

The Negro Question
by Robert L. Birchman

"Democracy" in British West Indies

British imperialism is moving swiftly to completely suppress freedom of speech, the right of assembly, the expression of grievances and criticism, in the West Indies. In Jamaica the Government is trying to enforce the "Undesirable Literature Law."

The Governor is given "absolute discretion" to ban the importation of any literature that violates the law and any person who imports, publishes, offers for sale, distributes, or reproduces any publication the importation of which has been prohibited shall be liable to imprisonment at hard labor for a term not exceeding twelve months or to a fine not exceeding £100 (about \$500) or to both imprisonment and fine.

The People's National Party of Jamaica has protested the law. Their statement reads in part: "The Law does not specify the sort of literature or matter that may be prohibited but vests in the Governor alone an arbitrary and absolute power. The Law affords no safeguards nor means of redress whatever for persons affected by the use of its powers."

"We do most strenuously protest against the undemocratic and bureaucratic and oppressive form of the Bill. We protest against the arrogant assumption of arbitrary powers by any man to control and limit the constitution rights of freedom of thought and opinion...."

"The law is undemocratic, unnecessary and harsh and makes it possible to deny to the people of the country the ordinary rights of free thought and opinion."

A Letter from Jamaica

We have received a letter from Jamaica which states: "Your May Day issue was exceptionally good and grand. Keep up the fight. The Jamaica Labor Weekly started republication but had to suspend on account of war-time repression. Yours for a Socialist World."

The Jamaica Labor Weekly was a militant labor paper which was published during 1938 and the first half of 1939 and appeared again for four issues during April and May of this year. It carried on a campaign against the war. We can be sure that the sentiments expressed in an article in May, 1939, are still the opinions of thousands of workers in the West Indies.

The article points out that Jamaicans will be called upon to fight for democracy and asks:

"HOW COULD JAMAICANS FIGHT TO DEFEND DEMOCRACY WHEN WE HAVE NOT GOT ANY? Although we Jamaicans are bitterly opposed to fascism and are ready to defend democracy when we get it here, WE ARE NOT GOING TO FIGHT FOR IMPERIALISM AND THE PERPETUAL ENRICHMENT OF THE POCKETS OF THE BRITISH CAPITALISTS."

An item from the Daily Gleamer, Kingston, Jamaica paper gives us something of a picture of the conditions in Jamaica. A. G. S. Coombs, President of the Jamaica Workers and Tradesmen Union states that in the Montego Bay area two-thirds of the workers are unemployed and that those who are working only receive the miserable wage of 3 to 10 shillings a week and that this "only provides for food of the cheapest and most miserable order—not to mention clothing and housing."

The cost of living for workers in Kingston, according to official figures, has risen 17 percent since last August. Clothing costs rose by 25 percent and food by 22 percent in this period.

In Trinidad, British West Indies, the police commissioner has ordered the suppression of all labor union meetings, groups or parades, of more than ten persons have been banned and trade union meetings broken up and their officers arrested by the police, according to reports appearing in the U.S. Negro press.

Negroes Fear Effects of War Drive

"Negroes may suffer in U.S. drive for defense," is the telling headline of a story in the New York City Negro newspaper, the *Amsterdam News*, May 25. It reports that "speedy Congressional action to approve the executive's request for a billion dollars for armaments this week were seen to signal doom to the welfare of thousands of unemployed Negroes all over the country."

The point is that the cutting down of the WPA rolls will oust tens of thousands of Negroes who will get no benefits from the jobs created by the armament appropriations. For, the *Amsterdam News* points out:

"Negroes are not employed by the major airplane and munitions making concerns, a Jim-Crow policy of long standing, and of those employed in navy yards and the steel industry, very few are above the ordinary unskilled labor classification."

There's only one place they aren't going to discriminate against Negroes: in the front-line trenches. They'll use black skins for cannon-fodder—as long as blacks will go to the slaughter....

Millions in Gold for Britain's War Chest from Labor of African Miners

Natives in the Rand gold mines of South Africa are working overtime to pour gold into Britain's war-chest. In the first seven months of the war, these mines produced \$272,000,000 of new gold. The production output reached an all-time high in March in the Rand. It totaled 1,147,382 ounces. At the American price of \$35 an ounce, the March output was worth \$40,145,000. This is enough to buy a fleet of 535 American pursuit planes. It is not difficult to see who pays for the war. Not the masters who spend "their" gold, but the colonial people and the workers of the imperialist nations.

GPU Assassins Try to Murder Trotsky

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separated, part of them placing themselves between Trotsky and the rest of the guards who were sleeping in their rooms, spraying the guards' doors with frequent blasts of machine gun slugs.
Guards Answer Machine Guns
The guards reported that one of the assassins called out to them in English to stay in their rooms and they would not be hurt. They returned the fire, however. Whether any of the assassins were struck by the return fire is not known. The invaders had cut all the wires except that of the telephone upon overpowering Harte, and in the darkness only the flame from their machine guns could be seen.

Feared Mechanized Device
The main body of assassins proceeded to the combined library and study of Comrade Trotsky, firing machine gun slugs wildly as they broke inside. From that vantage point they held their machine guns on the bedroom door of Comrade Trotsky, riddling it with bullets. At the same time others of the gang shot through the French door of the bedroom which opens upon the patio, thus directing a cross fire upon the beds where Comrades Trotsky and Natalia had been sleeping but few minutes before. Their pillows were riddled. More than seventy bullet holes were counted in the wall near the beds. Others of the assassins fired into Serge's room at the same time.

Undoubtedly convinced that they had succeeded in their bloody assignment and fearing to break open the bedroom doors which are connected with a special mechanical protective device of which they apparently were aware, the assassins hurled incendiary bombs in the library and left with flames rapidly spreading among the books and magazines. At the door through the wall, which also opens upon the garage, they stole two of the automobiles. They took Harte—perhaps already dead—with them.
Comrade Natalia rushed out of the bedroom and smothered the fire with blankets.

The alarm was flashed over the telephone by the remaining guards, and the Mexican authorities immediately responded with squads of police and secret service men.

Trotsky Names Mink
Comrade Trotsky named George Mink as one of the GPU agents assigned to assassinate him and declared that the entire attempt was carried out on direct orders and under the personal supervision of Stalin, the Cain who has slaughtered the entire of the Bolsheviks who led the October revolution.

One of the automobiles was abandoned by the GPU assassins in Coyocacan, the other was found on a road ten miles west of Mexico City. In it was a coat from one of the police uniforms used by the gang.

The Mexican authorities have launched a thoroughgoing investigation. The five policemen detailed to guard the house under the supervision of J. Casas have been placed in custody for close questioning. The Mexican secret service is combing the country for suspects.

All Mexico Aroused
The attempted assassination created a sensation in Mexico. It was the most important story of the week. Every newspaper carried detailed accounts.

In expectation that another attempt will shortly be made—Stalin seems to believe that the headlines on the world war now raging will cover up the crime—the police guard has been reinforced at Coyocacan by the Mexican authorities. The internal guard system is likewise being greatly amplified and the entire interior within the walls completely rearranged and reinforced in preparation for the next attack.

The final resolution that came out of the committee hopper, however, merely stated that the convention "was opposed to U.S. involvement in the war."

This despicable action of the resolutions committee was part of a deliberate drive by high CIO officials to tame the militant anti-war spirit displayed by the convention delegates.

Union-Label Bullets
Allan Haywood outlined the official CIO policy. "The CIO is supporting the preparedness drive," he stated, "and would help defend the country against any aggression, but it demands a voice on proposed emergency war bureaus and will insist that existing labor standards be defended."

Thus Haywood announced to the convention that the top CIO officials have already sold out to the Roosevelt war machine and only ask that the union label be placed on the bullets, the guns and uniforms that will be pro-



A recent photograph of Natalia and Leon Trotsky.

WHO IS GEORGE MINK?

Just over two years ago—on April 16, 1938—the *Socialist Appeal* reported that George Mink, G.P.U. assassin, was on his way to Mexico with the assigned task of murdering Leon Trotsky.

"He sailed early this week," the *Appeal* reported on that date, "from the port of Galveston, Texas, for the port of Vera Cruz, Mexico, to carry out the mission assigned to him by his gangster overlords: to organize the murder of Leon Trotsky!"

We gave in detail at that time many of the known facts about Mink, notorious for many years internationally as a spy, terrorist, and executioner in the service of Stalin's G.P.U.

In 1925, the *New York Times* published a dispatch from Copenhagen, Denmark, dated July 30, which stated that "two Americans, George Mink and Nicholas Sherman, arrested two months ago, were condemned today to 18 months in prison under the accusation of espionage."

Subsequently Mink, under the name of "Alfred Herz" headed the murder squads of Stalin's G.P.U. in Spain. In Barcelona he was personally responsible for organizing and carrying out the assassinations of hundreds of militant anarchists, members of the P.O.U.M., and of the Fourth International.

The Spanish anarchists directly charged "Herz" with organizing the murder of the anarchist leader in Barcelona, Camillo Berneri, and his comrade Barbieri. This charge was published in this country by Carlo Tresca, editor of the anarchist weekly, "Il Martello."

The sinister figure of Mink appeared in the

murder of Moulin, Fourth Internationalist militant, and in the kidnapping and probable murder—they have never been seen since—of Marc Rein, son of the Russian Social Democrat Rafael Abramovitch, member of the bureau of the Second International, and of Erwin Wolf, former secretary to Leon Trotsky.

Having acquitted himself so well in his master's behalf in Spain, Mink returned to this country and left almost immediately for Mexico for his new job—the assassination of Leon Trotsky.

Reported at the same time as going to Mexico were a known French Stalinist official, Georges Fournial, and Roland Abbiatte, sought by French and Swiss police as one of the murderers in September, 1937, of Ignace Reiss. Reiss had broken with Stalin's G.P.U. and joined the Fourth International. When Swiss police raided Abbiatte's room (he was also known as "Rossi"), they found a map of Mexico City and its suburbs, and a duplicate of an application for a Mexican visa.

Other known G.P.U. agents who subsequently joined Mink, Fournial, and Abbiatte in Mexico included Tina Modotti, Italian Stalinist who was held for a time by Swiss police in the Reiss murder, and Sorrenti, also an Italian, who goes by the name of "Carlos Contrera."

These are the creatures assembled in Mexico by Stalin to "get" Trotsky, his most feared and most hated enemy. Their names are written down in the books of the international working class and will remain there until the working class of the whole world has its reckoning with Stalin and Stalinism.

Michigan CIO Halted In Stand Against War

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convention, in its annual meeting this week-end.

The resolutions committee, under the domination of Allan Haywood, National CIO Organization Director and old time wheel-horse for the Lewis machine in the Miners Union, deliberately violated the sentiments of the rank and file delegates for a live wire program of action against Roosevelt's war preparations.

During Saturday's session the convention delegates had revolted against a milk and water resolution, submitted by the Resolutions Committee, had defeated the resolution and demanded from the floor that a great national campaign be launched with "mass demonstrations" to arouse the workers of Michigan not "to participate in any war launched by the imperialists of this country."

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vided the conscripted U. S. army.

Defend Labor's Rights

The convention delegates were fully aware of the fact that the onrush of war preparations of the Roosevelt machine signify an immediate attempt to destroy all of the labor legislation and union gains achieved in the last few years. The convention launched a drive to offset this move and to save labor's gains. A program was adopted pledging unalterable opposition to eliminating labor legislation for the national defense program.

The convention resolution stated its opposition "to any statutory lengthening of the work week, to any suspension of the Walsh-Healey Act, and to any move to abolish payment of overtime in the industries producing war and defense materials."

The resolution denounced the attempts of the Army and Navy officials to attempt to force labor to make sacrifices "while the employers continue to pile up their profits."

What the Score Is

While the convention was in session the *Detroit News*, organ of the Michigan moneybags, explained to the delegates what the national defense program really means. Criticizing union militants of the Bay City convention for being "cynically suspicious," it argued, "that as to certain trades the demand must be made, for quite legitimate reasons, that men be allowed to work longer than 40 hours. That will occur undoubtedly in the tool and die industry, where shortage of skilled men and facilities, it is predicted, will provide the chief 'bottleneck' of the whole program." Thus the manufacturers are again taking the offensive, seeking, before the actual declaration

of war, to destroy one of the basic gains of American labor, the 40 hour week.

This anti-union drive, pushed on the pretext of "a shortage of skilled labor," is all the more hypocritical since the representatives of the manufacturers themselves admit that no such shortage exists. Ward's Automotive on the auto industry, point out in their latest study that "the industries' ability to produce motorized equipment is immediately available." Chester Cahn, attorney for the Tool and Die Manufacturers Association admitted that "Most of the tool-and-die work on the 1941 cars now in the shops will be finished by August 1st. I should say that would represent 80 or 85 per cent of the 1941 automobile requirements. After August 1 our industry will be in a position to offer its facilities either for aviation or to meet other demands."

The state convention, while defeated by the high CIO officials to a great extent in its attempts to launch a bold labor offensive, has served nevertheless to dramatize to the unionists of Michigan the war drive now unfolding and has begun the great educational work which will inevitably culminate in the auto centers in a furious class struggle between the workers and the manufacturers.

FOURTH INTERNATIONAL FOR JUNE HAS TWO ARTICLES BY TROTSKY

The June issue of "Fourth International" is now off the press! Even finer than the outstanding *Magazine*, this second number of the *Socialist Workers Party's* monthly magazine again presents a lively, well-balanced table of contents for the Marxist reader. Leon Trotsky draws a "Balance Sheet of the Finnish Events." Trotsky is also represented in the department "From the Arsenal of Marxism," where one of his first documents on the Trotskyist movement appears.

Farrell Dobbs, National Labor Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, gives a second of his timely analyses of trade union problems in "FBI and the Unions," based on direct observation of the G-Men at work against the unions. George Novack appraises the political scene in "The Presidential Campaign."

FDR WAR PLANS HIT AT FLINT CIO HEARING

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when they jerked the charter of the Flint locals, suspended all officers, and appointed an administrator over the local.
The reasons given were pure red-baiting, and the method used an exact repetition of Homer Martin tactics. Without the local union's officers knowing a thing about it, the WPA administration was given a list of men as a new bargaining committee, and informed of the suspension of all local officers who had been elected by the rank and file in democratic meetings of the union.

Charter Returned

The dictatorial and uncalled for action aroused such a wave of anger and resentment among Flint unionists, in both the WPA Local and in the Fisher, Buick and Chevrolet locals, that Pagano and Case had to quickly rescind their action, and restore all former rights to the officers of Local 12, and give back its charter.

The old business of jerking charters, kicking out elected officers, and appointing administrators, is no longer popular among the UAW membership, who learned their lesson during the Martin fight. Pagano, Art Case, and other International officers spent an uncomfortable 24 hours immediately after the WPA union's charter was jerked. Dozens of phone calls from leading Flint unionists, constant visits from committees protesting the action, soon convinced them they had made a mistake.

The Public Hearing on Friday, in spite of the disruptive effects of the attempted ouster of the WPA Local's officers, was an impressive demonstration of solidarity between the UAW plant locals and the unemployed. Representatives from Chevrolet, Fisher Body, and the Regional CIO Office spoke on the unemployed question and supported Local 12.

Militant resolutions were passed demanding the doubling of the Welfare Budget, the abolition of red tape in the city hospital and the admission for free hospitalization of all WPA workers and relief clients in case of illness.

Anti-War Resolution

A fighting blow at the present Congressional action appropriating billions for armaments was passed unanimously by the Hearing, in the form of a resolution demanding that "all war funds be turned over to the benefit of the unemployed people of this country, and that a ten billion dollar public works program be inaugurated . . ."

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War Deal Drive Against Labor On Full Blast

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LaFollette Civil Liberties Bill into its opposite and adopted the monster on May 27. Even the *New York Times* had to refer to "amendments undreamed of a month ago, prior to European war developments," characterizing one of them as a "provision which is a deadly blow at the civil liberties of several million law-abiding residents."

One provision forbids employment of non-citizens beyond ten per cent of the personnel of any industry. Another forbids the employment of "any Nazi or Communist" without exception. Foaming at the mouth, the august Senators adopted these provisions by a vote of 47-20. LaFollette, father of the original bill, sat silently by while it was turned into an anti-labor weapon.

3. Roosevelt's proposal to transfer the Immigration Service from the Labor to the Department of Justice was speedily adopted May 27 by the House, putting over four million non-citizens at the tender mercies of the FBI. Roosevelt's message to Congress on the proposal explained it all in one of its sentences:

"This reorganization will enable the government to deal quickly with those aliens who conduct themselves in a manner that conflicts with the public interest."

Since "the public interest" had already been defined by Roosevelt to include a ban on strikes—"Labor will not attempt to take advantage of its collective power to foment strikes," said Roosevelt, May 21—"FBI control of aliens can play unimaginable havoc with the trade unions, for the four million non-citizens are predominantly industrial workers, strong pillars of many unions. The FBI is given a weapon to turn these union men into scabs and stool-pigeons."

Anti-Labor Jokers in "Alien" Bill

4. Attorney General Jackson proposed on May 22 registration and fingerprinting of all non-citizens, making it compulsory for them to carry identification cards. In line with this the Senate Judiciary Committee on May 27 reported favorably a House-approved bill providing for fingerprinting and registration of aliens.

A grim joker is concealed in this move. For though the bill thus approved is referred to in press reports as merely providing for registration of aliens, it turns out that the bill is actually the notorious Smith "Omnibus bill," a compendium of all the anti-labor and anti-alien legislation proposed in Congress during the last twenty years. It had passed the House early in this session but had scarcely been conceded a chance to pass the Senate—until Roosevelt and Jackson's calls for legislation against aliens provided the avenue.

In addition to anti-alien provisions, this bill contains a broadly-worded provision making it a crime punishable by ten year sentences to publish or distribute books, pamphlets or other literature "advising the nations' armed forces to disobey their superiors or advocating the violent overthrow of government," or "by word of mouth or in writing or by transmission by radio, to knowingly or willfully advocate, abet, advise or teach the duty, necessity, desirability or propriety of overthrowing or destroying the government." Another section would make it a crime for any person to organize or help to organize any group teaching or advocating governmental overthrow.

5. The WPA appropriation bill was passed by the House on May 22 with a provision prohibiting employment of "Communists and members of Nazi bands" on WPA projects, and requiring "loyalty oath" affidavits from applicants that they are neither. The WPA national office immediately indicated the breadth of the provision, saying it would seek determination from the Department of Justice "whether a 'Communist' must belong to the Communist party or whether the term can be applied to Trotskyists, Lovestonites and other dissident followers of the Communist philosophy." In a word, every militant on the WPA was to have a knife at his throat.

In the rabid atmosphere created by these and other acts of Roosevelt and Congress and the war hysteria they created with the aid of press, radio and movies, all manner of dark things flourished. Governor Rivers of the enlightened state of Georgia couldn't wait for Congress to do it, but on Monday, May 20 issued a proclamation—ordering all aliens to submit immediately to fingerprinting at police headquarters throughout the state—and followed this on May 25 with an order to revoke the business, occupational and professional licenses of all aliens by June 1. The effect of this may be indicated by the fact that in Georgia most business and professional men and various skilled workers are required to have licenses. Various cities in Florida and elsewhere also moved immediately to the fingerprinting of aliens.

A mob in Del Rio, Texas, drove three "Nazi agents" to the city limits and warned them not to return; the *United Press* reported this on May 22, referring to the victims as "professed Nazi agents"—and never troubled to check up or to correct the story. Actually the victims were members of the "Jehovah's Witnesses" sect; the "Nazi" literature they were distributing was the May 15 issue of their organ, *Consolation*, which, ironically enough, contained a bitter attack on the Hitlerite regime and an account of the vast number of the sects members in concentration camps. But the mob was sound enough in its reactionary instincts, for this sect is opposed to both sides in the war. In Philadelphia on May 23 a mob of University of Pennsylvania students attacked two "Young Communists." In Pekin, Illinois on May 25 ten men and women were attacked by a mob while distributing "Communist" literature. The attackers were, appropriately enough, American Legionnaires.

These hoodigan acts are merely the harbingers of a wave to come, as Legionnaires and other "patriots" organize "sixth columns" to combat the "fifth column." Texas, which contributed the first incident of hoodiganism, also contributed the most brazen of the "sixth column" proposals, when the Houston Chamber of Commerce proposed formation of a National Industrial Defense Corps, to be armed by the government, for "detecting and reporting acts of sabotage and sedition and in suppressing armed insurrection"—meaning strikes.