

# LABOR ACTION

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**MAY DAY 1951**

Greetings to All Fighters for Freedom!

**Can He Swing  
The Labor Party?**



ANEURIN BEVAN

## NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

will be a specially planned May Day number devoted entirely to a presentation of the Independent Socialist view on **SOCIALISM AND THE WAR**.

Our regular news articles and features will be back as usual the following week.

You'll want to order extra copies of the War number. It will amount to a pamphlet on the question.

## British Labor Left Wing Breaks With Attlee on Arms, Foreign Policy

By GORDON HASKELL

The resignation of Aneurin Bevan from the cabinet of the British Labor government has precipitated a political crisis both for the government and for the Labor Party which heads it.

Bevan was minister of labor in the cabinet and has long been regarded as leader of the general left group in the Labor Party leadership critical of the Attlee-Morrison majority. His resignation was followed the next day by that of Harold Wilson, president of the Board of Trade, (also a senior cabinet post).

No matter what the immediate consequences may be for the Labor government, this action will tend to force the British labor movement to face a contradiction in their politics which they have more or less evaded during the past few years.

Bevan's letter of resignation as well as his speech in the House of Commons makes it clear that he, and the people in the Labor Party whose views he represents, feel that the government has tied itself far too closely to the foreign policy of the United States. This has led to an armament program which threatens to wreck the British economy, and particularly to lower the al-

ready meager standard of living of the working class there.

Although Bevan (and the *London Tribune* which generally expresses his views and those of a broad left group in the party) have been criticizing the tendency of the party leadership to tone down and even sacrifice some of the social gains of the workers in the interest of the armament program, they have until now subordinated their criticisms to the desire to maintain party unity.

But the budget proposals presented to the Commons are so drastic in their implications for

the standard of living of the British workers, and go so far toward wrecking the program of "fair shares" which has been one of the chief slogans of the Labor Party, that Bevan and his friends have decided to take the serious step of starting a wide-open fight for leadership of the party even at the risk of bringing down the government.

### HITS TIE WITH U. S.

"The budget was hailed," Bevan told the silent and mainly hostile house, "in the City [the London banking district], satisfied the Opposition [Tories], and disunited the Labor Party. I say this because we have allowed ourselves to be dragged too far behind the wheels of American diplomacy. This great nation has a message for the world which is distinct from that of America or the Soviet Union."

"Ever since 1945 we have been engaged in this country in the most remarkable piece of social reconstruction the world has ever seen in the circumstances. By the end of 1950 . . . we had assumed the moral leadership of the world. . . ."

"There is only one hope for mankind, and that remains still

in this little island. It is from here that we can tell the world where to go, but not to follow behind American capitalism, unable to restrain itself at all, as is seen in the stockpiling now going on which denies to Great Britain even the means to carry on civil production."

And at a different point in his speech he came to the heart of the practical problem which has forced at least a section of the Labor Party to face a contradiction in their program which has dogged them since 1945:

"The fact is that the Western world has embarked upon a campaign of arms production and upon a scale of arms production so quickly and of such an extent that the foundations of political liberty and parliamentary democracy will not be able to sustain the shock. Now, this is a very grave matter."

Here lies the contradiction: On the one hand, there is the domestic policy which, with whatever reservations one may have, was directed toward undermining capitalism and the creation of a social structure with less inequality and injustice than had existed before. On the other hand is a

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**MAY DAY 1951**

## 'Capitalism Is Doomed' But . . .

We are living in that age to which generations of fighters for labor and socialism have looked forward—and it is different from what so many of them expected.

On this May Day, in the middle of this age and of this century, we want to put a sharp, short spotlight on one vastly important way of seeing the difference—and its lesson.

We think it is at the bottom of the sorry spectacle which labor and liberal politics still present in this country today—and that it is also the wellspring of hope.

Those generations of fighters for a better world looked forward to the day when the system of human exploitation based on private profit, capitalism, would be disappearing from the earth—disintegrating under the weight of its insoluble contradictions—thrust aside by the mass will of the millions who could no longer bear the intolerable life to which it condemned them.

That day is here—in our time—on a world scale. Yes, we know: that day is not here in one country—this country—the one country in the world in which the old ragged system of capitalism still presents a rosy visage and a bloom of health, illusory prospects of an indefinite future of television sets, high (war) wages, prosperity (cold-war type), and normalcy (atomic-era variety).

Yes, we know: the people of the United States still think of the world in terms of the social picture they see immediately about them, even when they know

better—as the dancers in *The Masque of the Red Death* tried to do so desperately.

But it is no longer a future to be demonstrated out of Marx's *Capital*; it is the present, our own present, to be seen with the naked eye as soon as one looks at any part of the world—above all, those countries which were the birthplace of capitalism, in Western Europe.

World capitalism lies in shambles.

In Britain it has suffered deep-going blows from a Labor government led by men not known for revolutionary fervor but for mild reformism, while the Tory paladins of capitalism barely even pretend to be able to turn the clock back to the "American type" of capitalism—that is, to one immediately recognizable as such by either a Taft or a Truman.

In France and Italy the masses (as never before in history) consider capitalism a "dirty word," while even the capitalist classes of these countries have lost any real confidence in their ability to survive between the triple threats of Stalinism on the east, the grasp of U. S. domination on the west, and the menace of working-class revolutionary stirrings from within, aroused by the horror of two world wars and ever lower living standards.

In Germany, a mass socialist movement, with all its political inadequacies, is still the people's only alternative to a government which came to power with the cheers of Washington and Churchill and remained to bring back all the remnants of Nazism plus neo-Nazi reaction—with the blessings of the Western capitalist occupiers.

In Asia, anti-imperialist revolution has swept one capitalist imperialism out of the continent after another, and the "Asian revolution" in social conditions is a commonplace even on the lips of American observers.

And in one third of the globe, capitalism has been destroyed completely—to be replaced, however, with a new system of totalitarian exploitation, Stalinism.

Yes, those older generations of fighters for a better world said that "capitalism is doomed." They had to learn why that was true. Our generation has only to open its eyes and see. They—so many of them—thought the doom of capitalism automatically meant socialism.

But a better world will not merely fall into our laps like ripe fruit. It has to be won.

Capitalism has made out no will and testament in favor of a socialist world, nor in favor of a new world of progress, peace and plenty such as the great liberals of the past aspired to.

It is not true that (with a little judicious pressure to be organized) this rotting system is moving to evolve, of itself, into a world fit for human beings to live in. It is not a question of "faith in progress" but of faith in capitalism—and in the fetid products of its degeneration.

We are not now thinking of the old-style reformist socialist's belief in the inevitability of the gradual and organic transformation of capitalism into a so-

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# 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 county, the Communist Parties, are unrelenting 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!

### INTERESTED?

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I want to join the ISL.

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Address .....  
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## YOUTH and CORNER

### DRAPER REPORTS ON TOUR FOR SYL

[The tour which was concluded last week by LABOR ACTION's editor Hal Draper was primarily to cover meetings on college campuses, on behalf of the Socialist Youth League. Comrade Draper comments on the trip in this guest column for the SYL's Youth and Student Corner.]

By HAL DRAPER

This short tour for the SYL carried me to six campuses (apart from other meetings held by the ISL and SYL) and Socialist Youth readers may be interested in two comments.

One is that the campus meetings were by and large much more successful than I or local comrades expected. An exception has to be made for Chicago, but not to its discredit. In that city, there have been active and well-organized socialist student groups carrying on excellent work right along; and, during the four days I was there, besides three school meetings there also took place the demonstration before the Spanish consulate, which was made successful particularly by the turnout of students from the University of Chicago and Roosevelt College. It was a heavy week.

That was Chicago. But interestingly enough, the most rewarding meetings took place on those campuses I visited where there is NO functioning socialist student club at present and, for that matter, little political activity of any kind.

First came the St. Louis meeting organized under the auspices of the Politics Club at the University of Washington. It is not recognized by the school and the meeting was held off-campus; there had been no extensive publicity; I had expected to have an evening's discussion with a half dozen or so students. Instead, an audience of at least 40 assembled, to hear "The Liberals and U. S. Foreign Policy."

At Madison, Wisc. (University of Wisconsin), the meeting was under the sponsorship of SDA (Students for Democratic Action), affiliated with the ADA. About 40 students crowded into a small classroom, and some others were turned away for lack of seats. The SDA's sponsorship, it would be said, was truly an act of democratic liberalism, since they knew, of course, that a socialist point of view would be presented which would be critical of ADA policy. (The subject was "What's Wrong with U. S. Foreign Policy?") Moreover, the very lively discussion that followed was unmarred by hostile overtones extraneous to the discussion itself—except for a Professor Auerbach who was present, and who I understand is supposed to be a wheel in the ADA, who managed to be both nasty and irrelevant in his discussion. (He unfortunately insisted on talking, not about the question of the evening, but about a subject on which he is evidently quite ignorant, namely the literature of Marxism.)

### 'Third Camp' Line Makes an Impact!

At Oberlin College (Ohio), the meeting had to be scheduled for the day after the students returned from their spring vacation and naturally I expected little under the unavoidable circumstances. In point of fact, 65 students jammed into the lounge at the Student Center and overflowed to the hall just outside, listening. The subject was again "The Liberals and U. S. Foreign Policy." The meeting had been announced mainly by postcards sent out the previous day by two sponsoring students, not by a club, though there is a Socialist Discussion Club in the process of organization.

The date at Ann Arbor (University of Michigan) fell during the school's vacation time and so there was no question of holding a public meeting, but an exceedingly stimulating evening's discussion took place with a small group of students.

The meetings in St. Louis, Madison and Oberlin in particular brought together very similar student audiences, made up very largely of students who thought of themselves as liberals, who had had little or no previous live contact with our ideas (and, many of them, with socialist ideas in general), but who were seriously interested in questions of politics and the war.

In this connection, the second comment I would make is a difficult one to put: expressed briefly, it hardly avoids sounding like a routine note of encouragement. I can only say that it is, on the contrary, the result of a most vivid personal impression; and that it is not intended to apply to "students" in general (I met no students-in-general) but to the elements mentioned above.

It is that our Independent Socialist approach to the war, of opposition to both imperialist war blocs, to both capitalism and Stalinism, presented concretely and particularly presented as the necessary conclusion from the liberals' own criticisms of U. S. foreign policy—this made a deep impression, to put it conservatively. To many, I believe, it came as nothing less than an eye-opening revelation that there is a road of struggle which an anti-war fighter can follow without feeling his mind and convictions torn between a false "practicality" and a mere baseless "idealism." Our views make an impact!

It is one thing to know this generally and another to feel it alive in an audience. There is plenty of opportunity to feel it, too, and not only on the campuses.



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## Reading from Left to Right

GENERATION OF CHISELERS.—UAW-CIO Ammunition, April 1951.

We've commented before on the excellent fact-articles in the Auto Workers union's monthly magazine. This one in the current issue lists, in punchy summary, "30 ways the very rich get more than they are entitled to." While Ammunition's language avoids words like capitalism and capitalists, and draws none but trade-union-level conclusions in its perorations, its articles of this type are ammunition not only for the trade-unionist but also for the socialist.

The article begins: "Wage workers and farmers have never been saddled with so numerous a brood of unproductive parasites as during this period of the Great Korean Corruption. The Korean war has set loose an arrogant horde of price pirates, tax chiselers, commodity crimpers and profit plunderers who are as free in Washington and the markets today as the rats are in a waterfront alley. Costello and Ericson are pikers."

The first few points are specific but the indictment gets more general as it goes along. Here are some short ones toward the front:

"3. In the six months after Korea, commercial bank loans increased by more than \$5 billion. This \$5 billion was provided by the government through the Federal Reserve Board to private speculators for profiteering by inventory hoarding . . .

"5. But you don't have to speculate. Government agencies will lend you money at low interest rates to build factories and to equip them for defense production (but they can also be

used to make automobiles or refrigerators or television sets when the defense contracts run out). The government itself will pay all except 15 per cent of the cost of the factories and equipment through tax credits over a period of five years.

"Then, if the corporation is in an excess profit bracket, it can save enough money in tax credits (above the gift of the factory and the equipment) to run an actual cash profit (gift from the government) in addition to the free factory and equipment . . .

"8. The aircraft industry (which exists almost completely on a Treasury formula) is the people's gift to free enterprise. In 1937, the value of 12 companies was \$66 million. By 1944, this value had increased 3,000 per cent. Practically every cent of the increase was out of the Federal Treasury.

"9. Small thing. In the 1949 Rivers and Harbors Bill, there was an appropriation of \$1,500,000 to widen and deepen and dredge an inlet of the Detroit River. But the only use made of this particular section of the river is by the Detroit Edison Company for coal hauling. Free from the people of the U. S. to the Detroit Edison Company. A substantial part of the appropriations for inland waterways is outright gift to the oil companies . . .

After which Ammunition goes, in a little greater detail, after such things as corporation tax laws and their gimmicks, unemployment compensation laws engineered by the fat boys, FHA gifts to the banks, the price-raising "Fair Trade" laws, advertising swindlers, capitalist suppression of new patents and inventions, and lots more.

## LABOR SCOPE

### HOW NEW N. Y. JOBLESS-COMPENSATION LAW SOAKS YOU

By PETER WHITNEY

The workers and employers of New York State are now being "clarified" on how the recently passed Hughes-Brees bill revises the state's unemployment-insurance law. For the employers, the explanations are most welcome in detailing just how they will benefit by reduced tax rates.

But for the workers, the Hughes-Brees amendments are a serious menace which in a thousand ways whittles away at the benefits available to them under the unemployment-insurance program.

Behind this raw deal, which was rushed through the state legislature by combined Republican-Democratic efforts, stand the biggest employers in the state: General Motors, Standard Oil, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, banking houses and other large corporations. They determined to make a raid on some \$600 million now in the unemployment-insurance reserve fund and to slice up this juicy melon for themselves.

Under the old law all unemployment-insurance money was pooled into one big trust fund controlled by the state. Given the past decade of high employment levels, this money had piled up to a \$900 million bulwark against depression or any sudden rise of unemployment. Employers paid a tax of 2.7 per cent of their payrolls to this fund, and workers were entitled to collect up to \$26 weekly if unemployed.

### REWARD FOR GREED

The revised law ends the state-wide pool and establishes a system of individual accounts for each employer. Each employer will be credited with his tax payments and any benefits drawn by his jobless workers will be charged against his account. Thus an employer's tax rate will be determined by the amount of unemployment benefits paid to his workers. Employers with relatively stable payrolls will eventually pay no tax at all.

What greater incentive could be given to employers to fight every single claim for unemployment insurance filed by their workers? Naturally, too, any extension or improvement of unemployment insurance will be opposed because

it will send the employer's tax rate up. Instead of benefits, workers can now expect plenty of hearings, and strong opposition from their employers every time they file a claim.

Especially hard-hit are the workers and employers in the smaller scale industries of New York, such as the apparel trades, the construction trades, and other trades with seasonal employment. Big business was out to knife them and they did a thorough job of it. The smaller businesses will carry the greatest burden of the taxes, while the big boys get away with little or no taxes.

### NOW THEY WANT BLOOD

It will be completely to the employer's advantage to penhag with the working time of his workers so as to make it impossible for them to collect unemployment insurance. If they don't earn enough to collect, he will have his taxes reduced or eliminated entirely.

The Hughes-Brees revisions are the first major attack on the state's unemployment-insurance structure. The big companies, encouraged by their success in this initial attack, are now pressing for further crippling legislation.

### 20-WEEK GIMMICK

With \$600 million to be divided into the individual accounts of the employers, the way in which this money is to be parceled out points out the real benefactors under this revised setup. Most of the state's 125,000 businesses will get little or nothing, while the bulk will be apportioned to the handful of giant companies who are already overburdened with green stuff. The biggest bonanzas in reduced tax rates will also fall to their happy lot, thus jacking their profits up even higher.

The big companies were not satisfied with all this feathering of their nest-eggs; they also went to town on curtailing the benefits available to workers.

Instead of a minimum annual earning, workers must now satisfy a requirement of at least 20 weeks of employment with an average weekly pay of \$15. Thus workers employed for less than 20 weeks will get nothing, even if their earnings during this period

amounted to \$2000.

Although the weekly benefits were raised to \$30, the workers will benefit little by this paper increase because so many of them will not be able to satisfy the requirements to get top benefits. The requirements of 20 weeks of employment means that some 15 per cent of the workers now eligible to collect benefits will be unable to do so in the future.

The "average" weekly pay of \$15 is another pitfall for seasonal workers, because if they are called in for a few hours' work, this pay will be lumped together with other "short" weeks, and they may have difficulty achieving the minimum of \$15 weekly.

At the same time, we work to enforce social and economic conditions which, later on, would deprive men of any incentive to war.

To achieve the former and latter program, our action is proceeding on national and international ground, outside of any influence of power blocs or political parties. The main reason for this is that we consider that real world peace could not be a Soviet, American or British peace.

Thus we keep absolutely independent from political parties.

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## Readers of Labor Action Take the Floor

### POUM 'HAPPY' ABOUT ISL ANTI-FRANCO WORK; PLANS INTERNATIONAL FUND DRIVE.

[The following letter by the secretary of the Spanish POUM to the secretary of the Independent Socialist League will be of interest to readers of LABOR ACTION—Ed.]

Dear Comrade Gates:

I have received your letters of April 5 and 11, also the photos of the New York demonstration at the Franco consulate. Thanks very much for the speed with which all that has been sent.

We have seen the issues of LABOR ACTION devoted to the Barcelona events, and we are very happy about your work. In truth you have made a real effort to help the heroic Barcelona fighters. This very day we are sending full information on all your activities to our underground organization inside Spain.

We await news of the demonstration in Los Angeles. We regret the incidents which arose with the comrades of the SWP and Socialist Party. The widest possible demonstration was needed. We are concerned by the difficulties which arose in Chicago.

### A FRENCH PACIFIST WEEKLY WRITES IN

To the Editor:

We regularly receive LABOR ACTION and read it with considerable interest, but so far we did not receive The New International which Mr. L. G. Smith has been sending us, as we are informed today. In exchange we sent you the latest issues of La Paix Du Monde.

Through this exchange we could discover many common points in your platform and in our program, though your action is mainly geared on labor and social subjects while the Artisans De La Paix and La Paix Du Monde action lies in peace problems.

But they are bound to be partly common since peace means better social and human conditions which leads us to fight against capitalism, fascism (whatever its name), racial prejudices, colonialism and for better social conditions.

As you may have read in La Paix Du Monde, the immediate aim of the Artisans de la Paix is to prevent an extension of war; consequently the first items of our program are: general disarmament under international control; opening of frontiers so that men and ideas may circulate freely; substitution of negotiations for the strength-and-power process.

At the same time, we work to enforce social and economic conditions which, later on, would deprive men of any incentive to war.

To achieve the former and latter program, our action is proceeding on national and international ground, outside of any influence of power blocs or political parties. The main reason for this is that we consider that real world peace could not be a Soviet, American or British peace.

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ground organization inside Spain. We await news of the demonstration in Los Angeles. We regret the incidents which arose with the comrades of the SWP and Socialist Party. The widest possible demonstration was needed. We are concerned by the difficulties which arose in Chicago.

It would be interesting if there could be organized in New York a meeting with the participation of militants from the socialist organizations, intellectuals and trade-union leaders (Reuther?). We mention this as a suggestion. But we are confident that you will know how to do everything possible to demonstrate to the workers of Catalonia the solidarity of their brothers in the United States.

though some free-minded and progressive political leaders may write in our paper. I must add that the Mouvement des Artisans de la Paix is neither a conscientious objectors' nor a "neutralist" organization.

In France, the Artisans de la Paix movement is gathering all genuine pacifist organizations with a minimum platform. In this work, we may say that we met a real success.

On the international ground, we are seeking all contacts with free pacifist organizations standing outside of any capitalist or Stalinist influence.

In both domains, we consider it a duty to make people aware of the huge weight of their own will if they want to express it aloud.

Considering the similarity of our positions would you allow us to publish some of your articles or part of it in one of our next issues? If you think possible to send us a special article for La Paix Du Monde, we would be very glad to print it.

We hope that we will be able to keep and extend relations with you, and we are

Yours very sincerely,  
For the editor,  
M. TEXITER  
Paris, Apr. 12

We have informed the editors of La Paix Du Monde that we are glad to give permission for reprints from LABOR ACTION and to establish friendly relations with anti-war movements abroad which are oriented against both capitalism and Stalinism, despite the evident divergences in our political approaches to the question of war. If the opportunity offers, we shall report to our readers on the group which introduces itself in the letter above.—Ed.

I have sent more news to LABOR ACTION. The executive committee of our organization inside Spain writes us that "the situation is very explosive" and that "the morale of the workers is excellent." The action in Barcelona has been indeed the beginning of a new stage.

We have launched an international fund drive to help the Barcelona prisoners. The French comrades have roused up a bit and are collecting funds. I hope that you will be able to do something in this direction. Bonet will write further on this matter. In our view it is a question of getting financial help from those who have been stirred by the action of the Barcelona workers; I refer mainly to intellectuals and others sympathetic with the ideas of socialism and with the cause

of the Spanish people. I will write again one of these days. Fraternal greetings to all the comrades.

For the Exec. Com.  
Wilebaldo SOLANO  
Paris, April 15

MAY DAY GREETINGS to all our comrades SEATTLE ISL

## For a World of Peace and Plenty!

—NATIONAL BUREAU, SYL

## In Memory of Martin Abern

On all major issues, American labor is either coming to or being forced into decisive attitudes and conclusions, including the all-decisive one of labor's attitude toward the productive forces and their relation to the government. And hence to politics. This is the basis of our confidence in the rapid political evolution of the American workers.

For the Second World War has indelibly impressed on the masses the decisive relation of government to their very existence. It is necessary to recognize and observe that this process toward the idea of government ownership and unavoidably toward the idea of workers control, is taking hold steadily, and to realize that future struggles will not just assume the old forms of bitter employer-worker struggles.

When the working class moves toward the acceptance of government as a dominant factor in their lives, it is only the beginning of the greatest problem of all for them to resolve, namely, their own responsibility as a class to the newly developing situation. —Martin Abern, War and The Working Class, 1944

## Celebrate MAY DAY with the INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST LEAGUE

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## May Day Greetings

# Let's Use Labor's Power

### FORM A LABOR PARTY!

BUFFALO BRANCH, ISL



# Spain: A Revolution in the Making

By RICHARD TROY



WILEBALDO SOLANO

The general strike in Barcelona, it has become increasingly clear, was by no means a flash in the pan. At this very date—in a number of cities—a general strike, estimated to involve more than a quarter of a million men, is paralyzing large portions of the country's economy. Reports have it that

Barcelona is again on its feet.

The American press, as one might expect, has given these developments far less than adequate notice. Recently, the only first-rate American reporter in Spain, Sam Pope Brewer of the New York Times, was denied permission by the Madrid government to report from Spain.

All the more important, then, are the reports which come to us directly from the Spanish socialists themselves, who are actively participating in developing the growing movement of revolt against Franco.

We have received a new issue of *La Batalla*, the organ of the Spanish POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unity)—published from its emigration headquarters in Paris—and three quarters of it is again, of course, devoted to a coverage of the growing revolt in Spain. The tone is one of the most supreme optimism and hope.

"The rebellion of Barcelona," writes the editor of the paper, Wilebaldo Solano, "vast and profound as nothing else under totalitarianism, has demonstrated that the people of Spain, so often tricked and betrayed, are on the march against Franco and will not resign themselves to live under fascist slavery."

These are not simply words of encouragement, arousing slogans for battle, but the actual prognosis of the POUM. There appears to be little doubt in their minds that the time for action has arrived. The struggle of liberation has begun! Even the Franco press has acknowledged the success of the recent revolts.

"The press of Dictator Franco, which tended to conceal anything that would darken the happy picture that it daily paints for us, has seen itself obliged to write about the success in Barcelona," a *La Batalla* writer notes. "The nervousness of the regime's leaders is becoming more and more apparent to all, and the action taken against Brewer of the Times is symptomatic."

## Strikes Are Spontaneous

Within some units of the official trade associations, this nervousness is reflected in growing conflict between many businessmen seeking a solution to the present crisis and the Falangists. The Falangist elements are finding it increasingly difficult to control these organizations, and often find it necessary to call in the police to stifle denunciatory speeches and speakers.

The ruling groups themselves, in other words, are beginning to split up under the strain of the economic crisis and the growing pressure of open protest from below. They can no longer agree on the means by which to combat the seething impulses of the enraged people.

Within the ranks of the people, interestingly enough, there appears to be no centralized organization of command in the coming struggle. The underground organization, remnants of Civil War groupings, still operate. But, in a sense, the present uprisings are so enormous that these organizations can neither claim credit for them nor guide them.

"Unfortunately," one POUM writer puts it, "there exists in Spain today no organization capable of achieving a mobilization of the masses for the struggle such as was known in Barcelona. It is the Franco regime, with its horrible misery, with its insulting inequalities, that is the true agitator."

The uprisings, in other words, are generally spontaneous; they develop out of profound discontent with the constantly rising prices and declining standard of living which "agitates" all alike; and they are led by organizations constructed, as it were, on the spot to handle specific strikes. One veteran of revolutionary activity in Barcelona declared that it was "the most astounding example of unanimity that he has ever seen." The spirit of the revolt was all-embracing, and all parts of the population were immediately involved. "It is necessary to live in Barcelona to realize the enthusiasm with which the people act, the extent of the recovery in

morale, the faith with which the immediate future is regarded."

The sudden in-rush of long-lost freedom is exhilarating. An amusing incident is related in this connection. The governor of Barcelona was evidently almost powerless during the general strike, and for many it was an excellent opportunity to take revenge upon him. His relations with a certain actress had always been the butt of many whispered jokes. During the strike an opportunity arose for the jokes to come out in the open.

"One night, many groups of students were present in the Comic Opera where she was acting, and loud shouts rang out to her—gobenadora (Madame governor) among other things—with great frolicking among the people that were present. The intervention of the police was necessary to suppress the tumult which was created when a rain of tomatoes and rotten eggs fell on the stage."

A sudden release of long pent-up energies and hopes, hatreds and resentments, was reflected in a dozen ways.

## Falange Factions Fight

That this movement from below developed at this time, even if it was relatively spontaneous, was not an accident. Solano and others have stressed the importance of the general deterioration in the strength and unity of the Franco regime, which is, today, wholly incapable of solving the most elementary problems of the Spanish economy. For a number of years, as an article on this subject points out, Franco was able to excuse the stagnancy of the economy as due to the "legacy of the Republicans." In addition, Franco could point to the bright future of the "New Spain" as part of the "New Europe" that his patron, Hitler, was building. Then, moreover, there was a great deal of fanfare about the great "economic awakening" called the "National-Syndicalist Revolution" which was supposed to lift the Spanish economy into prominence in the world.

But with the steady decline in the standard of living, it became plain to the masses, among whom sympathy for Franco's regime was never prevalent, that all this was merely talk, and the only group getting richer was the small clique around Franco and the corrupt bureaucracy immediately beneath him. (The general wage level was up 3½ times since 1936 while prices had soared seven times the 1936 level.)

The Franco press has, by now, been forced to admit that conditions are not what its propaganda had always tried to paint them. The bad conditions are blamed on outside boycotts, the disturbances from within, etc. And official sources tell us that Franco and his ministers have decided "to study the means necessary to fight illegal profits and the rise of prices." The Falange has initiated a demagogic campaign "against the speculators." Of course, the fascist leadership can do little, even if it cares to, to bolster up the economy, but the fact that it now admits that a problem exists is an indication of its seriousness and the depth of its concern.

In addition, as has been related, the Franco regime itself is developing splits in its own hierarchical organization. For example, the Barcelona Falange Unit has broken into two factions:

"The disintegration of the Falange . . . is notorious and indisputable. With the most thoroughgoing immorality, this movement, which never had roots in the people and which took power through assassination and robbery, is disintegrating. The Spanish workers will not fall into the trap of supporting this or that faction, but will guide this struggle in the proper direction, in the hopes of being able to sweep from power both one and the other and to hang its captives from a very strong branch."

## America to the Rescue!

Other splits have also racked the fascist structure. Large portions of the bourgeoisie—especially those sections not intimately tied to the Madrid apparatus—have been "neutral" in the present struggle. So have considerable sections of the army, at least in the Barcelona strike. And the church has behaved, in Solano's words, "prudently." In fact, the organization Catholic Action has actually made a public attack on the regime for its utter ineptness in dealing with national problems.

Franco's own base is becoming smaller and smaller, while, interestingly enough, his position in the system of alliances being constructed by the United States becomes larger and larger. POUM writers reflect the bitterness of the Spanish people toward the West when they write on the topic of the United States, the UN, etc.

"The ambassadors of the three great Western powers—the United States, England, and France—presented their respective credentials to Franco during the week in March in which the people of Barcelona rose in mass against the Falangist regime. Curious and significant coincidence!"

And, of course, while the Spanish people were resorting to mass strikes to voice their hatred of the regime in power, Griffiths, the American ambassador, began conversation with *El Caudillo* for more arms and dollars to prop up the tottering fascist structure. The Franco re-

## HITLER'S HEIR

It has been suggested, by those who defend the Franco regime, that it is unjust to bring up Franco's wartime cooperation with Hitler and Mussolini because those days are long past, the world has turned over many times since, etc. But an interesting reminder of the intimate connection between Franco and Hitler has turned up in recent months. A former Gestapo official, stationed during the war in Argentina, drifted into Spain in 1946, and has since been integrated into the Spanish fascist apparatus. His name is Krauss, although in Spain he is known as "Sanchiz Gallardo," and, today he is in charge of the repressive activities of the fascist government in Barcelona! Hitler, from his grave, cannot offer Franco very much aid these days, but a stray Gestapo officer will at least represent him at the ceremonies.

gime, shakier than ever, no longer able to boast of the "orderliness" of its reign and the "docile acceptance" of it by the Spanish people, sends out new calls of alarm, a new "crusade" in the making. (The American Legion, as if answering the call, awarded Franco a medal of honor the week before last.)

As it explained, the Spanish people are no longer surprised to find the Western "democracies" more than willing to respond to Franco's desperate pleas. They have evidently lost all illusions in this respect. But they are still astonished to encounter such lethargy from the international working class when the Spanish working class dispatches its pleas for help.

"We live in an age in which, unfortunately, the international working class, of which we have the right to expect more than platonic declarations, is today nothing more than an instrument of the governments." But, says Batalla, the Spanish people have adjusted to this sorrowful situation too: "In this period of abandonment, resignation and betrayal, the Spanish people, who have hoped for much, already expect nothing. This is 'desperation.' Instinctively finding itself once more, the working class starts to rely again on its own forces, to follow the tradition of combat and heroism of its own working classes."

In other words, since they can count upon nobody outside of Spain, they have, of necessity, turned to themselves and rediscovered their own revolutionary traditions in order to turn the tide.

## United Front Stalled

The POUM appears to be the only one among the Labor and Socialist organizations fighting Franco which has vigorously called for united action against the common enemy. The CNT (Anarchist) and the Esquerria de Catalunya have been coming around to the view that common action is necessary. (The statement by the Esquerria's general secretary mentions that "in view of the change in attitude of certain democratic countries [he means the U.S.] we believe the time has come to abandon erroneous conceptions . . .")

The Socialist Party of Spain (the PSOE), on the other hand, moves slowly and refuses to commit itself to united action. It is still entangled in a "mysterious alliance" with a monarchist group, a result of the infamous "Pact of San Juan." The SP leader Prieto has declared that his policy has crumbled but thus far there is no concrete evidence that the PSOE will detach itself from its monarchist alliance and plunge into the common struggle. (Although, no doubt, the PSOE has been active—not so much in the Barcelona strike but probably around the city of Bilbao.)

The POUM demands a unified struggle, without the Stalinists of course (about whom they have no more illusions), on the basis of concrete and realizable and immediate objectives. But this does not seem to be immediately near, and the initiative for action, essentially, remains in the hands of the Spanish people themselves. "Barcelona Shows Us the Road," proclaims the *Batalla* headline. That there is general unity in the shops and on the streets seems clear. The rest of Spain is beginning to follow Barcelona's road and the tinhorn dictator appears to be walking his last mile.

"In March 1951," solemnly concludes one writer, "the working class of Spain has shown once again that it is checked but not subdued. In spite of a ferocious repression and the difficulties that the parties and organizations have in maintaining existence, they have known how to keep contact with the people and recognize their desires and anxieties. The armed guard, the Civil Guard, all the apparatus of Franco's repression, have not been able to quell the spirit of protest and of struggle in the popular Spanish masses. They have shown their determination to liberate themselves from all tyranny."

## Franco Tyranny Vacillates before Strike of Quarter Million

Despite warnings from the Franco government that a strike would lead to dire consequences, 250,000 Spanish workers (some estimated as many as 500,000) in Spain's heavy industrial belt, have gone out on strike in protest against the high cost of living.

Coming less than six weeks after the great Barcelona general strike in March, this outburst attests further to the growing weakness of the Franco government and the growing initiative and power of the working classes and all anti-Franco groupings.

The government, apparently, has no weapon with which to combat these huge strikes except to threaten the strikers with the loss of their jobs. This threat was issued before the strike, and the workers, paying no heed to these first warnings, went out in a dozen key industries. Now, while they are on strike, the government has only been able to reissue the same threat.

It seems fair to interpret this, if the reports are correct, as a definite sign of weakness on the part of the regime; it means, in effect, that the government simply cannot carry through its dire threats. Government officials, in fact, admitted privately that in view of the strikers' unity, it would be impossible to carry out the dismissal threat. There is good evidence that during the Barcelona strike the fascists could not count upon all sectors of the army; perhaps the

same conditions prevail today. Over the weekend of April 21, according to the Associated Press dispatches, anonymous leaflets were distributed over the Basque area, in which the present movement is centered, and on Monday the workers responded with the strike. Some of the leaflets had an anti-American tinge to them, and the AP reporter suggested this to indicate a "Communist" influence. However, from what we know of

# We Fight for Socialist Democracy!

MAY DAY GREETINGS

TO ALL FIGHTERS FOR LABOR'S RIGHTS

## Forward to a Socialist World!

—DETROIT BRANCH, ISL

## For the Third Camp

## of World Labor and the Colonial Peoples!

—NEW YORK BRANCHES, ISL

## SOCIALIST GREETINGS on May Day

TO ALL OUR COMRADES

IN THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

—LOS ANGELES BRANCH, ISL

MAY DAY GREETINGS

Philadelphia ISL

GREETINGS

from the farthest west unit of the SYL  
Corvallis, Ore.

Greetings

from the PITTSBURGH BRANCH ISL

MAY DAY GREETINGS

to our SPANISH COMRADES of the POUM

San Francisco Bay Area ISL

May Day Greetings

to LABOR ACTION

from the CHICAGO SYL

### May Day Greetings

—NEWARK BRANCH, ISL

### Organize Youth for Socialist Democracy!

—NEW YORK SYL

Chicago Socialists Greet Labor Action

May Day 1951

### KEEP UP THE FIGHT for a SOCIALIST AMERICA!

—CHICAGO BRANCH, ISL

MAY DAY GREETINGS

### A SALUTE TO

### LABOR ACTION ON ITS 11th BIRTHDAY

—QUEENS (N. Y.) BRANCH, ISL

Build the Independent Socialist League!

CLEVELAND ISL

### FOR ANTI-WAR SOCIALIST UNITY!

BERKELEY SYL



## MAY DAY 1951: 'Capitalism Is Doomed' But . . .

(Continued from page 1)

cialist society as a result of its inherent trends, plus a push from the organized working class.

**We are thinking of its "American" version: the liberal and labor-liberal's belief in the inevitability of the gradual and organic transformation of the system into a more equitable and democratic society as a result of the trends embodied in Fair-Dealism, plus a push from men of good will.**

*But we are not getting more democracy, but the most insidious attack on civil liberties and democratic rights in the history of the country.*

*We are not moving toward a peaceful world, but toward the horror of a third world war piled on the two world slaughters we have lived through, a war in which the atom bomb symbolizes the potentialities for the destruction of civilization itself.*

*We are not moving toward a world of plenty but toward tightened belts and lower living standards in order to make that war possible.*

Along its own road, capitalism points down—down toward the same depths which are opened before us by the Stalinist monstrosity.

Yes, "capitalism is doomed," but . . .

**What will replace it?**

This is the great question which our generation is called on to resolve.

There is no place to look among the powers—that be.

There is no hope to be sought through the victory of either of the imperialist war blocs in the world.

There is no confidence to be reposed in the democratic evolution of either the capitalism of the West or the bureaucratic-collectivist Stalinism of the East. In this respect, the Fair-Deal liberals of the U. S.

have, as their symmetrically-opposite numbers, the tragically misguided and disoriented types of socialist workers in Europe who hope against hope in the "democratization" of the Stalinist regimes—as their lesser evil in comparison with the present system, of which they have had their bellyful.

But there is a power to which we look. It is the same power which has shown itself time and again to be the most irresistible social power in the world.

**It is the power of the fighting people when they rise to their feet against all oppressors and all tyrants, from below, from the "depths" of society—when they cease to be merely objects (of either philanthropic good intentions or despotic exploitation) and become subjects acting in their own right, taking the stage themselves.**

*As the people of Barcelona have done, in their heroic struggle against the Franco dictatorship, and as the people of the rest of Spain are beginning to do, inspired by their example!*

*As the courageous fighters of the Ukrainian resistance movement, the Ukrainian People's Army, are doing behind the borders of the Stalin empire—for the first time since the fastening of Stalinism on the Russian people and the nationalities under Moscow!*

This is the power that inspires us with admiration—and with hope for the world which now lies under the shadow of Washington and Moscow.

This is also the power which is stirring when Aneurin Bevan speaks out a part of the resentment of the British working class against the policies of its own party's leaders when, having dealt body-blows to capitalism, they tie Britain to Washington's war chariot. For British Labor also faces the great question of our generation:

Yes, "capitalism is doomed," but . . .

**What will replace it?**

This is the power that is stirring in the movements of revolt-from-below which are called "Titoist" when directed against the mastery of Moscow and called "subversive" when directed against capitalist exploitation.

If capitalism is visibly disintegrating, it must be remembered that it has already lived a long time. The disintegrative forces within the Stalinist empire have raised their heads almost from its birth.

Stalinism is a system of exploitation and terror which has replaced capitalism in one third of the world, not because there is any future of progressive development before it, but because the socialist working class has not yet risen to its task of replacing capitalism with its own workers' world.

Yes, "capitalism is doomed," but . . .

**What will replace it?**

We of LABOR ACTION and the Independent Socialist League propose to fight—but not for the hopeless aim of straightening out or refurbishing this capitalist system which has already led the world down the greased way to war and misery, and not for the suicidal aim of seeking to "reform" Stalinism while supporting or apologizing for it.

**We propose to fight for the democracy which is inseparable from genuine socialism, and for the socialism which cannot exist without the most thoroughgoing democracy under the control of the people.**

*It is not the easiest aim to fight for—in these United States on May Day 1951, no easier than the fight for freedom has ever been when a generation stands before a great crossroads. It is the only aim to fight for, however, which can in truth replace capitalism with the world of peace and plenty to which the generations before us looked to realize mankind's unquenchable aspiration for justice, freedom and happiness.*

The EDITORS

## British LP Left Wing Breaks —

(Continued from page 1)

foreign policy which was directed toward the maintenance of as much of the empire as possible on the old basis, and as a junior partner of the United States, propping up as much of the rotting capitalist order as can be propped up throughout the world.

### LABORITE POLICY

In 1945 the Labor Party was swept into power on a pledge to nationalize basic sectors of the economy, maintain full employment, reduce the inequalities of wealth on a basis of "fair shares" and a tremendous program of social security and welfare measures. This program the Labor Party carried out despite the fact that Britain after the war was an impoverished country with a relatively inefficient industrial plant, which depended in large degree on importing food and raw materials from the rest of the world.

The social measures of the Labor government could only be developed within the limits set by the economic situation of the country. Until 1950 the British economy was staggering under the weight of the "dollar gap," which was the financial expression of the overwhelming competitive superiority of the economic position and productivity of the United States.

The British workers, whose party was in power, were urged to accept a program of extreme austerity. They were asked to refrain from making wage demands, even when these were justified by the accumulation of profits by the industrialists. They were told that Britain could only maintain herself financially and slowly work her way toward some degree of financial solvency and economic independence if they would sacrifice some part of their standard of living in the interest of exporting manufactured goods and modernizing industry through a new accumulation and reinvestment of capital.

In its foreign policy, the Labor government remained firmly committed to holding as much of the old empire in Asia and Africa as it could, and to waging the cold war as an ally of the United States. This required the maintenance of a considerable armed

force, an added economic burden. It meant also that the British working-class movement through its government joined the American and French governments in maintaining reactionary governments and social regimes in Africa and much of Asia and Latin America.

This meant that while the Labor government was dealing its own capitalist structure telling blows, it was at the same time supporting the decaying structure of capitalism in the rest of the world. Rather than directing its foreign policy toward the powerful socialist elements in the working class of the European countries and the masses of Asia who were engaged in a broad political and economic revolution of their own, it stood side by side with the United States as a bulwark of the old social order in Europe and Asia.

### OPPOSITION GREW

Like the American government it has sought to stem the extension of Stalinist influence not by aiding and promoting a counter-movement of a progressive, democratic and socialist revolt, but by bolstering hated regimes of exploitation.

Inside the Labor Party in Britain there has been for some time a relatively small group of leaders with some following who have opposed this foreign policy. Their position finds its closest ideological analogy in this country in the liberals grouped around The Nation.

They oppose the policies of the American government in the cold war. They are not Stalinists or even Stalinist sympathizers; yet, lacking any positive policy of their own, and rejecting the idea of social revolution as desirable in itself and politically effective against Stalinism, they fall back on the hope that the cold war can be solved through negotiations between Washington and Moscow, if only Washington will negotiate in good faith.

As long as the Labor Party enjoyed an overwhelming majority in the House of Commons, the differences of opinion within the party could be given considerable leeway of expression. If a small group in parliament abstained on

some question, or even voted against the government, their actions could be met with reprimands or ignored, depending on the exigencies of internal party politics.

But when the party was returned last year with a tiny majority, the differences within it assumed a much sharper expression. Bevan and the broad left wing insisted that the loss of support among the middle class could only be repaired if the Labor Party would boldly drive forward with its full program of nationalization, and would maintain and expand the social services. The right wing, although it was still prepared to go ahead with the nationalization of the steel industry, was in favor of a policy of softening the social struggle inside the country.

### WORKERS RESTIVE

The economic boom in the U. S., which started early in 1950 and shot upward when war in Korea broke out, closed the dollar gap. Last year Britain had the largest foreign-trade surplus in many decades. The American market was opened to British goods as never before.

But the contradictions and ironies of world capitalism are still with us. At the same time that the dollar gap closed, the price of raw materials and food rose drastically, and Britain was faced with the demand that she tremendously increase her armament program.

In the meantime, the British workers have shown increasing signs of rebellion against the continued demand that they refrain from pressing for higher wages. The economic boom has piled up profits in the private sector of the economy. The workers in one industry after another have insisted that "fair shares" must mean higher wages to offset higher prices and profits.

While generally accepting the foreign policy of their party, they sought to ignore the inescapable fact that this policy requires a tremendous expenditure for armaments, and that in the long run this expenditure can only come out of their standard of living.

At the Labor Party congress at Margate last October the dissatisfaction of a large number of

delegates with the party leadership was expressed in loud cheers for Bevan's radical speech. At that time Bevan demanded a policy of no retreat on the party program, but did not challenge the party leadership. The opposition on foreign policy expressed itself solely in resolutions urging the government to enter top-level negotiations with Stalin, outlaw the atom bomb, etc.

### HAS BEVAN A LINE?

But now, some six months later, the practical effects of the government's policy have shown up in the budget proposals, in no uncertain terms. The figures leave no doubt that even the maintenance of the present social programs are incompatible with the level of armaments demanded by the United States and accepted by the government.

Further, the methods proposed to raise the money for these armaments are designed in such a way that the poor are bound to shoulder most of the burden. The same justification for this is given by the British government as we get in the United States: the capitalists must have an incentive to produce, therefore they cannot be taxed too heavily.

Although Bevan has linked up the foreign and domestic problems of the government in his speech, he has not offered a POLICY designed to solve the contradiction. He has stated that the British working class has "a message for the world" different from those offered by Stalinism and capitalism, but he has suggested no way in which this "message" can be effectively brought to bear in real political terms, that is, in terms of the organization of masses of people behind it, throughout the world.

The left-wing elements of the British Labor Party now face a unique historical opportunity. A struggle for the support of the workers is bound to take place, in which the foreign policy of the party will be directly related to the threat which the rearmament program presents to the social gains of the workers.

It will be difficult to evade the central problem: Shall the British labor movement continue to follow in the wake of the American

capitalist government, or shall it seek to mobilize the workers and the oppressed masses of the backward countries for a bold assault on the social structure of capitalism throughout the world?

### THE ROAD'S OPEN!

Unless the latter is proposed, the opposition inside the Labor Party will have no answer to the charge that they are sticking their heads in the sand as far as the threat of world Stalinism is concerned. The program of "sincere negotiations" with Stalin as an answer to this threat will not stand up under the blows of debate, and much less will it stand the test of history.

Stalinism will either be defeated by a new wave of social revolution directed against all forms of inequality, exploitation and oppression which can thus rally the peoples on both sides of the Iron Curtain against both the old capitalism and the new totalitarianism, or the world will once more have to go through the agony of a war on a scale of unprecedented destruction.

The historical opportunity for the British Labor movement is a double opportunity for the consistent revolutionary socialists in Britain. They can either stand aside from the struggle in the Labor Party while mouthing perfectly correct but completely abstract criticisms of the inadequacy of the program of the left wing—or they can jump into the fight and seek to influence the broad strata of workers who will participate in the struggle.

Their place is in the left wing. Their role is to urge on the left wing and the party as a whole that they turn their eyes away from the American colossus and toward the poor and oppressed everywhere as their potential source of strength against Stalinism just as Stalinism has been able to use and abuse so many of these people as its source of strength against capitalism.

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