

The Negro Question

By J. R. JOHNSON

The United Mine Workers condemned the Scottsboro frame-up as an attack against the entire Negro race and recommended support of federal anti-lynching legislation to pave the way for extending the benefits of democracy to Negro workers.

The United Mine Workers have had if not a perfect—we live in a capitalist world—a long and honorable history in its dealings with Negroes. Both white and black workers need to study its history closely. Just after the failure of the 1919 strike the miners in the northern fields of West Virginia, making a drive for unionization, recognized that their only hope was the success of their brothers in the southern part of the state, who were then under heavy attack by the coal-owners. They formed an armed group of 8000 men, of whom 200 were Negroes, and marched upon the southern counties. The federal government interfered and stopped the march. But the unity in action, as a class, of these black and white workers is comparable to the tremendous class solidarity displayed by the black and white workers in the Chicago race riots of 1919. There were lynchings and race riots in 1919. But in that period of labor upheaval the militant workers of both races were getting closer together, foreshadowing the mass movement into the CIO, the greatest step forward the Negroes have made in this country since the abolition of slavery three-quarters of a century ago.

Negroes Early Played a Role

The UMW, from its beginning in 1890, encouraged Negroes to join. In northern West Virginia, Ohio, and western Pennsylvania, Negro miners held offices such as president and secretary, although greatly outnumbered by whites. Often the solitary Negro member of a local was president or secretary, this because he could speak and write English at a time when many of the foreign born could not.

In 1900, in the Flat Top Coal Fields, there were about 18,000 miners, 9000 white and 9000 black, all members of the union. In 1920 there were 25,000 Negro members of the UMW, though by 1927 the number had dropped to 5000. When Lewis began the drive for the CIO, the traditions and experience of the UMW in the Negro field were powerful factors in helping to bring the Negroes in. Today it is estimated that there are 80,000 Negroes in the UMW. In 1937 George Schuyler of the Pittsburgh Courier wrote that in Local 12068 of the United Mine Workers there were only four or five Negroes out of 68 members and yet all the officers were colored.

After a year and a half of work in the Alabama fields 23,000 miners were organized, about 14,000 of them Negroes. Whites and Negroes met in mixed meetings. Officers and committees were chosen equally from both races. The white usually had the more important places but this was due to the influence of the social system in the South. It would be easy to show that all has not been perfect in the relations between the races in the union. But one old Negro miner, a miner for 33 years, a union member for 25 and secretary of Local 2950, has said that "The United Mine Workers of America has done more to remove hatred and prejudice in the labor movement and to restore harmony and good will between man and man than any other agency in the country."

At the Columbus convention there were six official bands, one of which was the Logan County Band, composed of Negro high school boys and girls from Logan County, West Virginia. Lewis, pursuing his political maneuvers with Senator Wheeler, included the band among those who went to meet the Senator at the railway station and accompanied him to his hotel. Lewis stated that he specially wanted to honor the band, each member of which was a son or a daughter of a member of the UMW. Their expenses had been paid by the local unions in Logan County.

At the convention an important speech was made by William Dickerson, of Barkly, West Virginia. He asked for support to the passage of a Federal Mine Inspection bill to prevent such disasters as took place in Barkley on January 10, when 91 men were lost, 16 of them Negroes. Dickerson was a member of the rescue squad. Dickerson is a young man of 25, graduate of West Virginia State College. He studied business administration but was unable to find any opening. He went to work in the mines, identified himself with the working class and was soon elected recording secretary of Local 6420. In this lodge there are 480 members, of whom 25 only are Negroes

Why There's Unity in West. Va.

Now what is the underlying cause of all this? Nothing less than the geographical construction of West Virginia. Yes, the geographical construction of West Virginia. Before the Civil War the states of Virginia and West Virginia were one. Eastern Virginia consisted of the rich flat plains, on which flourished the cotton plantation system. In the West, the highlands, the population consisted of small farmers who had no slaves and were oppressed by the rich Bourbons of the lowlands.

In 1861 the slave owners naturally went with the South. The farmers of West Virginia saw their chance, refused to go with them, organized a separate state, and fought with the North. White men all, they took sides not according to race but on account of their economic interests and the social and political ideas which flowed from them. Since that time the two states have had a steadily divergent history in regard to their attitude to Negroes. The hard life, the equalizing conditions of labor in the mines, have forged a unity, one of the most powerful in the never-ceasing battle against race prejudice in America.

When the fight for the CIO came, the UMW took the lead and has accomplished work of outstanding importance in the history of labor and of Negro labor in particular. Their support of the anti-lynching bill is a great gesture of solidarity to the Negro people. But it is more than that. It shows us that, along with our fight for the bill in Congress we must never lose sight of our main aim, the creation of such conditions as would enable whites and Negroes to work together in conditions from which will flow social and political equality. Those conditions are what we call the socialist society.

ON THE WAR IN FINLAND

Why We Should Defend the Soviet Union

By ALBERT GOLDMAN

Since its birth our party has stood for the unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against the capitalist world. And for many years before the existence of the Socialist Workers' Party, the Trotskyists considered that idea as absolutely essential to their program.

Our policy of unconditional defense is based on the fact that nationalized property constitutes the foundation of the Soviet state and for us nationalized property is a tremendous step forward in the development of mankind. Marxists considered the development of the productive forces as the basic criterion of progress. That the destruction of capitalism in its period of decay and the substitution of nationalized industry permits the productive forces to develop at a remarkable rate has been proved by the great industrial growth that has taken place in the Soviet Union, and this in spite of the Stalinist leadership. The unconditional defense of the Soviet Union means the unconditional defense of nationalized property against the capitalist world.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN STALIN AND U.S.S.R.

Through all the years that we have been insisting on the necessity of defending the Soviet Union unconditionally against imperialism we have been the most consistent and implacable opponents of the Stalinist regime, from the revolutionary point of view. Every important policy pursued by Stalin we attacked; but we never swerved from our policy of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union. Some people thought we were inconsistent; but they failed to understand that we make a fundamental distinction between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the Soviet Union as a "complex of social institutions" based upon the October Revolution. Just as a revolutionary worker makes a distinction between his trade union and its reactionary leadership.

Unconditional defense has never meant and could not possibly have meant that we support the Red Army in every engagement into which Stalin sees fit to lead it. If that army were to be used against workers in the Soviet Union who were striking for better conditions or struggling to overthrow the bureaucracy, we would naturally do our utmost to demoralize and defeat the army.

If the Red Army were to be used against the Ukrainian workers attempting to establish an independent Soviet Ukraine, we would fight against that Red Army.

When part of that Red Army, the G.P.U., was used in Spain to suppress the Spanish revolution, we were in favor of exterminating that section of the Red Army.

BUREAUCRACY AND NATIONALIZED PROPERTY

Is the Stalinist bureaucracy interested in defending nationalized property? It is a bureaucracy of the degenerated workers' state based on nationalized property, and the interests of that bureaucracy are bound up with the nationalized property, which it must defend in order to preserve its existence. Green and Lewis are "labor lieutenants of capitalism" in the ranks of labor; but they are compelled to defend the trade unions against the bosses because their very existence depends on the existence and strength of the trade unions. It is undoubtedly true that neither the Stalinist bureaucracy nor the bureaucracies led by Green or Lewis defend the interests of the workers and their institutions effectively. Their policies weaken those institutions. But that is a reason why the workers should get rid of them, and not an argument for refusing to defend the workers' state or the trade unions.

A principle that our party has taught and shall continue to teach is that the workers must never turn over the task of removing the Stalinist bureaucracy to the capitalist enemy. They must reserve that privilege and duty for themselves because the destruction of the Stalinist bureaucracy by the capitalist enemy can lead to nothing but reactionary results.

It is only necessary to analyze

the war between the Soviet Union and Finland in the light of the general principles mentioned above and in the first article of this series, in order to arrive at a correct conclusion as to the policy which a class-conscious worker should follow. In other words, it is necessary to ask if the slogan of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union against the capitalist or imperialist world is applicable to the war in Finland.

WHO WAS "AGGRESSOR" DOESN'T DECIDE QUESTION

In the first instance it is essential to exclude the factor of who first attacked whom. The fact that in 1914 Germany began the actual hostilities by launching an attack on Belgium was a matter of indifference to Lenin in arriving at his conclusion that the war was an imperialist war and that it was necessary for the workers in both imperialist camps to follow the policy of revolutionary defeatism. The fact that Germany attacked Poland could not possibly lead any revolutionary Marxist to urge the workers to defend the reactionary Polish state. For Marxists the character of a war "is determined not by the initial episode taken by itself but by the main moving forces of the war, by its whole development and by the conse-

quences to which it finally leads". This is what the thesis of the Fourth International states and the statement can not be challenged successfully. Not the violation of neutrality or threats or an invasion by any particular country but the underlying economic and social factors and the probable consequences of the war should determine our attitude to it.

This does not mean that we condone the invasion of Finland by Stalin. I shall deal with this crime later. But in determining our attitude while the struggle is actually going on that factor is not the determining factor.

FINLAND AN OUTPOST OF IMPERIALISM

Once more we remind the reader that Finland was born as a result of a victory of the counter-revolution led by Mannerheim and supported first by the German and then by the Allied imperialists. It is this state which is at war with the Soviet Union. Simpletons of the Socialist Party and lackeys of the capitalists in the Social Democratic Federation will point to the fact that representatives of labor and the farmers are in the Finnish government. But Marxists understand that the real rulers of the country are the capitalists and landlords, and these are inextricably tied up with the imperialist world.

Finland is a buffer state, an outpost of imperialism, and its struggle against the Soviet Union is, in the last analysis, a struggle of the imperialist world against the Soviet Union.

To convince oneself of that simple fact, it is only necessary to consider the reaction of the capitalist world to the invasion of Finland. It is certain that even in Germany the sympathy of the ruling class is entirely with Finland but this sympathy is muted for the present because Hitler needs Stalin's support. In the whole capitalist world, outside of Germany, all the "democrats", including the Pope, Franco and Mussolini, have not hesitated to show on whose side their sympathies lie and this fact alone should almost be sufficient by itself to indicate to a class-conscious worker that he should be on the opposite side.

When Hitler invaded Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the other imperialists grumbled a little because a rival of theirs had the nerve to do things in such a high-handed fashion. When Ethiopia was invaded by Mussolini there was also a tempest in a tea pot. But when Stalin invaded Finland the reaction was altogether different. For the simple reason that in a struggle between the

Soviet Union and any part of the imperialist world, imperialism as a whole feels threatened.

The League of Nations, dead as a dodo under ordinary circumstances, suddenly revived and expelled the Soviet Union in one day. The Spanish fascist press, echoing the Pope, called for a Christian army to fight the Soviet Union. The humanitarian, Herbert Hoover, took the lead in defending the "democracy" of Mannerheim. Roosevelt, who was responsible for the embargo against Loyalist Spain in its life and death struggle against Franco, is assuming the leadership in the movement to help the Finnish capitalist army defeat the Soviet Union.

IMPERIALISTS SEEK THE DEFEAT OF THE USSR

Conditions are such as to make inadvisable, at the present moment, an open declaration of war against the Soviet Union by France and England. Bolder imperialist voices in those countries are demanding just that; but more cautious counsel may continue to prevail. Nevertheless, the passing of every day, it is becoming more clearly recognized that the Finnish-Soviet struggle is one of the fronts of the war, in fact today the only active front. Daladier and Chamberlain have stated openly that much more help has been sent to Finland than the average citizen is aware of and that still more aid will be forthcoming.

And is there any revolutionary worker naive enough to believe that Chamberlain and Daladier are interested in saving democracy, Finnish or otherwise? Can there be the slightest doubt that the imperialist world looks upon Finland as its protagonist?

No matter what the results of the Finnish-Soviet war may be—whether Stalin succeeds in his designs (as seems more probable) or gives up his attempt to conquer Finland; whether the Allies will openly declare war on the Soviet Union or will refrain from doing that; or whether a peace can be patched up between Hitler and the Allied imperialists and a combined attack made upon the Soviet Union—no matter what may develop in the near future, it is certain that right now the struggle in Finland is essentially the beginning of a struggle of the imperialist world against the Soviet Union.

Let the revolutionary worker ask himself: what would be the reaction of the imperialists to a defeat of the Red Army by the Finnish capitalist army? Would not the counter revolutionaries the world over, including those still living in the Soviet Union, be overjoyed?

A class-conscious worker can be fairly certain that what will bring joy to the imperialists, to the Hoovers, Roosevelts, Chamberlains and Daladiers, has nothing in it that is good for the workers.

The only conclusion that the class-conscious worker can possibly reach is that, as between the Red Army connected with and, in its own way, defending the Soviet Union based on nationalized property, and the Finnish capitalist army connected with and representing the imperialist world, he must favor and work for the victory of the Red Army. Analyzing all the factors involved, the slogan of unconditional defense of the Soviet Union is applicable in the present struggle in Finland.

That is the conclusion that the Socialist Workers Party has arrived at, and that is the conclusion that every revolutionary worker who follows the principles of revolutionary Marxism will recognize as correct.

But the defense of the Stalinist-controlled Soviet Union requires different tactics from those which revolutionary workers followed in the days when the Soviet Union was led by Lenin and Trotsky. In the next article we shall consider and analyze exactly in what way revolutionary workers in the Soviet Union and in Finland should defend the degenerated workers' state.

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The American Youth Congress-- A Masquerade

It Was Packed With Dubious "Organizations" To Make Up An Imposing Body of "Delegates"

By ERNEST ERBER Here are a few of the pertinent facts and highlights of the February 9-12 "National Citizenship Institute" of the American Youth Congress:

1. REPRESENTATION: Some 4,600 "delegates" registered who, the AYC leaders claimed, represented over four million young people. About a thousand or so were delegates from various bona-fide national and local organizations in which members of the Young Communist League are active. Among these organizations were Stalinist-dominated AFL and CIO locals, Industrial Girls Clubs and Business and Professional Women's Clubs of the Young Women's Christian Association. Then there were delegates from the Stalinist peripheral organizations: American Student Union, youth sections of the Workers Alliance, the International Workers Order, the International Labor Defense, the Finnish Workers Federation, Armenian Workers Federation, etc. Then came delegates from hundreds of organizations with dubious names like the Modern Youth Group, the Williamsburg Youth Center, the Streamlined Dance Group, etc. In a word, the vast majority of the "delegates" were members or sympathizers of the Young Communist League.

2. PROCEDURE: The entire two-day "Institute" was controlled by the top leadership of the AYC with a firm hand. Neither speakers nor resolutions were permitted from the floor. "Discussion" was organized by having delegates submit a slip of paper with their name and organization to the platform. A "Trotskyite" delegate had as much chance of getting by the committee on the platform as a snowball in hell. Ushers and police took care of anyone attempting to speak from the floor.

3. PRESIDENT'S SPEECH: The delegates paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue in a drizzling rain on Saturday morning, displaying banners with all the slogans which the Stalinists are currently stressing, "The Yanks Ain't Coming," "For the American Youth Act," "Not a Dime for Mannerheim," "Keep America Out of the Imperialist War," and so on.

The parade ended on the White House lawn, where arrangements had been made for an address by the President. The delegates waited for a half hour in a rain that had become a downpour to listen to Roosevelt denounce the Soviet Union as a dictatorship in no way different than any other and call for American support to Finland. The speech brought slight response from the delegates. At one point the crowd began to boo, and the radio operators were forced to cut out all microphones except those into which the President was speaking directly.

The thousands of YCLers were a sorry sight as they trudged back, wet, cold and miserable after Roosevelt's tongue-lashing.

4. THE LEWIS SPEECH: John L. Lewis decided to address the Congress only on the day before he spoke. Speaking to the delegates only some three hours after the President, Lewis' speech was greeted with thunderous ovations. The bitter sarcasm he poured upon the President's remarks appeared as vindication to the delegates for the abuse they had suffered in the morning.

5. TREATMENT OF AUBREY WILLIAMS: Coming right after Lewis' eventful speech, the speech of Aubrey Williams, director of the National Youth Administration, received scant attention from the press. Williams devoted the first part of his speech to the economic needs of youth and surpassed any of the invited speakers in the "radicalism" of his demands. He referred to the \$500,000,000 appropriation requested in the American Youth Act as "insufficient" and called for billions of dollars to finance a program to "re-house America" and "put youth to work at useful occupations." However, when, at the close of his remarks, he sought to justify his action of turning over the NYA lists to the Army Recruiting Office, he was greeted with such a storm of boos, and hisses that it became impossible to continue his speech. He explained that he had nothing against militarism as such but that "militarism must be subordinated to democracy." This brought forth renewed boos from the young Stalinists, who, only a half year ago, printed articles in the "Young Communist Review" on the advantages of life in the U.S. Army.

6. MRS. ROOSEVELT'S SPEECH: Visibly nervous and tense, Mrs. Roosevelt answered a series of questions at the session on "The International Scene" on Sunday night. Her remarks were the climax to participation in the previous sessions and an active support to practical arrangements. Over a hundred delegates were put up at the White House, in addition to other hundreds that she provided with accommodations at the homes of Mrs. Cordell Hull and other wives of government officials, at army barracks and a girls school, and through negotiations with the hotel managers association to lower rates.

Mrs. Roosevelt grimly sat on the platform through speeches by Frederick "Blackie" Myers, Communist Party whip in the National Maritime Union, an Indian "nationalist" named Luis Perez of the "Brotherhood of Cuban Youth," and other speakers who followed the political form of the current "Daily Worker" attacks upon Roosevelt. After the first speaker of what the chairman announced would be a panel of five youths on the subject of "How the War Affects Me" had concluded with a continuation of the attacks upon Roosevelt as a war-monger, Mrs. Roosevelt, without waiting to be introduced, strode to the rostrum and prepared to speak. The chairman solved the situation by simply announcing, "I present, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt."

Big Business Backs Newark Manager Plan

(Continued from Page 1) words, they want an "efficiency expert" who will save money by taking it out of the hides of the people, thus making sure that the tax burden of the rich will be lowered.

Did It Elsewhere They want to carry out the same kind of policy in Newark that Big Business succeeded in carrying out in almost every other city where they installed the City Manager form. They want to put into effect what they put into effect in Trenton, Yonkers, Cincinnati, etc.

Incidentally, of course, they want to be able to get their share of the patronage, gravy and job control in Newark City Hall. Both the regular (Hague-Byrne) Democratic organization and the Clean Government Republicans (majority in Essex County) have practically no influence in City Hall, which is controlled chiefly by the Mayor Ellenstein (Independent Democrat)-Public Works Commissioner Franklin (Independent Republican) machines, together with Finance Director Murphy (State Secretary of the AFL). Unable in the past to shake these machines, they hope to get them out of the way by this maneuver.

Estimate of Incumbents The Socialist Workers Party has made it clear throughout the campaign that its opposition to the change in no way means support or defense of the men now in the saddle in City Hall.

The City Commission at present is made up of men who have not gone as far as Big Business would like to see them go, only because they can't put it over too bluntly without losing their support among the small business men and workers.

But, by themselves, they have gone pretty far. Franklin's man, Malady, the overseer of the poor, has already begun a widespread slash in the relief rolls which may go as high as 20%. The Commission has slashed hospital services in the last year, cut appropriations for the library, etc.

Most important of all, they are the ones who are responsible for the high tax rate which has enabled Big Business to get a strong following among the bosses because their very existence depends on the existence and strength of the trade unions. It is undoubtedly true that neither the Stalinist bureaucracy nor the bureaucracies led by Green or Lewis defend the interests of the workers and their institutions effectively. Their policies weaken those institutions. But that is a reason why the workers should get rid of them, and not an argument for refusing to defend the workers' state or the trade unions.

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C.I.O. LEADER AGAIN LASHES OUT AT F.D.R.

(Continued from Page 1) any politicians or any statesmen who undertake to involve this country in a war in Europe or a war in the Pacific."

Lewis' speech was, indeed, so definite an accounting of the Roosevelt regime that the question inevitably posed itself on Lewis' lips and was uttered by him:

"Well, why not do something about it?"

But He Gave None His effectiveness in answering Roosevelt almost evaporated after he had asked that question. For to that key question Lewis had posed himself, he gave a faltering answer. After his dramatic description of the plight of the unemployed as "America's No. 1 problem" he proposed . . . "a family conference," such as he had already proposed at the UMW convention, of industrialists, financiers, government and labor.

The answer to this conference proposal was given by Lewis himself when he said, in this same speech answering Roosevelt:

"Isn't it now apparent that the politicians' answers are not going to get you a job unless you force the politicians to get you a job? You know, after all, you young people of this country, labor, the common people, are only going to get that degree of consideration from the politicians and from our public representatives that you force them to give you, by your organization, by your work, by your crystallized a t t i c l a t e voices and by the fact that you expect to fight for your rights as Americans."

Two different and mutually contradictory elements were mixed in that speech of Lewis, like two geological layers mixed together but representing two entirely different epochs of history—one, Lewis' position of these past years as a "left wing" of the Democratic party, the other, Lewis' voicing of the anguished demands of the masses at this stage of the permanent economic crisis.

It is significant that this speech was at least as sharp as his statement at the UMW convention, thereby committing Lewis still further to a fight against Roosevelt. Undoubtedly Lewis still wants to settle the issue within the confines of the Democratic party. But with each enthusiastic response of the workers to these statements, it becomes more difficult for Lewis to retreat. Thereby the road opens toward really independent labor political action.

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