

LABOR ACTION

Independent Socialist Weekly

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FIVE CENTS

Special May Day Issue:

12 Pages on the Principles and Program of Independent Socialism

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May Day, Mid-Century —

The Fight for Socialism Is the Hope of the World!

By L. G. SMITH

Sixty-four years ago the American labor movement established May First as a day of demonstration and struggle for the eight-hour day.

This year the leaders of the American labor movement, AFL, CIO and independent, have joined with the most reactionary and anti-labor employers' organizations, the NAM and the United States Chamber of Commerce, to herd the workers into "Loyalty Day" parades on April 29.

The labor leaders justify this deed on the ground that May Day has been taken over by the Stalinists in the United States for demonstrations organized to further their own political ends. Yet next to the capitalists themselves the Stalinists will be the chief beneficiaries of the Loyalty Day parades organized by this unholy alliance.

Since 1886, when the predecessors of the AFL proclaimed May First as a day of national strikes and demonstrations for the eight-hour day, May Day had become accepted by militant and socialist workers all over the world as THEIR chief day of mobilization for struggle.

To the demand for the eight-hour day were added, as the years went by, the other chief slogans of the working-class and socialist movements. The third congress of the Second International, composed of the leading labor and socialist organizations of its time, passed a resolution in 1893 which read:

"The demonstration on May First for the eight-hour day must serve at the same time as a demonstration of the determined will of the working class to destroy class distinctions through social change and thus enter on the road, the only road leading to peace for all peoples, to international peace."

The workers' demonstrations on May Day were met in most countries by police violence. The employers and their governments did not want to see the workers mobilized in vast demonstrations which revealed to themselves and to all classes of society the potential power of the working class. And as the revolutionary socialist

(Continued on page 10)

This We Believe: The ISL Program in Brief

The Independent Socialist League stands for socialist democracy and against the two systems of exploitation which now divide the world: capitalism and Stalinism.

Capitalism cannot be reformed or liberalized, by any Fair Deal or other deal, so as to give the people freedom, abundance, security or peace. It must be abolished and replaced by a new social system, in which the people own and control the basic sectors of the economy, democratically controlling their own economic and political destinies.

Stalinism, in Russia and wherever it holds power, is a brutal totalitarianism—a new form of exploitation. Its agents in every country, the Communist Parties, are unremitting enemies of socialism and have nothing in common with socialism—which cannot exist without effective democratic control by the people.

These two camps of capitalism and Stalinism are today at each other's throats in a world-wide imperialist rivalry for domination. This struggle can only lead to the most frightful war in history so long as the people leave the capitalist and Stalinist rulers in power. Independent Socialism stands for building and strengthening the Third Camp of the people against both war blocs.

The ISL, as a Marxist movement, looks to the working class and its ever-present struggle as the basic progressive force in society. The ISL is organized to spread the ideas of socialism in the labor movement and among all other sections of the people.

At the same time, Independent Socialists participate actively in every struggle to better the people's lot now—such as the fight for higher living standards, against Jim Crow and anti-Semitism, in defense of civil liberties and the trade-union movement. We seek to join together with all other militants in the labor movement as a left force working for the formation of an independent labor party and other progressive policies.

The fight for democracy and the fight for socialism are inseparable. There can be no lasting and genuine democracy without socialism, and there can be no socialism without democracy. To enroll under this banner, join the Independent Socialist League!

YOU'LL WANT

copies of this issue, in the course of the next year and more, to give to friends, shopmates and other deserving persons. Get them now! Three cents a copy in bundles of 10 or more.



On this May Day of 1950, LABOR ACTION and the movement for which it speaks, the Independent Socialist League, celebrate a 10th anniversary. We were born as an independent socialist tendency at the beginning of the recent war, born in the struggle against it, not only in opposition to capitalist imperialism but also in opposition to the imperialist expansion of Russia which first showed itself clearly in the joint invasion of Poland by Stalin and Hitler's troops.

In our very first issue on May Day 1940, we squarely took our stand for the building and strengthening of the Third Camp of world labor and real socialism against it, not only in opposition world. To this firm line we have adhered without wavering for a moment. The lessons of these past ten years have only reinforced our pride in this record, and reinforced our determination to keep the independent banner of socialist democracy high in the midst of an A-bomb world.

It has never been more necessary than now to state clearly and unambiguously where socialists—Marxist internationalists—stand on the basic issues of the world today. To this task, the present issue of LA is devoted.

In the columns to the left, a brief statement of views attempts to point up the leading ideas in capsule form. Naturally much is left out; the array of articles inside these 12 pages add much more; the literature of the Independent Socialist League, a regular reading of LABOR ACTION and our sister publication, the New International, offers a further treasure of the best socialist thinking of our day.

Next week, of course, LABOR ACTION returns to its usual offering of news interpretation, features and articles — all of which have been omitted from this special issue.

This week we highlight the fundamental views of the movement which offers labor the only road leading to peace and security: the democratic alternative to capitalism, the socialist alternative to Stalinism.

THE ISL A Decade of Independent Socialism, 1940-1950

Ten Years: the ISL Story

By ALBERT GATES Secretary of the ISL

The Independent Socialist League (originally formed as the Workers Party) is now celebrating its tenth anniversary, having been formed in April of 1940, following its split with the Socialist Workers Party.

At that time, it was difficult to foretell what future course our movement would take, for it was born in the midst of the Second World War, a circumstance in which the conditions for life and growth of a new political organization did not seem promising.

But we did not merely survive the war, if one measures by ideological factors rather than the often illusory yardstick of numbers alone. We grew politically and ideologically stronger as we applied our Marxist theory to the extremely difficult problems of our time.

It was not only that we were born during the war. It was that we came into independent existence during the most critical period in the history of international socialism, a period of its decline, of the consolidation and strengthening of totalitarianism, this new form of state power and social rule—bureaucratic collectivism in Russia.

The 1940 split in the Socialist Workers Party was the culmination of a long struggle inside that organization which had deeper roots than appeared in the dispute over the "defense of the Soviet Union."

As a matter of history, the factional struggle had broken out earlier over the "organizational question" at a time when no serious dispute on Russia had yet started.

"Defense of Soviet Union" the Issue

At the regular convention held in July of 1939, the dispute between the bureaucratically entrenched Cannonite leadership and the then assembling, inchoate and confused opposition, while foreshadowing the future, was serious enough to paralyze the convention repeatedly when there was as yet no formal, conscious or deep political differences.

If that fight ended in defeat for the opposition bloc, composed of a variety of forces in the SWP, the struggle over the Russian question which ensued shortly afterwards was destined to take the most serious proportions, and in its worldwide importance transcended anything before experienced by the Trotskyist movement anywhere.

The new Minority, for the first time since the birth of Trotsky's Russian Opposition in 1924, questioned the theoretical basis of the movement, namely, the view that Russia is a "degenerated workers' state" and that the world strategy of the Marxist movement had to be to defend that state under conditions where it was threatened by war or intervention.

The party was electrified by the rise of this opposition, for it acted as a unifying center in the SWP against the deadening influence of the bureaucratically conservative leadership of James P. Cannon and his group, an influence which was felt in the fields of theory, politics and organization.

It was no easy matter for the Minority to break with Trotsky on the Russian question, for it understood that a deepening of the differences with him on the nature of the Stalinist state and on Stalinism must lead to a parting of the ways with him who taught us so much in the years gone by.

Theoretical Basis of Anti-Stalinism

The Minority did not have a complete program during this struggle nor a fully-developed theory of Russia and Stalinism. These were to come only after the split and as the clarification process asserted itself with the unfolding of the war.

Out of the discussion in the WP came the theory that Russia was a bureaucratic-collectivist state, characterized by a new ruling class and a new economic exploitation and slavery for the masses.

It is true that we did not initiate anti-Stalinism, but we gave the struggle against Stalinism a theoretically unassailable basis and a political program that rested on international socialism, and we remain the only force of this kind in the world: an internationalist, socialist-Marxist, anti-Stalinist movement. It is this which enables us

to hold aloft the banner of socialism in a world divided into two camps of imperialism, Stalinist and capitalist, to which all other movements with few exceptions subordinate themselves to one degree or another.

As the Workers Party established itself, it did many things for which it can be justly proud. Despite the war and its social-patriotic pressures, the party maintained its loyalty to the working class of the United States to the utmost of its abilities and resources.

But perhaps the greatest achievement of the party was its weekly paper, LABOR ACTION. The paper was frankly experimental and an investment for the future.

With this perspective, LABOR ACTION was an innovation in revolutionary socialist journalism and enjoyed an enormous success among workers during the war. Space does not permit the citation of many examples of this statement. Suffice to say, it appeared in tens of thousands of copies weekly, was distributed widely from coast to coast, appeared on shop bulletin boards, was the subject of discussion of many workers, and many of its ideas and slogans spoke the feelings and language of the best militants and progressives in the labor movement.

Spoke Labor's Language in Wartime

The party regarded its activities as a preparation for any possibilities that might be produced by the war to advance the interests of socialism and it counted upon a revival of the world movement for socialism. Aware as it was that no rebirth of world socialism was possible without the leadership of conscious socialists acting as the catalytic agent for this socialist revival, the party expected, and not without reason, that these cadres were present in unknown numbers throughout the country.

The post-war period did not produce what the Workers Party had hoped for and looked for: the revival of international socialism. Instead, the end of the war brought with it a more distinct division between the former Allies in the war, a division between capitalism and its remnant democracy, and Stalinism.

This single fact was bound to have and did have its influence upon the socialist prospects in the United States. The working class here, highly organized and militant on a trade-union level, remains ideologically backward, still for the most part bourgeois-minded, content to follow their backward labor officialdom.

The ISL is formed. For this reason, the Workers Party, certain of its course, decided at its last convention to cease calling itself a party, and to alter its organizational character as well as its national perspectives.

The ISL Is Formed

The task is at once simple and complex. It is to build up a new socialist cadre of people, educated in the theories of Marxism, convinced that no social good can come of the continued existence of capitalism or Stalinism, and ready to dedicate their lives to the emancipation of all humanity from exploitation and the fetters of modern exploitive society.

If the Independent Socialist League is small today and enjoys far less influence than it should like or deserves, it is a commentary on our times. But to believe that the socialist future is hopeless is to believe that modern society and its inhabitants can go on endlessly on a crisis level of existence, threatened permanently by economic chaos and war.

It is to this future that the ISL dedicates itself.

WITH THE ISL



You are invited to attend local branch activities of the ISL. For information or literature, address: Independent Socialist League, national office, 4 Court Square, Long Island City 1, N. Y. (tel. RK 5-5117). Same address for Socialist Youth League.

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YOUTH The Socialist Youth League — Rebirth of a Movement

The Future Belongs to the Youth

By MAX MARTIN

American youth occupy a singular position at this juncture of history, a position different from that of European youth and from the depression-matured generation of the Thirties. Most of them were depression babies and it is, of course, impossible to measure the unconscious effects that this crisis-filled and insecure era had on them.

Despite this they have for the most part little experience with war and fascism. The lack of roots and tradition makes them by and large ill-prepared to cope effectively with these problems which are today fast becoming part of social reality.

The relations between abstract political truth and personal existence are today—May Day 1950—just beginning to emerge. For this reason those youth movements which have developed or which continue to exist in the post-war period have remained, except in rare instances, isolated from the main stream of youth and student life.

The youth movement traditionally struggled around two focal points: militarism and joblessness. It is in precisely these two areas that young people are beginning to be affected. For the first few years after the war campus life was relatively immune from the pressures of American imperialism.

Academic Freedom

These two central problems, militarism and unemployment, which shaped the youth movements of the Thirties are beginning to take on concrete significance today. Yet important as they are they do not constitute the political problems on campus. The struggle between capitalism and Stalinism reflects itself very vividly in college life today in attacks against academic freedom.

ROTC and Jobs

The recent attempts of the army and navy to establish ROTC units at Brooklyn College and Harvard have been met with student resistance. The full momentum of the war drive has yet to be felt on the American campus.

The development of an anti-war student movement has as a corollary the existence of a socialist youth organization. Many students will not be satisfied with a struggle which is merely anti-war and is not more clearly formulated in terms of a permanent solution to war.



and prejudices of Stalinist and social-democratic influence.

American youth are truly youth in this respect—uncorrupted and unfainted by the past. They are free to follow independent roads and it is to these youth that Independent Socialism, the program of the Socialist Youth League, offers the dynamism of its ideas.

Stalinism for years channeled the militant anti-war spirit of thousands of students. The full measure of cynicism and apathy which enveloped an entire generation of ex-Stalinists has yet to be taken. It must be remembered also that during the Thirties the whole socialist movement was in one way or another sympathetic to Russia.

"Anvil" Appears

The most significant development on the campus recently was the organization of the New York Student Federation Against War. The federation, which is celebrating its first birthday this May Day, is composed of nine socialist and anti-war clubs on the campuses of New York City.

Anvil has just been merged with Student Partisan, published by the Politics Club of the University of Chicago. The result of the merger, Anvil and Student Partisan, has just put its first issue off the press.

The sad truth, of course, is that by and large the federation is isolated from the masses of students. The increasing violations

hunters and loyalty-oathers have a clear field in which to transform America into a police state and the Stalinists have a clear field in which to pretend to be democrats.

The drive to destroy bourgeois political democracy in America is intimately connected with the cold war and with the preparations for the hot one. This will become increasingly clearer in the period that lies ahead.

Join the SYL!

There are many students and young workers who have already been able to generalize beyond this. These youths recognize that the fight to prevent war must lead to a fight against the two exploitive systems—capitalism and Stalinism—of whose very fabric war is an inherent and inevitable part.

Marxists today pose the slogan "Socialism or Barbarism" before the masses of the world. This slogan can be stated in another way. Either the workers of the world will convert the means of production from their present status of being privately owned and used for the production of profit to a status of democratic collective ownership and use to create a world of plenty and freedom—or the powers that be, in a dying effort to hold on to their profits and privileges, will turn them into the means of destruction and will put an end to civilization.

On this May Day, 1950, conditions may look pessimistic. The two monster imperialisms are carrying on their cold war over the backs of and against the masses of the world, primarily the international working class. Nowhere has a real and effective challenge to the powers of darkness yet appeared.

This, however, often has a reactionary result. Many progressive students have the attitude that the consequent thing to do is to stay out of all struggles. The job which the more militant students must do—and which the Student Federation against War did with no small success at the recently held New York Conference for Democracy in Education—is to convince the liberal and progressive students that their attitude is wrong.

If the anti-Stalinist and progressive students do not struggle for civil liberties, capitalist reaction and Stalinist reaction are aided at one and the same time. The witch-

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RUSSIA The New Exploitive System of Bureaucratic Collectivism

Moscow: Arch-Enemy of Socialism

By MARY BELL

If all the propaganda of all the defenders of what has now been popularly simplified into two antagonistic world forces could be boiled down to two lines of dialogue, they might read like this:

THE "EAST" (boasting): We are building socialism. THE "WEST" (with contempt): Yes, that's socialism! Face-value acceptance of Russian proclamations that Russia is a socialist society and her rulers the inheritors of the Russian Revolution is common both to those who follow the Stalinists and to those who support the governing powers of capitalism. The theory that Russia is a socialist state is at once a weapon utilized by both of the two major ruling powers in their ideological contest to capture the allegiance of the hearts and minds of men.

The propagandists for the Moscow Politburo take advantage of the disaffection of the peoples in the weak extremities of capitalism (Eastern Europe, China, the colonies) and to a lesser degree, but still importantly, in the major centers, to extol the virtues of their system. They can make out an effective case against the ills of capitalism and then hold out the lure of a self-proclaimed socialist society which can replace the chaos and poverty of declining capitalism. (Their effectiveness would be redoubled in the United States if unemployment became more severe here and a depression ensued.) Many nations and individuals are caught in this net.

The spokesmen for capitalism—which has really only one vital center left, the United States—make political capital against the Stalinists by pointing to its totalitarian features and the economic backwardness of Russia and her satellites. Washington and Wall Street plead an effective case too. If this totalitarianism can be represented as socialism—and one has only to take the Stalinists at their word—then it is only natural to conclude that whatever one wants to do to better the world, one does not want socialism. It would be much better to stick with "a gradually improving" capitalism.

What Socialism Is

The theory that Russia equals socialism, held by both Stalinists and bourgeois apologists, is not merely a total falsehood but a weapon in the struggle against genuine socialism. It is a political truism that the identification of Russia with socialism is the strongest barrier to the reconstitution of the socialist movement. Thus the problem of defining Russian society is not one of narrow semantic interest, nor the mere concern of historiographers, but one which is essential for understanding the politically polarized world we live in. Its solution is paramount in the building of a new socialist movement. It is no less important for the orientation of the labor movement.

To settle whether or not Russia is socialist, one must define socialism. For this we first turn to the classic thinkers of socialism, who believed that socialism will be achieved when it is possible for society to apply the Marxian rule, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need." The prerequisites for such a society are the abolition of private property and the establishment of nationalized, or social, property. This implies, at least in the first

stages, state ownership of property, but it is a state which in the words of Engels is in the process of "withering away." Nationalized property also implies the democratic management of property by the working class through their class institutions. The workers, by virtue of electing their representatives in government, control the state. Socialism, by ending private property, by nationalizing industry, thereby ends the exploitation of man by man.



Socialism also means elimination of the "scarcity that stems from abundance," in the phrase of Fourier, a predecessor of Marx, and the establishment of a society of plenty for all. It is the economy of scarcity that makes the big stick necessary to keep the "haves" and "have-nots" from tearing society apart.

The Marxist View

Socialism is internationalist to the core. Never, prior to the Stalinist enunciation of the theory of "socialism in one country," had any socialist ever entertained the notion that socialism was possible on any but a world scale. Internationalism is as necessary to achieve abundance through the world division of labor as it is to eliminate the competitive drive of nations toward wars of plunder and annihilation.

The motivation for the socialist reorganization of society is the struggle of mankind to lift itself from the "prehistoric stage of human society," into which Marx and Engels relegated all previous social forms up to socialism. Its aim

is to achieve human freedom by ridding the world forever of dependence upon blind economic forces, to replace insecurity and poverty with abundance, backwardness with advanced technique, ignorance with consciousness. These were the concepts of the founders of scientific socialism about the future social order. Their ideas were held and translated into practice by Lenin and Trotsky in the Russian Revolution of 1917. They initiated the first transformation of society on a so-

cialist basis. "Who would believe," wrote the Russian general, Zalesky, in indignation at the facts, "that the janitor or watchman of the court building would suddenly become chief justice of the Court of Appeals? Or the hospital orderly, manager of the hospital; the barber a big functionary; yesterday's ensign, the commander-in-chief; yesterday's lackey or common laborer, burgomaster; yesterday's train oiler, chief of division or station superintendent; yesterday's locksmith, head of the factory?"

They Own the State

One of the Russian oppositionists described the situation in the following manner: "Under our very eyes there has been formed, and is still being formed, a large class of rulers which has its own interior groupings, multiplied by means of premeditated cooptation, direct or indirect (bureaucratic promotion, fictitious system of elections). The basic support of this original class is a sort, an original sort, of private property, namely, the bureaucracy of state power. The bureaucracy 'possesses the state as private property,' wrote Marx (Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law.)—The New International, April 1947.

It is only by understanding Russia as a new exploitive society, with a new ruling class, that one can understand the role of Russia in world politics and the motive force of its expansion. This motive force is not, as the adherents of "Russia is socialist" would have us believe, the urge to extend the world revolution, even if, because of its historic origin, the Russian bureaucracy so proclaims its mission. The motive force is the power and privilege of the bureaucratic ruling class, which in turn determines the pattern of expansion. They overturn capitalism, to be sure, in all the countries they overrun; but they remake their empire in their own image and likeness. So it has been in Eastern Europe.

Fight Goes On

But it is in this expansive drive that a fundamental weakness of Stalinism has shown itself. The first crack in the Iron Curtain appeared in one of the satellites when Tito staged his rebellion against the Cominform. The fissures appear in all the Iron Curtain countries. The United States is freely counting on some kind of Titoist uprising in China.

Far from creating any kind of international society, the Russian bureaucratic-collectivist empire creates new national antagonisms as its victims attempt to throw off the yoke. It is as unsuccessful as capitalism in creating any kind of stable world society. This remains the task of socialism.

Marxism determines the classes in any society by their relation to property or the means of production. In a social order of private property, whether in slaves, land or factories, the class is easily de-

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by Max Shachtman

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STALINISM It Feeds on Capitalism's Evils — to Enslave the Working Class

The Communist Party: Labor's Foe

By EMANUEL GARRETT

No worker can afford to be uneducated about the meaning of Stalinism. Of the enemies against whom the working class must guard, there is none more insidious and destructive than Stalinism. For it lives inside the working-class movement and nourishes itself on subverting labor's struggle against capitalism in the interests of the Russian slave society which is described elsewhere in this issue.

Who are the Stalinists? They call themselves "Communists," and as members or fellow travellers, open or concealed, present the line of the Communist Party. Why then do we call them Stalinists? Because they derive their purpose and policy from the Russian despotism. And why they use the word Communism is very important to an understanding of Stalinism.

Unlike other totalitarian, anti-working class movements, Stalinism bases itself primarily on working-class support. It seeks to attract such support by appearing as the advocate of specific and immediate working-class aims, and more generally as the champion of a society in which men and women will be freed of exploitation by capitalist owners of industry. To the extent that it is able to convince people that this is so, it is the sinister bearer of a slavery the like of which the world has never before seen.

Stalinist parties exist in virtually every country of the world. The success of Stalinism—that is, its mass strength is in direct proportion to the degree to which the peoples of these different lands are fed up with their exploiters, and the degree to which Stalinism can appear as spokesman for the exploited.

But whether in Johannesburg or Joplin, whether counted in millions or in tens, the primary aim of the Stalinist parties is the same: to advance the interests of the Russian despotism. If these interests seem to correspond to any moment with the interests of the people in the given land, there is still nothing in the relationship that will benefit the working class.

Whatever the policy of the Stalinist parties, it is dictated by the needs of Russian foreign policy. If we remember back ten years, back to the days when Hitler and Stalin were united in war alliance, we will recall how the Stalinists organized peace fronts, led demonstrations promising that "the Yanks are not coming." And we will also recall how they denounced interventionism as imperialist, called Roosevelt a warmonger. And we will also recall how all this automatically changed on June 21, 1941. Hitler attacked Russia. The peace fronts were demobilized so quickly that many who had taken them seriously never did regain their breath.

Picketers sloganeering peace before the White House vanished as if swallowed by the earth, and were replaced by the most ardent warmongers in the country. The imperialist war overnight (it took a minute, not a night!) became a



Made in the Kremlin

The end of World War II was followed by the cold war. Blinking an eye only to the extent of shuffling leaders around a bit, the Stalinist parties embarked on a campaign of "militancy." They were ready to seize upon the legitimate grievances of the working class, and offered themselves as leaders in struggle.

Key to Question

In the United States their influence is relatively small, though even here it cannot be discounted. In other countries their influence has been and is enormous in a country like France, for example. How is it possible with their record of duplicity? It is possible, basically, because they are able to appear in the guise of enemies of capitalism. The French worker may be aware, to one degree or another, of the shameful twists and turns in Stalinist policy, but he still sees them as enemies of capitalism—enemies of the institution which daily oppresses him.

So it is with workers in the United States, or any other country, who ally themselves with the Stalinists. And the Stalinists are really enemies of capitalism—even when they are friendly with capitalism, or allied with it! This is what is most important, for it is the key to understanding the



hallowed crusade for democracy. During the years of the war, no more rapacious flagwavers stalked the land than the Stalinists. They were loud in endorsement of the no-strike pledge, and sought to bludgeon militants who opposed that terrible invasion of labor's rights. Stalinist union leaders like Harry Bridges offered to make the no-strike pledge just about permanent. (And that came quite naturally, for the right to strike does not exist in Stalinland.) They touted incentive pay and every other inquiry so long as it benefited Russia, in this case by benefiting the war—no matter at what expense to labor.

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wholly unique character of this monstrous movement. Hitler could not create mass movements of support in other lands. Riffraff was the best he could collect, and only in tiny bands. His system was clearly identified with the capitalism and imperialism that peoples all over the world hate. But Stalinism is genuinely anti-capitalist, and it is indeed difficult to perceive that here is a movement that is anti-working-class as well.

No such movement ever existed before. This aspect of Stalinism has not pierced the consciousness of many workers who therefore join the Stalinists for the most commendable reasons—because they desire to end capitalist rule, and because the end of capitalist rule means socialism to them.

The Stalinist parties are the agents of a new system of class exploitation—a system which at one and the same time destroys the hated capitalism, and strips the people of every freedom. That it opposes capitalism can be seen in any country. That it fixes a concentration-camp servitude on those whom it dominates can only be seen in the lands it has conquered.

GPU Machine

It is, of course, evidenced in the brutally bureaucratic operation of the Stalinist parties themselves, where policy is handed down from above, where lines and leaders shift without the slightest appeal to the will of the membership, where disagreement is an invitation to expulsion. The one is the complement of the other.

The GPU, Stalin's secret police, runs the Stalinist parties of the world as surely as it staffs the slave-labor camps in Russia. So, too, the violence against socialist opponents by Stalinists in this and other countries is a small reflection of the world-wide GPU murder machine.

Ultimately it is the aim of Stalinism to duplicate internationally the system of totalitarian rule which we have described as bureaucratic collectivism. And to duplicate it under the strictest allegiance to the Kremlin; it will not tolerate such independent deviations as Yugoslavia under Tito.

Stalinist imperialism is expansionist. It represents a system basically antagonistic to capitalism (as well as to socialism) and the issue between them must eventually be settled. How it is settled is of the utmost concern to every one of us, for the solution can subject us to the horror of atomic war



DISCRIMINATION White Labor Cannot Be Free While Black Labor Is Branded!

Freedom Draws No Color Line

By LARRY O'CONNOR

The Independent Socialist League is unalterably opposed to all racial, national and religious discrimination. It stands for the full social, political and economic equality of Negroes and all other minority national, racial and religious groups.

Jim Crow is still the shame of America; and while anti-Semitism does not play as obvious a role as anti-Negro discrimination, there are numerous signs that it is on the increase. The men of Rankin's stripe are as anti-Jewish as they are anti-Negro and have to be fought wherever their foul ideas arise. Whether it be Negroes who are discriminated against, or the Jewish people, or Mexican-American workers in our Southwest, or Catholics, anything which is used to set worker against worker weakens labor and helps to keep ALL workers in subjection.

In the midst of the general decay of American society which accompanies the preparation for World War III, one of the few bright spots is the TENDENCY to lessen the legal discrimination against and loosen up on the segregation of the Negro people. In order to widen the domestic market, and to make more believable the claim that America is engaged in a world-wide struggle for democracy, the courts, government departments, and even a few capitalists have been talking about and putting into partial effect a greater degree of equal rights for Negroes.

There has been as yet much more talk than action in this field. In fact, the repeated cynical tell-tales on the civil-rights program by both major parties in Congress indicate that they are much more interested in keeping civil rights as a campaign issue than in giving any rights to the Negroes.

Yet progress has been made. More Negroes are registering and voting in the South than ever before. More of them are daring to move into white districts in the North, and are entering the major sports and professions.

Labor Must Clean House

All these gains, to be sure, have been made within the framework of a general Jim Crow policy and practice both in the North and the South. The gains only point up how far the Negro people have to go before they really achieve equality of status in America. But every gain eases the road for the next one. Every gain gives the Negroes courage and self-confidence, and lessens the powers of resistance of the Jim-Crow-minded whites.

The Negroes, or at least a section of them, have always struggled for equality in America. But for some years now they have had a powerful ally. Since the rise of the CIO in the mass production industries with its official anti-discrimination policy, tens of thousands of Negroes have found their way into industry and into the organized life of the unions. They have struggled on the picket lines side by side with the white workers. They have thus become more integrated into the major industries, and have gained a new status both in the Negro community itself and in the nation as a whole.

Much remains to be desired in the practice of even the most advanced CIO unions with regard to the Negroes, and many AFL and independent unions still disgrace the American labor movement by blatant Jim Crow policies. Independent Socialists have as one of their chief tasks in the labor movement to educate and struggle for complete living equality for Negroes.

The integration of the Negroes into industry has been a product of

the last war and of continuing high employment. Although the ISL is against a policy of "super-seniority" for Negroes, as a harmful policy which tends to divide the labor movement, it seeks to do all in its power to prevent discriminatory layoffs and downgrading of Negroes when industry slackens its pace.

The ISL stands for the right of all Negroes and other minorities to live and work without discrimination, whether they be workers, professionals, or even capitalists. But as socialists we are particularly concerned with the great mass of Negroes who are workers.

A Part of the Socialist Struggle

In the political and social conflicts which lie ahead, the struggle against discrimination and the struggle for the political and economic emancipation of the working class will form part of the same fight against a decaying capitalism. In this situation the upper-class Negroes will pursue, as usual, a policy of keeping the Negro masses tied to capitalist politics.

The ISL advocates the independence of all workers from capitalist parties and capitalist politics. We also urge upon the Negro trade-unionists that they start to contest the political leadership now wielded in the Negro community by the rich. Only thus can they lead the Negroes away from their futile alliance with and dependence on the capitalist parties, and toward alliance with the working class as a whole.

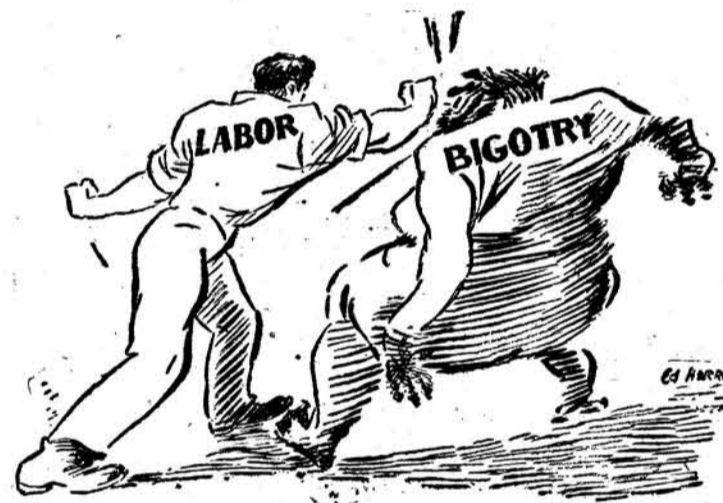
Independent Socialists rejoice in every gain made by every member of the minority groups in America. They seek everywhere to educate and struggle for complete equality and against all forms of discrimination. In the legislative field, the fight for the civil-rights program is today the front line of battle for equality. Every kind of mass pressure must be applied to force the betrayers of the Negro people in both capitalist parties to fulfill their cynically given campaign promises.

As revolutionary socialists we believe that the complete emancipation of the minority groups in America will come only when all workers, regardless of color or creed, have united and achieved real political and economic power as the first step towards socialism. But such unity and such power can only be achieved if we struggle today for equality, for democracy, for full employment and a rising standard of living for all. The struggle for full social, political and economic equality now is for the ISL an indispensable part of the struggle for socialism.



The Editors of LABOR ACTION extend greetings on this May Day to our readers and subscribers, to our comrades in the fight for a better world, to all workers who fight for their rights.

Greetings— Leon Steinmetz Sarah Truman



Congratulations on 10 years of Socialist Internationalism

ST. LOUIS SYL

May Day Greetings!

A SALUTE TO LABOR ACTION ON ITS TENTH BIRTHDAY.

Queens Branch (N. Y.) Independent Socialist League

For Socialism, Freedom and Peace

MANHATTAN (WEDNESDAY) BRANCH—ISL

"Loyalty Day" - -

(Continued from page 1)

ideas of Marx and Engels gained acceptance among the workers, the conservative labor leaders themselves grew fearful of the mobilization of the rank and file on May Day, and therefore either made it into a harmless "holiday" with games and festivals, or turned against it altogether, as in the present instance.

But especially in Europe, May Day had become deeply embedded in the consciousness of the workers. Stalin and Hitler, each in his own way, paid tribute to this fact by turning May First into a day for vast military and storm-troop demonstrations. The workers were forced to march in these parades, but not under their own banners, not in parades organized by themselves, for their own demands. To prevent them from marching for freedom and in defiance of their exploiters and oppressors, they were and are dragooned to march under banners proclaiming their loyalty to Hitler and the Third Reich, to Stalin and his totalitarian slave order.

Here in America no dictator forces the labor movement to parade in joint demonstrations of "loyalty" with the NAM and the Chamber of Commerce. These demonstrations of loyalty to the capitalist system, to the administration of the H-bomb and the

witchhunt, to the system of profits and unemployment, are voluntary and hence doubly degrading.

The bankers and manufacturers will not waddle down the streets in these parades under their own banners inscribed with the sign of the dollar, for that would expose to all how few of them control the destinies of millions.

And all over the world the Stalinist hacks will grin also. For they know that despite their misleaders the workers feel no loyalty to the millionaires. And to the workers of the world they will proclaim: "See! Either you march with us, or you march with those who exploit you, who seek to break your organizations, who denounce your every demand and every claim as 'subversive.'"

But the choice before the workers of America and the world is not between "loyalty" to capitalism and "loyalty" to Stalinism. The workers can still be loyal to themselves, to their own interest, to their own class. That is the message of Independent Socialism on this May Day of 1950.

And even though on this day the movement of Independent Socialism is too small to take to the streets, the gatherings of the ISL will represent the glorious tradition of the workers' May Day and the liberating ideas of the struggle for socialism.

Socialist Greetings on May Day

to all our comrades in the fight for freedom

—Los Angeles Branch, ISL

LABOR!

Let's put workingmen on the ballot line as we do on the picket line— Organize an Independent Labor Party!

Buffalo Branch, ISL

Build the Independent Socialist League!

Cleveland Branch ISL

Our Goal: A Socialist Democracy!

—Brooklyn Branch, ISL

We're in there digging for PLENTY FOR ALL West Virginia Branch ISL

Greetings Lucy and Joe

FOR THE THIRD CAMP OF LABOR AND SOCIALISM!

May Day Greetings from New York Unit SYL

Greetings

to the striking Chrysler workers! DETROIT BRANCH Independent Socialist League

Greetings on your 10th anniversary. We'll be with you on your 20th. Florence and Margaret

MAY DAY GREETINGS— Pittsburgh Branch ISL

MAY DAY GREETINGS for a NEW WORLD of SOCIALISM Akron Branch ISL

From a Group of West Coast Workers.

In Memory of MARTIN ABERN

"The proletarian revolution, in the very requirements of the revolution, in addition to transforming fundamentally the former relations of classes, changes even the organizational forms of government, that is, turning toward industrial foundations, aiming for the passage of government from the administration of men to the administration of things." —Martin Abern, Organizational Principles.

Revolutionary Greetings from the

St. Louis Branch ISL

GREETINGS from the

Newark Branch ISL

Socialist Greetings to LABOR ACTION

from the

CHICAGO SYL

May Day 1949--May Day 1950:

- Formation of a U. of C. chapter
Organization of the first national SYL camp
Over the top in two fund drives— June 1949 quota exceeded by 100% April 1950 quota exceeded by 200%

- Substantial increase in membership
Well over a hundred forums, classes, socials, etc.
Extensive political activity on several campuses and considerable neighborhood work

"We're the Best in the West"

the fastest growing unit of the Socialist Youth League

Socialist Greetings this May Day to all of our fellow workers!

Philadelphia Branch ISL

For the Third Camp of World Labor and the Colonial Peoples!

MANHATTAN (THURSDAY) BRANCH INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST LEAGUE

Greetings! THE THREE "JOCKS" Milton Mann Lenz

Greetings on May Day! A Friend Two Young Old-Timers A Comradely Couple

May Day Greetings! J. L. S. (Streator) Jennie (Boston) Charlie Steward (N. Y.)

Arouse, Educate, Organize, Unite

for Socialist Democracy!

Chicago Branch ISL

For a Socialist World!

SAN FRANCISCO Bay Area Branch

Independent Socialist League

LABOR **Bureaucracy Threatens — an Independent Labor Party Beckons****Let's Harness Labor's Power!**

By WALTER JASON

In an epoch that demands great decisions and bold actions to solve the urgent world problems pressing on humanity, the strategic role of the American labor movement assumes increasing importance, since it constitutes the largest free working-class force in the world at its peak of strength. Yet its tragic impotence is remarkable.

The contrast between the potential role of the American unions with aggressive socialist leadership and the actual facts of life constitutes a gap the like of which has never been seen before in modern capitalist society. Even a cursory glance at the record of defeats and so-called victories of the trade unions since May 1949 illustrates the point quite clearly. Furthermore, a review of the previous year's labor history does give a clue to the coming events and the part which the labor movement may play during the next immediate period.

It is customary in union circles to confine any review primarily to a statistical report: Last year the unions had X number of contracts, this year X plus 100 contracts. This is called progress. Last year the unions collected X millions in dues, this year they took in X plus A millions in dues: more evidence of progress.

The mentality of the trade-union officialdom confines itself within the limits of a static world which, while only fictitious, does lend support to the statistical approach which they find so comforting. The trick of the trade-union officials consists not in relating the evolution of the union movement to the social problems of the day and to the new tasks created by turbulent national and international events.

Disillusioned

The vast post-war unrest and search for economic security finally reflected itself in the labor movement by demands for pensions for the workers "too old to work and too young to die." John L. Lewis grasped the sentiment and won the first industry-financed pension plan. In 1949 the CIO leadership made pensions the major economic demand for the coming year, and Walter Reuther, president of the United Automobile Workers, as usual, eloquently outlined the significance of this blueprint to labor and the country.

In 1950 the results of the CIO campaign are almost in, and they have proved to be quite disillusioning to most workers whose unions won industry-financed pension plans. In the case of other workers—as, for example, the Chrysler strikers now out of work nearly four months in a pension strike—the disillusionment has set in before the "triumph." The whole pension drive of the labor movement has served to emphasize the insecurity of modern society rather than give any assurance of security.

Nor has there been any period in which the union movement seemed to sacrifice so much in terms of struggle for such minor gains. The pension pattern has turned out to be very disappointing to labor. In addition, in other strike struggles like Bell Aircraft and Singer Sewing Machine, the unions suffered big defeats. The AFL unions which, by and large, skirted the pension issue or opposed it, confined themselves primarily to consolidating previously won contracts and winning minor economic concessions.

Shall We "Demand"?

Until the coal miners' strike victory temporarily halted the anti-labor drive, the entire American labor movement seemed headed for a period of more retreats and defeats. Not the least important aspect of the coal miners' success against the Truman administration's strikebreaking, the coal operators and federal injunctions was the fact that no labor leader except John L. Lewis thought the coal miners could do anything except suffer defeat. This is the sorry past to

which the American labor leadership has come in the last year.

The significance of the successful tactics of the coal miners and John L. Lewis has been completely missed by the rest of the labor bureaucracy. They shudder at the very thought of "taking on the whole world" as the United Mine Workers union was forced to do.

Another aspect of the coal miners' strike which should not be lost is that with all its splendid militancy it was essentially a defensive battle, which did not solve any of the basic problems but only gave the coal miners a brief respite before other harsher battles ensue.

The effect of the conservative policies carried out by frightened bureaucrats may best be seen as they affect the most progressive union in America, the United Automobile Workers (CIO). Before the auto workers' union could make its major 1950 struggle against General Motors for a \$125 a month pension plan and greater union security, it found itself engaged in a costly, devastating, and almost demoralizing strike against Chrysler, the outcome of which, no matter how successful in terms of immediate demands, can never make up for the great sacrifices of the ranks.

Yet in the middle of this kind of class struggle one finds the national CIO announcing that it is dropping the word "demand" from its lexicon. Hereafter its demands will be referred to as "proposals." After all, the word "demand" may be found in the Communist Manifesto; it sounds radical; it may, you know, be un-American, and it implies that labor needs something so badly in this capitalist paradise that it must insist upon it.

Timid Bureaucrats

What is involved, of course, in this announcement is the whole cringing and defeatist mentality of a timid bureaucracy frightened by the blows of a changing world. Another reflection of this is the positive hatred with which many CIO bureaucrats view Walter Reuther, who, although he does not act one whit different from the others, still insists on making a speech now and then that suggests that perhaps this is not the best of all possible worlds, and his speeches are always referred to as "pie in the sky."

Turning to the field of political action, it could hardly be expected that any trade-union bureaucracy as timid as the CIO and AFL are on the economic field, which is the heart of unionism, could be expected to act differently in terms of national politics. Almost everyone, including these same bureaucrats, will admit that the activities of the labor movement on the national political scene have resulted in one fiasco after another. The best way to keep an index on Congressional action these days is to list any important CIO or AFL legislative program, and one can safely assume that Congress did not pass and will not pass that bill in the com-

ing period. The repeal of the Taft-Hartley Law and the shelving of civil rights legislation are two cases in point.

It is thus that in sheer self-defense the bureaucracies are beginning to move closer together, and this explains the recent CIO, AFL and UMW maneuvers on the question of labor unity. Fear, not a feeling of strength, is driving them together.

What lessons should be learned from the dumping of the Fair Deal program into the Congressional ashcan, from the political fiascos of the labor movement and from the costly and debilitating strike struggles which bring such relatively small results? CIO President Philip Murray informed the world, including his cohort Walter Reuther, in a recent issue of the New Republic, what conclusion he drew. Murray said he simply could not conceive of the

democratic Party not doing its job (all the facts of life to the contrary) and therefore any suggestion of a third party based on labor was simply a trick playing into the hands of general reaction.



Leadership Lacking

Three illustrations of the crude bureaucratization that is engulfing the CIO come to mind, besides the wholesale expulsions resulting from the 1949 CIO convention in Cleveland. Joseph Curran's combined police regime and strong-arm methods have struck nearly fatal blows to the splendid tradition of democracy in the National Maritime Union. The devastating biographical sketch of Michael Quill that recently appeared in the N.Y. Times Magazine speaks for itself as a commentary on the fate of union democracy in the Transport Workers Union.

A third illustration indicates how difficult it is to stop the trend once it begins. By the time this article appears George Baldanzi, executive vice-president of the Textile Workers Union, will be fighting desperately to remain in his union. Why? Is he a Stalinist or perhaps a socialist or an independent radical who disagrees with "CIO policy"? Nothing as serious as that. Emil Rieve, president and boss of the textile union, proposes to expel Baldanzi "because we don't get along and can't work together."

And there is evidently not a single public protest from one single CIO leader against this enervating trend. How safe is the struggle for democracy in the hands of a union bureaucracy which includes Curran, Quills and Rieves and is dominated by a Murray?

Nothing better suggests the power and almost limitless vitality of the American working class than its demonstrations at every possible opportunity of its willingness to fight and to sacrifice for a better world. The steel workers struck for six weeks. The saga of the coal miners' struggle tells itself. At Chrysler, in spite of a policy of no picket lines and of confusion and blundering at the top, the auto workers stand solidly together for nearly four months!

What is lacking, what is needed, what is wrong, is the leadership. Labor's record for 1949-50 stands as a wholesale indictment of the bureaucracy. And candor compels us to state bluntly that in the coming period no effective new leadership to challenge the old appears likely to arise. It is at this point, of course, that many socialists, understanding the real situation, become ex-socialists; ex-socialists become Democrats; and the Walter Reuthers are privately grateful that they chose to play it safe and keep their position.

The very urgency of the problems, the failure of the present labor leadership, and the need for a new force in the union movement giving direction to the ceaseless struggle of the workers dic-

tates the future role and outlines the significance of the Independent Socialist League!

To exist, to be an example of a different way out than the old hopeless and futile methods, are reasons alone that justify the functioning of the Independent Socialists in the union movement as well as in society in general.

Where can labor find the idea for its own political and organizational independence from the capitalist parties and their society except from the Independent Socialists? What other hope exists — outside of the terrible Stalinist totalitarian anti-capitalism — for the anti-capitalist feelings of the workers?

For a Labor Party!

The main stress of the union work of Independent Socialists in this period is political. The day-to-day tasks remain important but are not decisive in the kind of period in which the labor unions find themselves today. Of course there will be many different forms of revolt within the unions against the growing bureaucratization and the impotence of the top leaders to "bring home the bacon." The ranks will not act in shrewd, clever fashion, with assurances of success in the struggle against the bureaucrats. But in all instances, the Independent Socialists have an important role to play, not as trade-union leaders primarily, but above all, as socialist educators, who tie together the struggle for union democracy with labor's general political independence and its historic place in a new society.

No struggle for socialism has any meaning—without being a struggle for democracy, and no struggle for democracy is significant and lasting unless it combines with it the long-range struggle for socialism, the only form of workers' democracy compatible with the industrialized world in which we live today.

As protagonists for this basic concept, the Independent Socialists in day-to-day struggle and by all their activities, as well as the organization which symbolizes the fight for socialism, the Independent Socialist League, take on their most important job.

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