

**INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST LEAGUE
\$14,000 FUND DRIVE-GIVE NOW!**

LABOR ACTION

APRIL 25, 1949

A PAPER IN THE INTEREST OF SOCIALISM

FIVE CENTS

FOR SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY! Independent Socialist League Launched on May Day

Workers Party Convention Changes Name

The most striking decision made by the Fifth National Convention of the Workers Party, meeting during the second week of April, was to change the name of the organization to Independent Socialist League. This decision, however, was not taken as a mere matter of nomenclature.

It reflected one aspect of a convention (and an extensive pre-convention discussion) which grappled with the leading problems before the socialist movement, problems of orientation and organization as well as of political policy, in the open-eyed and independent-minded fashion which has made the Workers Party unique in the socialist movement.

The decision to change the name was taken on the proposal of the National Committee that the designation "party" be dropped. The convention, in overwhelmingly adopting the NC resolution on this point, sought to emphasize that the organization is a propaganda group for the spreading of socialist ideas, and not a full-fledged political "party" in the understood sense of that term.

While it has been the custom for small socialist-propaganda groups to assign themselves the name of a party, the WP has decided to break with this custom and to call itself what in actuality it is and has been—a socialist propaganda group. The discussion pointed out that this, of course, should apply not only to the WP but to the other socialist groups in this country still maintaining the "party" title (including the Socialist Party, which indeed used to be a party).

A summary of the motivations and ideas behind this step will be found in the statement of the National Committee which begins on this page; a more detailed discussion of the question is contained in the Resolution on the United States which was adopted by the convention (see p. 3 for the first installment of this resolution, which will be published in LABOR ACTION in its entirety.)

The new name was decided upon by the delegates separately from the conclusion to drop the term "party." With May Day 1949, the Independent Socialist League is launched as the continuator of the WP and the bearer of the distinctive political program formed in the latter's nine years of development.

BACKGROUND OF CONVENTION

The documents, resolutions and discussions upon which the decisions of the convention were based have already been available to interested readers for some months, in the Workers Party Bulletins. (Since its formation in 1940, the WP has been the only socialist group which thus made fully public the conflicting points of view and disputes on points of view and disputes on points of view.)

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What Is Independent Socialism?

What does the Independent Socialist League stand for? What is "Independent Socialism" anyway?

That's a big subject and every issue of LABOR ACTION has been and will be devoted to it, in one way or another.

If we had to put the ideas of independent socialism into a nutshell—or rather into five nutshells—here is what it would be:

1. Socialism vs. Reform

Independent socialists believe with

all their heart in the fight which the labor movement makes for the most extensive "reforms" under capitalism—that is, in the fight for the immediate and pressing and necessary demands for a higher wage, for better conditions, for full untrammelled rights for trade unions and for all democratic liberties, against racism and . . . the list is far longer.

Not only "believe in," but no socialist is worth his salt who is not in the front lines of these struggles, as a militant unionist, as an active fighter for every cause of the people. But we do not believe that through such reforms, the capitalist system

can be reformed into a system that operates for the benefit of the masses of people—above all, that through such reforms the capitalist system can be reformed into socialism.

We believe in fighting for such immediate demands ("reforms") because the people need them and ought to fight for them, regardless of how far they can get under capitalism. And through fighting for them—in the long run, only through fighting for them—they will learn that capitalism must be abolished if they are really to attain their needs and most heart-felt desires.

(Continued on page 5)

May Day Greetings!

This is the day when we proclaim again the international solidarity of workingmen and workingwomen all over the world.

This is the day when we take stock again of our position and our problems.

The world has barely emerged from the bloodiest and most destructive war in history. We were told that on one side of the conflict stood the nations that loved peace and democracy, and on the other the nations that loved war, conquest and oppression. We were told that if victory crowned the efforts of the Allied powers, that if the Axis powers were crushed to earth, the whole world would at last enjoy peace, freedom and security.

To gain these ends, the people were called upon to make such sacrifices of blood and wealth, to endure such sufferings, as have no parallel in the past.

Let us remember all the solemn promises that were made during the war to win the support of the people. Let us remember the solemn promises that were made to achieve the Four Freedoms, to carry out the lofty principles of the Atlantic Pact, to establish the peace and brotherhood of all peoples in the United Nations.

Let us remember them well, because the only way in which our rulers and their governments can continue to trick and deceive the people is by counting on our short memories.

They're Preparing War

The war ended in a smashing defeat of the Axis powers. The rule of Hitler, of Mussolini, of the Japanese militarists, no longer exists and therefore can no longer threaten the peace of the world. Yet, although the Second World War has come to an end, there is no real peace but only an international armed truce.

Everywhere the people tremble with fear of

another world war. Everywhere the governments are preparing another world war. The graves of the millions of war dead have not yet had time to turn green. The mothers of the world have not yet had time to raise a new generation of cannon fodder. The cruel, deep war wounds from which half the world is still bleeding have not yet had time to heal.

Yet, once again, for the second time in ten years, a new world war is being concocted before the very eyes of the helpless, unconsulted millions of every nation, a war even more unspeakable and sinister in its consequences than the one that has just ended.

What has happened to the peace which we were assured would be ours if the Allied powers were triumphant?

The United States now has the largest standing army in its peacetime history. It has peacetime military conscription for the first time in its history.

It has the largest military budget in its peacetime history and more and more billions of dollars are added to it every few months. It is pouring still more billions of dollars into militarizing and arming countries of Europe which have hardly begun to recover from the ghastly sufferings of the Second World War.

It cannot find a miserable few tens of millions of dollars for the building of homes because it is spending billions to produce atomic bombs, with which it threatens to destroy whole cities and industries and peoples. It forces its satellites everywhere—its hungry, groaning satellites—to engage in the same exhausting and fendish armaments race.

The Russian Tyranny Arms

Russia is likewise preparing for war. Its great and long-suffering people are still held in an iron vise by a totalitarian ruling class

(Continued on page 6)

Fund Drive to Build ISL Under Way—\$14,000 Due

By YETTA BARSH
Fund Drive Director

The independent socialist movement has a big job to do. And we're asking the readers of LABOR ACTION to pitch in.

At the recent convention of the Independent Socialist League, the delegates directed the organization of a national fund drive to help launch the new organization. A goal of \$14,000 was set to be raised by June 15 of this year.

It was unhesitatingly agreed by the delegates present at the convention, after listening to a recital of the financial situation of our League and the heavy demands made upon us

to aid the regular issuance of LABOR ACTION and The New Internationalist, that the sum of \$14,000 should be our reasonable and logical goal.

The raising of that sum will enable us to meet the high cost of printing such publications and the rising costs of the general operation of our organization.

SACRIFICES WORTHWHILE

It will make it possible for us to conduct our work, without interruption, even during the financially more difficult summer months because it will give us the necessary reserve to cover the deficits which usually accumulate during that period.

A portion of the \$14,000 is to be

set aside for use in our fight against the "subversive" listing. We have met with some initial successes on this score and feel that we can now begin a real drive to remove our name from this list. We will need funds to carry on this drive effectively.

It was anticipated by all that the raising of \$14,000 would not be an easy task, but all who participated in setting the goal felt that whatever sacrifices would have to be made to attain the goal would be worthwhile.

The representatives of one branch after another pledged themselves to spur on the comrades of their respective branches.

Quotas were assigned to the various branches and units of the League. (Continued on page 2)

Come to the May Day Meetings of the ISL!

CLEVELAND

Hear: BEN HALL
Sunday, May 1, 8 p. m.
Slovenian Hall
6409 St. Clair Ave.

NEWARK

Hear: EMANUEL GARRETT
Friday, April 29, 8 p. m.
248 Market Street

DETROIT

Hear
Max Shachtman
Saturday, May 7
8:30 p. m.

9016 12th Street
(near Clairmount)
Refreshments
and Dancing

S. F. BAY AREA

Hear: GORDON HASKELL
Saturday, April 30, 8 p. m.
Boilermakers Hall, 562 11th St.
OAKLAND

LOS ANGELES

Hear: ALBERT GATES
Skit and Social
Sunday, May 1, 8 p. m.
At Roland's, 1881 Morton
(cor. Lucretia)

N. Y. C.

Hear
Max Shachtman
Emanuel Garrett
Nathan Gould
Justin Graham
Sunday, May 1
7:30 p. m.
Cornish Arms Hotel
311 West 23rd Street
at 8th Ave.

CHICAGO

Hear: MAX SHACHTMAN
Friday, May 6, 8 p. m.
Midland Hotel, 172 W. Adams
(Parlors B-C-D)

BALTIMORE

Hear: HAL DRAPER
on The ISL and the Ober Bill
Friday, April 29, 8 p. m.
1029 E. Baltimore St., Rm. 5

BUFFALO

Hear
Max Shachtman
Tuesday, May 10
8:15 p. m.
at
Labor Action Hall
639 Main Street

PHILA.

Hear: HAL DRAPER
Sunday, May 1, 8 p. m.
1139 W. Girard Av.
(N.E. cor. 12th St. & Girard)

READING

Hear: HENRY JUDD
Saturday, April 30, 8 p. m.
29 Reed Street
(Reed & Court)

ADA Is Still Pulling at Truman's Coattails

By R. L. FERGUSON

CHICAGO—Although the delegates to the second annual convention of the Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), which met here April 7-9, were genuinely worried and angered by the frustrating defeats handed their labor-civil rights program by the unholy "Dixie-gop" coalition in the 81st Congress, this collapse of their feeling of victory of last November 2 has not as yet produced the slightest major change in ADA outlook.

BLIND TO FAILURES

Their convention was adorned by the presence of scores of the best known figures in the liberal and labor world. Promises of continuing and greater support to their organization came from many sides. Speeches by their leadership urged them to greater vigor in renewing the struggle—along the same political lines that so far have brought only betrayal and defeat!

It is this last point which is decisive. It is precisely this point that the ADA convention completely ignored. It ignored any examination of the fundamental political premises for its existence, and in so doing, it guaranteed its continued ineffectiveness.

The main convention issues revolved around two aspects of current politics: (1) attitude to the Fair Deal-Truman minority of the Democratic Party, and (2) attitude to the government's bi-partisan foreign policy. On either count a wrong political position would prove fatal to labor-liberal progress. ADA went (that is, remained) wrong on both.

COMMITTED TO DEMOCRATIC PARTY

Discussion of the Statement on Political Policy, drafted by a commission headed by Detroit Common Councilman George Edwards and including David Dubinsky, Michael Straight, Emil Rieve and Daniel

Hoan, to name only a few, brought the most distinct cleavage of the convention. *Crux of the dispute centered around a minority report, voted down 150 to 114, which merely sought to emphasize ADA's role of "political and organizational independence" and refrained from mentioning cooperation with the Democratic Party at all, although its sponsors certainly favor that too.*

The full pressure of Senator Hubert Humphrey (Dem., Minn.) national chairman, was needed to quell this timid "revolt" with a speech putting the matter point-blank: "Are you going to say to President Truman: 'We don't believe you ever did mean your campaign program?'"

A further amendment from the floor followed this defeat for the minority report, and was accepted by the leadership, so that the commission statement was revised to read "... cooperation with the Fair Deal elements of the Democratic Party offers the best opportunity on the national level for the achievement of liberal purposes" instead of "cooperation with the Democratic Party in carrying out the Fair Deal Program."

In reaffirming its view that in the present period "The formation of a national third party will be injurious to liberal purposes" the convention blindly heaved to its beaten path, without discussing whether the magnitude of the present crisis should force consideration of more drastic measures; that is, forming a political party of labor and liberals that really would be politically and organizationally independent of the two old parties.

Instead the statement blamed the Dixie-gop successes on three weaknesses of the liberal forces: (1) failure to follow up the election with a campaign to impress Congress with the need to enact the popular mandate into legislation. The delegates were not reminded that mass actions

such as demonstrations and the like had been proposed by militants in the union movement and in LABOR ACTION.

(2) The separate elements in the "liberal coalition" pursued too narrowly their own special aims. This reference is to the fact that labor, minority peoples and other forces concentrated their efforts on projects having the highest priority for them, such as labor on Taft-Hartley. Typical ADA attitude is illustrated in LABOR ACTION'S issue of March 28 describing the stupid and calculated affront by Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois to the interracial supporters of labor-liberal coalition, when he sacrificed the fight against segregation in the South to the Dixiecrats as a measure of appeasement during the filibuster.

(3) "The ineffective—if not nonexistent—liaison between Truman and ADA forces which put him in office. In a word this criticism of Truman means that he no longer cares about his liberal program or its supporters. The truth hidden in this phrase is the heart of ADA's failure. Not only the Dixie-gop alliance but Truman himself is no longer amenable to their approach. That is, the Democratic Party as a whole is anti-popular.

As though to reply to implied criticisms Truman sent a soothing telegram to the convention, saying in part: "We are carrying out (1) the program we offered to the voters last year. In carrying out that program we are not making everyone happy. Some say we are moving too fast. Others say we are moving too slow. As long as the people know where we are going and that we are going there I do not worry over petty and temporary victories by obstructionists, nor do I worry about the future of liberalism in America." The serenity of strike-breaker, injunctivist Harry Truman at his program's defeat is a very menacing fact to the masses. But the wire had

its desired effect on ADA liberals of forestalling possible further steps to independence from the Democratic Party.

The only measure proposed for still pushing the Fair Deal in 1949 was to call "conferences" in various communities to exert pressure on Congress and legislatures! It urges greater grass roots, doorbell pushing activities, on a basis of continuous political participation, to build up to a liberal majority in 1950 and 1952. Further cooperation with CIO-PAC, AFL-LLPE and the political arms of such independent unions as IAM and Railroad Brotherhoods was stressed.

INDEPENDENCE ISSUE REMAINS

Such as it was, the principal conflict of the convention was illustrated on this question of political action. Although apparently allayed by the "compromise" amendment referring to cooperation with Fair Deal Democrats, this cleavage may well make itself apparent, at a later stage of developments, again as a conflict between those firmly committed to the Democratic Party versus those who find "no other place to go at this time." The former are comprised of the Fair Dealers who gained office last November in national, state and local elections such as the 21 congressmen who support ADA, governors like Bowles of Connecticut, Williams of Michigan and Stevenson of Illinois, and their supporters.

Those who "have no place else to go," having rejected a Labor Party orientation, include assorted liberal and labor elements anxious to keep ADA as "independent" as possible to increase their bargaining powers. This of course is the most difficult of all tasks for liberalism in capitalist politics.

On foreign policy the convention adopted, with few amendments, the draft of its commission headed by theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. Wholehearted support was given the North Atlantic Pact, Marshall Plan and

such major policies in the cold war as Truman finds necessary. The convention got a telegram of gratitude from Secretary of State Acheson! An amendment by Students for Democratic Action, campus unit of ADA, to call for removal of Portugal from the North Atlantic Pact because of its dictatorial regime, similar to Franco's, was voted down, indicating how closely ADA leans to the really important demands of American imperialism.

Further examples: an amendment to strike out the phrase: "While we cannot pull out of Greece" from a sentence was defeated. On Indonesia an amendment carried enthusiastically to demand cessation of the U. S. aid unless the Dutch comply with U.N. orders.

DOMESTIC POLICY

A final point in this resolution calling for the setting up of a special ADA office for cultivating worldwide relations with democratic groups in order to establish a "world third force" is thought to prestage a future Paris conference to rival the Stalinists' recent New York City Cultural Conference.

The Resolution on Democratic Policy brought forth a number of amendments on questions pertaining to Civil Rights legislation and academic freedom. These will be dealt with by LABOR ACTION in a separate article at a later date, inasmuch as they involve controversial policies that divide ADA forces from top to bottom in many ways. The economic sections of the resolution were referred to the incoming National Board because of insufficient time for consideration by the convention.

A number of brief observations can be given here on the convention's significance:

1. It is now evident by the attention paid to ADA by top labor leaders, in speaking and participating in this convention, that they have decided to boost ADA further as "labor's" political vehicle. By constitutional provision the convention granted 7 posts each to CIO and AFL and 2 to independent unions on the incoming National Board. It was rumored that financial contributions by unions were substantial, with more to come, as labor observers report back to their organizations. The broader appeal of ADA to all social levels is thought to be an asset in labor's fight for its own political aims.

2. The ADA will remain tied, for the next period, to the Democratic Party. Senator Humphrey indicated he would not accept as chairman again unless the dispute on political policy were resolved by keeping tight ADA's link with the Democratic Party. He accepted the next year's chairmanship.

3. ADA's ultimate future will be determined by the increasing difficulty of reconciling the foreign policy of U. S. imperialist expansion abroad with ADA's desire for expansion of internal reforms at home. The collapse of its domestic political program in the 81st Congress is a grim foreboding of the future.

4. ADA is now the principal rallying center of all those forces determined to try to stop the growing desire of labor for a genuine independent Labor Party. As such it serves the top labor leaders as a meeting place to discuss policy with the liberals and social democrats. At the same time it gives these leaders the illusion of increasing their political bargaining power without resort to a politically-class conscious base in their own unions. Such a situation is fraught with real danger for the natural and normal development of a Labor Party. Labor leaders, including Walter Reuther, bear the same responsibility in this situation—which is a far cry from their pre-November 2 calls for new political orientations.

YOUTH and Student CORNER

By JULIUS FALK, National Secretary SYL

"How strong are the Stalinists in City College?" "If the Stalinists control a student action, should you support it?"

These are two questions one hears from all sides today and they deserve serious answers.

The Stalinists at City College do NOT control the strike, though they are very influential in it. The strike is run by the Student Council, in which the Stalinists are a definite minority.

However, they are a large minority and a well-organized one, giving them a serious advantage over any single anti-Stalinist force on the campus. The anti-Stalinists at City College range from the conservatives who oppose the strike to militant socialists. Only a small group of anti-Stalinists are aware of what Stalinism really means and are programmatically capable of fighting it on a healthy basis. The bulk of the anti-Stalinists—the majority of all student organizations—do not understand their totalitarian opponent, and they are programmatically incapable of conducting a genuinely progressive fight against it.

The confusion among the student leaders on the nature and aims of the Communist Party is exploited by the Stalinists; the confusion permits them to exert a seeming influence far beyond their actual extent of control.

The City College strike committee has issued excellent strike directives, insisting that political parties must not be allowed to utilize the strike for their own partisan ends, demanding a maximum of order on the part of pickets, and instructing students not to interfere with those who wish to attend classes. The first mentioned order is certainly indicative of the Stalinists' inability, so far, to control the strike. The other two instructions intelligently meet the given situation, which (we must remember) is a student strike and as such does not necessarily employ the same tactics as a trade-union strike.

IF THE STALINISTS CONTROL

But even if the Stalinists at City College did control the leadership of the strike lock-stock-and-barrel, that in itself would not necessarily determine our attitude. A socialist cannot base his activity on a concrete issue merely on the degree of Stalinist control.

The demands of the City College students are justified demands and IF the Stalinists were leading this strike it would still remain the socialist's responsibility to participate in the strike. But it would then be his additional responsibility to oppose the leadership of the strike, warning the students against the danger of the strike turning into a demonstration for Stalinist partisan interests.

On the other hand, IF the Stalinists at City College were to take over the leadership of the strike and maintain that leadership, then the original purposes of the strike would tend to give way to the propaganda speeches and slogans of the Communist Party. In that hypothetical situation the popular base of the emaciated strike would certainly dwindle and it might be incumbent upon socialists to withdraw their support. Speculations on these matters cannot be more definite.

The Stalinists are an important factor in the City College strike. There can be no doubt that they are particularly anxious to gain control of it. This follows from the exclusive emphasis the Stalinists are giving to civil-rights issues on and off campus. It is obvious Stalinist policy in the schools is to avoid meetings on

local political events. Instead, the activities of the CP-dominated clubs are devoted to social activities (folk-song festivals, square dancing, film presentations) and to campaigns and rallies on civil-rights issues.

KEEP AWAY FROM POLITICS

The reasons for this approach merit elaboration.

The Stalinists cannot expect any worthwhile response for their position on world politics from the student body. Meetings devoted to justifying the Russian role in Berlin, the purges and trials behind the Iron Curtain or conditions within Russia will boomerang. Precisely because the campus Stalinists are on the defensive in this field they have become extremely aggressive and "militant" on civil-rights issues.

This is designed to deflect attention from their role as agents of an unpopular totalitarian power and to deflect student concern from the brutal, undemocratic conditions in Russia and its satellite neighbors. The Stalinists hope to be in a position where they can effectively say to the student: "Why are you so concerned with reports about the lack of democracy and the existence of slave labor in Russia, when democratic rights are being abrogated at home?"

The Stalinists on campus, in order to make this abrogation of civil rights more vivid to the student, try to find local campus violations of academic freedom. Their question can then be posed: "Why listen to stories about conditions in Russia when democratic rights are being violated on your own campus?" This search for academic-rights issues is accompanied by conscious Stalinist efforts to make its members and front groups the victims of reactionary school administration regulations. This victimization is planned to give them further prestige and to facilitate their control of academic-rights struggles and their pretense to be the only real defenders of student rights.

CP STRATEGY

This strategy has another purpose. Not only is it intended to deflect attention from criticism of Russia but academic-rights issues can be used as a springboard from which the Stalinists can bring in most especially the government trials of the 11 Communist Party leaders. We can be sure that wherever the Stalinists gain the upper hand in a student action for democratic rights that the trial of the 11 will eventually eclipse the immediate issues at stake.

Another important motivation behind the campus Stalinists' campaigns on civil liberties is the more obvious organizational one: it is the easiest way they can win student sympathy, which in turn can be channeled into more direct organizational support for the CP fronts on campus.

In City College the Stalinists were particularly anxious for a prolonged strike as against the more realistic proposal of a one-day stoppage. A prolonged strike required more preparation and should not have been called before the Easter holidays. The Stalinists, with their smoothly operating machine inside of the Student Council, managed to push through a strike referendum which was so worded that even though a minority of those who voted were in favor of a prolonged strike, the extended strike was nevertheless called. The Stalinist pressure for a prolonged strike was motivated by the strategy described. This strategy will continue to be frustrated for the most part as long as they do not control the strike policy.

CCNY Student Strikers Return to Picket Line

NEW YORK—On Tuesday morning, April 19, City College students returned to the picket line after a four-day Easter vacation. The strike, which began on Monday, April 11, was the result of the failure of both the college administration and the Board of Higher Education to bring to justice two members of the faculty, who are charged with racial and religious discrimination. Last week's LABOR ACTION carried full details.

The students returned to the picket lines with renewed vigor and confidence. The strike seems to be gaining in influence and support. With a report from Albany that the Commissioner of Higher Education would be forced to intervene due to "a breakdown" of the normal educational processes the editor in chief of one of the campus newspapers resigned because he was opposed to the strike. The students are high spirited and determined to carry this fight out to the end. The strike leaders have stated that they would not accept compromise. They have planned mass meetings, entertainment and classes to be held on the campus.

In the three days of picketing preceding the Easter vacation the students showed that they would not be intimidated into returning to classes or into giving up peaceful picketing. The picketing and mass absences from classes continued throughout the three-day period despite police provocations and threats from the administration.

On Wednesday the 13th, the last day of school before the vacation period, the students went en masse from the campus down to the City Hall where they held a picket line in an attempt to see the mayor. The

picket line ended at about 5:30 in the evening; no one saw the mayor. The students left with the vow to return to the campus following the Easter vacation to continue their strike.

That same Wednesday afternoon there was a general faculty meeting. A request on the part of the student representatives to present a statement to this meeting was rejected with the statement that the Student Council would not be recognized as the students' representatives until the students return to classes. This policy on the part of the administration served to inspire even greater determination on the part of the strike leaders.

SEEK PUBLIC SUPPORT

During the Easter vacation the strike leaders made an effort to obtain the support of the public. They realize that the students cannot carry on this fight alone. They asked the public to send letters and telegrams to city and state officials and educators, in support of the students demands for suspension and trial of the two members of the faculty involved.

In addition the support of such organizations as the NAACP, the American Veterans Committee, and the American Jewish Congress, has been obtained. The strike leaders were alert and acted in concert with student opinion in refusing to allow Stalinist front organizations to take over the strike and obscure the issues involved.

The students have taken the initiative and are leading the way in this struggle to cleanse the campus of racial discrimination. It is up to the public and other college students throughout the country to come to their support.

\$14,000--

(Continued from page 1)

as well as to the Socialist Youth League, LABOR ACTION and the National Office of the Independent Socialist League. Since the announcement of the quotas, the comrades of the Cleveland ISL have written us that that branch "has upped its fund drive quota to \$400" (a \$100 increase).

We are urging all of the branches of the ISL and SYL units which are participating in our drive to make certain that they meet and even oversubscribe their quotas.

HELP NOW!

A total of \$12,450 has been assigned to branches of the ISL, and a large part of that sum is expected to come from members of the Independent Socialist League who will endeavor to contribute one week's wages to the drive. We hope that friends of the Independent Socialist League, members and friends of the Socialist Youth League and readers and friends of LABOR ACTION will do their best to help us raise the balance.

If you are a supporter of the program of LABOR ACTION, if you want to help the Independent Socialist League get under way as the effective left wing of the labor movement and as a fighter for socialism, then we urge you to give us a hand NOW.

If you want to help us in our fight against the "subversive" listing, you can do so now by helping us raise our \$14,000 goal.

Send us your check or money order. If you can make a \$100 contribution, or \$50, or \$1 contribution, or if you can raise those sums from among your friends—send in whatever you can. Make your checks or money orders payable to:

Independent Socialist League
4 Court Square
Long Island City 1, New York.

Members of the Independent Socialist League have been asked to make their contributions as soon as possible and not to wait until the end of the drive (June 15). The New York Local informs us that it is trying to help us speed up collections and that

it is making an all-out drive to achieve 50 per cent of its quota by May Day.

We would like to see other branches and units in the fund drive follow suit. Fill your quotas as quickly as you can! That will give you time to go over the top before June 15!

Build the ISL Fund Drive Quotas

Akron	\$200
Baltimore	200
Boston	100
Buffalo	1,000
Chicago	1,500
Cleveland	400
Connecticut	50
Detroit	600
Indiana	100
Los Angeles	500
New York City	4,000
Newark	300
Oregon	50
Philadelphia	400
Pittsburgh	50
Reading	100
St. Louis	50
San Francisco	800
Seattle	300
Streator	25
West Virginia	125
Youngstown	100
Socialist Youth Lea..	300
Labor Action	150
National Office	1,500
Miscellaneous	1,100
Total	\$14,000

Readers of LABOR ACTION: Help Launch the ISL!

Do your share! Help us hit the 100% mark!

Send your contribution immediately to: Independent Socialist League, 4 Court Square, Long Island City 1, N. Y.

Enclosed find \$..... as a contribution to the \$14,000 Fund Drive of the Independent Socialist League.

Name Date

Address

City Zone State



CCNY Recaptures a Bit of Its Old Tradition

It'll Go a Long Way!

By NATHAN GOULD

In most periodicals in the country, printed ads make the most fascinating reading. The April 11 issue of one magazine addressed the following message to a selected body of readers:

"Room to swing a cat in—a big house means room to grow in—to play and entertain and laugh and love in.

"Not all of us are so fortunate in these cramped days when only 16 per cent of all U. S. homes have as many as seven rooms.

"But some people are. "Path Finder's more than one million families have room for spacious, gracious living. Forty-eight per cent of THEIR homes are 7 rooms or more. Four out of five own their homes.

"Path Finder's brilliant, yet neighborly approach to vital and interesting news has singled out this kind of privileged families.

"Where else can you find so many—with so much—where people buy one half of the consumers' goods of the nation?"

"For further news about them just ask—Path Finder."

Working men and women can get

straighter facts about the one million privileged families who purchase 50 per cent of the consumers' goods and whose homes are spacious enough to swing a whole blessed managerie in, from LABOR ACTION and from the Independent Socialist League.

These institutions are somewhat more concerned with the over 120 million people in this country who live by toiling, who occupy cramped and dilapidated quarters and who all together purchase the remaining 50 per cent of the consumers' goods of this country.

It is on behalf of these underprivileged that LABOR ACTION and the Independent Socialist League lives, works and fights.

We "sell" ideas. We regard with indignation the inequality which "Path Finder" seems to exult over.

We want decent homes for the worker and his family, and decent wages to provide health, and education, and comfort for the 120 million. We want an end to all inequality, social and economic and political, for all peoples and all races. We want civil rights, economic security, and peace.

We want a true democratic government of, by and for the working class; a government

that can secure and ensure the equality of which we speak.

And what we seek, we fight for.

WILL GO A LONG WAY

The Independent Socialist League and LABOR ACTION are currently engaged in a fund-raising effort to support their activities on behalf of the underprivileged.

The \$14,000 which is the goal of this two months drive is a small figure. It would not, we are sure, make much of an impression on the annual, or even the monthly, budget of a magazine like "Path Finder."

But for a workers' organization which pays workers' wages (or less) to its "executives," and which carefully budgets every penny for use where it will do the most good, \$14,000 will go a very long way.

The money will be used largely to meet the annual deficit of these institutions; will assure the continued appearance of LABOR ACTION, and will help sustain our socialist activities.

Every class-conscious worker, every reader of LABOR ACTION, every friend of the Independent Socialist League should support this fund drive. We appeal to you to support this cause because it is your own cause.

Resolution of ISL Convention—Part I

The Basic Trends in the United States Today

The United States has emerged from the Second World War as the principal victor. Its economic condition is so powerful and vigorous relative to the economy of all other countries, and at the same time so vitally affected by the profound difficulties of other countries, that it finds imposed upon it a tremendous problem.

It has the task of resuscitating, maintaining and expanding the economy of the rest of the capitalist world in order to ward off or reduce to a minimum the violent social upheavals that threaten it and thereby to prepare it for its role in the coming war between the two imperialist blocs.

This task exercises a determining effect upon the evolution of the

American economy. To fulfill it requires the maintenance and in some cases the expansion of the productive capacity, primarily of the United States and secondarily of the satellites dependent upon it, and a steady increase in the extent to which this capacity is devoted to the production of means of destruction—that is, production for war and for war preparation.

The United States decided the defeat of the Axis powers in the war by virtue of its crushing industrial and financial superiority. To accomplish this defeat, the United States expended its productive forces, at the wartime peak, to twice the level of the last pre-war year (if the difference in commodity prices is ignored) and yet succeeded in maintaining an almost equal division between production for civilian purposes and production for war purposes. The expansion was thus largely accounted for by military production.

September, 1941, that is, at a time when the United States was but a few weeks away from full-scale and official participation in the war.

Orders already placed under this program mean the revival of the huge aviation industry which was allowed to collapse at the end of the war; it means the sustenance of the weak-

ened machine-tool and precision instruments industries; it means the re-allocation of steel and other products, already in short supply, to war instead of civilian production. There is little reason to believe that anything but an increase and extension of the American armaments program is to be looked for in the period ahead.

The phenomenon, characteristic of all class states today, may be expressed almost mathematically in a broad formula: the greater the share of the armaments economy over against the civilian economy, minus the degree of resistance of the working classes, the stronger is the tendency toward converting the democratic state into the authoritarian or totalitarian police state.

Fortunately, there exist powerful material and ideological forces that exercise a strong braking action upon the tendency to which the United States, like all sectors of decaying capitalism, is subject. They are even strong enough to reverse the tendency toward the development of a police state at specific stages of this development and therewith to strengthen the economic position and the democratic rights of the working class in particular and the people in general.

Materially, these forces are represented mainly and most significantly by the organized labor movement; ideologically, they are represented by the democratic traditions that are so deeply rooted in the United States. The organized working class has not been crushed in this country or even seriously defeated. On the contrary, it is not only at its high point numerically, it is not only established powerfully in basic industries that were still unorganized for years after the First World War, but it is filled with a great self-confidence in its strength, which has only been enhanced by the role it feels it played

in the last presidential election.

The working class is in an exceptional position to defend and even to extend democratic rights, to defend and improve its economic position, and it would be in an even more advantageous position if it organized as an independent political movement. It is difficult to assume that a really serious jump toward a police state could occur in the United States merely by gradual bureaucratic encroachment upon democratic rights, or in any other way than by the violent or semi-violent methods that are characteristic of fascism or a movement of the fascist type.

It is equally difficult to assume that a fascist movement of serious significance could develop in the United States before the labor movement has had the opportunity, which it will have, to take command of the nation and has failed to seize the opportunity, as was the case in several European countries.

Such opportunities are not in the irrevocable past, but lie ahead. The labor movement is neither crushed nor crippled. It is and will for a long time remain the surest force on which the preservation of political democracy can rely in the United States.

To lose sight of this vital consideration is to become completely disoriented concerning the tempo at which the underlying political tendencies of decaying capitalism are developing in this country and the effectiveness and even greater potentialities of the counteracting social tendencies.

SPARKS in the NEWS

In a Nutshell

"The American form of Socialism, as it was defined by Eugene Debs over a long period of years called for 'collective production for collective use.' There are variations to this phrase, but they are more or less supplementary such as 'collective use'; 'collective production for both collective and individual use.' And, there are others."—From Labor Herald (Md.), April 8.

Sure there are others, like: collective individuals for individual collectives, productive collection for useful individuals, and . . . heck, you play this game yourself.

Or better, go read Max Shachtman's "The Fight for Socialism," which is a useful collection of ideas about socialism—for productive individuals.

Now You See It . . .

"Post-war inflationary forces are still strong and will probably become more active in the near future, requiring the provision of measures now to curb spiraling prices."—Mr. Clark, Council of Economic Advisers, February 15, 1949.

"Prices are leveling off."—President Truman, February 17, 1949.

"The country is now in a period of disinflation."—Dr. Nourse, chairman, Council of Economic Advisers, February 18, 1949.

"Price developments . . . confirm the impression . . . that a rather impressive shift away from an inflationary position has occurred."—Department of Commerce release, February 22, 1949.

"Conditions have not changed in two months."—Mr. Snyder, Secretary of the Treasury, March 2, 1949.

"The economic situation and the price situation are leveling off."—Vice-President Barkley, March 2, 1949.

"Credit restrictions were eased because of sharp decline in installment buying."—Federal Reserve Board release, March 2, 1949.

"The nation's economy is spiraling in two directions at once—farm prices are coming down and metal prices are going up."—President Truman, March 3, 1949.

So there you are—nothing is happening, or things are moving in two directions at once, or the economy is spiraling up, or a downward trend has definitely appeared. The real solution came on March 3, 1949, when Mr. Keyserling, the third member of the Council of Economic Advisers, cautioned: "The public must not get a distorted psychological fear of the situation."

All right, Mr. Keyserling, we promise to not get a psychological fear of . . . er, what situation?

No Finn Can Win

From a column by G. Moroz, "Master of Sports" in USSR Information bulletin, published by Russian embassy, Feb. 25 issue.

BOXING

A team of Finland's crack boxers, 16 strong (two in each of the eight weight classes) visited Soviet rings last month and were polished off 8 to 0 in each of two meetings with the Moscow Trade Unions Athletic Club squad and then went on to Leningrad, where they did somewhat better, bowing finally 6 to 2.

The Moscow meet was held in the big Circus arena. Here is a summary of the second Moscow matches: flyweights: L. Segalovich (USSR) knocked out Kivist (Finland) in the second round; bantamweights: E. Mesyan (USSR) outpointed A. Lemettyy (Finland); featherweights: I. Knuyazev (USSR) outpointed Piispa (Finland); lightweights: Aristagov (USSR) outpointed Rinkinen (Finland); welterweights: S. Shcherbakov (USSR) knocked out P. Suominen in the first round; middleweights: V. Chudinov (USSR) won the decision weights: R. Turiya (USSR) knocked over Nissinen (Finland); light heavyweight: O. Renkke in the second round; heavyweights: Nikolai Korolyov (USSR) finished Vaelma (Finland) by the technical knockout route in 67 seconds.

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Shift to Heavy Industry

The end of the war and the almost complete suspension of production for military purposes did not, however, result in a profound economic crisis with massive shutting down of industry and mass unemployment, but only in the comparatively brief dislocations of the reconversion period. A vast purchasing capacity was built up among the workers and especially among the farmers during the war. Although the income of the working class as a whole did not increase to the same degree as the faster growing national income, it did increase absolutely and, while somewhat lowered during the reconversion period and considerably lowered by price inflation, it constituted a tremendous market for post-war consumer goods.

In addition, the first post-war period made possible the resumption of large-scale capital expansion, modernization of plant equipment and the production of industrial goods which was suspended during the war or which was made possible for the first time in more than a decade by the huge accumulation of financial reserves during the war. Finally, the end of the war reopened big export markets for American capital.

American industry, its plants intact, was the only one in a position to satisfy the requirements of this market which were extensive enough to eliminate the danger of an economic crisis in the United States immediately after the war. Except for isolated and specialized branches of industry (aircraft, for example), American economy, following the reconversion period, entered into production on a scale unprecedented in peacetime and now exceeding even the highest wartime peak, both from the standpoint of the number of workers employed and (again ignoring the difference in price levels) of the value of goods produced, both of which are now the highest in history.

U. S. Has Satellites Too

If it were possible to abstract the United States and its economy from the rest of the world, the undebatable conclusion could be drawn that in another year or two the country would be plunged into another of the classic capitalist crises of overproduction, probably the most severe and lasting on record. Such an abstraction is impossible; in any case, it renders impossible any concrete analysis.

By its whole nature and its whole past, the United States has matured for its decisive part in the struggle for single world domination which is now going on and which must, given the imperialist character of the contestants, culminate in the most violent war in history.

The United States is driven to subjugate but not to annihilate its satellites and junior partners. It is driven to invade their national sovereignty or to reduce its significance, but not to deprive them of all economic life. To prepare these countries for their part in the United States-Russian conflict, the United States must of necessity bolster up their economies, even if essentially within the limits of a war economy or potential war economy. The economic rehabilitation of these countries is thus purchased at the price of enlistment or impressment into the American war bloc.

The same economic rehabilitation, however, is one of the most important assurances against an early or precipitate economic crisis in the United States. Half or more of the Marshall Plan aid to the European countries is being allocated in the form of indirect orders upon American industry, providing it with an important sector of the market it requires for its relative equilibrium.

Furthermore, the United States has at its disposal a considerable actual

potential market in the countries of Asia and Latin America. The economic reconstruction or pacification of Europe is, however, only the preliminary to its increased fortification and militarization, which in turn amply increased governmental market for heavy industry in the United States.

The main arsenal of American imperialism must remain within the United States, which must be in a position not only to contest successfully with its principal enemy but to dominate successfully over its satellites. As the tendency to overproduction on the domestic market becomes marked, and even before, the whole international situation—not at any given conjuncture but taken in its broad and long-term development—increases the tempo and scope of the armaments program which operates as a counteracting tendency.

Although the Second World War ended only three years ago and the Third World War appears to be still off in the distance, and although, on the other hand, there are still no serious signs of an economic crisis in the nerve centers of American industry today—the United States has already launched a domestic armaments program so imposing as to have no parallel in the peacetime history of the country.

The immediate armaments program already voted by the government calls for the expenditure of \$14,000,000,000, of which one-fourth has already been placed, mainly in aircraft orders. What this already authorized amount signifies may be judged by comparing it with almost exactly the same amount supervised by the Office of Production Management in the 20,000 supply contracts of \$10,000 or more placed as war orders in Sep-

Arms Industries Dominate

This trend is recognized in all serious economic and political circles. It is the reason for the notable shift of traders and investors from consumer goods to capital goods. A heavy armaments program—to say nothing of war itself—gives the heavy or capital-goods industries all the assurances of material supplies and gives no assurances of such supplies to the consumer-goods industries.

The shift to the capital goods industries is further stimulated by the consideration that continued inflation will produce far greater "buyers' resistance" from the individual consumer than from the corporate consumer whose market and income is far more extensive. The shift is stimulated, finally and paradoxically, by the consideration that the boom usually declines first in the consumer goods industries, in the "soft lines" which feel the recession sooner than the heavier industries.

The principal factors in operation therefore dictate the conclusion that the United States may very well, in fact almost certainly will, experience radical dislocations, especially in the light and auxiliary industries, and even an economic recession, at the end of another year or two. However, there is no serious reason to look forward, within any such period, to the classical capitalist crisis of overproduction which, in the past, periodically and repeatedly maimed and prostrated the basic industries of the country, bringing in its train a multi-millioned army of unemployed.

A crisis based upon a narrowing market in consumer goods at a time of a sustained or widening market in capital goods is, if not inconceivable,

Armaments Bring Inflation

Government budgets, swollen by armament expenditures, require a tremendous tax burden which always weighs down disproportionately upon the living standards of the people; while the armaments makers and monopolists enjoy the special protection of the government which guarantees them a profitable market for their products, and are the principal profiteers from the protracted inflation.

Still early in the shift to the armaments economy, the United States now has a national budget of \$40,000,000,000. The bulk of this unparalleled budget is assigned to war costs, past, present and future. This budget represents a tax of about 20 per cent upon the total present national production of the country—and if the state and municipal budgets are added, the tax on the national income runs to about 25 per cent.

To run the governmental affairs of the wealthiest and most powerful of the decaying capitalist nations now requires two out of every eight hours of the work of every individual in the country. The national debt is now a good fifty times greater than it was before the First World War; the interest alone on the national debt today is larger than the national debt as a whole about 30 years ago; and the big bulk of the present national debt was incurred during the four years of American participation in the Second World War and as a direct result of this participation. The difference between the two capitalist

parties over the size of the national budget is, at its extreme points, inconsequential; it is a matter at most of a very few billion out of the total of forty.

The national budget, including the servicing of the fabulous national debt, which are respectively primarily a war budget and a war debt, constitutes by far the greatest single inflationary force in the economy of the country. On the basis of the present national budget—that is, even before it has assumed the much greater proportions which the growing war preparations will surely give it—for the capitalist politicians to speak of any serious check on inflation is at best a sign of ignorance or utopianism; as a rule it is sheer demagoguery. The harshest effects of inflation are always felt by the working masses.

Only the mass production of consumer goods under conditions of a high wage level can put an end to inflation on a sound basis. The growing government bureaucracy and growing governmental expenditures necessitated by the growing complexity and antagonisms of capitalist economy, on the one hand, and the growing armaments economy that inevitably accompanies capitalist imperialism, on the other hand, are the most gigantic and principal obstacles to the mass production of consumer goods.

Even in the wealthy United States, an armaments economy means a constant undermining of the prosperity and well-being of the people.

Labor and Civil Liberties

Parallel to the development of an armament economy runs the tendency toward a police state. It is important to judge correctly the speed of this tendency and the stage which it reaches at each point in its develop-

ment. The failure to do this entails the danger of one of two extremes: succumbing to democratic illusions or confusing the partial unfolding of the tendency with its ultimate conclusion.

THE BRITISH POLITICAL SCENE IS PORTRAYED EACH WEEK

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Enough of a "Cushion"?

"The king was in the counting house, Counting up his money."

The kings of several big corporations counted up the money made in profits during 1948. The figures were pretty terrific.

GENERAL MOTORS, leading the profit parade, reported earnings—after taxes—of \$440,447,724. That comes out to \$1,205,884 for every single day of 1948. That also comes out to \$50,245 profits for every hour of every day of the year.

GENERAL ELECTRIC reported profits up nearly three times from the high 1946 level. GE, which has already said "No" to preliminary CIO union demands for a wage raise, showed profits of about \$125,000,000 for the year.

(Nevertheless GE President Charles E. Wilson said profits were too low to act as a satisfactory "cushion" against possible drops in sales.)

U. S. STEEL reported, in preliminary figures, that its 1948 profits amounted to \$129,552,424—an increase of about \$2½ million over 1947. But experts say U. S. Steel's profit statement did not include some \$70,000,000 in additional earnings, which had been concealed in other accounting devices.

328 CORPORATIONS—reported by the Wall Street Journal from 22 industries—registered a 23.7 per cent profit jump in 1948. The 328 firms reported \$4,400,000,000 net profits—compared to just over \$3½ billion in 1947.

Biggest percentage jump—66.1 per cent—was reported by 18 oil companies. Their combined profits rose to \$729 million for the year. Nineteen auto and equipment companies had profit increases of 45.3 per cent—to \$640 million.

Total profits for 1948 are estimated at about \$21 billion.

(From CIO News, April 4)

We Are Building for Socialist Democracy

GREETINGS

to the
Independent Socialists
in the
vanguard
of the
fight
for the
Independent Labor Party!

SEATTLE BRANCH

WE'LL BE IN THERE

**DIGGING
TO BUILD A
WORKERS
DEMOCRACY**

Socialist Greetings
on May Day
from the West Virginia Branch
of the ISL

MAY DAY GREETINGS

to the
INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST LEAGUE
St. Louis Branch

*Build the League
in the
Industrial Midwest!*

THE CLEVELAND BRANCH
greet the formation of the
INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST LEAGUE

We're going

to build
the ISL
in
PITTSBURGH

Pittsburgh Branch

"Neither Washington nor Moscow!"

Reading's Independent Socialists pledge themselves to build the revolutionary anti-war movement against the third world slaughter that is being prepared on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

Reading Branch, ISL

Revolutionary Greetings to the ISL!

FOR AN INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS
AND A WORKERS' WORLD

Akron Branch, ISL

THE NEW YORK SOCIALIST YOUTH LEAGUE

Bronx, Manhattan and Brooklyn Units
greet the Independent Socialist League
on May Day

"YOUTH BE BOLD—SCRAP THE OLD!"

Greetings from
FRANK and HANK

- INDEPENDENT
- SOCIALISM
- LIVES
- AND
- FIGHTS!

Philadelphia Branch
ISL

MAY DAY GREETINGS

To the
INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST LEAGUE

from the
LOS ANGELES BRANCH

THE
**WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL LEAGUE
(CHICAGO GROUP)**
SENDS MAY DAY GREETINGS
TO THE
INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST LEAGUE

MAY DAY GREETINGS

from the
Newark Branch

We salute the
Independent Socialist League
The Comrades of
STREATOR, ILLINOIS

Build the
Independent Socialist
Movement!

The Comrades of
YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO

BUILD THE INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST LEAGUE!

Forward from this New Beginning!

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On May Day 1949, we pledge our dedication to the struggle for human freedom. The great aim of Socialism is more imperative than ever before—and the alternative more terrible. Let us build the Independent Socialist movement to rally all the fighters for socialist democracy and peace!

BROOKLYN BRANCH

For SOCIALIST FREEDOM— the HOPE of HUMANITY!

MANHATTAN BRANCH
ISL

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—CAPITALISM
—AND
—STALINISM!

—FOR A
—WORKERS'
—WORLD!

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UNITE FOR
SOCIALIST FREEDOM!

CHICAGO BRANCH
INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST LEAGUE

- SARAH and DAN
- SUE and SIS
- TAYLOR and FERGUSON

May Day Greetings
from Chicago
to the
Independent Socialist League

FOR THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

Berkeley, Calif.
Socialist Youth League

Socialist Greetings

TO THE ISL
from the

BRONX UNIT
SYL

MAY DAY GREETINGS

to the
Independent Socialist League

THE OBER BILL
CAN'T TURN BACK
THE CLOCK!

Baltimore Branch

MAY DAY GREETINGS ON THE FOUNDING OF THE INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST LEAGUE

We are In Solid Line with the I—S—L—!

BUFFALO BRANCH, ISL

May
Day
Greetings
to the
Independent
Socialist
League

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State Senator Says Lobbyists Can—

'Swing a Vote for a Steak Dinner'

By SUSAN GREEN

Recently the newspapers and magazines became quite excited about the announcement of Labor's League for Political Education of the AFL that it plans to raise a fund to augment the pay of labor-endorsed candidates elected to state legislatures. Comment has ranged from approval in the liberal press to a gentle warning from the Daily Mirror editor as follows: "Hey, wait a minute, fellows; that's bribery."

Because of the unbelievably low average pay of state legislators, powerful interests like insurance companies, railroads, public utilities and other corporations have a lush field on this local level to exert the influence of ready cash. The result of this situation, plus rural conservatism, has been a whole crop of anti-labor laws on the state statute books, so that even if the Taft-Hartley Act should be repealed in Washington, these state laws would still operate against labor.

Since state legislation is made, at least nominally, by state legislators, let us learn something about them. A most illuminating article about this species of politician recently appeared in the magazine section of the New York Herald Tribune, entitled "I Am a \$5-a-Day Senator" and written by Richard L. Neuberger, Oregon state senator. He tells of his own hardships living away from his home in the state capital on \$5 a day for the duration of the session: keeping house in a motor court; sharing a car and groceries with fellow legislators; worrying about getting back home quickly to get hold of some real money. These are the honest ones whose main infringement of what is called the moral code may be to sell their sets of the state's legal code to a bookseller or legal library.

FOR EGGS AND BACON

But this is not all. The picture of general corruption painted by Mr. Neuberger is shocking, even to the presumably shockproof. Direct quotations from Mr. Neuberger must be given to get the real essence: "It may all sound slightly comic, but there is an aspect to it which

rubs away the humor. There are 90 members in our legislature, and for every senator and representative a half dozen lobbyists crowd the capitol cloakrooms and hotel corridors. Armed with liberal expense accounts, they like nothing better than to pick up a legislator's dinner check, provide him with a bottle of liquor or a baked ham, or furnish him with a car and driver. It's gotten to the point where if you're a good lobbyist you can sometimes swing a vote for a steak dinner....

"I know a man who lobbies at state capitals all along the Pacific Coast. He admits frankly that it is 'easier and cheaper' to bring his influence to bear in Oregon than in California, where members are paid \$1200 a year plus expenses. The Oregon legislators are just as honest but less independent," confides this lobbyist. "Their measly pay makes them susceptible to what I call dime-store lobbying. You can get a key committee member indebted to you for the price of eggs and bacon...."

"In some states reports frequently hint of some senator or representative allowing his hotel bill to be paid by the local utility company. How much independence can be expected of a lawmaker under such circumstances?"

INDECENT WAGES

So it is not only of Oregon that Mr. Neuberger writes; no, indeed! The national average pay for state legislators is \$900 per year. Not many states, however, pay an annual salary. Those that do are: New York \$5000; New Jersey and Illinois \$3000; Massachusetts \$2750; Michigan \$2400; Ohio \$2000; Pennsylvania and Maryland \$1200. Legislators in these states are aristocrats compared with others. For instance, Connecticut pays \$600 for a two-year term; Vermont \$750 for a term; New Hampshire \$200 for a two-year term; West Virginia \$500 for a year; Utah \$300 a year.

Of course, legislative sessions do not last for a full two-year term nor even for a full year. But it must be remembered that legislators have to leave their own homes to live in the capital for the duration of the ses-

sion. Only a few states have small maintenance allowances. In states where legislators are permitted a secretary, to get extra money they often employ their wives who, as likely as not, know neither stenography nor typewriting.

This low standard of pay for state legislators results not only in the bribery so well effected by Mr. Neuberger. Another effect is that the well-to-do, who can afford the luxury, become state lawmakers. Businessmen sit in the state legislatures and make laws in their own private interest. Another outcome has been the growth of a retainer system, which is legal in many states. At any rate, legislators are not required to make their connections known.

The United States News & World Report, in an article on the subject of state legislators, says that the retainer system is practised by many insurance firms, railroads, public utilities, various other corporations. About one quarter of the legislators in most states are retained lawyers.

POLITICAL CESSPOOL

Another factor in the case is that most state legislators are apportioned to favor the rural districts. Some estimates are that the metropolitan areas are underrepresented by 25 per cent. For example, in New York State legislative apportionment was made in 1894 by a group of upstate politicians whose aim was to keep New York City from getting a majority. Labor is, of course, mostly in the cities.

Into this milieu of bribery and corruption, of domination by corporations, retained lawyers and rural conservatism, organized labor is entering with intent to increase its influence. In the past labor union have here and there also followed the retainer system. Now, however, the AFL is elevating the scattered practice to general policy. This ties in with the purpose of the CIO and AFL to elect candidates they endorse.

In order to get capable and reliable people to accept nomination for the state legislatures, they must be assured a decent livelihood. So there

is undoubtedly a logic in the plan of the AFL to raise a fund to subsidize its elected candidates. The gentle warning from the Daily Mirror—"Hey, wait a minute, fellows; that's bribery"—is laughable in view of conditions that seem as near a political cesspool as can be imagined.

WHAT IS REVEALED

From this corner, the corner of the socialist who wants to see labor as strong as possible, the question comes: Why not enter this field with labor's own political instrument, an independent labor party? Send men, and women from the ranks of labor to be lawmakers. Send them through a party which is labor's own, free from all Democratic and Republican entanglements, free from the parties to which these bribing lobbyists belong, these corrupting corporations, these retained lawyers, these rural conservatives. Let organized labor indeed see to it that its lawmakers are paid a decent wage, but let it also see to it that these are labor's own people, guided by and loyal to the platform of an independent labor party. Such a party would also be able to win over the rural people nearest labor in their economic and political interests.

There is something even more fundamental. On the scale of the state rather than the nation as a whole, one can see in greater detail the operation of the capitalist system. The unequal distribution of wealth; the power of those who have it over those who haven't; the use of any means for private profit—all is revealed in the operation of our state legislatures.

What kind of democracy is this anyway? Isn't there something to the socialist contention that real democracy is not possible under the profit system?

WORLD POLITICS

U. S. Occupation Govt. in Germany Grooms Secret Foreign Ministry

By GUSTAV MULLER

GERMANY — According to well-founded observations appearing in the foreign press, nationalism in Germany is on the increase. German administrative authorities place former Nazis in high positions, etc.

But what is not stated is that all this occurs with the knowledge and consent of the military occupation forces in Germany, and in opposition to German popular public opinion.

In Stuttgart, in the south of Germany, there is a bureau with a high-sounding name—Bureau for Peace Problems (Bureau für Friedensfragen). To give the secret away right now: this bureau, at a later date, is supposed to become the German foreign ministry.

Up to now the German public knows little or nothing concerning the activities of this office. It was created with American consent; the scope of its tasks is extremely diversified. The four prime ministers of the states which form the U. S. zone (Hessen, Bavaria, Württemberg-Baden and the city-state Bremen), are responsible for everything related to this bureau. The work of this office consists of analyzing questions of national law, what the future German frontiers should be, problems of dismantling and reparations, and an analysis of other very important questions, fundamental to the future German peace.

PEOPLE KEPT IN DARK Every politically conscious German citizen, every taxpayer—it costs about one million marks each year to keep this bureau going—by rights ought to be informed of what this bureau engages in. But the public hears nothing about it, since all the

work is pursued without public knowledge and control.

This outfit works exclusively for the private usage of the minister-presidents. However, in all types of its work, not only questions concerning the four states which make up the U. S. zone are taken up, but also problems that concern the whole of Germany and other countries.

Various requests on the part of the press to be at least informed of what was being discussed were met with the stereotyped reply: the Americans do not permit it.

At the same time, still another important question must be clarified. The future German foreign ministry would select its personnel from among those in the present Bureau for Peace Problems. For this reason, the German public cannot be indifferent to the question of who is being employed today in this bureau.

One section of its "reporters" are former colleagues of Ribbentrop in Hitler's foreign ministry. After having been freed, by compulsion, from their oath of allegiance to Hitler's government—perhaps against their will—they are now working in a so-called "democratic" institution, in order to let the old German foreign ministry, with its imperialist aims, rise up again tomorrow. The very fact that the activity of these colleagues of Ribbentrop is being kept from the public warrants the suspicion that the secret diplomacy of Hitler's era flowers on in the dark. The old tradition, after all, must be preserved and continued.

RIBBENTROP'S MEN

A certain Dr. Clodius, a former functionary under Ribbentrop, and stated to be a war criminal, is sitting

peaceably today in Moscow as one of Stalin's specialists on Balkan questions. He headed this field already under Ribbentrop. The Americans say: what the Russians can do, so can we, and even on a much greater scale.

They let these known war criminals move up in the ranks of the German administrative apparatus, dozens at a time. Count von Posadowsky-Wehner directs the Frankfurt division of the Bureau for Peace Problems. The director-in-chief of the German Economic Council, Dr. Paender, calls to Frankfurt a certain Mr. Eisenlohr, who once was Hitler's envoy to Prague, as consultant on "questions of foreign policy." A certain Herr von Maltahn heads the main division of foreign economy in Frankfurt.

All these gentlemen—colleagues of Von Ribbentrop and Dr. Clodius, closely related to Hitler's biggest and most powerful industrial trust, I. G. Farben—are working like moles to preserve and carry over into the future German foreign ministry, Hitler's tradition and the interests of the German trusts.

This list of "former" Nazis can be lengthened by adding a Herr von Friess, Director of the Protocol Division. A Mr. Holzhausen is charged with selecting the future personnel for German representation abroad. These gentlemen also are former functionaries of the notorious Ribbentrop ministry. All this goes on with the knowledge of the occupation forces.

The German people hardly suspect anything of these machinations. It is behind the closed doors of the ministerial offices and of the administrative palaces of the occupation forces that this ill-boding policy is being carried on against the interests of the workingpeople.

Independent Socialism --

(Continued from page 1)

The abolition of capitalism—that means the abolition of the private-profit system under which the factories and mines and all the means of production are owned by a class which lives by not working productively, because it lives off the labor of the workingpeople employed in their shops and plants.

WE ARE MARXISTS

Socialism means the replacement of this system by the collective ownership of the means of production (not of toothbrushes, towels or the family car—this is the kind of private property, not used to exploit labor, which we want more of).

For independent socialists, collective ownership means ownership by the associated people through a workers' government democratically

controlled by the masses of people themselves.

Not reform of capitalism but its replacement by a socialist democracy—this is the aim.

The Independent Socialist League is a Marxist movement, not an association of "pink socialists" or socialistically-tinted liberals. Liberals can do and have done a great deal in helping labor to fight for immediate needs, but their continuing belief in capitalism brings them up against a blind alley when capitalism's needs stand in the way of what they sincerely want to achieve. This is why liberalism, especially today, is so characteristically indecisive, floundering, confused and half-hearted. It cannot go all the way.

2. Socialism vs. Stalinism

Independent socialism is for a militant struggle against capitalism, but it has nothing in common with Stalinism, either with the Russian despotism and its works or with the agents of the Kremlin called in each country the Communist Party.

Russian Stalinism is the end-result of a counter-revolution that took place in the country where the first successful workers' revolution under Lenin and Trotsky first raised the banner of hope for millions of people. The Russian Revolution of 1917 has been completely destroyed. Nothing remains of its ideals or its institutions or its policies—nothing except the fact that a government owns and controls the means of production instead of private capitalists. And today it is a government despotism.

This state-nationalization of the economy in Russia means indeed that it is not the capitalist system of exploitation which reigns there. But the capitalist system of private ownership is not the only social system under which the masses of people have produced the wealth for the benefit of a ruling class.

There was feudalism and there was slavery, and today there is the totalitarian collectivism ruled by the bureaucracy from the Kremlin. But this bureaucratic-collectivist system is not socialism, is not a step toward socialism or a "form of socialism." It is its antithesis.

THE SOCIALIST'S QUESTION

Socialism does not merely mean government ownership. That is what the Stalinists say, and that is what the NAM says when it screams about "government interference in business."

A government may own industry (as in Russia) but the question which the independent socialist asks is: Who owns that government? That is: Is it democratically controlled by the people?

Under capitalism, industry is actually owned by private capitalists; and this minority, because of

their autocratic economic power, run the government to suit their own interests. Under Russian Stalinism, industry is autocratically owned by the government bureaucracy, and this minority, because of their autocratic political power, run the government to suit their own interests.

Independent socialists believe that the Communist Parties are enemies of the working class, twice dangerous because—unlike other enemies—they operate within the labor movement. Twice dangerous because, unlike other enemies, they are anti-capitalist and can therefore make a more effective demagogic appeal for working-class support... with which they seek only to enslave the working class.

3. Socialism: Democracy

From the above, it should be clear that real socialism and democracy are inseparable. There can be no real socialism without democracy.

The working class cannot be the dominant class in society except through its political power, except through the most thoroughgoing democratic control over its government. It is not an owning class of any kind—either capitalist, slaveholding or feudal—and cannot control a government through its purse-strings.

And there can be no real democracy without socialism. Freedom of the press is half a fraud when newspaper publishing is a big business which only big money can break into. Free elections are half a fraud when politics is a big business in which wealth and economic interest control the two big political parties through a thousand strings of patronage, corruption, social pressure and propaganda.

As long as the economic life of the country is run by the dictatorship of a wealthy minority, the owning class; as long as there is an owning class, democratic rights will be permitted to exist only so long as the people do not begin to use these rights in their own basic interests. When they do, the capitalist class moves toward fascism.

The fight for every democratic right, its maintenance and its extension, is part of the fight for socialism. Capitalism and Stalinism are both the enemies of democracy.

4. Socialism and War

Independent socialists are opposed to the imperialist wars of the capitalist governments as to the imperialist wars of the Russian Stalinists.

A third world war is threatening to bathe the world in blood once more. In Europe especially, the eyes of many workers turn in sympathy toward Russia because of the illusion of "socialism" there, and because these European workers have had enough of the misery and bloodletting and exploitations of the system they are familiar with—capitalism. The Stalinist advances in Eu-

rope have taken place in spite of the fact that more and more workers have found out the truth, or enough of the truth, about Russian totalitarianism.

But capitalism cannot stir them to defend it. It has nothing to offer them, especially today, its birthplace—it is visibly falling apart at the seams.

Capitalist imperialism has been weakened along with capitalism itself, particularly by the struggles of the colonial people in India, in the rest of Asia, by the revolt of Israel; but it hangs on where it can and wherever the people still do not move to throw it out—as in Africa. The most powerful capitalist country, the United States, is becoming more and more hated in Europe by its drive to subordinate the whole economy—and politics—of Western Europe to itself, by the operation of the Marshall Plan, for example.

In a world holocaust of atomic destruction, the capitalism of the West may count on defeating Russia militarily. But it can do so only by itself being submerged in the neobarbarism which it purports to fight. "Neither Washington nor Moscow"—this is the rallying cry of independent socialism. Socialism cannot be true to itself if it embraces its capitalist enemy in order to combat its Stalinist enemy, nor can it even effectively combat Stalinism by this step.

Only by fighting to present a third choice to the people can it work for the progress of humanity: a democratic alternative to capitalism, a socialist alternative to Stalinism.

5. Socialism and Labor

Independent socialists fight for their ideas as a loyal left wing in the labor movement.

"Loyal"—because, unlike the Stalinists, they have no interest except the heightened one, well-being, and effectiveness of the trade unions and every labor organization.

They do not seek to "capture the unions" in order to use them for a purpose alien to the interests of labor. In fact, they do not seek to "capture" them at all in any sense similar to the Stalinist machinations.

They do not seek posts for the sake of wielding power; in fact, they do not seek posts at all except insofar as the members want them there because of agreement with their policies.

"Left wing"—because, while their interests are the same as those of the rest of the labor movement, they see and point further. Today in the United States, the first further goal to which they point is not a great distance ahead.

Labor needs political power. It will need it in the future for a socialist democracy; it needs it today in order to defend itself against the rampant reactionary anti-labor drive and in order to get what it wants and needs and must have.

Labor needs its own political organization, independent of the old parties, which have given it nothing but constantly take away. It needs its own party of labor, an independent labor party. For this, first of all, independent socialists educate and fight within the labor movement.

But this is the socialism of the Independent Socialist League and this is the banner that it raises.

Lecture by Kazin, Howe Fills Hall at L.A. Forum

NEW YORK—An overflow crowd of 125 attended the Labor Action Forum on Sunday, April 18 at which Alfred Kazin and Irving Howe discussed "Two Novelists and Their Times: Melville and Hawthorne."

Irving Howe, the first speaker, presented an analysis of Nathaniel Hawthorne, the first American writer to achieve recognition in his own right. In dealing with the problem of the relation between the author's own life and his work, the speaker presented three different facets of Hawthorne's personality—the practical man of affairs, the recluse, and the inquisitive seeker after experience. Although his only apparent eccentricity was a desire for prolonged seclusion, Hawthorne in his writing tried to enter into "the dark caverns, into which all men must descend." His novels and stories are concerned primarily with sin, with human vice and error. Distrustful of the intellect and of reformism, he accepted the Calvinist doctrine of original sin, an inheritance of his forefathers.

CRITIC OF UTOPIA

In some detail, Howe dealt with the novel, "The Blithedale Romance," which was based on Hawthorne's ex-

perience at Brook Farm, a cooperative agricultural venture which tried to unite intellectual and manual life. The author refers to a "new hostility rather than new brotherhood" which is engendered by life in a utopian community that creates a minority set against the rest of the world. Characteristic of this novel as well as his other writings, Hawthorne's pattern is one of momentary sketches of a quest for experience which relapse into a seclusion and withdrawal from the world.

In discussing Melville and his work, Alfred Kazin made several comparisons between the two authors. Herman Melville dedicated himself completely to Hawthorne, who he felt was the only one who really understood him and whose certainty of style he envied. However, while Hawthorne was obsessed with reality and experience, Melville was primarily a mystic, occupied with the symbols of solitude and evil.

Religious, unlike Hawthorne, he was obsessed with the themes of a lost God, of the Father. Though he did not believe in God, he concerned himself with man's struggle back towards God, with the injustice of man's life on earth. His questioning and uncertainty was in relation to the established order of the whole universe, not merely the existing social conditions.

Both speakers aroused interesting discussion and capably handled their subjects. Alfred Kazin, author of "On Native Grounds" is a contributor to The New Yorker, The New Republic, Partisan Review and other magazines. Irving Howe, literary critic who has contributed to Commentary, Partisan Review and The Progressive, is a co-author of a forthcoming book on the UAW.

The final forum in the current series will be held at Labor Action Hall this coming Sunday evening, April 24 at 8 p.m. The speaker will be the well-known novelist Isaac Rosenfeld on "War and the Novelist."

Crowded Out:

An important article detailing the intense struggle in the National Maritime Union over the issue of loyalty oaths for members. Arrived too late for this issue; will appear next week.

Also a complete review of the UAW situation in Buffalo—recent elections, role of political groups, etc.

And much else that you will not want to miss.



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NEW YORK LABOR ACTION FORUM
April 24—ISAAC ROSENFELD
War and the Novelist
SUNDAY, 8 p.m., at 114 West 14th St., N. Y. C. 50 Cents (SYL: 25 Cents)

Workers Party Convention --

FOR SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY--

(Continued from page 1)

litical questions within its own ranks.) The following summary deals with the work of the four-day gathering at which the policy of the organization was decided.

The general background for this convention was the continued and intensified weakness of the socialist movement in the United States, the continued failure of the labor movement to form its own political party independent of the Democrats and Republicans, and the overwhelming threat accompanied by tremendous pressure of every kind to yield to the popular view of accepting support of American imperialism as a "lesser evil" to Russian Stalinist totalitarianism.

The latter question formed part of the first discussion on the agenda of the convention, based on the resolution on the international situation presented by the majority of the National Committee and on two minority documents. The resolution of the National Committee was adopted 29-3 (8 abstaining or not voting) in the final tally. The full text of this resolution will be published in the April issue of "The New Internationalist."

The NC resolution consists of three parts. The first analyzes new tendencies in the capitalist world toward increased bureaucratization and militarization and the growing dominance of war economy, linking these tendencies up with the new relations of imperialism in the colonial world and the trends toward a "bureaucratic collectivization" under capitalism. The second deals with the new problems raised in understanding the nature of Stalinism during the preceding two years, treating especially the Czechoslovakian coup of last February and the Tito split in the Cominform world. Section 3 concerns itself directly with the problem of the third world war looming between the two sectors of world imperialism, Western capitalism and Russian totalitarianism.

ANTI-WAR LINE STRESSED

The main thread of the resolution is a reaffirmation, in the light of the many new analyses contained in the document, of the policy of supporting neither of the imperialist camps in the cold war now raging or in the threatened war when and if it breaks out. The resolution points out that the orthodox Trotskyist view of Russia as some kind of "degenerated workers' state" worthy of support by socialists is today more blatantly than ever a tragic error at the best, in actuality, a suicidal defense of the most monstrous despotism the modern world has seen.

At the same time, it emphasizes that the advances of Stalinism in Europe and in the rest of the world cannot be stemmed by support of capitalism, which has nothing to offer the peoples to whom Stalinism appeals, and which can militarily defeat Russia only by itself sliding down toward the neo-barbarism of which Stalinism represents the advance-guard. It points to the development of an independent socialist movement — independent of both Washington and Moscow — as the only force which can defeat Stalinism without capitulating to all the degenerative forces leading Western capitalism to its doom.

A separate document attached to this resolution, on the slogan of an Independent Western Union for Europe, has already been published and discussed in the pages of LABOR ACTION.

The reporter for the NC, Hal Draper, stressed the war position of the resolution, including its analysis of the Marshall Plan as primarily the instrument of American imperialism to dominate Europe, and its opposition to the occupation of Germany by foreign troops, U. S. troops as well as Russian.

E. R. McKinney, presenting a counter-resolution, criticized many of the ideas in Section 1 of the NC resolution, in particular its analysis of the role of militarization and war economy in the trends of capitalism and its views on "bureaucratic collectivization" under capitalism. On the Marshall Plan he spoke for a "positive attitude" toward economic aid and against the view of opposing the Marshall Plan in principle.

Emanuel Garret spoke for two amendments to the resolution, one on the Marshall Plan and one on the German occupation. On the former, he laid especial stress on favoring economic aid while maintaining political opposition to the Marshall Plan; with regard to the second, he stressed the need for ensuring the defeat of Stalinism in Germany.

RESOLUTION ON U. S.

The first day of the convention ended with a report by Henry Judd on relations with other Marxist groups throughout the world and on the NC resolution dealing with steps toward reconstructing a socialist international.

The main discussion of the second day was on the Resolution on the United States, also in three sections: (1) the present state of the U. S. economy; (2) the political scene in the country today, particularly the effect of the 1948 election on, and the prospects for, a labor-party development; and (3) the role and tasks of the Marxists — in which the perspective for the party was taken up, as mentioned above.

(Continued from page 1)

which has added almost half of Europe and much of Asia to its slave empire.

It maintains the largest standing army in the world and the largest police machine.

This land, devastated by an invader with whom its own rulers allied themselves to launch the Second World War, and kept in poverty and wretchedness by these same rulers, is being drained of its energies and wealth for the upbuilding and maintenance of a war machine of such vast dimensions as to assure privation in permanence for its people.

In the satellite countries under Russian rule, reconstruction also means first and foremost the building of military-industrial arsenals and military-training barracks.

Thus the world, which was promised peace, has been divided into two irreconcilably hostile camps preparing feverishly for war.

From both camps, the people are hearing of least part of the truth about the Second World War, a part of the truth which should help us understand the whole truth about the coming world war.

The Stalinists tell us now that their closest allies of yesterday were not really fighting for world peace and freedom, that they were not really champions of democracy. Now they tell us that the Western powers are rapacious imperialists, enemies and oppressors of the people, secret and not-so-secret friends of fascism, warmongers who aim at the conquest and subjugation of the world.

The American government, the spokesmen, the statesmen, the editors of both of its political parties, tell us now that their allies of yesterday, the Stalinists, are not and never were democrats or fighters for democracy, that they are no better and probably worse than the Nazis, that they are and have always been a menace to world peace and world freedom, that they must be exterminated before they can carry out their long-standing plan to exterminate the liberties of the rest of the world.

Fools and Liars

Each side, in its own way, is telling the truth about the other! But even if only half of what they say about each other is true, they stamp themselves as criminal fools or criminal liars.

Fools — if they did not understand these things while they were allied in the last war and were proclaiming each other's great virtues, each other's great solidarity, and the justice of the war they were jointly conducting.

Liars — if they did understand these things while they were allied in the war, and yet kept silent about them, duping and trading the millions who listened to them and followed them in the international slaughter.

Why should people anywhere entrust their fate, their very lives, to these confessed fools or liars, to the rulers of both camps who promised us lasting peace after the war with the knowledge that they could not and would not keep their promise?

We socialists, who were independent of both camps in the last world war and maintained our independence, opposed the war on both sides from the very beginning. We opposed the war because we knew that it was not a just war, not a genuine people's war, not a war for democracy, that it was a war between two rival imperialist combinations to decide which one would rule the entire world, all its peoples and all its wealth.

The outcome of the war decided that neither Germany nor Japan would rule the world, or any part of it. But it left undecided who would rule — the combination headed by American imperialism, or the one headed by Stalinist imperialism.

It is precisely to decide this question that the frenzied preparations are being made for the Third World War. And for the same reasons that we socialists opposed the second imperialist world war, we are opposed to the third imperialist world war and summon all the people, starting with the working class, to bend every effort to combat the cold-blooded preparations that are being made for it.

No Security

The people were not only promised peace, but also security, freedom from fear and from want. Where is this security today, even in the United States?

The reporter for the NC, Max Shachtman, devoted his presentation in large part to Section 3, discussing the reasons for the weakness of the socialist movement, the pressure of patriotic ideology on its ranks, and the necessity of reorienting toward a propaganda group acting as the socialist left wing of the labor movement.

In a counter-resolution, Comrade McKinney opposed any such change in orientation and likewise opposed changing the name of the party. Presenting his own document also was J. Wallis, who emphasized the central idea that the key to growth was the more detailed working-out of the concept of workers' democracy in theory and practice. A series of amendments by Comrades Byer and Corbin mainly sought to concretize and extend the propaganda-group approach in a manner not, in their opinion, properly done by the NC resolution.

Sections 1 and 2 of the NC resolution were adopted by a vote of 33-2 (4 abstaining or not voting), and Section 3 likewise by a vote of 29-7 (3 others).

MINOR DISCUSSIONS

In the discussion on the Trade-

Security means freedom from economic uncertainty for the worker and his family. It means the guarantee of a good job, the guarantee of a comfortable annual income, the guarantee that the many good things of life that our highly advanced industry can produce so easily will be enjoyed by all, the guarantee that the life and future of the family, especially of the children, can be planned with confidence for years ahead.

Why should this security be so difficult to achieve in the richest country in the world, in the country of the highest productivity of labor and the highest production capacity?

Yet the working class of this country enjoys no such security. There is still a prosperity period in the United States, but it is a false and perilous prosperity.

It is true that the working force in the country is practically at an all-time high, but what is the bases for its size and how long can it last? Not even the government officials dare to speak on this point with assurance, and even if they gave assurances it would be foolish to take them seriously.

How many workers feel confident that they will continue to have their present jobs a year or even six months from now? Millions of workers are already unemployed. Many others are already working only part time. Still others are being driven, especially in the automobile industry, to work under the old backbreaking speedup system — with the justified feeling rising among them that the faster and harder they work, the more they produce, the closer they come to the day when production slows down or stops altogether.

How is it possible to be free from fear under such circumstances? How is it possible to plan ahead the life of the family, to think of a home, to think of advanced education for the younger members of the family, when economic conditions are so uncertain and precarious?

Just as we have no real peace, so we have no real security. The promises made to us were fraudulent.

Prosperity for Destruction

The only reason why the United States has its present boom, deceptive as it is, weakening as it is, is the growing concentration on the war economy.

The government talks endlessly about low-cost housing and even then it can only propose a ridiculously tiny, grossly inadequate fraction of the national budget to tackle the problem of the great national housing scandal. But it has no difficulty in voting for billions upon billions of dollars for war purposes.

It talks endlessly and makes fine promises about what it will do, some day, to tackle the other great national scandals — the tremendous shortage of educational facilities and the criminal inadequacy of health, medical and hospital facilities for the bulk of the people. Its promises remain promises, its bills remain bills which are talked to death, and even what is proposed for dealing with these problems is a paltry sum.

Except for altogether minor differences of opinion between them, both Republicans and Democrats do not hesitate to vote more and more billions of dollars for armaments, for warships, for bombers, for the most terrifying weapons of destruction, and still more billions to mobilize other countries which are dependent upon the United States for militarization and war. More than three-fourths of the national budget of the United States is allotted, directly and indirectly, to military purposes.

Put an end to the war budget, but an end to this monstrous pouring of the national wealth and national energy into paying for war, past, present and future, and the economic boom in the United States would be shattered overnight by the most colossal economic crisis in its annals! The American economic boom is maintained only by the growth of the war economy.

If American industry is still operating at a relatively high capacity, if employment is still at a relatively high point, if the standard of living of the American working class is still higher than in other countries, all this is now due first and foremost to the war preparations.

Could the bitterest critic of capitalism make a more annihilating indictment of it than it is now making of itself?

What good is a prosperity that piles up the highest national debt that any country in the world has ever had? What good is a prosperity that piles an even higher tax burden upon the people, especially upon the shoulders of those least capable of bearing it?

What good is a prosperity bought at the price of the happiness and even the lives of millions of people of this generation and the one to come, who will be called upon to perish like cattle in a slaughterhouse, whose homes and industries and entire cities will be threatened with utter extinction, whose very civilization will be imperiled by a new barbarism?

How can a thoughtful worker or housewife rest content even if he now has a job and a half-decent income, when he realizes that this frail prosperity is only the prelude to the most horrible holocaust the world has ever seen, which will surely engulf whole nations and leave not one of them, not even the United States, intact?

What comfort can the plain people get from the assurance of some of our experts that the Russians do not yet have the atomic bomb, or that they will not have it for another while yet?

What comfort can we get from the scientific experts who assure us that the atomic bomb cannot really destroy everything at one blow but only destroy a few million people and a few billions in wealth — that not all of us will be murdered overnight but only some of us?

Imperialism — American imperialism and Stalinist imperialism — is robbing us of whatever security we have and of the possibility of achieving real and lasting security.

If imperialism is to live and conquer, the people must be destroyed. If the people are to live and prosper, imperialism must be destroyed.

Democratic Promises

We were also promised democracy and a greater flowering of democracy. The promises have remained promises.

All over the world, on the pretense of combating Stalinist totalitarianism, the United States government has allied itself with and is promoting one reactionary force after another. Yesterday, the Greek fascists and monarchists; today Peron; tomorrow Franco.

In France and Italy, the United States is the patron and prop of Catholic political reaction. In Germany, the industrialists, the reactionaries of all stripes, including the former Nazis, count firmly on American collaboration.

In the United States itself, thanks primarily to the existence of a large and powerful labor movement, reactionary assaults upon democratic rights have not yet advanced very far. But these some democratic rights are being constantly and insidiously undermined.

The government bureaucracy has grown stupendously in the last generation and so have its arbitrary powers. For all the protests that are made by many capitalists against the government crutch on which their system must lean more and more, they cannot do without the crutch.

The government has been forced, by the anarchy of capitalist production and by the needs of imperialist policy, to concentrate more and more economic power into its hands. Correspondingly, it concentrates more and more social and political power and control over the lives of all the people.

More and more, the important political decisions in the country are made without the knowledge of the people, against their expressed wishes, and without their control. The economic power and the political influence of the people are declining; the profits, power and privilege of the monopolists mount.

Either the monopolists will tighten their stranglehold on the people through the government and its bureaucracy; or the people will take over the monopolies through the establishment of a workers' government.

That is the dilemma. Those are the choices, in this country as in all others.

Labor Has a Job!

The whole future of this country depends upon the working class. The curse of the working class is the modesty of its demands, the modesty of the role it has assigned itself up to now. The American working class must awaken to a realization of its power and its duty.

Its duty is to take the leadership of the nation, and for its fulfillment it has all the power it requires. No more numerous class exists in the country. None is more compactly organized. None is as democratic or as representative of the interests of all the plain people. None has so mighty an organized movement as the workers have in the form of the unions which already embrace 15,000,000 men and women.

If this class becomes the predominant political power in the country, then peace, democracy, prosperity and security are assured. It could and would organize the economic and political life of the country not in the interests of the monopolists, the profiteers, the time-serving arrogant bureaucrats, but in its own simple interests of all the people, who want to oppress nobody, to exploit nobody, to war on no other people.

It would organize production not for the profit of a handful of capitalists but for the use and enjoyment of all. It would build homes, instead of bombs to destroy armies; provide for the health and life of all, instead of armies for the destruction of life. It would set such a living example of well-being and democracy that no tyrant on earth could withstand the uprising of its own slaves who would be immediately inspired to follow the example.

For this, the working class needs nothing but the consciousness of its task in society and of its irresistible power to perform this task.

Up to now, however, the working class, and especially the organized labor movement, has been content to leave its own fate and the fate of the nation in the hands of the twin parties of capitalism. In the main, it has tagged behind the Democratic Party and provided it with indispensable voting strength.

In exchange for its renunciation of its own political banner and its political independence, the capitalist parties — which fear this independence more than anything else in the world — have graciously consented to throw the workers a couple of crumbs from time to time. But now even the crumbs are become smaller in size and fewer in number.

Our all-powerful labor movement, which could win anything it wants by its own strength and effort, now waits humbly with hat in hand while the capitalist politicians it elected to office laugh in its face.

For a Declaration of Independence

The administration, the Congress, whose election was hailed as such a great triumph by the labor leaders only a few months ago, find no difficulty in voting almost like one man, and with tremendous speed and efficiency, for the expenditure of their war billions — one billion this week, five billion next week, another few billion a little later.

But the infamous Taft-Hartley Act, so clearly repudiated by the people in the election, so unanimously condemned by the labor movement, still stands on the statute books. All that labor has is the usual promises.

All the capitalist parties and factions have no trouble uniting on the war program of imperialism. But the civil-rights bill, and all legislation proposed to put an end to the sickening stink of Jim Crow, is talked to death or dies in committee.

The vicious loyalty boards, and all other forms of government persecution of labor militants and political

opponents, continue in all their evil flower, unitedly backed by both parties. But improved minimum-wage and social-security legislation, housing legislation, progressive health and medical-service legislation, progressive educational legislation, road building, rural electrification, and similar legislation — these cannot get past the politicians who so lavishly squander our substance on war.

Labor needs its own political power! It cannot express it without having its own political party! It is time and high time that the organized labor movement, which already has the basis of its own political machinery in the form of the Political Action Committee of the CIO and the League for Labor Political Education of the AFL, issued its Declaration of Political Independence and established its own national Labor Party!

It is to our shame that the American labor movement, alone among the free labor movements of the other countries of the world, does not have a political party of its own. To organize one, to provide it with a bold program in which labor proclaims its intention to take the leadership of the nation, to provide it with militant leaders provenly devoted to the cause of the working class — that is the supreme task of the times today in this country.

It is above all else to help in realizing this task as quickly and satisfactorily as possible, that we socialists pledge our every effort this May Day.

We have no other interests save those of the working class itself. The labor movement is our movement and whatever our own political program and aims may be, we are part and parcel of the trade-union movement, its loyal socialist wing, its uncompromising champion.

Workers Party Laid the Basis

We seek nothing more than to be part and parcel of tomorrow's political movement of labor, the Labor Party; its loyal socialist wing, but always its champion against all enemies — its capitalist enemies and its Stalinist enemies, its enemies without and its enemies within — because it will be our party no less than the party of the working class as a whole.

The Workers Party, founded nine years ago to give coherent voice to the socialist program of international peace, international brotherhood and international emancipation of labor, founded to express the unflinching socialist opposition to the Second World Imperialist War on both sides of the conflict — fascist imperialism and democratic imperialism, democratic imperialism and Stalinist imperialism — has just concluded its Fifth National Convention.

The Workers Party realizes that the time when small socialist groups could proclaim themselves to be the parties of the American working class has come to an end. These are the days when the American working class is beginning its long-delayed, long overdue, break-away from the parties of its class enemy, the parties of capitalism.

We are convinced that great and stirring days are ahead. We are convinced that the working class will soon start its mighty stride along the road of independent political action in its own name and under its own flag, with its own program and its own leadership. The Labor Party, when it comes, will be the party of the American working class.

There is not in this country today any socialist organization which is worthy of the significant name of a party, let alone the party of the American workers. Not one of these organizations is anything but a socialistic propaganda group. To continue to pretend that they are parties is not only to deceive themselves but to stand in the way of the formation of the real party of the American workers and to impede the progress of the ideas of socialism in such a party. A genuine socialist has no need of such self-deception.

The ISL is Formed

With full realization of the significance of its decision, our Fifth National Convention has voted almost unanimously to relinquish the name of the Workers Party, to relinquish all claim to being a political party in the true sense of the term, and to acknowledge publicly and freely that we are what we really are: a militant, working-class group engaged in spreading the ideas and program of international socialism in the labor movement, among the youth and among the intellectuals.

On this May Day, we announce the formation of our new organization:

The Independent Socialist League.

In relinquishing our old name, we abandon none of the great liberating ideas and principles that have inspired the genuinely socialist movement all over the world for a hundred years. Our convention proudly reaffirmed these ideas, and reaffirmed its unshaken conviction that the militant working class will yet champion these ideas, and bear them to victory.

We are and we remain socialists — independent socialists. We are independent of capitalism, of all capitalist governments, of all capitalist politics. We are independent of Stalinism and all Stalinist politics and affiliations.

We are democrats, consistent and thoroughgoing democrats, because we are consistent socialists. The working class, and we as part of it, need democracy, widening and deepening democracy, and we shall fight for it without compromise.

The victory of the working class can come only by winning the battle for democracy. The enemy of the working class is at the same time the enemy of democracy. That holds for capitalism and the capitalist class, as it holds for Stalinism and the totalitarian bureaucracy. The fight for socialism is the fight for democracy. But the fight for democracy cannot be fought effectively and cannot be won except as it is the fight for international socialism.

In the Fight for Socialism

To all those militants in and around the labor movement who are dedicated to the fight for socialism, the Independent Socialist League holds wide open its doors.

To all those who refuse to resign themselves in helplessness and hopelessness to the barbarism of capitalist decay, to the barbarism of Stalinist tyranny, to the unspeakable war horrors that these two plague bearers are now preparing for the world — the Independent Socialist League is your organization.

To all those who have a profound and solid confidence in the working-class movement and in its socialist future, and therefore confidence in the noble future of mankind; to all those ready and enthusiastic for the great work of assuring the socialist future of the working class by fighting in the front ranks of its present — the Independent Socialist League extends the welcoming hand of comradeship.

May Day greetings, workingmen and workingwomen! Peace, security and freedom are yours to take if yours is the power in the land!

May Day greetings — to all sincere, genuine, militant socialists! Unite with us to build a strong and courageous movement to spread the ideas and program of international socialism, the Independent Socialist League!

Hail the advance of the socialist working class and socialist freedom all over the world!

NATIONAL COMMITTEE of the INDEPENDENT SOCIALIST LEAGUE,
Max Shachtman, National Chairman

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The overwhelming consensus of both delegates and visitors was that, in the face of great difficulties being faced by the movement and by the socialist movement as a whole, the convention had faced and accomplished its major tasks, taking the necessary political and organizational steps to clear the road for growth and increased influence.