

The Socialist Party of Australia

A SPLENDID ELECTION FIGHT

Our companion party in Australia contested the Melbourne Ports constituency in the recent elections to the Australian Parliament (House of Representatives). The candidate was Comrade W. J. Clarke, Honorary Secretary of the Socialist Party of Australia, but of course the electors were not asked to vote for the man but for the principles of the Party. The opposing candidates were two in number, the Labour Party candidate and the candidate of the United Australia Party. Simultaneously with the holding of the elections to the House of Representatives there were in progress elections to fill half the seats in the Senate (Australia's equivalent of the House of Lords, but elected). In consequence of this, the Socialist candidate also came into conflict with a Communist candidate for the Senate, whose constituency included the Melbourne Ports area. The result of the election was instructive in many ways. First, it showed that while the amount of support for Socialism is small it is by no means negligible. The Labour candidate won the seat with 27,081 votes, followed by the United Australia Party candidate with 12,173 and by the Socialist with 3,872. That there are 3,872 prepared to vote for Socialism and against capitalist and reformist candidates is highly encouraging.

What is more the Socialist vote was con-

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

OBJECT.—The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Great Britain HOLDS—

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.
7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. **THE SOCIALIST PARTY** of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch or at Head Office.

siderably higher than the vote cast for the Communist candidate for the Senate in the same constituency. The Socialist vote, as stated, was 3,872, compared with a Communist vote of 2,359. Not only was the total Socialist vote higher than the Communist vote but it was higher in every one of the 12 sub-divisions into which the total was divided.

As for the campaign we cannot do better than quote from the report we have received from the Australian Party.

"From the outset we were hampered by a campaign of silence, and whatever publicity we obtained in the press was grudgingly given. Like tactics were adopted by our opponents; the Labour candidate never once mentioned the name of our candidate or the Party. As he had been posing as a "Socialist" for years this attitude of his can be readily understood.

"Another drawback was the brevity of the campaign. Starting with an open air meeting at Albert Park on August 24th, we ended with an open air meeting in the same place on September 14th, the night prior to election day. Two large indoor meetings were held in the Port Melbourne Town Hall, right in the heart of the electorate. Another not so well attended indoor meeting, was held in the Mechanics' Hall at Williamstown, while a fine, attentive and well

attended meeting was held at the Clarendon Single Unemployed Men's Group. Open air meetings were held in all the sub-divisions of the electorate. . . .

"With rare exceptions our meetings were surprisingly well attended and the Party's propaganda was received with marked approval by the majority of those present. Objections were raised by supporters of the Communist Party and the Labour Party in some instances; but no member or supporter of these parties would take our platform to state their opposition to our policy when invited to do so by our speakers.

"The best meeting of all was held in the open at Albert Park on September 14th the night before polling day. At this meeting Mr. Laurence, the United Australia Party candidate, took our stump in answer to a challenge by one of our speakers. There were nearly 700 people present. The meeting

was lively but orderly, and lasted until after 11 p.m. . . ."

"Right throughout the campaign we stressed our object and principles and the whole burden of our appeal to the electors was, 'If you do not want Socialism, we do not want your vote,' an attitude which met with hostility from the Communists whose candidates were running on the usual programme of immediate demands."

Under Australian electoral law the deposit, of £25, was forfeit because the Socialist vote was less than one-fifth of the vote of the winning candidate. From a propaganda point of view the campaign was highly successful and has served to put the Socialist Party definitely on the map, while at the same time given encouragement to the members.

Further information is that the Sydney branch of the Party proposes to run a candidate in the New South Wales State elections, where no election deposit at all is required.

We Debate with the Fascists !!

The following is a summarized report of a debate that took place at Mawney Road Schools, Romford, on March 23rd, between E. Hardy, representing the S.P.G.B., and Mr. Probyn, representing the British Union of Fascists. The subject was "Fascism or Socialism." The chair was taken by Mr. Wilson, Editor of the *Romford Times*.

Case for the Socialist Party

Comrade Hardy opened the debate by pointing out that he was speaking as the representative of the S.P.G.B., and it followed as a matter of course that he was not prepared to defend the principles or policy of any other organisation than the one he represented. It would be necessary in order to consider the case for Socialism and the case for Fascism first of all to take a glance at the existing condition of things, to which Socialism and Fascism are offered as alternatives. The existing system is capitalism. Its essential feature is that the means of production and distribution are owned and controlled not by society as a whole but by a section, the capitalists. Less than one-quarter of the population own between them nearly 90 per cent. of the accumulated property of all kinds. Facing them is the working class which lives by the sale of labour-power to the capitalists. The one class lives by the ownership of property and is a non-wealth producing class. The other class lives by selling its mental and physical energies for wages or salary, based roughly on the cost of living of the various groups of workers.

It was necessary at this stage to remove any misconception about the term working-class. It is not used by Socialists in the popular loose way to

describe industrial workers only, but in a precise way to cover all who have to sell their labour-power as their normal means of living. The term applies, therefore, to clerical workers, Government employees, technical workers, salaried managers and so on, making up in all about 85 per cent. of the population.

The consequences of capitalism are too well known to require long description. First there is poverty in the working-class face to face with extremes of wealth in the capitalist class. Then there is unemployment, a normal feature of capitalism throughout its history. Then there are crises which periodically aggravate the normal evils of capitalism. Capitalists permit the workers to produce wealth only if they anticipate being able to sell at a profit. If this anticipation is absent then the capitalists can and do curtail production, close down the factories, etc., and throw millions out of work. Next there is class hatred, an inevitable consequence of the division of society into an owning and non-owning class. Lastly there is war. When the capitalists fear that foreign rivals are endangering their investments abroad, or are threatening markets, trade routes, etc., they set the armed forces in motion when bluff and threats have failed.

These are the consequences of capitalism and they are not recent phenomena as is sometimes supposed, but have existed since the beginning of capitalism.

The remedy is Socialism. Consequently the S.P.G.B. stands for Socialism alone and not for any other isms—"Socialism, the whole of Socialism, nothing but Socialism." Socialism