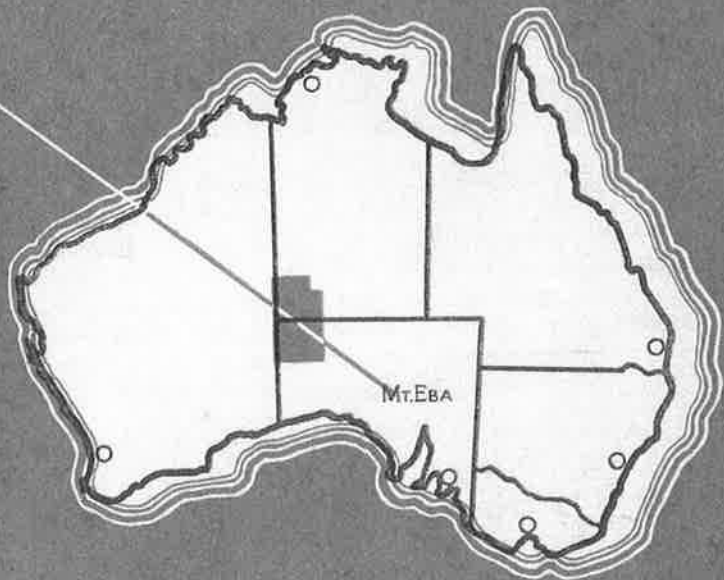


# ROCKET RANGE THREATENS AUSTRALIA



*By*

**ALF WATT**

S.A. Secretary and Central Committee member, Australian  
Communist Party.

**Price** \_\_\_\_\_ **3d.**

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The experimental rocket range, with its head at Mt. Eba, and its course running in a north westerly direction, across the Central Australian Aborigine Reserve to the North West coast, vividly searchlights the social effects of Australia's part in the new armaments race.

Cost of establishing the range has been variously estimated at from £6 million to £18 million, the latter estimate including £10 million for a rocket research station near the range. Operating costs have been given at £3 million yearly. Part of the cost will be borne by the British Government.

It will be used for testing guided projectiles, juggernauts of mass destruction intended for use against civil populations. Any discoveries useful to the well-being of Australians will be entirely incidental and accidental.

Total cost of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, a Commonwealth organisation engaged in research to improve Australian productivity, is just over £1 million yearly, a fraction of the cost of the rocket range.

A 230 mile pipe line will bring water to Mt. Eba from the Morgan-Whyalla pipe line.

Yet, at Iron Knob, till now practically the sole source of ore for the vast iron and steel empire of the B.H.P., located in hot, dry and dusty country, the small township depends partly on an uncertain water supply from the Tassie Creek dam, partly on water carted from Whyalla by train. Children's drinking water has been rationed at school. There is a swimming pool that is always dry. And the demand that the town be connected with the Morgan-Whyalla pipe line has been met with the reply that it is too costly, and there's not enough water in the Murray, anyhow.

## NO WATER ?

Kimba, where farmers carted an average of 54,000 gallons of water each, in 1945, can't get connection with the pipe line. Eyre Peninsula, a large wool, wheat and dairying area, needs an assured water supply, but the rocket range is to get the water.

In 1945, Adelaide faced another water crisis. Reservoirs were nearly empty. The sewerage system was in danger. Bores were sunk in the Adelaide plains to feed water into the metropolitan supply system. And the stereotyped official reply, to the mounting demand that Murray water be brought to Adelaide to solve its constantly recurring water famine, was that it would cost too much, and there was not enough water in the Murray, anyhow.

Yorke Peninsula towns, according to a promise made in January, are to be connected with the pipe line. This, however, is election year, and the Playford Government is notorious for the pre-election promises it makes and breaks. In any case, taking Murray water to the Yorke Peninsula does not alter the fact that it is also to be supplied to a deadly rocket range, while desperately needed for productive purposes elsewhere.

There is a desperate housing shortage, wrecking home-life, separating husband and wife, parents and children.

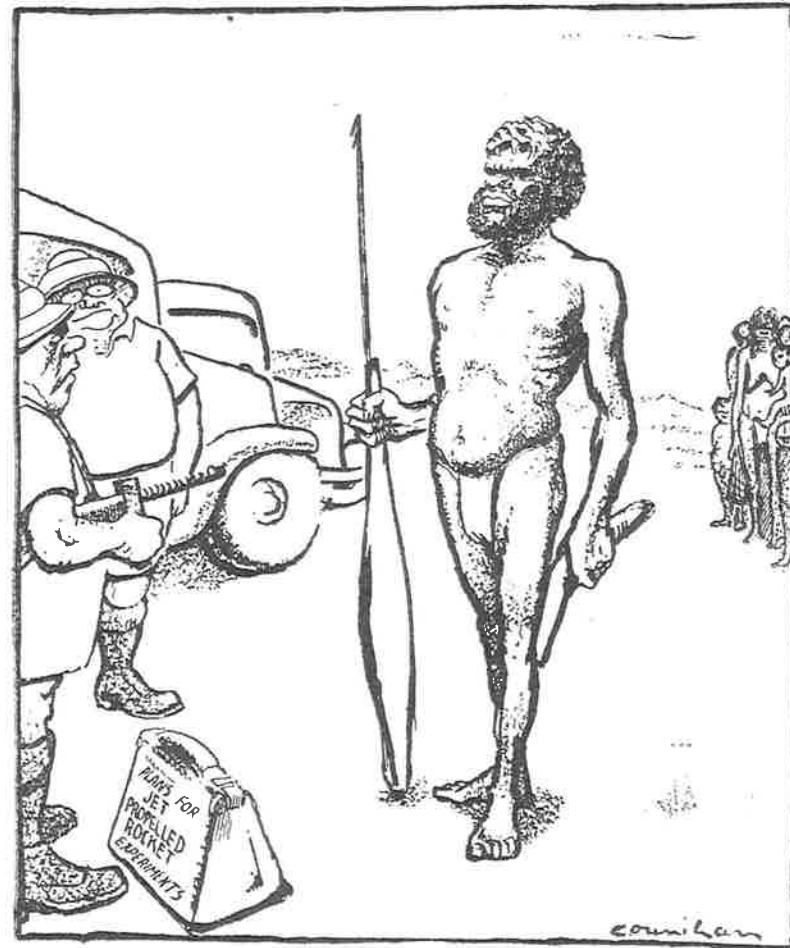
But building materials and labor will be used to construct a town for 500 people at Mt. Eba. Projectiles to be fired from Mt. Eba will take material that could be used for roofing iron and builders' hardware. House-hungry people are told that transport difficulties are responsible for the short supply of many building materials in S.A., but Mt. Eba is to be connected with the Trans-Australian railway with a 73-mile spur line, and the transportation of the huge missiles from Salisbury to Mt. Eba evidently presents no problems to people who find the problem of bringing building materials to Adelaide too big to solve.

#### VANISHING RACE

The Central Australian Aborigine Reserve is to be violated. Across its 65,000 square miles there will pass a rocket range 200 miles wide. Falling missiles, some fitted with war-heads (including atomic war-heads) will endanger both the lives and food supply of the natives. With observation posts placed at 100 mile intervals along the range, the Reserve will be opened to white men, with disastrous effects upon the aborigines and their tribal

organisation. Another crime is to be added to the long list by which the aborigines chiefly know us.

It is the fashion of governments to proclaim New Deals for the natives. But practice, without exception, has been to destroy the aborigines as a race, and turn the survivors into virtual chattel slaves for the white exploiters.



THE AUSTRALIAN : You will drive us from our source of life.  
THE IMPERIALISTS : Life ! Who said we are interested in life ?

No government has been prepared to operate the recommendation of Dr. Donald Thomson (commissioned by the Commonwealth Government to conduct a scientific survey of the aborigines in 1935-36-37) that natives not yet detribalised, be absolutely segregated, on reserves made absolutely inviolable, and their social organisation, institutions and culture be preserved intact.

Any policy genuinely concerned with the rights of aborigines, and with their social advancement, would begin with Dr. Thomson's recommendation ; with recognition of the absolute legal ownership of the reserves by the corresponding tribes, including ownership of mineral and other resources found there ; with government aid based on gradual economic developments, pastoral pursuits, handicrafts, etc., on a co-operative basis and under the control of the aborigines themselves ; and with the restriction of white contact to selected medical personnel and trained advisers of unquestionable integrity.

Instead of an enlightened policy such as this, one of the few remaining reserves is to be destroyed by the rocket range.

"Time is already late," Dr. Thomson said in 1937. Ten years later the warning is still unheeded. More of our native people are to be sacrificed, and the crime is to be committed in the name of peace and freedom.

The rocket range, of course, is only a part, a small part, of the rearmament program. The total cost of rearmament, and its effect on Australian life, are secrets locked in the bosoms of Mr. Chifley and his advisers. But a tiny glimpse at the cost was given in the 1946-47 Budget Speech. He told a war-weary people that "burdens have yet to be borne. We are pledged to maintain a defence organisation commensurate with our new responsibilities for Empire and world security in the Pacific zone."

The people were not consulted before they were pledged to carry this burden, but they are called upon to pay the cost. The budget made provision for £137 million for defence and service departments, munitions and supply.

Included in the £137 million is £25 million pay and allowances for the services, in Japan and elsewhere, and £17 million deferred pay for those to be discharged.

Included also is an unstated amount, it must be scores of millions, on account of the "burdens that have yet to be borne."

#### "GUNS BEFORE BUTTER"

Armaments are dead production. Labor and materials used in munitions, and in the armed forces, make no contribution to the pool of goods and services needed for national prosperity. On the contrary, they are a constant and increasing drain on the pool available for civil needs. And war production is an even more profitable investment for the capitalist than kiddies' Christmas toys. An armament race brings increasing poverty to the people. Hitler's "guns before butter" directive to the German masses is the ultimate law of every country engaged in preparation for war.

The second world war, and the preparations for the third will have cost Australia between 1939 and June, 1947, the staggering total of £2,710,000,000. To that must be added the human lives and suffering, that cannot be measured in pounds, shillings and pence.

In the same period, the interest and sinking fund on the debt for the second world war alone, will swallow £171 million, £46 million of which will be paid this year. The total public debt of Australia, mostly incurred to pay for the various wars we have fought, costs £80 million in interest and sinking fund every year.

There is a crippling burden of direct and indirect taxation that combines with shameless profiteering to reduce the purchasing power of wages to below the 1939 level.

To Mr. Chifley's "burdens yet to be borne," we say that to add further burdens is to betray Australia.

#### IT WOULD COST TOO MUCH

It would cost only £100 million to modernise our primitive education system, about £6 million to lift all direct taxation from incomes of under £6 a week, and £27 million to double pensions for the old aged and invalid. These, and other much needed social reforms,

would absorb only a portion of the cost of war. But there is profit in war, while reform is too costly for our rulers to undertake.

"Burdens have yet to be borne." The staggering cost of rearmament, the crippling interest bill, besides the satisfaction of the profit-hungry appetites of the Australian capitalists and the provision of an attractive bait for overseas investors, is the reality behind the Labor Government's "no promises" election policy and stubborn insistence upon depressed living standards.

The armament race, of course, will mean work, and profits. For South Australia, there will not only be the work of building the Mt. Eba township, offices and stores, the 230 mile pipe line and 73 mile spur railway. But producing the huge projectiles will absorb much labor and material. Transporting the bomb, and all the necessary stores from Adelaide to Mt. Eba will mean work for the railways. The railway town of Port Augusta will continue its war-time boom. A fillip will be given to S.A.R.'s limping finances. When the rocket bombs have passed their tests they will be made in large numbers, and stored in munition dumps. The uranium deposits at Mt. Paynter and elsewhere in the North will undoubtedly be exploited. The State's favourable strategical position, which helped its great war-time industrial development, will in all probability result in its selection as the site of much of the new war production.

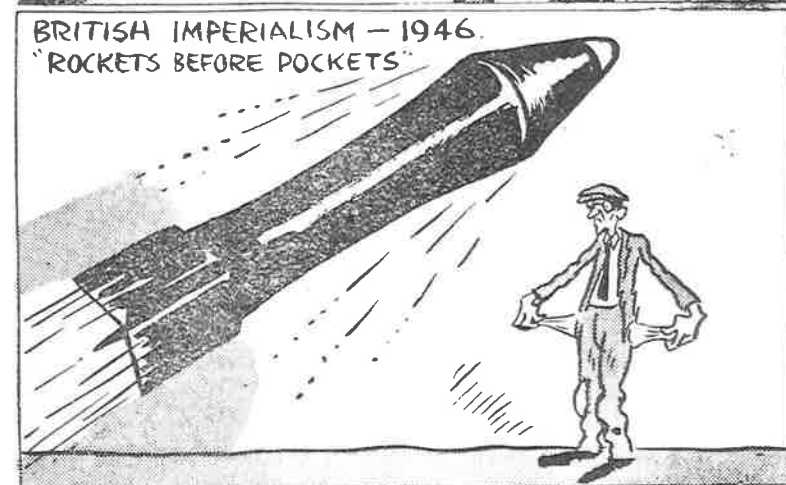
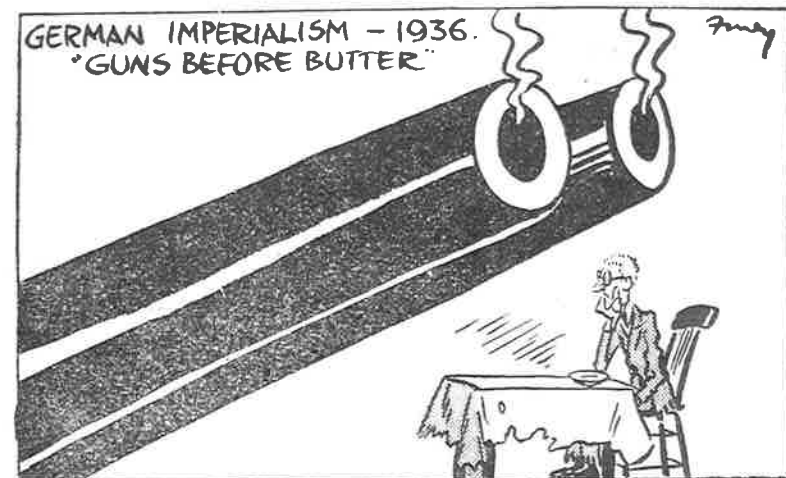
#### A GREAT THING, FOR WHOM ?

Mr. Playford, leader of the dreary old men who guard monied interest and privilege against the people, had visions of this in mind when he hailed the rocket range plans as a great thing for South Australia. A great thing! Work! Hitler's friends, before 1939, repeatedly spoke of Germany's development, of how the German workers had been given jobs. Work, yes. But what for, and at what cost? Ruined Germany gives the answer.

At a meeting I addressed in Kimba, last November, one of the audience said that we would have been glad of the arms when the Japs were advancing South.

That is true, as is also the fact that fascism had to be destroyed.

It is also true that we were not plunged into the war because we had no arms, but because our rulers spurned collective security, weakened the League of Nations, rejected the policy of friendship and mutual assistance with the Socialist Soviet Union, appeased and strengthened the fascist powers.



The rejected policy, which would have meant a complete economic and political boycott of the fascist powers, would have destroyed fascism without the terrible cost of the war.

Australia, together with the other capitalist democracies, was not prepared for the war because our rulers believed that the German-Italian-Japanese Anti-Comintern Triangle was aimed only at the Soviet Union. We were not prepared because we were busy preparing the fascist powers. We were caught unprepared, not by the fascist armed strength, but by the fascists attacking the capitalist democracies instead of the Soviet Union.

### BE PREPARED IS NOT ENOUGH

And the simple axiom, Be Prepared, is not sufficient today, to protect Australia from war.

Armed force serves foreign policy. The extent, and nature, of a nation's war preparations are determined by the needs of its foreign policy. If a foreign policy is a menace to peace, then the armed forces which give that foreign policy its power for evil, are also a menace to peace, and both must be fought by a people desirous of avoiding another world carnage.

So we must look at Australian foreign policy.

From the anti-fascist world war came the United Nations Organisation. People everywhere looked to the big powers to carry into the peace, and into the United Nations, the same unity for the preservation of peace that they had developed in the common struggle to win the war.

Reflecting this passionate aspiration, there was written into the U.N. Charter the principle of unanimity. Simply stated, this principle means that, on all major questions, the Big Five (Britain, America, France, China and Russia) shall be in agreement before any decision is made.

Objective of the principle is to discourage the formation of big power blocs, to prevent the U.N. being used by a Big Power bloc to impose, with the assistance of the votes of small powers which it may influence or dominate, its will on the other Big Powers. The princi-

ple recognises the fact that the keeping of peace lies in the hands of the Big Powers, and that if there is Big Power unity there will be no war.

### WRECKING THE U.N.

The principle is especially important to the Socialist Soviet Union, which, since its establishment in 1917, has repeatedly been the victim of sabotage and other interference in its internal affairs, as well as of invasion, by powers hostile to it because the Russian people dared free themselves from the blight of capitalist exploitation.

This principle of unanimity is one of the foundations of the United Nations. Without it there would be no United Nations. But from the very beginning, there has been a campaign against it, a campaign in which the wreckers have endeavoured to cloak their aims by calling the principle of unanimity, the right of veto. If the campaign is successful, the United Nations will be destroyed and the decks cleared for war.

Prominent among the wreckers is the Minister for External Affairs, Dr. Evatt, and other representatives of the Australian Government. Rights of small nations is what Dr. Evatt says he fights for. The utter hypocrisy of his plea is exposed by the treatment of the Australian aborigine, particularly by the projected violation of the Central Australian Aborigine Reserve in the interests of a Big Power rocket range and armament race.

Truth is that Australian policy is not based upon the United Nations. In July, 1946, Mr. Chifley said that "Against future aggression our co-operation with Britain and the United States is fundamental."

Where does this lead Australia ?

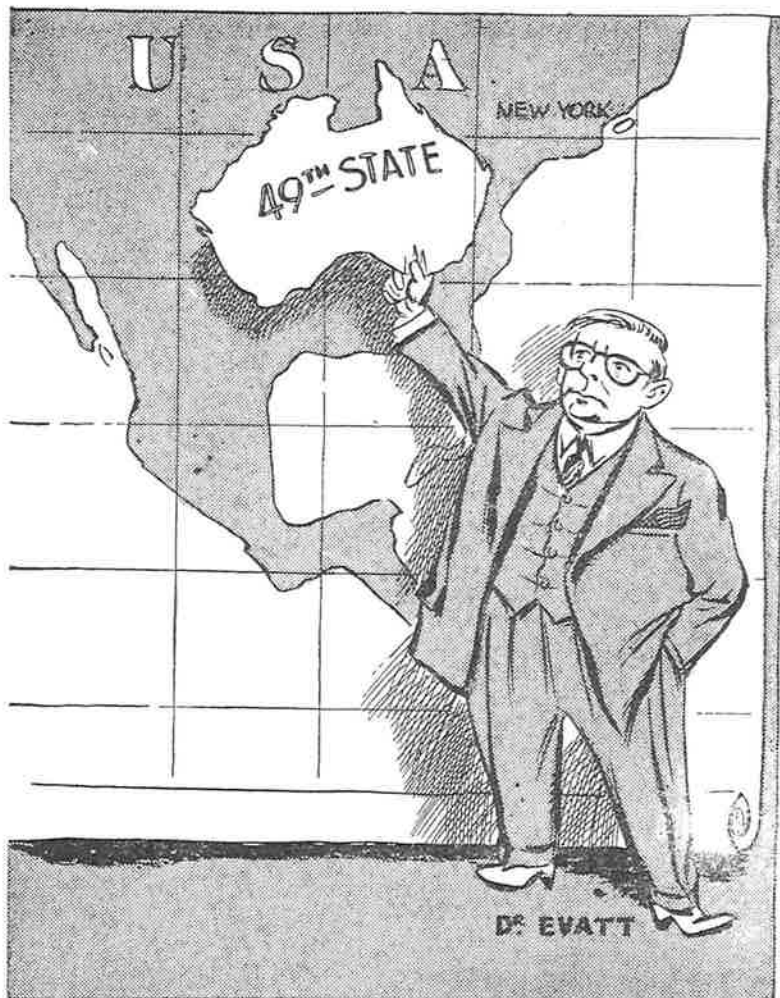
### AMERICAN CENTURY

"This is the American Century." "America can lick the world." "The American Navy will go where it damn well pleases." are the spoken sentiments of the American ruling class.

Henry Wallace, late secretary of Commerce, put it another way when he said that "We are trying to

build up a predominance of force to intimidate the rest of mankind.

America still has troops and war bases in 56 countries and islands, outside Germany and Japan. It is spanning the world with permanent bases placed so as to be within striking distance of the heart of other countries, bases which conform to a strategy of domination,



*Putting Australia on the Map.*

not defence. An immense fortune is being spent on the manufacture of atomic bombs and on the development of biological warfare. Latin American satellite states are being armed just as Australia is being armed. There is experiment into the use of armed forces in the ice-clad regions.

So far as Britain is concerned, Wallace declared that "to military men the British Isles are our advanced air base against Europe." Britain too has its strategically placed air bases, joining with America in encircling the world. There have been Anglo-American general staff conferences, and plans reported for the virtual "merging" of the armed forces of both nations. In this plan, Australia is to be an advanced base and source of arms supply for America. Britain's indebtedness to America, including the recent £1,000 million loan, gives Yankee Imperialism a strong hold on British policy. There is undoubtedly an Anglo-American alliance in the military and diplomatic spheres, though with underlying conflict in the economic sphere as America stretches out its hand to grab the wealth of the British Empire.

#### POWER POLITICS

"We are great friends of the jolly old Empire, and we mean to stick to it," is how Mr. Herbert Morrison summed up British Labor policy. Mr. Bevin speaks of "British interests" on the Danube, meaning the interests of the British millionaires. He accuses the Soviet Union of wanting to "cut across the throat of the British Empire" in the Eastern Mediterranean, meaning that the British millionaires want the Mediterranean as an English lake. He thumps the table at Molotov and the Soviet people, cringes and crawls to Mr. Byrnes and the American billionnaires.

Thus there exists a bloc of Big Powers, such as the principle of unanimity was intended to discourage. A bloc, moreover, which can command the votes of small States in sufficient numbers to give it a majority at United Nations gatherings. A bloc that has replaced the splendid war time unity, with attempts to impose its will on the new democracies of Europe and upon the Socialist Soviet Union.

In the attitude towards atomic warfare, this frightful new weapon designed for use against civilian populations, there is a test of the contribution the Powers are making to world peace.

#### ATOMIC CONTROLS

The American plan, in the words of Henry Wallace, "required other nations to enter into binding commitments not to conduct research into the military use of atomic energy, and to disclose their uranium and thorium resources, while the United States retains the right to withhold its technical knowledge of atomic energy until the international control and inspection system is working to American satisfaction." To this demand for a supreme and sole right of veto, the American Government added the demand that the principle of unanimity be abolished. About this demand, the Labor Imperialists, exceedingly vocal in their attacks on the principle of unanimity, have uttered no word of criticism.

The Soviet proposals, clear and concise, based upon the principle of equal responsibility, required that the production and use of atomic weapons be outlawed like poison gas, that existing stocks of atomic weapons be destroyed within three months, that within six months legislation should be passed in all countries providing severe penalties for violation of the agreement, and that there should be exchange of scientific information and joint international efforts to broaden the use of atomic energy for peace.

Obviously, the cause of peace demands that atomic warfare be outlawed, stocks of atomic weapons destroyed and their production prohibited, but Dr. Evatt is reported as saying that "the rejection of the Soviet proposal is only reasonable and proper."

#### NOT FOR DEFENCE

Mr. Chifley's "fundamental co-operation" with Britain and America means co-operation with Anglo-American policy. Our armaments program is part of the armaments preparations of Britain and America, which are not part of a policy of defence against aggression, but of a policy of Anglo-American world

domination, with the U.S. millionaires playing the leading role.

The rocket range, the huge armament program that will press so heavily on Australian standards of living, will not defend Australia. On the contrary, it will contribute to plunging Australia into a war in which those who use atomic weapons need not be surprised if they find atomic weapons used against them.

Australian policy helped prepare the second world war. If we forget the lesson, we will inevitably pay the price. Yet there is continuity of foreign policy in Australia as well as in Britain. Before 1939, Australian foreign policy was to train and strengthen the fascists, because the fascists proclaimed their intention of smashing the Soviet Union. Today, the fascist Axis has been destroyed. Today, our foreign policy arms Australia. Before 1939, our foreign policy helped to weaken and castrate the League of Nations. Today, our foreign policy seeks to undermine and destroy the United Nations as a force for peace.

#### THE ALTERNATIVE

There is an alternative to this policy. It is to be found in friendship with all peace-loving peoples, including the Soviet Union, instead of friendship with the British and American millionaires and scarcely veiled hostility to the Soviet Union; in loyalty to the United Nations instead of undermining and wrecking it; in loyalty to the Atlantic Charter, and its application to all peoples, no matter what their colour, and including the Australian aborigines; in support of the disarmament proposed by the Soviet, instead of resistance to the Soviet proposals.

With such a policy, we could have disarmament instead of the armament race begun by the Anglo-American bloc. Our armed forces could be small, and dovetailed into a world organisation for peace. We could have lighter taxes and higher living standards, instead of the heavy taxes and poverty standards the armament program will require.



Scientific research must not be blocked. With a different policy we can have experiments into pilotless cargo carrying aircraft, instead of into pilotless juggernauts of destruction ; research into atomic energy for peace, instead of for devastation ; scientists devoting their talents to the needs of life, instead of working under military dictation to perfect the means of death ; science enriched by free interchange of information between nations and scientists, instead of strait-jacketed by military secrecy. We can keep Australia free from militarist control, prevent it being turned into an imperialist armed camp.

These things can be done, if the people demand them, insist on them.

### THE PEOPLE MUST SPEAK

The revolt in the British Labor Party ; the voting at the last British Trade Union Congress, when a majority voted against the Government's protection to Franco, and when two out of every five votes were cast against the Government's policy of enmity to Russia, shows that the friends of peace are not alone, that they are gathering strength.

Here, in Australia, the friends of peace must carry their fight into every trade union, into every organisation, factory and place where people gather, rousing them to the dangers that confront the nation, and organising an Australian-wide demand for the reversal of our foreign policy.

We cannot fight for peace by preparing for war. To fight against American Imperialist domination, we must refuse to ratify the Bretton Woods Agreement, and refuse to accept U.S. domination in the sphere of foreign policy and armaments, as well. We must fight against the rocket range, against the whole armaments program, and against every aspect of the foreign policy of which the rocket range is a part.