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## CONTENTS

	Page		Page
Against War . . . . .	1	One Aspect of Marxian Philosophy (X.) . . . . .	14
Current Notes: The War Danger (Charles Silver) . . . . .	2	Fascism in Melbourne (Ralph Gibson) . . . . .	17
Australia Prepares for War (H.) . . . . .	7	Events in Germany (W.) . . . . .	19
The Soviet's Peace Policy (M.) . . . . .	10	Students and War (I.C.) . . . . .	22
In the Dungeons of the Berlin Police Headquarters (Kisch) . . . . .	12	The State Anti-War Conference (J.H.) . . . . .	24
		The Australian Working Class Movement (F.) . . . . .	26

## AGAINST WAR

TO-DAY the world is more heavily armed than ever before. The powers are frantically seeking a solution to their desperate plight. A crop of international conferences has failed to arrive at this solution. No end of conciliatory speeches by Hitler, MacDonald, and Roosevelt can conceal the deadlock at Geneva, the sabre-rattling in Germany, the economic catastrophe of U.S.A., or the savage brutality of Japanese imperialism. The heightening of the Fascist terror in Germany is a war preparation which has the full support of the worst reactionaries in Europe, who recognize in Fascism the weapon of attack on working-class resistance to war. The invasion of North China by Japan is now openly stated in the press to be a blow at "internal disorders" occurring especially in Pieping. A new wave of anti-social incitement has commenced. In every country, including Australia, working-class activity is being suppressed by ruthless means. At the same time, the capitalists agree in their opposition to the Soviet Union, and prepare for war against it.

The grave danger of war is obvious.

Melbourne University students have discussed the problem of their attitude to war. By a narrow majority, the Oxford resolution—"That this house will, under no circumstances, fight for King and Country"—was upheld at a Debating Society meeting. Several speakers there stressed the uselessness of passive resistance to war. It is this feeling of uselessness which deters many opponents of war from declaring themselves. It is useless to be a pacifist, they say. We agree. Pacifism

is the reaction of people who, while determined to oppose war, do not understand its nature. But pacifism is not only useless, it is dangerous—it denies the necessity for action against war.

On the 3rd May, nearly a hundred students at this University pledged themselves "to conduct a determined and persistent fight to prevent at all costs the occurrence of such wars." At this meeting an anti-war committee was appointed. It will determine how this fight is to be carried out.

The anti-war movement at this University must take the line of action indicated in the editorial of *The Student Vanguard*, London, in its March issue. This is an answer to the pacifism of the Oxford resolution.

"Wars to-day, apart from those fought by a nation for its own liberation, are imperialist in character, are fought between capitalist powers for the redivision of markets and cheap labour—that is to say, for the redivision of colonial territories and spheres of influence.

"Our attempts to prevent such wars are determined by the tools used in war—these tools are members of the working class, munition workers, transport workers, the rank-and-file of the armed forces. Each warring nation uses the same tools; the working class of one country is used to slaughter that of another; and this indicates the effective means of preventing war. The working class must unite to prevent war by strike action and sabotage; we students must unite with the workers to take action against war."



# CURRENT NOTES --- THE WAR DANGER

THE Achilles' heel of capitalist production lies in the fact that whereas power to produce commodities increases without a halt, the impoverished condition of the working class places definite limits on the expansion of the market. As loan capital accumulates in the advanced capitalist countries, the possibility of profitable home investments declines. So the capitalist class searches frantically all over the world for relatively undeveloped countries requiring capital. Every advanced capitalist country depends more and more on the profits derived from capital invested abroad. In 1916 Lenin wrote: "The revenue of the British bondholders is *five times greater* than that from the foreign trade of the greatest trading country of the world. (*Lenin: "Imperialism," p. 110.*) Since the war, Britain's foreign investments have declined. Yet before 1929, "of the annual savings in this country of about £400 million, rather more than £200 million used to be invested abroad." Capital is owned by national groups; each group is supported by a State apparatus. The division of the world amongst capitalist States is almost complete, and so the struggle for the remaining areas of exploitation (for example, China) and for a *redivision* of the world becomes peculiarly intense. In Manchuria it has already led to WAR. In Paraguay and Bolivia, in Peru and Colombia, the struggle between England and America has also issued in war. In Europe, the struggle between groups headed by France and England on the one hand, and Germany on the other, for fields for investment in Europe and abroad (Alsace and Lorraine, Germany's erstwhile colonies, etc.), threatens another world war on a scale far exceeding that of 1914-1918.

FREE competition between relatively small capitalist groups has grown into the era of monopoly capitalism. "Monopolies are the more solid when *all* the sources of raw materials are controlled by one group. The international capitalist groups furiously devote themselves to the task of preventing competition by acquiring all the resources." (*Lenin: "Imperialism," p. 87.*) This struggle by monopolist groups for raw materials emerges in war. We saw the process in the years be-

fore 1914. Manchuria is rich in primary products—oil, timber, and minerals, particularly coal; so is Jehol. So Japan invades China, and hundreds of thousands of Chinese are slain. According to the ethics of capitalism, murder is a legitimate means of acquiring raw materials. The United States in South America (particularly in Nicaragua), England in India, and France in Indo-China are applying this capitalist ethic. "We" (that is Standard Oil and the Anglo-Dutch Oil Co.)—"We fight for oil." And at the same time America and England pile up huge armaments for the time when the "fight" takes the form of armed conflict rather than a trade war.

UNDER capitalism, capacity to produce commodities far exceeds capacity to consume. So overseas markets are of primary importance for an industrial State. In these circumstances, a feverish struggle for colonies becomes a distinguishing mark of imperialism. Again, each imperialist group raises tariff barriers or introduces the quota system against foreign competition, partly to protect the home market and partly in order that the profits created by selling commodities at high prices can be used to dump the same commodities overseas at much lower prices. Thus tariffs and quotas limit the world market, and, in so far as they lead to dumping, the struggle in the reduced market is intensified.

ARGUMENT as to whether the struggle between imperialist groups for fields for investment, for raw materials and markets, leads to war is futile. The concrete evidence of the war of 1914-1918, and the wars before and since that date, make an affirmative answer inevitable. The point that must be stressed is that in our own era the menace of imperialist war is peculiarly acute. For "the novelty of the recent imperialism regarded as a policy consists" (partly—C.S.) "in its adoption by several nations." Up to 1870 Great Britain had a virtual monopoly of the trade and colonies of the world. But from 1870 other countries (and particularly Germany, the United States, France, and Japan) began to rival her ascendancy. Thus we see how the unequal development of capitalist coun-



tries leads to war. When imperialism was adopted as a policy by *all* advanced countries, and the division of the world was virtually complete, the period of relatively peaceful capitalism came to an end: we live to-day in the era of imperialist wars. There is another side to the picture. As the struggle between imperialist groups becomes more acute, as the world market becomes saturated, the period of capitalist expansion ends too. Attacks on the working class follow; and this leads to the revolutionary uprising of the toiling masses. Ours is the era of wars and revolutions.

**M**ORE than half a century ago Marx pointed out that as capitalism spread throughout the world, the areas for exploitation would decline until capitalism entered into the phase of its general crisis, in which the antagonisms between classes would be immensely intensified, finally emerging in armed conflict. The general crisis of capitalism began with the imperialist war of 1914-1918. This war did not solve the crisis; it merely led to a new alignment of forces, and above all to the beginning of the world revolution with the triumph of the working class in Russia. On the contrary, after a period of temporary stabilization between 1923-1929, the general crisis has now entered on another particularly acute phase. Since 1929 the value of world trade has declined by approximately 60 per cent. During the same period there has been a corresponding decline in home production in most countries. We have shown that even under "normal" conditions imperialist conflicts for markets, etc., lead to war. During an acute economic crisis it is clear that the struggle between imperialist groups must be intensified. War comes to be regarded as the way out of the crisis, not only in Japan and Germany, but also in the other capitalist countries. At present the conflict between the rival imperialists takes the form (mainly) of tariff increases, dumping, depreciation of the exchanges, etc. But it is recognized that at any time the trade war may pass into the phase of armed conflict. This is proved by the fact that during a crisis unequalled in intensity, range, or duration, the capitalist countries are actually increasing their armaments. Consider "pacifist" England. "For the coming year the estimates for the fighting forces of Great Britain have been increased by £4,581,000 over those of last year." Else-

where there is to be "economy"; for example, the education grant is to be cut by £830,755. The international price level has declined steadily since 1925, but expenditure on world armaments has increased.

*World Armaments Expenditure.*

[Armaments Year Book, 1932, p. 454.]

Year.	Expenditure in millions of dollars.
1925 . . . . .	3497
1926 . . . . .	3557
1927 . . . . .	3873
1928 . . . . .	3950
1929 . . . . .	4107
1930 . . . . .	4126

Here is the clearest evidence that the capitalist States regard war as the outcome of their economic rivalries.

**W**E turn now to consider in greater detail the antagonisms which explain this vast increase in armaments expenditure during the period of capitalist decay. Leaving the question of the Soviet Union for later consideration, we find that the central fact in the European situation is the division of Europe into two camps. Led by France and England, we have on the one hand the States that gained by the redivision of the world in 1919. They are determined to maintain the *status quo*. On the other hand, we have the States whose expansionist tendencies were checked by the Peace Treaties, or who actually lost ground. They are headed by Germany and Italy, and are determined on a further redivision of the world—notwithstanding the fact that this redivision can only be effected by war. In order to strengthen herself in the event of a war of revenge, and as a bulwark against Soviet Russia, France created Poland and Czechoslovakia out of the territory of the defeated Central Powers and Russia, and she greatly increased the territory of Serbia (the present Yugoslavia) and Roumania. France does everything possible to strengthen the ties that bind her allies to her. But in addition she has more than doubled her armaments expenditure between 1925 and 1931—the increase was from 5,543,-600,000 francs (1925) to 11,599,700,000 francs (1931). (*Armaments Year Book*, 1932, p. 124.) The Little Entente (Czechoslovakia, Roumania, and Yugoslavia) realizes the imminence of war, and recently concluded an alliance which involved the creation of a



federation. Undoubtedly this was a war measure dictated mainly by the situation in Germany. Poland endeavours to strengthen her hold on the "free" city of Danzig, and so she lands troops in the city as a preventative step against German occupation. Hence the recent crisis. Later the Nazis raid the trade union headquarters in Danzig. The accession of the Fascists to power vastly increased the danger of war. The Nazis have constantly exploited all the chauvinist feelings in Germany arising from the fact that by the Treaty of Versailles the Reich lost seven million Germans and all her colonies. In addition, she was forced to pay huge reparations and was compulsorily disarmed. Now we find that Germany has determined to rearm. "We will be forced to complete our armaments whatever be the general limitations within the British plan," writes Baron von Neurath, Germany's Foreign Minister. The military character of the Fascist German Government becomes apparent when we remember that, in addition to the War Office, the Nazis on coming to power created two new War Ministries—a Special Aviation Commissariat and a second War Ministry for military training of German youths. The Nazis make gestures against Denmark in the north and Poland in the east. Both these States include former German territory in Upper Schleswig, Posen, Upper Silesia, the Polish Corridor, and Danzig. Why is Germany so insistent on re-arming? Because her expansionist tendencies, checked at Versailles, are thwarted by the fact that she has not a military machine of sufficient strength to back up her demands. War alone will serve the ends of the German capitalist class. In proposing the Four Power Pact, Mussolini stated that its basis should be the revision of the Peace treaties—the goal of the foreign policy of Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria.

It is against this background that we should regard the Franco-British note protesting against the smuggling of Italian arms into Austria. Comrade Thaelmann, leader of the Communist Party of Germany, has given the correct working-class answer to this chauvinist propaganda: "We Communists say to you, French workers, masses of the toiling people: 'Your fellow-sufferers in Germany, the workers and peasants there, are not your enemies, but your natural allies.' And at the same time we tell the German toilers that the French

workers and toilers are never their foes, but their class allies and comrades." This is true proletarian internationalism. The unity of the workers of the world as contrasted with the patriotic chauvinist war gestures and war preparations characteristic of capitalism.

THE antagonism between the defeated and victorious bourgeois States (enormously exacerbated by the wave of Fascism in Central Europe) raises the war danger as the most acute issue facing the working class. The colonial question has actually led to war at the present time. With regard to the colonial question, Lenin has drawn attention to the supremely important fact that the bourgeois States now export capital rather than manufactured goods to the colonial and semi-colonial countries. So we get the emergence of capitalism, and therefore of a working class, in these countries too. Imperialism thus prepares the way for the world revolution. (See in this connection the growth of the Soviets in China and the struggle of the workers and peasants of India against foreign exploitation.) The Lytton Report suggests "international action" to crush the Chinese Soviets, "which have become an actual rival of the National Government. They possess their own law, army, and Government, and their own territorial sphere of action." (*Lytton Report*, pages 23 and 24.) With the steady growth of Communism throughout China the resistance to foreign penetration grows (despite the defeatist attitude of the corrupt Kuomintang); and already the capitalists are considering "international action" for "national reconstruction." Because Japan is the bulwark of capitalism against Communism in the East (Communism being represented by the Soviet Union and the Chinese Soviets), France and England have steadily refused to take any effective steps to check Japan in her attacks on Manchuria, Jehol, and Shanghai, or in her advance south of the Great Wall.

THE present era also marks an intensification of the antagonisms between the victorious imperialist powers. We have already referred to the conflict between Italy and France, particularly in the Balkans—a conflict which leads Italy into an alliance with Germany, and caused the two countries to refuse to limit their navies at the London Navy Conference of 1930. The central an-



tagonism in the camp of the victorious powers is that between Great Britain and the United States. At the present time the struggle between the two imperialisms takes the form of an acute trade war. Following on England's departure from the gold standard, her currency (sterling) depreciated, and, as we know from Australian experience, this depreciation leads to exporters receiving an exchange bonus paid by importers. Thus, in their competition in the world market, British exporters were placed in a distinctly advantageous position. On the other hand, British importers found it difficult to buy American goods, owing to the high rate of exchange. The Ottawa agreements (involving a huge loss in America's export trade) worked in the same direction. Finally, the United States decided to employ "diplomatic blackmail" against the sterling block, and in an endeavour to recover her lost trade the United States has departed from the gold standard. In reply, Great Britain immediately increased to £350 million the Exchange Equalization Fund, which aims primarily at preventing the appreciation of sterling in terms of the dollar. If history tells us anything it is that acute trade conflict between rival imperialisms eventually leads to war. In fact, Great Britain and the United States have already fostered war between Peru and Colombia and between Paraguay and Bolivia. In the Far East, Great Britain refuses to support the United States in the strong line she has taken against Japan's encroachment on American interests in China. The conflict between the two countries with regard to war debts is another phase of the struggle.

Finally, we have the antagonism between the United States and Japan in the Pacific—an antagonism which has been further accentuated as a result of Japan's invasion of China.

**I**MPERIALISM does not mean merely an era of imperialist wars. It is above all the last stage of capitalism: the era of proletarian revolution. In the Soviet Union the revolution has already freed over 160 million toilers. The existence of a Communist State as powerful as the Soviet Union creates two worlds. Can we imagine harmonious relations between the World of the Working Class Dictatorship and the World of Capitalist Exploitation? Clearly no. Because the capitalist class all over the world lives in mortal fear of

the proletarian revolution; the capitalist class knows that the Soviet Union demonstrates the possibilities of workers' control, and therefore it is an inspiration to all toilers. So the Soviet Union must be abused and, if possible, crushed. Again, before 1917, Russia was an extremely valuable field for investment. In this sense Russia was a "colonial country." We may note in this connection the huge debts of the Czarist Government and the extent to which foreign capital controlled Russia's financial and industrial life. To bring Russia back into the imperialist fold appears to be an obvious way out of the crisis. That the imperialist powers desire to crush the Soviet Union, and that they are prepared to embark on a war of intervention to achieve this aim, is a fact which can be proved by history. After the Russian Revolution, Japan and the United States invaded Siberia, France and England sent troops to Archangel, and all the great imperialist powers spent huge sums in financing the counter-revolutionary generals. Intervention was followed by economic blockade. The attitude of the imperialists to the Soviet Union has not changed. No one can doubt that if the Czar still ruled in Russia, Japan's conquest of Manchuria would have led to war between the two States. Only the peace policy of the Soviet Union has prevented war. With regard to Japan's determination to seize the Chinese Eastern Railway (owned now by Russia alone), even the "Sydney Morning Herald" stated on April 27th that "It looks very much as if Japan is seeking a pretence for taking action against the Soviet Union." Bourgeois newspapers constantly refer to the probability of the Japanese invasion of Siberia. France strengthens her alliance with the Little Entente and Poland against the Soviet Union, as well as against Germany. The United States has never recognized the Soviet. In Germany Hitler recently made a speech which was violently anti-Soviet. But England at present takes the lead in provocative acts against the Soviet Union. It is well known that England's foreign trade has declined sharply since 1929; while on the other hand her trade with the Soviet Union has steadily grown. Yet after the Ottawa Conference the British Government announced its intention of denouncing the trade treaty with Russia; and the trial of the Vickers saboteurs and spies was chosen as a pretext for virtually breaking off trade relations. At the same



time we observe rapid intensification of the campaign of lies against the Soviet Union. War is capitalist policy continued by other means. Capitalist policy to-day is directed against the Soviet Union; only the sympathy felt by the workers in the capitalist countries for their class brothers in the Soviet Union prevents capitalist policy taking the form of war.

**WHAT** of the League of Nations? When Baron von Neurath announced Germany's intention to re-arm, the British Secretary for War (Lord Hailsham) immediately threatened that the League would employ "sanctions" against her; that is, economic boycott or war. The League is clearly revealed as a military alliance of the powers victorious at Versailles against the defeated countries, and (as the Lytton Report shows) against Communism. Hence the League's "strange" failure to invoke sanctions against Japan when, in defiance of her covenant obligations, she invaded China. While the capitalists *talk* peace at Geneva, the *realities* of war preparations and actual armed conflict (in Manchuria, etc.) proceed undisturbed. To take the path of the League of Nations is to take the path of the bourgeoisie—the path that leads to war. Peace can only be achieved by the proletarian revolution, by Communism.

**WE** are accustomed to reading in one column of a capitalist newspaper that Communism is a very wicked doctrine, because, forsooth! it involves violence. And in the next we learn that more millions must be spent on armaments. So the question is not violence or Pacifism. The capitalist class employs violence normally against the workers and colonial peoples. We have shown concretely that it is preparing for imperialist war and for a war of intervention against the Soviet Union. So the real question is: "In whose interests is the force to be employed?" The capitalist class in France, for example, arms its workers in order to protect its interests against the capitalists of Germany, supported for the moment by their workers. The workers are to do the fighting; the workers are to suffer. So, again, we must ask: "In whose interests?" Surely the proletariat must use force in its own interests, and against the exploiters who are preparing war. When

confronted with the call to arms, the working-class reply must be: "The enemy is in our own country." After *every* modern war the workers have realized this fundamental fact. *Every* modern war has been followed by a proletarian revolution, in which the workers have turned their arms against the war-mongers. The aftermath of the Franco-Russian War was the Paris Commune; of the Russo-Japanese War, the Russian Revolution of 1905; of the Great War, the triumphant Russian Revolution of November, 1917, and revolutions in Hungary, Germany, and elsewhere—revolutions which were crushed owing to the treachery of the social democrats in causing sections of the workers to fight, in the name of "democracy," for the bourgeoisie. Owing to the proletarian revolution, Russia withdrew from the Great War nearly twelve months before the Armistice. Imperialist war or intervention against the Soviet Union can be crushed at the outset if the opponents of war carry out the necessary preparatory work; if a vigorous anti-war movement is built up *now* before the outbreak of war; if the lesson that proletarian revolution is the true reply to imperialist war is recognized by every worker and intellectual. The fundamental task confronting the working class to-day is to build up now a broad, united front against imperialist war and against a war of intervention in the Soviet Union.

—Charles Silver.

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Australian capital has commenced the exploitation of the goldfields in New Guinea. The activities thus set on foot have increased the work of the Administration, which has accordingly been extended by the establishment of an Executive Council appointed by the Governor-General and a Legislative Council appointed from the Executive and containing in addition seven representatives of mining, commercial, and planting interests, also appointed by the Governor-General.

This Administration will carry on and extend the imperialist task of exploiting New Guinea's natural resources, using the cheap and, in reality, forced labour of the 500,000 natives in the interests of Australian capitalists. From this exploitation arises the unity of the New Guinea natives and the Australian workers.



# AUSTRALIA PREPARES FOR WAR

"AUSTRALIA must keep pace with the Empire, and the Empire must keep abreast of its needs in the light of the international situation, *always in the expectation and the hope of a reduction of armaments.*" ("The Argus," March 10; our italics.)

Thus the forces of capitalism account for the rapid war preparations now being made. It is no longer possible to conceal the hasty but well-planned strengthening of each defence arm, and, indeed, as their militarist propaganda increases in intensity the bourgeois deem it unnecessary to hide the preliminaries to actual warfare. This is made plain by press statements.

In November last, six articles of considerable interest appeared in the "Argus" (Nov. 17-23), their avowed purpose being "to explain the parlous state of unpreparedness against possible aggression into which the Commonwealth has drifted in consequence of economies." These, in the light of subsequent events, repay study.

The first was a general review of the situation. The second dealt specifically with the Navy. Deploring the decrease in the number of naval ratings during the past four years, the article explained that the loss could not be made good in an emergency by recruiting from the mercantile marine, because "that service also must be extended in an emergency." Does this hint at a conscription of all vessels and all seamen? Complaint was also made that the old out-of-date warships of the Australian navy should be scrapped and replaced by modern, well-equipped cruisers—because, since the Australian battleships were included in the quota allowed Great Britain under naval "disarmament" treaties, the existence of obsolete vessels was weakening the Imperial forces.

Need we comment? On March 8 of this year the "Argus" hailed the gift to Australia from Britain of five destroyers, and on April 5 the "indefinite loan" of a new cruiser to replace H.M.A.S. "Brisbane." The "Herald" of March 8 remarks with a shriek of pleasure: "Australia's naval defence requirements will be better served than with the previously suggested three 8000-ton cruisers. . . . For 'patrol' and 'police' work among the Pacific

Islands and in New Guinea and Eastern waters the destroyers would be of more use to Australia." A cryptic cable from London ("Argus," March 10) states that the destroyers "are among the vessels Britain is obliged to dispense with under various treaties." Dear fairy godmother!

But all this was not enough. Three hundred naval ratings have been added to the present personnel, and the Navy Board has announced as its ideal the provision of four up-to-the-minute cruisers. That this is no far-distant plan is revealed by the statement ("Herald," May 1): "It is not known as yet to what extent the Commonwealth Government and the Admiralty will be able to accomplish this ideal in the year 1933-34."

To pass on to the third article of the series. This handled the subject of the land forces. These, it was admitted, were equipped with a "fair" supply of small arms and light artillery, "reasonable" stores of ammunition, and facilities for making more. The "Argus" of December 2 praised Mr. A. E. Leighton, controller-general of munition supply, for having since 1927 built up throughout Australia a chain of munition factories which had attained "a high level of efficiency." At Lithgow Small Arms Factory the latest type of machine gun is being manufactured, and the Maribyrnong munition works have recently restricted their production to war materials only. (There were 1000 tons of explosives stored at Altona Bay, according to the "Argus" of March 24.) But there were no anti-tank guns, no modern heavy guns, no modern appliances for directing artillery fire, no armoured cars available. In discussing motor transport for military purposes, the writer of the article recommends heavier vehicles, particularly six-wheelers of the type adopted by the British Army. Morris six-wheelers are bought by private firms in Australia on condition that they be made available to the Government for defence purposes when necessary. No duty is charged on their entry.

Two months before this (September 19), the "Argus" had recorded the first effects of a new policy in Commonwealth military practice—a review of mechanical transport held in the Domain on Sunday the 18th. Twenty



types of mechanical transport were displayed in action. These included heavy artillery tractors, field artillery tractors, and vehicles of a general type; and it was indicated that this display was the firstfruits of an intention to carry out in Australia the entire mechanization of military transport. At the end of March, 1933, came the addition of armoured cars. The "Argus" (March 29) told of the projected use of ordinary motor-cars, "the armour—a cover of light metal fitting over the body and chassis—detachable and so designed that thousands could be produced by factories at short notice and fitted to motor cars which would be manned by specially picked young men trained in peace-time."—These young men, by the way, would practise manoeuvres *with their own cars*. . . . "Specially picked." Facilities for the production of this armour have been prepared at the Sunshine Harvester Works.

The coastal defences of Australia were of necessity stressed in the same article. "Normally the advantage in an engagement with warships should always be with coastal defences, partly because the guns operate from a fixed platform and *partly because their size and therefore range is not restricted by international agreement*." ("Argus," March 21: "It is suggested that the coastal defence equipment may be improved by the installation of long-range 16-inch guns.") This proposal has also been taken up by the Defence Department.

"To prepare a series of fortifications," a special party of officers and men of the permanent military forces had proceeded to Darwin. "The decision to construct special fortifications" ("Argus," July 15) "was made recently by the Commonwealth Government with a view to protecting the four oil tanks which have been placed there as a fuelling depot for the Royal Australian Navy." Is there any connection between this and the unwillingness of the Defence Department to allow the establishment of a Dutch-controlled air mail between Singapore and Darwin?

Consideration of this question involves a short statement of the relations between civil aviation and the Air Force. Turning to the next article of the series (November 21), we find that the sum set aside from Defence estimates for civil aviation was "intended to develop air routes, equip aerodromes, and provide a reserve of men and machines to be used for defence purposes. . . . Subsidies to

private companies have resulted in the importation of a number of machines which might be used for service flying." Commercial air companies, though their interests may at times conflict with those of the Defence Ministry, are in fact part of the Air Force, at the disposal of those who wish to embroil Australia in another imperialist war. To the temporary conflict of interests we may attribute much of the publicity given to the Dutch offers in connection with the planned England-Australian air mail, and their refusal.

A short account of the air-mail proposals. Negotiations were begun during the latter half of 1932 with the intention of setting up an England-Australia air-mail service. Imperial Airways Ltd. (which received an amount of £365,000 from Britain's last defence appropriation) arranged to extend its Indian service to Singapore. Representatives of the Royal Dutch Air Line approached Mr. Bruce in London with a proposal that their company should take over the service between the Australian coast and Singapore, unsubsidized; but the offer was unwelcomed. Difficulties of all kinds—such as the unsuitability of Darwin as an air base—were brought forward. The Defence Ministry emphasized the point that the Singapore-Australia section should be handled by Australia. The Australian Air Convention, a body representing commercial aviation, deplored the rejection of the offer "in view of efforts being made to increase trade with the Dutch East Indies." The "Herald" of March 4 reports Major H. T. Shaw, of the Air Convention Committee, thus: "Every unbiassed aviation expert knows there are no real difficulties in the way of beginning an efficient service if the (Defence) Department will merely allow the Dutch to come in and make their own arrangements." The major difficulties of the situation for the Defence Department were solved, however, by the registration on February 15 of an Australian company to act as agent of Imperial Airways Ltd., and to tender for the aerial service between the Australian coast and Singapore. The Defence Department is handling the whole business of establishing the air-mail service! Foreigners must at all costs be kept out of Darwin, where the new aerodrome will but add to the fortifications now converting it into a naval and military base. Australia's "defence" concentration points are as jealously guarded as the war bases of any European power.



The fifth article, on the question of the militia, discussed the comparative merits of voluntary and compulsory systems of training. While admitting that in one branch—the Citizen Air Force—the voluntary system gave better results because of more careful selection of recruits, the writer drew the conclusion from his review of the situation that “a satisfactory reserve of properly-trained men can be established only by reversion to compulsory training.” Three months previously (August 15) it had been announced that the reintroduction of compulsory military training, though favoured by both the military and political authorities, was not likely till the next financial year, on account of expense. “In the meantime, the Minister for Defence hopes to make voluntary training more attractive”—and in what way? One method was indicated in the “Argus” of Nov. 16: “Among the pleasant memories which former trainees may have borne from Seymour, . . . there are more painful reminiscences of heat, flies, dust, and sometimes bush fires. . . . The experiment is therefore being made of holding camps in spring instead of autumn.” Competitions calculated to arouse the interest of youths are held in militia circles; newspaper illustrations lionize the uniformed heroes. But is it essential that the numbers should return to a high figure? The mechanization of the army has been credited by competent observers with increasing the efficiency of each man by 300%. Mr. Latham stated recently in the House of Representatives that Australia was well up to European standards in this matter.

The concluding article treated the subject of poor pay, assigning this as a reason for lack of interest in the militia. Five days later Brigadier-General McNicoll brought the matter up in the House of Representatives, and on December 8 increases in naval pay to the

extent of an additional £60,000 annually. An increase in the pay of militiamen (to 8/- per day) is now under consideration.

These increases are part only of a general raising of expenditure on armaments and other materials of war. On February 9, the “Argus” stated: “Important recommendations for the strengthening of all arms of the defence forces of the Commonwealth will be placed before the Federal Cabinet within the next few months by the Minister for Defence (Sir George Pearce). . . . Believing that more money will be available for expenditure on defence in the next financial year, Sir George Pearce desires to increase the scope of each section of the forces *to the greatest possible extent.*” At the beginning of May, Cabinet was discussing an increase of 25% in the Defence estimates—last year’s vote of £3,000,000 being declared inadequate.

This clamour for increased expenditure on war preparations coincident with reductions in wages, pensions, child endowment, is part of the Gadarene rush made by the capitalist class of the world to war. War brings the destruction of materials, the creation of markets, the absorption of the discontented unemployed. It is the “solution” of the crisis for capitalism—for a moment. But this “solution” involves the capitalists’ reliance on immense numbers of workers—both in and behind the lines. Only the workers can carry out the war preparations, and thus the working class, *if it is organized*, has in its hands the power to prevent war. “The fundamental task confronting every opponent of war is to burn into the consciousness of every worker the lesson that he has *no* interest in supporting imperialist war, and that if the exploiting class succeeds in dragging him into such a war, then his reply must be: ‘The enemy is in our own country.’”

—H.

“This new Union of Nations, it must be assumed, will be managed just as existing alliances are managed. . . . The Union itself will be controlled by the governing authorities of the nations from whose point of view its activities will be conducted. . . . It will certainly have the small nations at its mercy, and whilst presumably it would suppress rebellion, it would have no power to deal with the demand of subject peoples striving for liberty. The handing over of the issues of

peace and war to an international committee of the governing classes. . . .”—J. Ramsay MacDonald, M.P. (*National Defence—A Study in Militarism*; 1917).

The League of Nations, Ramsay MacDonald’s dove of peace, is “controlled by the governing authorities”; has the small nations at its mercy; advocates suppression of revolution in China. Subject peoples still strive for liberty from the dominion of its members.



# THE SOVIET'S PEACE POLICY

IN his report to the 16th Congress of the Russian Communist Party, Stalin said: "We have succeeded in maintaining peace. . . . For the future no less we shall continue this policy of peace, with all our strength and all our resources."

In what ways has Russia attempted with all her strength and all her resources to maintain peace? What chance has she of succeeding? Why does she want peace? Are other countries opposed to her peace policy? If so, why? These are the questions which this article proposes to answer.

The Soviet Union makes no secret of its belief that the only way to prevent war is to prevent the causes of war. M. Litvinov, Soviet delegate to the Disarmament Conference of the League of Nations, said outright to the assembled delegates of the other nations: "The triumph of Socialist principles, removing the causes giving rise to armed conflicts, is the only absolute guarantee of peace." (Speech given on Feb. 11, 1932.)

The reason for this belief is plain to see. "War is needed by the imperialists because it is the only means of redividing the world, of redividing markets, sources of raw material, spheres for capital investment" (Stalin: "Questions of Leninism"). Even if the impossible happened and the rival capitalist powers disarmed, there would not be complete security from war, for commercial aeroplanes and industrial chemicals can be converted over-night into instruments of death. Hence the only absolute guarantee of peace is the triumph of Socialist principles.

What, then, of the Disarmament Conference which opened its meetings at Geneva at the end of January, 1932, and which has not yet reached a decision? Delegates from all the nations of the world, whether or not they were members of the League of Nations, attended this conference. This, of course, was necessary, for if disarmament is to prevent war it must be universal. Hence Russia was invited to send delegates to the conference.

Russia did so. Why? Had she any faith that in this way war might be stopped? No. As early as 1930, Stalin pointed out that the bourgeois governments were arming and re-arming themselves. For what? "Naturally

not for a tea-party," he says, "but for war. . . . Conferences for the reduction of naval armaments become conferences for the renewal and enlargement of the navies." ("Questions of Leninism.")

Having no faith, then, in conferences established by bourgeois governments, why did the Soviet send delegates to the Disarmament Conference? For two reasons. Firstly, because if she had refused, the capitalist countries would have used this as propaganda against her, telling the masses of their people that Russia had proved herself to be in favour of war by not sending delegates to the World Disarmament Conference. It is not the Soviet's policy to give bourgeois governments any pretext for arousing popular feeling against it. Secondly, the Soviet delegates could do useful work at the conference by putting forward a consistent peace policy, which necessarily had to be answered by the delegates from the other countries. By doing this, and by insisting that the workings of the conference should be made public, Russia has complete and final proof to show the world that her government is the only one in existence that is willing and able to work for the interests of mankind by abolishing war.

Let us look briefly at some of the Soviet's anti-war activities at capitalist conferences. As early as 1922, at her first appearance at an international conference, she advanced a project for complete, general, and simultaneous disarmament. But at that time the project was not even discussed, for the reason, as Lloyd George expressed it, "that it would load the ship of the conference with superfluous ballast." Time and time again throughout the past ten years we find Russia insisting that as long as capitalist principles exist in five-sixths of the world, the only means of organizing some sort of security against war is by total and general disarmament.

Her warning that pacts and treaties are not a sufficient guarantee for the preserving of peace—a warning lightly dismissed by the other powers—has been proved to be justified. Japan and China were mutually bound by the League of Nations Covenant and the Paris Treaty of 1928; now they are at war.



But why did the other nations reject the Soviet's proposal for complete and general disarmament? Briefly, because (as Russia said at the outset) capitalism and disarmament are incompatible. Capitalism means the exploitation of the weak by the strong. When, therefore, one country is more strongly armed than another, how foolish the suggestion must seem to it to throw away the means it has of benefiting itself at the expense of the other country! Such a suggestion is contrary to the logic of capitalism. To bourgeois countries, a disarmament conference does not signify a place where war or the possibility of war can be done away with—it signifies a place where their respective delegates shall, by interminable hedging and shuffling, try “to put one over” each other in such a way as to secure a real increase in armaments relatively to each other. Hence the failure of the Disarmament Conference. Hence its betrayal of the masses of the people whose will it is supposed to represent—those masses of people who do not want war and gain no benefit from it. Hence its exposure as a conference whose purpose is not to benefit the bulk of mankind, but to benefit only those few powerful individuals who at present control mankind, and who need armaments and fighting men for their private ends. For the capitalist countries, the Disarmament Conference is a place where they may fight for “security”—not for security against war, but for security to win any war in which they may become involved. As M. Litvinov pointed out: “These countries see security only in the more or less levelling of the chances of victory, by the redistribution, or even the increase, of armaments. But pre-war history,” he continued, “also knew this form of security. Does it really amount to anything more than the time-honoured principle of the balance of power, which ruled pre-war diplomacy? This principle, which at the best only increased the security of some nations at the expense of others, did not save the world from the most terrible war it has ever known.”

The other nations, then, would not accept Russia's proposal of complete disarmament. She, therefore, put forward a new proposal for partial and proportional disarmament. This proposal, however, was also dismissed. “Impracticable,” said the bourgeois governments. Yes, impracticable—for bourgeois governments. But why? Because, once more, capitalist governments do not want to prevent

wars, but to win them. Moreover, one of the strongest factors making them oppose disarmament is the existence of the class struggle, and the fact that the capitalist class by owning the means of warfare gains a sense of physical power out of all proportion to its size.

Enough has been said of the Disarmament Conference to show that Russia is justified in claiming that “it is all merely a smoke screen behind which the former policies are still being pursued—policies for the rapacious egoistical partitioning of the earth hidden behind various diplomatic subterfuges—policies which may at any moment develop into an armed struggle.”

What possible chance, then, has the Soviet Union of establishing and maintaining peace? Consider the world in which it finds itself. “For fourteen years it has been the object of indescribable slander and hostile campaigns. Even now many States, including one of the strongest naval powers, do not conceal their hostility to it, even to the extent of refusing to establish normal peaceful relations, and many States maintaining normal relations with it have refused to conclude or confirm pacts of non-aggression. . . . Taking into account all the States in both hemispheres, the majority have not yet established normal relations with the Soviet Union—in other words, are applying a boycott against it.” (Litvinov at the Disarmament Conference, 1932.)

How, in the midst of such a world, is Russia to maintain peace? Only by refusing time and time again to retaliate against the provocative acts of the capitalist countries; only by making public to the world her peace policy, so that the masses of the people in capitalist countries will see the truth of it, and do everything in their power to prevent war.

“I do not think there are any left who doubt the peaceable disposition of the country I represent,” said M. Litvinov at the Disarmament Conference. “But it is true that there are still sceptics and cynics who endeavour to minimize its significance by pointing out that the Soviet State requires peace for its socialist construction. We do not deny this, but do such people imply that it is only the Soviet State which can build itself up and develop in peaceful conditions, and that other conditions, not peaceful, are required for the development of capitalist States?”



# IN THE DUNGEONS OF THE BERLIN POLICE HEADQUARTERS

By Egon Erwin Kisch.

*[The Prussian Minister of the Interior, Göring, recently made a categorical statement to foreign press correspondents denying that a Fascist terror was raging in Germany. He admitted only that large numbers of Communist Party officials had been taken into "protective custody." Reports of the tortures of the prisoners, however, belonged to the realm of fairy stories. The following personal experiences of Egon Erwin Kisch, a writer, in the prison of the Berlin Police Headquarters (Kisch was arrested at the beginning of March and later expelled to Czechoslovakia) stamp Göring's statement as a lie. They show to what horrible physical and moral tortures the imprisoned revolutionary workers in Germany are subjected.—Ed.]*

I HAD hardly had time to fold my coat on the plank-bed, in order thereby to reserve a place in the crowded cell, before I was surrounded by all its inmates; fifty to sixty imprisoned workers began talking to me, showing me their ghastly wounds and relating their terrible experiences.

They rushed at me, thrusting one another aside; their stories were such a jumble that I could only grasp the details and could obtain from them no connected story. Again and again a fresh prisoner would hold forth, telling me his experiences and showing me his wounds.

For five or six days they had been sitting there together, suffering unceasingly the most unimaginable tortures, and now a comrade had come in who had not been with them; they wished to unburden their hearts to him, to tell him their grievances, to give him proofs of the bestiality of their tormentors. And that was why there was this throng around me—that was why I was assailed by this flood of facts and sights which left me quite faint and dizzy.

They had all been surprised in their houses by Storm Troops on the Sunday of the elections, or the day after, and had been ill-treated in front of their terrified families; their furniture had been smashed to bits and their books

torn to pieces. Without being allowed to dress completely—many of them were without shoes—they had been dragged away to the Nazi barracks, first to the so-called "Friesenkaserne" (barracks), and later to a factory in the Friedrichstrasse converted into a barracks for the Storm Troops.

"We'll soon knock the Communism out of you!"

For five days and five nights the Storm Troops had been doing their best to drive Communism out of them in every possible way.

One of the chief ways in which the spirit of the non-commissioned officer, now awakened from the dead, expressed itself was as follows: The workers had been compelled to exercise in the courtyard, to throw themselves in the mud and jump up again at the word of command, again and again; each time their strength failed they were spurred on with sticks and whips; made to fall down and jump up again until they lay there so completely unconscious that no blow from stick or whip could bring them to their senses.

They were obliged to line up every day and, their arms raised in the Fascist salute, to shout hour after hour in chorus: "Three cheers for our victorious Chancellor Hitler!" Anyone who did not stretch his arm tautly enough, anyone who did not shout lustily enough, was subjected to kicks and blows. The text of another slogan was: "What were we yesterday? Communists. What shall we be to-morrow? National Socialists. Hurrah."

They were also made to recite the Lord's Prayer in unison. In the barrack-rooms other ceremonies took place. The prisoners were made to drink castor-oil, then let down their trousers and bend over a table; they were then beaten with sticks until the skin broke and the raw flesh swelled out. (Almost all my fellow-prisoners at the police headquarters had these wounds. I saw them with my own eyes.) When, during this castigation, the purgatives took effect, their tormentors shrieked with laughter.



Other prisoners were forced, after taking castor-oil, to stand up naked with their faces to the wall, and to keep on bending their knees until these movements, to the great delight of their gaolers, were accompanied by the effects of the castor-oil.

One of the prisoners was placed facing his son; they were both given sticks, and were compelled, by being beaten with sticks and covered with a revolver, to beat each other. "Harder, harder," the order was given, and "Quicker, quicker!" Both of them were with me in my cell, father and son, both with their heads and faces terribly injured, the father's right eye bloodshot and protruding, and his jaw swollen, perhaps smashed.

The prisoners were continually given warning that they would be shot, and that five men had been shot that day in the cellar. At night their tormentors amused themselves by shooting into their sleeping-quarters. One or other of the victims would repeatedly shout out, "Shoot me then, you cowards!" whereupon he would be beaten with still greater fury.

All these tortures were accompanied by contemptuous remarks; such phrases were particularly popular: "We aren't giving you much fun, are we? On the other hand, we are giving your wives all the more fun. In nine months' time your wives will have fine little Hitler-kids!"

These remarks were the more disturbing and tormenting, in that not one of the prisoners was in even the slightest communication with his relatives or knew whether his wife had not also been dragged off.

A game of question and answer, which was designated "Cross-examination," was carried out as follows:—"What are you?" "I'm a pig of a Communist." Anyone who did not answer thus received a series of blinding blows on the head or on the mouth; but if he gave this answer his tormentors corrected him with a blow: "— swine of a Communist." And next time he had to say, "I am a swine of a Communist."

In reply to a question as to how they had come by their wounds, the wounded had to reply: "I fell against a stove when I was drunk."

Their beards were cut off, their heads shaven, generally on one side only, or singed off or torn out in handfuls; and in some cases the prisoners' hair was cut into the form of a Swastika.

This continual beating was too much for a major of the Storm Troops, so that at last he stamped his foot and shouted to his fellow-Nazis in front of the prisoners, "That's enough now!"

*Count Helldorf*, however, Commandant of Berlin, who personally superintended the barracks and had the prisoners led out before him, gave orders for fresh beatings. He was particularly interested in routing out Jews. He made the prisoners show their genitals, and asked:

"Your father's religion?"

"Evangelical."

"Your mother's?"

"Catholic."

"Hm, you're a typical Jewish half-caste. Your mother went with Jews."

The Jews amongst the prisoners had to suffer most, for they were the most cruelly beaten; every day they were taken to "execution," placed against a wall, and revolver shots were fired over their heads to frighten them.

All this time there was in the barracks a young boy of fourteen, who had been imprisoned because it was desired to obtain from him the address of his mother who was in hiding.

From other prisoners the Nazis wanted to discover the addresses of officials or of houses in which secret presses, explosives or arms were to be found. Of all the prisoners only one divulged the names and addresses of comrades. He also was in my cell. No one spoke to him.

On the day before I was brought back from Spandau to the Police Headquarters, everyone was brought hither from the Nazi barracks. They were obliged to go on foot; many of them were unshod, and they had to hold their hands above their heads and to march thus through the streets. At the corner of the Friedrichstrasse and the Unter den Linden one of the prisoners threw himself under a passing 'bus, and was picked up with his legs cut off. At the Police Headquarters the most severely wounded were bandaged and the prisoners were locked up in groups in different cells.

The light in our cell was not extinguished, as fresh prisoners were constantly being brought in. As there were already more than seventy there, they had to lie on the floor, there not being enough plank beds. Amongst others there were also some Social-



Democratic shop-stewards from a tramway repairing depôt, who had been arrested in the midst of their work by some Storm Troops led by an officer. There was also in our cell a uniformed National Socialist who had opened his collecting tin and used the money for himself; he had been arrested and placed with the political prisoners.

Until late into the night the injured surrounded me and overwhelmed me with their stories; my nerves were racked to the utmost, and I jumped up and paced to and fro. "Leave him in peace!" someone shouted, and came up to me. "You must understand us. We have had terrible experiences. In my case, for instance, they . . ." and he thereupon began to relate a fresh story.

They had, it is true, lived through in four or five days what I had to pass through in the space of a few hours; but they had had to experience it in person, while I only had to listen to it.

Not one of these workers who had been so inhumanly mishandled, not one—with a

single exception—had betrayed anything; not one of them spoke without hate and contempt of this kind of enemy; not one had lost his faith in the cause for which he had been made to suffer so terribly.

At midday on the 11th of March I was called from the cell and informed that I was to be expelled over the frontier. Only for a minute did I return, to fetch my coat. "Red Front," I said in farewell, and "Red Front" sixty voices answered me. A civilian policeman escorted me to the Anhalter Station; he had the money which had been paid for me, as well as my watch, my fountain-pen, and my knife, in his pocket. He travelled with me to Bodenbach, where he delivered me over to the officials of the Czech frontier police in return for a receipt, and handed over to me my things and the remainder of my money. Then I travelled to Prague.

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## ONE ASPECT OF MARXIAN PHILOSOPHY

**M**ARXISM is a theoretical system embracing philosophy, sociology, and economics; it is the revolutionary theory of emancipation of the workers and society at large from the limitations placed on them by the bourgeoisie. Its philosophy is a militant materialism. As Lenin aptly summarised it, Marxism "has completed the three chief ideological currents of the nineteenth century; represents respectively the three most advanced countries of humanity: classical German philosophy, classical English political economy, and French socialism combined with French revolutionary doctrines."

The importance of understanding clearly the philosophy of Marx cannot be too strongly emphasised. Lenin said that without sound revolutionary theory there could be no revolutionary party. We may add that without sound revolutionary philosophy there could be no revolutionary theory.

It was through his studies of philosophy which led him to study sociology and economics that Marx realised the impossibility of their separation. Bourgeois professors in general have not yet recognised this unity. There is between Marxian philosophy, sociology and economics a scientific unity which precludes the possibility of treating each as an independent study.

### *Marxism and Speculative Philosophy.*

The great idealist philosophers of Germany, Schelling and Hegel, had a great influence on Marx. However, it would be wrong to suppose that Marxism is the continuation of Hegelian philosophy; on the contrary, there is a definite and sharp break between the two, "a change of quantity into quality." Marx utilised the weapon they had forged in order to turn it against all idealism. Hegelian philosophy was the culmination of German idealist philosophy plus dialectics. Marx rejected the idealism of Hegel, but



utilised the dialectics, and turned it into a powerful lever of materialism. His work was greatly facilitated by that of another German philosopher, Feuerbach.

According to Hegel, "Nature is to be considered as a system of stages, the one necessarily arising from the other, and being the nearest truth of that from which it proceeds; but not in such a way that the one is naturally generated from the other; on the contrary . . . (their connection lies) . . . in the inner idea which is the ground of nature. The metamorphosis can be ascribed only to the idea. . . ." To Hegel, the historical process was subject to a law, and he sought the motive power of the historical metamorphosis outside the nature of man. This conception was, of course, a tremendous leap forward, an advance from the crude pragmatism of feudalism as well as from the utopian views of the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, its philosophy contains a vague element—"notion"—"the inner idea of Nature," etc.

Feuerbach criticised this standpoint. "Hegel's doctrine that nature is postulated by the idea is nothing more than a translation into philosophical language of the theological doctrine according to which nature is created by God, material being by abstract or immaterial being."

Thus, according to Hegel, the thought process is creator of the real, or, in other words, thought determines being. "Thought is the subject; being is the predicate." This conception was vigorously attacked by Feuerbach, who considered that Hegel tried to suppress the contradiction between being and thought, a contradiction so aptly brought forward by Kant (dualism). But this suppression of the contradiction by transferring it into the realm of thought does not solve it.

Marx denied the existence of this contradiction. Thought does not come before being, but is its consequence. The outer world not only exists outside the ego, but within it also. Man is only a part of nature, a part of being, and that is why there can be no contradiction between his thought and his being.

Engels wrote in *Anti-Duhring*, "If we enquire . . . what thought and consciousness are, whence they come, we find that they are products of the human brain, and that man himself is a product of nature develop-

ing in and along with his environment. Obviously, therefore, the products of the human brain, being in the last analysis products of nature, do not contradict the rest of nature, but correspond to it."

But Marx' philosophy is an advance from Feuerbach's. According to Lenin, Marx criticised it as being "mechanical," non-historical (not dialectical) and as regarding human nature abstractly, not as a definite "synthesis" of social relationships. It thus only "interpreted" the world, whereas "it was a question of changing it." That is, it did not grasp the significance of "practical revolutionary theory."

In his thesis on Feuerbach, Marx stated: "The materialist doctrine according to which men are the product of circumstances and education . . . fails to take into account the fact that the circumstances are modified by men, and that the educator must himself be educated." Old materialism was unable to solve this problem. The great discovery in this domain belongs to Marx.

"In social production which human beings carry on they enter into definite relations, which are determined, that is to say, independent of their will; production relations—which correspond to a definite evolutionary phase of the material forces of production. The totality of these production relations forms the economic structure of society—the real basis upon which the legal and political superstructure develops, and to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond."

This is the essence of historical materialism, or the materialistic conception of history. Thus the whole problem of development of the economic structure of society in a given epoch is reduced to the problem of the causation of the evolution of the productive forces. In this light the problem is solved simply in reference to the nature of the geographical environment.

But it is only a partial answer because, with the development of specific social relations, these in their turn influence the development of the forces of production.

Hence that which formerly was an effect becomes in its turn a cause; between the evolution of the forces of production on the one hand and the social system on the other there occurs a play of cause and effect which assumes at various epochs most divergent forms.



This discovery of the "motive" has elevated history to the realm of science. Marx goes even beyond this. "The mode of production of material life determines the social, political, and intellectual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of mankind that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness." This being so, the history of men is one of continual change of environment by both natural and human agencies. Thus human beings by constantly changing their environment constantly change their own nature. Thus, seeking for a perfect legislation within the framework of old production relations is an idle occupation which was taken up by the utopian socialists. The latter started from the abstract principle "human nature," and sought for a perfect social organization. Marx pointed out the fundamental fallacy of this approach, and demonstrated that "new legislation" will only be possible after a revolutionary overthrow of all existing social relations, i.e., after the conquest of power by the proletariat. This action is the culmination of the class struggle, the political contest between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The emancipated working class "in the epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat" will forge this "new legislation" out of its revolutionary experience and according to political expediency.

#### *Dialectics.*

According to Marx, dialectics is "the sum of the general laws of motion of both the external world and of human thinking."

It is a theory of evolution, but one that has been purged of vulgar conceptions that all changes are gradual and that no sudden violent transformations occur. It was clear to Hegel that such sudden changes did occur: ". . . not only changes from one quality to another, but also changes from the quantitative to the qualitative." This would involve a change of one phenomenon to another, and thus involve a breach of continuity. "Now every time there is a

breach of continuity there occurs a sudden change in the course of evolution" (Plekhanov). But according to Engels (and Marx supports his view), "Nature is the test of dialectics, and we must say that science has supplied a vast and daily increasing mass of material for this test, thereby proving that in the last analysis nature proceeds dialectically and not metaphysically."

This statement finds a striking confirmation by recent advances in science. For example, according to Plank: "Recent discoveries have shown that the proposition that nature makes no sudden jumps is not in agreement with the principles of thermodynamics, and unless appearances are deceptive the days of its validity are numbered. Nature certainly seems to move in jerks, indeed of a queer kind. . . . In any case, the quantum hypothesis has given rise to the idea that in nature changes occur which are not continuous, but of an explosive character."

Ryazanov comments that from the outset Marx' dialectics synthesizes gradual evolution with the theory of catastrophes, the theory of jumps. For the Marxian dialectic these catastrophes are indispensable factors in the dialectical process. Herein lies the main difference between dialectics and other theories of evolution.

This becomes even more emphasized by Marx: "In a certain stage of their development the material forces of production of society come into conflict (contradiction) with the existing relations of production, or, which is only a juridical expression for the same thing, with the relations of property within which they had hitherto moved. From forms for the development of these forces of production they are transformed into their fetters. We then enter upon an epoch of social revolution."

Marx has shown thus that economic evolution in a class society leads to a political revolution.

—X.

The Australian League of Nations Union's interstate conference agrees to "welcome assistance from any organization for the maintenance of peace," provided that its beliefs are "in accordance with the objects and methods of the League of Nations" ("Argus" 1/6/33).

Important modification—the support of a League which condones by silence and apathy now-existing wars. Peace-lovers who support the League, deceived by its protestations of pacifism, enable it to function as a war-making machine.



# FASCISM IN MELBOURNE

FASCISM is regarded by many as a peculiar product of the Italian or German temperament, or at any rate as a peculiar product of European conditions. Such a view is entirely false. Fascism takes its rise directly from the intensification of the crisis, the increasing militancy of the workers, and the consequent threat to the power and the very existence of capitalism. Therefore it is a world-wide phenomenon, and may be expected to blossom forth in Australia as everywhere else.

The present situation in Melbourne reveals that Fascism has not merely commenced its march, but has passed several milestones on the road to an open dictatorship. Free speech, in many parts of Melbourne, has become a mere name. Freedom of assembly and demonstration has ceased. Industrial direct action, organization for struggle on industrial issues, have come to be viewed as high-class political offences. The attack on the right of newspaper publication has commenced. What are commonly termed our "democratic" rights and liberties, always shadowy under capitalism owing to the private monopoly of wealth, are now singled out for open and forceful repression. They are being crushed not only by the power of money, but by the power of Fascist law.

To the capitalist class, it is true, and to those who support them, these rights are still real and substantial. Anzac Day demonstrations, speeches of election hacks, the "Argus," the "Herald," industrial organization and direct action by employers are in no way interfered with. Fascism signifies the enlargement of these rights for the possessing class, not their abolition. But for the masses it means the open theft of those few rights and liberties, won by hard struggle in the past, that have to some degree lightened their bonds and helped to provide a barrier between them and starvation.

How far has this movement developed?

The attack on workers' street meetings in the suburbs has now become general. The main battlefield has been Brunswick, where at the time of writing five successive Friday night meetings have been suppressed by heavy police forces, and the total of arrests and convictions has mounted to 19. But street meet-

ings have also been prohibited in Carlton and Prahran, and have been curtailed in most other suburbs. True, Fascism here advances with stealth, suppressing first of all only the most militant meetings in the most crowded quarters. But experience has shown that it finishes by sweeping the back streets and side lanes, and even driving away the Salvation Army! The reason why the Communists have borne the brunt of the fight for free speech is not that they alone have been attacked (though they have certainly been the principal target), but that they alone (for the most part, up to date) have been prepared to put up an effective resistance.

The special "political squad" of the Victorian Police Force, presided over by the would-be Fascist dictator, General Blamey, is the chief weapon of attack on free speech. Blamey asserts his authority over that of State Ministers and Municipal Councils. "No one has any power to permit street meetings," he stated in his reply to the protest of the Brunswick Council (no one, that is, except Blamey). The "political squad" exists to bash up workers' meetings and demonstrations, and the "evidence" of its members in the courts secures the conviction of militant workers.

On Friday, May 19, a young worker who had been shouting "free speech" slogans from a tram-top in Sydney Road, Brunswick, was pursued into a back street. According to the police report he fell and was accidentally struck by a bullet from a police revolver. The worker himself can produce the fullest evidence that he was felled to the ground, and while lying there a revolver was aimed and fired at him. The press, which expands or contracts its news at Blamey's behest, dutifully published the police report, though this is contradicted by eye-witnesses and would not bear the test of a moment's examination at an impartial public enquiry.

But the attack on free speech, even when conducted with firearms, is far from sufficient to whet the appetite of growing Fascism. It must swallow up also any trace of workers' liberties of whatever sort that the "liberal" period of capitalism may have left behind it. If street meetings are suppressed, then street demonstrations must follow; hence the general



mobilization of the police on May Day, the arrest of five peaceful demonstrators, and the savage sentences of £3 fine or 21 days' imprisonment and no time to pay. Again, the more powerful workers' organizations are sometimes able to hire halls for their meetings, or even to occupy them as full-time tenants; and of what use is it to drive "agitators" from the streets when they have these halls for a sanctuary? Fascist logic therefore demands the closing down of working-class halls. Hence the recent history of the Friends of the Soviet Union Hall in Melbourne, which was first (in September, 1932) attacked by hooligans armed with guns (who were allowed to escape by the police, the defenders being arrested instead of the assailants), and has since been attacked by the Taxation and Public Health authorities armed with regulation books and legal documents. The sudden and simultaneous interest of these authorities in all the legal technicalities surrounding the management of this hall would be baffling to anyone who did not understand the political motive behind it. To cripple the organization financially, to close down the hall—such is the object of their machinations.

But some of the most striking manifestations of Fascism in Melbourne have been on the field of industry. More important even than the street and the meeting-hall is the factory or other workplace, where the "agitator" has for his audience the whole of the working class, and where he has silent means of agitation that could be effective even under illegal conditions. Here Fascism plants itself with determination, seeking to root out not only Communists, but "mischief-makers" in general; not only strike-leaders, but all active organizers of struggle. The result has been a ruthless campaign of victimization and repression by private employers and Government departments alike. A long line of victims is formed, dismissed on specially invented grounds or on none at all—Mullins (no reason given), Miss Taylor (trumped-up charge), the Hawthorn unemployed leaders (for going on a deputation to the Town Hall), and the City Council employee, Syd. Herkes (again no reason given)—victims from all quarters sharing the common characteristic that they were striving to build up the workers' struggle against one phase or another of the capitalist offensive. Their dismissals were clearly political in every case. They were the penalty

for speaking about the Soviet Union, and for undermining the system of work for the dole. But it would be wrong to interpret the word "political" in a narrow sense. With the approach of Fascism every sign of agitation comes to be viewed as a threat to the present social order, and therefore as a major political crime. This was vividly illustrated when Councillor Wales made the statement (publicly praised by General Blamey) that he would make every employee of the City Council sign an oath of loyalty to King and Country *and* to the Council. It was also illustrated in the dispute on the "sustenance jobs" at Hawthorn, where the issues were of an "industrial" character—boots and clothing, dismissals, etc.—but where the men's leaders were arrested, and where a member of the Political Squad was despatched to make the arrests.

Not only is there wholesale victimization of political offenders, but all industrial agitation or struggle comes to be regarded as a political offence. This is a clear sign of Fascism in an advanced stage of development.

Lastly, there has been a further attack on the "Freedom of the Press." This "freedom" under capitalism has always been unreal, and was aptly described by Lenin as "the freedom of those who can afford to own a newspaper to debauch the minds of those who can only afford to buy it." Yet even this glorious capitalist "freedom" does not satisfy the capitalists in the era of the approach to Fascism. Working-class newspapers must go! The "Workers' Weekly" and the "Red Leader," being the newspapers that preach most consistently the necessity of struggle against capitalism, must go first of all! Thus the ban on their transmission by post as newspapers in February, 1932, is followed by the ban on their transport by rail in May, 1933. These two steps are clearly intended as the prelude to the complete suppression of the newspapers concerned. Among the "untouchables," by the way, there is included the "Soviets To-day," which is widely read even in liberal circles, and does not engage in propaganda for revolutionary action; and the suppression of this journal shows clearly that even the bare truth about present conditions under capitalism and socialism has no place in the developing Fascist State.

As in Germany, Fascism and Social Fascism have developed side by side. Almost opposite the Central Police Station stands the



Trades Hall, and these two buildings are in close political as well as physical proximity. Scullin, when he refused to repeal the Crimes Act of 1926; Tunnecliffe, when he authorized repeated bashings of workers and reappointed General Blamey as Commissioner of Police; Sear and Co., when they facilitated Mullins' victimization; the Brunswick reformist leaders, when they decided to remain outside the active struggle for free speech—these men have all helped to hew out the path for the Fascist advance. Fascism thrives on passivity as well as on active capitalist aggression, and the reformist leaders have not stopped short even at passivity. Time and time again they have co-operated actively in the new offensive on the workers.

Our answer to Fascism and to Social Fascism must be the building of every possible form of mass resistance to the Fascist attack. Mass resistance has shown its power in the reinstatement of Miss Taylor, in the victory of the Hawthorn unemployed, and in a hundred other instances. Capitalism can still be defeated by determined struggle, even in these days when it has sharpened its sword for a new and more vicious campaign of repression. It is clear that this struggle, when pursued to its logical conclusion, must lead to the point of revolution; but this merely confirms what has always been true, and what the Communists have fearlessly stated, that our choice is between a workers' revolution and the doom of mankind.

—Ralph Gibson.

## EVENTS IN GERMANY

THE swift march of events in Germany has in a few weeks completed the change-over to the open and bloody dictatorship of capital. True, within the shortest time possible, parliamentary elections were held, but this was only in order to give the Fascist regime an appearance of popular approval. It was made quite clear that whatever the voting results might be, the Fascist Government had come to stay. Thus Frick, the Minister for the Interior, in a speech at Dresden on February 19th, declared that, "Should the elections not result in a majority for the Hitler Government, the Government will nevertheless continue its work undeterred. We have no intention of voluntarily abandoning the field." On the same day in Essen, Dr. Goebbels stated: "We shall no longer go voluntarily. We shall not relinquish power." Through the mouths of these Fascist leaders was once again confirmed the Marxist conception of the State as an instrument of class domination, for which parliamentary democratic formalities are but a cloak. Following on the elections, full authority was formally conceded to the Government for a period of four years, and the parliament as such disappeared from the scene. Subsequently commissioners were appointed for each of the States, subject only to the central Fascist authority.

How was the Hitler election victory achieved? In the first place, the results gave expression to the fierce nationalism engendered by the Versailles system. The burden of reparations has aggravated intensely the economic crisis and the impoverishment of the peasantry and urban petty bourgeoisie. By August, 1924, these payments had totalled £1,650 millions. Under the Dawes and Young plans an additional £520 millions was paid up to the time of the Hoover Moratorium in July, 1931. At Lausanne in 1932, further payments were demanded. Together with commercial debts, Germany is required to provide an annual tribute of approximately £115 millions. The hatred for the Versailles Treaty has given a tremendous impetus to Fascism and its promise of national restoration and aggrandisement.

The election campaign was conducted under conditions of savage terrorism. Crude provocations, such as the Reichstag fire started by Van Der Luebbe, who was expelled two years previously from the Communist Party of Holland as a provocateur, and who was subsequently connected with the German police, and the "discovery" of documents at the Communist Party headquarters concerned with plots of mass poisoning, terrorism, etc., were used as pretexts to suppress all Communist newspapers, make wholesale arrests of Com-



munist Party functionaries, murder individual leaders, etc. The terror was extended to include the Social-Democrats—mainly that section which, despite the leaders, was joining with the Communists in the struggle against Fascism.

During the election campaign the Social-Democratic leaders continued their policy of prohibiting working-class action against the Fascists. These leaders, together with the bureaucracy of the reformist trade unions, had sabotaged the Communist Party's call for a political general strike against the Hitler Government. As a result of this sabotage, the general strike was successful only in Luebeck and Stassfurt. In the other centres only small and medium-sized enterprises participated, the Social-Democrats succeeding in restraining the main detachments of the working class. How the Fascists regarded the Social-Democratic leaders is reported by the Berlin correspondent of "Le Petit Journal," Paris, in the issue of February 10th, after an interview with Count Helldorf, leader of the Fascist storm detachments: "The Communist Party represents a deadly danger for Germany, and must be suppressed. . . . If a general strike occurred we should be the victors. Undoubtedly the Communists are more numerous in industry than we are, but there are enough National Socialists to secure the maintenance of the main industries, and our storm detachments would defend them against interference." When the French journalist pointed out that he had referred exclusively to the Communists and made no mention of the Social-Democrats, Helldorf smiled and answered: "The Social-Democrats? When did the Social-Democrats ever take any action? On the 20th July when their Government in Prussia was deposed? Or at any time after that? The Social-Democrats are tame enough. Despite their speeches they are not really dangerous. The enemy we must destroy is Communism. This is a vital question for us." In these words a Fascist leader showed how the Social-Democratic leaders had paved the way for the Fascist dictatorship. They had repeated the stand of their Italian fellow-Socialist, Turati, who, in a letter of April 26th, 1921, to the workers of Apulia, stated: "Do not respond to provocations. . . . Do not provide them with any pretexts; do not respond to insults; be good, be patient as saints. You have been patient a thousand years; be

patient a bit longer. Endure, bear the sufferings, continue to forgive. . . ." As the Italian Socialist had opposed the Communist call for general strike against Mussolini's march on Rome, so had the German Socialists opposed the general strike against Hitler and boycotted all struggle on the plea that Hindenburg was a guarantee that the constitution would remain inviolate.

One of the strongest weapons of German Fascism was the discrediting of the so-called "Marxists" of the Social-Democratic Party, whose record of failure since 1918 in alleviating the situation of the masses had caused big sections of the petty bourgeoisie to lose faith in "Socialism" and to seek in Fascism a new solution to their problem.

Under these conditions of shameless demagoguery, anti-semitic and other diversions, silencing of all opposition, ruthless terror, and labour treachery, the elections victory of the Nazis was assured.

The significance of the new Government centres mainly around the increasing instability of German and World capitalism. It marks an acceleration of the maturing of the revolutionary situation. The deepening crisis precludes all prospect of political stability under the present regime. In February, German trade reached record low figures, with imports showing a decline of 93 million marks compared with February, 1932, and exports showing a decline of 154 million marks. The total surplus of exports over imports was only 26 million marks, which is quite inadequate to meet tribute payments. The tremendous subsidies given to German industries in recent times, in the form of interest-bearing tax vouchers, face the German Government with the prospect of increasing deficits. According to German trade union statistics, at the end of 1932 44 per cent. of the workers were unemployed, 22 per cent. were employed part time, and only 34 per cent. were fully employed. About three-quarters of German industry is at a standstill. The average wage is in the vicinity of £1/2/6 per week. Under such conditions, nothing but bitter disillusionment can come to the supporters of Fascism among the petty bourgeoisie. The struggles between the various sections of the bourgeoisie for the diminished national income will become more intense. A disintegration from within of the Fascist forces is inevitable.



The advent of the German Fascist concentration Government enormously intensifies the war danger in Europe. The aggressive nationalism capitalised by the Fascists in the sphere of foreign politics calls for revision of the Versailles Treaty, equality of armaments, abolition of the Polish Corridor, restoration of colonies, and union with Austria. These questions constitute the source of intense antagonisms making for war. Following on Hitler's rise to Chancellor, the rumour was widespread in France that Germany had concluded a military alliance with Italy and Hungary. Whilst pursuing these imperialist aims against the other imperialist powers, the German bourgeoisie nevertheless counts most on reaching agreement with France and joining with France in the anti-Soviet bloc. In his speech to the Reichstag prior to the carrying of the Enabling Bill, Hitler referred to foreign affairs as follows: "We accept Signor Mussolini's far-sighted plan, and are ready to collaborate sincerely and peacefully with Britain, France, and Italy. . . . We are convinced that agreements could be reached with France if the problems were tackled vigorously." ("Sydney Morning Herald," 25/3/33.) This statement is in agreement with the proposal of Von Papen at Lausanne, when he offered a union of Germany, France, and Poland against the Soviet Union. The present Government has shown that it is prepared to sacrifice its relations with the Soviet Union in the interests of a bloc with the imperialist powers. Recent weeks have witnessed raids on Soviet trade agencies and the arrest and ill-treatment of Soviet citizens connected with them.

How long will German Fascism survive? This depends mainly on the strength of the working class. It is noticeable that, despite the unprecedented terror, the proletarian ranks have remained firm. The Communists retained 5,000,000 votes and the Social-Democrats 7,000,000. In the Prussian Landtag elections the Communist Party increased its vote by more than 300,000—a fact of enormous significance. In some of the rural areas workers were forced at the point of the bayonet to vote for the Nazis. The Fascist gains were mainly at the expense of the other open bourgeois parties. Fascism—bourgeois imperialist counter-revolution—aims its blow at the proletarian vanguard, the Communist Party. In order to lull the vigilance of the working class, the Fascists first declared that

they would not suppress the Communist Party, and then proceeded to destroy it piecemeal. With shameless provocation they sought to isolate the Communists from the masses of workers while intensifying the murderous repression. Great losses have been sustained, including the imprisonment and murder of many leaders. "Shot while trying to escape"—the Fascist formula for the murder of prisoners—has become a daily occurrence against the best leaders of the working class. But the Communist Party of Germany, which, in its infancy, had its leaders (Liebknecht, Luxemburg, and Jogisches) similarly murdered, with the connivance of Social-Democratic leaders, has had tremendous experience. It has previously experienced illegality. Against all provocations and treachery, its iron ranks maintain connections with the masses, the revolutionary crisis matures, the proletarians move forward to the struggle for Socialism. Parallel movements develop everywhere. The victory of the workers is assured.

—W.

In the past month further events have revealed the bankruptcy of the Hitler régime. In his speech on May 17 Hitler announced that "Germany will tread no other path than that laid down by the treaties." Thus he has capitulated to the Imperialist powers, and in doing so he has betrayed many of his followers.

The real opposition to the Fascists is increasing as the Social Democratic workers see more and more clearly the rôle of Social Democracy. Their leaders have capitulated to the Fascists. These endorsed the Nazi foreign policy, and have declared that their opposition to Hitler will be purely legal. Legal opposition is to be used against a brutal force which has met working class activity with murder, terror, and rigorous armed repression!

The revolutionary movement is growing. Despite repression, strike actions are common. In them a greater solidarity of workers is in evidence. The sole leader in the fight against Fascism—the Communist Party of Germany—is not disrupted. It is able to publish its newspaper illegally, and in most cities and towns local bulletins are produced. The struggle is growing, and must eventually overthrow disintegrating Fascism.



# STUDENTS AND WAR

**M**EMBERS of the Oxford Union recently decided, by 275 votes to 153, that under no circumstances would they fight for King and Country. This decision resulted in a tremendous outburst from the whole bourgeois press. All the "diehards," the representatives of the exploiters and landlords, denounced the resolution with rabid ferocity. The British capitalist class used the event to conduct a widespread campaign designed to accentuate jingoism throughout the country. The war-mongers showed their true character. They demonstrated that they regard war as the only way left out of the crisis. The world is at present pregnant with the war danger.

Parallel with the unexampled war preparations and activities of the imperialist powers there has been an ever-growing wave of resistance to wars. Among the workers tremendous struggles are taking place, especially in Japan, China, and Germany. This struggle has the appearance of a civil war in which there is no quarter. Strikes, demonstrations, and conferences have helped to weld working class solidarity. In these countries especially the struggle against war and imperialist oppression has become identical with the struggle for liberation from wage-slavery and exploitation. It has become the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the workers' republic.

In other countries fierce anti-war struggles are taking place. In Britain itself the tremendous feeling against war, not only among the workers, but also amongst the petit bourgeoisie, students, etc., is evidenced by the motion of the Oxford Union. In Australia members of all sections of the community have shown themselves opposed to war. It is now becoming necessary for Australian students to face up to the facts of the war danger and to organize in order to assist in the prevention of war. We shall see that in Australia, as elsewhere, the struggle against war is indissolubly linked up with the struggle for working-class freedom. We will first deal with the experience of workers in one or two other countries where the conflict is more advanced.

Chinese students have a long history of struggle behind them. For many years they

have conducted a persistent fight for the national liberation of China from the dominance of the great powers—Britain, France, America, Japan, etc. At present the national Kuomintang Government is conducting a savage campaign in Northern China against the Chinese workers and students. Despite the fact that the Japanese have killed thousands of Chinese soldiers and workers in their advance through Jehol and across the Great Wall, the Kuomintang has made not the slightest effort to oppose them. The rank and file of the army have been boycotted by the generals. Communications and supplies have been completely neglected. There has been not one arrest made of the persons connected with the Japanese, although dozens of students and hundreds of workers have been arrested for attempting to arouse the people against the dangers threatening China. This suppression has been carried on under the smoke screen of the "Communist menace." In short, the Chinese ruling class is taking the part of the Japanese, British, and other imperialists who are vitally concerned in the attempt to stamp out the Chinese Soviets which already have the adherence of over 80,000,000 peasants and workers. That is the true rôle of the colonial bourgeoisie everywhere—in India, South America, Cuba, etc. And that is why the struggle against the war danger and against national oppression becomes identical with the struggle of the working class for power. *There is no other way for those who are opposed to war but that of the proletarian revolution.* Wars of national liberation become of necessity revolutionary wars. The Kuomintang actually permitted Prince Kung to stay for three weeks in Peiping organizing, on behalf of the Japanese Government, a puppet Government similar to that in Manchukuo. After he left the authorities issued an order for his "arrest"! At the same time there were in Peiping alone 100 students and professors under arrest for attempting to organize a national resistance to the Japanese. These events will compel the Chinese students to realize that their efforts in the future must be directed into *revolutionary* channels.

The anti-war activities of American students are linked up with their economic



JUNE, 1933



struggle. American universities are full of proletarian and semi-proletarian students, who are compelled to work for a good part of their time in order to pay fees, expenses, etc. The frightful depression in America has led to a marked aggravation of the poverty of these students. No attempt has been made to cut down fees. In many cases they have been raised. (This has also been the case at the Melbourne University.) At the same time, the American Government has been expending vast sums on armaments, war preparations, etc. There has been a well-organized campaign to repress anti-war moves among the students, and their right of free speech has been interfered with in subjects concerning Socialism, working-class politics, etc. As a result, there have been big strike moves in various academic centres. For example, in the New York University a three hours' strike was conducted on February 2nd, 1933. It rose primarily from the refusal of the athletic authorities to continue medical treatment for a student boxer whose arm had been disabled. The authorities stated that this arm was "incurable," and that the "depression had hit the University." The University paper, "Daily News," attacked the authorities, who, as "punishment," broke off relations with the paper. Thus the strike was initiated under such slogans as "For academic freedom," "Fight the gag rule," "Demand free press," etc. A similar demonstration, lasting for a whole day, occurred in the College of the City of New York on February 25th under similar slogans. 2,500 students, or 15 per cent. of all students at the college, stayed away from classes and lectures as a protest against repressive measures adopted by the University authorities. In these same educational institutions strong anti-war moves are under way, though of course there are many widely divergent opinions as to how the struggle should be carried on.

We have considered these examples in order to prove the statement that the struggle against war, if it is to attain any permanent result at all, must be linked up with the everyday struggle of the workers, students, etc., for their economic demands. The reason for this is obvious if it is remembered that wars, exploitation of workers, high fees, gagging of free speech and discussion, all proceed from the one cause—the existence of the capitalist form of society, with the State apparatus as

its organ of oppression, employing all the forces for repressive measures. The authorities in the universities and schools exercise the same repressive functions in a concealed form. As a result, out of the struggle of students for their rights there must inevitably develop a struggle for the overthrow of the capitalist State. And this struggle will naturally become linked up with the revolutionary struggle of the working class.

These are some of the problems facing Australian students very openly to-day. The recent debate on war held at this University revealed that there is a small but definite anti-war feeling growing among the students. This feeling takes many forms, such as pacifism. Pacifist students will learn as time goes on that pacifism actually aids war preparation and manoeuvres. The essence of pacifism is the denial of all resistance and struggle, and hence leads to the disarming of those sections of the population opposed to war. It must be realized that the working class is the main force opposed to war, because from the products of its exploitation and slavery wars are made. The working class will fight against wars by strikes, demonstrations, and finally with armed insurrection. This is the path which all who are opposed to war must take. So it is with the students, who should conduct a persistent anti-war campaign keeping these things well in mind. The history of the revolutionary movement in the present century proves this contention, and events are rapidly developing in Australia towards a similar conclusion.

—I.C.

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At the Easter Conference of the Labour Club, held at Mount Dandenong, the following resolution was passed unanimously:—"This Conference, having discussed the problem, expresses its emphatic disapproval of imperialist war. It recognizes that such war is fought for markets and raw materials. The burden of these conflicts is borne by the working classes of all participating countries. It recognizes that imperialist war is already being fought in China and in South America, and that there is very grave danger of the further outbreak of war at the present time, especially war directed against the Soviet Union. It realizes that there will be extreme danger of war until capitalist society is finally replaced by Socialism. It pledges its support to the work of the Anti-War Committee in Victoria, realizing that organized resistance against war preparations can effectively hamper the plans of the imperialists."



# THE STATE ANTI-WAR CONFERENCE

In August, 1932, at Amsterdam, the World Congress Against War, convened by Henri Barbusse and Romain Rolland, was attended by 2300 delegates representing 30,000,000 people. An International Committee Against War was established. National anti-war movements were set on foot there.

A National Provisional Anti-War Committee for Australia was set up in Sydney in February, 1933. This was followed by the establishment of State Provisional Committees to arrange for State Conferences which should elect State Councils against war.

In April, 1933, conferences were held in Sydney and Brisbane (8th), Melbourne, Perth, and Adelaide (22nd). At these, State Councils were elected to organize the fight against war, and to arrange for an All-Australian Anti-War Conference in the near future.

The task of organization was no light one. As a first step, the Victorian Provisional Anti-War Committee applied to the Melbourne City Council for the use of the Town Hall. The request was granted, the contract signed, and the exorbitant fee of £40 paid in full. The committee proceeded to advertise the Conference as to be held at the Town Hall, leaflets being printed and invitations being sent out on this understanding; 20,000 leaflets and circular letters to the number of 1800 were distributed.

To quote the official statement on subsequent events:—"On the 13th April notice was received from the City Council requesting the names of the official speakers at the Conference. This was complied with as far as was possible, seeing that our Conference was to be a delegate conference, and it was impossible to determine beforehand what delegates would be taking the floor in discussion. The list submitted included such prominent people as the Rev. J. T. Lawton; Maurice Blackburn, M.L.A.; H. Burton; Vance Palmer. . . . On the 15th we received a notification from the City Council that our engagement of the Town Hall had been cancelled—no reasons being given."

One week was left to engage another hall and re-circularize all those societies and individuals who had been approached concerning the Conference, pointing out the change

of places. "Everyone," wrote a prominent Melbourne figure in response to the Committee's questionnaire, "is opposed to war." Apparently there are some who also oppose opposition to war.

Despite the attitude of the City authorities, the Conference held at the Bijou Theatre on Saturday, April 22, was a success by virtue not only of the enthusiasm which characterized the proceedings, but also of the determined and concrete proposals for organizing the anti-war fight. Empty phrases, masking apathy or despair, were of no avail here. The gathering realized the necessity of embarking upon an organized and active struggle against war, and wholeheartedly took the following pledge:—

"We swear that we will never allow the formidable unity which has been established here among the masses of people opposed to war to be broken up.

"We swear to fight with all our force and with all the means at our command against war and the causes of war.

"We swear to dedicate ourselves with all our forces and all our resources to our immediate and pressing tasks, taking our stand—

*"Against armaments, against war preparations, and in consequence against the governments preparing for wars.*

*"Against the participation of Australia in the approaching new wars, and against the supplying by Australia of war materials to any belligerent power. . . .*

*"For active support of the anti-war struggle throughout the whole world, and the development of bonds of international solidarity between the masses of peoples of all countries.*

*"For active participation in all forms of the anti-war struggle throughout the State of Victoria. . . .*

"And we continue to appeal to all; to appeal to the workers, farmers, and intellectuals of Australia; to the exploited and oppressed, to join us, and at public meetings and demonstrations to enter into the pledges we have entered into here, and to put them into effect."

This pledge was attached to the main resolution of the day—a statement of the causes, effects, and cure of the war disease. From this resolution, the adoption of which was moved by Mr. H. Burton, of the University,



and seconded by Sister St. Clair, D.C.M., we quote a few salient paragraphs. Lack of space prevents the giving of the text in full.

"The workers by hand and brain united in this Conference against war, in order to lay a solid foundation for their future work, wish to record in a single document the efforts and intentions of this Conference, and to come to an agreement on the essential points and conditions of the struggle against war, and the duties and responsibilities incumbent upon each and all.

"The Conference, regardless of the ideological and political differences which may separate its various component elements, desires to face facts, and facts only. It emphasizes that the dangers of war are no less real and grave to-day than in the years immediately preceding 1914.

"The Conference denounces the attitude of the big newspapers and of public men who, through servility or love of gain, either maintain silence about the wars which are now in progress, or else misrepresent or distort the truth concerning them and concerning the catastrophes towards which the present generations are being visibly driven, and in which, unless they make a vigorous resistance, they will be engulfed.

"The Conference notes and condemns the huge and ever-growing armaments throughout the world, which flatly contradict the idealist statements and theatrical proclamations of the governments concerned. It denounces the terrible efficiency of these armaments, as well as the sinister instruments of scientific extermination, namely, poison gases and disease germs, certain to be brought into use in the next world war.

"The Conference urgently draws attention to the war preparations being carried on in Australia at the present time, to the press campaigns for the increasing of the effectiveness of the war machine, the statements of leading Federal and State politicians, and the proposals to allocate £7,000,000 for increased armaments. . . .

"The Conference points out that all capitalist powers treat the Soviet Union as a common enemy, which they are attempting to undermine and overthrow. . . . To-day is being openly prepared in the Far East a definite armed crusade against the Soviet Union. The Conference points to the steadfast peace policy systematically pursued by the Soviet

Union, and repudiates the legend of 'red imperialism.'

"The Conference proclaims that the present and future victims of the whole situation are the great masses of the people. . . . It points out that the Japanese workers have, by their heroic example, already shown how the fight against imperialist war must be carried on. They have stood up against their own war-makers, held up war production and munition convoys, and revealed this war in the eyes of the Japanese soldiery for what it is—a war of piracy. . . .

"Determined as it is to offer every resistance in its power to the current which is sweeping the whole of the present generation towards disaster, the Conference sees salvation only in the concerted action of the workers and farmers, with the co-operation of humanitarians, intellectuals, and other sections of the population.

"It is aware that many distinguished minds are desperately seeking to find a means of saving society by noble dreams. It is aware that there are men who offer a personal resistance to war. . . . But it considers that in the face of the terrible challenge offered by present developments it is impossible to stop short at abstract formulas, or to confine oneself to means of resistance foredoomed to failure, notably the unfortunately futile sacrifice constituted by the noble attitude adopted after a declaration of war by conscientious objectors, and by all others who fling themselves individually against a collective disaster.

"It hopes that the men of character and courage who preach those heroic measures, and who are prepared to accept for themselves the very grave consequences of such an attitude, will join with the others in erecting . . . a massive collective barrier against war. Every form of opposition to this work merely helps the enemy."

Among the speakers on this resolution were the Rev. J. T. Lawton, Miss Eleanor Moore, Dr. G. P. O'Day, Cr. W. H. Turner (of the Carters and Drivers' Union), and A. W. Nicholls—people of widely-differing political opinions, but all united in their opposition to war. The same unity was preserved in discussion on the second resolution—that upon organization of the struggle against war, containing suggestions for future work. Mr. H. Payne, of the Clerks' Union, sponsored this resolution, stressing the urgency of deter-



mined and widespread effort. The activity of the movement should be both intensive and extensive. The immediate task was the establishment of anti-war committees throughout Victoria. "These committees must be set up in every suburb of Melbourne, in every city, town, and village in the country areas, in every factory, mine, and mill. . . . The committees must take up the task of educating the great mass of the people to the meaning of war and how to fight against war. . . . The organization of this propaganda against war can take many forms—meetings and lectures, leaflets and pamphlets, etc.

"Committees must be set up in the war industries and in the transport industry to develop a strong agitation for the stopping of munition manufacture and transport. The great mass of the unemployed and pensioners must be organized to demand the ceasing of all expenditure on armaments and war preparations, and the diverting of this money for relief for the unemployed and the restoration of 'economy' cuts in pensions."

Mrs. Boyce Gibson, in seconding the resolution, emphasized the necessity for spreading the anti-war movement among women and children. To draw women into the struggle, to give children an anti-war atmosphere in the home, to create a definite public opinion against war, anti-war committees were as

essential in the domestic sphere as in the industrial.

This resolution, like its predecessor, was adopted unanimously. 174 credentialled delegates, representing 60 organizations, were present, and the galleries (open to the public) were filled with an enthusiastic crowd. The conduct of the meeting was admirably summed up in the concluding remarks of the chairman (Maurice Blackburn, M.L.A.): "I congratulate you on this meeting. I congratulate you on the excellent fraternal spirit and tolerance shown to one another's views. And I congratulate you on the decisions you have made."

The daily press, which seized with avidity upon the fact that mention of the Soviet Union was greeted with cheers, failed to record that speakers who can by no means be regarded as Communist in opinion or even in sympathies were also warmly applauded by the assembly. The Conference was one *against* war, and all sincere opponents of war were welcomed, as they are now welcomed into the anti-war committees which are being formed in every suburb of Melbourne and every country town.

All information may be obtained from the hon. secretary, N. E. Seeligson, Box 1312, G.P.O., Melbourne.

—J.H.

## THE AUSTRALIAN WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT

THE first forms of the Australian Labour movement were a reflection of the Chartist movement and the English trade unions of the time. This was the result of the immigration of large numbers of artisans from England into Australia, for these workers brought with them the traditions of the movement in England. Thus it was that the earliest trade unions in Australia were rather of the nature of friendly societies than organs of class struggle. Their whole outlook was based on the idea of class collaboration and the prevention of strike movements.

Up till 1890 in Australia there had been numerous strikes, which had been settled by conciliatory means. In 1890 an attack by

the shipowners on the conditions of ships' officers led to the Great Maritime Strike which extended to include many other workers. The fundamental issue was the struggle for the recognition of the trade unions and their right to carry on negotiations on behalf of the workers. The strike was lost. The defeat emphasized the fact that the workers' struggle could not be confined to the industrial field, but that it was necessary to achieve political strength also. The workers, therefore, set on foot a movement for the creation of their own political party.

Labour leagues were set up in all parts of New South Wales, and preparations for the forthcoming Parliamentary elections



were made. Similar moves were made in other States. A number of Labour Party candidates were successful at the elections. Here it must be emphasized that, from its inception, the Labour Party was formed with the sole idea of securing representation in Parliament. This fact is explained by the incorrect idea prevalent at that time that political action meant nothing more than Parliamentary action.

This period in the development of the Australian Labour movement is marked by the birth and rapid growth of the arbitration system.

Since the beginning of this century these institutions—the Labour Parties and the arbitration systems—have developed commensurate with the rapid growth of Australian industry. This growth was particularly intensified during the Great War, 1914-1918, when Australia was forced to rely upon her own resources for the production of the greater part of the manufactured goods previously imported from Great Britain and the Continent. At the same time the rises in the prices of wool and wheat on the world market as the result of the demands of the war period assisted industrial development by providing additional capital for investment.

This rapid industrial growth, with its accompanying huge profits for the capitalists, provided a basis for granting concessions to a fairly large section of the workers, the Labour aristocracy, and, in comparison with European countries, high wages were paid. In these circumstances, the arbitration system developed rapidly. Able to give concessions to the workers, it was an ideal capitalist weapon for concealing class antagonisms from them. The concessions were merely crumbs from the feast of war profits granted to hold the workers back from greater demands, but they served the purpose of creating the illusion that the interests of capitalists and workers were not essentially different. Herein is displayed the opportunism upon which the arbitration system is based.

The adherence to arbitration led to a great development of trade union organisation in Australia. The powerful trade union bureaucracy became an appendage of the Arbitration Court. The trade union officials were, in the main, isolated from all forms

of class struggle, and devoted to the preparation of court cases, and in general performed the duties of lawyers in the Arbitration Courts. Thus the trade unions became legalistic organizations, and in the courts the trade union officials fought any suggestion of class struggle, and branded strikes as "barbarous" and "uncivilized."

This deep-rooted opportunism of the unions was reflected in the liberal policy of the Labour Party, which had been born of the working-class movement, and, as such, was working-class in social content. Never in its history has it carried through a working-class policy. In the earliest period the Labour Party was mainly concerned with attempting to use the differences in the ranks of the bourgeoisie over Protection versus Free Trade. The Labour Party sold its support to one or the other section in return for promises of small concessions to the workers. Its policy even then showed itself as the Parliamentary expression of the opportunism of the arbitration system. Both had the same economic basis.

The Labour Party and the trade union bureaucracy were, therefore, closely allied. This close relationship was clearly expressed by Lenin in an article written in 1913:—

"And if in England the so-called Labour Party represents an alliance between the non-socialist trade unions and the extremely opportunist Independent Labour Party, in Australia the Labour Party constitutes a pure representation of the non-socialist trade unions.

"The leaders of the Australian Labour Party are the trade union officials, an element everywhere moderate and subservient to capital, but in Australia altogether peaceful and purely liberal."

There had been little or no knowledge of Marxian theory by the early leaders of the Australian Labour Party. Theory in general, and Marxism in particular, was looked upon with contempt by the well-paid trade union bureaucracy and the leaders of the Labour Party. This contempt for theory was an integral part of the opportunism which permeated the Labour movement, and, in its turn, the absence of theory, and especially of Marxian theory, fostered opportunism.

During the war the opposition of the workers to the opportunist policy of the



Labour Party and the trade union bureaucracy became widespread. The fight was led by the I.W.W., which also fought against the war and against conscription. The I.W.W. did not understand the true nature of war, and, therefore, could not fight against it correctly, and it left a legacy of anarcho-syndicalism to the Australian Labour movement, which has been responsible for many mistakes in the workers' struggles in the recent past.

Shortly after the war, the One Big Union movement, while reflecting the growing desire of the Australian workers for unity, was an expression of the anarcho-syndicalist influence of the I.W.W.

In Australia economic conditions favoured the growth of opportunism in the Labour movement. Although there were circumstances peculiar to Australia, the basic cause of opportunism was the same here as elsewhere. There have been many occasions on which the Australian workers have not forsaken the methods of class struggle for those of conciliation. The first of these was in the strike period, 1890-91. In the years preceding the war, and again in 1917, very decided strike movements were carried on. The strike wave lasted through 1919-20, and many other strikes have occurred since then. Those strikes in which the trade union bureaucracy has had control have usually ended in defeat for the workers, as in 1917. The Australian workers have a long, militant tradition.

In the present period the crisis has destroyed the economic basis of the opportunist policy of the Labour movement. The Labour aristocracy has lost its exalted position. Wholesale wage-cuts have been forced on all sections of the workers. The first stages of this offensive were met by a number of strikes—timber workers, water-side workers, shearers, and the northern miners, among others. Now more than one-

third of the working class of the whole country is unemployed, and of those still working many are little above starvation level, owing to wage-cuts and rationing. This situation, in which the burden of the crisis is thrust on to the shoulders of the working class as far as possible, has completely changed the role of the trade union bureaucracy and the Labour Party. At present the Arbitration Court is the leading weapon for wage-cuts. The Labour Party and the trade union bureaucracy still support the Arbitration Court, and are thus openly aligned with the capitalist forces. Their former policy led to a prevention of struggle by tying the workers to the Arbitration Courts—now it leaves the workers unarmed in the face of a determined offensive. The Labour Party and the trade union officials act as the main support of the capitalist state against the workers. So long as they retain their influence over the masses of the working class, they will continue to act in this way. To retain their influence over the more advanced sections of the workers, they resort to a "revolutionary" policy. Hence the left wing of the A.L.P. and the trade union bureaucracy has taken up the cry of "socialisation." The workers are offered a policy for the attainment of Socialism through peaceful Parliamentary methods. There is in the policy no word of struggle against ever-worsening conditions — no word even of these conditions.

The Australian workers are taking up the fight for Socialism. Their so-called leaders are now in circumstances where their capitalist rôle may be easily exposed. Their exposure to the masses will be effected by the militant leadership of the more advanced workers in their everyday struggles. The road of these struggles is the road which prepares the workers for the final struggle for power and for Socialism.—F.