

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

The Negro Question

By J. R. JOHNSON

The Republican Party has issued a statement on its policy for the election in 1940. It is not too early for the Negroes to begin a careful consideration of the programs and candidates at the coming election.

The Republican party for years masqueraded as the friend of the Negro. To quote Frederick Douglas' famous words, "The Republican Party is the deck and all else is the sea." People have claimed that the adherence of the Negro to this particular position for so many years is proof of the Negro's backwardness, stupidity, and ineptitude for politics. It was nothing of the kind. Here again the Negro has been vilely slandered.

Why Negroes Backed Republicans

After the Civil War, the Negroes, contrary to the general belief, flocked to the polls and lived an intense political life. Naturally they supported the Republican Party. The Republican party was the party of Lincoln; in it were revolutionary radicals like Thaddeus Stevens and Sumner who agitated for expropriation of the Southern landlords and "forty acres and a mule" for the Negroes.

Within their limits, the Republicans, anxious to crush their rivals, played a progressive role—small wonder that the Negroes voted for them. This they did in unusually large numbers.

Not that they were not tempted. In Virginia, for instance, the Southern landowners embraced the doctrine of Negro suffrage, and made an attempt to win the Negro vote. They posed as friends of the Negroes and in addition to promises they made threats: If the Negroes would not vote as their Southern employers wished, they swore to drive them from employment. This was a very real threat, carried out without mercy. But in those early days the Negroes would not be coerced. Some few Negroes were bribed, and even won elections against Republicans with the support of the Southern whites. But the majority of the Negroes voted solidly for the Republican Party. In fact, far from being apathetic about politics, it was the political energy of the Negroes that drove the old Southern landowning class into suppressing the Negro vote at all costs.

In Virginia the whites outnumbered the Negroes. Soon after the Civil War they gained a political majority and controlled the government. They would not vote funds for public education and insisted on the full payment of the interest on a huge public debt. William Malone led a split from the government party and rallied the poor farmers and the middle-classes against the reactionaries. The Negroes voted in great numbers for Malone.

His party, the Readjusters, was returned with a majority and, backed by the middle classes, and the poor, white and black, Malone reduced the public debt and raised the appropriations for public education. The Southern landowners saw that this combination of the poorer classes, both black and white, meant death for them. They sought for the weakest link in the chain of their enemies and found it in the slogan against "Black Domination." With this slogan, and by intimidation and terror, they split the ranks of their enemies and regained power.

Active in Populist Movement

Near the end of the century, the Populist movement asserted itself. Once again the Negro farmers rallied to it. The reactionaries used the old tactics of "Black Domination" allied with violence. In vain the white farmers in the South protested that this new struggle had nothing to do with the conflicts of the Civil War. Once more their ranks were disrupted. It was then that in despair the poor and middle-class whites decided that to have the Negroes with them meant the ruin of their course and finally acquiesced in the exclusion of the Negroes from politics. Under the powerful pressure of legalized lynching, the Negroes gradually sank into political apathy.

The Southerners rallied round the Democratic Party. The Negroes, when they voted at all, were driven into the Republican camp. In the days when the Democrats were systematically excluding them from participation in politics, the Negro's only hope for salvation seemed the Republican Party. In many respects the Republican Party was indeed the deck, a very small and slippery deck it is true, but a drowning man catches at much less than the Republican Party, and the Negroes were drowning.

Broke with Republicans in 1932

With the coming of the New Deal, however, the Negroes sat up and took notice. A New Deal. If any group of people in this country need a New Deal the Negroes did! They rallied to Roosevelt in 1936 and carried consternation into the ranks of the Republicans. The Republican High Command appointed Dr. Bunche of Howard University to make a special investigation into the reasons for the desertion of the Negroes, though why they should have needed a special investigation to find out what everybody knew, passes ordinary comprehension. But the New Deal has failed. It is now a corpse. The Negroes have begun to realize that there is nothing in it for them. The result is the beginning of a swing back to the Republicans, as seen in a Philadelphia election some months ago.

Swing back to what, however? What have the Republicans to offer? In their new draft program, the Republicans make a strong plea for the Negro vote. What they offer we must examine closely. But this much is already clear. 1940 is a great turning point for the large masses of Negro voters. They know that the Republican Party has nothing to offer, and after eight years of the New Deal they are in as much misery as ever they were. They form one-third of the ten million unemployed in the country. Roosevelt slashes at WPA and relief. He says not a word about the Anti-Lynch Bill. It seems to be a case of either the Devil or the Deep Blue Sea.

But in 1940 there is a way out. There is no need to limit oneself to the reactionary Republicans or the hypocritical New Dealers. Why must the workers continually trail behind the bosses? What we want is a Labor Party, a party of the workers and the farmers, white and black. If we are to form it, however, we must start laying the basis for it now.

ON THE WAR IN FINLAND

Why We Should Defend the Soviet Union

By ALBERT GOLDMAN

The war being waged between France and England on the one hand and Germany on the other is an imperialist war. A great many people make that assertion without, however, understanding the real meaning of the term "imperialist". There are many who dump the Soviet Union into the class of imperialist countries and to prove this they point to the invasion of Poland and Finland. The net result of applying the term "imperialist" to the Soviet Union is to give the workers the idea that it is folly to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist countries because it too is an imperialist country.

When we say that Germany, England and France are fighting an imperialist war we mean something more than that the people who happen to be at the head of the government of those countries have bad motives. It is true that Hitler's aim is to destroy the British Empire and obtain the colonies that Britain now possesses. But it is important to understand that German industry needs these colonies in order to obtain raw materials, markets for its products, and for the investment of German capital.

Great Britain on the other hand wants to retain these colonies for the same reasons that Germany wants to get them. The ruling classes of both countries desire to exploit the hundreds of millions of colonial peoples. The same is true of the French ruling class.

Why? Because these countries are imperialist countries: their competitive capitalism has developed into monopoly capitalism; the banks (finance capitalism) have replaced industrial capitalism as the real power; every one of these countries needs colonies in which to invest their

surplus capital and sell their products.

If and when the United States enters into the war it will be an imperialist war on its part no matter how many times Roosevelt will assert that it is a war to save the world from fascism. The United States, being an imperialist nation, cannot wage a war that is not imperialist in character.

LENIN'S DEFINITION OF IMPERIALISM

Marxists have insisted on a very strict use of the term "imperialism"; especially since Lenin wrote his pamphlet on imperialism, in which he severely condemned everyone who did not use the term "imperialism" to characterize the latest stage in the development of capitalist nations. It should be used only to apply to the expansionist policy of finance capitalism.

There are of course many people who use the term "imperialist" to designate any kind of aggression, but they are not Marxists, although they might claim to be such.

When the Red Army, in the early days of the Soviet Union, invaded Georgia, the reactionary "socialists" set up a howl about "Bolshevik imperialism". At present every writer in the capitalist press, every liberal and every pseudo-socialist insists that the invasion of Finland by the Red Army is a sign of "red or Stalinist imperialism".

Marxists, however, will continue to ask: Is the Soviet Union a capitalist country? If not, then the term "imperialist" to characterize Stalin's invasions and policies is absolutely incorrect and can only result in confusing the masses and weakening their struggle against real imperialism.

Some radicals of various kinds and types insist that we can recognize the difference between the economy existing in the Soviet Union and that of the capitalist countries and still use the term "imperialist" to describe Stalin's policies. They even attempt to justify the use of the term by stating that the aim of Stalin is to increase the "revenue, prestige and power" of the bureaucracy. This is undoubtedly true; but it can be pointed out to these people that the aim of every bureaucracy, including that of the trade unions is to gain "revenue, prestige and power". That, however, is hardly sufficient to transform the trade union bureaucrats into imperialists, unless one wants to use the term in such a broad sense as to make it meaningless.

In effect, they who shout about the imperialism of Stalin, whether they do or do not recognize any distinction between the economy in the Soviet Union and the economy in capitalist countries, are all against defending the Soviet Union not only in the present conflict with Finland but, it is safe to say, they will refuse to defend it in case England and France send their troops into Soviet territory.

IMPERIALISM IS THE MAIN ENEMY!

Calling the Soviet Union an imperialist country conceals the fact that the imperialism of France, Germany, England and the United States is the most reactionary phenomenon of modern society and the greatest enemy of the working class and of mankind in general. It is the imperialism of the capitalist countries that causes wars, exploits hundreds of millions of colonial slaves and its "own" workers, causes unemployment and retards the development of the productive forces.

IMPERIALISM IS THE MAIN ENEMY!

The Russian workers, by expropriating the capitalists and landlords, delivered a terrific blow to imperialism. By means of the foreign trade monopoly the Russian workers erected a wall to prevent the economic penetration of the Soviet Union by the forces of imperialism. One-sixth of the earth's surface was thereby closed to the imperialist world which was unable freely to sell its products or invest its capital in the Soviet Union — the greatest blow imperialism has ever received.

It has been the policy of revolutionary Marxists to defend colonial and semi-colonial countries, regardless of the reactionary character of their government, against attack by imperialist countries. When Italy attacked Ethiopia we defended Ethiopia even though its ruler, Haile Selassie, was a slave driver of the worst type. We defend China against Japan even though Chiang-Kai-shek has butchered tens of thousands of Chinese workers. In defending the colonial and semi-colonial nations we follow the principle that, as against imperialism, the independence of the backward countries is progressive. The defeat of any imperialist country trying to subject a colonial people, is a blow to all of imperialism, and revolutionary Marxists consider it their duty to help defeat their main enemy, imperialism.

HOW STALIN SERVES HITLER

How Lenin Negotiated A Treaty

Another Letter to a Communist Worker

Dear Will:

Last week I sent you an analysis of the Feb. 25 Sunday Worker article, "German Communists lead fight on Nazi hunger." I tried to show you that the title of that article was a fraud, for the article showed that the main activity of the Comintern in Germany, by its own claim, consists of propaganda on behalf of the Stalin-Hitler pact. And, in claiming that the pact "protected the vital interests of the German people", your party was helping Hitler. For if it is possible for Hitler to conduct a foreign policy beneficial to the German people, to that extent his overthrow is not a desperate necessity for the German people.

You reply to me, heatedly and at length. To sum up your argument, it is this: the Hitler-Stalin pact is of enormous benefit to the German people, but no thanks to Hitler. For, in the words of that Sunday Worker article:

"The Communists (in Germany) patiently explain to their fellow-workers that it was the victory of the proletarian October Revolution and the successful construction of socialism which gave the U.S.S.R. the strength with which to foil Chamberlain's plans and to strike fear into the heart of Hitler and to compel him to seek peace with the Soviets."

So we must thank Stalin, and not Hitler, for all the consequences of the Stalin-Hitler pact. Very well, then. Let us, for example, thank Stalin for one of these consequences—the partition of Poland.

The Polish state was everything which the Comintern press has called it: a dictatorship of the colonels, a monstrosity, imperialist oppressor of the Ukrainian and Byelo-Russian peoples, etc. Yet—one more of his crimes—Stalin announced himself ready to defend this monstrosity in alliance with Britain and France, until the Hitler-Stalin pact was signed.

But what has replaced this monstrosity, thanks to the pact? The Comintern press boasts about the "liberation" of the western provinces. Let us assume it is liberation. But this liberation is one result of the pact; and another is the enslavement of the rest of Poland by Hitler. Eleven millions liberated, 22 millions enslaved. At this rate, socialism will be achieved at the cost of the enslavement of two-thirds of the world's population!

HITLER'S GAINS ENSLAVE GERMAN PEOPLE

It used to be understood, among people who called them-

selves Communists, that the enslavement of a foreign people meant tightening by that much the hold of a ruling class on its "own" people. Hitler's enslavement of 22 million Poles is therefore a disaster not only to the Poles but also to the German masses. That this is a result of the Soviet-German pact is a fact which terribly compromises the Soviet Union in the eyes of the German workers and class-conscious workers everywhere.

Note that your party does not say that the Soviet Union could not help itself and had to sign the pact. Your party doesn't say that rather than plunge the Soviet Union into war and thus endanger its existence, it was better to save the Soviet Union even at the cost of letting Hitler enslave the Poles. If your party said that, one could then argue whether or not it was possible for the Comintern to call upon the Polish people—to rise up against Hitler and for the Red Army to join the Polish masses in preventing Hitler's occupation.

But your party doesn't say the Soviet Union couldn't help itself. On the contrary, it boasts, in the words of the Sunday Worker article already quoted above, that the Soviet Union had the "strength" to "strike fear into the heart of Hitler and to compel him" to sign the pact as a result of which the Nazi and Red armies collaborated in dividing Poland and turned over to Hitler the lion's share and 22 million Poles (not to mention the doomed Jews!).

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STALINISM AND LENINISM

Compare Stalin's negotiations and collaboration with Hitler when the Soviet Union is assertedly "strong", with Lenin and Trotsky's negotiations with German imperialism when the newly-born Soviets were pitifully weak!

On December 12, 1917 Trotsky arrived in Brest-Litovsk to open negotiations. He insisted, successfully, that the negotiations be completely public. Every speech by the Soviet delegation constituted a public exposure of the imperialist aims of the German negotiators and a ringing call to the international working class to overthrow their rulers. By every possible device of radio, telegraph, speech and print, Soviet agitators communicated the proceedings to the entire world.

In the midst of the negotiations the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets on January

2, 1918, declared:

"We now declare that the Russian Revolution remains faithful to the policy of internationalism. We defend the right of Poland, Lithuania and Courland to dispose of their own destiny, really, freely. Never will we recognize the justice of imposing the will of a foreign nation on any other nation whatsoever."

Izvestia, organ of the Soviet government, that same day denounced the German negotiators as "wolves in sheep's clothing."

TREATY-MAKING A REVOLUTIONARY WEAPON

The same day Soviet agitators distributed leaflets in the German lines, denouncing the German peace terms.

The German generals constituting the negotiating delegation constantly protested against the revolutionary propaganda conducted during the negotiations, and called Trotsky's speeches "provocative" and "addressed to the gallery." You behave as if you were dictating the peace to us, when the fact is that we are victorious and are negotiating on occupied Russian territory, the Germans complained to the Soviet delegation.

The German generals listened in bewilderment at some of the Soviet demands: that passports be issued immediately to the German Independent Socialists for a visit to the Soviets; that any publications the Soviets desired should be sent to prisoners of war in Germany and to the Socialists of Germany and Austria.

The Germans presented a proposed treaty which began with the usual diplomatic formula: "a treaty of peace and friendship between Germany and Soviet Russia." Trotsky demagogically struck out the phrase of "friendship." A revolutionary government could not permit itself such a lie!

Strikes in Germany were greeted by official Soviet messages: as the Soviet Congress met on Jan. 25, great strikes broke out in Austria; the Congress hailed "the rising of the Austrian workers."

Thus, in every possible way in the midst of the negotiations the newly-born Soviets called out to the German and Austrian workers over the heads of the negotiators.

After the German and Austrian revolutions of 1918 we learned how important in mobilizing the proletariat for those revolutions were the speeches which Trotsky delivered as "treaty negotia-

tions." Their revolutionary message took time, however, in reaching and moving the workers to action. The Soviets made one more demonstration of the situation of the world's workers; they refused to sign the treaty, the Germans advanced, and then when the treaty was signed every class-conscious worker in the world understood that the iniquitous terms of the treaty were solely due to the German-Austrian imperialists.

WHAT SOVIETS SAID THEN INDICTS STALIN NOW

The All-Russian Congress of the Soviets, meeting March 14, 1918, ratified the treaty in a declaration which said:

"It is unworthy of a true socialist if badly defeated . . . to deny that fact. . . . It is not true that we have betrayed our ideals or our friends, when we signed the peace. . . . We have not sanctioned or covered any lie. We have not refused to aid any friend or comrade in misfortune in any way we could, or by every means at our disposal."

The treaty sacrificed the national independence of the Ukraine. But every Ukrainian worker understood that the Soviets had "not refused to aid any friend . . . by every means at our disposal." No lie was covered or sanctioned.

Compare all this with what Stalin has done in the Hitler-Stalin pact!

The difference between the politics of Lenin and Trotsky and the politics of Stalin is epitomized in this:

The German social-democrats, lackeys of German imperialism, voted in the Reichstag for ratification of the Brest-Litovsk treaty, justifying their vote on the ground that the Soviets had ratified it. Lenin denounced them as traitors to the working class. For the Soviets, the treaty was a bitter necessity to secure a breathing-spell. But the social-democratic deputies should have been honor-bound to fight against their "own" rapacious imperialists.

Lenin denounced any German who supported the peace treaty of his imperialist rulers. But your party calls upon the German workers to support the peace treaty of their imperialist rulers. In that single difference is expressed the unbridgeable gap between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the revolutionary internationalism of Leninism.

Fraternally,
FELIX MORROW

Nazi Comment On Moscow's New Attitude

By OSCAR FISCHER

The Frankfurter Zeitung, mouthpiece of the chemical and export industries, published on December 24, 1939, an extensive report from its Moscow correspondent in the form of an annual balance sheet. The report bears the significant heading: "The Year of the Great Turn". It mirrors faithfully the raised hopes which a Fascist journalist today experiences in Moscow:

"German observers have been undergoing an incomparable year in Moscow, reporting and describing things from intimate proximity. The narrow circle of Moscow Germans suddenly discovered itself in the very midst of historic events. A breath-taking political development took place under the very eyes of the spectators. . . . Their aides and friends unexpectedly assumed the roles of fighters for new conceptions. They arose from their desks and engaged in conversation with the leading men of the Soviet state. They initiated an uninterrupted, highly significant exchange of ideas.

"Retrospectively, it seems almost impossible to say just where the point of departure was for this new policy, for this reshaping of relations between Germany and the Soviet Union. Undoubtedly a more pacific attitude among the two former antipodes developed as far back as December last year (1938), under the impress of the Munich settlement. There was also an element of readiness to be noted in Stalin's speech at the party conference in March, an undertone which later on grew perceptibly louder and which finally swung with it all of Soviet Russian public opinion. Unforgettable in one's memory remains the day on which was issued the report of Litvinov's downfall. . . ."

Regarding the sentiments of the population the Nazi reporter has, to be sure, nothing at all to say. He only speaks once on this point and precisely with regard to his discovery of Litvinov's downfall:

"I sat in a Russian railroad train . . . the provotnik, hoping for a good tip, handed the foreign passenger the latest Pravda. 'Anything new?' the other passengers asked, crowding around. The German hesitated as he looked at the dispatch and then turned the paper over to his neighbor, pointing with his finger to the dispatch in question. 'Maxim Maximovitch—liquidated!' the latter summed up philosophically."

Bureaucrats Welcome Nazi Gains

Nothing more was said by his Russian neighbor and the Nazi can report no more. But this philosophical silence is no less instructive than the warm sentiments which the Fascist press representative discovers inside the Stalinist bureaucracy and upon which he dwells at the close of his article again, as the most important result of the "great turn":

"German successes are observed with unceasing satisfaction, which resounds even more strongly in private conversations than in the press and on the radio. The fate of the armored cruiser 'Admiral Graf Spee' has had a tremendous effect on the Russian power of imagination. . . ."

"The number of German press representatives in Moscow as well as that of Soviet journalists in Berlin is increasing in proportion to the greater desire for information.

"An incomparable year. The strictly enclosed circle of persons within which the German observer used to carry on his work has very rapidly been extended far beyond its former confines. Once again, after so many years of an alien atmosphere, a social bond is being forged between Germans and Russians. Among the foreign guests in the Moscow hotels, the Germans are at present the predominant element. There are quartered the various delegations, the German business representatives and industrialists. Even German travel book authors are beginning to make their appearance. . . ."

The Stalinists Are Losing Out In Harlem

James Ford, leading Negro Stalinist and twice vice-presidential candidate on the Communist party ticket, has been removed from power in the party, as a result of the alarming decrease in the party membership among the Negroes, according to The Pittsburgh Courier (March 2, 1940). Ford, the former executive secretary of the Harlem division of the C.P., was "kicked upstairs" at the recent meeting of the National Committee of the C.P. and appointed as special representative for the Stalinists in Mexico.

Ford was given the Mexican "assignment" after a special report was read to the meeting that of an estimated 5,000 Negroes who joined the party in 1939, only 250 now remain as members. The report stated that there are only fifty paid-up Negro members in Harlem.

Ford's Harlem work, says The Pittsburgh Courier, is being taken over by a bureau which is reported to be planning a campaign on the exploitation of Negroes in the West Indies, Africa and the U.S. The Stalinists dropped these issues in recent years during the People's Front and Democratic Front periods.

"Bitterness over the failure of the Communists and the Soviet Union to aid Ethiopia . . . is blamed for the big drop in Negro membership, as well as the published charges of 'expelled' Negro leaders that the Communist officers practiced discrimination against Negro comrades in unions, WPA and functionary jobs controlled by the party."

Now that the Stalinists are following a pseudo-revolutionary line it was necessary for them to find a scapegoat for past crimes and Ford is the victim. They have a tough job ahead, however. The attendance at a Harlem meeting at which Browder spoke in January, the opening gun in their attempt to win back their Negro membership, was not more than one hundred, whereas in previous years they had packed the Renaissance Casino and the Rockland Palace with party and united front meetings.