The Negro Struggle

"LABOR WITH A WHITE SKIN CANNOT EMANCIPATE itself WHERE LABOR WITH A BLACK SKIN IS BRANDED" — KARL MARX.

By ALBERT PARKER

Jim Crow in the Galley

In this week's issue of the Pittsburgh Courier there is a letter from 15 colored men now serving on the U. S. S. Philadelphia, stationed at Pearl Harbor, in which they bitterly condemn the Jim Crow system in the Navy and sound a warning to all Negro youth considering entering this branch of the service.

Consider how they must have been driven and pressured before they would write and sign a letter of this kind—when they are still in the Navy, and still under control of the southern officer caste who run the ship!

They write:

"On entering, we are given the same mental and physical examination as the white sailors and given to believe that we have the privilege of choosing our branch of the service the Navy offers. This is not true.

"With three months of training in making beds, shining shoes and serving officers completed, we are sent to various ships and stations of the Navy.

"The white sailor, after completing his training period, is not only eligible for the branch of service he has chosen, but he is automatically advanced in rating and his pay is increased to $36 a month without even having to take an examination.

"In our case, we have to be in the service a full year at $21 a month before we are eligible for advancement rating. It is also necessary for us to take a competitive examination. Even if we pass, it doesn't mean positively that we will be rated and have our pay increased to $36 a month.

"On this ship out of a crew of 750. There are 58 colored men, ranging in ages from 18 to 35. They are from out of high school and some have a year or two of college education.

"Their work is limited to waiting on table and making beds for the officers.

"In the last nine months there have been nine mess attendants given military confinement on bread and water.

"Five of the nine were given help time because of fighting and arguments with other enlisted men. From this you will probably think we are a pretty bad lotbch. We are not.

"With the trouding on and kicking around we receive here (without being able to do anything about it), every last one of us becomes bitter enough to fight a member of our own family.

"We, the mess attendants of the Philadelphia are not merely stating these facts because of our own plight. In doing so, we sincerely hope to discourage any other colored boys from joining the Navy and make the same mistake we did.

"All they would [illegible] hell hope, chambermaids and dishwashers.

"We take it upon ourselves to write the letter, regardless of any action the Naval authorities may take or whatever the consequences may be.

"We only know that it could not possibly surpass the mental cruelty inflicted upon us on this ship." And the letter ends with their signatures.

The same bitter story is told in an anonymous article in the July issue of The Crisis, monthly magazine of the N.A.A.C.P., written by a colored man on a warship whose home station is Long Beach, California.

U. S. Government's Color Line

It points out that contrary to popular belief, "Negroes cannot become petty officers or chief petty officers. The highest rank that can be obtained is officers' cook or steward and even though a steward, one is still looked upon as a mess attendant."

"After all, he is a mess attendant. Just a mess attendant. Or shall we say 'officer's boy'. His duties consist of serving officers' meals, cleaning officers' rooms, shining their shoes, checking their laundry, mending uniforms for them, caring for their uniforms, etc."

"The white officer is usually the type to persecute. He can and does make your career difficult for you, because he knows that you cannot defend yourself.

"Our Negro sailors should be warned never to show a spark of intelligence if they want to spend four years in the navy. Everyone does his best to keep a smart Negro 'in his place'. If one doesn't mind being insulted by his superiors, if he is the kind that wants to be the rug under the white man's feet, if he is willing to stand by while others make ratings, then he is the type the navy wants. He is the type that will make a success as a messman.

"Most Negroes feel that four years in the navy is much too much for them. Proof of this fact is evident in the fact that only 1% re-enlist for another four years. This shows conclusively the attitude of the modern Negro toward white supremacy and bigotry."

"I would like to offer one suggestion, as this situation deeply concerns every Negro in America. Let's not sit and talk, and wait for sympathy. The Navy department, and the government, can and will give you your equal rights when, and only when, you have fought and successfully demanded them."

Fight against Jim Crow in the armed forces by demanding workers' control of military training and service!

ARCHITECTURAL NOTE

Says a Minneapolis Star-Journal editorial: "L'Enfant, architect who laid out the city of Washington, plotted it with circles and diagonal streets not because he foresaw that this would be a convenience more than a century later, when the automobile had been invented, but because that design enabled a minimum of artillery to command the city in case of popular uprisings."

S. W. P. Candidate For U. S. Senate, Grace Carlson, Goes On Minnesota Ballot

MINNEAPOLIS, Oct. 6—Petitions bearing over 2,600 signatures—600 more than legally required—were handed to the Secretary of State of Minnesota yesterday by the campaign committee for Grace Carlson, running for United States Senator on the Trotskyist Anti-war Party ticket. Election restrictions ruled out Comrade Carlson's use of the party's official name, the Socialist Workers Party.

The program of trade union control of a universal military training program received much aid in the Trotskyist platform, has aroused the interest and sympathy of thousands of Minnesota workers and farmers. Scores of trade unions and sympathizers of the Socialist Workers Party participated in the signature drive and received a uniformly friendly response. Signed petitions came in not only from the workers' neighborhoods in the Twin Cities, but also from outside Twin Communities.

Speaks to Negroes

Dr. Carlson delivered her first campaign speech after filing on Sunday afternoon at a forum sponsored by the Minneapolis Negro Youth Council, to which representatives of all political parties were invited. Representatives of the Republican, Democratic, Farmer-Labor, Socialist and Communist parties also participated.

Stressing that the emancipation of the Negroes was part of the struggle of all workers to free themselves from capitalist exploitation, Comrade Carlson urged the Negro workers in the audience to prepare to participate in the revolution which will do away with the system that oppresses them. In contrast to the purely pacifist program of the representative, William Hermes (who failed for support to the Mardonington bill to repeal the Negro-hating swoorh bill), Dr. Carlson gave a militant working-class program for trade union control of military training, and for union wages and conditions in the army and navy and on all national defense work.

Grace Carlson, S.W.P. Candidate In Minnesota Senatorial Race

"It is [illegible] to choose, with war they now face imperialist, every statement, as usual [illegible]. The [illegible] behalf appeasers, as she prophesies a new turn in the Communist Party line when and if Stalin again draws closer to the United States and Britain.

Will Speak Sunday

Sunday, October 13th, Dr. Carlson will speak at the Sunday Forum at 319 Marquette avenue, Minneapolis. The forum starts at 8:30 p. m. The admission is 10c, and all workers are welcome to attend.

MILITARY POLICY OF THE PROLETARIAT

(Continued from page 1)

ing substantial people in the community both physically and morally: everything going fine until the situation changed from peace which it utilized and expressed, to war which is the logic of the present day. All those organizations for peace were crushed like egg shells. Nothing of organization remains but the small body of revolutionary people who realized that war was on the agenda and prepared themselves to function accordingly. There is nothing left of the Laodicean unions in France. Of all the contracts, his pension agency, his treasury and his pseudo-importance—nothing is left. One decree of a decrepit General Petain, "We don't want these unions any more," and the game was up.

And that great socialist party of Leon Blum, the party that mobilized millions of votes and looked so big in times of peace. The war struck one paralyzing blow, and the French Socialist Party went down and out like a clubbed ox in a slaughter house. Leon Blum winds up under arrest at Vichy practically like a vagrant picked up on the street and thrown into jail. They are finished people these reformists, men of the past. Now times call out the men and a new type of party, a party built for war.

They used to make fun of the Fourth Internationalists—this little group talking about war and revolution, which looked so insignificant beside their numerically imposing organizations. They boasted of their own importance when their movements were already marked for ignominious death. The Fourth Internationalists, on the other hand had an idea which contemplated the coming events and they prepared to survive them. I have the great pleasure to report to you that we have received word from our comrades in France—we were all greatly disturbed about the fate of our comrades—we received word that they survived the war up to now, that our comrades had slipped through the nets and were not only safe but were functioning in little groups and in contact with each other. Even those in jail during the war made their way out at the time when everyone was running, including the jailers. They took advantage of the general exodus and mixed themselves with it and are still there. I am sure the same thing is true in other countries. Those who prepare in their own minds for the war are best qualified to survive and grow stronger. The Philippines used to sneer: "The Trotskyites—there are only a few hundred of them." True, but they still exist, more confident than ever. Leon Blum could not today rally together a few hundred social democrats in the whole of the occupied and unoccupied territories of France. They were not organized for war. That is why they succumbed to the first blow. Only those parties adapted for war, ready to carry things through to the very end, to a military solution of the problem,—only they will be able to survive and conquer.

THE FUTURE OF THE TRADE UNIONS

Now I come to another phase of this problem—the transformation of this society from a peace to a permanent war basis as it affects the trade union movement. One thing is absolutely clear: The days of the old routine reformist trade unions are numbered. They will not be able to survive the war as independent organizations. The trade union movement will be able to survive only insofar as it takes the road of resolute struggle against the capitalist system. The traditional non-fighting trade unions in the United States will suffer the same fate as those in France, Belgium and Norway, unless the revolutionary elements are able to winnow them from within and inspire them with a spirit of revolutionary struggle.

And so both the work of our own comrades in these unions has to undergo a change. We comrades have been affected by the whole general perspective of long years of slow progress. Ninety per cent of our trade union activity in the past had to do with little agreements and compromises with progressive and non-progressive elements in order to gain a few inches in the economic struggle. We have to continue the struggle for immediate demands in the trade unions. It is necessary to continue all the petty day to day work, to guard every gain, watch every contact. In this work we collaborate with everybody—whether progressive or reactionary—in the daily interests of the workers.

But at the same time we have to realize, and make the workers realize increasingly, that there is not going to be the possibility in America for a long period of growth and stability of conservative trade unions. Such visions of the trade union bureaucrats represent a mirage. They are thinking in terms of the world of yesterday. America is going into the war with express train speed. The unions will be confronted with this alternative—they will either turn sharply, develop a revolutionary policy, begin a struggle for power hand in hand with the revolutionary wing of the army, or they will come to exist. At best they will be relegated to mere appendages of the government, having no independent power. It is in this vein that we must speak louder in the unions and in the factories.

WE MUST TIGHTEN OUR OWN RANKS

We have to look over our own party. All those comrades of the party who are in the conservative trade unions, who have in one way or another began to succumb to that stifling atmosphere, who have begun to develop tendencies to avoid struggle and let well enough alone—all those party comrades who are sinking into that quagmire must be pulled up short. They must be convinced that the one most important thing in this epoch is to build a revolutionary party. Only a revolutionary party can inspire the unions to meet the test of the new times. We have to insist more than ever upon the party responsibility of every comrade.

Your strength in the unions is the strength of your party. Don't forget it. All those collaborators of the day; all those trade union militants who look so good in normal, peaceful times, who are good enough for a local strike but have no general concepts—how quickly those people can be transformed under the pressure of the social crisis. Only those will be able to stand up in the coming period who are fortified by great general ideas—not otherwise. You will have some bad disappointments if you believe for one moment that a man who has not yet broken his allegiance to capitalism in general will be able to stand up under the pressure of war. Not at all. Some of our comrades have already had some very painful experiences along this line. Those people can stand up under pressure who have anticipated pressure and can see beyond it to the goal of the new society.

Above all, we have to develop our party as a party of a new type. All the old party organizations were built for peace. They can't survive in this new epoch of universal militarism. The only party that can survive is the one that adapts itself to universal militarism and aims at the struggle for power. It can't be a sprawling, slow-moving, undisciplined organization. It must be highly centralized with iron discipline in its ranks. It must be able to function if necessary under all kinds of persecution. It needs a strong leadership. We have to select out of the ranks tested and trusted people for leading positions and give them full authority. Only so will we be able to move fast and strike hard as a united, disciplined organization.

During the past year we made gains of historic significance. While Comrade Trotsky was still alive to help us we had the possibility of fighting out in our ranks a fundamental struggle which prepared us to build the party of a new type. We had people who set up a great howl about "bureaucratism". They wanted a party where one could do as he pleased, have the honor and badge of the Fourth International without any personal responsibility. And if the party at any time demanded anything of them they raised a row and cry about the injustices they were enduring. When these people cried about "bureaucratism" they really meant to protest against centralism and discipline. I charged many times, and I said many times to comrades, that the principal, the real problem of incompetents in the party held against us was that the organizers of the party-bureaucratic majority were not even half trips.

The workers in the party want discipline. They want centralization. They want a party that doesn't permit anybody to make a fool of it. They want a party that demands of every leader that he put his whole life, his whole time, his entire life personal life, at the disposal of the party. Our movement is not playing for fun. It aims to take power in this country. For that we need a hard party, a firm party. It is a great advantage for us that we got rid of this petty-bourgeois opposition. We improved the composition of our party, we got rid of a lot of windbagism. We got rid of a lot of deadwood and are now in a position to take some real steps forward.

It is time now to bring the struggle with the petty-bourgeois faction to a definitive conclusion. You know the majority refused to accept the decisions of the convention. In order to be perfectly fair and give them time to think it over we allowed them a period of nearly six months of vacillation, not existence, to accept the decisions of the convention majority and remove their party standing. They caused a split in spite of this exceptional concession. In the meantime they have developed politically away from us as a typical Schachtman pacifist clique. Their theoretical leader, Burnham, has pronounced materialism. We have nothing in common with them politically. They have more than used up the recent balance of patience we allowed them. We don't want any ambiguity and confusion in the public mind regarding them and as we say, aliens of the class movement. It is the unanimous recommendation of the National Committee that the suspension of the convention minority be changed to constitutional expulsion at this conference.

A WARNING AGAINST SUPERCAUTION

Our second recommendation is that we begin a closer check up of party responsibility, discipline and loyalty without permitting any purge in the ranks. We have two dangers to fear now, and we must steer a course between them. One is carelessness and irresponsibility, and the other is supercaution, a apprehensive and general paralysis in the organization. The second is by far the greater danger. We are proposing a measure that will tend to eliminate both of them. I have talked about a party that says it will stop at nothing short of the struggle for power and will fight to the end to overthrow capitalism. Such a party cannot exist with a leadership that is scared for itself or affiliated with opportunists of any kind.

We are under great pressure and will be under still greater pressure. We know that we are dealing with a murderous machine in Stalin's GPU. We know that Comrade Trotsky was not the first, and probably will not be the last victim of this murderer machine. Our party must also expect prosecutions from the Wall Street gangsters. Realizing all this, some comrades have wondered if we couldn't do something to prevent our leaders from danger—perhaps put them on ice I suppose. From the very first hour since the assassination of Trotsky we have conducted a campaign against this psychology. Young people are too young to be able to lead anybody. One who takes part in the revolutionary movement by that fact has to encounter certain risks. Millions of young American workers are going to be thrown into the war. Many of them will lose their lives. These are dangerous times. But they are dangerous for every body, not only for us. Revolutionists must face the hazards of our time, and not fear them. A good one-half or three-fourths of

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"Socialist Appeal" Is Banned in British West Indies

Editor:

According to pronouncements made by the government here, the Socialist Appeal Newspaper which you send me is banned. I am asking you to cease sending me any more as according to laws recently passed if they continue coming it will be a great offense against the Government.

Wishing your press all that is good and standard of success.

KEMUEL GRAHAM
Kingston, Jamaica,
British West Indies

[illegible]

Child Labor Is Revived By Stalin

On October 3, the TASS released a dispatch stating that "For the purpose of establishing State labor reserves for industry, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR has found it necessary to train annually for subsequent training in State labor reserve numbers ranging from 800,000 to 1,000,000 persons by training urban and rural youth in certain industrial professions at professional schools... All persons who have terminated courses at professional, railroad and industrial schools will be considered mobilized and must work four consecutive years at State enterprises" (N. Y. Times, Oct. 3).

The mobilized youth falls into two groups, ages 14-15 and ages 16-17, and "cannot be used by people's commissariats and enterprises without government permission."

While the original text of this decree is not yet available—if it ever will be—the thinly veiled terminology of the TASS dispatch reveals just what is involved in this latest decree, namely, the legalization of child labor. Children will work in industrial enterprises as a conscript army, "with government permission only".

Soviet industry has been suffering from an increasingly acute shortage of labor. With the growth of individualistic tendencies in the villages, and the worsening of the working conditions in overall years to the cities, the flow of peasants into urban centers has dwindled. The labor force has been further depleted by army mobilization and the heavy losses of lives in the Finnish Campaign. Last year an attempt was made to draw women into industry. But this campaign suffered a noticeable lapse. To compensate for the labor shortage, harsher and harsher labor legislation has been introduced. The regime thought that it had solved the problem with the passage of the June 26 laws which abolished the 35-hour week, decreed in its stead the 48-hour week, made it a criminal offense to quit one's job or to absent oneself without leave—crimes punishable by forced labor (time) to be served at the same place of employment at 25% less pay, etc.

In July, Pravda indulged in wishfulfillment by stating: "The bugbear—tardiness of workers, quitting of workdays and labor turnover—which was often used by many as an excuse for the failure to fulfill the plan—seems, has now been plugged up." (Pravda, July 26.) The masses, however, are resisting the June laws. Hence the latest decree.

In the struggle against the masses the bureaucracy needs cheap weapons, especially, a "labor reserve". It now proposes to conscript this reserve out of child labor. That is the meaning of Stalin's latest, anti-labor decree.

FRENCH SOCIALISTS SUPPORT THE PETAIN GOVERNMENT

There seems to be no limit to the political degeneracy of the "socialists" of the Second International. We may have thought that they hit bottom when their Reichstag group gave a vote of confidence to Hitler's foreign policy in March, 1933, in the hope of saving their skins. (Hitler kicked them out the next day.) Like the Bourbons these "socialists" learn nothing.

Of the 150 Socialist deputies and senators present when the National Assembly voted abolition of the parliamentary regime and granted full power to Petain, 125 voted for the new "constitution". Some 80 of these Socialist parliamentarians, led by Spinasse, are actively supporting the Petain government and are favoring the project for the creation of a single united French party.

The ideology of the Socialist majority supporting Petain was formulated as follows, at the time of the armistice:

"We are ready to accept the most radical changes if they would only alleviate the condition of shattered France. The Petain government, the abolition of the old democratic system, the new constitutional regime, will make easier negotiations with Germany and may, therefore, be supported by the Socialists." To fight Germany, "we" must support the bourgeoisie; to make peace and subordinate ourselves to Germany, "we" must support the bourgeoisie. In a word, always support the bourgeoisie. That was and remains the ideology of these lickspittles.

One of these "socialist" scoundrels, writing for the organ of his American similars, the New Leader (Oct. 5), says in further explanation of this ideology:

"To this we may add, by way of elaboration of the view, that in proportion as the new regime begins to develop into a system which may last a long time, it will not be an elective but a selective regime. The cause for which we have always struggled requires that Socialist elements be represented in the new national state."

To comment on this would be gilding the lily.

NO MINIMUM WAGE FOR PUERTO RICO

The workers of Puerto Rico will be excluded from the benefits of the Wages-Hour Act because the House passed an exemption for the industries of Puerto Rico as a rider to the conference report on the relief bill. The rider was introduced to the relief bill by Senator William King of Utah. Senate and House conferees agreed to have the provision in the relief bill and the House vote annexed the needle and sugar industries of Puerto Rico of their exemption. The workers in these industries in Puerto Rico have been paid starvation wages and this action again permits the bosses to lower wages and further exploit the workers.