

The Negro Question

"LABOR WITH A WHITE SKIN CANNOT EMANCIPATE ITSELF WHERE LABOR WITH A BLACK SKIN IS 'BRANDED' — KARL MARX.

By J. R. JOHNSON

The Anti-Lynch Bill will now go before the Senate. The S.W.P. must tirelessly work, by itself and with all other organizations, in order to bring all possible pressure upon the Senate to pass it.

The Southern landowners and their satellites try to make out that lynching is the only safeguard for the "purity" of their women from Negro assault. Lie No. 1. Of four thousand cases of lynching during the last fifty years, in only one-fifth were the Negroes even charged with any sort of assault on white women.

A report of the dietary standards of the Finnish peasantry was prepared for the League of Nations Conference on Rural Life, 1939. Among the poorer families—the vast majority—the investigator discovered an abnormally low use of sugar, potatoes, cereals, and even of butter and milk (Finland has a large dairy industry).

In the West Indies, where slavery has been abolished for one hundred years, there is not, as far as we know, one single case, not one, of assault upon a white woman by a Negro. Sir Harry Johnston, the great traveler, has put on record what is common knowledge, that the women of the comparatively small white population in the West Indies walk anywhere at any time among the Negro people with the utmost safety.

Do Glands Change in the South?

And the Negro in the North and West and East of America? What transformation in his glands takes place that allows him to meet any number of women in the parks and lonely places on the outskirts of New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles and not give vent to the uncontrollable lusts which are supposed to dominate him in the South?

No, let us once and for all chase from civilized society this monstrous myth, and wherever we speak, not only meet the question if it is raised, but bring it out into the open and show it up for the lying fraud that it is. No man knew more about Africa than Sir Harry Johnston. This was his conclusion on Negroes and white women:

"There is, I am convinced, a deliberate tendency in the Southern States to exaggerate the desire of the Negro for a sexual union with white women. . . A few exceptional Negroes in West and South Africa, and in America, are attracted towards a white consort, but almost invariably for honest and pure-minded reasons, because of some intellectual affinity or sympathy. The mass of the race, if left free to choose, would prefer to mate with women of its own type. When cases have occurred in the history of South Africa, South-West, East and Central Africa, of some great Negro uprising, and the wives and daughters of officials, missionaries and settlers have been temporarily at the mercy of a Negro army, or in the power of a Negro chief, how extremely rare are the proved cases of any sexual abuse arising from this circumstance! How infinitely rarer than the prostitution of Negro women following on some great conquest of the whites or of their black or yellow allies! I know that the contrary has been freely alleged and falsely stated in histories of African events; but it is little else than astonishing that the Negro has either had too great a racial sense of decency, or too little liking for the white women (I believe it to be the former rather than the latter) to outrage the unhappy white women and girls temporarily in his power."

Lynching Not a Sex Question. Among very highly developed urban people, particularly writers, artists, revolutionaries, intellectuals, stage-people, one finds a tendency towards interracial sexual relationships, but it is precisely among the large masses of workers or farmers that such tendencies are absent. When rapes do occur, they are the result of artificially stimulated mass hysteria working on the embittered imagination of a few subnormal individuals. When they do occur—because over and over again, white women in the South, when their illicit relations with Negroes are discovered, either through fear or external pressure, raise the cry of Rape.

Lynching is not a sexual question, but a social and political question. Marxists have not only to know that themselves. They must propagate it with as much assiduousness and energy as the Southerners propagate their lies about the Negro's desire for white women.

IT'S BEGINNING AGAIN!

"America did not enter (the last World War) under the siren spell of British propaganda, or to safeguard our bankers' loans to the Allies, or even on account of the Lusitania. . . The United States cast in its fortunes with the Allies primarily because of William Shakespeare and John Bunyan and Magna Carta and General Lafayette."—From "The Living Tradition," just published by Simeon Strunsky, chief editorial writer of the New York Times.

Some Pertinent History—Past and Present

"POOR LITTLE FINLAND"

By CHRIS ANDREWS

There are in Finland on an average twenty years of famine per hundred. Who tells us this? The Finnish Government itself calmly reports the fact in its "Finland Year Book" (1938). Naturally the rich landowner escapes the suffering; it is upon those 950,000 human beings who struggle for existence upon farms ranging from 1/2 an acre in size to a maximum of 25 acres; upon the 112,000 members of tenant families, and upon the 616,000 farm laborers and their families, that the tragedy of "a bad crop year" falls with the utmost cruelty.

A report of the dietary standards of the Finnish peasantry was prepared for the League of Nations Conference on Rural Life, 1939. Among the poorer families—the vast majority—the investigator discovered an abnormally low use of sugar, potatoes, cereals, and even of butter and milk (Finland has a large dairy industry). It says: "Such low figures bear witness to the poverty of these households. The housewives are generally incompetent cooks, for in 19.1% of the families, cooked food was eaten only once a day."

In describing the peasantry, the government-published "Finland Year Book" discusses "the primitiveness of their living conditions." It states: "Rural dwellings consist for the most part of small one or two-roomed houses, the majority of them over-crowded, cramped, ill-

lit, badly ventilated, draughty or damp, and often infested with vermin."

Upon this level of rural poverty, it is only natural that disease should flourish. Tuberculosis is the great scourge of the rural population (and of the city worker—a recent peasant). It strikes with especial havoc among farm hands and timber workers. Great Britain, a capitalist country with a permanent unemployed and slum class, had a deathrate of 7.4 per 10,000 from tuberculosis in 1935; Finland's deathrate was 18.5—equalled only by two of the most poverty-stricken and backward countries of Europe—Rumania, 18.2% and Poland, 18%.

The cause of these desperate conditions of the Finnish peasantry today can be traced directly to the failure of the proletarian insurrection of 1918. In the test of power by civil war, the bourgeoisie triumphed—with the aid of English munitions and a German Army Corps. The Finnish landowners thus escaped the expropriations which took place in other parts of Europe. Victors have no need to give concessions to the vanquished.

THE MYTH OF LAND REFORMS

The League of Nations Conference Report on Rural Life—1939—divides the agrarian reforms of post-war Europe into three classes:

- 1. Almost complete liquidation of large estates.
2. Fairly extensive reduction of large estates.
3. Relatively slight modification of land tenure.

Finland is listed in the third group. In fact, the reporter adds, "In general, the expression 'agrarian reform' is not applicable to the land policy of the Finnish Government. . ."

The Kallis law of 1922 provided that estates of 494 acres or less were completely exempt. From an estate of 741 acres the most that could be required for sale to peasants was—22 acres. From an estate of 988 acres the most that could be taken was 39 1/2 acres—and so on. No wonder the League of Nations reporter declines to call this "agrarian reform."

And for the land actually made available to the peasants, they had to pay the landlord the price he asked and go into perpetual debt to the government. The landlord received good government bonds bearing 7% interest. The peasant paid the government 7% interest for a maximum of 49 acres arable land and 49 acres for firewood. The "cottagers," receiving only 5 acres for a "house" and garden, had to pay 9% interest—because they had to work in the timber camps in the winter and would have more cash.

By this sleight-of-hand the Finnish bourgeoisie placed the burden of the agricultural crisis more squarely upon the peasantry and through the government were able to handle the collection of their revenues more efficiently. Reappearing as the Finnish Labor Party, the Bolsheviks conducted a fight against the infamous Lex Kallis. The "Republic" disposed of them by arresting the legally elected 27 Diet members in 1923 and condemning them to prison for long terms.

There has been a steady flight of the peasantry from the land—the United States was a refuge for thousands of Finns until emigration there was curtailed. Today there is still a steady movement of the peasantry to the city. The city worker now represents some 16% of the population.

THE TRADE UNIONS AND THE CITY WORKERS

The Finnish trade unions were controlled by the Bolsheviks in 1918 and took an active part in the civil war. As a result of the defeat, they were outlawed, their officials and militants murdered or imprisoned. The following ten years was a slow struggle back for the union men. As they gradually became more militant and outspoken, the bourgeoisie unleashed both government and Fascist attacks upon the labor movement lasting from 1930 to 1932 (described in last week's issue of the Appeal).

The "Finland Year Book" (1936) justifies the repressions against the organized labor movement by saying that ". . . to some extent the present weak organization of labor in Finland is due also to the fact that the trade unions have not kept strictly to purely professional questions in their activities but acquired a political character and consequently, had to suffer for all the mistakes made by the Social-Democratic and Communist Parties."

In 1917 some months before the outbreak of Civil War the trade unions had 160,000 members. In the years that followed the White Terror they slowly reorganized until by 1925 they had once again some 90,000 members. Two years later the government smashed the unions again under pretext of "treasonable activities."

Intervening in the trade unions through its Social Democratic servants, the government now keeps a sharp restraint over the workers. Once again struggling to revive the unions, the workers are further confused by the presence of three organizations, the Central Federation, the Independent Labor League, and National Trade Union Organization. The vast majority of workers in private industry are unorganized. The unions represent some 70,000 members of whom 16,000 are women.

THE FAMOUS EIGHT-HOUR DAY. The capitalist press of the whole world has been proudly boasting of the fact that the Finnish bourgeoisie gave their workers the eight hour day as far back as 1916. Further details they do not bother to cite.

The International Labor Office in Geneva lists the following exceptions to the Eight-Hour Day in its study of working conditions in Finland (1935). Under "Permanent Exceptions" we find seasonal industries and all of agriculture. The majority of the Finns are engaged in agriculture—the 1930 census gives us 68,291 farm servants, 13,864 "overseers," 58,689 share-croppers (who pay back their landlord not only with produce but also with their personal labor) and 475,837 rural day laborers—all in all, some 616,000 Finns, the overwhelming major-

ity of wage workers, engaged in the hardest kind of work—from whom the benefits of an eight-hour day is specifically excluded.

"But what about the 379,861 workers in Industry, Transport, Commerce?" says the indignant petty-bourgeois defender of Finland. "They enjoy the eight-hour day. It's the law."

Underneath the "law," the Marxist must look for the reality—the relation of class forces. In 1916 a powerful and rising trade union movement in Finland wrested the Eight-Hour Day Law from the bourgeoisie.

A revolutionary Marxist remembers that to carry a law against the bourgeoisie into practical application requires a tireless fight by the workers. What happened after 1916 in Finland? By 1918 the class struggle matured to the point of Civil War. The workers lost and their unions were destroyed. Do the bourgeoisie enforce the laws against themselves?

Twice since then the bourgeoisie have arrested the legally elected workers' representatives in the Diet and imprisoned them—1923 and 1930. The slowly reviving trade union movement was ruthlessly dissolved in 1930. Such is the relation of class forces in Baron Mannerheim's Finland.

Finland's industries are largely decentralized—in a manner to rejoice the heart of Henry Ford. Finland is studded with "company towns." All workers understand that such an arrangement

makes repression by the bosses much simpler. The militant worker is easily isolated in the small population. There are no unions in timber or the other large industries of Finland—there is no collective bargaining or job security.

Besides "Permanent Exceptions" the International Labor Office lists the following "Temporary Exceptions"—"urgent repairs to machinery of plant"; "technical reasons"; "force majeure"; "if, owing to the technical condition of the work, it is impossible to enforce the Act in practice"; "if interruption of the work may damage property, manufactured products, or raw materials"; and "in special circumstances or for exceptional reasons subject to the consent of the workers."

When the boss interprets the "exception," who resists his interpretation—where there is no union? Where there is no union to protect the job, what happens to the militant worker who doesn't give his "consent"? And more than 300,000 out of 379,000 are unorganized.

It is only necessary now to add that the Act specifically allows additional overtime work of 200 hours a year, plus "an additional 150 hours a year"—making 350 hours a year.

Class conscious workers will know how to judge the capitalist propaganda about the Finnish Eight-Hour Day!

(Continued next week)

U.S. Notes to London Evoke 1914-16 Echoes

(Continued from Page 1)

Walter Millis' "Road to War" will quickly realize how much of a sham the present little diplomatic skirmish is, how little it really affects the basic trend of the Washington government toward throwing this country's weight into the bloody holocaust of war.

Millis sums up the diplomatic conflict before 1917 in words which can be offered as eloquent comment on the present situation:

"Every issue which arose between the United States and Great Britain was settled in accordance with the British view. The completeness of this reverse was due partly to Mr. Page (the Anglophile U. S. envoy in London) . . . but chiefly to the Allied cause entertained at that time not only by the American press and vocal public, but by (Col. Edward) House, the State Department and the President himself. They could not bring themselves to contemplate a German victory; and the strongest argument of the British was . . . their plea that the measures they took were 'essential to our existence.' As long as that plea carried weight with our statesmen and the corresponding plea from Germany did not, the United States was unavoidably a silent partner of the Entente."

If we look for the differences between now and then, we shall perceive only that this "silent partnership" has been an established fact from the very beginning. And that it is not so silent.

At the outbreak of the last war Wilson bade America to be neutral even in thought. But his successor in the White House of today goes in for no such naive blandishments and urges the direct opposite, in order to speed the transition from partisanship in thought to partisanship in action.

Further on the Road

If the present argument with England over the mails brings echoes from the past, they serve only to press home the fact that we are much further along the road to war today than we were in 1915. All the material and psychological bases for the final plunge have been longer and more effectively and more completely prepared. Nothing proves this more completely than the fact that whereas 25 years ago the Washington government had to go through diplomatic duels with Britain which contained live germs of serious conflict over issues of basic importance, today the "silent partners" find themselves fencing harmlessly over a few bags of mail while behind the backs of the people of this land the real alliances for bloody wars are already sealed.

Illinois Socialists Condemn Jingo Attacks on USSR

By FELIX MORROW

A letter in the January 20 issue of Norman Thomas' Call is worth reprinting in full:

"The Jewish section of the Socialist party, Chicago, affiliated with the Jewish labor committee, whose function is to lead the fight against Fascism and anti-Semitism, expresses its dissatisfaction with the plans for a meeting to protest at the same time Nazism and Stalinism. Such a meeting is arranged in conjunction with the Czech, Polish and Finnish national councils.

"The Jewish section has more than once declared its opposition to Stalinism and the dictatorship practiced by the Soviet Union. We believe, however, that to protest against the brutal barbarism of Nazism, especially the savage persecution of the Jewish masses, and at the same time against the dictatorship of the Soviet Union, will detract from the effect of a protest against Nazism.

"Furthermore, we believe that such a protest meeting held in common with the bourgeois national councils, will be used primarily to attack the Soviet Union, with the object of severing diplomatic relations in keeping with the demand of the most reactionary forces in America.

"The Jewish section in Chicago declares that such action of the Jewish Labor committee is unjustified and harmful both from the Jewish, and from the Labor and Socialist standpoint. We hold it is especially important that our criticism of the Soviet Union be made as a working-class organization, that our protest against Stalinism be conducted independently of bourgeois and reactionary elements.

"Therefore, the Jewish section of the Socialist party, Chicago, is compelled not to participate in the planned protest meeting, disclaiming all responsibility for this action of the Jewish Labor committee.

—Mordecai Shulman, Chairman, Nathan Miller, Secretary."

Also A Condemnation of Thomas

This letter is very much in point. It indicates that there are people in the Socialist party who are not going along with the reactionary Thomas-Symes-Trager line of uniting with war-mongers in attacks upon the Soviet Union. The letter is, logically, not only a condemnation of the Chicago Jewish Labor committee's action, but also a condemnation of the Socialist party's support of the anti-Soviet resolutions, of the jingo leaders of the American Labor party, its support of bourgeois Finland, etc.

The sentiment expressed in this letter must be widespread among the rank and file of the Socialist party, for there has been a change of tone in the Call. It is no longer screaming at the top of its voice for arms for Finland. It has made no attempt to answer our criticism of its jingo editorials on behalf of "democratic" Finland.

The change of tone is not, however, a change of policy. Underneath, the line remains the same reactionary line of backing Finland in the war, a "left" formulation of it, to hold on to class-conscious workers who are outraged by the brazen Hoover formulations with which the Call began.

The letter of the Chicago Socialists correctly denounces the Jewish Labor committee for joining with bourgeois groups in attacks on the Soviet Union. Is there any difference between that crime and that committed by Thomas? He writes, for example, in the January 20 Call: "We should do ourselves, and even encourage the government to do all that can be done for the Finns. . ." He adds, glibly, "That is, all that can be done without involving or threatening to involve America in war." To call upon the War Deal government of America to aid Finland—is that "a protest against Stalinism conducted independently of bourgeois and reactionary elements"? The letter of the Chicago Socialists should have been directed against Thomas and the Call as much as against the Jewish Labor committee.

Thomas says: "The aid given should be non-military." Why? Either the cause of Finland is one deserving working class support, in which case it should be supported with arms, or it is unworthy of support, in which case it should get nothing at all! Thomas' is a dishonest formula, designed to placate class-conscious workers in his ranks, while continuing his united front with Hoover for Finland.

Henry Haskell, in the same issue of the Call, makes a contribution which would provoke much merriment, if the issue were not so deadly serious. He writes:

"Socialists should make a sharp distinction between workers' aid to Finland, and aid by reactionaries like Hoover and also the Roosevelt administration. . . . When the workers all over the world come to the aid of Finland, that is something else again, and must be of great concern to the leaders in the Kremlin."

By the same token, every worker in the world coming to the support of the Anglo-French camp, would change the class-character of that war. And that, in fact, is what the "democratic," "anti-imperialist" wing of Anglo-French jingoism is trying to sell the American workers.

Let us hope that the Chicago Socialists, and every worker in the Socialist party, applies to the Socialist party's line the principles enunciated in their letter. If they do, we shall gladly join hands with them in a revolutionary Marxist struggle against Stalinism, the only kind of struggle which can destroy Stalinism, win independence for a Soviet Finland, and save the Soviet Union from capitalist restoration.

FDR Alibi For Cuts Blows Up

(Continued from Page 1)

a total of ten million unemployed. Roosevelt's relief slashes, if they are sustained by Congress, condemn these ten million plus their families to a hopeless prospect of neither government relief nor private jobs.

The only thing open to these workers is local relief. But that is collapsing altogether, as one crisis after another overwhelms the local relief systems. The report of the Chicago Council of Social Agencies, published here last week, which established that relief clients were actually starving in that city—and Chicago is listed as slightly above the national average in relief standards!—typifies the situation nationally.

What Will CIO Do? Roosevelt has indicated how he will meet the issue—by slashing relief still further. It is therefore now up to Congress. But Congress, it is clear, will go along with the President—unless in the next weeks the trade union and unemployed movement can make Congress change its mind.

The eyes of all militants in the labor movement are turned to Columbus this week, as the United Mine Workers convention convenes. What will John L. Lewis say? Will he propose to put teeth into the CIO News' condemnation of Roosevelt's relief slashes? Will the CIO undertake the responsibility of organizing a real fight, or will it shirk the task? That decision will determine the next stages of the fight for jobs and relief.

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We've got dance music, fifty gals, drinks, ping pong tables, roulette, pinocle and bridge corner, sing-fest, folk-dancing, famous personalities, gay repartee! Everything to warm the cockles of your heart! So come! Money back guarantee of satisfaction!

FOOD WORKERS Branch dance has been postponed to Saturday, Feb. 10. Place: Upper West Side branch headquarters, 910 Ninth Ave., N. Y. C. Beginning 8:30 p.m. Admission twenty-five cents.

UNSER WORT No. 1 (99) is available at the following bookshops and newsstands in New York City: Modern Book Shop, 27 University Pl. Rand School, 7 East 15th St. 42nd St. & 6th Ave., S.E. Cor. 42nd St., Southern Side, near Library. 200 East 86th St. Moderne Deutsche Buchhandlung, 250 East 84th St. Get it at once! It contains the article of W.H. on the War in Finland, a commentary on the Riots in Bohemia, and the important article by L. Trotsky, the USSR in War.

THE MARXIST SCHOOL announces two significant lectures series beginning MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1940: I. THE TRADE UNIONS FACE THE WAR Mondays, 7:15—8:40 P.M. Three lectures on current tasks of progressive trade unionists in America, to be given by E. R. Frank, Trade Union Director of the New York Local of the S.W.P. II. DIALECTICAL THINKING Mondays, 8:45—10:15 P.M. Three lectures on the philosophical basis of Marxism, by J. G. Wright, American translator of Trotsky's political works. ADMISSION FIFTY CENTS PER SERIES, OR TWENTY-FIVE CENTS PER LECTURE. All Lectures Take Place At: 125 WEST 33RD STREET, Room 201, N.Y.C. Register now in person or by mail at the school office, 116 UNIVERSITY PLACE, 3rd floor, N.Y.C.

HEAR JAMES P. CANNON NATIONAL SECRETARY, S. W. P. ERNEST ERBER EDITOR, CHALLENGE OF YOUTH Lenin Liebknecht SEE Dramatic Presentation "THERE WERE THREE" Luxemburg at Irving Plaza (Irving Place and 15th Street) WEDNESDAY, EVENING, JANUARY 31st, 1940, AT 8 P. M. SHARP