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party which demonstrated its skill, organising efficiency and ability to lead great working class battles against capitalism.

Secondly, this great struggle established the fact that the Arbitration system has been made into a vicious bludgeon against the working class by the Labor Governments. There can be no illusions about the fact that as the economic crisis develops, this Arbitration system will be the chief weapon for imposing wage cuts, longer hours and worsening the conditions of the workers. As time goes on the workers will find themselves more and more in conflict with this weapon of the employing class.

Thirdly, the coal strike demonstrated that great working class victories can be won even though specific economic claims are not secured in the course of the strike. This is likely to be a more frequent feature in conditions of economic crisis. More and more the partial struggles face the workers with the great issue of the all-in struggle against capitalism itself as the only way to lasting solution.

Fourthly, the defence of unionism and the rights of unionists to regulate and determine their own affairs has now become a matter of first-rate importance for the whole Australian working class. The battles on this front which are such a longstanding tradition of Australian workers must be fought again with redoubled vigour.

Finally, the conditions have been created for developing the fighting, united front of the working class. It is the great responsibility of all Communists to help Labor Party workers fully to grasp the lessons to be learned from the coal strike. These Labor Party workers must never be lumped together with their Right Wing leaders. These workers will more rapidly move over to the banner of united working class struggle to the extent that the Communists show vigour and understanding in organising and developing this united front.

In pursuing this united front policy, no time should be lost and no opportunity should be missed to bring all the best working class fighters, all the splendid militants who came forward in the process of the coal strike, into the ranks of the Communist Party.

A COMMUNIST PUBLICATION

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which read kindly pass on!

The

GREAT COAL STRIKE—1949

by

J. D. Blake

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J. D. BLAKE

The magnificent seven weeks' strike struggle of the mineworkers in July and August, 1949, brought into sharper focus than any other event of the post war period the true nature and policy of all political parties and classes in the Australian community. This struggle was a great turning point in Australian postwar history, which threw into clear relief the new conditions which now confront the working class.

The interpretations of this struggle which have been advanced by the Labor Governments, the Tory parties and the daily Press are many and varied, but the stock argument used by practically all these forces hostile to the working class was that the coal strike was a Communist plot or a Communist conspiracy.

Even a cursory, but honest, examination of the facts and the events before and during the strike clearly shows that this interpretation is completely unfounded and false. From the very beginning, the strike developed on the basis of genuine industrial issues, that is, upon the basis of the economic claims that were advanced by the mineworkers. But it soon became clear that, so far as the ruling class and the various governments were concerned, the struggle involved much more profound issues than the economic claims of the miners. For this reason also, the outcome of the struggle meant much more for the workers than simply the satisfaction of the economic claims of the mineworkers.

Already in the second week of the strike, it became known that the Collins House monopolists and the Federal and State

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Labor Governments had set themselves the deliberate aim of securing the extinction of the Communist Party as an effective organisation in Australia. It was made known that Labor politicians in both Federal and NSW State Parliaments looked upon this struggle as an opportunity to destroy the influence of the Communists in the trade union movement. They openly acknowledged that most of the postwar advances in wages, hours and working conditions were associated in the minds of the workers with those key unions in which Communists played a prominent part in the leadership.

For this reason Chifley, McGirr and other Labor Party leaders had two major aims in connection with the coal strike. These were to smash the Communist Party and to break the back of the Miners' Federation as the first stage of their grand plan to cripple the militant trade unions, deprive them of their leadership and in this way disarm the working class.

This plan of the Labor Party leaders did not arise out of thin air, but from their consideration of the economic crisis developing in the capitalist world. This developing crisis compels them to employ violent police State measures against the working class in their efforts to defend capitalism and unload upon the backs of the working people all the misery and suffering resulting from economic crisis.

The economic crisis now spreading through the capitalist world is a grave menace to capitalism, and all the more so if the working class remains unshackled; hence one of the main preparatory steps of the capitalist class, and of the governments which represent that class is to shackle and cripple the working class by smashing the militant unions and the Communist Party.

Aggravating the critical situation created by growing economic crisis is the enormous burden of war expenditure involved in the war preparations of the Chifley Government. This war expenditure of the Federal Labor Government is designed to transform Australia into a Pacific war base for the use of the Yankee imperialists in their aggressive war plans.

Undoubtedly the greatest barrier in the path of all these capitalist plans is the Communist Party; for this reason the whole power of the ruling class and its governments and all the venom

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of the capitalist daily Press is directed against the Communist Party.

During the strike, in full page advertisements in all the daily newspapers in the Commonwealth, Prime Minister Chifley poured out a stream of lying propaganda about the strike. These advertisements were designed to confuse the general public and isolate the miners; with this object in mind Mr. Chifley deliberately lied on the causes of the strike and the responsibility for the development of this struggle.

The events preceding the strike clearly prove Mr. Chifley and the daily Press to be liars. One of the great arguments advanced in all this propaganda was that the strike of the mineworkers was completely unnecessary. The strike was described as unnecessary because the Coal Industry Tribunal was alleged to be all ready to grant the demands of the mineworkers, consequently the miners were charged with coming out on strike solely because of malice and with the object of wrecking the economy of the country.

The facts show these charges to be completely without foundation. Let us briefly examine the record of events preceding the strike.

THE RECORD OF PRE-STRIKE EVENTS

On May 18th, the Coal Industry Tribunal, Mr. Gallagher, made this announcement:

"I have no objection whatever to the parties negotiating, in fact I think it is highly desirable that they should do so. I think that if the parties reach agreement on industrial matters it is far better than being determined by arbitration. If there is any agreement that needs ratification, I would be only too pleased to do it. As far as the present claim for the 35-hour week is concerned, I do not see anything at all to prevent the parties negotiating, and if they reach an agreement it will make the matter much easier."

This statement of Mr. Gallagher made it quite clear that within a few weeks of the outbreak of the strike in the coal mining industry he considered it advisable that direct negotiations between the workers and the coal owners should take place. Furth-

ermore, he considered it quite possible to secure agreement on the main economic claims of the mineworkers.

The day after this statement was made, a conference was held to discuss the mining unions' claims. At this conference the attitude of the coal owners was soon made evident. In reply to the proposals of the mining unions, the coal owners proposed a system of incentive payments and said they were prepared to agree "in principle" with long service leave if the unions waived their opposition to mechanical extraction of pillars, agreed to set aside compulsory retirement at 60 provisions of the Pensions Act, and if they undertook to accept an outside disciplinary authority with power to impose penalties on mineworkers.

It is quite clear that these proposals of the coal owners were a direct attack upon some of the basic conditions won by the miners in the process of many years' struggle. In this regard it is interesting to note that the Joint Coal Board, which is one of the instruments of the Federal Labor Government, advanced proposals which were virtually word for word the proposals of the coal owners. The Joint Coal Board advanced a plan which called for a bonus system, mechanical extraction of pillar coal, elimination of compulsory retirement at 60, elimination of pit top meetings, and the matter of working hours to be referred back to the Tribunal.

The coal owners' approach had already been clearly indicated in the challenges to existing awards that had been made as from the beginning of 1948. During the whole of 1948 and so far in 1949 the awards of the Federation have been under fire—those relating to annual leave, paid public holidays, seniority, weekly hiring and the democratic practices of the union.

In this way already early in May of this year the line-up of forces was quite evident. The Coal Board and the coal owners together were pursuing a policy which clearly had the object of worsening the conditions already existing in the coal mining industry and all that the mineworkers were offered in return for this sacrifice was a system of long service leave which was hedged around in such a way that practically no mineworker would ever enjoy it.

Naturally these proposals were rejected by the Miners' Federation and late in May a conference of the parties in the coal mining industry was again assembled. At this conference the repre-

representatives of the miners announced that they proposed to call aggregate meetings, whereupon Mr. Gallagher declared that he would deal sympathetically with the union's claim for long service leave if the matter were referred to the Tribunal. On the basis of this undertaking the miners' leadership decided on June 1st to postpone the aggregate meetings until June 16th, to enable the negotiations to be continued.

As a result of this a further conference of the parties was held, and at the very beginning of this conference the owners repudiated their previous agreement "in principle" on long service leave, and announced that they were opposed to the claim without reservation.

The Coal Board then played its part by submitting proposals for long service leave which meant that a one-day stopwork meeting would deprive the miners of the whole of that year in assessment of long service leave, in submitting this proposal Mr. Stuart, for the Coal Board, openly stated that in 1948, on the basis of the agreement proposed, the cost of long service leave would have been absolutely nothing, as no mineworker would have been eligible to receive it.

Mr. Gallagher, the Coal Industry Tribunal, made his position quite clear at this conference by declaring that it would be impossible and absurd to grant long service leave without attaching to it conditions of service, because the industry was a key one and difficult to discipline. This in itself made it evident that any award made by Mr. Gallagher on long service leave would mean in fact no long service leave at all for the mineworkers, and that his award would be used as a means to introduce disciplinary measures against the miners to destroy the industrial strength of the Miners' Federation.

MINEWORKERS RECORD THEIR VOTES

On June 10th, the Central Council of the Miners' Federation carried a resolution declaring that as the coal owners and the Joint Coal Board had repudiated their previous undertaking regarding long service leave, and as Mr. Gallagher had indicated that his award on the matter would be on the lines demanded by the Coal Board, the aggregate meetings of mineworkers would be called on Thursday, June 16th.

The chairman of the Joint Coal Board, incidentally, is a former mine manager. There is no representative of the mineworkers

on the Board—this principle was rejected by the Federal Government.

In this resolution, the Miners' Central Council made a public announcement that they were still prepared to confer with the object of securing a satisfactory agreement on the miners' claims. But instead of taking advantage of this offer of the miners' leadership, Mr. Gallagher invited the coal owners to make an application for an order against the union leaders responsible for calling the aggregate meetings. The coal owners quickly accepted this offer and applied to Mr. Gallagher for the order which was issued on June 14th.

In spite of the order, the aggregate meetings of mineworkers went ahead on June 16th, and at these aggregate meetings the mineworkers decided by 7995 votes to 822 in favor of a general coal strike on June 27th, unless a settlement was reached in the interim.

This decision of the aggregate meetings of mineworkers provided the authorities and the Labor Governments with a further ten days during which an agreement could be arrived at with the unions. But it is significant that during this time no effort was made to take advantage of the opportunity to secure a settlement before the strike broke out. The only move during this time was a discussion between the Coal Mining Unions' Council and the Emergency Committee of the ACTU on the afternoon of June 24th. At this discussion the mining unions conveyed to the ACTU leaders compromise proposals upon which they were prepared to arrive at an agreement. These proposals covered two points: (1) Acceptance of the principle of a long service leave scheme not less favorable than that operating at Wonthaggi, and (2) acceptance of the principle of a 35-hour working week.

But the strategic plan of the Federal and State Labor Governments had already gone into operation; the order had gone out that no attempt at a settlement of the miners' claims was to be made. There was no effort on the part of the Labor Party leaders to avert the strike, but on the contrary. War was declared against the miners and the operational plan was to smash the union strength of the Communist Party and break the back of the Miners' Federation.

That is why the compromise proposals of the miners were flatly rejected by the Joint Coal Board, and at a later conference be-

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"unfair"
proposals?

tween the representatives of the mineworkers, the Coal Board and the coal owners, the latter immediately made the announcement that they would not budge from their proposals made on May 19th, the Coal Board made a similar declaration and the conference quickly broke down.

THE MYTH OF GALLAGHER'S LONG SERVICE LEAVE

The hypocritical and lying nature of all the declarations of Chifley and of the daily Press about what Mr. Gallagher was allegedly prepared to do to satisfy the miners' claims is completely exposed by the transcript of the proceedings before the Coal Industry Tribunal on these matters. Here are some extracts from the proceedings which clearly reveal the true facts of the situation.

The Chairman: Even though there is a break in service, a man should be entitled to long service leave?

Mr. Williams: Yes.

The Chairman: I do not think you can do that in this industry. I think you have to have regard to the nature of the industry—its history and general conduct If an employee does not attend for work, you can say that work is no longer available for him; that is all well and good. However, in this industry that position does not obtain. In this industry, if a man is sent out of the pit or is sacked, the usual thing is for the whole pit to stop. To say that an industry can carry on in that way and at the same time can have costly benefits such as this without any conditions would be, to my way of thinking, absurd . . .

* * *

The Chairman: Do you mean a strike by an individual or a . .

Mr. Davie: A strike in which an individual is involved. After all, the claim is being made by his organisation and if his organisation calls a strike which involves him, he should not accrue long service leave.

The Chairman: I think there is a great deal of substance in what you say. Now we have to look at the practicalities of it. Assuming I accepted that condition, do you think it would work in the industry? I mean, it is no use me imposing a condition in the award which would be unworkable. It would be specious to do such a thing. Do you think if I did that it would be workable?

Mr. Davie: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The only qualification would be that if it were inserted in an award it must remain without any variation notwithstanding any steps which might be taken to have a variation made—that is, any illegal steps.

The Chairman: And it amounts to this: that as regards long service leave the so-called right to strike would not be recognised.

Mr. Davie: And would not be recognised, and I only repeat again what the proprietors said when they were talking about long service leave at a conference which was held. They said that long service leave would be unthinkable in an industry in which strikes were permitted to go on.

The Chairman: Well, if you, representing the employers, think that is practicable, I am going to give it a very weighty consideration . . .

* * *

The Chairman: The difficulty is that the Managerial Board in the industry is opposed to that scheme, and it would be difficult to get the Government to give their approval. The Wonthaggi scheme has been strongly opposed. The Managerial Board set up by the Commonwealth and the State Governments would have to disagree with the Joint Coal Board. I have to take that into consideration in making an award.

Mr. Gallagher's attitude on this occasion merely confirmed his consistent opposition to long service leave, taken from the first day of the hearing. When the Federation first lodged the claim, Mr. Gallagher urged that it be not proceeded with. When the Federation insisted upon the claim being heard, Mr. Gallagher refused to determine the issue and referred it to the Joint Coal Board for a report. In doing so he said, among other things: "It might be said that mineworkers are already fairly treated and that no sound reason exists for the innovation now sought. On the material before me I do not consider that a case has been made out for departure from the practice of the Federal industrial authorities of not granting long service leave otherwise than by consent. It should also be pointed out that irrespective of the views of the Board and of other features both for and against the claim, it will be quite impossible to allow long service leave by industrial award unless the employees receiving the benefit of the award are also prepared to carry the burden of it."

When the Coal Board report came to hand, virtually rejecting long service leave as not being in the public interest, it said that in any case it was a matter for Government legislation. It was following this that the Federation approached the Federal

Government with the result already mentioned. Mr. Gallagher instantly declined to even submit a report on the matter to the Government.

This record proves beyond doubt that the award which Mr. Gallagher was alleged to have all ready in his pocket, and about which there was so much noise in the daily Press, was nothing more than the scheme of the coal owners and the Joint Coal Board.

HOW DID CHIFLEY USE HIS POWER?

One of the stock phrases of Prime Minister Chifley and of all Labor politicians during the struggle was that the miners must go back to arbitration, and that the matters in dispute in the coal mining industry were of no concern to the Government and could only be decided by the Coal Industry Tribunal.

The fact is that Clause 18 of the Coal Industry Act contains this very clear provision: "The Prime Minister may, in agreement with the Premier of the State, issue directions to the Board on matters of policy, and it is to be the duty of the Board to observe and carry out any directions so given."

Hence it is quite clear that Mr. Chifley had all the means at his disposal to secure an amicable settlement of the dispute in the coal mining industry. It goes without saying that he failed to take advantage of this provision of the Coal Industry Act in the interests of the mineworkers, but on the other hand there is every reason for believing that Mr. Chifley did take full advantage of this provision to issue directions to the Coal Board binding that Board to advance the proposals which they did in various conferences and to completely reject all of the proposals advanced by the mineworkers.

Mr. Chifley himself in October had advised the Federation that long service leave could only be achieved by agreement with the coal owners and that the Government could not assist as it lacked the constitutional power.

The Chifley Labor Government was determined to use all its powers in defence of the coal owners and to make war against the mineworkers. In provocative fashion industry was shut down on a wide scale in NSW a week before the coal strike had even begun. Scores of thousands of workers were thrown out of employment as part of the policy of the Chifley and McGirr Governments to manufacture hostility amongst the workers against the miners and to isolate the miners.

It is now well known that this plot failed as far as it related to the miners; its sole effect was to inflict unnecessary hardship and misery on countless thousands of workers.

TREACHERY OF THE RIGHT WING LABOR PARTY LEADERS

All the events during the process of the coal strike itself throw a clear light on the true nature of the Labor Governments. The strike provided the most concentrated exposure of the role of Social Democracy which has been experienced by the working class in Australia for many years.

In this situation the treacherous leaders of the Labor Party proved to be more useful to the Collins House monopolists than the Menzies Tory Party. The Labor Party leaders were able to mobilise all the Right Wing elements and traitors in the Labor Movement in a way which Menzies would have found it more difficult to do.

Menzies himself has made it clear that in his view the policy pursued by the Federal Labor Government in relation to the coal strike was in fact the policy of the Liberal Party. Without doubt, Menzies could have added that Chifley did this job better than Menzies himself could have done it.

The fund freezing legislation introduced by the Chifley Government was one of the most vicious strike-breaking laws in Australian history. In their noisy speeches during the debate on the Act, a number of Labor politicians like Calwell said they had no intention of interfering with the workers' right to strike. Hypocrisy and cant could hardly be carried further! The Labor Government freezes the funds of the unions, stifles financial aid to the mineworkers on strike, and has the audacity to say it is not strike-breaking, but on the contrary is defending the right to strike.

In implementing this vicious legislation the Labor Government brought into play its tried and trusted weapon against the working class—the Arbitration Court. The judge selected to wield this weapon was also a Labor Party gentleman with a record of demagogic utterances—Judge Foster.

Next stage in the struggle was the unprecedented proceedings before the Arbitration Court, in which the weapon of contempt was used to inflict savage jail sentences on union leaders. In these proceedings there was no trial and no defence, a refusal to act as a common informer or to give information on internal

union affairs to the enemy of unionism was met with a sentence of 12 months' jail.

It was a Labor Government which did this. It was the noisy champion of human rights Dr. Evatt who invented this legislation and perpetrated this criminal violation of the rights of workers. But maybe the intellectual Dr. Evatt does not look upon workers as human.

The objective of these jailings of union leaders by the Labor Government was to behead the unions on strike and leave the mineworkers without leadership in the struggle. This hope proved to be vain because the workers quickly threw up new leaders and commenced rapidly to improve their organisation throughout the coalfields.

Instead of weakening the fighting spirit of the mineworkers or their solidarity, the violent onslaught against them increased their fighting determination and this was revealed in the resounding votes for continuation of the struggle recorded at mass meetings in the middle of the strike. These votes were even more decisive than the vote at the original aggregate meetings which called the strike.

This militant fighting spirit of the miners forced the Labor politicians out of their secluded Canberra surroundings to stomp the coal fields and take the platform on the Sydney Domain. This series of Labor Party meetings (which were discontinued after the strike) showed the Right Wing Labor politicians in their true colors. In all their speeches they poured abuse upon the miners and upon the Communist Party. Coming forward as the ardent defenders of the coal bosses, they ordered the miners to go back to arbitration and accept the will of the coal owners, the Coal Board and the arbitration system acting on their behalf.

The vicious strike-breaking campaign of the Labor politicians reached its all-time low with the gutter language of Calwell in his notorious Sydney Domain speech. In this speech Calwell threatened the establishment of concentration camps to place militant workers behind barbed wire a la Hitler.

In the same speech Calwell boasted with pompous pride that: "We unloaded the Haligonian Duke," in other words the Federal Labor Government came to the assistance of the Hollway Liberal Party Government in Victoria by using the navy to unload a shipload of coal declared black by militant unions in that State. The Labor Government came to the aid of a Tory State Government and Calwell is proud of it. Calwell boasted of treachery and

revelled in his unity with the Victorian Tories, thus clearly exposing the true role of the Labor Party leadership.

In the coal strike, the whole machinery of the Labor Party was set in motion with the object of strike-breaking. At the top of this strike-breaking apparatus stood the Federal and NSW Labor Governments, which proceeded to mobilise the ALP State executive, the Right Wing leaders of the ACTU and Labor Councils to defend the coal owners and make war on the coal miners. While the Fergusons, Clareys, Monks and Stouts were brought into action for their dirty work, Right Wing forces headed by Blair, were being thrown into action to disrupt the Combined Mining Unions' Council, while on the Northern NSW coalfields the Right Wing Labor Party agents, Crook, Cockerill and Simpson were assigned the task of disrupting the miners' front from within.

Elsewhere the ALP leaders threw into action those other shock troops of disruption known as the Groupers, who consist to a great extent of criminal elements and shady characters in the employ of the Security Police. In the full glare of publicity, the notorious Dobson story threw a brilliant light on the true nature of these anti-working class shock troops of the Labor Party leaders which parade under the high-sounding title of ALP Industrial Groups.

The purpose of all this furious activity of the Labor Party Right Wing was to sow confusion and divert attention from the real issues of the struggle and to create the false impression that what was happening was a battle between the Labor Governments and the Communist Party, while the miners were alleged to be merely onlookers. These efforts of the Labor traitors failed completely. The mineworkers in the process of almost eight weeks' bitter struggle learned the true nature of the Labor Governments and the Labor Party leadership. They learned that in battle between the working class and the capitalists, the Labor Party leaders are the ardent defenders of capitalism and the enemies of the workers.

The mineworkers learned in most convincing fashion to see their true friends. In this great mining struggle, the only political party which fought unconditionally and without equivocation in support of the miners was the Communist Party, which stood out as the sole party of the working class in the test of battle. On the coalfields it was the Communists who devoted all their organising skill to leading the fight for the cause of the miners. In Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and other big cities, the Communists were the organisers of support for the mineworkers' struggle and for the supply of relief. The whole of the Communist Press in all States solidly supported the miners' struggle and continuously

1 So they are the
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brought the miners' claims before the public and refuted the lies of the capitalist Press:

MILITARY FORCES IN 1890 AND 1949

Betraying a cardinal point in the platform of its own Party which declares: "No troops to be used in industrial disputes," the Chifley Labor Government ordered the use of military forces in open cut mines to break the coal strike. Australian workers have bitter memories of the use of the army against the workers by Tory Governments in the strikes of the 1890's. In fact it was out of those bitter experiences that the Labor Party itself was born.

The Labor Party came into existence with the principle that in no circumstances should military forces be used against striking workers. In the coal strike this principle was betrayed by a Labor Government headed by Chifley and Evatt, which gave the order to soldiers under military discipline to work open cut mines while mineworkers were on strike, and ordered the navy to unload coal for the Hollway Tory Government in Victoria.

This act of treachery will never be forgotten by the Australian workers, who are rapidly learning by hard experience that the only genuine party of the working class to which they can look for leadership is the Communist Party.

It was one of the outstanding results of this great mining strike that a large body of Labor Party workers began to act openly against the treacherous policy of their leaders. This revolt amongst the Labor Party workers will continue to grow and spread, and serves to emphasise the need for tremendous attention to development of the united front of the working class.

FINAL STAGE OF THE STRUGGLE

In the last weeks of the great struggle in the coal mining industry the situation which arose was one in which the Labor Governments and the daily press were anxious for the Communists and militants to blindly pursue the struggle on the economic issues through to the bitter end. Their obvious intention was to break the front of the mineworkers at the outer edges by developing breakaway movements for a return to work in such a way that the militant leadership and the Communist Party would be left high and dry and isolated.

Because of the strike-breaking activities of Ferguson, Secretary of the A.R.U. in N.S.W., the railworkers had been prevented from acting in solidarity with the miners. In various places black coal was being handled by sections of the workers on the orders of their Right Wing leaders. There were signs of some weakening of

the position in parts of the coalfields in Queensland, but above all the disruptive work of Crook, Cockerill, Simpson and others on the key Northern fields had produced a public impression of weakening of the front in one of the main centres of the struggle.

As a result of these events the miners had come to feel that there was no way forward so far as continuing the struggle to fully secure their economic claims was concerned. In these circumstances it was clear that the time for resumption of work had arrived. The enemy desired that this resumption of work should take place under the control and direction of the Right Wing disruptive elements, thus leaving the militant leadership in a state of isolation.

Had this been allowed to take place all the tremendous political advances secured during the struggle could have gone for nothing.

A disorganised return to work would have produced the very result sought by the reactionary forces, namely, the breaking of the Miners' Federation, but instead of this the skill and boldness of the Communist leaders retained the initiative and the leadership in the hands of the best working class forces right through to the end, with the result that the plan of the Labor Government failed, and the ranks of the miners are more solid than ever before, whilst the prestige of the Communist Party is the highest it has ever been on the coalfields.

Having failed to secure the objective which they set themselves during the coal strike, Chifley, Evatt and Co. are now attempting to secure these objectives by other means. It is for this purpose that they introduced the amendments to the Arbitration Act taking control of union ballots and union affairs out of the hands of the workers as part of their plan to fascise the unions.

The working class must now launch a vigorous and prolonged struggle against this and all other attacks upon their trade unions.

CONCLUSION AND LESSONS

The coal strike was of tremendous importance for the Australian working class. Firstly, the workers secured in this struggle invaluable lessons on the true role of Labor Governments, the A.L.P. leadership, or what is known internationally as Social Democracy. In contrast to this the workers saw the Communist Party as the only genuine working class

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