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# BULLETIN

SOCIALIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA PUBLICATION

## *The real Mr Hawke stands up*

It took Prime Minister Hawke only a few days following the much boosted Economic Summit to dispel the illusions about reconciliation and co-operation amongst sections of the community and to spell out for workers that the purpose of the summit was to ensure that the burdens of continuing economic crisis and even of early economic recovery are to be borne by the workers.

When the building unions continued a campaign in support of claims, long since made and pursued, Prime Minister Hawke grimly warned them that they "would not get away with it" and virtually called upon the ACTU to deal with the unions, in fact, to expel them.

Reported statements by the General Secretary of the road Transport Workers' Union, Ivan Hodgson, who is also a member of the ACTU Executive, reveals that the building unions are not on their own in deciding to pursue wage claims.

The stand of Prime Minister Hawke is based upon the concept that the level of wages is a prime cause of inflation, unemployment and indeed economic crisis. It is equally based on the concept that the need is to control the unions.

His warning to the building unions sets out clearly the main purposes of the *ACTU-ALP Accord* and the Economic Summit.

It is now clear that all the grand talk about recovery, co-operation, reconciliation, was little more than a smoke screen to hide the purpose of the Prime Minister and leading members of the ACTU Executive and that purpose was to involve the workers in collaborating with the employers in placing the main burden of solving the problems of capitalism onto the backs of the workers.

### HAWKE'S CHANGES

As Research Officer of the ACTU Mr Hawke, advancing himself as a qualified economist, declared that wage rises of themselves and wage levels of themselves were not a main factor in determining prices, that is, were not a main factor in the question of inflation.

In support of that view he published, in the name of the ACTU, a leaflet showing in graph form that the level of prices in many countries with wages much lower than Australia were higher than the level of prices in Australia.

As ACTU President Mr Hawke, when confronted with accusations of unions being responsible for economic decline, frequently used the expression "the system is not ours."

Later still as ACTU President and in relation to implementing ACTU policy in relation to uranium Mr Hawke pointed to the fact that the ACTU con-

sisted of independent unions and the executive was unable to enforce ACTU policy on those independent organisations.

Now as Prime Minister Mr Hawke deserts those three previous positions.

What is to be assumed from that changed position? Was he misleading the workers and the public when he took up his three previous positions or is he misleading the workers now and seeking to overcome that by requiring of the ACTU disciplinary action.

### WE THINK THE REAL MR HAWKE HAS NOW STOOD UP

The main outcome of the Economic Summit for the workers is continuation of the "wage pause," continued reduction of the purchasing power of wages by way of no indexation to meet price rises, a minimum wage increase later this year still leaving purchasing power of wages well down, the remote prospect of some form of indexation to be determined by the Arbitration Commission and anticipated to be less than the indexation level required to meet price increases, a centralised wages system which leaves the power in relation to this matter solely in the hands of the Arbitration Commission, no wage increases in relation to sections of the working class and continued high level and increasing numbers of unemployed.

ACTU leaders who spoke at the summit claim to base themselves upon the *ACTU-ALP Accord*, endorsed by the unions at a special ACTU convened conference in February, to support their stand which in turn supported the Economic Summit outcome we mention above.

### OTHERS SHOULD JOIN BUILDING WORKERS

The action of the building unions and the reported position of the road Transport Workers' Union reflect the best interests of the workers.

If the plan of the so-called Summiteers to place the burden of economic crisis on the backs of the workers is not to succeed then that result can be achieved only by such actions as those proposed or now taken by the building unions.

BWIU National Secretary P Clancy, has pointed to the fact that the building unions had an undertaking from the building employers at the time of the late 1981 wage and hours agreement that there would be a further reduction of hours at a later date and he has also pointed to the fact that with a 9.2 per cent increase in prices since the last wage increase and an anticipated 3 per cent increase on top of that before the middle of this year the \$40 claim amounts to little more than maintaining the purchasing power of existing wages.

An attempt to maintain that purchasing power is apparently considered by the Prime Minister and seemingly ACTU President Dolan as some kind of crime.

The best interests of all workers will be served if the building unions maintain their campaign and others join them

### MANY WORKERS AFFECTED

Existing agreements covering many sections of industry contain terms which provide that the unions will make no further claims for a specified period. They also provide that at the expiry of that period further reviews of wages will take place having regard for the movement in prices which have taken place during the currency of the agreement.



## Peaceful foreign policy of Indo-Chinese nations

The totally peaceful purposes in foreign policy and relations with other States, including the ASEAN nations, of the three Indo-Chinese nations, Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea, is repeatedly spelt out in official documents from those three countries.

These purposes are in no way denied by the present conflict on the Kampuchea-Thailand border.

Those peaceful purposes are again testified to in a most recent document dated April 13, 1983 issued from Phnom Penh in the form of a communique of an extraordinary conference of the foreign ministers of Laos, Kampuchea and Vietnam.

The communique does not deal with matters only in general but deals very specifically with the problems arising on the Kampuchea-Thailand border as a result of the presence in that area of armed forces of the so-called government of Democratic Kampuchea which includes the forces of the murderous Pol Pot.

Dealing with issues concerning the Kingdom of Thailand and the People's Republic of Kampuchea the communique makes the following statement:

"The three countries of Indo-China are of the opinion that it is urgent to put an end to the military actions on the Kampuchea-Thailand border, to find a solution to the problem of the Kampuchean victims and to restore peace and security in this border region."

The communique repeats a proposal made as far back as July 7, 1982 for the establishment of a security zone along that border with only Kampuchean troops being allowed in the area of the zone on the Kampuchean side and only Thai troops being allowed in the area of the zone on the Thailand side.

This proposal also includes complete removal of all other armed forces from that area and the removal of refugee camps and proper arrangements for the repatriation of Kampuchean refugees to Kampuchea itself.

In these circumstances there are most regrettable features of the current visit to Australia of Premier Zhao Ziyang of the People's Republic of China.

All that has now gone by the board as the result of the ACTU-ALP Accord and the Economic Summit.

### REJECT "ACCORD" AND "SUMMIT"

But what has not gone by the board is the continued reduction of the purchasing power of the wages of waterside workers. Like the building workers, and as pointed out by P Clancy, these wages are now well below their purchasing power level when they were first fixed.

The SPA through this bulletin and *the Socialist* warned against the Accord and the Economic Summit. We declared, and we now repeat, there is no basis on which the interests of employers and workers can be reconciled. Their interests are diametrically opposed. Any union official who proceeds on any other basis proceeds towards the target of deserting the interests of the workers.

The building unions and all other unions will be well advised to develop their campaigns quite irrespective of the Accord or the Summit. Indeed the workers need to demonstrate their rejection of the impositions on them perpetrated by those who claim to speak in the names of the workers both in drafting the Accord and in agreeing to wage restrictions at the Summit.

Particularly regrettable is the efforts of the Chinese Premier to affect the position of Australia in relation to the Indo-Chinese states and in particular to Vietnam.

Another regrettable feature of this visit is Mr Zhao's reference to "arrogance" in relation to Vietnam. The Socialist Party of Australia poses the question "What could be more arrogant than the threat of the Chinese leaders 'to teach Vietnam another lesson'?"

We find it extremely difficult to accept bone fide's of a nation which while claiming to be socialist thus threatens another socialist and very much smaller country.

In a statement issued by the Central Committee of the Socialist Party of Australia at its meeting on the 19th-20th March, 1983 the situation in relation to Indo-China was dealt with and included the following paragraph:

"Australia will be well served by an end to tension in this area and the country's best interests require that the Hawke Government responds positively to the latest proposals coming from a meeting of the heads of state and the party leaders of Vietnam, Kampuchea and Laos."

In dealing with the position of the leaders of the People's Republic of China the SPA CC statement said in part:

"However, the attitude of the Chinese leaders towards the Indo-Chinese states is totally untenable. Their call for withdrawal of Vietnamese volunteer forces from Kampuchea as a prelude to discussions between China and Vietnam is a blatant interference in the internal affairs of Vietnam and Kampuchea and their call against resumption of Australian aid to Vietnam serves only the interests of imperialism."

The public statements made by Chinese Premier Ziyang in recent days concerning the position on the Kampuchea-Thailand border and the Vietnam-Chinese border confirms the estimate made by the Central Committee of the Socialist Party of Australia.