

# STUDENT SOCIALIST

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EDITORIAL:

## May Day 1951

The recent cruel defeats of the working class movement have been unable to wipe out the meaning and significance of this international workers' holiday! This amazing fact should give pause to those who talk glibly about the failure of socialism. In a period of reaction, the mode of life of the intellectuals becomes cynicism, apathy and soul-searching; workers, on the contrary, merely give up political action, or acquiesce in the pro-capitalist leadership of their officialdom. This is the case today.

In America it must be remembered that organized labor, under the influence of the ultra-conservative Gomer's leadership, refused from the very beginning to celebrate international labor solidarity. It was left to the socialist and radical parties to keep this day in trust until it should be made the property of the mighty American labor movement.

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In Europe, however, May Day has long been feared and hated by the ruling classes. Along with the red flag it is a symbol loved and respected by the people, attacked and reviled by their exploiters. It has become the great holiday celebrating freedom, socialism and workers' power.

The content, meaning and slogans of May Day have, of course, changed with the ebbs and flows of the class struggle. Beginning in 1889 the Second International, through its various mass Parties throughout Europe and America, did the great service of popularizing the eight-hour day, the trade union movement, co-operatives, universal suffrage, anti-militarism and all the other progressive and necessary demands of a slowly growing international working-class movement. Although May Day tended to become a celebration instead of a demonstration, it at least expressed labor's demands, grievances and hopes for a better world.

The pro-war betrayal of the leadership of the Second International in 1914 came as a great shock and attempts were made, some successful, to turn May Day into a puny, patriotic, pro-capitalist celebration. But these attempts were cut short by the great October Revolution!

Under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, the Third International once more placed May Day before the eyes of the world, but this time on an infinitely higher plane. From a day of celebration it became a day of struggle. The slogans began to change: workers' power, Soviets, revolutionary struggle became the order of the day. The Russian revolution unleashed great social forces which shook capitalist society to its foundations! It implanted, with the power of a fixed conviction, ideas which can never be stricken from the con-

sciousness of mankind. The first workers' state remains for us, just as the Paris Commune did for the socialists before World War I, the image of the future. Despite its mistakes, its often confused and fumbling moves, the Russian Workers' Republic of 1917-1922 is an eternal possession of progressive mankind.

Just as the failure of world socialism revolution led directly to the growth of Fascism and World War II so the rise of a monstrous totalitarian police regime in Russia has helped to divide the peoples into two huge war camps.

The victors in World War II, not satisfied with the division of the earth made at Yalta in 1945, are now preparing for a new war. "Operation meat-grinder" arises before our eyes as the painful image of death and destruction. This will be the price if mankind does not turn toward socialism!

At the same time it is heartening to know that comrades in the Ukraine are fighting a militant, political struggle against the tyranny of the Kremlin. Even more heartening is the recent news of the workers' and students' strike against Franco in Barcelona and Madrid. The day of the Spanish revolution and of the complete demise of the Franco dictatorship has been pushed much closer. To the Indian Socialist Party, the Independent Labor Party of England and to all socialist militants throughout the world who are working for a new international socialist movement, we extend our sincere greetings and feelings of solidarity.

It is this new international which is the need of the day. To advance, it must assimilate the past and project a program for the future. This program must take as its hub the ideas of the third camp. It must inscribe on its banners the words: Against Both Imperialist War Camps! For the Third Camp of Democratic Socialism! This is the lesson of May Day 1951!#

The Editors

## Socialist Polls 3,000 Votes

In the Berkeley City Election of April 3rd a socialist appeared on the ballot for the first time in over 30 years. Although the election was a non-partisan one, Durward T. DuRant ran under the political banner of the Socialist Party. The Socialist Youth League and its friends heartily joined in this campaign to bring socialist ideas before the people of Berkeley.

A campus committee to support Mr. DuRant was formed of one representative from the Socialist Party, one from the SYL, one from the Berkeley Socialist Club and several independents. Working in close harmony the groups and individuals planned and executed a campaign consisting of a social, a street meeting and a motorcade in the campus area.

Results exceeded by far even the most liberal estimates of all concerned. Three thousand ballots were cast for Mr. DuRant, approximately 16% of the total vote for Mr. Purcell, the leading candidate. In the areas surrounding the campus, where campaigning was done, the vote cast for DuRant ranged from 25% to 40% of the vote for the top candidate in each precinct. This vote is a most encouraging sign when it is compared to the four thousand votes cast for Bill Lowe, second-time candidate in the Berkeley city elections, who ran without disclosing his Stalinist affiliations.

Here, indeed, is evidence of the faith of many people in the ideals of socialism. A small united campaign by these three socialist groups has yielded startling results! The high percentage of votes for DuRant in the campus area is ample proof of the effectiveness of such a campaign. The price? A united action. By working in close co-operation, three socialist groups have shown that joint action is not only feasible but also extremely effective. #

## Imperialism Today **FEATURE**

In American colleges and Universities today, the term imperialism is being put on the academic blacklist.

Despite its great currency among nineteenth century social scientists, the use of the concept is beginning to be looked upon as a breach of good manners rather than an invaluable aid to historic analysis. The American Century exerts a profound influence on all realms of thought, but its pernicious effect on the average student is often overlooked. The sophisticated indifference of the graduate student toward the manifest absurdities of Sunday Supplement social theory removes no cobwebs from the brains of his less fortunate brethren.

The hack journalist has an easy time of it. To speak of American imperialism is to give aid and comfort to the Communists who are trying to smear a country which supplies Marshall Aid to half the world, which has no record of colonialism, and which projects a Point 4 program to aid underdeveloped areas. The hideous theoretical lucubrations of Stalinism only serve to add fuel to the fire.

A second line of defense is used against real Marxist theory. Students are informed that imperialism is merely another word for the foreign policy adopted by certain "aggressive" and "warlike" nations. Another version has it that imperialism has decreased tremendously since the formation of the U.N. in 1945. Still another identifies imperialism with colonialism and then points with pride to America's undeniable lack of colonies. Most of this was contained in the works of J. A. Hobson and is perfectly in line with a natural rights philosophy which was long ago chased out of most other realms of social science. America's ruthless use of the U.N. in Korea leaves the World Federalists with

only half the world to play with; the other half, unluckily, lies behind the iron curtain.

The real theoretic justification for American world ascendancy is yet to be written. There are indications, however, that it will be set in terms of a general concept long endeared to the home-spun patriots who set styles in American ideology. It will be an up-to-date variety of the old dogma of American Exceptionalism.

The influence of the frontier, isolationism, the American Way of Life---these are but variations on a single theme: the rigid insistence on the uniqueness of American institutions. The unreconstructed exceptionalist refuses to generalize from Europe to America; he transmutes the genuine differences in development into a vulgar backwoods particularism. Just as he insisted during the 1920's that America had "outgrown" the industrial crises which afflict all capitalist economies, so today he is the unselfish advocate of the State Department's heavy-handed benevolence in world affairs, which he nicknames "world responsibility."

The word imperialism has a long history, but it began to receive an exact scientific connotation during the latter part of the nineteenth century. It more and more came to mean the process of political and economic expansion of the great Western capitalist nations into the economically more backward regions of the world. This process was substantially completed by the turn of the century and led directly to the first World War which Lenin defined as an "imperialist war" whose basic purpose was the re-division of the world's resources, markets and raw materials on the basis of the relative economic strength of the great powers.

To describe this development was not enough. Lenin sought for the deeper reasons which impelled modern capitalist nations into the tremendously expensive and dangerous expedient of world war. The motor force for

the political expansion of the great powers was discovered to be the automatic and uncontrolled accumulation of capital. Secondary and subsidiary factors certainly entered in, and these helped to explain the form and tempo of the world struggle. The constant increase and the direction of the struggle was found to be a product of capitalist production itself. The fact that it assumed unprecedented dimensions after 1870 and slowly built-up to the great war was the result of the rapid and uninterrupted growth of monopoly within the framework of free enterprise and the world market.

To misunderstand this theory as a mere chase after markets, spheres of influence, and raw materials by greedy or "selfish" governments is to do it to death. Nor is the specific interrelationship between the need to export capital and foreign policy an automatic one. To replace concrete analysis with lifeless schemes will not help. What is important and sufficient in each case, is whether theoretical analysis provides a basis for judgment and practical action.

Lenin concluded that the world war was reactionary i.e., that the hitherto progressive expansion of the productive forces by capitalism was historically at an end, and that its continuation would result in decay, destruction and chaos. Scarcely had he finished his study when the revolution broke-out in Russia and an important area of the world's economy was removed from the capitalist arena.

It is important to remember that the political and social content of World War I was not altered by the military form it assumed. It is a problem of consequences and not of guilt. The problem of who struck the first blow could determine when the war would start but its results were the product of the entire previous historical development. The supposed aggression of the vigorous German nation was nothing but a reflection of its need for colonies and markets; the older imperial nations --England, France, Holland, etc.-- had but to

defend the status quo. The parallel between the rise of Germany to great power status and the present world extension of American influence is obvious.

The destruction of the Russian workers' state by the Stalin clique and the cruel defeats of the socialist movement, made a Fascist solution possible. The 2nd. World War repeated the vast struggle for world hegemony begun in 1914, but on an infinitely more reactionary basis. For the first time, modern European nations themselves were subjected to semi-colonial treatment. Beginning as an English colony, America had risen by 1945 to the position of the richest, most powerful industrial nation in world history. The stage was finally set by the Yalta and Potsdam agreements for the truly global conflict between Russia and the U.S. which today threatens the very foundations of human culture.

While Europe was decimated and reduced to subservience by the two wars, the U.S. has grown ever more powerful until today it is the economic overseer of half the globe! The fact that this huge growth has hitherto been basically internal should not obscure the astounding increase in external power and influence. The American economic and political bailiwick now extends over South America, Western Europe, and throughout the Far East into Japan, Formosa and Korea. The Truman-MacArthur struggle is an excellent illustration of where American imperialism stands today: the question at issue is not war or peace, but war in Europe or war in the Far East!

The future of America is only too evident. Arms standardization, military occupation, U.M.T., the increase of executive power, huge debts, economic controls, power struggles, military adventures and all of the political and social evils which go with the rise to "world leadership."

If it is futile to deny the unmistakable imper-

ialist content of American foreign policy, it is equally impossible to identify it with "old-fashioned" colonial imperialism. It is true that this is still the epoch of capitalist decline, that colonialism though weakened still exists, that the big powers continue to struggle for markets, raw materials, spheres of influence and areas of investment. Important changes in world economy have occurred, however, which require a reinterpretation of imperialism.

The rise of bureaucratic collectivism in Russia and its extension to Eastern Europe and China gives to the present imperialist conflict a social character. Instead of various capitalist countries struggling for a redivision of the earth, we have a global struggle for world supremacy between two incompatible social systems. In neither war camp is there an alliance between comparatively equal imperialist nations (as was true even in the last World War); the essentially reactionary nature of this struggle is revealed by the fixity of the lines of conflict and the subordinate nature of the smaller nations. America steps forward as the super-exploiter of half the world, while Russia cynically plunders the areas under its control.

There is no need to play down the real nature of the Marshall Plan, Point 4, or the other "aid" schemes of American imperialism, for it is precisely its leading role in the capitalist bloc which demands the use of international pump-priming to revive European capitalism. The undoubted success of the Marshall Plan attests to the far-sightedness of the American bourgeoisie, not its global humanitarianism. The timidity of the American investor in the face of a permanent crisis in world economy requires government intervention into the field of long-term foreign investments. The meagre success of Point 4, combined with a stupendous accumulation of capital has produced an essentially new stage in the development of monopoly capitalism, the permanent war economy! The government budget becomes transformed into an independent economic factor

The record accumulation of capital in the last 15 years, combined with a pitifully low foreign investment necessitates huge government war expenditures. The permanent war economy brings with it the Garrison State domestically and an intense aggravation of the international struggle with Stalinism leading directly to a new and ever more catastrophic world war. The concept of imperialism, therefore, becomes an absolutely indispensable means of understanding and changing the world.

## Student Audiences Greet Shachtman on West Coast

Max Shachtman, National Chairman of the Independent Socialist League, spoke before several student audiences during his recent tour of the West Coast.

On Tuesday, April 17, at the University of Washington in Seattle, Shachtman exchanged views with Dr. Frank Williston of the Far Eastern Department on the subject, "Will the UN Policy Lead to Peace in the Far East?" That evening many interested students discussed the ideas of independent socialism with Shachtman and were impressed with the need of an active campus SYL.

At the University of California (Berkeley), a discussion of the Barcelona general strikes drew fifty students. A last minute, off-campus meeting was required since the Spanish Consul-General of San Francisco called off a scheduled debate on the question, "Should America Aid Franco Spain?"

Thursday evening Shachtman spoke before 90 Reed College students in Portland on "The Socialist Alternative." Students from Reed and Oregon State attended an informal bull session after the talk, and it was decided to organize SYL units on both campuses. Students interested in having Shachtman visit their campus on his next tour should contact the Student Socialist.#

# FUMIGATING THE POLECAT

(reprinted from The S.F. Chronicle, April 8 )

Americans, though wholeheartedly content with their national economic system, apparently feel that it needs another name than "capitalism".

This conclusion was drawn this week by William I. Nichols, editor of This Week Magazine, which appears Sundays with the Chronicle.

Nichols and his staff have been reading thousands of letters responding to his article in the Sunday, March 4 issue of This Week. In it, Nichols had indicated that the word "capitalism" caused considerable misunderstanding and often carried unwholesome connotations here and abroad.

Nichols invited readers to write in, suggesting a new name for our economic system. Thousands did. More than 11,000 letters poured into the New York office of This Week.

"We were swamped with mail from every section of the country," said Nichols. "And almost without exception, the suggestions showed serious and intelligent thought."

Such names as "Americanism," "incentivism," "industrialism," and "individualism" appeared hundreds of times. Many write carefully-thought-out essays on the American way of life.

Letters came from ministers, statesmen, farmers, students, professors, servicemen, workers, and businessmen.#

# Agenda for West Coast Anti-War Conference

Place - The Case Hotel, 1106 S. Broadway, Los Angeles,  
6th Floor Conference Room

Wednesday, April 25

Morning session at 10 AM; Afternoon session at 1 PM

1. Presiding Committee Report
2. The American Scene
3. Reports from Localities
4. Report on April 14 Pacifist Conference

Evening Session at 8 PM.

5. Stalinism, Reports and Discussion

Thursday, April 26

Morning and Afternoon sessions, 10 AM and 1 PM.

1. Concrete Actions and Perspectives  
Against War by the Conference
2. The British Labor Party and Britain in  
the War, Reports and Discussion

Evening Session at 8 PM.

3. Socialism and the War, Reports, Discus-  
sion and Program Against War

INTERESTED

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## Students Help

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## Picket Franco Consulate

Students from UCLA and LA City College helped set up a two hour picket line in front of the Spanish Consulate in downtown Los Angeles on the morning of April 14. Six socialist organizations, including the SYL, united to form this anti-Franco demonstration in response to an appeal from the Spanish Workers Party, the POUM, for support to the recent Barcelona general strike and for the liberation of 5,000 imprisoned strikers.

The picket line took on an anti-totalitarian character by the use of slogans and placards saying, "Down With Dictators on Both Sides of the Iron Curtain," "For Democracy Everywhere," and "Against the Tyrants Franco and Stalin." Consequently, neither the Communist Party nor the Socialist Workers Party participated, and the action was carried through by the Independent Socialist League, the Socialist Party, the Libertarian Socialist League, the Young People's Socialist League, the Westwood Socialist Club, as well as the SYL.

Besides the thirty sign carrying pickets, a sympathetic crowd of several hundred bystanders served to give the demonstration a political significance. Even the Hearst Herald Express had to publicize the event with a three column picture of the picket line. The Spanish Consul himself was compelled to acknowledge the demonstration as well as the general strike. His remarks, however, flew in the teeth of every American correspondent in Madrid when he said, "...there was a small general strike in Barcelona, Spain, three weeks ago which lasted only two or three hours." His belittling "a small general strike" is as apologetic as the

expression "a little bit pregnant."

In preparation for the picket line the SYL undertook an open air meeting at City College on Thursday, April 12. The students saw their free speech shamefully violated by a few hoodlums directed by the notoriously anti-democratic school administration. The sprinkling system was turned upon those gathered to listen to the speaker. The school's vice-president, Milham, circulated through the crowd and beamingly approved the efforts at unlawful violence of a handful of hooligans. The chief hoodlum, Robert Munger, was identified as a supporter of America's Fascists, Gerald L.K. Smith and Wesley Swift.

As a result of this scandalous conspiracy between the administration of a publicly endowed school and a few Fascist disrupters, the SYL has decided to spot light in open exposure the continual attempts at L.A. City College to abridge free speech, peaceful assembly, student self-government, and the minority rights of Spanish speaking, Negro and Jewish students. Liberals, the free press, and all democrats are being mobilized in support of free speech for all. Already the executive editor of City College's Collegian has written a two column feature story accurately exposing the antics of the reactionary forces at the public meeting. The images of both Franco and Stalin loom large if such events are to go unchallenged. #

SATHER GATE MEETING

subject:

*The Meaning of MayDay 1951*

NOON — MAY DAY

# Socialist Youth Unite For 2nd Anti-War Conference

Los Angeles, April 25----For the second time within a period of six months, anti-war socialist youth from the West Coast will come together in a conference to work out joint views and methods in the struggle against war and reaction in America.

Once again students from all over the West Coast will attend the sessions which will be held at the Case Hotel in Los Angeles. A simple fee of 25¢ will admit any interested student to all of the conference sessions. During the two days all types of organizational and political items of real importance will be discussed. The agenda includes such items as Stalinism, the British Labor Party, the American scene, over which there is sure to be good discussion and debate.

The three initiating organizations are again the Libertarian Socialist League, the Socialist Youth League and the Young Peoples' Socialist League. The overriding importance of the war danger has once more slashed through traditional organizational differences! This conference can well teach a lesson to the entire anti-war socialist movement on the need for cooperation and unity.

The problems before this conference are manifold. It should, of course, cement even closer the ties binding together all those socialist youth who reject both war camps. War tests all political programs with a bloody hand and in the vast conflagration which is approaching, a unified, aggressive, anti-war youth movement could exert an influence far beyond present expectations. Such a situation demands the flinging aside of all sectarian and separatist considerations. #



Of even greater importance is the necessity to work out, during the educational and discussion meetings, a clear, understandable, popular third-camp position which can be applied on the campuses in the present world conflict between the forces of totalitarian Stalinism and democratic capitalist imperialism. Such a program must begin with an understanding of the social character of this struggle. It should clearly underline the great threat to the labor and socialist movement represented by Stalinism, the reactionary and utopian character of the capitalist military response, and the democratic socialist alternative to the coming bloody and futile world war. In doing so the conference should be able to help weaken and destroy any patriotic or "lesser evil" response to the war situation.

Joint, united-front actions of the various groups in both Los Angeles and Berkeley have helped to set the stage for the conference and the actions which should flow from it. In Berkeley a joint anti-Franco street meeting was sponsored by the SYL and the Socialist Club during which the comrades vigorously defended themselves from a provocative physical assault. A joint election campaign of the Socialist Party and the Independent Socialist League netted three thousand votes for Durward DuRant in the Berkeley elections. A united front picket line before the Spanish Consulate is now being organized.

In Los Angeles, the excellent united-front picket line before the Spanish Consulate is a real lesson in the need for unity. Another example of this was the cooperative socialist-pacifist bloc which chased the Stalinist disrupters out of the April 14 Pacifist Conference.

This conference holds great promise for the anti-war struggle. The Socialist Youth League sends comradely greetings to all the delegates, observers and participants. #