

# In the World of Labor

By Paul G. Stevens

## Bevin's Too Radical for Mr. Harry Pollitt

Somewhat scared by the speed with which his conferees were rushing through pro-conscription and pro-war resolutions at the recent Southport Labour Conference, one of the more staid British trade union leaders, Mr. Ernest Bevin, delivered himself of the following quite correct but more or less vague and not too binding opposition speech:

"I do not want this Movement to be fighting for the salvation of the Paris Bourse, the London Stock Exchange, the Amsterdam Exchange and Wall Street. I want this Movement in its peace policy to be fighting for the salvation of the common people of the world."

That Mr. Bevin was not taking himself too seriously may be gathered from the fact that up to date he has not made a single move to actually fight conscription. Like the rest of the Labour leaders, he is taking British war preparations in his stride. His speech was purely verbal radicalism. But even that is too much for Mr. Harry Pollitt, Stalin's chief stooge at the head of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Writing in the current issue of the Stalinist "Labour Monthly," Mr. Pollitt characterizes Bevin's speech in these words:

"Mr. Bevin's line is a direct continuation of the Munich policy. It was a try-out at Southport of the policy of the Cliveden set and the pro-Fascist Chamberlain government."

Nobody was probably more surprised at these darts than poor Mr. Bevin himself. A colleague in the Glasgow Forward comes to Bevin's support with a rather apt quip:

"How long will it be," he asks, "before Harry Pollitt will be demanding that the 'Internationale' cease to be sung at Socialist meetings and that what we want is a good old anti-Fascist song like 'Rule Britannia'?"

## Ambassador Malsky Explains Current Kremlin Policy

That the Kremlin masters of Mr. Harry Pollitt have long ago displaced internationalism with the Russian version of the "Rule Britannia" spirit may be gathered from a recent interview between their Ambassador to Eng-

land and a British member of Parliament.

In the London Evening News of June 16, Mr. Beverly Baxter, M.P., makes public his interview with Ambassador Malsky. "Some of the passages attributed to the Ambassador sound like a less hypocritical reply that Pollitt might have given Bevin. For instance, asked by Mr. Baxter as to his attitude regarding the present alignment of the powers, Malsky said:

"We have no love for you, but less love for the German. We do not wish to die to preserve the power of France and Britain in the West. That is not hostility on our part—it is just pure reason. First, we do not want war at all. We do not mind war, but it doesn't suit us. We have 50 years' work ahead of us and we must have peace to carry it out. Therefore we ask only one question—'Does this non-aggression front help Russia to remain at peace?' We are not sentimental like you. We are thinking only of Russia, not of humanity."

As if to emphasize this last point, to make sure that it is understood properly, the venerable Ambassador answers as follows to the question: Is it not true that the Soviet government is still planning and working for world revolution?

"Absolutely no," says Mr. Malsky. "All that belongs to the past, when under Lenin there was a lot of emotion mixed up with politics. Once the Comintern had that magnificent building near the Kremlin and exerted a dominating influence. Now they have moved over to a small house in the suburbs and the trade unions have taken their great place by the Kremlin. No, we do not work for world revolution."

There. That ought to reassure any Tory diehard. For Mr. Malsky speaks with authority. He had nothing to do with the Kremlin "when under Lenin there was a lot of emotion mixed up with politics." On the contrary he was interested on which side his bread was buttered in the camp of the White Guards fighting Lenin. He is still interested on which side his bread is buttered. And so are all the other bureaucratic colleagues of Mr. Malsky, both in the Kremlin and on mission for it. No, these boys don't work for world revolution.

# Minnesota Labor, Pressing W.P.A. Fight, Honors Martyr Killed on Picket Line by Policeman's Bullet

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legitimate protests of hundreds of thousands of workers in exercise of their constitutional civil rights to strike, to walk-out or to picket; and their economic right and duty to make a struggle to live; and proved by (his) inclusion of a five-day firing clause which is in no way mandatory or part of any relief act;

### Murphy Blamed

"2. The inflammatory statements and the publicised orders to the Federal Bureau of Investigation with respect to Minneapolis, which gave to the people of the United States an erroneous impression of the true cause of the W.P.A. protest here as well as elsewhere;

"3. State W.P.A. administrator Linus Glotzbach, who demanded police action against a majority of W.P.A. workers who are here on strike, in full knowledge of what consequences might follow;

"4. The local Mayor, his Chief of Police and the admittedly crazed brutality of the Minneapolis police, who acted on orders to fulfill regulations for W.P.A. promulgated from the Federal W.P.A. office;

"And be it further resolved:

### Frameup Warning

"That this labor movement calls upon the people of the United States to recognize and correct the laws, policies and attitudes upon the part of the above-mentioned agencies which have precipitated this nation-wide problem, and calls upon them to unitedly defeat any prosecution or frame-up attempt as a result of the murderous assaults of the Minneapolis police.

"Be it further resolved, that copies of this resolution be

sent to the public press, the President of the United States, Col. F. C. Harrington, Linus Glotzbach, Mayor George E. Leach and the Minneapolis City Council."

Workers Alliance representatives objected to the criticisms of the Roosevelt administrators, but the resolution was adopted.

Another resolution demanded of the City Council a thorough investigation of the actions of the Minneapolis police in the strike.

### Telegram to Murphy

A caustic criticism of U. S. Attorney General Murphy was wired to him on Friday, after the press had carried blaring headlines on Murphy's insinuations that the strikes in Minneapolis were connected with racketeering. The telegram was signed by Peter Murck, president of the building trades council, and Walter Frank, chairman of the W.P.A. joint committee, on behalf of the entire labor movement here:

"Your inflammatory statement to the press regarding the W.P.A. strike in Minneapolis has no foundation in any fact," said the message, and then told Murphy that the joint committee "has taken action to investigate the activity of the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Minneapolis to determine whether they are involved in a conspiracy of falsification and intimidation against the striking W.P.A. workers and the Minneapolis labor movement as a whole to deprive it and the W.P.A. workers of their constitutional rights to organize, strike and picket."

"Demand Projects Closed

"The striking W.P.A. workers and their pickets have been

subjected to numerous provocations and intimidations and attacks. We demand that you take appropriate action immediately to close all W.P.A. projects in Hennepin county wherever labor disputes exist. "The Minneapolis city police have, to our knowledge, made no request for the assistance of the F.B.I. and no direct statement condemning the conduct of the strike, and your unwarranted insinuations of racketeering, etc., if honestly motivated, could only be the result of gross misrepresentation and falsification of the Minneapolis situation by local and state W.P.A. administrators and your own representatives.

"Unless our demands are sustained, we are compelled to conclude that the F.B.I. is conducting strike-breaking activities in Minneapolis," the telegram concluded.

### 1934 Murderer Again

Instead of acceding to the strikers' demands, the W.P.A. authorities appealed for more police, with the inevitable result that the police Friday, at 7 p.m. poured murder from shotguns, pistols and tear gas into a picket line of 5,000 and as many bystanders. The police murder squad was commanded by Sergeant John Albright, notorious as the commander of a similar squad which killed Ness and Belor during the general drivers' strike of July-August, 1934.

At a Federal Workers Section, Local 544 strike meeting that night, the embittered workers booed Roosevelt and Murphy as strikebreakers.

### Police Planned Attack

The police attack was carefully planned, with six armored cars taking part, as well as many squad cars and motorcycle cops.

Even the conservative Minneapolis Tribune makes clear in its story that the firing was deliberate, without reference to any strikers' actions. It states:

"An hour or more before the scheduled quitting time for the sewing project workers, a crowd of pickets and strike sympathizers congregated around the building. . . .

"Roofs of buildings across the street from the sewing project swarmed with people.

"Shooting started as soon as the women began moving out of the building. An armored car lobbed a tear gas shell onto the roof of a one-story building across the street. A policeman crouched and fired his riot gun." (Tribune, July 15).

This was in the strike extra. By later editions, of course, the editors fixed up the paper to read that the police "replied" to a stone hurled from across the way.

A woman's eyewitness story of Bergstrom's death — it will be brought forward in the investigation demanded—was:

"Me and my son-in-law were right in front of this old man (Bergstrom) when the cop shot him. All the police seemed wild that night. The old man didn't have a club or a gun, of course. None of the pickets did. He wasn't doing anything, only standing there. The policeman looked at him quite a while, pulled out his gun, levelled it at his head and fired. The bullet went right in the forehead. My son-in-law ran up to help. When he saw the man was badly hurt, he called to the cop to stop and help him. The cop only started aiming at my son-in-law and would have shot him too, only we both ran. The old man must have died right away."

Bergstrom was 60 years old, unemployed and on relief. His brother, 33 years a member of the painters union, was at a union meeting when notified of Emil's death.

### IMPORTANT

Negro Department opening up. Badly needed: typewriter, cabinet file and other office accessories. Readers are urged to donate these absolutely essential items. Their donations will be greatly appreciated. Communicate with National Office.

### INFORMAL HOUSE

Box 245 Kerhonkson, N. Y. (Near Ellenville) 120 acres of greenland in the Catskills, 40 acres of pine for sunbathing; handball, ping pong, archery; swimming and horseback riding nearby; dancing. UNUSUALLY LOW RATES \$18 Weekly \$6 Weekly Busses met at station. Tel. Kerhonkson 118 R

## Labor Speaks

# Exposing Another Political Doublecross

The official organ of the St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly, A.F.L. central body, the "Minnesota Union Advocate," hitherto a pro-Roosevelt paper, published the following editorial in its issue of July 13:

The blunt statement of President Roosevelt Tuesday that he was not opposed to the so-called "security wage" and is definitely opposed to the restoration of the prevailing wage relieves Labor of the necessity of trying to place responsibility for the recent enactment of congress on political interests outside the White House. Labor now knows that it was Mr. Roosevelt's wish that the prevailing wage scale for skilled workers on W.P.A. projects be abolished.

At first there was a disposition on the part of many Labor leaders to believe that it was congress—that reactionary congress—which undertook to establish a federal yardstick of wages by which private industry could gauge its wage scales. Some leaders believed that Col. F. C. Harrington, head of the W.P.A., was in league with the economy bloc. They forgot that Harrington was a personal appointee of Mr. Roosevelt; that Mr. Roosevelt has seldom blundered by appointing executives out of sympathy with his own policies. They evidently forgot that not once during the hearings on the W.P.A. measure did Mr. Roosevelt as much as shake a finger at Mr. Harrington as he argued against the prevailing wage scale and demanded the substitution of the so-called security scale.

Now Labor knows that it has suffered another political doublecross; that the President is definitely "lined against Labor"; that it was his wish and his will that prompted congress to completely reverse the administration's Labor policy—and that from now on Labor can look for few crumbs under the table of the New Deal.

Labor has enjoyed many favors at the hands of Mr. Roosevelt, but Mr. Roosevelt is just another politician, and most politicians are willing to make concessions on occasion to enhance their own political futures. And while considered stubborn on many things affecting his own egotism, Mr. Roosevelt is not above the common tricks of those who trade on mass popularity. He undoubtedly feels that Labor is sewed in a political sack and safely in cold storage for 1940. Now he must make overtures to those who exploit Labor—and the "security wage" is the bait that will best serve his purpose.

Labor knows that governmental blessing on starvation wages raises havoc with the established standards of living. During the NRA—when Mr. Roosevelt permitted the various industries to establish their own codes—the minimum wage became the maximum wage. The present wage and hour law has established a minimum wage of 25 cents an hour—and that is the maximum wage in many industries. If the New Deal can make the "security wage" the prevailing wage, then private industry will take full advantage of its opportunity to destroy the established standards of the W.P.A. and Labor.

One of these days—perhaps—Labor will see the folly of subordinating its economic purposes to political expediency. One of these days Labor may get its eyes open to the fact that practical politics has nothing in common with principle; that politicians are not crusaders for the common good of all but mere crusaders for themselves and their own kind; that Labor has enough to do in maintaining its own organization without dividing its energies with ward healers and political connivers.

# Who Is the Murderer?

"James Montalto, 30 years old, shot and critically wounded his wife, Helen, 31, and then killed himself after a quarrel in their third-floor apartment at 319 East 101st Street.

"Mrs. Montalto had upbraided her husband at breakfast because he was unemployed. . . .

So reads the report in the New York Times, July 11, 1939. WHO IS THE MURDERER?

Not Montalto, who killed himself. Not his wife, who bawled him out because he was unemployed.

THE MURDERERS are THE SIXTY FAMILIES who dominate and control the economic life of the country. THEY close down the factories, throw millions of middle-aged people into the human garbage heap and DRIVE hundreds of Montaltos TO SUICIDE. THEY LOCK OUT millions of eager YOUTH from jobs in private industry and grind ALL unemployed into ECONOMIC DEGRADATION and DESPAIR.

THE MURDERERS are their Charley McCarthys inside and outside of Congress—the Democrats with their Roosevelt and Woodruff and the Republicans with their Landon—who are destroying the only other source of employment, the W.P.A. THEY are DRIVING THE MONTALTOS, some TO SUICIDE and others TO INSECURITY WORSE THAN DEATH.

Let us NEVER FORGET who is RESPONSIBLE for this suffering and suicide.

Let us SAVE OTHERS from the fate of Montalto.

OPEN THE IDLE FACTORIES — UNDER WORKERS' CONTROL!

The factories are idle and decaying in the hands of the SIXTY FAMILIES. Let the GOVERNMENT TAKE OVER THE IDLE FACTORIES and work them at full capacity. Then there will be jobs for the jobless AT TRADE UNION WAGES.

Let the workers who run the factories also CONTROL them. Then there will be REAL PROSPERITY and PLENTY FOR ALL.

PROPOSE and SUPPORT this program in your unions. JOIN with those who fight for it everywhere—JOIN THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY! (From a neighborhood leaflet issued by the Jamaica Branch, Local New York)

S.W.P. is putting out a series of bulletins to the W.P.A. workers on how to win the strike and restore the hourly rates and jobs. The branch is putting forth the demand for joint action between the A.F.L., C.I.O. and independent unemployed organizations and the issuance of a general strike call, organization of picket lines to shut the projects down and spread the strike, and the incorporation of demands for the unskilled workers.

# On the Line . . . with Bill Morgan

One day last week I am on O'Farrell Street waiting for a cable car and watching some pretty stenogs cross a windy corner when along comes an old heap all piled up with camping gear and three slim guys on the front and only seat. It must have been a 1912 model. When they reach the curb near where I am parked the guy at the wheel leans his gaunt face out the side window and says, "Say, brother, how do we get to Marysville?"

Well, I am a stranger in town and cannot take the responsibility of directing traffic but at the same time I am afraid these birds will be given a bum steer by the police which is unfriendly to anything less than eight cylinders. I walk over and look and the three guys who are looking me up and down like I was a boy scout. Then I asks, "Where are you from?"

"Oregon, Washington and points North and West," says the guy at the wheel, "and we are going to Marysville to pick fruit—the apricots will be ripe soon."

"Well," says I, thinking fast because I am anxious to meet some agricultural workers about which I have heard a lot, "you got to cross the Bay Bridge and so have I. If you give me a lift we will find the right highway on the other side of the Bay."

## Speak the Same Language

In I get and the guy at the wheel says, "My name is Martin—Joe Martin and these galoots here are my kids, Pat and Howard. Shake hands with the brother, boys." We shake hands and I start asking about how much money can a fellow make picking apricots. Soon the old junkpile is tearing across the Bay Bridge like a cement mixer in a hail storm. Pretty soon the four of us is friends. Joe Martin speaks my language. He, too, is a Red.

The questions I ask and the answers he gives and the questions he asks and the answers I give soon lead around to a little discussion on which party is the party for the workers of America and here is what Joe has to say:

"I don't know much about the Trotskyists. Never heard much about them until I was expelled from the C.P. They said I was one but to tell you the truth I couldn't deny it because I didn't know but what I was and didn't know it. So I just said, 'Yeah, I'm a Trotskyite if Trotskyites are like me,' and let it go at that. But that's ahead of our story.

"Do you remember the great Lawrence strike? Well I do. I was only sixteen then but I picketed and yelled and fought alongside my old man who was a textile worker and a Wobbler.

"There were four kids on that picket line and they were all from my family. My old man was proud of us, you bet. We got what he called a class education during that strike. I saw a National Guardsman run a bayonet all the way through a baby in the arms of its mother who was standing on the sidewalk waiting for the soup kitchen to open up for breakfast. I wrote it up for the school paper but they didn't print it.

"When I left Lawrence I went to sea. I was a member of the Marine Transport Workers Number 510. When I saw the Wobblies were unable to organize and were making the same old mistakes over and over again I quit the I.W.W. and being a class conscious worker, joined up with the Marine Workers Industrial Union.

"Yeah, I knew it was never going to get anywhere but I figured it would be the beginning of something—maybe we would get a real militant National Seaman's Union after a while. Well, I went through all the ropes trying to get the bureaucrats to recognize the fact that they were only keeping the revolutionists away from the ranks of the seamen by insisting on making the M.W.I.U. a 'red' union to start with—but you know how smart

them birds are—they know where the butter comes from. So when I busted two ribs and a leg during a strike in Seattle I decided to rest up and work ashore a while. It was there I joined the C. P.

"You call it the Third Period but I call it the Last. Boy, then were the days. I organized the unemployed in Seattle and was chairman of the largest Local in town. We used to raise hell and fight like demons. We organized big strikes and we won our demands hands down until the State Relief Officials began to use goon squads to dump our committees. Then we went to Washington.

"Remember the big Unemployment Insurance Congress? Well, I was a delegate and I was a member of the committee elected by the Congress to see Harry Hopkins. Mr. I. Amter, a boil on the face of decency if ever there was one, headed the committee. When Hopkins give us the run around and left Williams, the N.Y.A. director holding the bag, Amter didn't squawk. He says, 'Let us send a committee of three in to see Mr. Williams.' That made me sore because the Congress elected about two hundred of us and we had plenty to say—all of us. Amter tried to talk me out of it but in we went. And when we got in there I spoke up. That made Amter see red and he says to me, 'Comrade, you got the wrong tactic. We must be reasonable. We must be ready to understand that Mr. Williams is a very busy man.' Bah. . . .

## Smelling a Rat

"Back I ride on a box car to Seattle. After that, little by little I see they are turning the party into a fink hall. Every time my local goes out and pushes in the front door of the relief bureau I get a note to appear at the section committee. There they beg me to lay off the Progressive Phonies in the State Legislature and write a post card to the President. Little by little they expel all the guys who did the ground work in building the party. Then they can't expel they begin to send to Spain. After about ten of my comrades from the West Coast had been railroaded into enlisting in the George Washington Brigade because they were too well known and too important to be expelled I begin to smell a rat.

"That rat was Mr. Sam Darcy, Browder's personal stool pigeon on the West Coast. One night he got to talking a little too much and dropped a hint. 'They will get the fight taken out of them over there in Spain,' he said and it was enough for me. I blew my top and within a few days all the comrades knew where I stood.

"Next thing I knew I was in jail! Framed up on a charge of deserting my wife! I called the I.L.D. No answer. I called the Section Committee. No answer. When I appeared in court there were the faithful stooges and they had come not to testify for me but to prove to the boss court that I was a red and not a fit father for my boys.

"Well, I fixed those finks. When I got through the court gave me custody of the kids and threw the case of wife-desertion out of court. I had been expelled from the party while in the can and had no trial or anything. Back I went to the Section Committee and busted the organizer's beak. And here I am. Now we are out on our own and going to pick apricots."

(To be continued)

General Motors Corporation announced the suspension of its income security plan in plants on strike or affected by the United Automobile Workers (C.I.O.)' walkout. Here's another instance of something "given" by the bosses from the fullness of their hearts' turning sour. Everything that is sweet in the worker's life has been won from the bosses by the strength of his arms and the brains in his head.

# Let the People Vote on War!

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representatives. If a freely conducted popular vote went against the war which they proposed, that would prove that they did not really represent the will of the people; if it went in favor of the war, they would be strengthened as the genuine representatives.

Similarly in the case of the other two arguments. If the people are in fact divided on the question of the war, do they not have the right to say so? What if in a division, a majority were against the war? Do the "representatives" want to fight the war in any case, against the will of the majority? The argument against the referendum on the grounds that it will disclose a division of opinion indicates indeed that those who will be for the war when the time comes intend to suppress all contrary opinion. The same argument of course applies to anyone who will express opposition of any kind to the war, quite apart from a referendum. Again, the referendum could hamper U. S. diplomacy only if the diplomatic maneuvers were going in a direction contrary to the will of the people. If the diplomacy were in line with the will of the people, the referendum would strengthen and reinforce the diplomacy.

Under the barrage of the opposition, on January 10th, 1938, the House of Representatives voted down the Ludlow motion. Earlier in that same week, the Gallup poll had shown that 72% of the people favored the bill! Could there have been a more striking demonstration that on the question of war the Congressmen are not the "representatives of the people", that the people are correct in distrusting the President and Congress, that the President and Congress do not express the people's will!

Lurking behind the fake arguments which the opponents of the referendum use on the surface, we can find the real meaning of their fierce opposition. By their attitude they are proving that in reality they are against democracy and democratic processes of government, and that their aim is to drag the people of this country into a war of imperialist aggression and conquest for the sake of profits. What other real reason could they possibly have? If they actually believed in true democracy, if they were fully and sincerely against any war except perhaps a war of honest defense, they could only welcome the plan for a people's referendum.

It is because they are planning a war for the benefit of the banks and the big corporations, for the Sixty Families, that they oppose the referendum so bitterly. They dare not let their plans see the light of day; they dare not submit them to the verdict of the people. They plot behind the backs of the people with secret diplomacy, closed-door meetings, secret treaties and military agreements. And, when they are ready, they prepare to whip the people into line and to plunge them into mass slaughter. In the eyes of Roosevelt and Stimson and Browder and Lipman and Hoover, war is not an issue for the people to decide. It is for the people, like slaves and cattle, to obey the orders of the masters, to suffer and to die in order to make the world safe for the Sixty Families.

(Continued in next issue: "The Referendum and the Fight Against War")