

# The Need for the I.W.W.

THE LIES OF THE MINISTER  
FOR LABOR

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"Industrial Worker"

The I.W.W. was launched some 41 years ago to organise the working class not only of America, but of the entire world into One Big Union, with which to fight the world's ruling class to a frazzle and run the industries of the world for their own good. So far we have not succeeded, the workers of the world have paid "in blood, and sweat, and tears."

But we have been performing some very important functions—some of which are not commonly understood or appreciated. Here are some of the things the I.W.W. has done:

1. Despite smallness, despite a chronic lack of funds, it has repeatedly during these years proved itself an effective fighting instrument and has directed some of labor's greatest and most successful industrial battles. It has been a union in which its members were able to use what power lay in them, unhandcuffed.

2. It has been able to do this, despite difficulties, because it has attracted to it many of the ablest, keenest, fightingest members of the labor movement—men and women who came to the I.W.W. and stuck with the I.W.W. because they saw the world going to the dogs for the lack of working class solidarity and understanding, and who consequently felt that the only significant and satisfying purpose to which they could dedicate their lives was to build One Big Union of labor to remedy this lack.

3. As a result of its struggles, it has turned the dream and theory with which it started into a proved and tested system of unionism—into ever more workable forms of solidarity, into ever more reliable guarantees for union democracy, into increasingly clearer formulation of policy and objectives, into an ever wider array of tactics and strategies.

4. For all the foregoing reasons it has been a powerful stimulant to the entire labor movement. It has sought no monopoly on democracy, militancy, or solidarity, nor on the means it has devised to further them. Labor has sung the songs and applied the strategies that would have died still-born in any other environment than that of the I.W.W. It can readily be contended that the I.W.W. has organized millions of those in other unions who got there to keep them out of the I.W.W.—and we'll probably keep on doing the same thing even though we fully realize how it works ourselves. Because it was untrammelled, it could rally to the defence of the framed-up members of these other unions long before they could decide whether it was a safe bet to defend their own—such for instance was frankly the way it worked in Tom Mooney's defence. There is no way of reckoning it, but it would be mighty interesting to know, to what extent the rest of the labor movement owes its existence to the I.W.W.

5. A surprising amount of the democracy and solidarity that has been shown in unions has come in strange ways under I.W.W. influence. Because of the hard members, because of the early union personnel who had early union training in

the I.W.W., it has happened repeatedly that silly jurisdictional disputes got settled and picket lines were not crossed by "organised scabs," for the simple reason that otherwise those who had the say-so could not afterwards have faced their own conscience or their "Wobbly" friends.

These are some of the historic functions the I.W.W. has performed. History goes on and assigns it new tasks.

It is still needed, and more than ever, as an effective fighting weapon, as an untrammelled and fertile source of new ways to win, new tactics to fend the blows of reaction. But probably its outstanding function in the present day and in the days to come, is as an exponent of *scientific industrial unionism*.

We have a labor movement that just grew up like Topsy, an unplanned reaction to its economic environment. What passes as "labor thinking" is an inhibited, chaotic, contradictory jumble of those ideas that survive for the sole reason that they don't hurt anyone's feelings too much. Outside of the I.W.W. no union is free to look the industrial facts of to-day square in the face; no union is free to apply the investigations made in the domain of social science to the problems of unionism—it would step on someone's toes if they did. The results are as absurd as though mechanics and inventors were barred from all study of the science of physics; more than that, it is as though they were permitted to know, and allowed to believe only gross distortions of the generalisations of science.

To solve the problems facing labor—and these problems include the entire range of the adaptation of human society to the facts of the Atomic Age—we have to face facts and think clearly. We cannot do it without science. Especially we cannot do it without applying science to the means we have in our hands—union solidarity, or to the economic problems that provide our field of operations. That task of itself makes the I.W.W. of critical importance—and it is a task that is done while continuing to do many others.

## VICTORIAN STATE ELECTIONS

### The "Great Landslide Against the Labor Party

Exposes the undemocratic set-up against the working class expressing its support for the industrial capitalist party calling itself the "Labor Party," when the voting is analysed.

Total votes counted to Nov. 13—election day was Nov. 8—were:—

	Votes	Seats
Labor	459,008	16
Liberal	418,145	28
Country Party	168,503	20

A total of votes given to Independent, Independent Labor, Independent Liberal, and Independent Country Party of 72,469 account for one seat to Independent Labor. The lone Communist Party candidate, R. Gibson, editor of the Communist *Guardian*, lost his deposit for Port Melbourne—he polled only 1528 votes.

The dissection of the voting speaks for itself.

We referred in No. 33 issue (page 2) to a "Labor" parasite (E. J. Holloway, Minister for Labor) appealing to the workers of Australia for greater production. (See also letter following *A Labor-Socialist Is Expelled!* on page 2).

A capitalist publication, *Industrial Victoria*, circulating amongst manufacturers, now issues this "Appeal" as a leaflet supplement to its November issue—with the "Fellow Workers" opening and all, with a view to manufacturers increasing the circulation of Holloway's appeal to their own work slaves.

Holloway alleges: "To-day . . . by refraining from helping to produce more we are denying fellow-workers and their families the chance to enjoy a better living standard. . . ."

If Holloway does believe this, then he himself is doing his damndest to delay such a better living standard, as is also the so-called Labor Press, which prints quarter-page advertisements to lure young virile workers away from industry to fight in the Regular Army for six years and 12 years' service.

These recruits would not only be lost to productive industry, but would be, as army personnel, huge consumers of material produced by civilian workers, and so lessen the amount of production for civilian social needs.

We stated that Holloway "has the audacity to lie to the workers," especially in view of the fact that his Government's policy has implemented the factual result that real wages were never during the past thirty years as low as they are to-day.

This is partly disguised by the fact of full employment both of the individual worker and his whole household.

Never before in the history of Australia did workers' wives find it so necessary to take paid employment in order to attempt to hold their present standard of living.

Prices of living items have risen faster and higher than the price of labor-power, i.e., wages.

By financial manipulation of the currency, the Australian pound to-day is only worth a little over ONE-THIRD of the Australian pound paid as wages in 1916.

Few workers to-day, no matter how hard they work, will ever be able to own a house up to the standard of the latter 1920's. By the square method of pricing a complete house and its necessary appurtenances, a worker's home is now proved to be THIRCE AS FAR BEYOND HIS REACH than it was when Holloway and his fellow politicians first promised "if elected to power" to GIVE MUCH to the workers.

Holloway LIES when he states in emphasised bold type as the conclusion to his "appeal" that if Australian workers will only accept piece-work payment they will achieve "our lordly objective of giving to the people that higher standard of living they have been promised so long, and which is now financially within reach, for the first time in their lives."

It will NEVER be within their reach so long as the money-trick wage system of exploiting labor exists.

It will NEVER be within their reach as long as "Labor Governments" implement a policy of permanent War Economy that sucks productive man-

power away from production of the things that would otherwise provide for civilian well-being and comfort.

The proportion of PARASITE occupations to PRODUCTIVE occupation grows larger at an ever accelerating ratio, due to world trends of capitalism, but also, in Australia, to the implementing of the Labor Government's War Economy policy.

If therefore REAL WAGES—the goods that the currency money-wage will buy—continue to get LESS, as they must do under the Government's policy, the future of Australia's workers will be worse, and a real crisis depression nearer if piece-work speed-up of wage workers produces MORE for a market beyond wage-workers' reach. Holloway LIES.

Finance trickery will INCREASE

# Workers' Councils

[Cross headings have been interposed by us.]

"Workers' Councils in no way owe their origin to the theoretical analysis of society, but they are the result of the intuition of the masses. Deprived of every form of organisation, living in the blackest poverty, the Russian working class themselves organised their own strikes from below in the period 1900-5. The Western European method of struggle was practically unknown in consequence of the ban on organisations. Parties and Trade Unions which in Western Europe were already free and strong had no influence on the actions of the Russian working class. In Russia, therefore, the workers could not only dispense with conducting the struggle through their Party or Trade Union leaders, but they were forced to do it themselves in the factories. In the industries, strike committees were formed for the organisation of the struggle.

## 1905 SOVIET

"The strength of the strike movement in Russia which found its culmination in the St. Petersburg Workers' Council (Soviet of 1905) consisted in the expansion of the strike over many industries. Whilst in Western Europe the consideration of the matter between capital and labour (arbitration), the conference-table, the formation of strike funds and everywhere the limitation of strikes, were the conditions for the class struggle, in Russia it was the contrary.

## ONE WEAPON

"The Russian masses knew no organised conciliation conference, no fighting funds, no congresses, motions, and official leaders. They knew one weapon: strikes, organised by themselves from below, passing on from factory to factory, and above all, spreading. In every factory a committee was chosen, out of which by factory committees joining together, a general committee was chosen. These general committees or Workers' Councils had no permanent function, did not consist of paid administrators, and were raised up in the struggle itself.

## BOLSHEVISM SUBORNED STRUGGLE FROM 1917

"The contradiction between the Russian working masses, fighting under their own strike leadership, and the gentlemen of the school of scientific Socialism,

under nationalised banking.

The workers will be ROBBED more than ever by the State money-wage trick. The ONLY WAY to bring a real high standard of living within the reach of wage-workers is to organise in job units to eventually direct production, to form Workers' Councils as a basis of a NEW ORDER free from wage exploitation—production for the comfort and well-being of ALL.

Remember, we hope to, early in 1948, commence the publication of *Workers' Councils* so soon as the MSS. arrives from Anton Pannekoek. This book of hundreds of pages was outlined in No. 31 and 32 issues of this journal. Comrade K. J. Kenafick has translated from *Spartacus* of 1st February last an article on:—

only came out with full clearness in the Russian Revolution of 1917. The masses acting on an intuitive impulse must, cost what it would, be made subordinate to the General Staff of the Bolshevik Party. Only the General Staff knew the way to the classless society, so the masses ought to obey its commands.

## THE BLOODBATH OF

### KRONSTADT

"The bloodbath of Kronstadt, where the Bolshevik, Trotsky, had thousands of workers slaughtered, only because they advanced a point of his own party's programme: 'All power to the workers' council' (Soviets) was the historical evidence of it.

"If we measure the correctness of a theory by its results, then the practice has given judgment. What has the years' long Trade Union struggle got for the masses? What increase in the standard of living have they got out of it? Where are the results of the Party political struggle? The scales tip in favour of the self-acting and thinking Russian masses.

## TRAITORS TO SOCIALISM

"The practice of the class struggle in Europe gives the same result. Ninety per cent. of the theorists of the scientific school have become traitors to Socialism and by crooked leadership have diverted the masses further from Socialism than ever before.

## HOW WILL THE WORKERS' COMMUNE COME?

"The coming of Socialism will be the result of the uprising of great masses of workers joined in one front, organised industrially in workers' councils.

"The Trade Unions and political parties must be settled with. They form an obstacle in the way for the independent uprising of the masses.

"One must not expect that the Workers' Council idea should be a magic charm, that it is only needed to be put into practice in order to bring forth results. Far from that.

"Workers' Councils only express the exhausting struggle of the workers to rise from their sleep to be free men.

## THE INSTRUMENT IS FORMED

"The upward climb of the working class, now bound down in wage slavery, to

the position of a class in a state to rule socially will be lengthy process. "The skirmishes of vanguards are only carried on to show to the masses how fighting ought to be done. The workers' councils form the instrument whereby and by way of which the workers can free themselves from dependence on leadership, in which they can construct in opposition to the Trade Unions and political parties, an emancipating power of their own."

## SOUTH AFRICAN SLAVE BILL

### Trade Unionism Illegalised

(Reprinted Article)

Since the end of the war, South Africa has been an investor's paradise. Capital has been streaming into the country from Britain and America, and already it is reaping rich dividends. The attraction is not only the natural wealth of South Africa, but the abundance of cheap labour which is provided by the millions of black workers.

To maintain this situation and thus ensure huge profits for its capitalist backers, is the chief function of the Smuts' Government. Its latest effort is the introduction of a Trade Union Bill which rivals in savagery the worst anti-labor and color bar laws.

### Trade Unionism Banned

The "Native Trade Union Bill," introduced into the current session of the Union Parliament by Minister of Labor Colin Steyn, makes trade unionism illegal for African workers in gold mining, agriculture and domestic service, that is to say, for the overwhelming majority of African workers.

It takes away completely the African workers' right to strike.

African workers will have no say in the appointment of personnel for arbitration tribunals, and the Minister of Labor is given the right to veto any agreement arrived at by the workers and the bosses.

The organising of any trade unions, other than those registered under the proposed Bill, will be illegal.

White and black workers will not be allowed to belong to the same unions.

This is the Bill which the Government of General Smuts is trying to impose on the workers of South Africa—the same Smuts who drafted the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, with its honeyed phrases about freedom and liberty. It now becomes clear why the King bestowed on him the Order of Merit during his recent visit to the Union. Smuts was being rewarded by his King for his services to the capitalist class and British imperialism. For the Bill is directly in the interest of British finance capital investments in South Africa. Behind it looms the sinister shadow of the Chamber of Mines.

By introducing the clause giving the Minister the right of veto over agreements between employers and workers, it can be assured that secondary industry will not be able to tempt African labor away from the mines by offering higher wages. The British owned and controlled Chamber of Mines has long been pressing for such a measure to prevent "unfair competition" and the "disruption and dislocation of the labor market."—From *The Militant*, Sydney, N.S.W., Oct.