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A Communist Party Pamphlet

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LIVING COSTS A LOT...

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LIVING COSTS A LOT !

Prices are still going up. Things every family needs are hard to get.

Ask the housewives. They know.

They know how much more they have to pay now for meat, vegetables, milk, clothes than they did before the war.

They know how difficult it is to get soap, rice, paraffin, candles, matches and a dozen other things they use. They know how scarce clothes are, what a struggle it is to buy anything for babies and children to wear.

They know how much further a ten-shilling note used to go four years ago than it does nowadays.

No need to turn to official figures to learn these things. In any event, official figures don't reveal the full facts. But even they show that meat has gone up 38 per cent. since pre-war days, and fruit and green vegetables 64 per cent. In the nine biggest towns of the Union food prices have risen between 26 and 35 per cent. since 1938. Clothes have gone up still more.

Here is a list comparing some prices to-day with prices in 1939:

	1939.	1943.
Rice (per pound)	1½d.-4½d.	9d.
Coffee (per pound)	11d.	1/5
Canned Fruit (per tin)	11d.	1/4
Loose Tea (per pound)	1/6	2/6
Bacon, Raw (per pound)	1/-	1/6
Cooking Oil (per bottle)	1/-	1/10
Paraffin (4 gallons)	4/3	6/6
Candles (per packet)	7d.	11d.
Soap (per bar)	5½d.	9d.
Cups and Saucers	6d.	3/6
Calico (per yard)	8d.	1/6
Workman's Overalls	5/11	13/6
Grey Flannels	15/6	42/6
Boys' Shirts	2/11	7/6
Men's Socks	1/-	2/6

Every working-class family knows what these figures mean. They mean that a good wage in 1939 is very far from being a good wage now. Things which cost twelve or thirteen shillings before the war cost twenty to-day—if you can get them at all.

SHORTAGE AND THE WAR

■ Shortage in war-time is nothing unusual. No doubt it's something we must all put up with.

In peace-time South Africa never produced enough food for her population, let alone other things. All kinds of goods had to be imported from overseas.

In war-time supplies from overseas disappear. Many ships are sunk. Those that escape Hitler's U-boats are needed to carry troops and munitions. South Africa must rely on her own production to feed and clothe not only her own soldiers and people, but convoys and all those who pass through her ports.

Nobody but a fifth columnist would grumble against this. The Communist Party agrees that shipping must go to the war fronts, not be used to carry goods to South Africa.

But if there aren't enough ships, other ways must be found of supplying the people's wants. The food and clothing problem which the war causes must be solved. In spite of many promises, the Government has failed to solve it.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S SOLUTION

■ The Communist Party is a working-class party. Its aim is to put forward a policy which will answer the problems of the workers. On the question of food and clothing shortage the Communist Party says:

PRODUCTION CAN BE AND SHOULD BE INCREASED.

More use must be made of our own soil. Much of South Africa is poor farming country. Experts say that only 15 per cent. of it can be cultivated. But to-day only 6 per cent. is actually under cultivation. Where there is one morgen of wheat or mealies there could be two or three.

Vegetables are scarce and dear. The coast towns have to go short of them if visiting ships are to be supplied. But far more vegetables could be grown on the land round our towns.

Overseas, people have been helped to "dig for victory". In the Union the Government assists Italian prisoners in growing their own vegetables. What about assisting South Africa's own people to do the same thing?

And when there is a glut of storable vegetables, like potatoes, the Government should see to it that they are stored—not left to rot so that the remainder fetch high scarcity prices.

Vested interests must not be allowed to keep down production in order to keep prices up.

Butter is often scarce in the Union. The gap could easily be filled with margarine from South African whale oil and fish-liver oils—if the dairy interests which produce the butter

did not stand in the way. Our own troops in North Africa eat margarine from South African fish-liver oils which are sold by the Union to the United States, sent to Britain under lease-lend, and then sent as margarine to North Africa round the Cape.

Margarine from South African products can go half-way round the world and back again, but because of Big Business it cannot be eaten in South Africa! IT IS TIME SUCH CRIMES FOR THE SAKE OF PROFIT CAME TO AN END.

EQUALITY OF SACRIFICE

■ Increasing production is a job to be started NOW. But it will take time. As long as the war continues and shipping is scarce, the food and clothes shortage will continue.

Therefore, the Communist Party says:

IF THERE'S LITTLE TO BE HAD, THAT LITTLE MUST BE FAIRLY SHARED.

South Africans can take it. They will not grumble at sacrifices if they know that rich and poor alike are hit by them. But what are working-class families to think when they know that rich customers, people who buy on credit, can get things in the shops while they walk from shop to shop and are refused?

Or that luxury goods—profitable goods for the big shop-keepers—are still being imported and advertised while necessities run short?

Or that wholesalers hold back their stocks till June 30 to dodge the Excess Profits Tax?

Many shops will only sell candles or soap or matches to those who buy 5/- or 7/6 worth of goods. Perhaps the shop-keeper is not to blame, but the system is wrong.

We hear a lot nowadays about the "black market". The "black market" may suit the wealthy. They even turn it into a joke for stalls for war funds. But it's no joke for the working-class mother who cannot get necessities for her family.

Such rackets should be stopped. If goods must be short, let them be fairly distributed. Distribution must be **PLANNED**.

And the way to plan distribution in war time is **RATIONING**.

Rationing is already in force in most of the Allied countries. It must be introduced in South Africa—not for everything, but for those types of goods which are difficult to get. It is the only way to make sure that every family receives its fair share.

RATIONING IS A BIG JOB, SAYS THE GOVERNMENT. THE COUNTRY EXPECTS THE GOVERNMENT TO PUT BIG JOBS THROUGH, IF THEY MEAN MORE OF A SQUARE DEAL FOR ALL.

THE "CONTROL" OF PRICES

■ Shortage of goods is one trouble. The other is prices. Rising prices somehow always get beyond that cost-of-living allowance.

Here again it is the poor, the working class, who come off worst.

They cannot save by spending less on luxuries. They often pay more because they buy in small quantities. The less you buy, the more you pay.

Often hardest hit of all are the wives and children of men away in the Army. The Governor-General's Fund is supposed to give them the same income as they had before the husband joined up. But as prices rise they find it more and more difficult to make ends meet.

The Government has set up price control—a welcome advance. But there are certain things the public wants to know,

Does price control work? And if so, in whose interest does it work?

Are prices fixed to suit the consumers' pockets or the sellers' profits? Are the controllers out to help the public, or to guarantee the merchants as much or more profit than they made before the war?

Why is it that according to the newspapers only small traders are ever charged with profiteering? Are the big firms never charged, or is the news of their cases kept from public knowledge?

According to the method of "control" now used by the Government, wealthy firms who made a big profit before the war are guaranteed big profits for the duration. No wonder this "system" is approved of by Big Business!

PROFITEERING MUST STOP!

From the Big Business point of view price control has certainly been a success. From the consumer's point of view it has failed.

Even its greatest achievements are not so remarkable: the lowering of the price of oranges, for example, which are now "controlled" at 3/3 a bag. Last year and 1941 in season they were being sold at 2/3 to 2/9 a bag "uncontrolled".

When it became clear that profiteering landlords were trying to make a good thing out of the war-time housing shortage, the Government banned any increase in rents. In many cases unjust rents have even been reduced. If the profiteering landlord can be kept in check, why can't the same be done with the profiteering shopkeeper?

It is a scandal that profits should be made out of the war. It is a scandal that, while some men and women are sacrificing their jobs and even their lives, unscrupulous individuals are allowed to fill their pockets by fleecing those who are left at home.

The Communist Party says:

All prices must be fixed in the interests of the consumer. If profits prevent it, profits must come down.

The regulation prices must be made known to the public by every possible means. They should be published in the papers and broadcast on the radio. They should be displayed **PROMINENTLY** in every shop—not tucked away in a corner where nobody sees them.

Profiteering must be stopped. Heavier penalties must be inflicted on profiteers. All cases of profiteering must be made known to the public—those involving big firms as well as those involving small shopkeepers.

A MINISTRY OF FOOD

■ The Government has promised a Commission of Inquiry into some of these things. But reports of Inquiries and Commissions are easily forgotten when they clash with vested interests. What we need is **ACTION**.

The Communist Party calls for the setting up of a Ministry of Food, which will see to the whole job of increasing production and planning distribution. Such a Ministry of Food must take over the task of control and carry it out to suit the consumer. It must concern itself with the health of our people, not with Big Business profits.

RICH AND POOR MUST MAKE EQUAL SACRIFICES. VESTED INTERESTS MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO STAND IN THE WAY. EVERY WORKER'S AND SOLDIER'S FAMILY IS ENTITLED TO A FAIR SHARE OF WHAT THERE IS TO BE HAD—AND AT A FAIR PRICE.

SUPPORT THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN DEMANDING THAT THEY GET IT!

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