

The Negro Question
by Robert L. Birchman

Negro-White Solidarity In Strike

The month-old strike of Negro and white laundry workers at the Lewandos Company of Waretown, Mass., is an example of the solidarity between workers that is necessary for either colored or white workers to win better conditions. The strike is for better working conditions and more pay. Standing shoulder to shoulder with the white workers are nine colored workers. The colored workers immediately joined the white workers when the strike was called a month ago by the Laundry Workers Union, No. 66.

The Lewandos Co., one of the largest cleaning companies in the Boston area, has had a policy of paying colored workers a smaller wage than that paid white workers for similar work. During the strike the officials of the company have tried to create dissension among the workers by making overtures to the white workers. It is reported that the company volunteered to restore the strikers jobs provided the colored workers were left out. When that failed the company sent out an ultimatum that they would take back only those who had been with the company for five years or more, automatically eliminating the colored workers. These offers of the company were rebuffed by the union.

A picket line is maintained, with both colored and white workers doing their part. The length of the strike has entailed great hardship on the strikers, but they intend to remain on strike until their demands are obtained. Last week the organizer, Rose Norwood and another worker were arrested on a charge brought by a strikebreaker. It was shown in court that the Lewandos Company was backing the prosecution in its determination to break down the morale and starve out the strikers. The judge ruled out the evidence of intimidation by the Lewandos Co. as irrelevant; he dismissed one defendant but postponed the organizer's case.

The Lewandos Co. refuses to submit its case to the Labor Board, and has refused all offers of arbitration and consideration of proposals that have been termed very fair by the Labor Board.

Chicago Negro Drivers Strike

Five hundred Negro taxi drivers on Chicago's Southside went out on strike on Monday, June 10, in response to the call of Johnny Patrick, president of the Bronzeville Chauffeurs Club.

The drivers are protesting high rental rates for the cabs. The drivers pay from \$4.70 to \$5.70 a day for the cabs with another dollar added for Saturday and Sunday. They are also required to pay for gas and oil, which must be bought from the cab owners, and are responsible for damage done to the cabs. The rental increases, according to Patrick, is 50 cents for night and 25 cents for day drivers.

Louisiana Solons Threaten Negro Jobs

The reactionary legislators of the state of Louisiana are seeking to displace Negro workers from their jobs through a bill introduced in the state Senate last week. The bill would require railroads operating within the state to employ "only bona-fide and qualified voters of the United States."

Various methods are used by the reactionary state officials to keep Negroes from voting and the bill would only permit the employment of those who have "participated in the primaries and general elections within the confines of any state in the Union."

According to a report in the Kansas City, Mo., Call, Negro paper, the bill has the backing of lily-white labor unions. It threatens the jobs held by Negro workers on the Southern Pacific, Missouri Pacific, Texas Pacific, Illinois Central, Gulf Coast Lines, Louisiana and Nashville and Southern Railway systems operating within the state and on which Negroes hold many positions as brakemen, firemen, porters, etc.

Another case of discrimination is brought to our attention by a suit filed by Ed Teagle, Negro fireman on the Gulf, Mobile and Northern Railroad, in Memphis last week against the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineers for an injunction and \$50,000 damage. Teagle contends that the Locomotive Firemen and Engineers signed a secret contract with the railroad company whereby senior Negro firemen were replaced by junior white firemen on stoker-fired engines.

The Brotherhood has claimed the right to make contracts for all firemen because the majority of the firemen are white and members of the Brotherhood, but it excludes Negroes from membership, while it claims the right to represent them under the Railroad Labor Act.

Teagle claims that the action by the Brotherhood was not representative of the Negro firemen. He claims that the law requires the Brotherhood to give the Negro firemen notice and a chance to be heard and vote before any contracts can be made by the Brotherhood.

We need scarcely comment on this shameful situation—a Negro worker, obviously loyal to the principles of labor solidarity, forced by lily-white policies to take a union into court.

What Shall We Call This Column?

The question as to the correctness of the term "Negro" in the heading of this column has brought forth considerable discussion and a number of suggestions for a new title. We agree that the use of "Question" should be eliminated; but as yet we do not believe that a sufficient number of opinions have been expressed to warrant not using the word "Negro." The papers and other publications of the colored people use the terms "Negro," "colored," "black" interchangeably, but do not use one to the exclusion of the others and the use of "Negro" appears to be more extensive than the others.

Among the suggestions for a new title for the column we have received the following: "The Negro Struggle," "Black and White Solidarity," "Revolt of the Black Man," "Colored People's Struggle," "Voice of the Negro," "Life and Struggles of the Negro."

We would like to receive further opinions of our readers before we change the title of the column.

Fearing Hitler, Stalin Moves Into Baltic Countries

Swift German Victory in Western Europe Upsets Kremlin's Calculations; Stalin Reaping Fruits of His Pact With Nazis

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made impossible a German war against the Soviet Union; that advantage of the pact, Stalinists had argued throughout the world, outweighed all its evil consequences. Now, less than ten months after the pact, Stalin could not admit that he was compulsively adding to his defenses to guard against that which the pact with Hitler was to have made impossible.

Since the Stalin cult of infallibility precluded telling the truth, the occupation of the Baltic states had to be justified by preposterous lies. The official Soviet communiques solemnly declared that the Lilliputian states had "prepared an attack on the Soviet garrisons" stationed there.

The Baltic states could very likely play the role of puppets of a great power preparing an assault upon the Soviet Union. But with the Allies cracking under Hitler's blows, the only great power which could be manipulating the Baltic puppets would be Germany—and that Stalin could not admit for it would condemn his entire policy. Hence his absurd lies, which convince no one and which further discredit the Soviet Union in the eyes of the world's workers.

STALIN'S BANKRUPT POLICY ENDANGERS THE S.U.

It does not require an admission from Stalin to establish the utter bankruptcy of the Stalin-Hitler pact. When the Nazis marched on Poland, Stalin counted on a second Munich as the most likely aftermath. On the day the German troops marched, Molotov smiled skeptically when the Polish ambassador told him that France and England would fulfill their commitments to Poland; "we shall see," said Molotov unbelievably. Neither Molotov nor his master had understood that the European crisis had gone too far for a second Munich.

The only other possibility which occurred to the Kremlin minds was that, if war did come, it would be of long duration. Precisely the Stalin-Hitler pact, however, wiping out the possible danger of a war on two fronts, enabled Hitler to concentrate all the war power of German economy in the West to assure a short war. Stalin's intelligence service undoubtedly acquainted him with the fact that Hitler's military machine actually believed in the reality of the blitzkrieg timetable which Hitler was publicly enunciating—with August 15 as the outside date for successful completion of the European phases of the war; but Stalin did not use this information to reorganize his policy. He followed that policy out to its dead end.

And what a dead end! Never in the worst days of the war of intervention of 1918-20 was the infant Soviet republic in a more dangerous position than is the Soviet Union today, thanks to Stalin's strategy.

The European labor movement, which Lenin considered to be the most important bulwark defending the Soviet Union, lies crushed under Hitler's war machine, as

the end-result of Stalin's foreign policy. Lenin said the Soviet Union must take advantage of the contradictions between the imperialist powers; instead, Stalin let himself be used, first by one imperialist power, then the other. Lenin said the Soviet Union must take advantage of the contradictions between the imperialist powers in order to advance the world revolution, the only real safeguard of the Soviet Union; Stalin permitted himself to be used by the imperialist powers to crush, one after another, the labor movements of Europe.

HOW STALIN DESTROYED EUROPE'S LABOR MOVEMENT

In 1935, in the name of the "defense of the Soviet Union" provided by the Franco-Soviet pact, Stalin's French lieutenants prevented the revolutionary June strikes from culminating in a complete social revolution; instead they told the workers to be good French patriots, to surrender the factories and to obey the coalition with the bourgeoisie, the

Harrington Warns Arms Drive Won't Help Cut Unemployment

Testifying behind closed doors before a Senate subcommittee considering appropriations for the 1940-41 relief program, Colonel F. C. Harrington, Commissioner of WPA Work Project, gave no encouragement to the hope that a vast defense program would at least mean a partial solution of the unemployment problem. What Colonel Harrington said in this secret session leaked out and is quoted in June 15 Unensored:

"I think it is certain that regardless of events abroad unemployment in the fiscal year 1941 is likely to number 8,000,000 to 9,000,000,000. . . . The expanded armament program will not materially affect the volume of unemployment or the pressing need for relief. In the first place, the sums appropriated for armament cannot be spent immediately. It will take time for those expenditures to get under way in important volume. There is no question that tens of thousands of workers will be re-employed as a result of these expenditures, but the total potential re-employment is small in relation to the total number of workers who need jobs. The national defense expenditures will be concentrated in a few key industries, principally aircraft, machine tools and shipbuilding. Employment resulting from these expenditures will be heavily concentrated in specialized skilled trades and other skilled groups and unskilled workers will not be directly affected.

"In this connection, it might be noted that the additional defense program recommended by the (President's) special defense message of May 16, 1940, will about

Popular Front government of Blum-Daladier. That government and its successors, backed by the Stalinists, broke the back of the French working class. Hounded and denuded of its gains and rights, the French workers could scarcely be inspired by the French bourgeoisie to hurl back Hitler.

That same French Popular Front government of Blum-Stalin refused to provide arms to the Spanish Loyalists. Meanwhile the Spanish Popular Front government created by the Stalinists broke the morale of the Spanish workers and peasants by forcing them to dissolve their factory, land and soldiers' committees; forced them to limit their struggle against Franco within the impotent confines of bourgeois democracy. To achieve this foul end Stalin's GPU assassinated the flower of the Spanish revolutionists—all this in Stalin's vain attempt to establish his respectability and to win the good-will of British imperialism. Instead the British facilitated Franco's victory—and another labor movement was wiped off the map.

Having perpetrated all this evil without adding a particle to the security of the Soviet Union, Stalin then sought protection in the pact with Hitler—with what results we have now seen.

Neither to the British workers nor to the American nor to any

other labor movement left in the world can Stalin turn with any assurance of aid in this moment of terrible danger to the Soviet Union. Millions upon millions of workers who before that were ready to defend the Soviet Union would not turn a hand for it now, after the Hitler-Stalin pact and the invasions of Poland and Finland. Our prediction that the defensive positions gained by the pact and the invasions would not compensate in any way for the loss among the workers of their former faith and trust in the Soviet Union has been verified. That, and the crushing of the European labor movement by Hitler's victories, leave the Soviet Union bereft of all outer defenses.

SOVIET NOW FACED BY UNITED CAPITALIST EUROPE

The Soviet Union could endure as an isolated workers' state in a capitalist world for 23 years thanks only to the fact that Europe was not a capitalist unity but was divided by imperialist rivalries. Now Hitler is in the process of unifying Europe on the most reactionary basis imaginable. The Soviet Union is confronted by a united capitalist Europe.

This is the end of Stalin's road of "socialism in one country." Stalin and the "realists" who rallied to him turned their back on the dream of world revolution and concentrated on a "practical"

task. At every stage the interests of the world revolution, of the world working class, were subordinated, were sacrificed, to the needs of the Soviet Union—so they said. And this is the result.

If Stalin remains at the helm of the Soviet Union, he will bring it to destruction at the hands of the imperialists, we have predicted. The truth is here now for all to see. The masses of the Soviet Union, if they are to save themselves and the nationalized economy from imperialist assault, must overthrow Stalin. The destruction of the Stalinist bureaucracy is an absolute necessity for the Soviet Union. Only a revolutionary - internationalist policy and a revolutionary leadership capable of inspiring the world working class to a new effort can save the Soviet Union.

STALINIST BAND ARRESTED FOR TROTSKY ATTACK

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Mexico City to the New York Times, June 19, announced.

Four others, all members of the Communist party, were being sought as the organizers of the attempted assassination.

General Nunez announced that the attack was financed by the Mexican Communist party, and that the organizers were David Alfaro Siqueiros, his brother Alfredo, Antonio Pujol and Pedro Zuniga Camacho, Mexican Stalinists who were in Spain during the civil war.

General Nunez also announced that Nestor Sanchez Hernandez, in whose possession was found one of the police uniforms used by the attackers, had confessed he took part in the attack, and that David Siqueiros was the leader of the attack who wore the uniform of a Mexican Army major.

Hernandez is also quoted as saying that Robert Sheldon Harte, one of Trotsky's guards, was in league with the assassins, but there is no confirmation of the likelihood of this from the Trotsky household. As we go to press we have received no direct word about the households' estimate of the arrests.

offset the decline in expenditures under the PWA program. About \$900,000,000 of Federal and sponsors' funds will be spent on PWA projects this fiscal year but no new appropriation has been made for this purpose during the fiscal year 1941 and the carryover of the existing program into next year will be small. We hope for a slight increase in (industrial) production in the next fiscal year 1941 over 1940. There is, however, no certainty of this. The index of industrial production for the fiscal year 1940 will show an average of about 112. For the next fiscal year an extremely optimistic-

estimate of this index is an average of 115 to 117."

Colonel Harrington testified that the need for skilled workers in the arms industry would not materially relieve demands on WPA because only 10 per cent of WPA employees are skilled. Therefore, he declared, only about 10 per cent of the WPA rolls could be absorbed "even if they go up to 45, 50 and 55 year old men, which industry isn't doing."

But despite this authoritative testimony the Senate passed the WPA-slashing law, already passed by the House.

Story of Norway's Last Days

The writer of the following article was in Oslo when the Germans arrived and was an eye-witness to the collapse of Norwegian resistance. He managed to escape shortly afterward to another country.

The first day of the German landing of troops in Norway, April 9, revealed what all insiders had known long ago: that the Norwegian sea and coastal defenses were a farce. To be sure, the so-called labor government of Norway had in recent years surrendered to the armament hulla-balloo and squandered several hundred millions of kroner in arms expenditures. Squandered is the right word; for these millions were not used to arm the Norwegian workers, but were sunk in a Lilliputian army, half of whose officers were infected with Nazism and the other half absolutely worthless.

In spite of the fact that since the Russo-Finnish war, at least, the possibility of a German invasion of Norway had been openly discussed all over the world, the Norwegian general staff had not prepared so much as a single plan for such an eventuality. The German fleet had already passed the Great Belt when the commander-in-chief of the Norwegian army, General Laake (pronounced Loki, but not to be confused with Loki, the war god of the Norse sagas), received representatives of the Oslo press in a pleasant birthday interview: the general was busy at this time preparing to celebrate his sixty-fifth birthday, which was to take place on April 9.

As for the "labor" government, it could bring itself to no decision in the course of April 8th. It spent its time discussing with various parliamentary committees the attitude Norway should take on the mine fields sown by the English the night before. No one seemed to think at all about any danger from Germany.

Since the Norwegian government had no instructions to announce to the populace, the Oslo broadcasting station went off the air at 11:30 on the night of the 8th. During the night the first German warships penetrated the Norwegian fjords; when the news reached Oslo, the government did

not know whether the ships concerned were English or German.

Early in the morning Dr. Brauer, the German ambassador, delivered Hitler's ultimatum; after negotiating senselessly with Hitler's messenger boy, the government and the Storting decided to leave the capital: without a public proclamation and without the slightest word to the Norwegian people.

At the very last moment, from the railroad station, a mobilization order was issued—short and simple—which was broadcast by the Oslo radio station, but which had already become senseless by that time as far as the large cities of Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim were concerned. For when the Norwegian soldiers arrived during the day at their places of assembly they were received by Norwegian Nazis and German officers and very politely sent home. Thus a few thousand German troops were able to occupy the Norwegian coast almost without a battle.

The Norwegian government arrived at Hamar still full of irresolution. It lost another day in negotiations with the German ambassador, who had come on the trail of the government and the king. However, these negotiations fell through on only one point: Hitler's emissary stood firm on the naming of Quisling, the leader of the Norwegian Nazis, as prime minister. According to the White Book issued by the Norwegian government itself one week after the beginning of the invasion, Foreign Minister Koht asked Ambassador Brauer in very explicit terms whether the German authorities would not accept some other government which would be ready to co-operate "amicably" with the army of occupation. Only when Brauer rejected this proposal were negotiations broken off.

Three weeks of petty warfare followed among the Norwegian valleys and mountains, which, after the German troops had occupied all the important points of exit, had to end the way it did, with the complete conquest of southern and central Norway. Far too late, the English and French expeditionary forces could do nothing to change the situation. In the end the few Nor-

wegian troops had to cover the hurried retreat of the Allies, in the course of which they suffered heavy losses.

Meanwhile the Norwegian government withdrew to the north and took its place there as a modest cog in the great war machine of the Franco-British imperialists. There is no question, even by implication, of any independent class policy on the part of the Norwegian labor party. To emphasize the truce between the classes, conservative deputies were taken into the government; independent propaganda by the labor party disappeared.

Yet, in spite of all this, the labor party is by no means unambiguously on the side of the Allies. Like all Norway, the labor party has split into two sections. While the government and a part of the party's directing council, Tranmael among them, sit in northern Norway and make common cause with the Allies, the leaders of the labor party and of the trade unions who remained behind in Oslo, Bergen and Trondheim, have submitted to the German authorities and, like Stauning in Denmark, carry out their instructions. The labor party's newspapers in the occupied areas appear with the approval of the German authorities and print their official proclamations. Illegal revolutionary propaganda is carried on only by isolated lower units of the party.

In any case, the Norwegian Stalinists have behaved the most shamefully of all. Their Oslo newspaper, *Arbeideren*, appeals with complete legality under the protection of the authorities of occupation and of the Gestapo governor, Terboven. It exhausts itself in fulminations against Anglo-French imperialism and in accusations against the Labor party members who fled, accusing them of the misappropriation of workers' funds and of other crimes in the same vein. Moreover, information has reached us first hand that two members of the Russian trade delegation in Oslo and the well-known Norwegian Stalinist lawyer, Regnar Solheim, were surprised in active espionage for the Germans. An extensive report on these matters has been circulated among all the labor organizations in Oslo.

His Opportunism Leads Lovestone to Pro-Ally Camp

When the Norman Thomas and Lovestone groups voted for the American Labor Party bureaucrats' pro-Ally resolution on October 4, 1939, but insisted they were voting for it merely as an anti-Stalinist resolution, we wrote: "As they yielded previously to the pressure of the Stalinist regime and its 'democratic' allies, now they yield to the pressure of the democratic imperialists. Can one imagine, for a moment, that these people will stand up under the pressure of the warmongers when the war comes here?" (Appeal, Nov. 3, 1939).

Unfortunately our prediction is already coming true, even before America's entry into the war.

The process of the Lovestoneites in moving toward an open pro-Ally position was undignifiedly hastened when, without advance preparation in their press, their leading trade union official, Charles S. Zimmerman of Dressmakers Local 22, voted 100% with the Dubinsky pro-war line at the convention of the International Ladies Garment Workers. It is true that not all the Lovestoneites followed Zimmerman at the convention. It is likewise true, however, that in every conflict between Zimmerman and other Lovestoneites, it ends up with Zimmerman having his way. For he is the "mass base" of the Lovestoneites, and Jay Lovestone has never in his motley career let principles stand in the way of preserving the connections of his group with the Local 22 payroll.

In the May 25 issue of Lovestone's *Workers Age* appeared a pro-Ally article which, the editors announced, they would answer the following week. They would answer it to refute it, they indicated. The next issue, however, announced: "E.B.'s questions on the war, published in the last issue of this paper, will be discussed in full very soon. Technical reasons made it impossible to deal with these questions in the present issue, as we had promised." The next issue after that was silent altogether. Then, in the June 15 issue, which appeared after Zimmerman's performance at the ILGWU convention, there is an announcement of a series of articles to appear in the next issue on "The War and Socialist Policy."

They will bring forward certain new approaches to socialist policy on the war," the announcement says. As usual with a dirty job, the author of the articles will be Will Herberg, editor of *Workers Age*. The "new approaches," we can safely predict, will be as old as Social Democracy's betrayal of socialism in 1914.

The direction the Lovestoneites are moving was cautiously indicated by Jay Lovestone's "Some Further Reflections" (*Workers Age*, June 1, and 8). Buried in the body of the article appeared this:

"For Hitler and for the world as a whole, this war will spell for some time either total prestige or total ruin of fascism. Should he win, fascism would win tremendously. Should he lose, there are many reasons to believe that fascism will lose all, not only in Germany and Italy, but in all countries. This is true despite the headway made by totalitarianism even in the most democratic countries."

To understand the full implications of this line, one must refer to the numerous articles recently appearing in the *Workers Age* favoring a "re-evaluation" of Marxism. The chief exponent of this revisionism is Lewis Corey, a member of the Lovestone group. The revision involves abandoning of the Marxist theory of the state. What follows? If the victory of fascism is worse than the victory of the "democracies," as Lovestone indicates, and if the road to socialism is through the present state "growing into" a socialist order by "democratic"—i.e., non-revolutionary—processes, then there is no reason in the world for not supporting the "democracies" in the war.

Pretend To Forget What Fascism Is

For years the Lovestoneites, like everybody who still had any vestiges of Marxism left, explained that fascism is an economic phenomenon; the form taken by capitalist domination in this epoch of the decline of capitalism. The *Workers Age* explained that the totalitarian trend within the "democracies" would grow whether the "democracies" won or lost the next war, and that the only way to prevent this is proletarian revolution. All this elementary Marxism is now being thrown overboard by the Lovestoneites, under the pressure of American imperialism, and particularly under the pressure of the agents of American imperialism in the labor movement.

This final mutation of the Lovestoneites is no surprise, we have already said. In April James P. Cannon, summing up the history of such groups as a warning to the petty-bourgeois opposition in our party, gave their history in a few words:

"In the terminology of the Marxist movement, unprincipled cliques or groups which begin a struggle without a definite program have been characterized as political bandits. A classic example of such a group, from its beginning to its miserable end in the backwaters of American radicalism, is the group known as 'Lovestoneites.' They were wild-eyed radicals and ultra-leftists when Zinoviev was at the head of the Comintern. With the downfall of Zinoviev they became ardent Bukharinites as quickly and calmly as one changes his shirt. Due to an error in calculation, or a delay in information, they were behindhand in making the switch from Bukharin to Stalin and the frenzied leftism of the Third Period. To be sure, they tried to make up for their oversight by proposing the expulsion of Bukharin at the party convention they controlled in 1929. But this last demonstration of political flexibility in the service of rigid organizational aims came too late. Their tardiness cost them their heads.

"Their politics were always determined for them by external pressure. At the time of their membership in the Communist Party it was the pressure of Moscow. With their formal expulsion from the Comintern a still weightier pressure began to bear down upon them and they gradually adapted themselves to it. Today this miserable and isolated clique, petty-bourgeois to the core, is tossed about by bourgeois democratic public opinion like a feather in the breeze."

The storm of war is blowing and the Lovestoneites are swept along with it like the cynical cowards that they are.

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