

The Negro Struggle
by Robert L. Birchman

By H. WILLIAMS

Anyone interested in the Negro question will be eager to study and learn the contents of the 30th annual report of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, for 1939, just issued. However, after reading the forty-page document, one must surely be struck by its almost pathetic futility—a record almost barren of successes.

Readers of the report have the right to expect to learn of some definite achievements of the association. The NAACP, one must remember, is a respectable organization, supported by such notables as the Hon. Frank Murphy, Hon. Arthur Capper, and the Hon. Charles Poletti, and is able to report an annual income of more than \$500,000.

The first section of the report describes the activities of the NAACP to stop lynching. The Gavagan-Fish anti-lynching bill introduced in Congress at the beginning of 1939, still had not been acted on by the end of the year. As no program, other than further conferences with legislators, are contemplated in the report, there does not seem to be much ground for optimism for the passage of the bill.

The report lists four lynchings for 1939. In none of them, were the lynchers apprehended, or any serious investigation made. However, the report does not tell the full story, since lynchings in the South are done now in the new manner—i. e., without any fanfare or mobilization of the whole county. We can be quite sure therefore, that far more than four lynchings took place. In addition, the report makes no mention of the beatings and lynchings handed out to labor organizers in the south.

The second section tells of the efforts of the Association to secure equal educational rights for the Negro people in the South. In this field too, the NAACP can report only dubious success.

In the best known case, that of Lloyd Gaines vs. the University of Missouri, the U. S. Supreme Court ruled that Gaines was to be given equal opportunity to attend the state law school with white students—whereupon, the state legislature countered with the appropriation of \$200,000 for graduate study for Negroes at Lincoln University, a Negro college.

The NAACP again took this Jim Crow action to court, but Gaines, the subject of the case, disappeared and the case was dropped. No mention of an investigation into Gaines' disappearance is made in the report.

This case represented the high point of NAACP action for equal educational rights—and was typical of the manner in which these cases are fought—almost solely through court action.

Little About the Fight For Jobs

The third section, "Economic Opportunity", which should logically be the most important phase of the Association's activities, is given less space in the report than any other section. It merely reports:

(1) Unsuccessful efforts were made to have some responsible agency conduct a survey on the relative costs of living in various parts of the U. S., particularly "with respect to alleged (1) differences between the North and the South."

(2) Investigation by the association's economic committee revealed the fact that Negro workers in Fayetteville, N. C. and Cheriton, Va., factories, were being paid less than white workers.

(3) The rest of the section reports a few ineffective protests by the association against discrimination in Civil Service, discrimination against Negro policemen, etc.

The fourth section deals with "legal defense". In most cases growing out of false confessions extorted from Negroes. Unfortunately, the Association cannot report much success in its attempts to secure justice for the Negroes through the courts.

The report concludes with a summary of organizational progress. The NAACP consists of 324 active branches, as of Dec. 31, 1939. No indication is given as to how many members this represents, or how many states are covered. The fact that the Detroit branch is reported as having enrolled more than 5,000 members in 1939, would indicate that the Association is to some extent a mass organization.

The NAACP supports a total of 137 youth groups in different cities, with a full time youth director, the Rev. James H. Robinson.

The report's omissions define the character of the NAACP. One might imagine that, in the year 1939, Negroes were not suffering from unemployment, starvation, disease or the threat of war.

These vital problems are not mentioned by so much as a syllable. This is not surprising, since to seriously raise these questions means immediately to come into conflict with the capitalist class and the capitalist government. The NAACP attempts to restrict itself to the smaller issues and ignore the great fundamental problems that face the Negro masses.

Unfortunately for them, however, these "smaller" questions are also full of dynamite—a serious struggle against lynching, and for equal educational opportunities means a fight not only against certain reactionary Bourbons, but against the entire capitalist system which must keep up discrimination against the Negro as one of the methods to separate the black and white workers and maintain the rule of the capitalist class.

We'll Never Forget August 4, 1914

THAT WAS THE DAY WHEN THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL FIRST DELIVERED THE WORKERS TO THE WAR-MAKERS, LENIN TAUGHT US THE LESSONS OF THAT DAY

Tomorrow is August 4th. That date probably does not evoke an immediate response from the younger generation; but they should learn to feel as deeply about it as did the war and post-war generations of revolutionists. For on that day, 26 years ago, the Reichstag fraction of the Social Democratic Party of Germany, the leading party of the Second International, cast its votes in favor of the war budget presented by the Kaiser.

It was a day of great rejoicing for the ruling class. "I do not know parties anymore," orated the Kaiser in his joy. "I know now only Germans." The same horrible scene was repeated, in Paris by the French Socialist party, and in London by the British Socialists; even in the prison-house of Czarist Russia there were men who called themselves Marxists who called for support

of the Czarist regime in the war, among them the founder of the Marxist movement in Russia, Plekhanov.

The masses of Europe, tens of millions of whom were directly enrolled under the leadership of the Labor and Socialist International, in the parties, the unions, the fraternal organizations, the consumers and sports organizations, were thus delivered over to the war-makers. These masses could not but have been bewildered at the turn of events. For during that same week the socialist leaders of Europe had apparently been making all preparations to stand up against the war.

APPARENTLY ANTI-WAR UP TO THE LAST MOMENT

The weeks since June 28, when the assassination of Austria's Archduke Ferdinand at Sarajevo occurred, had been weeks of anti-

war protest meetings, demonstrations and strikes. The Sarajevo incident was branded by the socialist leaders in Austria and Germany as well as in France and England, for the mere pretext that it was.

The real causes of the war, the conflicts between the great powers over control of world markets, sources of raw materials and fields for capital investment, were well understood by tens of millions. The events of that summer of 1914 were merely corroborating down to the last detail the analysis of the coming war which had been unanimously adopted as its Manifesto by the International Socialist Congress at Basle in November, 1912. That Manifesto had warned: "The Congress views as the greatest danger to the peace of Europe the artificially cultivated hostility between Great Britain and the German Empire."

And it had reiterated the stand previously taken by the Stuttgart Congress (1907) and that at Copenhagen (1910), that the proletariat would not be content merely with opposing war in time of peace. "In case the war should break out anyway," said the three Manifestos, then it is the duty of the working class and their parliamentary representatives "with all their powers to utilize the economic and political crises created by the war to arouse the people and thereby to hasten the downfall of capitalist class rule." This formulation—dictated by stringent press laws—is not a perfect one; but it clearly means only one thing: answer the war of the bosses with the war of the workers against the bosses.

At least for seven years, then, the nature of the coming war had been understood and the necessary strategy of the working class movement had been indicated. And it seemed during the weeks preceding the outbreak of war that the socialist leaders were continuing the course set during those seven years.

The arrival of President Poincaré in St. Petersburg in mid-July to prepare joint action of France and Russia against Germany was appropriately answered, July 19-25, by strikes of 300,000 factory workers in St. Petersburg, by barricades, by street riots, and the spread of the strikers to Baku and other cities.

Before that, on July 14, the French Socialist party had met in convention and pronounced in favor of a general strike for the prevention of war.

On July 29 in Brussels the International Socialist Bureau met and issued an appeal to the international working class to intensify the demonstrations for peace. Symbolizing international solidarity, a great mass meeting was held on July 30 in Brussels, at which the principal leaders of all the big socialist parties in Europe participated.

On that day and the next, the appeal of the Bureau was answered by protest meetings and demonstrations of the proletariat against the war in all important industrial cities of Europe.

And the next day—August 1—H. Mueller, member of the Presidium of the German Social Democratic Party, arrived in Paris to open negotiations with the leaders of the French Socialist Party for joint action against the war. That day, too, the Kaiser declared

THE COLLAPSE OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

The next day, August 2, when the German ultimatum came to Belgium, the first gaping hole in the proletarian dike against war was revealed. The General Council of the Belgian Labor Party directed the socialist members of Parliament to vote for "appropriations required for mobilization." The next day, August 3, the German Social-Democratic deputies met to discuss their stand on war appropriations—and a majority of 78 against 34 decided to vote for the appropriations. The next day Haase read their chauvinist statement to a wildly cheering Reichstag—and the 14, including Liebknecht, remained silent, obeying party discipline. That same day the war bills were voted unanimously in the chamber of deputies. The Socialist International had collapsed in national chauvinism.

Even the Russian Bolshevik Party did not remain untouched by the terrific force of the pressure of bourgeois public opinion. The Bolshevik group in the Czarist Duma joined with the Mensheviks in a joint declaration which was nothing more than patriotism diluted with pink pacifist internationalism. And though they soon took a more revolutionary position, they relapsed again at their trial, when four out of the five Bolshevik deputies categorically differentiated themselves from the defeatist theory of Lenin.

And when the Czar fell and Russia became a "democracy," in February, 1917, a large part of the Bolshevik party looked like the parties in Western Europe: there were fusions of Bolshevik and Menshevik organizations in many cities, the central party organ under Stalin and Kamenyev took a social-patriotic direction, etc. Only after Lenin returned was the party's internationalist outlook recovered. And this in the best, most revolutionary and tested party!

August 4th showed that all previous analyses of the terrific power of bourgeois pressure upon the workers' organizations had been inadequate. That is best indicated by the fact that Lenin, then in Austria, at first believed that the August 4th issue of the central organ of the German party, *Vorwaerter*, was a forgery. He could not believe the evidence of his eyes!

Thanks to Lenin, we have been forewarned during these years since 1918. Thanks to his analysis of the ways in which the capitalist class exerts its pressure to force the masses into line, we have not been taken by surprise. He taught us to understand the various types of "left" socialists, labor leaders and pacifists who inevitably go over to the side of the war-makers—the Norman Thomases and John L. Lewises—not to speak of the cruder varieties like the William Greens. Lenin taught us to understand that those who are not irreconcilable, revolutionary enemies of capitalism in peacetime cannot possibly oppose war, which is an integral part of capitalism.

We live in days very similar to those following August 4th, 1914. The situation seems even more complicated, for now the degenerated Third International plays a reactionary role even more cleverly than the Second International.

And yet, if we compare the revolutionary anti-war forces of to-

day with those of 1914, the comparison is all in favor of today.

In Germany in 1914 the revolutionists had no party. The first public voice to be raised was old Franz Mehring's, and all he was able to do that first time, September 14, 1914, was to protest in a letter to the press against the distortion by Social Democratic papers of Engels' views on proletarian tactics in war-time. Liebknecht's first public act against the war within Germany was at the December 2, 1914 Reichstag session when he made a statement against war appropriations. On May 31, 1915—ten months after the war began—there appeared for the first time, to be circulated illegally, Liebknecht's famous appeal, "The Main Enemy Is in your own Country." Only by ones and twos did the revolutionists begin to gather together, and it was long, still, before they had a party. In France, Britain and the rest of Europe, it was the same story.

In Switzerland, in September, 1915, the Zimmerwald conference of anti-war socialists seemed pathetic in its lack of representative character; and only its left wing was revolutionary. There was no international organization of the revolutionary socialists until after the February and October revolutions in Russia, and after the German and Austrian revolutions of 1918! Yet it was those revolutions, and the gathering elements of revolution in the other warring countries, that really put an end to the war.

WE STAND ON THE SHOULDERS OF 1914!

A comparison between the anti-war forces of 1914 and those of today gives us confidence in the future of the revolutionary struggle against the war. Today we have a world party of revolution. As the Manifesto of the Fourth International has said:

"The Fourth International in numbers and especially in preparation possesses infinite advantages over its predecessors at the beginning of the last war. The Fourth International is the direct heir of Bolshevism in its flower. The Fourth International has absorbed the tradition of the October Revolution and has transmuted into theory the experiences of the richest historical period between the two imperialist wars. It has faith in itself and its future."

We recall the black day of August 4, 1914, therefore, only to make clear that the process of "anti-war fighters" turning into "traitors and faint-hearts, a process now being repeated, is in reality part and parcel of the process of capitalist war. It is part of the capitalist machinery and will exist so long as capitalism is permitted to exist. Their present arguments—"war for democracy," "for civilization," etc.—are but a stale rehash of the stuff their predecessors peddled in 1914. Lenin coined a word to name those of 1914, and the name still holds: "social-patriots": socialists in words, patriots, chauvinists in deeds.

If they seem strong, today, so did their predecessors in 1914. But in the crucible of war apparent strength melted away, and the isolated handful of internationalists ended the war by revolution. We stand today on the shoulders of those revolutionists of 1917 and 1918. That is why we shall do what must be done so much better and enduringly!

Behind the Lines

U. S. Embargo Move Against Japan A Bargaining Move For Indies Tin

by GEORGE STERN

By its embargo on oil and scrap metal proclaimed on July 25, the U. S. government served notice on Japan that it still had weapons to use in the Far East even if it can no longer contemplate use of its fleet to enforce American Far Eastern policies. It indicated that Washington is embarking upon a policy now designed primarily to improve its bargaining position with respect to coming Japanese moves in the Orient. The embargo was the first reply to the formation of the Konye government, whose announced policy is the exploitation to the fullest of the prime opportunity presented to Japan by the development of the European war.

It is an illuminating commentary on imperialist international relations that such an embargo comes after years of a combined policy of diplomatic opposition to Japan and of economic aid in the form of virtually unlimited supplies of vital metals and fuels. Last year the U. S. supplied 65 percent of all of Japan's oil imports and 85 percent of its scrap metal. In 1938 the percentages were similar. Business, after all, is business.

But now the prospect of early establishment of Japanese control over the vital rubber and tin supplies of the Dutch East Indies, at a time when the U. S. cannot offer forceful resistance to such a move, has led to the drastic embargo policy. As the New York Times frankly stated on July 26: "With power over petroleum and scrap exports now in executive control, the United States is in a position to bargain oil and scrap against rubber and tin should the Administration be so disposed."

Some of the newspaper commentators have also seen in the embargo move a reflection of a changing attitude in Washington toward the perspectives of the war in Europe. It is claimed now that there is more confidence in British ability to hold off the German assault, that the war may last longer than was expected, and that therefore the U. S. can afford to take a stronger attitude toward Japan. This interpretation, at any rate, will soon be subjected to the test of events.

Even relatively more successful British resistance to the German attack, however, cannot greatly change Britain's own situation in the Far East at the present time. The Konye government is greatly increasing the pressure on British—even arresting leading British business men in Japan—and quite obviously does not intend to permit any stalling on the part of the British, to delay Japanese action in the vital British spheres in the Orient, in China particularly.

In this situation the U. S. interests there come equally under attack. The embargo forms part of the preparation to meet that attack as best possible in the present circumstances. It may be quite significant in this regard that while blasting Moscow for the absorption of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, the State Department granted a permit for an oil shipment to Vladivostok right after refusing like permits for shipments to Japan and to Spain. Washington will move and more seek to preserve what it can of a U. S.-Soviet-Chinese tie-up in the face of further Japanese moves.

'Fourth International' Out For Aug., Features Story of Attempt on Trotsky

"The Attempted Assassination of Leon Trotsky," an authoritative report and analysis of the attack of May 24th on Trotsky's house and the murder of Robert Sheldon Harte, is the main feature of the Aug. issue of "Fourth International," the monthly magazine of the Socialist Workers Party, just off the press. This article is written from Mexico by Joseph Hansen.

The latest issue of the "Fourth International" is noteworthy for its informational articles and analyses of the most important aspects of the American situation. Farrell Dobbs writes on "Labor and the Elections." Carl O'Shea covers recent union activity (and lack of it) in "National Defense Hits Labor." William F. Ward analyzes the reorientation of the government recently in an article entitled, "Roosevelt After the Battle of France."

The new developments in Asiatic waters provide the subject matter of an authoritative article by George Stern on "Changes in the Pacific."

Burnham's Resignation Letter An interesting item in this Aug. issue of the "Fourth International"

is the publication of the complete text of James Burnham's letter of resignation from the "Workers Party", the group which he led into a split from our movement. His letter makes clear that he has now drawn the final conclusions from the petty-bourgeois line in which he indoctrinated his group of splitters, and has therefore deserted the movement openly and altogether. An analytic comment on Burnham's letter is provided by Jack Weber.

This is the first time that Burnham's letter is published. His group, which used to cry for conducting all discussion "before the public," developed an underground complex when they got his letter.

Other articles in this issue of the "Fourth International" include an editorial analyzing the way in which the Manifesto of the Fourth International has stood the test of events subsequent to its publication; and the first of a new series on "Elements of Dialectical Materialism."

This 32-page issue is an excellent introduction to our movement and should be used particularly to secure new subscribers to the "Fourth International."

PRIVATE ARMIES ARE GROWING TOO FAST, SAYS JERSEY GOV.

TRENTON, N. J.—The rapid growth in the number of private military training groups in New Jersey caused Governor Harry Moore this week to caution that they were becoming too numerous for effective coordination in the "home defense" plans of the State.

Though many of these outfits have been formed by hysterical individuals who expect German parachutists to descend on New Jersey in the next twenty-four hours, some of the larger ones have a more serious and sinister motive. These are aimed at suppressing labor and combating strikes under the slogan of opposing "industrial sabotage."

The formation of private military associations under the leadership of "safe" businessmen and professional patriots has had the unofficial blessing of governmental officials who have often supplied them with arms and instructors. Significantly, not a single one of these private army outfits is pro-labor.

ATTACKER OF TROTSKY, HIDING SENDS "STATEMENT" TO PRESS

MEXICO CITY, July 25—"El Popular", Stalinist-controlled daily, yesterday published a peculiar item, ostensibly a statement received by mail from David Alfaro Siqueiros, who is being sought by the authorities as one of the leaders of the attempted assassination of Trotsky and the murderer of Trotsky's secretary, Sheldon Harte.

The "statement" says: "When I shall be sure that Almazan (reactionary presidential candidate) is not plunging the country into civil war nor assaulting the President of the Republic, I shall publicly explain my attitude in the very justified assault at Trotsky's house, pointing out the grave political responsibilities that made it possible and inevitable. I do not wish to nullify in a jail my humble support of the

legal and extra-legal, civil and armed struggle of the revolutionary people against a reactionary coup."

When it became clear that the evidence against Siqueiros was complete, the Stalinists abandoned defending him, and sought to picture him—a man associated with them for fifteen years, a colonel in their armed forces in Spain, head of their Spanish veterans' organization in Mexico, etc.—as in no way associated with them. In line with this, the "statement" would have the function of laying the attempt to kill Trotsky to a question of Mexican politics instead of being the work of Stalin's GPU.

Is Siqueiros perhaps already dead, executed by the GPU? It seems difficult to believe that he himself sent the "statement,"

More Evidence On the French Capitulation

Louis Levy, a leading member of the French Socialist Party, diplomatic correspondent of its daily *Le Populaire*, sends "a message to the workers of America", as "one of the few French Socialists who have managed to reach London since the capitulation." His article published in the *New Leader* of July 27, makes very interesting reading, indeed.

"In May it was clear that important tactical mistakes had been committed," he points out. "Why, then, between May 10 and the month of June, were concrete works not erected in front of the Seine and the Loire? Why was the Maginot Line not evacuated and its defending forces withdrawn intact toward the Southwest?"

"But it would have been necessary to galvanize the country, to have appealed for complete cooperation...An appeal could have been made to the mass of the population to put anti-tank obstacles in the streets and to mine the roads. A bugle call was needed to stir the spirit of a great people which did not want to die. "But this, General Staff, which did not wish to defend Paris, the great city of revolutions, was no doubt frightened of anything that looked like a 'people's war.' A call on the revolutionary spirit could not be expected to appeal to General Weygand, a Fascist of foreign origin.

"The truth which all should know is that there were many French capitalists who preferred Hitler to that which they call Communism but which is in fact nothing more than democracy.

"Fascist propaganda had completely undermined everything...One may safely assume that these French Fascists were not without contact with their counterparts abroad...And German and Italian Fascism did not flourish only in the press. It was active in Parliament and in the governments. Everywhere it had its conscious or unconscious accomplices.

"Of course, it is difficult to distinguish between the real traitors and the dupes. What is unbelievable is that good Frenchmen, good Social Democrats, did not understand their danger.

"I have no wish to reproach friends for the past. But one may well ask why it was thought necessary to introduce into the Reynaud Cabinet men who were bound to show their hands at the very moment when defeat began to assume catastrophic proportions.

"What faith could anyone have in Jean Ybarnegary, one of the leaders of the Croix de Feu and an intimate friend of Fascism? In Paul Baudouin, representative of the banks who never hid his hatred for democracy, his sympathies for Fascism, and who only last year was employed as an emissary to the Duce?"

"The workers of France, you can be sure, learned with shame and pain of the armistice conditions which, until the last minute, were hidden from them. Their anger is now great."

France Mirrors All "Democracy"

Levy's testimony, it is plain, is very useful. Not that he himself understands it. That is plain from one preposterous sentence: "Persons in a country (he means America) where all classes of society are united against the Nazi aggressor cannot understand how far the Fifth Column had penetrated into the French bourgeoisie." Even now, this incorrigible reformist thinks that what happened in France is somehow a chain of circumstances peculiar to France.

He cannot for the life of him understand that what happened in France was merely the unfolding of the class struggle; that if the socialist and trade union leaders were successful in stifling the class struggle of the workers, the bourgeoisie nevertheless continued the class struggle on its part; that when the bourgeoisie chose to capitulate to Hitler rather than to risk being overcome by the aroused workers, they were merely doing what the capitalists in any "democracy" will do in the same circumstances.

Now Levy remembers that General Weygand was really a fascist, and Ybarnegary, and Baudouin. All that was, however, sufficiently well known to Blum and the other socialist leaders when they consented to sit in the same cabinet with these men. Levy is absolutely wrong when he says that "good Social Democrats did not understand their danger"; that danger was pointed out by the Trotskyists, not as advice to Blum but as a warning to the workers, and for pointing it out the Trotskyists were clapped into jail—with the approval of the socialist cabinet ministers.

The Social Democrats committed no "mistakes" in France. A mistake implies something, which can be rectified if detected in time. Something, that is, which is not organically part of one's entire outlook. But "national unity" with Ybarnegary, Weygand and Baudouin was a fundamental tenet of the theory of the Social Democrats. That is why Levy's testimony does not cause the American Blums and Levys to change a word of their howls for unity of "all classes of society against the Nazi aggressor." There is a grotesque instance of this in the same issue of the *New Leader* that carries Levy's article. In it Ross B. Willis says:

"The Government calls in a Stettinius and a Knudsen...to coordinate our industrial mobilization for defense. They are brought in because they are proven industrial experts, and not because of their political beliefs. But what happens? A great roar goes up on the Left... 'They! Capitalists! War-mongers! They! They!... No matter, of course, that the fortunes and destinies of the Knudsens and Stettinians are bound up inextricably with those of us all, in a crisis that menaces the whole nation, the obscure as well as the well-known."