The "LABOR WITH A WHITE SKIN CANNOT EMANCIPATE ITSELF WHERE LABOR WITH A BLACK SKIN IS BRANDED" — KARL Negro Question

≡By J. R. JOHNSON≡≡

(This column is written by Robert L. Birchman in comrade Johnson's absence.)

In blasting the myth that this war is a conflict between the "totalitarians" and the "democracies," we have often pointed out that British democracy, such as it is, is limited to the small white minority of the British Empire's population of five hundred millions. English law and legal procedure is one thing; the laws dictated by Englishmen to the colored populations of the Empire is something else again. England's Privy Council has recently made this distinction with brazen clarity in connection with the laws governing one of the colonies, Sierra Leone in British West Africa. The story is worth telling.

At the sessions of the British-dominated Legislative Council in May, 1939 a series of bills were passed, providing for the deportation of undesirable subjects, for the punishment of "seditious acts," and prohibiting the publication and distribution of "undesirable literature." Under these ordinances there will be no writ of habeas corpus and "no other process calling in question the legality of any order made under these ordinances shall have any effect."

One of the main purposes of these ordinances is to guard against political activity in the armed forces. There was a mutiny among the native soldiers of the colony last summer, and eleven of them were court-martialled. They received sentences of from seven to ten years penal servitude. Unrest is widespread among the industrial workers, the civil services and the armed forces. This accounts for the large number of white troops stationed in Freetown.

The introduction of this dictatorial legislation aroused tremendous opposition among the people and thousands of natives demonstrated on the opening day of the legislature. The demonstrators represented the Trade Union Congress, the National Congress, Christian League, Citizens Committee, West Africa Bar Association, etc., and was the largest ever seen in Freetown. But the ordinances were pushed through the legislature in spite of this overwhelming sentiment.

Political Persecution of Wallace Johnson

The persecution under these ordinances of Wallace Johnson, secretary of the West African Youth League and of the Sierra Leone Trade Union Congress, indicates the function of this legislation. At the outbreak of the war Johnson was subjected to "preventive arrest." His home was raided, his books confiscated, and he was imprisoned for the duration of the war. For under these ordinances the governor has the power to order the arrest of any native whom he considers undesirable. As a trade union organizer, he was most "undesirable" to the British colonial officials.

"Preventive arrest" without any crime charged was perhaps too much like Nazi procedure. The authorities decided to justify their persecution of Johnson by convicting him of a "crime." He was therefore convicted of sedition by the West African Court of Appeal for having written in the Gold Coast Spectator an article, "Has the African

Voicing the indignation of the natives of West Africa against the imperialists, Johnson had

"Personally I believe the European has a God in whom he believes and whom he is representing in his Churches all over Africa. He believes in the god whose name is spelt Deceit. He believes in the God whose law is 'Ye strong'; you must weaken the weak. Ye 'civilized' Europeans, you must 'civilize' the 'barbarous' Africans with machine guns. Ye 'Christian' Europeans you must 'Christianize' the 'pagan' Africans with bombs, poison gases, etc.

"In the colonies the Europeans believe in the god that commands: 'Ye administrators, make Sedition Bill to keep the African gagged. Make Forced Labor Bill to work the Africans as slaves. Make Deportation Ordinance to send the Africans to exile whenever they dare to question your authority. '

"Make an ordinance to grab his money so that he cannot stand economically. . . . Send detectives to stay around the house of any African who is agitating for national independence and if possible to round him up in a 'criminal frame up' so that he could be kept behind the bars."

Two Kinds of "Law"

Johnson's conviction was appealed to England, to the Privy Council. In the argument on the appeal, the Gold Coast Government contended that publication of the article was seditious in that it brought the government into contempt and hatred. Johnson formally denied this, claiming that his article was a fair expression of opinion on matters of vital concern to the natives. His counsel, arguing the legal issue, contended that the prosecution had to prove that the words complained of were of such a nature as likely to incite violence. His counsel based his argument on numerous citations from English and Scottish court decisions.

The judges of the Privy Council dismissed the appeal, leaving Johnson convicted and subject to penalties. On what ground? On the ground that the law of sedition for the colony is to be found in the criminal code of the Gold Coast and not in English law! The colonial code, they said, was no doubt designed to suit the "circumstances" of the natives in the colony!

A clear-enough decision. One law for the white English; another law for the black natives. That is the foundation-stone of the British Empire: open and brutal dictatorship over the overwhelming majority of the population of the British Em-

O'Dwyer, the Butcher of Amritsar, Meets His Fate In London

By SHERMAN STANLEY Governor General of India's province of the Punjab.

Azad, crying out that he was acting in the name of India's freedom, also wounded the Marquis of Zetland, Secretary of State for India, and two others.

not support individual terrorist dependence. But if ever a man deserved the fate that was meted out to him it was Sir Michael O'Dwyer. That is why we, op- of Independence of 1857 had the The British will unquestionably who instantly disowned Azad and Royal committee to investigate publican Army. the British authorities.

which takes its place in world history alongside the Bloody Sunday of Czar Nicholas.

The Amritsar affair took place on April 13, 1919-almost 21 years ago. The Caxton hall asreminder to British imperialism that the memory of April 19 sassination of last week was a that the memory of April 13, 1919 can never be wiped out until it has been fully avenged.

THE POST-WAR WAVE OF REVOLT IN INDIA

After the last World War a during the war in exchange for powers. support by India, held the country in its grip. The Indian Nationalist movement was progressing rapeasants and workers had gathered on April 13 to listen to Gandhi and his crowd. Nationalist agitators. They were a crowd of men, women and known as Jallianwala Bagh.

Last week, in London's West- tish soldiers, with a few profes- BY BRITISH "DEMOCRACY" minster district, a young Sikh sional Indian troops, under the After the trial had dragged on student and engineer named Ma- command of Brigadier General for years, the inevitable whitehomed Sing Azad interrupted a Dyer appeared. They had been wash and verdict of "not guilty" meeting of high Indian officials sent by Sir Michael O'Dwyer to was given. Dyer retired on a nice and retired British civil servants "restore order." These men were pension and died in 1928, doubtto put two bullets in the heart posted at the only exit to the lessly untroubled by the screams of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, former walled-in square. Without warn- of his victims, for had not the over 500 lay dead and 1,200 were week. wounded. Then the brave general No event has made such an im-

summer of 1919!

the worst massacre in India's his- that he had saved thereby British behalf. tory-the Amritsar massacre, rule over the 400,000,000 Indian Defend Azad from the British

Suddenly a contingent of Bri- MURDERERS WHITEWASHED

ing-as General Dyer later boast- Crown and Church of England ed—they began to fire into the given him their blessings? As for crowd. Before the slaughter was Sir Michael, he met his fate last

pression upon the Indian people The next day, as part of his as the massacre of Amritsar. A admitted project of "striking ter- national memorial park has been Readers of the Socialist Appeal | ror into the whole of the Punjab", | created on the site, to which know that our movement does General Dyer issued his famous hundreds of thousands of Indian "crawling order" compelling all fighters for freedom come every action which can never be a sub- Indians to crawl on their hands year. Jallianwala Day-a day stitute for action on the part of and knees down the principal upon which the memory of those the people of India for their in- street of Amritsar. Such was Bri- who died in the cause is honored tish imperialism in action in the and a renewed pledge to struggle for freedom is taken-is celeb-Never since India's first War rated annually by India.

ponents of terrorism of this sort, country been roused to such a try to place the hangman's noose must hasten to energetically con- fury. Dyer and his boss, Sir Mi- around the neck of Mahomed demn Mahatma Gandhi and his chael O'Dwyer had to be with- Singh Azad, martyr in India's associates in the leadership of drawn from India. Indian public struggle. They have already hung the Indian Nationalist Congress opinion forced the creation of a three members of the Irish Re-

threw his fate into the hands of the horrible massacre. At the Action of the English working hearing both of these bloody im- class can save Azad. Our com-Who was Sir Michael O'Dwyer? perialists defended and boasted of rades in England, the British It was he who, more than any- | their actions. O'Dwyer assumed | Fourth Internationalists, have alone else, bears responsibility for full responsibility and claimed ready begun a campaign in his

hangmen!

BOSE WARNS OF

(Continued from Page 1) revolutionary wave, stirred up have been engaged in a bitter by the actions of the Russian struggle for over a year. Gandhi workers and peasants and by the and his die-hard right wing suptotal failure of the British to keep porters have bent every effort to dustry, prohibition, etc. The aim their hypocritical promises made isolate Bose and strip him of his

But Bose, supported by the jute | reached about 3,000 years ago. workers of his home city of Calpidly. In the historic Punjabi city cutta, has fought back. Bose gave Congress may well be of decisive of Amritsar some 5,000 Sikh a clear statement of the platform importance for India's nationalist around which he is seeking to overthrow the dead weight of

children-totally unarmed-meet- with Gandhi on three fundamen- Socialist Appeal we will have a ing in the city's open square tal points: (1) The left-wing of lengthy article on the results of the Congress, known as the For- this historic Congress session.

house. What a smack! Everybody

on the starboard deck are over-

The captain heaves the ship to,

ward Bloc, wants complete independence from Great Britain. (2) Gandhi, at best, would take Dominion Status within the British Empire; Gandhi wants to indefinitely postpone the campaign for independence. Bose wants the campaign immediately launched. (3) Finally, Bose-even though in an extremely bewildered manner -understands that only socialism and industrialization can solve India's economic problems. To this Gandhi counterposes his Utopian and reactionary "hobbies" of reof these schemes is to return India to a stage which it had

The Ramgarh session of the movement. Will it result in a split, with the radical and progressive elements going their own Bose explained that he differs way? In next week's issue of the

and cargo. The spray stops flying

and the decks begin to dry. After

Pigs and Bosses

A Sailor's Story

The stench of pigs is over the pigs! Goddamned pigs!" He hates Four hundred hogs are penned in down or have the pigs washed ovbetween the bridge and the poop erboard. He slows down with lie in three days accumulation of on the port deck of the SS KAP- curses. ULANI, a freighter bound for

shovels pig droppings over the some sight.

Friday night; the wind is blow- The propellor races madly. The ing up and the barometer is go- stern bounces up and down, ing down. The weather report is a shakes, quivers and vibrates. One storm warning.

Saturday, before dawn, the first up against your ears, the next insea came aboard and knocked stant they shoot down to your deck. The second mate called the the steering gear grinds back and Or just plain stupidity? captain, who called the mate, who forth, leaking steam valves hiss called the bosun, carpenter, day- and scream, lockers rattle crazily man and pig man, who, together while the water-logged crew tries with the watch on deck began to rest in jitterbugging bunks. herding pigs.

At dawn the wind is blowing a gale. The captain is driving the ship full speed into the storm and in gale-driven showers makes a making dirty weather of it. Con- minute on deck miserable. And ing force, pelt and soak every- wet, taking an awful beating. thing on deck. The pigs are squawking.

A sea knocks down the forward the ship up into the sky and then wall of the pig-pen. The wrecking- plunge it down into the ocean. couple hours. They go below soak- are constipated. ing wet for breakfast. A big wave knocks the hell out of the entire' pen. The wet crew is on deck; the starboard corner of the after-

dunnage, rope yarns and nails, is ketchup bottles and mustard jars. and plunge full speed into storms. smashed to pieces. The crew, still soaking wet, turns out cursing hundred and fifty carboys of acid get in our hair. captain for not slowing down.

The captain, fatter than the turned. fattest hog and much louder, keeps grunting, "Goddamned while all hands secure loose gear Coast Saller," March 1.)

three hours work (no overtime) the crew go below. The break of a new day sees

the ship driving ahead. The cold, wet spray is flying. The pigs lie toship. A head wind blows the foul to slow down the ship. The waves ly. They are too tired to get up off gether shivering like bowls of jelsmell aft into the crew's quarters. are getting higer. It's either slow the wet deck. Too tired even to get up and eat breakfast. They dung. The stench is terrific. The The crew works all afternoon pig-man refuses to disturb the and finally put up a strong pen. pigs to clean the pen. Phew! What The pig-man, a weather-beaten The pigs are wet and miserable, a stink! With a tired crew and hand from the wide open spaces, One has two broken legs. Another five thousand dollars damage the feeds and waters the pigs, and has an eye gouged out. A grue- ship arrived thirty-two hours late. The ship could have arrived a few hours later but without any dam-The captain speeds up the ship. age. Why did the captain disregard good seamanship and common sense to endanger the ship. cargo and crew? Pressure from moment your guts are plastered the office to maintain a schedule.

What is this schedule that must down the after end of the pig-pen. knees. There is an awful din as be kept at any cost? Is it a new The pigs stampeded to the poop the giant turbines hum and whine, religion? A disease of the mind?

> Before the depression the upper classes flocked to Europe by the thousands. Abysmally ignorant of the social sciences, they were eas-Thru the night and all day Sunily taken in by the lies and hypocday the storm rages. The captain ricies that mask the rotten social structure of Europe.

They came back raving about "that wonderful man Mussolini tinual sprays, driven with sting- there stand the pigs cold and He makes the trains run on time!" This they repeated like parrots, until the entire boss-class The sea is making up big. Huge believed 'trains on time' to be a waves, growling and hissing, lift modern miracle.

They proceeded to put this crew, with hammers, nails and Some of the crew are sea-sick, mental aberration into practice ropes, are on the job again for a some have headaches, and some with religious fanaticism. All sorts of schedules were mapped Just after dark a big wave hits out, with speed the essential factor. Men were driven nuts trying to make everything run on time.

Ships were no exception. Capcomes out on the run. The star-This time they stack up the board lifeboat is smashed. The tains ashore and affoat had to pieces and begin to build anew. dining saloon is wrecked. The maintain schedules or else. That All morning they labor in a howl- wave smashed thru the heavy oak is why ships are wrecked and storm ports and knocked off the sailors drowned when captains try During dinner the pen, origin- inside wall panels. The place is to make port in a fog, cross ally put together in Frisco with awash with broken glasses, china, treacherous bars in bad weather The stench of pigs and bosses

Luckily only five of the three —S. U. P. No. 3248

(Reprinted from the "West

STALIN IN FINLAND

(Continued from Page 1)

joining Finland, Christian E. Guenther, Swedish Foreign Minister, showed that the Allied proposal to send troops to Finland was designed more for the purpose of getting at Germany than to assure Finland's independence. To a certain extent Guenther is correct. But another primary motive of the Allies in sending troops to Finland would be to inflict a defeat on the Red Army, if possible, and if not, to keep Stalin busy so that he would not be in a position to help Hitler.

Why Hitler Wanted the Peace

It can be presumed that not only did Hitler agree to peace between the Soviet Union and Finland but he was actually pressing for it. While his general aim is to involve Stalin in a military conflict with the Allies, he obviously is of the opinion that, at this particular moment, Stalin can be of greater service to him if the Soviet Union is at peace. He was also anxious to avoid war in Sweden, for hostilities there meant a chance of having his supply of iron ore and other material cut off.

Nor is he very anxious to see Stalin entrench himself too strongly in the Baltic, for he realizes that any increase in the defensive strength of the Soviet Union makes his future task all the more difficult. However, his all-important problem is to defeat the Allies. He is perfectly willing to grant Stalin defensive positions if thereby the Nazi war machine can only achieve its main purpose at this moment.

What the Soviet Union Lost

It would be folly to deny that the defensive position of the Soviet Union, in a military sense, has been strengthened. But it would be greater folly not to realize that the defense of the Soviet Union depends primarily, not upon military strategic factors, but upon the sympathy of the masses throughout the world. Through the invasion Stalin brought discredit upon the Soviet Union; he destroyed the sympathy of the masses for the Soviet Union and tied them more firmly to the capitalist world. The loss to the Soviet Union because of that is far greater than the gains achieved in a military-strategic way.

No one except the misled people who blindly follow the Stalinist parties believed the absurd statements made by the Kremlin that Finland threatened to invade the Soviet Union and no one except those same people believe now that the Soviet-Finnish peace treaty is a tremendous victory for peace, as is claimed by Moscow and, of course, by the Daily Worker.

If and when the Allied imperialists should succeed in defeating Hitler and proceed with settling accounts with Stalin, or if the Allies should decide to invade the Soviet Union before defeating Hitler, it will be a thousand times more difficult to arouse the masses in opposition to such a war. Stalin has destroyed the faith of millions in the Soviet Union and has once more shown that the Stalinist bureaucracy is weakening the Soviet Union.

Stalin Is Not the Soviet Union

Millions of workers do not make the distinction that should be made between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the Soviet Union. Stalin acts in the same manner as Hitler and from that they draw the false conclusion that the Soviet Union is the same as Germany. We condemned the invasion because we knew beforehand that no matter what victories the Red Army would gain, the Soviet Union would lose in the esteem of the working masses, because the masses, repelled by the invasion, would tend also to become indifferent or even hostile to the Soviet Union.

But we were staunch in our defense of the Soviet Union and favored the victory of the Red Army against the Finnish capitalist army representing the imperialist world. Recognizing that nationalized property still exists in the Soviet Union we must defend it in any war against a capitalist nation. All that one has to ask is: what would have been the result of a defeat of the Red Army in Finland? Nationalized property would have been endangered and that is what we defend both against imperialism and against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Has not the Stalinist bureaucracy strengthened itself because of the victory of the Red Army? Perhaps, yes, temporarily, But would not the Soviet Union be in danger if the Red Army had been defeated? We repeat what we have said a thousand times. The task of destroying the Stalinist bureaucracy is a privilege and a duty which the workers must reserve for themselves and not assign to the imperialists.

"Stalinist Imperialism" Theory Blasted

How will those profound theoreticians-the Socialist party, the Lovestoneites and their similars-justify their theory of Stalinist imperialism? Undoubtedly they will make all kinds of gyrations to show that they are correct, but anyone who is not blinded by hatred of Stalin can easily see that what he is after primarily is to obtain defensive footholds. It is well-nigh impossible to explain what he has done thus far on the basis of the theory that he has entered into a partnership with Hitler to divide the British Empire or even (some have said it!) the whole world. Of course people do not have to consider facts; they can let their desires and imaginations run away with them. But then these people are not Marxists.

And when the Supreme Council of the Soviet Union will meet it will undoubtedly nationalize industry in that section of Finland ceded to the Soviet Union by the peace terms. It is true that this will be done in a bureaucratic manner and to that extent it is not what we want. But as against permitting industry to remain under capitalism, even bureaucratic nationalization is progressive. Let the middle-class democrats howl about "Stalinist imperialism," but Marxists will continue to make a distinction between imperialism and a degenerated workers' state which, when it annexes territory, takes property away from imperialism and narrows the base of world imperialism.

No one can say with certainty when and under what conditions the Soviet Union will find itself at war. All that our party states is: whenever the Soviet Union will be at war with any capitalist country we shall call upon the workers of the world to defend it because in doing so we are defending the first conquest of the World Revolution. For workers everywhere the main enemy is imperialism. The workers must do their utmost to destroy the power of the Stalinist bureaucracy precisely in order to defend the Soviet Union most effectively.

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Centrism Did Its Bit During the Soviet-Finn War

By PAUL G. STEVENS

Among the centrists today united in the socalled "International Front Against War" (British Independent Labor Party, Lovestoneites, French P.S.O.P., Dutch Revolutionary Socialist Labor Party, etc.), the Soviet-Finnish conflict has brought to the fore the deep contradictions which have been latent among them for years.

Thus we read in the German edition of the "Front's" information bulletin (January 1940): "Among adherents of the I.F.A.W. who have had an opportunity to discuss the question there are divergent views with regard to the character of the present regime in the Soviet Union." Some consider it, we are told, as still retaining the character of a "progressive workers state." Others, that it is no longer a workers state, that the bureaucracy is a new exploiting class and that therefore the workers should be for its de-

Some regard as motives for the war: the desire to strengthen the defense of Leningrad and to find other military-strategic guarantees for defense against Germany as well as the Allieswithout excusing in the least Stalin's procedure in realizing these motives. Others think that the invasion of Finland is part of a great plan of conquest agreed upon by "Berlin-Moscow imperialism."

Some recall the counter-revolutionary character of the Finnish bourgeoisie under Mannerheim. Others regard the "resistance of the Finnish people against the Russian attack as a progressive national war". They believe that "the Finnish proletariat must participate actively in the defense of Finnish indeepndence, maintaining their class independence in doing this, and desire the defeat of the Red Army."

After setting forth the existence of the divergent views in its ranks, the I.F.A.W. presents a resolution which contains the following main point: "Regardless of our opinions about the character of the present Russian state (!) and the motives for its invasion of Finland, that the methods employed by Stalin against the Finnish people must be condemned and attacked as counter-revolutionary . . . the Russian workers can not therefore be for the victory of the Russian (!) Army in Finland, but must desire the immediate cessation of the war. For a peace without annexations! For the immediate withdrawal of Russian troops from occupied territories!" etc.,

How Do They Do It?

How anyone who still regards Soviet Russia as a workers state and considers Mannerheim's Finland as an outpost of world imperialism can consistently be "against the victory of the Red Army" in a struggle between the two is not explained. Nor can it be explained. For the centrists are here trying to reconcile two opposing class points of view.

How untenable this position is has been revealed by subsequent events. While the January resolution strained itself to avoid characterizing the Soviet Union in the terminology of Marxism, and in order to avoid commitments, speaks of the "Russian" state and the "Russian" army a resolution published by the same people in February throws all caution to the winds in this

In "Independent News", the English language bulletin of the I.F.A.W. for February, we read something entirely different: "By appealing to the argument of 'strategic advantage' as a justification for a wanton attack against a small neighbor, Stalinist Russia puts itself in the category of imperialistic powers. . . ."

Logical Result of Their Theory

Whoever says "A" must say "B". Having discovered that Soviet Russia is an imperialist state, the I.F.A.W. now finds: "Because we sincerely believe in the principles of national self-determination, because we recognize the disastrous effects of Stalin's invasion from the standpoint not only of the Finnish people but also of the Russian people and of the international working class generally we sympathize with the Finnish struggle against the Russian invader. Of that there can be no doubt."

The new line permits their American section (the Lovestoneites) and the Dutch (Sneevliet) to howl in chorus with the bourgeois press against "Soviet imperialism" and to identify the Communist Party with the German-American Bund, and to call for funds to be sent to Finnish "labor organizations", that is, to the social democracy which is in one bloc with Mannerheim. However, it does not yet prevent the Scottish Independent Labor Party from adopting a resolution which goes against the grain of this whole, line: the latter, adopted at a conference on January 20-21 says:

"This conference, reviewing the events which led up to the present situation in Finland, condemns the foreign policy of the Russian govern-

"We warn the workers, however, to be on guard against the intensive propaganda in which world capitalism seeks to canalize opinion against

"We therefore resolve to oppose the formation of a capitalist block against Russia and consider that we can best assist the workers and peasants of Russia by concentrating our energies against the capitalist, imperialist enemy at home."

The Finnish-Soviet war is concluded. But the imperialist war goes on. In this war, the class lines come boldly to the forefront. Within the workers' camp, in this war, is the Soviet Union which, despite Stalin and his degenerated bureaucracy, still retains the main economic conquests of the October revolution. Any attempt to slur over this fact, any attempt to find compromise formulas that reconcile two opposing class attitudes, are bound to shatter on the rocks of living reality. That is why centrism is doomed to disintegration. That is why one wing of the I.F. A.W. must of necessity go over to the camp of the treacherous social democracy. That is why another wing must approach ever closer the positions of the Fourth International. The actions of the Lovestoneites, Sneevliet and company, on the one hand, and of the Scottish I.L.P. on the

other, are merely portents of this trend.