectarianism, and positive practical achievements in place of abstract talk. Workers look for results and support those who achieve results. The militants, whilst avoiding anything in the nature of narrow trade union practicalism, and keeping well in view their political objective, basing themselves on the class struggle, must become efficient trade union builders, experts at interpreting awards, flexible in their methods of work, gaining the confidence of the trade union masses by superior work and leadership.

A change in our methods of work, in the way we approach questions, flexibility in manoeuvring, and vigilance in connection with provocation is of the utmost political importance in the present period.

When we speak of eliminating reformism from the workers' ranks, of hastening the passing of the era when reformism completely dominated the workers' organisations throughout the world, we do not mean to imply individual, all and sundry attacks and elimination of reformist officials. This must be made clear, otherwise confusion, with lamentable results, is quite possible. On the contrary, we must be able to differentiate between an honest reformist, who conscientiously believes he is doing the best for his union and the working-class, and the unprincipled scoundrel who deliberately and consciously be-

trays the workers' cause. There is a fundamental difference here, which is of great political importance to the Party and our class.

We can work on a united front basis with many honest reformist officials, can win quite a number to the Party, because it must be realised by all comrades that a lot of these people are only just seeing the light and are coming to us, perhaps hesitatingly, but nevertheless, surely. We must help them to come to us, and on no account rebuff them or see in their every action because it does not minutely agree with our line, a whole host of ulterior motives. Remember that they are, perhaps, a little suspicious of our sincerity. The other fellow often has a point of view. Let him express it, and don't attempt to ram your argument down his throat. The basic point is not to win an argument, but to win the worker or the official for a militant policy, for Communism.

It is my belief, comrades, in view of the fact that it takes years to turn out well-trained political and industrial cadres capable of leading the Party work, of taking the initiative and inaugurating movements amongst the masses, that we have got to go over to an ever-increasing extent to the problem of winning the lower officials of trade unions to the Party, to the placing of greater trust in them than hitherto, of giving them responsible and leading mass work to do, to help solve the burning political and organisational question of cadres in the shortest possible time. You see these comrades have already had in a great number of cases, half a life-time of experience in executive positions, they have in most cases a broad following amongst the workers, and will need only proletarian political training to make them efficient Communist functionaries. To my way of thinking this approach to the question offers a partial solution to the urgent and vital question of cadres for the leadership of mass work.

Let us get them in—the task then confronts us of holding them and developing their understanding. Perhaps this will not be so easy, but difficulties should not deter Communists in the fight to overcome the problems confronting us. There is one thing certain, that the successful accomplishment of this task will not be nearly so difficult as the task of building up cadres from the inexperienced workers who are equipped only with honesty and sincerity, a task which must, of course, go on at a tenfold greater tempo, but which will, nevertheless, take a long time to bring to fruition. And time, as I mentioned be-

fore, is of tremendous importance in the present situation.

Remarks on these all-important questions would not be complete unless I mentioned the rapid change that is taking place within the rank and file of the trade union masses, what this change means for us, and how we must utilise it in the interests of our class. We can say with certainty, as far as the North is concerned, that this change down below, this swing to the left, accompanied by a growing dissatisfaction with the old reformist policies of class collaboration and passivity in the face of growing attacks on wages and conditions, increasing war danger and ripening Fascism, is not only having a tremendous effect on the lower reformist trade union officials who are in closest contact with the workers, but is also, to a large extent, making itself manifest on the upper strata of officialdom. One example—and perhaps a very good one—is the Newcastle Trades Hall Council Executive.

The political importance of this change and the implications it carries for the working-class movement, has not yet been fully grasped in District 2. The swing to the left expresses itself in the election of militant officials and delegates, a growing desire for closer unity (Miners, A.R.U., etc., making application for affiliation to T.H.C.), a change in Trades Hall Executive from a direct reformist policy to a more militant standpoint. A further example of the urge for closer unity, the desire for a more militant policy, expressed itself some time ago in the formation of Industry Councils (Metal Council, Transport Council). This last tendency was brought about, to some extent, by the hostility of the leftward moving workers to the then current policy of the T.H.C. Being unable to find expression through the T.H.C. at that period, for a militant policy, the tendency was to desert the Council, to lose faith in trade union centres, and this movement was augmented by the lack of clarity and initiative on the part of the militants in their trade union activity. This danger has now been arrested and there is evident on all sides a returning confidence in the leadership of the Trades Hall Council since the militant workers have learnt how to use to better advantage the leftward movement from below to alter the Council's line.

There can be no doubt that the Industry Councils mentioned earlier, helped to stem, to some extent, the growing lack of faith in trade union centres. This is especially true of the Metal Trades Council. Nevertheless, these Councils were no substitute for basic job and union branch work amongst the trade

unionists, to overcome the situation that existed in the Trades Hall.

It was a lack of clarity, leading to sectarianism, and an underestimation of the need for painstaking day-to-day work among the workers, that was the chief weakness in the work of the militant trade unionists and which allowed these bad tendencies to gain ground.

What should have been done earlier was to have revitalised the union branches with this movement along lines of specific policy and demands, so that militant delegates could be sent to the T.H.C. This was done later with some degree of success but only after a persistent drive by the C.C. Certain confusion has arisen in the minds of the leftward moving workers through this error which must be overcome to gain the best results. We must make it clear that we support the T.H.C.

The question now, comrades, is to link all the unions in the Industry Councils with the Trades Hall Council, and the Industry Councils with the Trades Hall Council. Does this mean that these Councils, which have done some good work, are to be liquidated and their connections with the shop committees and workplaces severed? No, it does not mean that. They will still maintain their industry connections, they will still have delegates from the workshops meeting with them, but they will operate as an industry section of the T.H.C., and so have their activities linked up and co-ordinated with the whole trade union movement in the North. For example, the Metal Trades Council should become the Metal Section of the T.H.C., and so on. You will readily see that this will make for closer unity, and greater strengthening of the work. It will also give greater authority to the campaigns launched from time to time, and will also, if handled correctly, assist to rally the unions of one industry to the moral and active support of the unions of another industry. The degree to which this expression of closer unity is effected will be determined by the amount of work and the quality of that work, indulged in by the militant trade unionists.

There is a further question in connection with the change taking place amongst the trade union officials that must not be overlooked. These comrades, lacking concrete leadership from the A.L.P. to conform to the changing situation in the trade unions, feeling the pressure from below, and not as yet entirely trusting the Party, are tending to develop a line of "pure industrialism." It manifests itself in the desire to narrow the

fight for the Defence of Democratic Rights to the industrial field, to treat questions only from the industrial viewpoint.

Whilst we know that there is no room for a middle party, a "pure industrial party," between the C.P. and the A.L.P., because of the strong ideological position of our Party to-day and the influence it wields, it must not be underestimated. There is a danger here that the leftward moving trade union masses who are rapidly losing faith in reformism, unless we do our political work much better, may be, at least temporarily, affected by this trend. This would not be hard to understand, as faith in parliamentarism and the courts is being shattered and the tendency is to depend more on the unions and job organs to protect conditions and wage the struggle against the employers' offensive. This is as it should be, and we should develop this tendency to the utmost, and conduct our work in such a manner that the movement will get correct political guidance. The work can only be carried out effectively and the danger eliminated by improving the work of our fractions and by raising their political understanding to much higher levels. Political training is of the greatest importance and must be taken up by all Party members in a conscientious Communist manner.

These "industrialist" tendencies can be harmful if we do not understand them correctly and wage a campaign to convince the workers and the officials of the incorrectness of the theory and the way it hamstring the workers' struggles and aids the ruling class. We can only succeed in doing this effectively if we are quite clear about the political role the Party plays in relation to the workers' struggles.

One of our most important tasks, at the present time, is to build up the Newcastle Trades Hall Council. This cannot be done from the top, although valuable aid can be given by the Council officials and leading elements of the Party. The strengthening of the Council must come from below, from the union branches and on the jobs. This can only be successful when we build, in a real manner, active live fractions in all the branches and on the jobs, popularising the Council's decisions, winning support for it and so actually making the decisions real.

This work is inseparable from building the trade unions and shop committees, and of penetrating the unorganised workers, of which there are many thousands in the metal industries of Newcastle. We must strive to lay the basis so that the Trades Hall Council and the unions can fulfil their functions of leading, aiding, and uniting the economic struggles of the whole work-

ing class of the North, and of fulfilling their role, in the words of the C.I. Programme, "as the principal weapons in the struggle against trustified capital and its State," giving the call to action when needed, helping the workers to gain better conditions and being vigilant and active in policing these conditions.

In this work, in all the tasks confronting the unions and the Labor Council, they must be actively assisted by the shop committees and any tendency to substitute the shop committees and job organs for the unions must be strenuously resisted. In preparing this groundwork we must have in mind the need to make the T.H.C. a centre of militant unionism, with wide authority, laying down policy for its affiliated sections, leading the campaign for 100 per cent. unionism and preparing the way for industrial unionism. Here you will see that the role of the Council and the unions in the struggles of the workers is a very important one, and the need to decisively influence this role and give it correct political direction is self-evident.

There is one more question before I outline plans I have worked out in connection with the metal trades work and the drive for 100 per cent. unionism, and that is the matter of trade union traditions and the important part they play in relation to our whole trade union work. We must understand the significance of these traditions, make the most of them, and get no inflated ideas that we can substitute other things for them.

Loyalty to the trade unions is very strong among the English-speaking workers. Trade unions in England go back to the days of the Tolpuddle Martyrs and to the period of the broad Chartist movement and perhaps even further, and are clothed with the glorious traditions of struggle for the shorter working day, for better conditions and factory regulations, for stable awards and all the small economic questions confronting the workers in their dealings with the capitalists. Born in the fire of struggle in England, the same ideas and organisational forms, methods of struggle, negotiation and settlement of disputes, were imported into this country by the many trade unionists who were either deported here for their industrial activities in England, or migrated in an attempt to better their lot in life.

It is because the worker looks to his trade union as the means of struggling for better wages and conditions and against the bosses' offensive that we must realise the political importance of these traditions, must grasp the significance of this loyalty to the unions, a loyalty observed even by the great majority of

the most backward workers, including many that are not members of unions. It is in the light of union builders as buffers between them and capitalists, as people who understand and fight for awards, agreements, compensation, and the other multitude of little questions that trouble the average worker, that the majority of the trade unionists see their officials, however bad they may be. It is traditional for the official to do these things. The whole history of the unions has been based on a struggle, sometimes open in the form of strikes and riots, but more often in the form of negotiations and class-collaborationist bargaining by the reformist officials and the bosses around these economic questions. To think that we can brush lightly aside these traditions extending over many decades, and the prestige that accrues to officials from them, is to court disaster. We must use them by studying trade union questions, becoming proficient on all the matters of interest to the workers, by being better trade unionists than the reformist official, who holds his job precisely because he is able to give service to his members on all the small economic and immediate job questions that confront them. In a word, he is an efficient trade union expert. I repeat again: Words are not sufficient; the workers look, and correctly so, for results.

What are some of the conclusions to be drawn?

- (1) That there can be no successful proletarian revolution without winning the trade unions and their factory and job organs for Communism, and that this task can only be solved by winning the branches and the members for a militant trade union policy, which in turn calls for much more detailed study of trade union questions and the building of active units and fractions of the Party in the branches and workplaces.
- (2) That we cannot hope to make reformism impotent without winning the great majority of the trade union members for a militant trade union policy.
- (3) The swing to the left in the unions is not being used to the fullest advantage because our fractions are failing to infiltrate work, are still at a low level of understanding, and continue to suffer from sectarianism, meet infrequently, and have not yet solved the question of elementary collective leadership.
- (4) That our principal trade union tasks in the North are:
 - (a) To make Newcastle Trades Hall a militant trade union centre;
 - (b) To build the Ironworkers and other metal trades unions in the E.H.P. and overcome the widespread non-

unionism that exists.

(c) To work for the affiliation of all trade unions to the T.H.C.

(d) To develop the rising economic struggles to higher levels and give them our political direction.

(e) To improve the work in the Miners' Federation in line with the Central Executive decisions.

(f) To win the majority of the union branches and members for a militant policy in the shortest possible time.

Unemployment and the Tasks of the Party

By "MAC"

MUCH confusion exists as to what extent unemployment prevails in Australia. Figures are quoted from time to time in the capitalist press alleging that there are great reductions in the number of unemployed. The figures given are invariably misleading, and are certainly not a true reflex of the actual position. Trade union returns and registrations at the labor exchanges are given as the index of unemployment, but in neither case can these figures be accepted. Trade union membership for a number of years has been on the decline, and with many members engaged on relief work who, in numerous cases, are not recorded in the union books as unemployed, along with the fact that unemployed members in many cases are struck off the union books for being 12 months or two years in arrears, these figures cannot possibly be taken as a true estimate of the position. Neither can the registrations at the labor exchanges, for the reason that in the various States of the Commonwealth the permissive income regulations operate in a manner that discourages tens of thousands of unemployed from bothering about registration as unemployed and for employment. Rather do these workers, being aware that they are debarred from food relief or work relief because of the family income, seek employment in channels other than official registration.

The Census Figures

The Census in relation to unemployment and incomes was taken as at midnight on June 30, 1933, and these figures are the only figures upon which we can place reliance in estimating the

true position. They disclosed the position throughout the Commonwealth as follows:—

State.	Totally Unemployed.	Under 21 and Never Worked.	Helpers Not Receiving		Total.
			Relief and Part Time.	Any Wages or a Salary.	
N.S.W.	210,334	12,108	60,919	15,743	299,104
Victoria	115,403	4,347	44,653	14,260	178,663
Queensland . . .	54,798	2,793	34,191	7,131	98,913
S. Australia . . .	41,892	1,848	13,035	4,001	60,776
N. Territory . . .	370	7	12	54	443
Fed. Capital . . .	299	10	464	29	802
W. Australia . . .	24,367	1,100	12,675	2,933	41,075
Tasmania	11,110	558	4,944	1,865	18,477
New Guinea . . .	98	1	25	6	130
	458,671	22,772	170,918	46,022	699,383

Nine days after this Census was taken, the Premier of New South Wales (Mr. Stevens), speaking for his State, said that the number of dependents on Government relief had been reduced from 154,000 to 98,000, so that 135,361 unemployed (at least) were receiving no relief—were victims of the permissible income regulations. This demonstrates to us the vicious nature of the regulations. It demonstrates that a tremendous burden is placed on workers in industry and others in receipt of small incomes in having to maintain the unemployed members of their families. It raises the question very sharply of carrying the campaign for the abolition of these regulations into every shop, factory, and mine throughout the Commonwealth. The position in other States must be considered by the district committees of our Party in taking an estimate of the position by comparing the Census figures with the increase in employment as shown in statistical returns, and the numbers that are in receipt of Government relief. When this is done, it will be found that one of the most important campaigns to be waged and one which will bring about unity of struggle in the ranks of employed and unemployed against all Governments, will be the demand for the abolition of these regulations.

The poverty of the masses is reflected in the Census returns on the incomes of the people. Space or time does not permit an analysis of all States, but New South Wales will reflect generally

the position throughout the Commonwealth. The figures for New South Wales disclose that:

- (1) 57.7 per cent. (more than half) of the people have no income;
- (2) 72.3 per cent. (7 in every 10) of the people have less than £1 per week;
- (3) 60.5 per cent. (3 in every 5) of the breadwinners have less than £2 per week;
- (4) 72.1 per cent. (7 in every 10) of the breadwinners have less than £3 per week; while only
- (5) 10.6 per cent. (1 in every 10) of the breadwinners have £5 per week or over, and 5.1 per cent. (1 in every 20) of the people have £5 per week or over, including rich employers, directors, financiers, and politicians.

Basic Wage

As the men and women breadwinners are given separately in the Census, it is easy to work out the average wages received, and we find that of men breadwinners, 66.3 per cent. receive under £3 per week, which is less than the basic wage (2 men in every 3), and 33.7 per cent. receive over £3 per week (this includes the employers, as well as the employees).

In most of the States the workers are required to pay wages tax for the relief of unemployment, and thus they are doubly penalised. Along with this impoverishment of the masses, we find that full opportunity is taken by various Governments to have public and other works performed at rates of wages varying to 33 per cent. below the award rates.

The fact that unemployment has increased so rapidly during the crisis has also been responsible for a falling off in the number of skilled hands available in the last two years, with the result that the Government, in alliance with the employers, has initiated vocational training and trainee apprenticeship schemes which serve a dual purpose, in that while they afford the opportunity of teaching a trade to youth and thus assist to build the reserve army of skilled labor, opportunity is also taken to dispense with much adult labor in those callings where the awards do not stand in the way. Present indications are that the Arbitration Acts will be altered to permit of this latter scheme being further developed irrespective of any award or industrial agreement.

The problem of youth is one of the highest importance to our Party. From the Census figures for New South Wales we learn

that there are:

- 250,073 persons between the ages of 10 and 14;
- 243,963 persons between the ages of 15 and 19;
- 229,063 persons between the ages of 20 and 24.

It is evident that between 45,000 and 50,000 young persons should leave school and college every year for work. Figures for the other States of the Commonwealth will reveal proportionately a similar position. Hence the intense drive that is being made for the employment of juvenile labor to the exclusion of the adult.

Rationalisation proceeds apace. The profits of the wealthy concerns grow greater, but the poor become poorer. The foregoing reveals the position in relation to unemployment and mass poverty in Australia.

Our Work Among the Unemployed

Much can be said in approval and in criticism of our work among the unemployed. We have not yet liquidated sectarianism, nor have we, even in New South Wales, where our work stands far above the other States, yet realised the importance of the enormous army of unemployed not on food or work relief, victims of the permissive income regulations, with whom we have very little contact. Our chief activity in N.S.W. has been among relief workers, whose numbers have varied between 60,000 and 70,000 over the past two years. Following on the N.S.W. June Conference of unemployed and relief workers, the Party fraction were able to put forth a line, adopted by delegates to the Conference, which has done much to bring a closer organisational contact with the relief workers in New South Wales. A close study of the legislation, the regulations, and the moves of the Government from time to time has enabled the Party members to give leadership to the unemployed and relief workers in New South Wales that has brought forth the esteem and confidence not only of the unemployed and relief workers but also the trade union movement of N.S.W.

Much time is spent and to much good purpose by comrades in the State Council of Unemployed and Relief Workers in New South Wales in research work, an invaluable work that the Party must seriously concern itself with in all districts. To understand the conditions laid down by the Governments in relation

to relief work, to permissible income, to social services generally, to be able to render legal advice and court assistance to the impoverished mass of workers and to help them in their day-to-day struggles, wins for the Party a sympathy and support that must assist in the building of a mass Party in the Commonwealth.

In strike struggles, relief workers both in New South Wales and Victoria have played an important part. In New South Wales, under our leadership, relief workers have carried on struggles that won for the unemployed and relief workers an amelioration of their conditions. The Concord West strike meant an increased scale of food and work relief that cost the Government of N.S.W. an extra £800,000 per annum. The West Wallsend strike compelled the Government to refrain from applying the Preference to Returned Soldiers Act to relief workers. The operation of the State Council of Unemployed and Relief Workers of N.S.W. with the Australian Railways Union compelled the N.S.W. Government to retreat from the position it took up in applying for and obtaining the consent of the Federal Arbitration Court to the introduction of relief work to the railway services. The Australian Railways Union, not unmindful of the valuable assistance rendered, expressed its appreciation to the State Unemployed and Relief Workers' Council of N.S.W. at the Orange Conference.

Owing to the work of the State Council in New South Wales and to the good work of the Party fraction on the Labor Council of New South Wales, our approach to the trade unions has been rendered much easier. Toward the work of the united front, the Party fractions in the unemployed council in N.S.W. have achieved much. There yet remains much to be done.

The Need for Study Classes

Practice, without theory, is a tree without fruits;
Theory, without practice, is a tree without roots.

Therefore, whilst we must insist on the theoretical level of Party comrades, especially of those in the leadership, being developed higher and higher, we must also insist that theory can only be applied in practice. Our work among the unemployed, if we are to give correct political guidance, if we are to conduct successful mass struggles, if we are to cement the alliance and unite the forces of employed and unemployed, means that we pass beyond the academic stage and find our place in the mass, where, by learning the feelings, the thwarted desires, the needs, the

sufferings, and the degree of discontent prevailing in the mass, will we be able to estimate and gauge our strength as expressed in the conscious will of the mass to engage in struggle.

We can say that the Party is fast assuming the leadership of the working class in Australia. We must realise, nevertheless, that if we are to improve our work and influence among the masses, constant and deep study of the events both at home and abroad are essential to our work. We have to realise that without theoretical training we cannot give correct analyses in respect to many happenings. We have to realise that our struggles have been mainly on the economic field, and that a greater and wider work confronts us in organising and engaging the masses in political struggles.

Unemployment and Social Insurance

At the moment of writing, there appears in the press a statement by Stewart, M.H.R., in relation to national unemployment insurance. A "Workers' Bill" has been prepared and adopted by the conference of unemployed and relief workers in New South Wales. This bill has the support of the Party. It was prepared with the assistance of the Party. Comrades have been instructed by the Central Committee to engage in research work and compile data and publish material for the guidance and assistance of Party members and all other workers. A particular responsibility devolves on Party members to make a full study of this important question. The introduction of legislation by the Commonwealth Government on this question must raise issues of very great political importance. Therefore, Party members, whether engaged in unemployed, trade union, or other work, must possess themselves of a knowledge of the subject.

Our immediate tasks throughout the Commonwealth in relation to unemployment are:

- (1) To fight for the abolition of permissive income regulations.
- (2) To unite the employed and unemployed in common struggle for the restoration of trade union rates and conditions on all work.
- (3) For 100 per cent. increase in food relief scales.
- (4) For a rent allowance of 12/- per week to all impoverished tenants and mortgagor home-owners.
- (5) To wage a campaign for extensive public works, such as the construction of railroads, building of workers' dwellings, and

abolition of slum areas, for the creation of rest parks, recreation reserves, widening of streets and lanes, more school accommodation, water and sewerage schemes, and other works of a local nature around the demand for which we can rally mass support. We must demand these works and on a scale that will provide full-time work for the unemployed with trade union rates and conditions. We must demand that there be no reduction in taxation on the wealthy and that moneys devoted to war purposes be diverted to works of this nature and the improvement of the conditions of the impoverished masses.

(6) We must organise, demand, and struggle for a non-contributory unemployment and social insurance bill in accordance with the principles embodied in the "Workers' Bill" previously referred to.

Finally, let us realise that in all States, in all districts, there is a vast army of unemployed yet to be contacted and organised in struggle around the foregoing demands.

"The Final and Irrevocable Victory of Socialism!"

By A FRIEND

THE Seventh Congress was thus able to summarise the situation in the Soviet Union. This victory, in addition to altering the correlation of class forces throughout the world to the advantage of Socialism and the disadvantage of capitalism, has profoundly affected the conditions of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. It has brought such a rapid rise of material and cultural well-being as has never before been witnessed. It has finally dispelled the age-old ignorance afflicting the people of Russia; it has welded into a homogeneous whole the diversified nationalities from the Baltic to the Pacific, from the Arctic to the Black Sea. It has abolished the contradictions between town and country, has performed the impossible—to capitalism—by placing science and industry at the disposal of the collective peasantry, who are now beginning to enjoy a cultured and well-to-do existence.

At the time when Fascism and Fascist tendencies are destroying culture, are curtailing the democratic liberties won in a period of expanding capitalism, the Soviet Union is still further extending the already wide proletarian democracy existing under the Soviets. The victory of Socialism has rendered possible and necessary this extension, which will further strengthen the proletarian dictatorship, which will strengthen in the minds of the masses Socialist consciousness and assist in destroying the survivals of capitalist ideology.

The unique position occupied by the women of the Soviet Union has long been recognised throughout the world, and for the first time woman has grown to her full stature. At the same time, dying capitalism further degrades and humiliates her. Similarly the care of children and the opportunities afforded to young people for development and culture offer ever more glaring contrasts with the rest of the world.

The persistent fight for peace, against the war aims of Fascism and predatory imperialism, is undoubtedly a tremendous factor in staving off war, and has given the U.S.S.R. a decisive role in the struggle for peace. This alone has awakened a tremendous response, not only among sections of the people in

all countries, but even among whole nations, particularly those small nations whose independence is threatened by the great capitalist Powers.

Every day further millions in all countries are drawn into support of the social, economic, and cultural progress in the Soviet Union. Not only the working class, but also small farmers, intellectuals, women and youth, the petty-bourgeoisie, ruined and degraded by the crisis, are profoundly influenced by the new era unfolding for mankind under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This unique development imposes great tasks upon all Communists for the defence of the Soviet Union, whilst at the same time giving them previously unheard-of possibilities for strengthening this defence.

With the ever-widening contrast between Socialism and capitalism, there is to be observed an intensification of the drive towards intervention. The German Fascists are untiringly working towards an anti-Soviet bloc with Great Britain and France, and their efforts are undoubtedly meeting with a response from certain influential circles in both countries, whilst the Japanese militarists are awaiting their opportunity to attack from the East. This opportunity is undoubtedly for them the further development of the anti-Soviet bloc in the West. In this connection, the following is tremendously significant:—

Already at the time of the Thirteenth Plenum of the E.C.C.I., the question of the slogan "Towards Soviet power" was raised, and it was pointed out that this could best be advanced by concretely pointing out what Soviet power has meant to the toilers of the U.S.S.R. However, the Seventh Congress states:

"With the victory of Socialism in the U.S.S.R., on the threshold of the second round of revolutions and wars, a new political situation is created, a new relation of class forces is being brought about in the international arena which makes it incumbent upon the Communist Parties to take up a number of fundamental questions of the strategy and tactics of our struggle in a new way. . . . We must now appeal to wider strata of the toiling population and show them what will be their lot under Socialism. . . . We must make the defence of the U.S.S.R. the starting point for a broad general front of classes, organisations, and political parties." (Manuilsky's Report to the Seventh Congress of the Communist International.)

From this it follows that one of the fundamental tasks of the Communists is to assist in the building of the Friends of the Soviet Union in Australia into a mass organisation. This organisation at the moment has a very narrow base. This fundamental weakness is evidenced not only by the disproportion between the influence of the F.S.U. and the number of its members, but also between the tremendous amount of sympathy for the Soviet Union which exists and the influence of the F.S.U. As has been stated, there is not one section of the toiling population which cannot be shown by concrete illustration the difference between their lot under capitalism and the possibilities offered by Soviet power. We can clearly demonstrate the barbarity of Fascism in contrast to the progress of Socialism; all lovers of peace must be convinced that the U.S.S.R. lends its powerful support to every force that stands against war. "Relying on the U.S.S.R., the proletariat must create within each country a broad general people's front for the struggle against war." (Manuilsky's Report.)

As an example of the correct utilisation of the possibilities, the experience of the French Party in building the People's Front Against War and Fascism is noteworthy. Recently in Paris a Congress of Friendship for the U.S.S.R. was held, which was a tremendous success, exciting the attention of the anti-Fascists and peace-lovers throughout France. Not only the working class and its representatives participated in the Congress, and even sections of the bourgeoisie were drawn into proceedings were even wider broadcast, the result being not only the strengthening of the anti-interventionist front, but also the People's Front against war and Fascism, and a tremendous building of the F.S.U. which organised the Congress. Similar congresses were held in other countries, and recently several States of Australia witnessed for the first time this effective means of organising the defence of the Soviet Union. Particularly good results were achieved in Melbourne and Adelaide, many organisations being represented. Scientists such as Professor Greenwood (Melbourne), Professor Prescott (Adelaide), educationalists, intellectuals, and workers took part.

The F.S.U. claims a circulation of between 18,000 and 19,000 per month of its magazine "Soviets To-day," and this paper undoubtedly is doing very effective work in bringing home to the people of Australia the contrast between Socialism and capital-

ism. Actually this circulation is higher, on a percentage basis, than that of any other F.S.U. magazine in the world, but is still totally inadequate to meet the situation. It is within the bounds of possibility for this number to be doubled within three months, and Communists everywhere, whether members of the Friends of the Soviet Union or not, must realise how essential an immediate increase in the sales is if the Socialist advance in the U.S.S.R. is to be utilised to the full for the defence of the U.S.S.R. and in the building of the People's Front against War and Fascism.

The hitherto utilised means of propaganda of achievements in the U.S.S.R. are now no longer sufficient. What is required now is the development of mass propaganda—on a huge scale, by new and lively methods. The holding of occasional lectures and meetings is inadequate; the reaction to slanders is slow and frequently ineffective; and, generally speaking, propaganda is conducted within a very limited and apparently almost closed circle. "From the defence of the Soviet Union against anti-Soviet slander we must pass to the offensive against the enemies of the U.S.S.R.; we must drag them before the judgment of the broad masses." (Manuilsky.)

It is true that successes are being achieved: the Congresses of Friendship referred to are a step in the right direction (incidentally, Sydney has so far failed to organise one); a rise in the circulation of the magazine, although slow, is taking place surely; the growing desire of many sections of workers to send a yearly delegation to Moscow for May Day is being organised and it is practically certain that Australia's largest and most representative delegation will leave Australia early next year. In Brisbane and Adelaide the F.S.U. is breaking new ground and is certainly bringing the Soviet Union before the people. Yet the possibilities are almost unbounded. A Dunningham, a Perkins, a Makin slanders the workers of the U.S.S.R.; a scientist, Professor Woodruff, of the Melbourne University, on his own initiative, refutes these people by publishing an article (Sydney "Sun," Nov. 17, 1935) setting forth the giant strides in economy and science possible under a planned economy! Educationalists, scientists, social workers in every part of Australia, as well as worker delegates, are ready and anxious to refute these traducers of Socialism. Truly, we must assume the offensive, and drag them "before the judgment of the broad masses."

One of the essential conditions in mobilising within the shortest time all those who are friendly towards the Soviet

Union is the rigid observance of the non-party character of the F.S.U., and this is particularly the responsibility of the Communists working in that organisation. It must be said that in the past grievous sectarian errors have been made, which have been seized upon by the leadership of the Labor Parties, who have banned the F.S.U. as an "off-shoot" of the Communist Party. This ban must be broken, and this can be achieved only by the Communists rigidly avoiding sectarian practices. Certainly, a great improvement in this direction is to be noted recently.

Collective listening-in to Moscow broadcasts is a further means of extending the influence of the Soviet Union. There are in Australia thousands of people who regularly "listen-in" to the English sessions from Moscow, and it is possible to make many of them centres for collective work, and this has been neglected almost entirely.

The attack by the Government on the Friends of the Soviet Union indicates that the bourgeoisie of Australia understand very well the revolutionising part played by the triumph of Socialism in the Soviet Union. It is their plan to prevent the people of this country from learning the details of this success, and in order to do this they attempt drastically to curtail the democratic rights of Australians. We must assume the offensive; we must intensify a hundredfold of spreading the truth about the U.S.S.R., using at the same time the effective contrast of the broadening of proletarian democracy there and the narrowing of capitalist democracy here. We thus link up concretely the fight for democratic rights in Australia with the defence of the Soviet Union, and the fight for Soviet power in our own country.

Australia's Anti-Militarist Tradition

PART III

The Fight Against Conscription (Continued)

By J. N. RAWLING

THERE were various factors that determined a "No" verdict to the Conscription Referendum. They may be classed as latent and active. Among the former may be included the widespread, instinctive opposition to war or to compulsion, the fear of having oneself or one's relatives sent to the war, that war is all right for the other fellow but—"I'm not going," the seemingly inevitable tendency for many to vote "No" always. These in themselves would not have been sufficient to defeat conscription. That defeat resulted from the organised fight against the conscription proposal by important bodies and tendencies. These were the active—very active—factors. They were: (1) the pacifist organisations—opposed to war generally; (2) the Irish-Nationalist and Catholic elements—hostile to British imperialism; (3) the official Labor Party machine—not opposed to the war, but of the opinion that "Australia" had done enough; and (4) the revolutionary forces—opposed not merely to the war but to imperialism and all its works. These last were organised in the Australian Socialist Party, the Industrial Workers of the World, the Socialist Labor Party, other Socialist organisations, and in the rank and file of the Labor Party, whose leaders were forced into opposition to conscription by the militancy of that rank and file.

It is a mere truism to state that a Government cannot carry on a war in these modern times if it cannot count upon the support of the masses. That the Australian Government was able to count upon that support was due solely to the Labor Party support of the war. That fact must be reiterated again and again. The anti-war forces had to fight the Labor Party. The Labor Party (and, of course, I mean the officialdom and the machine) mobilised the masses in support of the war, not only in 1914 but in the years preceding. Nay more—the Labor Party prepared the ground for conscription, not merely in a metaphorical sense but literally! It was Labor Party politicians and trade union officials who took an active part in forming the

Universal Service League. It was Labor Party politicians and trade union officials who spread propaganda in favor of conscription, and it was they who tried to have it carried into effect. And, after the split came, it was those that remained who mobilised the masses for continued support of the war, in order to prove that the voluntary system was "adequate." It must be remembered that in the early years of the war and at the time of the first Conscription Referendum, a majority of Governments in Australia were Labor! No one has yet set down in print the full heinousness of the betrayal of the Australian masses by the Labor Party politicians and officials during and before the war. The present writer does not imagine that he is equal to the task!

Now for a little of the evidence for the above charges. As early as December, 1914, N.S.W. Labor Minister for Education Carmichael had this to say:

"I would make it compulsory for every man in the Commonwealth, up to the age of 45 or 50, to undertake some military drill during the present crisis—and what finer body of men could be got for the purpose of training than our teachers?"

His colleague, the Minister for Works, A. Griffiths (who, alas, had deteriorated from the A. Griffith whom we have had to congratulate for his opposition to the Boer War), at the same time was telling the unemployed (there were plenty of unemployed in 1914) to go to the war! At Easter, 1915, "at the Royal Show luncheon," so the "Sydney Morning Herald" informs us, "Mr. Fisher, Commonwealth Prime Minister, said that if voluntary service failed—of which there was no sign—the Government would take further action." In the following month, the same gentleman's Ministry passed through the Federal Parliament the War Precautions Act, which took from Australians all the liberties that they were being asked to go to Gallipoli to fight for!

On the industrial front. By methods of which they were past masters, the officials of the Wharf Laborers' Union in Sydney had a mass meeting of the union pass a resolution pledging its members to refuse to work with Germans, Austrians, or Turks—whether naturalised or not! The result, in one particular case, was that a man, born in Germany, who had come to Australia thirty years before, had married an Australian wife and had raised an Australian family, was deprived of his living!

The Court, which the Australian-German had invoked, upheld the officials of the Union. The secretary, James Woods, justified the action of his union by saying that "the Germans on the wharves might take advantage of their opportunities to damage the property of loyal and patriotic people"!

If the words and actions of Woods were sinister and treacherous to the cause of the working class, what shall we say of the proposal of A. C. Willis—a name not unknown to us to-day! In May, 1915, he was secretary of the Illawarra Colliery Employees' Association, and, in a speech that he then made in Wollongong, he put forward this "modest proposal":

"Every unmarried man in the country without encumbrances should be compelled to go to the front, or else contribute a substantial amount out of every week's salary towards the support of the wives and families of those married men who decided to enlist"!

Can any reader find words to describe that? I counted ten before I went on writing! Even German militarism did not allow the wealthy to pay a substitute to do their military service!

We have already referred to the Universal Service League (see October "C.R."). Professor David was its president, and among its vice-presidents were the following members of the N.S.W. Labor Party:—Holman (Premier), Cann (Minister for Works), Hall (Attorney-General), Black (Chief Secretary), Griffith (Minister for Education), Ashford (Minister for Lands), Fitzgerald (Vice-President of Executive Council), and Meagher (Speaker). In addition, the following signed the Manifesto:—Burgess (Government Whip), Fern, Watson (former Prime Minister), Lamond (manager of "Worker"), Thompson (secretary Railway and Tramway Service Association), Turner (secretary Federated Enginedrivers), Talbot (Executive Committee, Sydney Labor Council), Lewis (secretary, Millers and Mill Employees), Furse (secretary, Meat Employees' Industrial Union).

In a letter to the press, J. D. Fitzgerald put forward a specious "justification" of his attitude on the basis of internationalism. He said that he "had always conceived that the objective of Labor Socialists, and even of the doctrinaire International Socialists, was to organise the whole of the State, so as to secure united action for certain social purposes." So, his argument ran, we ought to support conscription—"united action for a social purpose"! We have learned to apply the epithet

"Fascist" to such tendencies as are exemplified in that "justification" of betrayal!

In N.S.W., Premier Holman exerted himself mightily to recruit men into the army and to prepare the way for conscription. He was responsible for another sinister move: the making of bashing of Socialists and anti-militarists by the police and of the recruiting by them of soldiers financially desirable.

"Inquiries made reveal that the country police of this State are receiving 10/- for every man they enlist. The order to pay the police was made some months ago while the late Mr. E. C. Day was the Inspector-General. He received his instructions from the State Government [Holman "Labor" Government.—J. N. R.], and notices were sent to every police station. The police, it is admitted, have sent along from the country a large number of men, some of whom have gone to the Dardanelles, while others are now in camp at Liverpool. Members of the force are still energetically working to get men at 10/- a head." (Sydney "Sun," July, 1915.)

Holman threatened those who did not enlist firstly with conscription and secondly with decreased pay. He said:

"If conscription does come, clearly it won't be possible for it to come on the financial footing of the present arrangement. [Holman here proves the aim was not merely to keep up reinforcements, in which case the cost would have been no more than under a voluntary system.—J. N. R.] Men who are conscripts cannot be paid 6/- a day. It would have to be on the French model, and men who served with the colors would have to practically give their services without remuneration."

Holman wanted only the workers sent to the front, while the "intellectually elite" (his phrase) would remain at home to do more important work. He said:

"I have been a life-long opponent of conscription, as I have been a life-long opponent of militarism. At the same time, I think that in a war of life and death like this, conscription is the most logical and satisfactory way out.

"The right to call upon men to serve does not necessarily mean the exercise of that right. With conscription the Government could pick and choose, and it could choose the men who could best be spared from the industrial life of the community to go to the front in the first instance.

"When we rely upon the voluntary system we find a large proportion of the highly trained and extensively educated men offering. While these men are doing the right thing and are most welcome as soldiers, . . . one cannot help feeling that it is a pity there is not some power to intervene and send these men back to their positions where they would be doing still more valuable service for their country, and replace them at the front by other men who are equally good as fighters, but whose departure for the front would cause less of a gap in civil life." (Sydney press, August, 1915.)

One fact that has to be remembered in connection with the conscription campaigns is that the defeat of conscription did not mean the total defeat of the militarists and their plans. While they were prevented from laying their hands on that last man promised by Fisher, the campaigns for and threat of conscription were responsible for the recruiting of many thousands of men. By means of the threat of conscription and the consequent exertions by the Labor Party recruiting agents to "justify" the voluntary system; by the threats implied in the census taken by police and teachers mentioned below in Fisher's War Census (1915) and the mobilisation into camps of all eligible men before the first referendum; and by means of economic conscription—tens of thousands were forced into the army. The conscription campaigns served part of their purpose, if not all.

Warnings, threats, recruiting campaigns, more warnings, more threats—such was the round. The "Sydney Morning Herald" started. In August, 1914, it was asking: "Where are the trainees?—Very few of the boys are volunteering for service abroad." A month later, a writer in the "Daily Telegraph" (Sydney) was saying: "The fact that it has taken N.S.W. nearly five weeks to muster 7000 men shows that there is something lacking." And Labor Party Recruiters Ltd. soon got into its stride!

Recruiting was in full swing during 1915—in the first quarter Gallipoli was in prospect and then the gaps created there had to be filled. In July, 1915, Holman started out on an extensive recruiting campaign. As part of it he had all the police collecting information about men without encumbrances—"instructions have been issued to the police throughout the State to make use of the records which they secured while compiling the electoral rolls"—and teachers were instructed to co-operate! He returned from that campaign on August 7; he was, he said,

very disappointed with his tour. As a result, there were more threats of conscription. After the defeat of the first conscription proposal, economic conscription was more persistently and consistently applied, culminating in Holman's infamous "Secret Memorandum" in 1917. By then, however, he had ceased to be a "Labor" man. It is rather difficult to determine the exact point when he did cease to be a "Labor" man!

The clergy was called upon to take an active part in recruiting, and many of them were enthusiastic in urging others to go to fight. For example, at the Exhibition Building, Sydney, Cook, Holman, and the two Archbishops of Sydney addressed a packed audience on July 31, 1915. Only 105 recruits, however, came forward. On the same night, Holman and Wade (Leader of the State Opposition) tried to address the audience at the Stadium—tried! for they were hooted and not allowed to speak! A touching scene and the united front typified, when Wade patted Holman on the back consolingly! The Anglican Archbishop, Dr. Wright, had this to say at the other meeting:

"Our Empire is in danger, Australia is in danger, and the danger is such as has never before faced the British Empire. The enemy against us wants to rob us of our liberty and all that is dear to us. If Germany wins, our homes will not be safe, the honor of our mothers, our wives, our daughters, and our sisters will not be safe. That has got to be stopped. Talking is no good. We have got to draw the sword and say: This shall not be, in the name of God! Our Australian lads have covered themselves with immortal glory, but there is not enough of them. The gaps have to be filled; will you fill them?"

Here is another example of pious recruiting:

"Some persons are using their prayers as a means of shirking their national duty. There are young men to-day that are fit and well able to go to the war. They hide themselves behind their mothers' skirts. They will go to every prayer meeting and with enthusiasm pray for the other fellow, but take good care that they will not risk their own precious skins. To such God says: Get thee up from your canting hypocrisy; get up from your knees and do your national duty; don the khaki or else go home and hide your coward's head behind the apron of the mother whose heart is possibly breaking with the shame of her son's

cowardice."—Rev. H. J. Bowden, of the Hornsby (N.S.W.) Methodist church, in a recruiting sermon at Millthorpe, January, 1916.

All the piety was not amongst the clergy, however, and militarists found the combination of theology and militarism useful:

"When the day of judgment comes—and I believe it will—the man who has died on Gallipoli, whether he was the biggest scoundrel on earth before he redeemed himself by dying—that man will be all right; but, by the God above me, the shirkers and those who forget what we are doing for them and what we have sacrificed for them are assured of eternal damnation. The man who will not go will be damned to all eternity."—General McKay (reported in the Melbourne "Age," January, 1916).

One of those in the Federal arena most active in preparing the way for conscription was Senator Pearce, Minister for Defence. He has always had just enough brains to watch Billy Hughes and jump off the fence or on the fence as Billy jumped. Until the last few years, when Billy's manoeuvres have been so bewildering to George's feeble intellect that the latter was quite incapable of following him. His instincts told him, however, that he was already on the right side of the fence, and it would be the correct thing to stop there—so George is still a Minister, and has been a Minister since 1910, with the exception of a year of the Cook Ministry (1913-14) and two years of the Scullin Ministry (1929-31), while Billy is again on the outer. George has received his reward: he has always been well spoken of by the "Sydney Morning Herald." Than that, no honor could be higher. Even before the elections of September, 1914 (that is, when Pearce and Labor were in opposition) the "Herald" (Sept., 1914) had this to say of him:

"Mr. Pearce, as Minister for Defence in the Labor Government, won for himself a high place in the estimation of all; and in his hands Australia would be quite satisfied to leave her defence policy."

So, Mr. Pearce was prepared to please his masters still more. In the debate on the Address-in-Reply in the Senate, after the elections of 1914, he expressed himself, according to "Hansard," as favoring the amending of the Defence Act so that the forces

could be sent anywhere to fight. He showed, in the same speech, what it was that Australian imperialism was fighting for. He said:

"I wish now to say a few words regarding Senator Millen's suggestion that our defence scheme makes no provision for service abroad. **That has always struck me as a weakness**, for the reason that in the very expeditions that were recently organised by the late Government [i.e., Cook's.—J. N. R.] for service in the Pacific, in our sphere of influence and in islands practically in our own seas, we could not send a single soldier unless he were a volunteer. There was no organisation in existence for dealing with those islands. That does seem to me to be a weakness, and **it is one which, when the present trouble is over, any Government which may be in power must set themselves seriously to think over and to deal with.** It will be all the more necessary to deal with it in the future because, if the war turns out as we all hope it will, our sphere of influence will be widened by the fact that what were formerly German possessions are possessions under the British flag, and with the consent of the Allies may, after the war, remain under that flag."

With those high ideals in mind, Pearce was easily able to keep in the good graces of the "S.M.H." and have his sentiments fill headlines in the press (June 12, 1915): "Men must be forthcoming without delay to replace those fallen."

And the "S.M.H." gave its instructions: "The Government, which has assured the people of Great Britain that Australia is with them 'to the last man and the last shilling,' must find 9000 men a month; and if it cannot be done in one way, it must be done in another." ("S.M.H.," October, 1915.)

The urgers were hard at work during 1915. The National Council of Women, in August, passed a resolution in favor of conscription, and N.S.W. Labor Chief Secretary George Black said (August, 1915): "If you shirk your duty, we will get you by conscription."

If, then, as we have seen the conscription campaign and the Labor Party opposition both played their parts in recruiting, it becomes clear that real opposition to conscription had to be opposition also to the purpose of conscription, namely, to recruit

as many men as possible. As we have stated, and as we shall see further on, the official Labor Party opposition was not directed at the aim of conscription but at the method. Opposition not merely to conscription but to recruiting and to the war itself was in the hands of the **revolutionary organisations**.

The menace of conscription was early realised by the Socialists and anti-militarists in Australia. Somewhere about the middle of 1915 the **Anti-Conscription League** was formed. [Note. —In last issue, we stated that it was formed on October 23, basing our statement on a publication by E. E. Judd. Since then, however, we have seen an announcement of "the new Anti-Conscription League" in a paper dated August 7.] It was announced that membership was "open to all who are opposed to conscription and are prepared to refuse service regardless of consequence." A successful meeting was held in the Domain on August 1.

On the following Sunday, August 8, another meeting was held, at which **J. Quinton**, a member of the A.C.L., was arrested. On the same day, **C. Jackson**, was arrested at Newtown for speaking against the war. According to the "S.M.H." report of the Domain meeting, Quinton's remarks were resented by soldiers, who "pulled him from his stand" [usual "S.M.H." provocation, for future occasions], and "he then tried to run away, but the crowd was so big that he could not do so, and had to seek the protection of the police." According to the "**International Socialist**," however, "the police stood off to give the crowd a fair go, but when they saw that he was not going to be kicked to pieces and that he had the crowd with him and was laughing at his opponents, they rushed bravely to the rescue and arrested Quinton."

Quinton was charged, remanded, and allowed bail. He later was sentenced to six weeks and appealed, but his appeal was quashed. Jackson was not allowed bail, and was sentenced to three months. The conscription fight was in full swing.

Professor David, president of the Universal Service League, addressed the Trades and Labor Council. The Council refused to support conscription, and David was asked about the conscription of wealth. He dismissed the idea as being outside practical politics, but later both he and the League reversed their policy and came out in favor of conscription of wealth. The stand against conscription made by the T. & L. Council caused a great

deal of elation amongst the Socialists, and led them to announce, prematurely, that "the conscription movement is slumping."

But on the other hand, it was just about this time that attacks upon Socialists became more frequent. **Tom Barker** was being sentenced because of his famous poster:

"To arms! Capitalists, parsons, politicians, landlords, newspaper editors, and other stay-at-home patriots! Your country needs you in the trenches. Workers, follow your masters!"

There was much sectarianism that marred the work of the Socialists during the war. There were at least four organisations in Sydney claiming to be revolutionary, and five in Melbourne: the A.S.P., the S.L.P., the political I.W.W., the non-political I.W.W., and (in Melbourne) the Victorian Socialist Party. Unity, as it proved, was unattainable, although unity conferences came to be the inter-party pastime.

Many examples of rabid sectarianism could be given, but here are two gems: The Melbourne "**Socialist**" paraphrased Marx's famous slogan thus: "Workers of the world, go and fight! You have nothing to lose but your brains." That was bad enough, but the "**International Socialist**" (Sydney) quoted it ("I.S.," October 10, 1914), and added the comment: "Have those who go to fight any brains to lose?" That was capped by this ("I.S.," August 29, 1914):

"After the war the average worker will be a sadder but a wiser man. The bone-heads below the average will mostly be killed off, and the Socialist will get a better hearing than ever before."

On September 24, 1915, a deputation from the Melbourne **Trades Hall** interviewed Prime Minister Fisher to ask him what the Government's intentions were regarding conscription. He was told that the Labor organisations were totally opposed to conscription, and that the politicians who were advocating it did not represent the workers. Fisher was indignant. He was, he said, being asked to take up a negative attitude to "outside" propaganda when the Government had not yet declared its attitude. When it "desired" to do so, "I am the person to declare it." Fisher was in a queer position. He did not want to declare himself. The result was that he was very angry and

tried to bluff the deputation. But it was not to be bluffed. You have conscription already for home defence, Fisher told them. Then—"this is my business and not the business of anybody outside the Government. I have nothing to do with the Trades Hall Council in this matter. **The last people in the world who should come along and say, 'Are you going to do this thing or the other thing?' should be Labor people.**" Their's, evidently thought Fisher, not to reason why; their's but to do or die! When a member of the deputation said, "We are here to fortify you," he took as an insult the insinuation that he needed fortifying. He was forced, however, to declare that the Government had no intention of extending conscription, but that, if it had to be extended, it would be only after the people had been consulted.

In the meantime, a drive was being made against those who were opposed to the war and to conscription. All obstacles possible were put in the way of Socialists and pacifists. Men were arrested for speaking in the streets and for selling literature. Soldiers were incited to attack anti-militarist speakers. "If you give us any more of this Christ business," a soldier-tool of the imperialists told a Quaker speaker in Adelaide, "you'll get some plugs in the mug." Christ was to be banished from the City of Churches!

The violence of the police was matched by the ferocity of magistrates. Joseph Skurrie, of the Victorian Socialist Party, was sentenced in March, 1916, under the War Precautions Act, to three months, on the evidence of a newspaper report! "I propose to make you suffer, to make you pay . . . to close your mouth when men are fighting for life and liberty," the magistrate told him.

The censorship was tightened up. In February, 1916, new regulations were issued to the newspapers forbidding them to make it known, or even to hint, that anything had been censored! The "International Socialist" was for two issues barred from the post, and the whole of the August 4 issue of the Melbourne "Socialist" was seized. The Yarra Bank was closed to meetings and George Black's police forbade the A.S.P. to sell literature in the Domain. Newspapers kept up a campaign of incitement of soldiers against the Socialists. The "Sydney Morning Herald" led the way:—

"During the next few months, if we all put our shoulder to

the wheel, the small minority of anti-everything will find themselves in Coventry, or shamed into silence. If they still shout their abuse they will find the Australian uniform not quite so patient under provocation as the Australian politicians may have been."—"S.M.H.," January, 1916.

The soldiers did come to town and ran amuck, February 14, 1916,—but it was not the Socialists they attacked, it was the newspaper offices and business places. And then, the capitalist press and Archbishop Kelly blamed the Socialists for the soldiers' riots. Said the "Mirror":

"We trust that the Minister for Defence will now deal ruthlessly with those tools of the Huns, the members of the I.W.W., the International Socialists, and other bodies who, we are convinced, have been the sinister elements behind some at least of the recent industrial and military disturbances." (Sydney "Mirror," February, 1916).

And said the intelligent Pearce: "I cannot keep believing that enemy influences and enemy gold have been at work in Liverpool." Take your choice of explanations. At any rate the "Mirror" could not have been right, for the I.W.W. devils and Socialist demons had been cast out of the swine (we have to guess who the swine were). By W. M. Hughes. Speaking in the Melbourne Town Hall in January, Hughes said: "In the name of Labor and unionism, I cast out these [I.W.W. and Socialists] like devils out of swine." Hardly flattering to the rest of the community!

And a good deal of prominence was given in the Socialist press to the example of Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and Clara Zetkin in Germany. The capitalist press in the Allied countries gave much publicity to Liebknecht, trying to take advantage of the fight against German imperialism for the purpose of mobilising opinion against Germany. An edition of Liebknecht's speeches was even published. In this way the imperialists over-reached themselves, for Liebknecht's name came to mean, in every country, opposition to imperialism, not hostility to Germany. The "Sydney Morning Herald"—trust the "Herald"!—early saw that that would happen and, in April, 1916, warned its readers not to "fall into the dangerous error of regarding Karl Liebknecht's stand against Prussian militarism with favor." He was disloyal to his country, said the "Herald"!

In Australia, however, Liebknecht's example was followed and many—some prominent but most whose names have been forgotten—made sacrifices, fought long and bravely, and worked without remission against the militarists and against conscription. The mobilisation of all the resources of the State was not sufficient to prevent the building of the mighty anti-conscriptionist army that defeated the hosts of militarism in pitched battle on two occasions. The devotion of the individual units of that army serve as an inspiring example to us in future struggles. Their mistakes are beacons for us.

Many of those mistakes were based on that sectarianism of which we have already given several instances, and of which the existence of so many revolutionary organisations was a reflection. In spite, however, of the lack of unity politically, the various organisations were able to achieve a united front against conscription. We have referred to the Anti-Conscription League in N.S.W. In Victoria, the No-Conscription Fellowship was formed. Pacifist organisations co-operated. An Anti-Conscription meeting held in the Sydney Domain on June 18, 1916, gives a good example of the united front in being.

A Large banner carried the words: "**Conscription Means Slavery.**" Mr. T. J. Miller, Commonwealth Organiser of the Australian Freedom League, was the chairman. In his opening remarks, he said he was opposed to conscription, firstly, as a trade unionist, secondly, on the basis of common citizenship, thirdly, because the civil laws should never be made subservient to the military, and fourthly, because he was a conscientious objector. Mr. T. D. Mutch represented the N.S.W. Labor Party Executive. He read the resolution carried at the Labor Conference at the previous Easter (see last issue of "C.R."). When a voice called: "What about Hughes?" Mutch said he would have something to say to Hughes when he returned. All who supported conscription would be turned out into the cold. He moved the following motion:—

"That this mass meeting of citizens of Sydney emphatically protests against conscription, believing it to be opposed to the best interests of the people, and appeals to all claiming to represent them in Parliament to oppose such a measure should it be introduced."

This was seconded by Mr. F. J. O'Reilly, who represented

the Trades and Labor Council. The Council, he said, was not opposed to recruiting—but to compulsion. Conscription was not necessary.

The A.S.P. was represented by Mr. Luke Jones, who said that he was not concerned about the issues of the war, but how it affected his class. He was opposed to all forms of militarism. Mr. S. F. Allen, of the Society of Friends, also expressed himself as being opposed to war, not merely to conscription. Others who addressed the meeting were, Rev. Rivett (active then against war as he was from 1899 to 1902 and to the day of his death), Peter Bowling (of 1909 miners' strike fame), Tom Glynn (of the I.W.W., soon after to be sentenced to a long term of imprisonment because of his anti-militarist activity), and Mrs. Paul (one of Australia's earliest women Socialist Parliamentary candidates). The resolution was carried unanimously. It was by means of such a united front, built in hundreds of centres throughout Australia by thousands of self-sacrificing and enthusiastic workers who faced unflinchingly gaol and the threat of gaol, attacks by police, "patriotic" larrikins, and drink or propaganda-crazed soldiers, and the terror under a Government with power possessed by no British Government since the days of Charles I and his Court of Star Chamber, that conscription was defeated!

As the date approached for the first referendum to be taken, repressive measures by the Government multiplied. The publishers of the Victorian "Socialist" were raided early in August, 1916, and the whole of the issue of August 4 seized. Under the War Precautions Act, a new regulation was issued making it obligatory to submit all matter relating to recruiting to the censor before printing. Meetings continued to be broken up, and in N.S.W. George Black's police protected the soldiers and hooligans who did the breaking up, these being incited thereto by the press. Socialists and members of the I.W.W. were gaoled and fined for "statements likely to cause disaffection to His Majesty" or to "prejudice recruiting." These attacks culminated in a raid on the I.W.W. rooms in Sussex Street, Sydney, on September 23, and the arrest of leading members, who were charged that they "feloniously and wickedly did compass, imagine, invent, devise, or intend to levy war against the king within His Majesty's dominions." They were later sentenced to from five to fifteen years!

After the defeat of the conscription proposals in 1916, Hughes was in a queer position. He had been expelled from the party, and most of his Ministers, whom the "No" majority had shown which way to jump, deserted him. He had to form a new Ministry, was kept in office for a while by the Liberals, and then coalesced with the latter to form the Nationalist Party. In spite of bribery to get a Senator to resign and thus give him a majority in the Senate, Hughes was not able to pass a Bill lengthening the life of Parliament, and elections were held. The election campaign showed how the Labor Party was prepared to exert all efforts to ensuring a plentiful supply of cannon-fodder for the battlefields of Europe. According to "The Vanguard" (April 5, 1917), official organ of the A.L.P. in Victoria, Mr. Tudor (leader of the Labor Party) promised in his election manifesto that:

"... If entrusted by the people with the conduct of Government, the Labor Party will continue under the voluntary system to secure the services of every man fit and willing to proceed to the front."

And Holman in N.S.W., and others elsewhere were ensuring by means of economic conscription that all fit men would be "willing"!

"When in office," Tudor's manifesto continued, "we conducted the war with vigor and determination. Not only did our Australian Fleet protect Australia and New Zealand and the Pacific Islands from the German cruisers . . . but by voluntarism we organised, trained, and equipped the best-clothed and the best-paid soldiers in the world." He did not regard a levy on wealth as necessary.

But, at the same time as the paper that contained the above was being printed, another prominent Labor member (and one who would have been a Minister, if Tudor had been returned to office) was saying:

"If it could be proved to me that the men in the trenches were suffering from lack of reinforcements, I would become an advocate of conscription to-morrow . . . If voluntarism fails the Labor Party will have to reconsider its position in the light of new circumstances."—Frank Anstey, speaking at Northcote ("Argus," 5/4/17).

Signs there were a-plenty that the Labor Party, if returned to power, would have carried on the war with the same enthusiasm for workers' sacrifices as Hughes and Cook showed. There

is the possibility, too, that the Labor Party would have made an attempt to apply conscription as Hughes did. That is speculation, but not idle, if the workers draw conclusions about the character and basis of the Labor Party. It was the militancy of the workers that forced the Labor Party politicians and officials to take up the fight against conscription, but they were never tired of telling that the reason for their opposition to it was not hostility to the war or to imperialism, but merely their confidence that voluntarism could do and was doing the job.

This was made clear especially in the 1917 campaign. "Voluntarism has not failed," was the title of a long article in "The Worker" (Sydney, 6/12/17), by Senator Long, who told of his pride at Australia's response. "The Labor Call" (6/12/17), amongst articles opposed to conscription (one deprecating the "bitterness" manifest in the campaign!), had advertisements from the Defence Department, calling for air mechanics, draftsmen, etc.! And H. E. Boote, in "The Worker" (6/12/17), said that conscription in Australia would injure England, because of the ships that would be occupied in the long trip to Australia—ships that would be better employed in taking American soldiers across to France, as days instead of weeks would be required in that case! "It is not a question of wanting the Americans to fight for us," he said, "but of rendering the greatest help in the quickest way to England, France and Italy." And, so on—!

One man who played a big part in the defeat of conscription was not a labor man at all. That was Archbishop Mannix who, during the war, was not only prepared to oppose conscription, but also to voice his hostility to British imperialism, his condemnation of the war as a sordid trade war and his sympathy with the Irish revolutionaries and the Irish Republic proclaimed at Easter, 1916. (In this respect, it may be stated, that the action of Connolly and his associates was condemned by Socialists of Australia!). Mannix refused to join the central committee set up after the defeat of conscription to organise voluntary recruiting. It was Mannix who early called attention to the danger of a fresh attempt to impose conscription in 1917. At the time of the Federal elections, he said:

"I think I am not going far astray when I say that the conscription issue has been already raised again . . . Those who are attempting to hide and cloak the issue will, if they be re-

turned again, readily find an excuse for submitting conscription to another referendum . . . I am not a politician of any kind, overground or underground. I am simply a plain honest man. They might say that the verdict of the people was to be accepted, but if you are foolish enough to trust them you will have the conscription campaign upon you as soon as the election is over."

Events proved him not far wrong! He trounced "those lip-loyalists, who are not going to the front but who saw to it that they got from six to seven per cent. interest before they subscribed to the war loans." Archbishop Mannix, because of his association with Irish nationalism, played an honorable part in the fight against conscription.

The Australian working class has reason to be proud of the defeat of conscription. That defeat was a sign that the workers of Australia were not content to betray the traditions of the past. Those traditions—love of freedom, the hatred of oppression and of militarism, the desire for fair play, a sturdy independence—have been built up through the course of decades of militant struggle. Those traditions need more and more today to act as inspirations to the workers of to-day in the fight against war and Fascism. They warrant our confidence in our ultimate triumph over both!

(Concluded)

"Pravda" on the War in East Africa

[Leading Article in "Pravda" (Moscow) of October 5, 1935]

ON October 2 the Italian troops which had been concentrated on the frontiers of Abyssinia proceeded to attack without any formal declaration of war. The guns have begun to roar in East Africa. Italian imperialism has started the war on the Abyssinian people. From the very beginning military action assumed wide proportions. The border towns of Abyssinia were subjected to cruel bombardment. The first victims on both sides have already been reported by wire. Uneasiness has filled the masses of the people in every country. The war which has begun in East Africa is, after the occupation of Manchuria by Japan, the most important event showing how acute the contradictions in the imperialist camp have become, and how great is the danger of a new, even bloodier, even more terrible world massacre.

For what object has the war in East Africa begun? For the sake of turning a country which is independent of foreign capital exclusively into an Italian colony. Now, after military action has begun, authoritative circles in Italian imperialism declare that the bombardment of Adowa and the advance of Italian troops further into Abyssinian territory are merely "defensive measures." The official Italian reports shift the blame for everything that has happened on to the Government of Abyssinia on the frontiers of Abyssinia; to carry out a partial for a ridiculous reference to "the menace of Abyssinian troops"—wherein actually Abyssinian guilt is expressed. This guilt obviously consists in the fact that Abyssinia will not surrender itself to the mercy of Italian imperialism and voluntarily accept the Fascist colonial yoke.

The facts which are being cited in the entire press of the world do not corroborate the official Italian declarations. On the contrary, it is well known that Italian imperialism has made the most of the long-drawn-out diplomatic negotiations to gain time and to concentrate vast military forces in Eritrea and Somalia on the frontiers of Abyssinia; to carry out a partial mobilisation. The fact that military action did not begin earlier is explained by the military preparations not being completed and by the rainy season in East Africa not having come to an end. Italian Fascism well realises what the results of an Italian defeat in Abyssinia would be. And that is why it is throwing

the entire country into the service of the war.

The head of the Italian Government himself indicated the causes of the war by Italian imperialism on Abyssinia in a speech delivered on the day of the "extraordinary mobilisation" in Italy on October 2. "Italy," he said, with his eyes on the Versailles division of the world, "received only scraps of the rich colonial booty." Against Italy, the speech went on to say, "attempts are being made to act with the most blatant injustice: namely, to prevent us from attaining our place in the sun." But why should this sun be in Abyssinia of all places? Why does Abyssinia of all places attract the desires of Italian Fascism?

Italian Fascism decided to make war on Abyssinia because Abyssinia is a weak and backward country. If Abyssinia were a strong Power, Italian imperialism would never have risked an attack upon her frontiers. This is confirmed by the fact that in acting against a weaker nation Italian Fascism has been guided by the old beast of prey's principle of imperialism: "You are weak, therefore you are in the wrong."

But weak Abyssinia is the object of rivalry among the most powerful imperialist States. Any imperialist Power obtaining a firm footing in Abyssinia will secure the key to the most important sea routes of the British Empire—Suez Canal, Red Sea—and to its possessions in South-East and West Africa.

Italian Fascism evidently assumes that it will be more sure of attaining its goal the more immoderate its attack is and the more it threatens to turn the war in Abyssinia into a war involving the whole of Europe. It is working on the assumption that the contradictions between Britain and France and the fear of intervention by Fascist Germany in the event of complications between the former allies would in the end compel the Great Powers to agree to an expansion of the Italian colonial empire at the expense of Abyssinia in the direction of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Italian imperialism is joining the struggle for a new partition of the world, above all of the colonies.

The conflict between Italy and Abyssinia, which has now developed into war, directly affects the interests of nearly all the large and small capitalist countries. Many of them oppose Italy's plans. So far as small capitalist countries are concerned, their negative attitude towards Italy's attack on Abyssinia is more than understandable: they can see plainly the results which the war in East Africa threatens to have: they realise

that German Fascism will exploit the struggle between the Great Powers in order to proceed against small European countries in just the same way as Italian Fascism is proceeding against Abyssinia.

The imperialist great Powers tried to prevent war in Abyssinia just as they will obviously try to confine the military action which has already begun to a limited space; in particular, they want to prevent Italy from moving to the side of Fascist Germany; in other words, not to allow a drastic regrouping of the forces in their camp, a disturbance of that unstable equilibrium which is to-day characteristic of the situation in the capitalist world.

The attitude of these Powers is expressed in a series of proposals aiming at establishing a protectorate over Abyssinia. In other words, she is to be deprived of her political, administrative, and economic independence. The armed forces of the country are to be reorganised and placed under the command of foreign officers. National economy, trade, and finances come in practice under the control of foreign capital. The internal administration is also to be controlled by representatives of foreign Powers. Italy receives territorial concessions at the expense of Abyssinia.

It is enough to mention these proposals in order to understand that it is a matter of an attempt to settle the colonial conflicts between the imperialist Powers at the expense of Abyssinia. The rivals of Italian imperialism want to avoid an open armed clash with it, and are consequently prepared partially to satisfy its colonial desires with portions of Abyssinian territory; they are, however, not inclined to recognise its main claim to the exclusive right to exploit the Abyssinia people. The fact that Abyssinia's representatives at Geneva have stated their readiness to accept many of these proposals makes no difference to this; for Abyssinia is acting like someone with a loaded revolver pressed against his temple. Her acceptance is therefore a forced one. The plan to restrict Abyssinia's independence does not thereby lose one iota of its frankly imperialist character.

But Italian imperialism rejected these proposals, evidently on the assumption that its rivals, once the guns had begun to speak, would be faced with the choice, give in or wage war, and would become more inclined to give in. The troops assembled in

Eritrea and Somaliland have been sent to the attack, and the coming meeting of the Council of the League of Nations will take place to the accompaniment of the artillery salvos, whose roar will be heard from East Africa. Indignation against the imperialist aggressors is growing among the masses of the people. The defence of the cause of peace demands the joint and unanimous efforts of all adherents of collective security.

The attitude of the Soviet Union is well known: consistent defence of peace and the freedom of the peoples. Our proletarian State has taken up a position condemning the imperialist cravings of Italian Fascism. Nor can the Soviet Union support the proposals providing for a protectorate over Abyssinia, since they have a frankly imperialist character. But it will do everything in its power to co-operate in finding a genuinely peaceful solution of the conflict. As always, it is in the front line in the struggle for peace.

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NOW off the press

Report of
GEORGE DIMITROV
(Secretary of the Communist International)
to the
SEVENTH WORLD CONGRESS
of the
COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

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