WHITHER?

BY "TOUCHSTONE."

From "Worker." 15th April, 1933.

"Out in the West," I am told, "the men are no longer Socialists. Unionism and Labourism are living forces, green and growing plants, vigorous, virile. But Socialism is a ringbarked tree withering rapidly to its death."

I wonder if it is so. I am a town-dweller; my ear is not attuned to the heart whispers of the Ruhr. I cannot tell. But I fear me there is something to it. I know there is less Socialism in the towns than there was ten years ago—much less—and there are indications that the decay of socialist thought has not been confined within the municipal freem. The Labour Party is still a Socialist Party, because it makes for Progress, and all Progress is Socialism. BUT ITS SOCIALISM IS NOT AVOWED. It is not proclaimed from its platforms to ring throughout the land as the Gospel of Glad Tidings. It is mentioned, if ever, with bated breath, lest the re-
that men, and the leaders are mostly indifferent or timorous, where not overly hostile.

It is a pity, ten thousand pities, for the Movement's sake, and for the sake of all that the Movement seeks to every one of us. For the Socialist State is our destined home, our haven, and any drifting away is a divergence from the true course. And always there's looming ahead the task of finding the way back.

The feeling for Socialism is the instinct for natural right. Antinomy to it is a violation of primal impulses, and can only be attributed to misconception, to false training, to counsels of error.

The first principles of the Socialist's Creed are as obvious as the sun in the sky, as essential to justice as food is to life.

So simple are its base propositions that the intellect of a child can comprehend them. Everything a man produces unaided is his own. Everything two men produce by their conjunct efforts belongs to those two men. Everything a number of men produce together is the property of that number. Everything produced by Society as a whole belongs to Society as a whole.

Those who produce nothing own nothing. That which is produced by no man is owned by no man. The opportunities of Nature belong equally to all. The rule of labour belong to the labourer.

A number of men working in co-operation will produce more than the same number working as independent units in opposition to one another.

It is better to work together and share together, than to fight and rob one another for a living.

There are the simple fundamentals of Socialism. All else is but elaboration. They need no argument. The healthy minds assent to them as naturally as the healthy body succeeds in the physical face of its existence.

Now take another step in the scale of reasoning.

Here is the Earth—a beautiful place; luxuriant, prodigal of gifts; land, sea, air, breeding with fruitfulness; with riches inexhaustible, waiting only for the magic touch of Labour to minister to the pleasure and well-being of men.

Nature refuses nothing that is for our good. We suffer only through our sins. Famine to-day is the aftermath of extravagance or folly yesterday. Flood, drought, frost, destroying cyclones—all these are local and temporary phenomena. Elsewhere there are compensating harvests.

Never at any time in the history of this circling sphere has there been real want—unremittible want. Nature is the beneficent mother-God, I have no indifference to prayer to which She never turns a heedless ear.

Why is it then that millions perish of hunger? Why is there misery and crime, springing like leathosome fungi from the poverty of the soul?

Why are the cities and towns ruled by the bones with a legacy of sorrow and sin?
Why is the Bush tormented with the horror of a social tragedy? Why does it brood with a melan- 
choly madness, as though the shadow of some unavailing wo 
lay like a curse upon it? 

Is it Nature's fault that the giant legions of the unemployed march in an endless procession of wretched 
children through the streets? 

Is it Nature's fault that Frankish 

ci 


van enam used to drill the shrewd, 
gnallySummons of amiable human 
masses, with its sacred fangs of in 
separably connected, or flourishing 
ously like a spent candle in the 
ocket? 

Is it Nature's fault that weary 
stragglers tramp the lonely tracks, 
east, searching for the tide that 
yields no more than the basest 
meritance? 

Is it Nature's fault that men who 
have grown raked in body and 
smothered in mind in the lonely 
watchers of the wilderness should find so haven but Farquhar for 
their sober years? 

Anyone can see that there is 
nothing wrong. And anyone 
can see, if they have eyes to see, 
that the fault is ours; that 
a few groan more than is good for 
them or for us; that greed is the 
Satanic Sin of this Babylon we call 
Society. 

Anyone can see, too, if they are 
not blinded with prejudice, that 
the remedy is to get back as soon as 
may be to primitive principles. 
Salvation is always on the simple 
plan, Paley in his life, 

patience are complex: yet 
merely palliative won't cure one evil—if, indeed, it produces 
effects. 

Industrial arbitration, old age 
pensions, factory laws, better ac 
commodation, accident compensa-
tion—all these are palliatives, mea-
ures designed, not to sweep away, but to smother the results of an 
evil system. 

Under Socialism they would be unnecessary. 

* * *

I wish every Colonist and La-
bourite who seeks advice at Societ 
ists propagandists would ask himself 
that plain question—"WHETHER 
AM I GOING?" 

No sensible man should be con 


tent to press on blindly, ignorant of 
his destination—clearly, with 
no objectives in his hand, no 
stars in the sky to guide him. 
Every think 

ing Democra 

must desire a goal, 
so that he may shape all his efforts to 
to attain it, and know the path to 
avoid. 

And if the Ultimate of the Labour 
movement be not Socialism, what 

is it? 

I have the original manifest 

developed by the 

A.L.P. before me. It is boldly 

uncompromisingly Socialist. 

Of all the prolix documents ever 
edited in Queensland, that is the 
greatest in my view. It strikes at 
the root of the social malise: it 
holds up the oddest idea that 

one brought tears of emotion to the 
eyes of men. 

It has never been repudiated; it is 

the root of the A.L.P. still. 

But its ethics, I am told, have 
fallen into neglect. Our politi 
cians don't talk about them—all 
of them dabbed to bear the man 

rocks upon; they pride themselves 
on their practical common sense, 

and Socialism they regard as a 

beautiful dream or a hateful 

chimera. You in what direction does La 
bour legislation tend? If not
towards increasing the Labourer's share in the produce of his labour, if not towards curtailing the power of the Profitmonger, we are foolishly wasting our time. But if that be its tendency, then in so far it is Socialist.

What is wanted, however, is not unconscious Socialism, but the cool, calm, deliberate, insistent Socialism of men who know what they are after, and will never permit themselves, in the hurly-burly of the fight for the needs of the day to forget the objects of the morrow; the Socialism of men who see the truck before them, and will not be diverted from it, or lured from it, by side issues and decoys.

WHITHER? There is no joy for Labour if Socialism be not the goal. The hopes of the Reke Days to come, when fraternalism shall rule the land, alone can colour the grey monotony of industrial servitude, alone can sweeten the grim struggle for existence.

It is good to band together as mates to resist the aggression of the Boss—but better to have no Boss to resist, and be mates still. It is good to protect the factory slave, and the station slave, and the wage-slave everywhere—but better to strike the taxes from their limbs, and set them free to face Nature with a smile, strong in the sense of their own manhood.

Let us, as Unionists and Labourites, search for the truth, and serve it loyally when we find it. WHITHER? If, for one, feel in every fibre of my being that there will never be fair days, never be heart's ease, never be any abiding joy in life, until the conviction grows upon us that Socialism is coming like a flower-crowned bride to meet us, and that we are active agents, everyone of us, in harmony with eternal forces making for Justice and Righteousness.