

# WHAT IS THIS LABOR PARTY

by

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# Authors' note.

❖ This pamphlet is not a history of the Labor Party. In it we examine the fifty years of A.L.P. activity from the standpoint of Marxism-Leninism. We reveal the role of the A.L.P. in the development of Australian economy, its role in the struggles of the classes and its attitude to the Socialist Revolution. Therefore, we refer only to the major events during this fifty years to illustrate and prove our case.

Our starting point is Marxism-Leninism, more especially Lenin's well-known analysis of the Australian Labor Party, made in 1913. Then the great revolutionary leader declared that the A.L.P. was not a Socialist Party, "even in words;" that it was a Liberal (a capitalist) party in essence, that its aim was not Socialism, but an independent Australian capitalism. It was founded by liberal-minded British workers who had migrated during the period of liberal competitive capitalism in Britain. It grew up in a young colony at a time when capitalism was still a stable, expanding economy.

One day, Lenin continued, the party of Labor-Liberalism would have to make way for a genuine "Socialist, workers' Party." It is from this standpoint we approach the task of estimating Labor Party politics and to prove that the central task of the workers in this period of capitalist decay, in the epoch of world wars and Socialist Revolutions, is to further strengthen and develop that new, Socialist workers' party of which Lenin wrote—a Party, pledged to Marxist-Leninist principles, and which must replace the moribund, dying, treacherous Labor Party.

M.—Mc.

## Glossary

❖ **PROLETARIAT:** The modern working class—a class of labourers who live only so long as they find work, and who find work only so long as their labor increases capital.

**PETTY BOURGEOISIE, PETTY BOURGEOIS:** The middle class, small commodity producers, farmers and artisans, small traders, professionals and salaried people of similar social position, connections and outlook.

**BOURGEOISIE, BOURGEOIS:** The Capitalist Ruling Class.



## CHAPTER 1.

### A LIBERAL PARTY OF EXPANDING CAPITALISM.

The Labor Party arose following the defeats of the great strike wave of the nineties of last century. The workers had noted how, during these strikes, the Parliament, the State and its armed forces, its laws and judges and its prisons, had been used against them. The workers imagined that by electing a majority to parliament they could use these institutions in the same way against the class enemy and, at the same time, be in the position to legislate in favor of the workers, and by this means achieve their aims without overthrowing the capitalist State and replacing it with a workers State.

Marx's teaching on the State was unknown in this country, hence the naive misunderstanding of the function of the capitalist State as the instrument whereby the rulers keep the workers in subjection. The pioneers of the Labor Party often had a militant outlook, though confused and "Liberal" and non-Socialist, except in individual cases, and honestly aimed at the betterment of our class.

The Labor Party however, arose when capitalism was still in the ascendant, was rapidly expanding in this country; in the pre-monopolist era of "free competition" and "Liberalism." The politicians of the Labor Party soon lost all militant outlook, adapted themselves to the comfortable Parliamentary life and the flattery of the capitalists, adopted a purely liberal outlook, aiming at small reforms within capitalism. They turned the Labor Party into a class-collaborationist and arbitrationist party so that by the time it reached the Treasury benches it had fully assumed the character described by Lenin, which we have quoted already, non-Socialist, aiming at the building up of an independent Australian capitalism.

The pre-war governments formed by the Labor Party legislated a number of reforms that were of benefit to the masses without in the slightest way interfering with the foundations of capitalist exploitation. It was this fact that established the Labor Party as the mass popular party in a period that has departed, never to return.

It is the exploitation, by the Labor Party politicians, of this tradition of the days when the Labor Party was reaching its zenith, that, in the main, accounts for the fact that, despite, repeated major betrayals of the interests of the toilers, the Labor Party leaders, are still able to command a vast section of the popular vote.

The decline of the A.L.P., even as a party of reforms, dates from the commencement of world war number one.

The Australian Labor Party is not a Socialist Party, "even in words." Adoption by the A.L.P. in 1921 of the objective "socialisation of industry" did not change its real character. Unions were deserting the A.L.P., the influence of the Russian Revolution was particularly strong, and the pressure of the militants forced a gesture from the party leaders. Even then, a section of the rightwing fought furiously and only "adopted" this objective under protest. Since then, the "socialisation" objective has been ignored and trampled on by the Scullins, Curtins, Langs and Beasleys. Lang, in N.S.W., expelled the socialisation groups, who, during the "depression," pressed for action in regard to the alleged objective of the Labor Party.

Lenin, in the article referred to on the Labor Party, also said that the task of the Labor Party would be to constitute an "independent (Australian) capitalist State."

Its leaders have shown much more concern for the protection of Australian capitalist enterprises than for protection of the working class, they have done much to advance and consolidate the interests of big capital, they have hindered the advance of real working class organisation and have tied the Labor Party organisations and most of the unions to their policy of submission to the interests of Australian monopoly capital.

In addition, it has relied largely for its election funds upon the brewery interests, upon the Australian manufacturers who want high tariffs, and other moneyed sections, who in turn influence the policies of Labor governments.



Australian nationalism is a marked feature of the A.L.P., far more than anything of a socialistic character. The original objective was "a self-reliant community based on Australian sentiment" and "racial purity".

A.L.P. policy is therefore fundamentally in opposition to working-class internationalism; instead of the Marxian slogan of "Workers of all lands, unite", the Labor Party adheres to the "White Australia" policy even to the extent of refusing to extend to the Australian aborigines the benefits of the bits of social legislation it has placed on the statute book.

Nationalism, of the variety espoused by the A.L.P. leaders, is directly opposed to the interests of the workers and the World Socialist Revolution and one of the main instruments whereby the imperialists incite the peoples to war against each other, as well as splitting the workers on racial lines within the country.

It is more and more becoming recognised that the division of humanity into a mass of "national" states is a barrier to economic and social progress and that a "Federation" of peoples is needed. The Labor Party is opposed to such a union on a Socialist basis as that of the U.S.S.R. It calls the domination of hundreds of millions of people by the British Imperialists its "ideal" Commonwealth of Nations.

The Labor Party leaders, in their endeavors to sidetrack the class struggle for Socialism, also dabble in the false theories of the currency cranks. They make the absurd claim that the evils of capitalism could be overcome if only "banking policy" could be changed, "cheap money" provided, and the "public credit" tapped. The latter is indeed a strange claim in face of the fact that the "public credit", (the ability of the government to tax, impose tariffs and customs, etc.) has to carry a national debt burden of £1,500,000,000 on 7,000,000 people, a sum that will rapidly increase as the war drags on. This banking theory resulted in the formation of the Commonwealth bank, and 25 years experience of this institution surely proves that it can be no real instrument of emancipation or "Socialism," so long as the capitalist class retains power.

In "boom" periods a State bank could be used for providing a few necessary public works, that is provide some work, and, by the same means, lessen unemployment in times of depression. State banking cannot alter the hard realities of the capitalist system to any appreciable extent. It is but another reformist illusion.

No wonder a party influenced by such factors is unable to advance the interests of the working class, that it is subservient to the finance-capitalists and the servant and tool of the imperialist warmongers.

Another reactionary feature of the A.L.P. is the powerful influence of "Catholic Action" upon its policies. "Catholic Action" set itself the task of combating the Socialist Revolution, the working class "New Order", as well as generating religious sectarianism.

The Catholic Actionists supported the barbarism of Franco, Hitler and Mussolini against the Spanish Republic. For years, it openly preached Mussolini's "Corporate State" as its ideal and was loud in its praise of Italian Fascism. "Catholic Action" is an extreme anti-Socialist force, combating the progressive ideas and the militancy of the workers everywhere it wields any influence. It is strong among the A.L.P. politicians and reactionary union officials. It is behind many of the reactionary policies of the A.L.P. leaders and their sabotage of working-class unity.

The working-class strives to unite Protestant, Catholic, Jew and Gentile, in the struggle against capitalism and for the New Order of Socialism. The intrusion of such an organisation as "Catholic Action" in the labor movement must be fought by all workers, irrespective of their creed.

Liberalism, reformism, protection of capital, nationalism and "Catholic Action" influence; such is the hotch-potch that goes to make the patch-work quilt of A.L.P. policy.



## CHAPTER 2.

### A TWO CLASS PARTY.

Marx, Engels and Lenin taught that the parties of the Second International were "two class parties." Basing themselves (as does the A.L.P.) on the organisations of the working class, the trade unions, etc. the Social-Democratic Parties, joined by numbers of the petty-bourgeoisie, (professionals in particular) rejected the working-class revolutionary programme for a petty-bourgeois outlook and policy. Lenin showed that the whole second International had renounced Marxism and become dominated by petty-bourgeois ideas of class collaboration, "peaceful" solutions of the class struggle, "gradual" transition to Socialism" and so on. This ideology leads everywhere to subservience to capitalism. The personnel of the A.L.P., as well as its non-proletarian policy, shows this feature. Lawyers, publicans and other small exploiters are numerous among A.L.P. politicians. Together with representatives of the "aristocracy of labor;" the small better paid section of the workers, they constitute the leading cadres of the A.L.P.

To reject petty-bourgeois and intellectualist illusions and pacifist schematism does not mean to reject any political alliance between the workers and the petty-bourgeois masses. The real issue is the winning of the petty-bourgeoisie for working class policy and tactics. The petty-bourgeoisie are being ruined by the growth and domination of monopoly capital. They will support a genuine working-class assault on the monopolists. It is when the workers, misled by the reformists, fail to carry on such a struggle against Big Capital, that the petty-bourgeoisie desert the working-class camp, as they did leave the Social-Democrats in Germany, when the latter betrayed the struggle against fascism.

Besides its base in the petty-bourgeoisie, the Labor Party also has had a basis in the working-class for its reformist policy, its "liberalism," its policy of class-collaboration. That basis in the working-class is, as Lenin showed, the basis of Social-Democratic reformism the world over, namely, the "aristocracy of labor," the highly skilled, better paid, section of the workers. During the expanding phase of capitalism and in the imperialist countries where the capitalists are drawing super-profits from the colonies, the exploiters were able to make a number of concessions to this section, to "bribe" them as Lenin said. This produced the phenomena of "bourgeois" working men, supporters of ruling class policy.

In the most recent strikes and development since the outbreak of war, the "aristocrats" of labor in the metal trades, Engineers, Electricians and similar crafts, have remained aloof, as far as their officials could manage it, from the struggles in the Metal Trades. The engineers accepted dilution of labor and made other retreats at the commencement of the war in spite of heated protest from large numbers in their own ranks, from other unions and from the Australian Council of Trade Unions. The engineers likewise stood aloof from the overtime ban and the fight against taxes on wages.

This standing aloof from the struggles of other trade unions is a sort of "tradition" with the Amalgamated Engineers. On the other hand, the engineers also take action without considering the effect on the less-skilled and poorly-paid sections.

This conservative craft union attitude and class-collaborationist policy is typical of the labor "aristocrats." By splitting the workers it provided the basis whereby employers and their reformist servants were able to secure the dominance of reformist policies for a whole historical epoch in the labour movement.

In the mining industry, the skilled craftsmen's unions have played a similar part to the engineers in the Metal Trade. It has been extremely difficult to form a united front on a stable basis for common struggle by the miners and the more "aristocratic" crafts,



whose position is a little better than that of the ordinary miner.

Among the maritime workers and railwaymen, the crafts will be found to be playing a similar role. Such is the "labor aristocracy" which provided the base in the Labor movement for the reformist leaders and their policy of support for and preservation of capitalism, the basis for reformist influence over the whole of the working-class.

But, like that of the petty-bourgeoisie, the position of the labor aristocracy is being undermined by economic crisis and imperialist wars, that is, by the general crisis and decay of the capitalist system. The skilled workers, too, are being convinced of the necessity of the Socialist Revolution.

Besides the skilled crafts, reformism has a strong basis in a large union whose membership in the main does not belong to the "labor aristocracy," the Australian Workers Union. Here a powerful bureaucracy has become entrenched and because of the wealth of the union, due to its large membership, are the best paid officials in the country. Its leading officials receive £1,000 per year. This bureaucracy, long a most powerful buttress of the A.L.P., has an extremely anti-working class policy, and a long record of strike breaking against both its own membership and those of other unions.

The reactionary Forgan Smith Labor government in Queensland is based mainly on the A.W.U. bureaucracy, which in return is given preference on half the workplaces in that State. Without the A.W.U. ticket, no work. Criticise the officials and expulsion, and consequent loss of employment, follows. This bureaucracy maintains its supremacy by means of victimisation plus ballot stuffing and faking. Many of the A.L.P. politicians, party leaders and Premiers are "A.W.U. men," former cogs in the bureaucratic strike breaking machine.

## CHAPTER 3.

### HANDMAIDEN OF THE WARMAKERS.

Like the Labor Parties in other English speaking countries, and the Second International as a whole, A.L.P. leaders lost no time in demonstrating that they were no anti-war party, but a party supporting "their own bourgeoisie" in imperialist wars undertaken against rivals of the British and Australian capitalists and imperialists.

In 1914, the Labor Party leaders proclaimed their slogan — "to the last man and the last shilling" behind the warmongers in the struggle for the division of the world among rival capitalist Empires. The "war effort" in the first half of the war, was openly led by the Labor Party chiefs, Messrs. Hughes and Holman. It was only in 1916, under extreme pressure from the Socialist groups, the I.W.W. and the workers that a section of the A.L.P. leadership was compelled to oppose conscription for the imperialist massacre raging overseas.

Hughes and Holman, transferring to the open capitalist party, continued to lead the war governments of the bourgeoisie, using for this purpose all the tricks and demagoggy of which they had become masters during their previous lengthy association with the Labor Party. The remaining A.L.P. leaders and trade union officials, who were forced to oppose conscription, did not take a working class stand against the imperialist war. Like the European Social Democrats whom Lenin so often pilloried for their shameful betrayal of the workers by supporting the war, labor leaders continued their support. They appeared on recruiting platforms and appealed to the masses to immolate themselves on the altars of imperialist war, so long as it was "voluntary." These labor politicians and trade union bureaucrats were just as opposed to a revolutionary struggle against the war as Curtin is today.

In the recent discussion over the amended "National Security Regulations" the government claimed that these fascist laws contained nothing that was not already in the War Precautions Act passed by the Federal Labor government in the last war, or in the legislation of the New Zealand Labor government for the present imperialist war.



The Labor government, conducting the last war, in its early part, on behalf of the capitalists, had enacted legislation of a penal character that Menzies had hastened to copy for present purposes. And these purposes remain the same now as then; the suppression of all opposition to the warmongers, the goading of working class militants, religious pacifists or anyone opposing the blood-letting loosed by the capitalist class.

**As the dreary bloodshed dragged on year after year, as the profiteers thrived as never before, as the burdens of the war became ever heavier, as the truth about the causes and nature of the war became clearer, mass war-weariness, and opposition rapidly increased.** The recruiting sergeants of the A.L.P., then, meeting in Perth W.A., passed a formal "Peace" resolution. But no machinery to implement it was established nor any call for struggle against the war ever issued. The "peace" resolution was only a manoeuvre to keep the masses away from the left, from the only real fighters against capitalist wars.

After the war had ended, the warmongers were discredited, the memory of the war regarded with hatred by vast masses. The treacherous reformists again announced themselves "pacifists," especially in regard to the armed revolutionary struggles of the workers of other countries. When the capitalists, for the moment, had no need of the services of their labor lackeys as recruiting sergeants, conscriptionists and soothers-on, the latter could allow themselves the luxury of posing as heroes of the struggle for peace and against war. To offset the growing influence of the Communist Party, with its consistent warning of the approach of the Second Imperialist War and its endeavours to unite the workers against it, the Labor leaders adopted a grandiose anti-war "policy."

No Australian troops were to be allowed to go overseas. Australia was not to take part in war without a referendum of the people. What happened to this grandiose program?

Prime Minister Menzies calmly announced, over the air, that the country was at war, (was once more fighting for the imperialist loot and plunder of the British and Australian millionaires). Curtin hastened at once to demolish the "Peace" policy of the Labor Party. **Hand in hand with Menzies, Fadden and Billy Hughes, Curtin and Beasley quietly consigned the "No troops for overseas" and the "Referendum" to the cupboard, until the war is over; they now appear before the masses as leading instigators and organisers of the imperialist war in this country.**

The point that the mass of workers must be taught to understand is that this is no accident, no "weakness" on the part of Curtin, no "mistake" of a bad leadership, but that these people appear but in their true colours; play their true role as labor imperialists and warmongers.

At the time the Curtins and Beasleys were proclaiming their "anti-war" policy, they at the same moment, tirelessly fought against the real peace policy put forward by the Communist Party and others of the left; the united front of the workers against war and for collective security internationally.

The reformists prevented working-class unity and the establishment of a Peoples' Front to combat the warmongers.

Denouncing anti-war agitation as "Communist scaremongering for propaganda purposes," the Labor imperialists opposed so called "isolation" to the programme of international collective security. This "isolation" catch-cry fitted in perfectly with the "non-intervention" by means of which Chamberlain brought about the defeat of the Spanish Republic in collaboration with Hitler and Mussolini. Many of the Labor Party leaders openly fought against the Spanish Republicans and nearly all of them sabotaged assistance for the Spanish working-class. "Isolation" was also the other side of the "appeasement" medal which destroyed the Czech Republic and built up the strength of Hitler.



The leaders of the Labor Party have always been as bitterly anti-Soviet as the capitalist class itself. They endorse the policy of non-recognition of the Soviet Union and the rejection of economic relations with it pursued by the Federal government. During the pre-war period, when the Soviet government was struggling to maintain peace, the Labor Party press, such as the "Century," "Labor Daily" (when controlled by Lang), the "Labor Call," the Queensland "Worker" and others, carried on the most vicious and filthy anti-Soviet propaganda. No lie was too mean and debased for publication in these anti-Soviet rags.

This Labor Party struggle against the Soviet peace policy supported the British ruling-class in their desperate endeavors to promote a German-Soviet war. Shouting slogans of "isolation," "no troops for overseas," "a referendum on war," the Labor Party leaders actually helped the capitalist class to unloose the present war.

#### CHAPTER 4.

### THE PREMIERS' PLANNERS OF 1931.

In its economic policy, the Labor Party demonstrated itself futile and subservient to the needs of capital, by its espousal of the Premiers' Plan.

Marx and Engels, in the "Manifesto of the Communist Party" (1848), already outlined the limitations of the policy of reforms within the confines of the capitalist system. In periods of capitalist expansion, when the system is still "young," when there are still possibilities for new markets, when markets have not yet been saturated with goods, when countries are being industrialised there are periods when reforms are possible. These concessions to the workers are possible mainly in the "boom" period between two "depressions." But, Marx and Engels declared, when the economic crisis arrives, the reforms of the "normal" or "boom" period are at once swept away. Australian Labor Party and trade union reformism supplies a complete confirmation of this teaching.

The "depression" of 1929-32, as an example, swept away most of the trade union gains and the political reforms of the preceding period. It is only now when there is a considerable increase of industrial activity; temporarily, resulting from war demands, that the unions are able to recover ground, and that not by means of the Arbitration Courts beloved of the reformists, but by means of open class-struggle, including strikes.

The economic crisis of 1929-32 was another major test of the worth or otherwise of reformist policy. The bourgeoisie, taking advantage of the vast unemployment and the flooded labor market, aimed to place the burdens of the crisis on the backs of the poor. This, of course, necessitated lowering the living standard by means of wage cuts and taxes on wages and small incomes.

Did the Labor Party demand that the "rich must pay?" Did it use its control of most of the governments, at that time, to protect the masses against the capitalist offensive? Far from it. The Federal Labor government, headed by Messrs. Scullin and Theodore, the N.S.W., Victorian and South Australian Labor governments of Messrs. Lang, Hogan and Hill undertook the offensive against the masses in co-operation with the U.A.P. governments in Tasmania, W.A. and Queensland. They formulated the Premiers' Plan in collaboration with the bankers and the representative of London finance-capital, Sir Otto Niemeyer. (It is interesting to note that a chief "Labor leader" of that period, Theodore, is now an imperialist colonial exploiter, growing into the millionaire class by means of serf labor in Fiji mines, as well as owning



an anti-labor daily newspaper in Sydney).

The Labor leaders brought forward and enforced the Premiers' Plan. Wages, salaries, pensions, endowment, etc., were ruthlessly slashed. Unemployed workers were evicted from their homes by the use of armed force, "travelling" unemployed were ruthlessly hounded and gaoled for stealing rides on the "national" railways, the dole was cut, thousands were arbitrarily removed from the "dole," militant fighters were gaoled by the score by the "Labor" governments of Messrs. Lang, Hogan and Hill with the backing of Scullin and Theodore in the Federal government. The capitalist class had been saved, but the Labor governments were discredited, and were driven from office by the disillusioned though yet backward masses.

The Labor Party leaders responsible, Scullin, Theodore, Hogan and Hill lost their positions of leadership as a result of this infamous betrayal. Nor could the wriggings of Lang and his endeavors to place all the responsibility on the others and by means of demagoguery, "radical" phrases, and denial of his own part in the Premiers' Plan, save himself from the same fate, political defeat for his government and his group.

In any case, if the Labor governments become too venturesome in experimenting with reforms, the banks, because the reformists are too weak to deal with them, cut off financial supplies and government loans. Both the Ramsay McDonald Labor government and the New Zealand Labor government gave way before financial pressure from the bankers.

This experience of the depression and the Premiers' Plan also proves the contention of Marx in the Manifesto that the working-class under capitalism, can improve its position by means of reforms, temporarily, "only for a time," that the real significance of the struggle for reforms is the raising of political consciousness and the strengthening of the workers' organisations.

The Premiers' Plan experience proved that the reformists are prepared to destroy the living standards of the masses wherever capitalism needs such action. Again, to finance the bosses war, Curtin and Co. have endorsed the War Budget, which, just as the Premiers' Plan, undermines living standards.

## CHAPTER. 5.

### SHACKLING THE TRADE UNIONS.

In the Parliamentary and political sphere, it is plain that reformism subordinates itself to the interests of the capitalist class; in times of economic crisis, its aid is indispensable to capitalism for the offensive against the worker's wage level and conditions; in war-time it is needed to tie the working-class to the chariots of militarism and imperialism. In the trade union field, the Labor Party and reformist trade union bureaucracy preach class-collaboration and compulsory arbitration whilst opposing and outlawing strikes and other forms of direct struggle.

The aim of the arbitration system is to stultify trade union action by delays and threats. Its wage policy is based on the so-called "basic wage"—a minimum, fodder basis. If one follows the proceedings of basic wage commissions, it will be noted that all sorts of "experts" are called to testify as to the least possible amount of the poorest food and clothing, the smallest quantity of "luxuries" like beer and tobacco, the lowest rents in congested slums and industrial areas, that will keep a worker's family in existence. The Judges determine the basic wage on this "evidence," wiping aside the union demands and evidence in favour of substantial increase. The skilled workers are



given a margin above the basic wage as also are some workers in dangerous and unhealthy occupations.

In addition to fluctuations in the cost of living other factors operate, the state of the labor market, the strength of the unions and degree of determination and organisation by the workers to resist cuts or to take advantage of a rising demand for labor. However, the tendency is always toward the minimum, and toward a reduction in the standard of living of the whole class.

Marx showed that the worker's wage, under capitalism, is determined by the minimum amount of food, clothing and shelter necessary to keep the wage-slave in working condition and able to perpetuate the class of wage-laborers. The very procedure of the basic wage inquiries, to find out the minimum needs of the laborer, to add a margin to meet the higher cost of skilled labor power, proves the Marxist theory. The job of the Arbitration Court is to give a legal cloak to the law of value in relation to wages, the price of the commodity labor-power. This alone destroys the contention of the reformist trade union officials and Labor Party politicians that the way to increase wages is through the Arbitration Court.

The adjustments of the basic wage nearly always lag far behind the cost of living in a period of rising prices, thus robbing the workers of even the meagre basic wage.

In times of economic crisis, when the union position is weakened by unemployment, when reformist leaders take up the slogan, "equality of sacrifice," the courts act quickly to cut wages.

**In this period of capitalist decay with mass unemployment affecting the vast majority of workers from time to time, with a permanent army of unemployed all of the time, it is clear that the majority of workers do not average a "basic wage" standard of living.**

The basic wage was reduced in N.S.W. in the middle twenties, by the first Lang Labor Government. Lang changed the basis from the needs of a man, wife and two children to a man, wife and one child. In place of a basic wage increase he introduced Motherhood Endowment making the working-class pay for this benefit. Henry Boote, in the Sydney "Worker," estimated that this change in the method of computing the basic wage cost the working-class at least £10,000,000 a year. The Federal Government, on the suggestion of Judge Beeby, who refused to increase the basic wage, is repeating this Lang plan of reducing the income of the working-class with its endowment scheme.

The rising prices and rents, the Fadden-Curtin Budget, the refusal to raise the basic wage, and already some wage-cuts, mark the beginning of a new "low" period, directly connected with the present war, unless the workers are alive to the situation and continue their struggles.

**Out of this situation arises the need for organisation and strikes, in spite of and against the reformists and Courts, to preserve even the present meagre standards and to seize whatever advantages there are due to the demand for labor, to increase the share of the worker in the product of his own labor. If the worker did not resist the continuous attacks of Capital, if he did not take advantage of a favorable labor market, he would become, as Marx said, a degraded wretch, beyond hope of salvation.**

As we have already indicated, the problem of the basic wage is not merely a matter of statistics about the cost of living. The state of the labor market, the organisation, militancy and readiness to fight shown by the trade unionists plays a most important part. Despite the efforts of Judges, members of the Government and parliamentary and trade union reformists, strikes have been continuous since before the present war started.

The reformist Labor Party and trade union officials give this instrument of capitalism, the Arbitration Court, their fullest support. They do so because they want to safe-



guard capitalism. They do so because they have snug berths in the labor movement, positions of "honor" in the State apparatus, Parliament, Courts etc., bestowed on them by the capitalist class. They prefer their comfortable middle-class existence to leading strike struggles, risking gaol, and improving the workers organisation in preparation for the overthrow of the power of capital and the institution of socialism.

The arbitration system offers reformist union officials opportunities to practise class collaboration, to make bargains with the employers behind the backs of union members, and often at the expense of other unions.

Compulsory arbitration was invented by men of the capitalist class who were helped by the reformists to impose it on the unions as a brake upon the struggles of the workers. The class struggle leads to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat (working class rule) as Marx taught, it leads to the complete victory of the workers over Capital. Hence the capitalists and their Labor lackeys fear class struggle.

The great strikes of the nineties led to the adoption of compulsory Arbitration in order to curb the strike movement. W.G.Spence, former secretary of the A.W.U., leading reformist and conscriptionist, declared in his "History of the A.W.U.," that had these strike struggles continued, the workers would have over-run Australia, and that arbitration was introduced to prevent that eventuality. The insistence on adherence to the discredited arbitration system by reformism again demonstrates its counter-revolutionary nature, its role of sabotaging any real challenge to capitalist domination. The arbitration system has been barren of results for the workers, real wages are much the same as at the beginning of the century, providing the worker can get full-time employment, which becomes increasingly difficult for the majority. Not reformist theories about arbitration, but the validity of the "law of value" has been proved.

What improvements have been won in working conditions and shortening of hours have been won in spite of the betrayals and treacheries of the reformists, by the unceasing pressure of the mighty strike struggles of the rank and file and the ceaseless campaigning of the hated and slandered militants and communists.

When conditions bring about strikes the reformist officials do their utmost to shepherd the workers back into the courts. This they attempt by all manner of intrigues, by means of splitting tactics and finally even by resorting to strike-breaking. The A.W.U. bureaucracy has time and again organised scabs to break the strikes of members. The reformists caused the defeat of the miners in the lock-out of 1929-30. The officials of the union, supported by Lang and Scullin and their Governments and the Labor Party press, kept the miners of all districts other than northern N.S.W., producing the coal which enabled the coal-barons to starve the northern miners back to work at the end of fifteen months.

In the Seamens' strike of 1935, the Labor Party leaders and trade union officials deliberately isolated the seamen, prevented solidarity and aid from the unions they controlled, whilst the government and the shipowners used the laws, police intimidation and black-legs to break the strike. They helped to cripple the Seamen's Union on that occasion in order to discredit militant trade union action and to prevent the further development of Communist leadership of the trade union movement. Numerous other strikes were sabotaged in the same way, especially during the economic crisis of 1929-32. The strikes of relief workers and the struggle of the unemployed were broken up very often by reformist treachery. The "no eviction" struggles of the unemployed were suppressed by the Lang "Labor" government in N.S.W. with the utmost ferocity by police violence, gaolings and intimidation. Labor governments in other States acted in similar fashion toward the unemployed. All militant struggle is frowned on and attacked in the name of "Arbitration" and "Conciliation."

Further, the reformists maintain and perpetuate the division of the workers by the craft union system. Already we have dealt with the splitting tactics of the bureaucracy of the "labor aristocracy" crafts. The reformists thus have prevented the organisation of the workers on class lines according to place of work and industry. Since the coming of large industries and monopoly, the working-class has been considerably weakened and prevented from taking concerted action against the exploiters by the craft union divisions.

Reformism and arbitration have failed to improve wages in the forty years of this century. The reformists have prevented the development of better organisation, solidarity and political consciousness that comes from struggle and that alone can prepare the workers for the bigger struggles for Socialism. Reformism is today a retarding, splitting influence in the ranks of trade unionism, the reformist leaders are the lieutenants of capitalism in the union ranks. Continuation of their policy of capitulation means frustration and defeat of the trade union movement.

## CHAPTER 6.

### STRUGGLE AGAINST THE LEFT.

In the struggle against Socialism and Marxist ideas, the Labor Party leaders have rendered the capitalist class inestimable service. Indeed as reformism declines and the left-wing develops, the reformist leaders become more and more pre-occupied with the struggle against the left-wing in general. The reformist leaders have at all times endeavored to suppress the growth of militant working-class and Socialist groups and teaching within the Labor Party and the trade unions. At the end of the last war, a left-wing led by ex-Senator Arthur Rae, Jack Kilburn and others, was expelled from the N.S.W. branch of the A.L.P.

The Communist Party, which had gained affiliation to the N.S.W. Labor Party by one vote, at the succeeding conference was expelled.

The depression and the Premiers' Plan period brought doubts of reformism which crystallised in the Socialisation Units, formed within the A.L.P. to advocate the formal objective of the Party, the "socialisation of industry." For a time these units were tolerated as a counter to the Communist Party, but as soon as they showed genuine opposition to the ruling Lang bureaucracy and reformist ideology, the Socialisation movement was suppressed.

In N. S. W., following the suppression of the Socialisation Units, the leftwing continued to strengthen, especially in the fight against Lang's dictatorship, which it led. Reformism was being worsted and called upon the Federal Executive, upon Curtin, Forgan-Smith and Fallon to intervene. They expelled the N.S.W. Executive and its followers from the A.L.P., resulting in the formation of the N.S.W. Labor Party.

It is clear that the reformist leaders will not tolerate a genuine leftwing within the A.L.P. and are prepared to wreck the Labor Party rather than allow the left to gain control. In other States, individual lefts and militant unionists have been expelled, more especially from the A.W.U.

Reformist policy had long since caused a split in the working-class; the genuine Marxists, as in all other countries, forming a Communist Party to lead the workers to the struggle for the Socialist Revolution. The reformist leaders have never ceased to lie, vilify, misrepresent and slander the Communist Party. Their Press, the Victorian "Labor Call," the A.W.U. controlled "Workers" (with the exception of N.S.W.), the "Labor Daily" under Lang's control and the "Century" are filled with filth, culled from the



worst Whiteguard, fascist and Trotskyist sewers, against Communism and the Soviet Union. The attitude of the reformist leaders to the First Workers' Republic is one of bitter hostility. The reformists support any attack by the British and Australian imperialists and quite openly show that they would support war by the imperialists upon the Soviet Union. Lang recently advised the Nazis, in "Century," to make war on the Soviet Union.

The reformists do not confine themselves to wordy vilification of the left. Expulsion, and victimisation of the militants from their employment is often used as a weapon. The Labor governments use the capitalist State and laws to hound the Socialists and Communists. The I.W.W. men were sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment under the "Unlawful Associations Act" of the Hughes Federal Labor government. Under Lang, a record number of Communists, anti-eviction fighters and unemployed organisers were gaoled. Forgan-Smith's Labor government supplements Menzies "Regulation 42A" with the villainous "Public Safety Act" which has aroused the indignation of the workers of Queensland. The Westralian Labor Government has undertaken the greatest number of prosecutions of Communists for anti-war activity, to the time of writing, in the Commonwealth. Workers are stopped in the street and police continually visit the homes of persons suspected of radical views.

Beasley and Lang and others were vying with the reactionary Country Party leaders and "Catholic Action" in calling for the banning of the Communist Party after the commencement of the war. By voting for the National Security Regulations, Curtin and his followers voted for the ban on the Communists, the raiding of workers homes, the seizure of literature, printing presses and other property.

Curtin and Co., united with Menzies and the capitalists, are preparing for new attacks, not only on Communists, but left laborites and trade union militants, introducing the same regime of terror and intimidation they pretend to be fighting against in Germany and the occupied countries of Europe. The reformists, it is plain from all this, **are the mortal enemies of the Socialist Revolution**, whose advocates they ruthlessly persecute and try to suppress.

That the policy of the A.L.P. top leaders is no accident is further proved by examination of the record of international reformism. Henderson was in the war Cabinet in Britain during the last war; McDonald, Thomas and Snowden betrayed the General Strike and finally deserted to the Tory camp to lead the attack on the British workers with the "Means Test," and other measures during the economic crisis.

Bevin, Atlee, Morrison and Co. are in the present "War Cabinet." Their policy is not distinguishable from that of the Tories, who use them for the dirty jobs; moving the Bills for military conscription, for industrial conscription and to suppress the "Daily Worker" and other working-class organs. Another of these "heroes," Dr. Dalton, is Minister for the Blockade, that is, to starve the workers, the women and children of Europe.

Bevin, Citrine and Co., have the job of suppressing strikes. All of these sorry heroes are used by the Tories to slander and abuse the militants. They are hired prizefighters of British imperialism against the workers and Socialism.

The New Zealand Labor government has acted, since the outbreak of the war in accordance with the "traditions" of the worst capitalist reactionaries. Jingoism, conscription, gaoing of unionists, Communists, and religious pacifists, is the order of the day in New Zealand with reformist leaders in control of the war government.

The German reformists, the Social-Democratic Party, taking the reins of office after the armistice, crushed the German Socialist Revolution in blood and murdered its leaders, Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg. For this purpose, the Social Dem-

ocratic leaders had armed the Junker officers, the very same officers who later became leaders of the Nazis Party. The Social Democrats helped the Nazis to power by splitting the workers and refusing a united front with the powerful German Communist Party. Declaring the Communist agitation for a general strike to prevent Hitler taking power a "provocation," the Social Democrats cringed before Hitler. When Hitler was made Chancellor by Hindenburg, whom the Social Democrats had supported as a "less evil," they sang the Nazi "Horst Wessel song" along with the fascists in the Reichstag. The reformist union bureaucrats marched in Hitler's "May Day" procession.

Such was the social-fascist role of the German Social Democrats, the "moderate wing of fascism," that allowed Hitler an easy victory over the German workers by paralysing their resistance.

In Russia, the reformists, the Mensheviks, supported the Tsar's war to seize Constantinople and the Dardanelles in 1914, called Lenin a "German spy" and fought with the White Armies and the foreign interventionists against the Russian workers and the Red Army in 1917-20. The Trotskyite wing of the Mensheviks finally entered the pay of the Nazis as murderers, wreckers and spies. They were prepared to sabotage the Red Army in the event of a fascist onslaught on the First Workers' Socialist Republic. In all other European countries where the Revolution was crushed (Italy, Hungary, etc.) the Reformists were guilty of exactly the same treachery as in Germany.

The Second International refused to assist the Spanish workers and sabotaged aid to them. It was the French "Socialist" Blum, who invented "non-intervention."

The Social Democrats of all countries sabotaged the united front and collective security, the struggle to prevent the outbreak of the current war. The reformists of all countries have been among the chief purveyors of lies and slander against the Soviet Union. Blum, Sir Walter Citrine, the Finn, Lanner, and others were among the chief propagandists for "switching the war" over to one against the Soviet Union at the time when the latter was destroying the Finn Whiteguards' Mannerheim line. The reformists of all countries are among the foremost advocates for the present imperialist war.

The French "Socialists," aiding the "200 families" to gaoi the Communists, demanded the death penalty for workers who opposed the imperialist war. Blum undermined and split the Peoples' Front movement and destroyed its economic gains; the forty hour week, wage increases, and other concessions forced from the French rulers. Blum and his "Socialists" supported Munich and undermined the Franco-Soviet Pact upon which, together with the Peoples' Front, the security of France rested. The French reformists are the architects, together with France's pro-fascist capitalist class, of the disasters and misfortunes that have befallen the French masses, just as the reformist Social-Democrats ruined the German labor movement and left the masses at the mercy of Hitler.

The reformists, Curtin and Co., will do the same for the Australian masses if they are not combated, defeated and driven out of all labor organisations.

Everywhere the story is the same; these people, the Blums, Attlees, Bevins, Curtins and Beasleyes are not fighters for a Socialist New Order, but the watchdogs and political gladiators of the capitalist system. The history of reformism in every country proves that.

## CHAPTER 7.

### THE CRISIS OF REFORMISM AND GROWTH OF THE LEFT.

For a considerable period before, and since the commencement of the war, the policy of Curtin has been to maintain the Menzies-Country Party government in power.



This government represents the biggest monopoly capitalist groups, the banks, the B.H.P., the Colonial Sugar, and so on, the Tsars of Australian industry, and in its Country party wing, the Squattocracy, the landholding companies and the wealthy strata of farmers.

It was precisely this ruling-class that the labor movement was organised to fight; it is their ruthless exploitation, their continuous efforts to destroy working class conditions that have caused the many industrial revolts of the workers. It is they who have for decades victimised and gaoled, black-listed and hounded the best representatives of the labor movement, and the best sons and daughters of the working-class. It was in the teeth of their bitter opposition that the labor movement was built; in face of their savage onslaught that certain civil liberties we once possessed, rights of organisation and free speech, were established.

To-day, Curtin and Beasley unite with these people in the War Council and present them to the toilers as angels of light, defenders of trade union conditions, heroes of the fight for "democracy" and people who are going to give us a "new order." This is a base deception of the toilers. Actually, Curtin and Beasley are using their connections with the workers' movement to help the capitalists attack living standards by means of the Budget and the Basic Wage Commission, and destroy liberty by means of the "National Security Regulations." The exposure of Curtin in connection with the Swan by-election in Westralia proves that Curtin and Co. do not want a Labor government but to keep Menzies in office and help the capitalist class carry through their policy of imperialist war and suppression of the working class.

Years of reformist treachery have created a profound crisis in the Labor Party. It has divided into numerous factions. The long story of the right-wing Lang-Beasley "opposition" group, commencing in the depression is an expression of this crisis in the leadership. It will not be ended by the return of the Langites to the Curtin camp. There is the "Centrist" group of Ward and Blackburn, critics of the two main groups in words but united with them organisationally and practically. Unless Ward and Co. are prepared to break with the reformist leaders, their "criticism" but creates new illusions in the minds of the workers about Labor Party reformism, serves as a shield and helps maintain the domination of reformist policy in the working-class.

The most significant development is the expulsion of the leftwing in N.S.W., which has constituted itself a genuine leftwing labor party. Other evidences of the break-up of reformism are the growing opposition of the progressive elements in other States, the big votes for independent labor candidates in the parliamentary elections, the growing militancy of the trade unions and big union votes for leftwingers. These developments emphasise the growing contradiction between the activity of the workers, the needs of their struggle and the policy of the reformists, of imperialist warmongering, outlawing of strikes and support for the National Security Regulations, which Curtin "would not repeal." All this will serve to aggravate the crisis of reformism and open the way to further growth of the left.

The Curtin rightwing won victories in the Federal elections, especially in N.S.W. as well as successes in union bodies and among the Labor party membership. This is explained by the fact that, despite the contradiction between the strike activity of the workers and the war policy of Curtin, the majority of the toilers, desiring relief from the burdens of the Menzies regime, see the Curtin party as the one in the position to form a government in the immediate future. Curtin fears such a government, he fears it would be shattered on the rocks of reality of imperialist war and a rapidly worsening economic position, and would finally discredit Labor Party reformism in the eyes of the workers. Despite the increased support of the ruling class for the Curtin faction, the



latter hesitates to enter a National Government. He doubts his ability to take the party with him. He is not opposed in principle to National Government, he retains a "fig leaf" of independence lest, as he said, opposition groups among his rank and file followers seek Communist leadership. Curtin wants to keep the Labor Party in reserve, probably with a view to dealing with a future revolutionary crisis and to end the long story of reformist infamy in Australia with a blood-bath for the workers.

Lenin wrote of the British Labor Party in "Left Communism," that it should be supported "as the rope supports the man who has been hanged;" forced into office and compelled to show its true face to the masses. Therefore, it must be demanded that Curtin and Co., cease supporting Menzies and take office. But this must be accompanied by ruthless exposure and tireless criticism of all the different reformist tendencies and the fiercest struggle against them in the mass organisations as well as their exposure by means of the further development of mass struggle.

The rank and file of the Labor party must never be confused with the "top leaders;" a comradely attitude must always be maintained towards them with patient explanation to help them see the real role of their "leaders," to see through the demagoguery of the reformists, the loud outcries about small matters whilst they aid and abet capitalism in all its major attacks on the workers, the pre-election promises that are quietly pigeonholed once they are in office.

## CHAPTER 8.

### BUILDING "A PARTY OF A NEW TYPE."

Before the war, Australia was being transformed from a mainly primary into a manufacturing country as well. It was being industrialised. The growth of the B.H.P.-controlled iron and steel industry laid the basis for this. The demand for munitions and implements of war has accelerated the process of industrialisation in a number of directions. The capitalist class and the reformists often claim that this will save Australia's economic and social problems.

A glance at world capitalism, at the United States, Britain and Germany where capitalist industry has reached its highest peak, at once disproves this. Permanent mass unemployment, slums, speed-up, suppression and imperialist war have been the result of capitalist industrialisation the world over. The poverty of the masses, because of their exploited condition, restricts the market and brings about crisis and decay. The growth of industry in capitalist lands simply prepares the way for more widespread and intense crisis in the face of which reformism is powerless, except as a hindrance to the working-class.

The Labor Party won its best successes in the days of "liberal," ascending capitalism, and small capitalist enterprises. A purely parliamentary activity is helpless against the present monopoly capitalism, against the united banks and trusts. All that the successes of the Labor Party, in its palmiest days, amount to are bits and pieces of social legislation: no different to those of the bourgeois "liberals" of other lands. It is claimed for the Labor Party that it has "influenced the Australian people towards a more democratic outlook," and in a measure this is true, but in spite of this there is the Crimes Act, War Precautions Act, National Security Act, and as much repressive legislation made law with the assistance of the reformists as in any other capitalist country, to prove that the capitalist leopard has not changed its spots.

Insofar as the reformists have endeavored to use the capitalist State to further their limited policy of reform, they have confirmed another Marxist proposition, namely,



"that the working-class cannot simply lay hold of the ready made machinery of the State and set it going in its own interests" but must construct a new State of its own. (Marx, The Paris' Commune)

Where the Labor Party has held office for a lengthy period, as in Queensland, it has only done so by completely subordinating itself to capitalist politics.

Capitalism, racked and torn by economic crisis and war, is in no condition to grant "peaceful" concessions to the workers. **THE ERA OF REFORM HAS, ON THE WHOLE, ENDED, AS THE INABILITY OF LABOR GOVERNMENTS TO MATERIALLY ALTER THE POSITION OF THE MASSES IN THE LAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AMPLY DEMONSTRATES.** The present war will make it practically impossible for the capitalists to allow an improvement of any consequence in living standards. The real contribution that the period of reformist domination made, is, as Lenin declared of the Second International, the mobilising of the workers and the building of mass organisations, such as trade unions.

But the workers cannot successfully tackle the bigger tasks of the Socialist Revolution until "Social-Democratism in the Labor movement has been crushed" (Stalin).

The leaders of reformism "the Social-Chauvinists" (i.e., the Curtins, Evatts, Beasleys, Forgan-Smiths) are, as Lenin wrote, our **CLASS ENEMIES, THE BOURGEOIS WITHIN THE LABOR MOVEMENT.** They represent strata, or groups, or sections of the working-class which have virtually been bribed (by better wages, positions of "honor"), and which help **THEIR** bourgeoisie to plunder and oppress small and weak peoples and to fight for the division of the capitalist spoils."

It is only by understanding that Labor Party "liberalism," the policy of class-collaboration and reformist "gradualism" is a bourgeois policy operated by "bourgeois in the workers' movement" that the history of the Labor Party becomes comprehensible.

It is no "accident," to be explained solely by the "ambition" of a Hughes, a Holman, or a Joe Lyons, nor by the "weakness" of Scullin or Curtin, that the successive leaders of the A.L.P. have supported imperialist war, conscription, repression of the workers, the Premiers' Plan, the Fadden Budget and strike-breaking. Their policy of reformism results in submission to the capitalist class in every crisis and makes them defenders of the capitalist system. That is the basis of the "weaknessess" and "betrayals."

Labor Party reformism has no theoretical basis, it rejects and fights Marxism, the scientific Socialism of the working-class. This accounts largely for the theoretical and political backwardness of the Australian labor movement. The A.L.P., itself soaked in capitalist ideas, is quite unable to educate the masses, on a broad scale, in a scientific working-class, Socialist outlook. "Theory," Lenin declared, "is the lamp that lights the feet of practice." Without a revolutionary theory, a revolutionary movement—that is a struggle for a "New Order," Socialism—is impossible!

The defeat of reformism, isolation of the reformists from the labor movement is essential for the Socialist Revolution.

The Labor Party, as Lenin explained in his 1913 analysis, must make way for a Socialist, workers' party.

To meet the demands of the imperialists, the last stage of capitalism, the epoch of the giant capitalist monopolies, the old parliamentary activity no longer suffices. The workers, the small farmers, the middle-class, the soldiers and sailors, need a "party of a new type" (Lenin). That party is the Communist Party, the only party which can lead the workers in the period of imperialist wars and proletarian revolutions.

The main task is to build the Communist Party and militant class unionism; to end the domination of reformism in the labor movement, and to assemble all toilers for a Peoples' Government.



## CHAPTER. 9. TOWARDS A PEOPLES' GOVERNMENT.

A Peoples' Government would comprise the representatives of the workers; trade unions, Labor Party left, the unemployed; representatives of the small and middle farmers and the middle-class. It would also be based on the elected representatives of the armed forces, the Navy, Army, and Air Force.

The Peoples' Government will arise out of the mass struggle for a better life, for liberty and peace, in opposition to the policies of the capitalists and their "Socialists" of the Curtin type. Such a government may come through elections to Parliament, it may be thrown up outside Parliament by the joint activities of the organisations of the people. The essential now is struggle and organisation.

The Peoples' Government would meet the desires of the masses and would fulfil the tasks before which Labor Party governments have baulked and, instead, substituted the policy of the capitalist class. The first task of the Peoples' Government would be to re-establish peace on a just and lasting basis, a peace without annexations and indemnities. Its foreign policy would be to relinquish all imperialist conquests and aims and to establish friendly and trading relations with all countries, especially with the U.S.S.R.

The Peoples' Government would nationalise the banks, mines, combines and war industries. It would proceed at once to raise the standards of living and radically improve the conditions of the working-class, aiming at a £5. Basic Wage, the seven hours day, social insurance, abolition of unemployment and other measures of major importance to the working-class.

The Peoples' Government would end the debt slavery of the toiling farmers by cancelling the huge debts to the banks, machinery companies and other institutions of capitalism. It would make the land the property of all the people, putting an end to land monopoly, promoting closer settlement and making land available to small farmers who need it, guaranteeing security of tenure to those who are prepared to work it.

Special assistance would be rendered in the struggle against drought, provision of water, storage of fodder and other measures. The Peoples' Government would assist the farmers to secure modern machinery. It would institute proper organisation against bushfires, and deal effectively with other problems of the country side.

The Peoples' Government would democratise the armed forces, transforming them into a real Peoples' Militia for the genuine defence of the country, and not to be used in imperialistic wars overseas. It would improve the pay and conditions of the forces and enable rank and filers to be promoted to the highest rank.

The Peoples' Government would put an end to the disgraceful condition of Education, dilapidated and cheerless school-buildings. It would end the disgrace of present overworked hospital staffs, lack of accomodation, and lack of medical attention for the people. It would give justice to the aboriginees, and self-determination to Papua and other colonies.

The Peoples' Government would initiate many other social and economic measures which the workers have been demanding for a decade, and which have been refused by U.A.P., Country Party, and Reformist Labor Governments alike.

**SOCIALISM.** The Communist Party in fighting for a Peoples' Government regards this as a first step in the advance towards its basic aims of a complete social transformation which will finally eliminate capitalism and class divisions, and thereby destroy the causes of poverty, unemployment and war by making all means of production the social property of the people, and socially organising production for use.

The old order is going down in blood and tears. With high explosives the lords of monopoly are dynamiting the foundations of their own social order. Under the brutal blows of war the awakening of the people is spreading. The struggle of the people is rising. A new order of Socialism will end the present miseries and bring a happy future or humanity. The future belongs to the people.