A REVIEW
OF THE
REPORT TO THE IRONWORKERS’
UNION FEDERAL COUNCIL
AND
COMMUNISTS
AND
THE WAR

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COMMUNISTS AND THE WAR

"We must see that the war changes for us, when the character of the war changes. Does it change because Russia, as Russia, is defeated? or is it because the world, the world, in the same way, is defeated in the same way? The answer is: because now the workers' Russia is in the war. Because the workers' Red Army now guarantees the defeat of the Nazi and now guarantees a democratic peace."

Mr. E. Thornton's Report to the Ironworkers' Union Federal Council, June 1942.

I HAVE just read two reports. One is called "Trade Unions and the War" and was published by the Ironworkers' Federal Council last June. It records the Union's policy on the War. The other is called "Iron Glory" and was published by a man named Gilbert Messer, who was a British War Correspondent during the Malayan campaign. It records the unhappy heretics of the Australians who fought in thatricidated campaign, and it was published last July.

And as the Federal Council of the Ironworkers' Union had not read "Iron Glory" before it published its ambitiously entitled report, it is probably able to claim ignorance of some fewer matters concerned with modern warfare. In any case, this is the most charitable view to take, as it is far better to believe that people siimply do not want to admit that they have forgotten that they are Australians, and that the popular blood has been literally shed in their defence against Fascism.

The alleged opinions of the Ironworkers' Union (as expressed by its War Council) are not, however, the opinions of the Australian Trade Union Movement, which declined its opposition to Nazism, and its readiness to collaborate with the trade unions in Australia. In 1935, and which, unlike some people described as Trade Unionists (but with relatively short records of service in the Union) has not found it necessary to change its policy since 1939.

Nor does the Ironworkers' Report express the opinions of the Australian Labor Party, which also declared its opposition to Nazism in 1939, and its Undivided Allegiance to the Allied cause, and which also has not found it necessary to change its policy since 1939.

Nor does the Ironworkers' Report express the opinions of 99 per cent. of Australians who love their country, who hate Nazism, or any other form of political dictatorship, and who are working and fighting to defend Australia, because they believe in Australia, because they believe in the ability and courage to work out their own salvation in their own way. Because, in any case, they prefer the Australian socialistic system to the German or Japanese capitalistic system, and because, above all, they are Australians, and, as Mr. Cattin said, "loved to their soul."

Australians, therefore, do not require Communist apologies served up to them through their trade unions, as reasons why they should defend their way of life against foreign despots. The character of the war has not changed for Australians. Australians, like their British brothers, were defending their way of life against the Nazis, long before Germany attacked Russia. They were defending their way of life against this struggle, irrespective of whether the Red Army, or any other Army, was defending their own country. (Mr. Cattin's words) "the defeat of the Nazis..."

Australians know that the British people fought the Battle for Britain, and won it, and they have been guaranteed, and despite the belligerence of the British Communist Party during those terrible months when the skies rained death, and Germany threatened, unconsciously defeat and stalemate.

And Australians will face their destiny in that same self-sacrificing way. All Australians will continue the struggle as they commenced it. Irrespective of whatever new changes may distinguish Communist "explanations" of the war, including even Communist "explanations" published by trade unions such as the Ironworkers' Union.

But in so far as it deals with the War, the Ironworkers' Union "Report" is indistinguishable from Communist policy (at the moment), and it is only upon this basis that it can be analysed. Particularly when its author has been associated with that policy from its inception. Particularly when that policy is in complete disagreement with those principles of which it is written. Particularly when that policy is in complete contradiction with those principles of which it is written.
COMMUNISTS AND THE WAR

"The leading circles of the Second International are acting the most filthy and criminal part in the blood-dripping slaughter machines of the war. They are deceiving the masses by their lies. The anti-fascist character of their wars, and are helping the bourgeoisie to drive the people to the slaughter." — Dzheritow, General Secretary Communist International (before Germany attacked Russia).

The most amusing part of the Ironworkers' Council Report are the Communists apologies for their changed attitude towards the Labor Party, including the Australian Labor Party.

After explaining that the "character" of the war had changed because Russia was attacked, the author hastens to add:

"Has the world's workers put any trust in people who alone led the Allies into June 22, 1941, even without the military tragedies that followed once after the other for the whole military machine of Great Britain?"

"The people who led the Allies early in the war were people who all their lives had been opposed to the working class. As well as the military leadership, the civil leadership of the Allied cause was in the hands of anti-working class people!"

Then the sentence is, of course, best answered by the Communist Party itself, which, in the Communist "The Guardian," September 9, 1943, issued the following statement:

"The desire for the full weight of Australian manpower and resources being mobilised for the defence of Australia, and along with other British forces for the defeat of Hitler, is a democratic Germany, and for the independence of nations now enslaved by Nazism!"

At length its policy even clearer:

"We hold that it is unfair to reject the principle of the organization and training of forces to fight overseas. In the event of a voluntary expeditionary force being organized for use in any part of the world to assist the Australian Army from aggression or to participate directly in the struggle to defeat the aggressor armies."

The Communist Party will advise fit and available members to offer their services.

Apparently the Communists were not to trust the Chamberlain and Menzies Governments with even the lives of their own members in September, 1942.

But had the pro-Fascist Menzies Government supposed to be conducting an anti-Fascist war?"

But, of course, was before the Communists drew their first arrow, and Dzheritow discovered that:

"The leading circles of the Second International" (the Labor Parties) were "... acting the most filthy and criminal part in the blood-dripping slaughter machines of the war."

"But, however, was the Communist policy after British Labor entered the National Government? The Communists asked the British Labor Party in precisely the same terms that they used by utilising the ability of the United Labor Party, which was not so long ago...

Therefore, the following statement was, of course, that the war be a Contributing factor, not the second Communist mention, because:

"Almost coinciding with this new change in the character of the war, a Labor Government came to office in Australia."

This, of course, is not true. The Communists changed their policy immediately after June 22, when Russia was attacked, and accelerated the war by an initiative of Labor Government, before Labor announced office in the October.

So that the argument of "coincidence"—is approximately as factual as the rest of the lies in the argument of the Ironworkers' Report.

As the most valuable admission in the Ironworkers' Report is it summarily the following statement (page 9): that:

"The Labor Government is not a thoroughly working class government in the fullest sense. It is a government, which has completely betrayed working class principles for which it once strongly stood."

"In recent actions the Federal Labor Leader, Mr. Curtin, has completely betrayed working class principles for which he once strongly stood."

Curtin, divorced from the working class, joins with the capitalist gang in reviving the land of victimization.

And by April 29, 1944, we read the Federal Secretary of the Ironworkers' Union telling the Australian Parliament that the war in an imperialist war, and that:

"While he agreed that working class unity is desirable in most matters, WAR IS NOT ONE OF THEM."

And that:

"For once he was in AGREEMENT with Menzies, that had the election lost another one more?"

Curtin would have been in Khashi so changed was his policy from day to day.

And at the stream of Communist vituperation against the Australian Labor Party bowed to on June, 1941, until once again we find the General Secretary of the Ironworkers' Union telling an A.C.T.U. Congress that the war was an imperialist war, and moving up menacing to the effect that:

"Congress demands the immediate nationalisation of the arms industries, and:

Reaffirms its uncompromising hostility to military and industrial conscription."

But the anti-stigma was not long coming. Within a few days, Germany attacked Russia, the Communists overnight changed from baying enemies of Pauls, into racing to the aid of Russia. By December, 1941, we found the General Secretary of the Ironworkers Union publicly stating such:

"I would not necessarily oppose conscription in all circumstances."

And by June, 1942, we find the Communist and the Federal Council of the Ironworkers' Unions definitely dissolving to the workers that one of the "explanations" for their second switch in war policy is that the assumption of office by a Labor Government, headed by "Fascist Curtin, the Federal Labor Chief," will do the United Labor Party so long before he believed necessary, "really stands in the camp of capitalism, and serves its interest."

But if the Communists suffer from short memories, they do not lack im-

pudence. So, immediately we read the Federal Council of the Ironworkers Union used as a convenient megaphone for Communist Second Front propaganda.
SECOND FRONT

LIKE other Communist arguments in the Ironworkers' Report, the SECOND FRONT argument is conspicuous for these little lies of forgery and distortion which distinguish the publications of the Communist Party. At a glance it is incredible that in some 20 pages of what is described on the front page as "a necessary, detailed analysis of the situation both in Australia and abroad", there is not one reference to the Russian-German Pact (24/8/43) or the Russian-Japanese Pact (30/4/44).

Instead, Page 4 implies that the quick defeat of France..."(can be attributed to the rotten, anti-imperialist leadership of France and the Fascists who had worn their way into the key positions in the French Government.)"

This may be true, but it is also true that the defeat of France can be attributed to utter things. For instance, the organised sabotage of the French communist Party, which sought to end the war as soon as the Russian-German Pact was signed, and which did its best to smash the miracle of the French workers. Thus, if France could have been saved by a Second Front in Europe, it might have been.

There may be something in this idea, for so many people are attached to and fighting for it.

Particularly as the Ironworkers' Report states that..."In the main subsequent characteristics of the war were the steady success of our forces in the Pacific, the steady success of Great Britain and France, and the serious nature of the battle for the Atlantic, which resulted in millions of tons of Allied shipping going to the bottom."

This account carefully omits any mention of the Battle for Britain.

It was possible to search in vain for any reference to the epic struggle of the British workers in defence of their island home.

Apparently the only complaint permissible in the Ironworkers' Report are sentiments having nothing of any kind to say about the Korean war, with its horror and sacrifice during the bitter and bloody struggle for South Korea alone makes possible today the enormous British supplies without which Russia could never have won the war. Instead, we are informed that "by the new strategy of the war, a new victory is being won..." Our Management Committee decided to campaign for increased production. We campaigned to avoid strikes, with the result that we have been surprisingly successful, when we remember that our union has deliberately and in a planned way been involved in more strikes than other unions in the last few years.

"These were not just the sporadic strikes that are typical of the coalfields, but planned strikes, because we made strikes our business."

It would appear, therefore, that the Ironworkers' Report wants to increase production because Germany attacked Britain, and not because Japan attacked Australia. Thus they point out, Japan's entry into the war "did not mark the end of the war for us.

In other words, the Communists admit that their activities in the coalfields are not connected with Australia's needs, but with Russia's last few years.

Once this is understood, it is not difficult to assess the Communist "Second Front" propaganda at its real worth.

An inspection of the admission and sympathy with all the workers in the Soviet Union is a stout measure for those who feel for the Russian people. According to the report, the small, white, slavish population of the country north of the Arctic Circle is_stronger and more efficient than the Russian people, but the Communist government of the country north of the Arctic Circle is_stronger and more efficient than the Russian people...

For Russia has the manpower to survive, while Australia, as a nation, would conceivably be utterly annihilated.

And while Australia's men are fighting for our survival in the deadly jungles north of the continent, Austrians are able to work and rest comfortably for their lives.

But Austrians are called to prefer the judgment of their own trade unions and their own government. The trade unions of Austria have demanded a coat for the Austrian workers and their own Government. We can only support this demand as a necessary measure to prevent the spread of the war in Europe to the whole world today.

That Australia, which is in desperate need of a Second Front in Europe, the workers of Australia must decide their own fate. That Australia has the right to determine its own destiny and to decide the war for themselves. That Australia is in desperate need of a Second Front in Europe, and that the Australian workers must decide their own fate.