

The 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.

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."

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-martialed.

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."

"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."

"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 spelled Deceit. He believes in the God whose law is 'Ye strong'; you must weaken the weak.

"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.'

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.

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!

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

By SHERMAN STANLEY

Last week, in London's Westminster district, a young Sikh student and engineer named Mahomed Sing Azad interrupted a meeting of high Indian officials and retired British civil servants to put two bullets in the heart of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, former 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.

Readers of the Socialist Appeal know that our movement does not support individual terrorist action which can never be a substitute for action on the part of the people of India for their independence. But if ever a man deserved the fate that was meted out to him it was Sir Michael O'Dwyer.

Who was Sir Michael O'Dwyer? It was he who, more than anyone else, bears responsibility for the worst massacre in India's history—the Amritsar massacre, 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 assassination of last week was a reminder to British imperialism 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 revolutionary wave, stirred up by the actions of the Russian workers and peasants and by the total failure of the British to keep their hypocritical promises made during the war in exchange for support by India, held the country in its grip.

Suddenly a contingent of British soldiers, with a few professional Indian troops, under the command of Brigadier General Dyer appeared. They had been sent by Sir Michael O'Dwyer to "restore order."

The next day, as part of his admitted project of "striking terror into the whole of the Punjab," General Dyer issued his famous "crawling order" compelling all Indians to crawl on their hands and knees down the principal street of Amritsar.

Never since India's first War of Independence of 1857 had the country been roused to such a fury. Dyer and his boss, Sir Michael O'Dwyer had to be publicly drawn from India. Indian public opinion forced the creation of a Royal committee to investigate the horrible massacre.

BOSE WARNS OF COMING CIVIL WAR IN INDIA

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have been engaged in a bitter struggle for over a year. Gandhi and his die-hard right wing supporters have bent every effort to isolate Bose and strip him of his powers. But Bose, supported by the jute workers of his home city of Calcutta, has fought back.

Bose explained that he differs with Gandhi on three fundamental points: (1) The left-wing of the Congress, known as the For-

MURDERERS WHITEWASHED BY BRITISH "DEMOCRACY" After the trial had dragged on for years, the inevitable white-wash and verdict of "not guilty" was given. Dyer retired on a nice pension and died in 1928, doubtlessly untroubled by the screams of his victims, for had not the Crown and Church of England given him their blessings? As for Sir Michael, he met his fate last week.

No event has made such an impression upon the Indian people as the massacre of Amritsar. A national memorial park has been created on the site, to which hundreds of thousands of Indian fighters for freedom come every year. Jallianwala Day—a day upon which the memory of those who died in the cause is honored and a renewed pledge to struggle for freedom is taken—is celebrated annually by India.

The British will unquestionably try to place the hangman's noose around the neck of Mahomed Singh Azad, martyr in India's struggle. They have already hung three members of the Irish Republican Army. Action of the English working class can save Azad.

MURDERERS WHITEWASHED BY BRITISH "DEMOCRACY"

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.

The Ramgarh session of the Congress may well be of decisive importance for India's nationalist movement. Will it result in a split, with the radical and progressive elements going their own way? In next week's issue of the Socialist Appeal we will have a lengthy article on the results of this historic Congress session.

and cargo. The spray stops flying and the decks begin to dry. After 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 together shivering like bowls of jelly. They are too tired to get up off the wet deck.

What is this schedule that must be kept at any cost? Is it a new religion? A disease of the mind? Or just plain stupidity?

Before the depression the upper classes flocked to Europe by the thousands. Apathetically ignorant of the social sciences, they were easily taken in by the lies and hypocrisies that mask the rotten social structure of Europe.

They came back raving about "that wonderful man Mussolini. He makes the trains run on time!" This they repeated like parrots, until the entire boss-class believed 'trains on time' to be a modern miracle.

They proceeded to put this mental aberration into practice with religious fanaticism. All sorts of schedules were mapped out, with speed the essential factor. Men were driven nuts trying to make everything run on time.

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STALIN IN FINLAND

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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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 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.

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.

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?

"Stalinist Imperialism" Theory Blasted

How will those profound theoreticians—the Socialist party, the Lovestonetites 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.

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.

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.

ANNIVERSARY MEETING PARIS COMMUNE AND LEON SEDOV MEMORIAL. Max Shachtman, Editor, New International; Nathan Gould, National Secretary, YPSL. FRIDAY EVENING, MARCH 22 8:30 O'CLOCK. Beethoven Hall, 210 East 5th St., N.Y.C. ADMISSION: TWENTY-FIVE CENTS. Socialist Workers Party, Local New York. Sponsors: Young Peoples Socialist League, N. Y. District.

Centrism Did Its Bit During the Soviet-Finn War

By PAUL G. STEVENS

Among the centrists today united in the so-called "International Front Against War" (British Independent Labor Party, Lovestonetites, 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 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 Allies—without excusing in the least Stalin's procedure in realizing these motives.

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."

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 (1) 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..."

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 respect.

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

"We therefore resolve to oppose the formation of a capitalist bloc 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 fore. 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.