Socialism or New World Reconstruction?

An audience of 100 listened to a debate between the Melbourne Branch of the S.P. of A. and the New World Reconstruction Movement on the above subject.

**THE S.P.A.**

Comrade C. Sanders, opening for the S.P. of A., said that this debate was not an academic one—Socialism was a practical proposition. Orthodox parties, both Right and Left, had failed to improve the workers lot. He defined Capitalism as a social system in which two classes existed—the capitalist class, owners of the means of production, and the working class, the non-owners, who could only exist by the sale of their mental and physical energies. They were exploited by the Capitalists who lived in luxury through the existence of surplus value. Wages were equivalent to the cost of living of the workers. Productivity had skyrocketed, yet the real wage, what you could buy for your money, had remained constant for many years.

Tracing the historical evolution of society from primitive communism through slave societies and feudalism to the present system, he showed that Capitalism was not something peculiar or required by "human nature." To-day, it was inseparable from crises and wars—the system itself controlled the capitalist class. Whatever their "good" or "bad" intentions, they were forced into steps which inevitably led to war.

Socialism, a system of society based on common ownership and democratic control of the means of production by the whole of society, was the only alternative. Russia was not a socialist, but a State-Capitalist country; the various Labour Governments aimed at a reformed capitalism, not at its abolition. Under Socialism, there would be no wages, nor banks nor money; the principle would be from each according to his capabilities, to each according to his needs.

As for the New World Movement, its charity abounded in airy abstractions. Reference to a "false consciousness" were meaningless—we were not one people, but lived in a class society with class antagonisms and the class struggle as predominant features. The N.W.M. charter stated that "liberation cannot be achieved by force." To this the Socialist replied that "Might was Right." The Movement used words such as "Justice, Freedom, Truth and Happiness." As long as a small class of parasites controlled the coercive machinery of the State, there could be little "freedom." We aimed at conditions where there would be neither "justice" nor "injustice."

The charter claimed that "money must serve men." Money was merely a means of exchange, and no judging with the currency could change the status of the workers—that of being an exploited, a subject class. Society was not "at the mercy of private money power." Big monopolies were independent of banks. By capitalist standards, banks were just as "hostile" as the shopkeeper. Their profit was made on the difference in rates of interest for depositors and borrowers.

**THE N.W.R.M.**

Mr. C. E. Cutting, in his reply on behalf of the New World Reconstruction Movement, said the purpose of the debate was to understand the other man's point of view. Mr. Sanders really hadn't studied their charter, had taken single pillars of it, torn words from their context, instead of examining the charter as a whole.

They agreed with many things in the first part of the S.P.'s speech, but their program was more practical. The subject of the S.P. was "Common Ownership and Democratic Control," but nowhere did they specify what form of control. The N.W.M. had a practical plan, including P.R., Initiative, Referendum, and Recall, and boards, where workers would have a share in industry, profits, and management.

The S.P. had only a General Philosophy, the N.W.M. was specific. In their second pillar they advocated "common ownership of key industries to be controlled by the people" with co-operative ownership of all other industries. Mr. Sanders had given the impression that the N.W.M. claimed this could be achieved under Socialism, but that was not their view. What was needed was a definite vision, something concrete, rather than an ill-defined abstraction like Socialism. Mr. Cutting dealt with their seven pillars of reconstruction with practical proposals which presented in all a "Christian Co-operative Democracy.

In their political pillar they had safeguards against bureaucracy—control upwards of the people, instead of downwards by the State. The S.P. had no proposed machinery, hence had no guarantee that Socialism would not bring bureaucracy and regimentation. Justice and Truth existed, whatever Socialists might say. They did not deny the existence of the class-struggle, but "there was no need to ram it down people's throats." A people's world "a world worked out on a draft board by science and common sense" was necessary. He knew that many of the "opposed opposing class." Leaving out the inner ring of 15 men, would gladly cooperate in a New Order.

Answering the S.P.'s objections, Mr. Cutting stated that they "would use pressure" of the people to get the New World. The old order was changing, the intelligentsia was turning left. They agreed that money would ultimately be unnecessary, but it was up to them to talk about that now, when people didn't even grasp fundamentals. A co-operative banking system was realistic. Sanders did not understand that government had to read any reports of the banking commissions? Financial barriers had aggra-

((Continued on page 3 col. 1))

**DEBATE:** "Can the Housing Problem be Solved under Capitalism?"

**AFFIRMATIVE:** Mr. T. H. Atkinson (President, Builders and Allied Trades Association).

**NEGATIVE:** C. Sanders (Socialist Party of Australia).

**ASSEMBLY HALL, COLLINS STREET, 2nd FLOOR, WEDNESDAY, JULY 24th, at 8 p.m. sharp.

**FREE! QUESTIONS! PUBLIC INVITED!**

S.P.A. — Melbourne
Censorship and Socialism

A READER OBJECTS

To the Editor "Socialist Comment":

Dear Sir,

In your article "Banned Books" (S.C.R. May 1946) you mention the case of a man who wrote a free and frank letter to a newspaper, which was then banned by the government. This has been reported as the case of a man who was penalized for writing about a subject which he considered important for the public welfare. I am writing to you to express my views on this matter.

It seems to me that it is not the responsibility of the government to regulate the content of writings by individuals. The right to express oneself freely is a fundamental right of every citizen. It should not be curtailed by the government simply because they disagree with the views expressed.

I believe that the government should not have the power to ban books or newspapers simply because they contain material that the government finds objectionable. This would be a violation of the freedom of speech and expression.

I would appreciate it if you could consider my views and address this matter in your future articles.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

CONFIDENTIAL

[Redacted text]

FEAST AND FAMINE

The two cuttings below, taken from the Melbourne Herald, 7/4/46, require no comment. They should, however, provoke workers with food for thought, even though bodily requirements are such that death may cancel hunger by eliminating the hungry.

STAFF DINNER WILL NOT

The Premier (Mr. Cave) today suggested that the staff dinner on Friday night be called "Famine Dinner," to which Mr. Curtin replied: "It would be even better if the dinner were to be called "Feast Dinner," as it is a time for merriment, not for fasting and suffering.

"And if you want to know the meaning of "Famine," it means a period of hunger and hardship, a time when there is not enough food to sustain life. It is a time when people are forced to endure hunger and suffering, and it is a time for us to remember that we have the responsibility to ensure that everyone has enough food to sustain life."

TEST YOUR SOCIALIST KNOWLEDGE

"Who is the author of this book?"

"Socialism and Capitalism, or the Ethics of Modern Life." By Karl Marx.

"What is the main idea of this book?"

"The main idea of this book is to show how the capitalist system is unjust and how socialism can bring about a better society."

"What is the author's argument?"

"Marx argues that the capitalist system is characterized by exploitation and inequality, and that socialism can bring about a better society through the elimination of these problems."

"What is the author's conclusion?"

"Marx concludes that socialism is the only solution to the problems of the capitalist system, and that it is the responsibility of all workers to support this movement."

COMMUNISTS' RIGHTS COMMITTEE

The following paragraph appeared in the "Socialist Comment" (3/4/46):

"The official organs of the Metal Trades Union (S.C.R.) have been attacked by the employers. The employers have accused the union of organizing strikes and of interfering with the production of goods. The union has denied these accusations.

"The employers' accusations are false. The union is simply fulfilling its duties to protect the rights of its members. The employers should be aware that the union is a democratic organization and that it cannot be controlled by the employers."

"The employers should stop their attacks on the union and allow it to carry out its duties."

"The union is a democratic organization and it cannot be controlled by the employers. The employers should stop their attacks on the union and allow it to carry out its duties."

PARTY NOTES

S.P.A.—SYDNEY P.O. 2210, G.P.O., meets Mondays, Room 301, Lovett Chambers, Pitt St.

S.P.A.—MELBOURNE P.O. 2210, G.P.O., meets Mondays, Room 301, Lovett Chambers, Pitt St.

AUSTRIAN BRANCHES

SYDNEY—P.O. 2210, G.P.O., meets Mondays, Room 301, Lovett Chambers, Pitt St.

MELBOURNE—P.O. 2210, G.P.O., meets Mondays, Room 301, Lovett Chambers, Pitt St.
LITERATURE

• "Western Socialist," official organ of the companion parties in U.S.A. and Canada.
• "Socialism," "Questions of the Day."

Other Socialist literature obtainable on application.

Family Allowances ........ 3d.
Beveridge Reorganises Poverty, 4d.
"Nationalisation or Socialism?" 9d.
Socialism and Questions of the Day ............... 1/-
If We Are To Survive ........ 3d.
Socialist Manifesto (S.P. of Canada) .............. 6d.
Principles and Policy of S.P. .............. 4d.
Socialism .............. 4d.
War and the Working Class ........ 4d.
Write for free samples of literature.

Answer to Who Wrote This?"
Rosa Luxemburg, in Die Rote Fahne,
November 26th, 1918, in Paul Troche-
liek's "Luxemburg," p. 298.

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S.P.A.
THE WORLD-WORKERS UNION
S.P.N.Z.

OBJECT.—The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

The Socialist Parties of Australia and New Zealand hold:
1. The society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthower of privilege, aristocracy and plutocracy.
7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

THE SOCIALIST PARTIES OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND therefore enter the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged Labor or avowed Capitalist, and call upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under their banner to the end that a speedy termination may be brought to the system which depriv es them of the fruits of their labour and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality and slavery to freedom.

Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment, apply to nearest address.

HERE'S YOUR OPPORTUNITY!
The Socialist Party will send Speakers to any Organisation to explain the Socialist view on any subject affecting working class interest.

Ask Your Party.
Ask Your Trade Union.
Ask Your Organisation.
TO FORWARD YOUR REQUEST.
WE WILL DO THE REST: AND REMEMBER IT COSTS YOU NOTHING.

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Auckland.
PETONE MEETINGS: See local press.
AUCKLAND MEETINGS: Economics and Discussions Class, every Monday, 7.30 p.m., Carpenters' Union Room, Union Bank of Australasia Buildings, East Street, and Karangahape Road.