

# DIRECT ACTION

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A FORTNIGHTLY SOCIALIST NEWSPAPER

## Throw the Liberals Out! Labor to Power on Dec. 2

What has twenty three years of Liberal rule meant for the masses of people in this country? It has meant Australian involvement in the genocidal war in Vietnam. It has meant compulsory service in the army for hundreds of young people. It has meant denial of educational opportunities to thousands of working class, immigrant and black students. It has meant consignment of millions of women to positions of subservience and inferiority. It has meant unemployment for thousands of workers and young people leaving school. Yet the McMahon government claims that nothing is wrong, that the present unemployment is temporary, that inflation will be stopped once the unions are brought under control and that women, black people and immigrants aren't so badly off. What are the facts?

A survey recently released in Melbourne shows just how much credence can be given to McMahon's and the Liberals' utterances that they have unemployment under control. The survey, conducted by the Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, a body operating at Melbourne University and composed of some of the foremost economic experts in the country, reveals that unemployment figures will reach 180,000 by January. The survey dismissed as inconsequential the so called decreases in unemployment in the September and October figures which have been so loudly hailed by McMahon as a turning point.

The survey did not say that the Liberals achieved their September-October "turning point" by discouraging people from registering for the dole. But we do. We know that throughout Australia hundreds and thousands of working people thrown out of work by the capitalist crisis have been intimidated out of registering as unemployed. We know that thousands of women who have become unemployed have not registered as unemployed because their chances of getting work are nil. We know that the Liberals are desperate to conceal the real unemployment situation in this country because that alone shows that they deserve to be unceremoniously dumped by the Australian working people.

But it is not on the issue of unemployment alone that the Liberals deserve to be cast aside. Have a look at their policies on almost any issue. How have they treated Aborigines during their twenty three years in office? Have they shown any willingness at all to dispossess a few giant pastoral companies of even a small proportion of their holdings so that black people can preserve what is left of their culture by gaining the right to own their tribal lands? No, the big pastoral interests which run the Country Party have seen to that. Have they even done anything to assure black people of adequate housing, health and education facilities? You only need to look at the aborigines'

infant mortality rate for the answer to that question. It is among the highest in the world.

Where do the Liberals stand on women's rights? Are they going to legislate to grant women equal pay or the right to abortion? Or would the simple act of granting some elementary rights to women hurt too many of the Liberals' powerful friends? These are the big employers who pay women only a fraction of the miserly wages paid to men, and the churches which are allowed to impose their views on the family on the whole society.

What will the Liberals do about inflation? Will they bring under control the big companies which use every pretext to raise their prices in order to squeeze a little more out of the working people? Will they impose a price freeze? Or would that too injure too many of the Liberals' friends?

Will the Liberals allow the working people the right to organise to fight unemployment and erosion of their working conditions? We think not. Have a look at the statements of NSW Premier Askin, a leading Liberal spokesman, he regards the leaders of the working class as "vermin" and has said so in public. The Liberals will do everything in their power to destroy the unions — the defensive organisations of the working people. Premier Askin has said "there is a fight on" and he knows what he is talking about; if the Liberals are reelected they will attack the unions, they will goad union leaders and fine strikers. The profits of their friends, the big companies are being eroded by the international capitalist crisis and they are seeking to shift the burden onto the shoulders of the workers. They are trying to force the working people to accept lower

standards of living in order to maintain their profit margins.

In the coming elections there is only one avenue open to people wishing to defend the rights of workers, women and black people, they must vote for the Labor Party. No other party offers a viable alternative to the misrule of the Liberals. The election of Labor after twenty three years of Liberal rule will be a tremendous boost for the labour movement in its coming confrontation with the employers. Only such a conscious political act by masses of working people will give the workers' movement and the movements of the oppressed the strength and the confidence they need for the coming struggles.

For an end to Australian complicity in Vietnam, for an end to conscription, for a step toward women's rights, for the defence of the right of the workers to organise, for a blow against inflation and high prices, for action on the demands of black people put Labor into power on December 2.

# 35 HOUR WEEK

# FOR

# WORKERS NOW!

# Vote Labor!

Special Feature p.4

# A Socialist Programme for Labor



## Why Labor Must Adopt A Fighting Platform

Despite the many parties and independents standing, there are really only two alternatives on December 2. We shall see returned to power either the Liberals, the party of the dominant sections of the capitalist ruling class, or Labor, the only party based on the workers and their unions.

From all indications, Labor will win the elections. It will win because the workers and youth are turning massively toward Labor as an alternative to the discredited L-CP coalition. However, the ALP leadership doesn't project Labor as a fighting, socialist alternative to the Liberals but as a better administrator of the capitalist system - more "efficient", less "inept", and so on.

On every basic issue Whitlam avoids socialist answers (the only ones) because they challenge the power of the employers, whose interests Labor's present leaders are ultimately pledged to defend. Thus, for instance, Whitlam proposes a "prices justification board" to control inflation. Why not campaign for pegging wages automatically to the movement of the cost of living and for an immediate price freeze? That would, if implemented, end the suffering which continually rising prices imposes on masses of low income families. But it would mean a head-on clash with the employers and their use of inflation to maintain their profit rates at the expense of workers' living standards. Mr Whitlam has no stomach for such a confrontation.

Nothing can make a capitalist Australia a fit place in which to live for labour

and its allies. The crime of the ALP leadership is that they deny this and peddle the illusion that a few changes can fix up everything. As long as capitalism exists, a tiny minority will live at the expense of the vast working majority. These two classes have nothing in common.

Because Whitlam and Co. are terrified of appearing as "radicals" or (heaven forbid) "socialists", because they want to appear as "sound", "moderate" and "responsible", they constantly capitulate to the attacks of the employers. A big issue (at least in the columns of the bourgeois press) is the "cost" of Labor's policy proposals. Whitlam says that "the economy" can easily afford them. This is really a non-issue (a better question is whether we can afford another L-CP government). To its capitalist critics Labor should say: Well you might worry for you'll be paying; you've made yourselves rich through the toil of the working class and we intend to reclaim those riches, rightfully ours, to rebuild this society and make it fit to live in. Unfortunately, Mr Whitlam's proposals have far more modest aims in mind.

This country is immensely rich, yet under the capitalist system it cannot give a decent life to more than a small minority. Unemployment is the lot of tens of thousands and threatens many more; high and always rising prices make life a struggle for masses of low income families, as do high rents and taxes, costly medical care, and inadequate and expensive transport; a decent

education is the privilege of but a few; imperialist alliances line us up with the world's oppressors and lead to huge defence expenditures which would be better spent on improving the lives of the masses; women continue to be discriminated against, second class citizens as do black people, the original inhabitants of this country; capitalist pollution, the result of profit-mad industry and a government refusal to provide an adequate infrastructure for "modern" cities, blights everything and threatens to make urban life impossible. That is the reality - yet it needn't be that way.

The reason for the gap between the objective possibilities and this ugly reality is that under capitalism profit not human need is the ultimate yardstick in every question. It is not profitable to end unemployment, curb inflation, grant equal pay, end pollution, etc. Any departure from this golden rule is due to the power of the mass movement forcing the capitalists to make concessions.

Under socialism the wealth of this country would be controlled by the immense working majority and used in its interests and those of the oppressed of the world. A socialist government would nationalise industry, the banks and transport under workers control and move towards a planned economy which would liberate the productive forces from the restrictive fetters of the capitalist private property system. This is the economic basis for the final liberation of society from all forms of oppression.

Now, Labor does have a "Socialist Objective". Its implementation relegated to the distant future, its content watered down, it remains as a testament to Labor's origins and the hopes of many of its supporters, past and present. In 1921, at the impact of the mass radicalisation sweeping Australia and the capitalist world after the imperialist war and the Russian revolution, the ALP adopted its Socialisation of Industry objective. However, the right wing succeeded in defeating moves to incorporate this aim in the party's fighting platform, but instead adopted it as an "ultimate" aim, which the right wing could ignore in its practical day to day work.

In the crisis beset years to come huge struggles will shake society and will find their reflection within the Labor party. Perhaps the 1921 struggle will be repeated, hopefully with a happier outcome for those who look to Labor to take a clear stand on the side of the oppressed and exploited.

Below we outline a programme which we think Labor should adopt and campaign on if it is to meet the needs of the labour movement and its allies. It is not exhaustive of every question facing us. It is not a recipe book but ties together the demands raised by many of the struggles of recent years. In it socialism is not relegated to the distant future, but saturates the whole programme which, basing itself on the immediate needs of the masses, challenges the power of the capitalists and poses the need for a socialist reorganisation of society.

**END AUSTRALIA'S COMPLICITY IN THE VIETNAM WAR!** Nixon is trying to confuse international public opinion into thinking that the Vietnam war is about to end on the basis of the "peace" treaty that American imperialism is forcing on the Vietnamese at gunpoint. What we want and what the Vietnamese want is the immediate and total withdrawal of all US troops and materiel from Indochina. Nixon has no right to negotiate with anyone.

**End Australia's complicity in the war!** Withdraw all the Australian advisers! End all Australian aid and support for the puppet Thieu regime. Put Australia on the side of the Vietnamese in their fight for self-determination.

Get Australia out of SEATO and ANZUS and other aggressive military pacts.

Abolish the National Service Act. No more conscripts for imperialist wars abroad.

Support the struggles for national liberation of the African, Asian and Latin American and Niugini peoples, and of oppressed nationalities in the imperialist countries.



**SUPPORT THE STRUGGLES OF LABOUR.** The ALP must lead the united fight back by the labour movement to the offensive of the bosses against the rights and wages of the working class.

Against unemployment, demand jobs for all. Shorten the working week, with no loss of pay, as much as necessary to spread the available work among all who need a job. As an immediate step bring in the 35 hour week at 40 hours pay.

The government must start a programme



of public works to provide work at union rates for those that industry cannot employ.

The dole to all those out of work.

Nationalise under workers control any firm which threatens lay-offs.

To combat inflation, cost of living escalator clauses in all awards. Also

In their attempt to bolster sagging profit rates at the expense of the working class the bosses are trying to curtail basic working class rights such as the right to strike. Repeal all anti-strike and anti-union legislation - repeal the "Lynch Laws" and Dunstan's anti-union law. For an end to Arbitration - for direct bargaining.

For rank and file control of all aspects of union life.

Equal rights in the union and on the job for women and black people. Full union support for the struggles of women and black people.

Full union rights for apprentices.

**END THE BURDEN ON LOW INCOME FAMILIES.** Masses of working class families have to cope with low wages, pensions; and high rents, taxes, medical bills and fares.

Abolish all taxes on incomes of less than



# A Socialist Programme for Labor

per week. 100 per cent tax on all incomes over \$10,000.

the pension and the dole immediately to the average wage.

ce all rents on apartments and houses to less than 10 per cent of family income.

alise medicine to give totally free dental and dental care to all.

a crash programme to build a high speed free public transport system in the major cities.

**SUPPORT THE DEMANDS OF YOUTH.** Free education (including allowances to those who need it) from pre-school to tertiary. An end to entrance qualifications. For immediate jobs when students leave school.

nd to all state aid to private schools. A massive increase in educational expenditure, especially to inner suburban working class schools.

self-student control in all schools tertiary institutions.

full democratic rights, including freedom of political activity, for students in all educational institutions.

all legal rights at the age of 18.



controlled by those who use them,

For comprehensive sex education courses in the schools.

Write women back into history — for women's studies courses controlled by women in all educational institutions to tell the real history of women.

**SELF-DETERMINATION FOR BLACK PEOPLE.** Black people are an oppressed nation in their own country. For the democratic right of black people to determine their own destiny.

For the granting of all land rights claims. Adequate compensation for all land seized since the whites came to Australia.



**THE LIBERATION OF WOMEN.** The fundamental question facing women is that of control over their own lives. For the repeal of all anti-abortion laws and the ready availability of contraceptive devices and information.

Abolish all discriminatory sexist laws against women. Immediately bring equal pay and equal job and educational opportunities.

free, 24 hour child care centres



control. Really effective controls must be established and implemented.

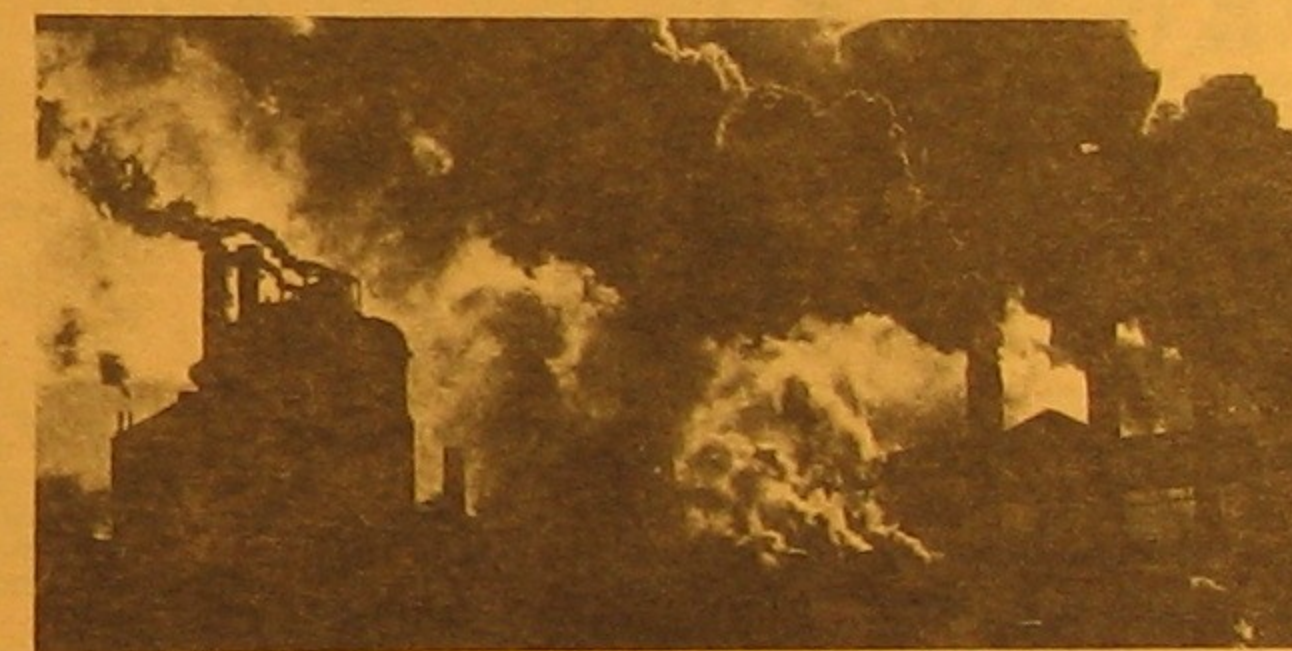
Legislate to force industry to establish strict pollution controls. Set up committees of workers to enforce the law.

100 per cent tax on the profits of all polluting firms. Divert "defence" spending into pollution control and research.

Nationalise any company which refuses to stop polluting the environment.

**END INHUMAN TREATMENT OF PRISONERS.** Capitalist prisons are instruments of oppression of the poorest layers of society. Under socialism prisons will not exist. As immediate measures, demand humane treatment and conditions for all prisoners. For an end to all censorship and mail restrictions. For full union rates for all prisoners' work.

**FOR AN END TO THE WHITE AUSTRALIA POLICY.** For an end to all restrictions on immigration.



**STOP THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT.** Pollution and environmental destruction by big business continues unchecked by any government

**FOR A SOCIALIST AUSTRALIA.** For a workers government which will nationalise all industry, financial institutions and transport under workers control.

## Socialists Campaign for Labor

Supporters of DIRECT ACTION and members of the Socialist Workers League and the Socialist Youth Alliance are campaigning for an ALP victory under the slogan "Labor to Power — Fight for Socialist Policies". We want to raise with ALP members and supporters the vital questions Labor must answer now and in office. The inadequacy of the present conservative ALP leadership must be pointed out to as wide an audience as possible and a start made in organising the forces for a fight for a socialist programme.

In the present period DIRECT ACTION has carried an extensive coverage of Labor activities and policies. The paper has been consistently and successfully sold at ALP election rallies and meetings. We have also covered Australia Party and Communist Party rallies. The special DIRECT ACTION election broadsheet has been extensively distributed — about 45,000 have been printed.

Last week in Melbourne Gough Whitlam, before an enthusiastic capacity audience in the Springvale Town Hall, followed up his policy speech of the night before. At this meeting over 1000 copies of the

special broadsheet were distributed and more than 200 copies of DIRECT ACTION sold. A revealing if predictable response was given by Mr. Whitlam to a question by one of our supporters. He was asked if he intended to immediately end Australia's complicity in the Vietnam war, by breaking with Thieu and Lon Nol, and if he would pledge his support for the November 18 antiwar actions in line with official ALP policy. Mr. Whitlam felt that evasion of the question was the safest policy.

DIRECT ACTION has also been extremely well received in areas of the LaTrobe Valley, scene of the recent militant strikes. Two recent visits there resulted in over 300 copies being sold.

At Mr. Whitlam's opening campaign speech in Blacktown we sold over 200 DIRECT ACTIONs to the overflow crowd as well as distributing large numbers of our election supplements. The response of the audience clearly showed the nature of Labor's support and why masses of youth are turning toward the ALP. References by Mr. Whitlam to ending conscription, grant-

ing land rights to black people and "ending" the Vietnam war received thunderous ovations. However, outside the meeting Mr. Whitlam was given a leaflet advertising the November 18 antiwar demonstration in Sydney. On being asked whether he would support the action he replied that he'd have to read it first (of course). The organising committee never got any reply.

One curious thing we've noticed... apparently for the ALP leaders there are different kinds of support. There is the support that the mass of people looking to Labor give them; they'll vote for them, enthusiastically or not so enthusiastically, in the belief or hope that Labor will resolve some of the many problems they face. That kind of support is quite acceptable. Then there's the support they get when they go the rounds of private enterprise for campaign contributions. That too is very acceptable. Then there is the support that we and other socialists give to Labor. Several times at rallies some official has felt obliged to dissociate the ALP from DIRECT ACTION in various terms. There is clearly support and... support.

Because this issue of DIRECT ACTION will only be on sale for one week before the elections, it is only eight pages instead of our usual sixteen. We will have a new issue out immediately after the elections with a full analysis of the results.

After the election period our regular features, our women's column, our World Revolution column, our Letters column and our series on the history of the Trotskyist movement will return. Meanwhile, DIRECT ACTION remains the best value around. Don't miss a copy, subscribe now, while our 15 for \$1 special offer lasts.



# WHITLAM'S POLICY SPEECH

## WHAT IT MEANS FOR AUSTRALIAN WORKERS

By JAMIE DOUGHNEY

So far the response to Whitlam's speech has been varied but predictable. Standing squarely on the side of the most conservative sections of big business, Prime Minister McMahon not surprisingly reacted to the imminent election of an ALP government with statements like the following from his televised election address:

"... The Labor philosophy of socialism and the all powerful State in a society where the Government is the master and is dominated by the left-wing and the powerful militant trade unions. . ."

Particularly interesting is the reaction of the capitalist press which clearly reveals the divisions among capitalists in regard to the question of a Labor government. The ultra conservative Sydney "Sun" of November 14 carried as its headline a statement from New South Wales Liberal Premier Askin, "Election of Labor Means End of NSW". From those sections looking toward Labor for "sounder management" of the capitalist system came various statements of praise. The Melbourne "Age" of the same date spoke of Whitlam's address in its editorial in the following terms: "The programme is notable for its range and scope, even if not all its proposals for change and reform can be accepted without qualification or questioning. The best things about it are its blend of idealism - legitimate idealism rather than the hollow working-class idealism of other elections and other years - with realism; its concentration on long-neglected issues; its attempt to make articulate policy out of issues which have in recent years become trendy catch-cries."

However, perhaps the most forthright and startling comment was to be found in the finance pages of "The Australian". Under the dual headings of "Whitlam's Plan NoThreat To Business" and "Goals Impressive; But Policy Favours 'The Rich' economist for the "Australian" Kenneth Davidson, wrote: "The political manifesto presented to the Australian people last night by the leader of the Opposition, Mr Whitlam is bourgeois in its appeal and elitist in its intent. . . under the superficial tenderness of some of the specific

proposals is some nasty equity implications for Labor's traditional working class supporters."

Certainly strong words from one of the most eminent newspapers of the employers in this country. Nevertheless it provides an indication of just how mealy-mouthed the proposals of Whitlam were.

What the response of the press reveals, and this is borne out by examination of the ALP platform, is that the proposed answers to pressing political questions are of a contradictory nature. At best they offer pseudo-solutions, when attempts at solutions are really offered at all, reflecting once again the unique position of the ALP in Australian politics.

On the one hand Labor's policies are responsive to the pressure for elimination of the ills of this society and the demands of the working class for a better standard of living, an end to unemployment and inflation etc. All of which pressures the Liberals stand firmly opposed to, trying to block them at every opportunity. The ALP is subject to the efforts of working people and the oppressed to act in their interests against the parties of the capitalists. Hence its policies must accommodate these pressures to a certain extent, giving rise to such attitudes as opposition to the Indochina war and conscription, calling for an end to unemployment, better education, higher social services etc. This was well illustrated at the Blacktown meeting, where the youthful audience responded the most enthusiastically to the most concrete and radical proposals such as an immediate end to conscription.

Yet on the other hand the ALP leaders, imbued with the spirit of conciliation, are unwilling to press these issues any further than the bounds of "respectability" permit. In fact it avoids them wherever possible. The ALP then becomes the instrument for the development of "the spirit of national cooperation" between the implacably opposed interests of the working people and the employers, with the aim of managing the present capitalist system more efficiently than the Liberals.

This side of ALP policy is strikingly pronounced in Whitlam's policy speech - socialist solutions being deliberately

avoided in the hope of catching the middle income vote with a policy of "moderation" and "mediation". This attitude is exemplified by statements like the following from the election speech:

"The key to financing Labor's programme must be strong and continuing economic growth based on sound national planning and national cooperation between Government, employers and employees. To obtain that cooperation it is necessary to convince all sections of the community that responsibilities, burdens and opportunities are being shared equally by all sections of the community. Employees, as consumers, must know that their national Government requires equal cooperation from all powerful sections of industry."

It is not surprising that with this style of politics up his sleeve Whitlam is able to attract certain sections of the capitalist class to his side. The more subtle approach to quelling industrial and social discontent, to say nothing of the benefits of increased state support for the economy through the manifold establishment of new bureaucracies in the Fabian model, offer new promise for those more up to date capitalists who are dissatisfied with the perennial backwardness of the L-CP coalition.

On the question of the Indochina war and Australian involvement the ALP should enact its stated policy immediately, severing all bonds with the Thieu and Lon Nol regimes. No equivocation can be tolerated on this score, as more than once Whitlam has hedged when confronted with this question.

With unemployment at its highest level for 10 years and inflation at its highest for 20, a Labor government should be at the forefront of the fight for a reduction of the work week with no loss in pay. This provides the solution for unemployment by sharing the available work. Similarly for inflation the Prices Justification Tribunal as proposed by Labor only goes part of the way; what is required is a total price freeze. In addition wages should be pegged to the cost of living to counter any price increases. But Whitlam has rejected these real solutions for a fallacious scheme which makes workers depend



on the well being of capitalism as reflected by its "growth rates". This is not the answer.

On industrial relations we need a Labor government ready at all times to defend the working-class and its right to strike against the ever profit-hungry employers. However Labor proposes a glib "harmony" and would attempt to limit the right to strike through the infamous Cameron proposals. And so it goes on. Over the rights of women, blacks and homosexuals the Labor leadership continues to equivocate, dodge and present superficial solutions.

Although the ALP is the mass party of the Australian workers, and should be supported in the elections by virtue of this very fact, nowhere does its leadership present a challenge to the capitalist system and the misery it creates. What must be done is to project the ALP as a real class-struggle alternative to the Liberals, championing the needs of the oppressed. This it can do, being based on the forces of organised labour, and it should have no perspective of loyally maintaining the status quo.

It's time for some socialist policies!

# HOW WILL LABOR FACE THE ECONOMIC CRISIS?

By JIM MC ILROY

More and more signs are apparent that December 2 will see the fall of the Liberal-Country Party coalition from power after 23 years but not before time. The Labor bandwagon is fully under way with large enthusiastic meetings in several states. Gough Whitlam in his election speech outlined his potential government's platform. His eyes are firmly fixed on the PM's job but there are many others in this country who would be happy to offer to these people and to all the others who are suffering under this capitalist system? If one is to judge from the campaign promises alone, the simple answer would be - very little.

Labor's programme consists of a series of give-with-one-hand-take-with-the-other proposals, and an elaborate network of new bureaucracies to oversee the various aspects of the economy. Both aspects reflect the "change by gradual stages" ideology which has always dominated the thinking of Labor leaders, and has invariably (e.g. under Chifley) led to an augmentation of centralised power and no real improvement for the majority of working people. Whitlam promised at least 20 new bureaucracies of various kinds, including a Prices Justification Tribunal, a Schools Commission, a Pre-schools Commission, a much enlarged Commonwealth Grants Commission, and a "takeover secretariat". Most of these new organisations are seen as means of making society run more "efficiently" through the creation of more and more "efficiency" can only serve to increase the profits of big business, and not serve the interests of the working class.



Workers in the Depression of the 1930's.

A number of Whitlam's proposals were quite specifically anti-egalitarian, aimed only at making things harder for the lowest income groups. Even some commentators in the big business press noticed this. "The Australian" economist commented (14/11/72): "For a start, Mr Whitlam's proposal to make interest charges on housing finance tax deductible is quite explicitly inflationary as well as being viciously regressive."

Another example is the abolition of the means test. "The Australian" continues:

"Abolition means that about 60% of the work force will be paying higher taxes to support a \$20 boost to incomes of people who are already better off than they are."

And yet Whitlam maintains that no tax increases will be brought in by Labor. What this means in practice is that the working class will lose out once again with inflation and the extremely regressive tax structure which exists at the moment eating into earnings. The proposed "closing of loopholes in the tax structure" will solve nothing. Nothing

but an inversion of the tax structure including for instance, a rise to 100% for incomes over \$10,000 and no tax for incomes under \$100 per week can really produce any move in the direction of equality in incomes. But of course this is only a start in what is really required to produce equality in this society. Fundamentally, the system of production for private profit must be eliminated for all time through social ownership and control and distribution according to need.

The ALP leadership does not dare to mention the word "nationalisation". Instead we find Whitlam offering all things to big business. "We shall give priority in public cooperation to setting up economic planning machinery with industry and employers' representatives to restore strong and continuing economic growth". Labor leaders plan to offer themselves as super-protectors. Protecting whom? Well, Australian capitalists who provide jobs for Australian workers (but also just as willingly throw them out of work). Insurance companies will have their investments in "approved companies" guaranteed. How can any company, based on exploitation for private gain, be "approved"? Certainly not by Australian workers. But their "representatives" have other ideas.

Labor has made a verbal commitment to full employment. Whitlam again: "Labor's first priority will be to restore genuine full employment - without qualification, without hedging. This requires that the national government must by consultation and cooperation with all sections of industry achieve a growth rate of 6% to 7% in each of the

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