LABOR AT LOGGERHEADS

A Conference Comment

During the Easter week-end the Victorian division of the Australian Labor Party held its annual conference. The opening day, Good Friday, was marked by a heated debate on the Federal Labor Government’s proposed Preference to Soldiers’ Bill. The Labor Party has evidently forgotten its wartime slogan of “economic security for all when victory is won.”

The contentious motion was submitted by the Central Executive and the Fabian Planners’ Union and was carried by a majority of six. The voting was 109 for, and 101 against. The text of the motion being:

“Conference endorses the policy of the A.C.T.U. and condemns attempts made by vested interests to divide the nation with political shams such as preference to soldiers. Conference regards the Federal Government’s declared intention to introduce preference as a breach of faith with the trade unions and the Labor Party, and a betrayal of the thousands of workers who have voluntarily accepted industrial conscription and wage-pegging, and therefore directs its representatives to strongly oppose the implementation of preference to soldiers.” (“Labor Call,” Melbourne, 5/4/1945.)

Mr. P. J. Cleary, M.L.A., pointed out that “it is the policy of the trade union movement to see that everyone who wants a job shall have a job.” How this is to be accomplished under capitalism Mr. Cleary did not explain.

It was contended by supporters of the motion that Mr. Curtin and his Government had overstepped the mark in proposing the Preference to Soldiers Bill without consulting the party.

Mr. J. V. Stott, President of the Victorian A.L.P., who said “we have swallowed many things, including conscription,” stated:

“We believe that the right of the party to determine matters of Federal policy is greater than the right of the Prime Minister to act without the approval of his movement.” (“Age,” 31/3/1945.)

This statement of Mr. Stott’s explains the point at issue: the motion being merely a mask, as opposed to the motion pointed out later in the debate, that Victorian A.L.P., including the Central Executive, supported the Dunstan Country Party Government’s Preference to Soldiers’ Bill in the Victorian State Parliament.

THE PRICE OF OFFICE

Mr. Deakin, Minister for Post-War Reconstruction who is in charge of the Bill defended the actions of Mr. Curtin and the Federal Government. Mr. Deakin pointed out that when the Repatriation Act was being revised by the Labor Government in 1943, Mr. A. W. Cole, (millionaire chain store director) who, as an Independent, supported the Labor Government, and was one half of its majority of two, insisted on the Government including a preference provision. Mr. Deakin went on to say: “If we had not conceded to Mr. Cole’s requirements the Government would have lost his support and would have been thrown out of office.” (“Labor Call,” 5/4/1945. Italics theirs.)

The fruits of office must be sweet. Mr. Deakin’s statement confirms the Socialist contention that the Labor Party is prepared to dispense with any of its so-called principles if it has a possibility of administering capitalism. Capitalism can only be unshackled in the interests of the ruling class—the capitalist class.

Mr. Deakin caused an uproar when he said “that although there were seven members of the Victorian A.P.C. Executive in the State Parliament the Victorian State Labor Party apparently did not decide to oppose Mr. Dunstan’s rotten preferences Bill.” (“Age,” 31/3/1945. Italics ours.)

After several interjections Mr. Deakin went on to say:


Mr. Deakin’s statement expels debate as a sham fight between p. 2.
**A HOBBINING "WOBBLY"**

**A Lesson in Labor Kidstake**

In the “Sydney Morning Herald” (Woman's page), 2/3/24, there appeared a picture showing Senator Donald Grant and his spouse being "received" by the Duchess of Gloucester. This event is significant as it reveals to what extent Labor leaders will go to further their own interest. Any new interest, starting out as a member of the "Wobblies" (the I.W.W.), Mr. Grant has become a champion of the Labor movement. It is in this spirit of service to the people that he has been the subject of today’s event. By his election to the Senate, he has often told us that the Labor Government is a Free- blank Government. What is your own opinion? Is this the "mass destruction" tool class we have yet to learn? How must Mr. Lady speak of the Duchess of Gloucester when she "received" this Senator with such leniency? Any politician but he who has killed thousands of dollars could not easily explain her to her if it was all part of the political game.

The present Labor Government is the last of its kind with its policies. We have concluded co-operation in their minds from the first year of the last. Some have decided, political action, but have ridden power. They have not seen the way to fight in capitalist wars, but they have not seen the way to fight in capitalistic wars. They have been the "Red Flag of the Free- blank" and "Vance Jackson". Nevertheless, they were previously against the Labor Government. And the Communist Party does not support these Labor time-savers. In fact, its problem is to further the road to revolution.

Some of the few who have been heard doing dueling with appropriate proposals, including Ralph Chaplin’s "Red Flag", "Shambles the Smash Ballooner with One" have used the case of Mr. Grant. It was not in the nature of the occasion, but merely a question of the party’s. Since the United Labor Party was formed, it has been the party of the Labor movement, and not the party of capital.

The Retort Courteous

The following paragraphs appeared in the "Daily Mirror", Sydney, on April 31st, 1931, in "Commissar Olive Branch". "Commissar" Mr. Grant was at the time the Labor member for North Sydney. In an address, Mr. Grant implied that the Labor Government was not only seeking the support of the trade unions, but also the support of the "workers". Mr. Grant’s speech was received with an uproar of applause. In another paragraph, Mr. Grant confided in private that he was doing his best to avoid becoming the "boss" of the Labor movement. The Labor Government, however, has clearly stated its intention to control the political power of the country, whether they be the employers or the workers, and by any means possible, including through the trade unions, to control the political power of the workers. Mr. Grant’s speech was not only received with applause, but also with a certain amount of criticism.

The Black Market

"The black market will be turned inside out in an effort to recover 500,000 baton bands," said a recent statement. This is true in the sense that the black market prices are being set by the Labor Government. The statement was made by Mr. Grant, who is in charge of the black market in Sydney. The numbers are large, and so are all markets (black or white), in shortest supply.

**RUSSIA AS EXAMPLE FOR CAPITALISM**

INCENTIVES TO BOOST OUTPUT

A tremendous effort must be made in Australia to increase the efficiency of Australian manufacture. The problem is how to increase the efficiency of the worker in a short hour of work must be increased," said Sir Henry Barlow, the Minister for Commerce, at a meeting of the Australian Institute of Economic Science, at Sydney University.

The Minister pointed out that the Australian Institute of Economic Science was established in 1931, and that it had been decided that one of its main tasks was to study the problem of how to increase the efficiency of the worker. The Institute has been studying the problem for some time, and has made some progress. The next step, said the Minister, is to prepare a report on the problem of how to increase the efficiency of the worker.

AUGUSTAN BRANCHES

SYDNEY—B.D., Box 7341, G.P.O., Sydney.
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"SOCIAL STUDY CLA"—Set up in February of this year for the study and understanding of "Socialism and Capitalism".
PRESS CLIPPINGS

"Tribune" (Official Organ Communist Party, Sydney), 1/5/45:

"As Trotskyites, Short and O'Grail argue the war is a capitalist war and, therefore, it is of no concern to the workers. The Trotskyites believe everything should be done to wreck the war effort. Theirs was a section of the "England and America for doing just that. And they are doing it here." (Our emphasis.) (L. L. Shary, Communist Party Pres.

The workers have a very appropriate appellation for people who cry "copper."

"Tribune" (same date):

"At a time when our war effort needs the greatest financial support, the chief occupation of Mr. Menzies is that of subverting the current loan campaign." J. D. Blake, Secretary, Victorian Communist Party, Verbal Note.

"Herald" (Sydney, 1/5/45):

"Mr. Justice Davidson, asked if it could be made clear there was a section of the men who regarded the situation as a class war which was to be fought until the owners were completely destroyed and the working class won the case, he said, there would be nothing but a string of fights . . ."

Mr. Wells (President Miners Federation, No. 1): "No, that is not altogether the case. There is, however, a section which is working for a state of anarchy, and it will be a tragic thing for this country if, as a result, we find after the war ends that the workers and the owners have each other by the throat." (Emphasis ours.)

We may be pardoned if we suggest that regardless of any section, large or small, near-anarchist or pseudo-communist, the CLASS WAR WILL PER- SIST LONG AFTER THE OTHER CAPITALIST WAR HAS CEASED. In fact, after the war, the class reach the point where they regard the situation as a class-war and take the necessary steps to abolish capitalist ownership of the means of wealth production and distribution and substitute common ownership and control, the class struggle will manifest itself. We can understand 'This Honor's' apprehension; we can understand Mr. Well's postwar fears; and weighing up the position, it becomes easier to understand why miners go on strike occasionally.

HANDS OFF GREECE

During the bitter fighting between the E.L.A.S., forces and the British troops in Greece, Mr. Churchill stated that he wanted full consultation with Roosevelt and Stalin.

The Communist Party staged one of its usual "Hands Off" demonstrations, demanding "the cessation of war and the brutal butchery of Greek patriots." During the crisis it is significant that Stalin made no move to join the "Hands Off Greece" advocates. The following press report may help to explain the "Red" gentleman's silence:

STALIN FIRM WITH E.L.A.S.

"Daily Mirror" World Cables—25/2/45.

LONDON, Monday.—In the hope of rousing Marshal Stalin's sympathy, E.L.A.S. sent a delegate to Russia during the height of the fighting in Greece.

This was disclosed by the "Sunday Tidorial" yesterday.

The report says that the delegate was immediately interned on reaching Russia, and was not permitted to communicate with friends.

Communists, please note.

COMPANION PARTIES

SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA—P.O. Box 1731, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.
SOCIALIST PARTY OF NEW ZEALAND—P.O. Box 42, Petone, New Zealand.
SOCIALIST PARTY OF NEW ZEALAND—P.O. Box 129, Auckland.

DISCUSSION GROUP held in Room 12, 17 Courtenay Place, Wellington, 8 p.m. on Sundays (except first Sunday in each month).

WORKERS' COMMUNITY OF U.S.—12 Hoyward Place, Boston, 11, Mass.

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.

GREETINGS FROM LONDON

To our companion parties in the Socialist International, greetings. The days that have sorely tried us are passing over and we emerge stronger than ever. After five years of stress and the shattering bomb with the added strain of psychological propaganda, our message of hope finds a growing volume of sympathetic listeners and the promise of Socialism in times not far distant. We beseech you across the seas, and the harbingers of the day, that the early fruition of our hopes depends upon the energy we all put into the struggle with the enthusiasm born in the day. A message of fraternal greetings and earnest wishes for rapid progress towards our goal, the earth and fullness thereof for the equal enjoyment of all.

Harold Holt

For the Socialist Party of Great Britain Annual Conference.

LABOR AT LOGGER-HEADS

(Continued from page 1)

Central Executive and the Federal Labor Government. The debate shows clearly that the Victorian Federalist, Central Executive, supports preference to returned soldiers as much as the Federal Government.

As Mr. P. J. Keenly pointed out, the conference has only one thing to do—to accept the choice between the Federal Act or the State Act or to bury their heads in the sand—to refuse to face facts." ("Labor Call," 5/4/45.)

The only point at issue was: Should the Curtin Government consult the Victorian Labor Party on the proposed Preference to Returned Soldiers' Bill? Obviously, the matter was not put for the trade unionists who provide the majority of votes for the Labor Party. However, the preference to jobs for any particular section of the working class is merely a question of which workers are to be exploited for profit in the interest of the capitalist class. This aspect of the question was not even mentioned at the Labor Conference in spite of the fact that most of the trade unions were represented.

Preference bills will not solve any working class problems, but will create antagonisms between members of the working class. The ONLY solution to the problems which confront the working class of this and every country is the abolition of exploitation in all forms, the abolition of the capitalist mode of production and the establishment of Socialism, that is, 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 society as a whole.

E.W.

When you have read this COMMENT AND REVIEW pass it on.