

# SOCIALIST COMMENT

SOCIALIST  
PARTIES  
OF  
AUSTRALIA and  
NEW ZEALAND

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ONE PENNY

# The Referendum

Since the last referendum was defeated in 1944, the Labor Party has excused its failure to introduce the 40-hour week, and increase the basic wage, on the grounds that under the Constitution as it stands, it has not the power to do so. In 1936 Curtin accused the Lyons U.A.P. Government of being both unfair and dishonest because of their failure to introduce the 40-hour week. THEN Dr. Evatt maintained that the Federal Government had power to introduce this legislation. NOW when the Labor Party finds itself with a majority in both Houses, it suddenly discovers "legal difficulties" which prevent it from honoring its promises.

Briefly, the position is this: Prior to Federation in 1901 there were only State Governments, each pursuing its own way without consideration of the other States, and often with quite contradictory laws. When Federation was brought about, a Constitution was drawn up handing certain spheres of legislation over to the Federal Government, while the States retained the rest.

The present referendum is for the purpose of granting wider powers to the Federal Government in respect to (1) Social Services, (2) Marketing of Primary Produce, (3) Industrial Employment.

In regard to Social Services, the Labor Party claims that there is some doubt as to the legality of their Social Service Legislation—such as Child Endowment, Widows Pensions, etc. "If you vote YES you will make SURE of Social Services" is the Labor slogan. What are the facts? Child Endowment was introduced by the Menzies Government (to counteract a demand for increased wages). Menzies and the Liberal Party now advocate its extension to the first child, for the same reasons. Furthermore, the capitalist class long ago have realised that Social Services are extremely valuable from their point of view. They distribute the wages bill more evenly among the workers—out of the wage envelope of a single worker,

or a worker in constant employment, money is taken by means of taxation which is distributed amongst those with several children, or who are unemployed or ill. Many workers believe that they receive something for nothing from the Government when they get these "benefits"—actually their poverty is merely being reorganised, spread more evenly over the class as a whole. Liberal, Country and Labor Parties all support these services, and, whether you vote

so, they have not seen fit to grant the 40-hour week TO THEIR OWN EMPLOYEES. Furthermore, after sending the Unions to the Court to seek the shorter week, the Government Counsel defined the attitude of the Government as follows:

"The Commonwealth Government was neither supporting nor opposing the application for a 40-hour week," Mr. Stanley Lewis, representing the Commonwealth

"THE SYSTEM OF WAGE-LABOR IS A SYSTEM OF SLAVERY, AND INDEED SLAVERY, WHICH MORE-OVER, GROWS HARDER IN PROPORTION AS THE PRODUCTIVE POWERS OF LABOR ARE DEVELOPED IN SOCIETY, NO MATTER WHETHER THE LABORERS PAY IS BETTER OR WORSE."

KARL MARX,

The Gotha Programme,

"Yes" or "No" will make no difference at all. They are indispensable to modern Capitalism and here to stay.

The Marketing question was voted on in 1937 and defeated. In spite of the dire results forecast if it were not carried, Capitalism continued as before, with little or no changes. Whether it is carried this time or rejected, again, you as worker, will still have to market the only commodity you possess—your ability to work, under the same conditions. It won't make the slightest difference whether you vote "Yes" or "No."

The Industrial Employment proposal is the one which the Labor Government maintains it needs if it is to interfere with wages and hours, and working conditions generally. They infer that if this is granted wages will be increased and hours lessened. "A 'Yes' vote means full employment and a fair deal for every worker," says the "Labor Call" (1/8/46). The sincerity of the Labor Government can be seen when we realise that, although there is no question of them not having the power to do

Government, told the Full Arbitration Court yesterday. Judge Kelly asked Mr. Lewis: "Then I take it you are neutral?" "No, your Honor, we are not neutral," Mr. Lewis replied. "It would be absurd to suggest that a Labor Government would be anything but friendly to labor reform, but to say that the Commonwealth is supporting the claim is absolutely wrong." ("Sun," 20/5/46.)

[Continued Overleaf.]

## S. O. S.!

We are printing more than three times the usual number of copies for this special election issue! Our funds are low. We depend on working-class support. If you're in sympathy with our work, send us a donation.

Treasurer,  
"Socialist Comment,"  
P.O., Box 1440-M., Melb.







was no provision in the platform for total socialism." (Melbourne "Argus," 16/12/43, quoted by Brian Fitzpatrick in "The Rich get Richer," p. 54—our emphasis.)

Enough has been said to show that the Labor Party serves as an instrument of the ruling class, and does their dirty work just as well as the Liberals. Remember: He who serves the master, cannot serve the slave!

The "COMMUNIST" PARTY who can change their policy and tactics at the drop of the hat to suit Russian foreign policy, pays lip service to Socialism. Their real aim, however, is entirely opposed to Socialism.

It is State Capitalism on Russian lines, with themselves as the foundation of a new privileged class. At the moment, having taken a "left" turn, they pose once more as "militants"—telling the workers to fight for hard won conditions and awards WHICH THE COMMOS HELPED TO BREAK DOWN DURING THE WAR YEARS. Fifteen years ago they demanded a 30-hour week; today they ask for a 40-hour week. Such is the "progress" of these "militants." They appeal to you with a programme of immediate demands similar to those of the Labor Party. Their candidates are hand-picked "personalities."

**\* EVERY VOTE FOR THE LIBERAL, COUNTRY, LABOR OR "COMMUNIST" PARTY IS A VOTE FOR CAPITALISM.**

The Companion Socialist Parties of the World have always held that no reform under Capitalism can lift us out of our status as wage slaves. That the very best that Capitalism can offer the vast majority, between wars and depressions, is that we be allowed to work and battle with our masters over hours and conditions. Which is a pretty shoddy deal for a class whose intelligence and skill produces all the wonders of modern industry!

We have one immediate demand—in season and out, we demand SOCIALISM, nothing less. We want a system where every able

bodied adult will be expected to take part in producing the goods that Society needs; goods that will be produced for no other reason than that Society needs them; goods to which every human being shall have equal right of access. That system is Socialism. Instead of running the world for the Capitalists, mankind will then run it for the benefit of mankind.

Capitalism has served its purpose; it has brought production to the point where, stripped of the profit motive, it could provide a full life for every human being.

The means of production MUST BE MADE COMMON PROPERTY.

The longer they are left in the hands of an unscrupulous minority the greater the danger to mankind as a whole. The latest weapon of mass-murder, the Atomic Bomb, poses the alternative more urgently than ever before: Socialism—or Social Extinction?

When enough of the working class want it, Socialist candidates will stand. You can help to make it the next election. When we have a majority of Socialists in a majority of the countries of the world, we shall get Socialism.

A tall order? None know that better than the members of the Socialist Party of Australia. The Companion Socialist Parties of the World have gone a little way in a long time, trying to make their voices heard above the din of the Capitalist propaganda machine, the press, the radio, and the pulpit.

But in that long time we have become convinced that there are no short cuts. Working Class understanding is the only way, and when the working class understand they will have no use for any "leaders". There can be no betrayals.

Don't be appalled at the magnitude of the task! Be appalled instead at the horror of Capitalism, and resolve to do your best to end it.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
SOCIALIST PARTY OF  
AUSTRALIA

Melbourne, Sept. 1st, 1946.

## LECTURES

### MELBOURNE.

Tuesday, Sept. 10th: "Socialism and the British Tradition" (S. Willis).

Tuesday, Sept. 24th: "The Elections" (H. Holmes).

Other Tuesdays: Branch Meetings. Open to Public. All activities at: Temperance Hall, Russell Street, 8 p.m. Debate: "Is the Referendum a working class issue?" Yes: Mr. K. D. Kenafick, Sec. No. Description Campaign. No: Y. London, S.P.A., Sunday, Sept. 15th, 8 p.m., in Temperance Hall.

Lectures advertised "Age," Saturday, "Meetings" Column.

### NEW ZEALAND.

Auckland: Economic and Discussion Class, every Monday, 7.30 p.m., Carpenters' Union Rooms, Union Bank of Australasia Bldgs., East Street and Karangahape Road.

Petone: Watch local Press! All Lectures, etc., free. Questions, Discussion. Come along!

AUSTRALIAN BRANCHES.  
S.P.A.—SYDNEY: P.O. Box 2291, G.P.O. Meets fortnightly, Tuesdays, Room 99, Station House, Rawson Place. Public invited.

S.P.A.—MELBOURNE: P.O. Box 1440-M. Meets every Tuesday. See "Lectures."

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## S.P.A.

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.

- The Socialist Parties of Australia and New Zealand hold:
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

## S.P.N.Z.

- 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 interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
  8. THE SOCIALIST PARTIES OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND therefore enter the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and call upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under their banner to the end that a speedy termination may be brought 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 apply to nearest address.