O P P R E S S I O N

IN SOCIETY

AUSTRALIA IS A FREE COUNTRY, OR SO MOST AUSTRALIANS BELIEVE, BUT, IN FACT OUR BASIC INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS ARE UNDER ATTACK, AND MANY HAVE ALREADY BEEN LOST.

OCCASIONALLY SUCH OPPRESSION IS SEEN OPENLY AND DRAMATICALLY WHEN OFFICIAL VIOLENCE IS TURNED AGAINST PROTESTING STUDENTS OR WORKERS, AS SEEN ABOVE. MOSTLY, HOWEVER, IT TAKES THE FORM OF AUTHORITARIAN RESTRICTIONS THAT TOUCH ALMOST EVERY ASPECT OF OUR DAILY LIVES.

EVERYTHING FROM THE WAGE YOU ARE PAID TO THE BOOKS YOU MAY READ AND THE FILMS YOU MAY WATCH IS CONTROLLED BY SOME REGULATION OR SOME AUTHORITY. IF YOU ARE A PUBLIC SERVANT YOU RISK DISMISSAL. IF YOU CRITICIZE THE DEPARTMENT IN WHICH YOU WORK OR TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN POLITICS. IF YOU ARE A WORKER YOU RISK CRIPPLING FINES AGAINST YOUR UNION AND YOURSELF, AND IMPRISONMENT OF ITS OFFICIALS IF YOU WITHOLD YOUR LABOUR FOR A JUST WAGE. IF YOU ARE A TWENTY YEAR OLD YOU MUST RISK IMPRISONMENT IF YOU CHOOSE TO FOLLOW YOUR CONSCIENCE AND REFUSE TO FIGHT AND KILL A PEOPLE WHO WISH YOU NO HARM.

IS THIS THE DEMOCRACY WE HOLD SO DEAR?

SURELY EVERY AUSTRALIAN WHO BELIEVES IN DEMOCRACY, WHO DESIRES TO LIVE IN PEACE AND FREEDOM, MUST STAND WITH HIS FELLOWS TO END THE STEADY EROSION OF FREEDOM IN OUR SOCIETY.

FREEDOM DAY : JULY 4
Australia is not free while the Federal Government conscripts voiceless young men to kill and be killed in Vietnam.

Australia is not free while the Government gaols for two years those who, in obedience to their conscience, refuse to fight or to register for military service.

Australia is not free while citizens who support the young non-compliers can be imprisoned under the Crimes Act.

Australia is not free while freedom is denied to a voiceless minority, forced to sacrifice their careers and their lives in a futile war of aggression.

Australia is not free while the National Service Act remains in force. It must be repealed.

The Australian arbitration system has been hailed (by the employers and government) as one of the most advanced in the world.

But when examined objectively the penal clauses of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act are amongst the most advanced forms of repression.

When the Menzies Government amended the Act in 1951 to provide for heavy penalties on unions, union leaders and union members who were involved in "illegal" strikes, he sought the Labor Opposition's support in the Senate. The Senate, he said, the Act itself had its defects and the amendments have been realised.

Union leaders and barristers have variously described the penal clauses as discriminating, vicious, precipitous and obnoxious.

Overseas industrial experts, when discussing the Act, draw uncomplimentary parallels.

According to the leading British trade unionist, Mr. C. R. Jenkins, who is general secretary of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs, the only other country in the world with similar legislation is France.

Unionists attempted by some Establishment forces to claim that the penal clauses of the Act — sections 109 and 111 — operate equally for the employers as for the unions, most observers can see they are stacked against the unions.

The Arbitration system, too, is swiftly becoming a one-way process. How can there be peace in industry when unions who observe the rules of the Commonwealth's arbitration process are continually stepped on in the face, and while unions who flout for the system for collection bargaining achieve much better results?

An example of the former was the outcome of a long-winded case for the Australian Railways Industrial Union.

The union had gone to the Arbitration Commission, Mr. Neil, with a list of claims for its members, which sought, among other things, a general 15-hour week for its members, particularly the lowest-income workers.

The commission, in its typical bullying way, replied by awarding wages ranging from five cents to 45 cents an hour to the lowest-paid railway workers, who are among the lowest paid workers in the country, and asked its members to respect the decision.

In May, 1965, the Government announced that Australian troops would be sent to Vietnam — to fight against people who have never threatened Australia. We were told the South Vietnamese Government had asked for them. But in August, 1965, Prime Minister Menzies admitted he had never seen such a request.

We were told Australia's action was an obligation under the pact. But on June 13, 1965, Mr. D. Price, First Assistant Minister for External Affairs, said: "South Vietnam has not asked Australia to help."

We were told it was to prevent a Chinese invasion of Australia. But Mr. Moore, Prime Minister Holt said on June 12, 1967: "We are not concerned about the possibility of Chinese Communists invading Australia."

At a recent meeting of the Intimate Committee of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, a decision was taken calling for the complete repeal of the penal clauses.

The ACTU authorised a delegation to confer on the Commonwealth Government and sought support of the Labor Party. Mr. Bruton, leader of the Federal party, welcomed the move.

And trade unionists will not settle for anything less than total repeal. A decision has been taken that the strike to which the government has been subjected will continue until the necessary agreements are reached.

As Mr. Bruton said: "the ACTU advocates and research officer, Mr. Bob Havas, said: "We won't have a strike unless the government comes to terms."

Mr. Havas strongly attacked the double standard of values of the national employers, who demanded the right to strike, but who refused the unions the same right.

Mr. Havas told the conference: "There is no such thing as a strike that is a legal strike."

A report prepared for the American Church of Christ, also received the same treatment to the right to strike.

The strike which was prepared by protestant clergymen and laymen, said: "It should be noted that the right to strike has been, essentially been one of the greatest victories when industrial regimes have taken power."

The individual who is a slave has little or no influence over the conditions of his employment. When industrial regimes have taken power, the right to strike should be removed. Any broadside limitation of freedom would mean neither that industrial disputes would generally be settled by default in favour of management or that the nationalisation of industry would fall on the shoulders of the government.

This report was prepared for the American Church of Christ, as labor relations are heightened. But in Australia there is a crisis in which change towards what the report describes as the government and employers. A continuous attack on the rights and wealth of workers and their organizations.

The government's determination, for long, the sleeping giant in matters of industrial relations, but it must become more conscious of its need.
We conscientiously object to student violence — not violence in general.

the control of public opinion

How do you know the situation in Vietnam? ... how many Australians or Americans were killed there last week ... what is being said by Nixon or Gorton, or the Siagon regime or the NLF ... what do other nations, or the United Nations, think? How do you know about the provocations in Australia under the National Service Act, or industrial-peace clauses, or the Crimes Act?

You depend on one or other daily paper, or TV or radio stations. Before the 1939-45 war, many Australians were effectively locked out by the press and radio. Now there was no TV. There were perhaps two daily papers with circulations of no more than 150,000 copies. From them we at least eight daily dailies in Melbourne and Sydney are now the half-million mark or higher. Dailies controlled by the Melbourne Herald combine have a total circulation of around two million mark, and are influencing probably five million people, near the whole nation. Dailies ran by the Fairfax (Sydney Morning Heralds) interest sell about a million a day.

Add to this the fact that TV and radio, the majority of the channels are commercially owned and the majority of those are either owned by the big press communications or carry their news and news-correspondent services and that the ABC network has been operated under a Liberal Country Party regime for 30 years (including the entire development of Australian television). This virtually the entire news and information system of this country is dominated by the private companies and the Government which they support.

Their international news is more or less on the British Australian news service (AATS) supplemented by the two biggest American services and the BBC-ABC tie-up.

Australia being so geographically isolated, its people are more at the mercy of its national media than those in European countries, for instance. Hence, the conditions for controlled opinion of public opinion through selected information and published opinion are almost perfect in Australia by comparison with other developed countries. But IS there, in fact, any major pattern of opinion control or "brain-washing?"

A clear example was in the 1967 Sydney press strike, which obtained the "accused" interest of newspaper owners to change suddenly the grading or skill-shocking or distress the case of the employers on strike and to flood the city with a week's supply of printed paper. The three main TV and radio stations backed the proprietors. In the notorious 'water torture' cases the Daily News and other Australian newspapers do not report on the complete facts, not even the existence of the cases. The Smith Act in the United States, the major difficulty here, is that it is a major difficulty here, it can be applied to any case you want. What is more, the Government and its agencies will not support the opposition. The Smith Act in the United States is not applied to any case you choose and people are held in prison.

The mass media in Australia consistently supported the American position in the Vietnam war and the Australian involvement, but have supported conduction. All up to the May 1969 strike were for complete abolition of the political control of the Arbitration Act — indeed, it invariably opposed strikes of all kinds, and supported the employers, irrespective of the cause and issues. The all the media have increasingly opposed the militant forms of protest action by the radical student movement. There was an inflammatory chorus of anti-student hatred from the Sydney dailies for several days after the May 12 University "inmates" demonstration — even though the university authorities adopted a very moderate tone.

All these examples concern important public issues, and all reveal a clear pattern of conscious manipulation of information, by selection, censorship and distortion, to control public opinion in the interest of policies favoured by the controllers of the mass media. In most cases, the Government...

What can be done about this? The daily press is responsible to no one except its owner (part from the laws of libel). No democratic authority, statutory or other wise, exists that can put any law on the press. TV and radio channels are theoretically subject to certain standards laid down by the Broadcasting Control Board, but in practice this board is guided by what the media control themselves want to do. Until the Australian movement of democratic protest can give real attention to democracy control of the mass media, with the help of the manipulation, the Australian movement of democratic protest can give real attention to democracy control of the mass media, with the help of the mass media themselves, in the national interest and at the national interest and at the national interest and at the national interest and at the national interest

Or Media Manipulations

JULY 4
FREEDOM DAY

PROTEST AGAINST OPPRESSION
AT HOME AND ABROAD

conscription, penal powers,
censorship, vietnam war...

DEMO

CHIFLEY SQUARE

5.00

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