

The Negro Struggle

By ALBERT PARKER

A Victory On Paper

A couple of weeks ago, before the conscription bill was passed, two amendments were made, which were hailed by Senator Wagner of New York...

One amendment was supposed to prohibit discrimination in the armed forces because of color, so far as enlisted men were concerned...

But actually, in spite of the statements coming from secretaries in the White House, nothing has changed. Jim Crow still wears his stripes.

This was definitely shown in the attempts of a number of colored people to enlist in the service since the passage of the amended bill. They wanted to enlist so that they can choose the branch of the service they preferred...

In five cities, reporters of the Baltimore Afro-American attempted to join the U. S. Aviation Corp. In each case, these colored men were met with flat rejections.

Another reporter of the same paper tried to enlist in the field artillery, a branch of the service that has been closed to the Negro people.

Another applied for admission into the U. S. Navy this week in Washington, the capital of this great democracy. He was told that the only place open for Negroes was as mess-hands...

And so it goes, up and down the line of the different branches. The marine corps is still hilly white. So is the tank corps, the air corps, the artillery, the coast guard, the engineers, the signal corps, etc.

The White House is Unmasked

After a White House conference with Walter White, A. Philip Randolph and T. Arnold Hill, it became clear this week that only white officers will be called in to command colored draftees.

Colored reserve officers will be called on active duty only to fill vacancies "in units now officered by colored personnel." Since the only units now officered by colored men are the National Guard...

"As to the Navy," says the Afro-American Colonel Knox allegedly stated that while he was sympathetic, he felt that the problem there was almost insoluble since men have to live together on ships...

If Jim Crow still rules in the enlisted Army, in spite of the fine "anti-discrimination" amendment, how much more will it rule in the drafted army! It becomes clear now that the only reason these amendments were passed was to get the colored people to support the conscription bill...

...It is now clearer than ever: The fight to end Jim Crowism in the armed forces, the fight to get colored soldiers have the right to pick their own officers, can be won only as part of the general struggle for trade union control of military training.

The Army doesn't want colored men to become officers. And it has an unwritten rule that those who do become officers shall not rise higher than the rank of Colonel. And few of those!

The reason is that they don't want colored men in the highest councils where they can see from the inside how the Negro ranks are discriminated against, how it is decided that they are to play mainly two roles: to do the dirty work in the labor battalions, and to be given the most dangerous assignments in active duty.

In 1917, when officers were being promoted, General Jim Crow and his staff decided that Colonel Charles E. Young, highest ranking Negro West Point graduate, was suddenly retired "because he had high blood pressure."

Young rode on a horse all the way from Wilberforce, Ohio, to Washington, to show that he was physically fit—but he was not promoted as all the whites of his rank were. Later on, he was returned to active duty, but only as a colonel, because his "retirement" gave the general staff their necessary excuse not to advance him.

History repeated itself last week. President Roosevelt, who tells how he loves democracy... in Europe, appointed 100 white colonels to the grade of brigadier-general over the head of Col. Benjamin O. Davis, commanding officer of the 369th Infantry Regiment, N. Y. These appointments were made by the Commander-in-Chief on the recommendation of the Army.

The only difference is that in 1917 they looked for an "excuse." In 1940 they feel Jim Crow is permanent in the Army, as long as they're in control, and they don't even need excuses to cover it up.

Workers' Power Alone Can Defeat Fascism

France's Fate Shows That "Democrats" Cannot Lead Fight Against Fascism

By J. GERLAND

(Fourth International Press Service)

Every breed of bourgeois likes to constantly preach morals to the workers. The collapse of France furnishes these gentlemen an excellent subject for sermons.

"You see," say some of them, "national defense was compromised by strikes, by the class struggle..." Others, of lesser stature, but no less dangerous because of that, strike another tune: "The French army was swarming with Fascist officers..."—and conclude by calling upon the workers to save bourgeois democracy.

Yes, the collapse of France and the advance of Fascism over the face of all of Europe contain terrible lessons and menacing warnings for the workers. But the latter must look upon this tremendous experience from the point of view of their class and know how to draw from it lessons for their coming struggles against the bourgeoisie and its lackies.

WE NEAR THE END OF BOURGEOIS DEMOCRACY

The biggest loser of the war is bourgeois democracy. In the years preceding the war, it underwent one defeat after another in the field of diplomacy. With Hitler holding the whip hand, the entire policy of democratic capitalism consisted of making concessions and waiting for a better future which never came.

This war was, on both sides, merely the continuation of the policy carried on until its outbreak. The great secret of Gamelin and the British General Staff was to temporize. By 1941, they figured, they would have more aviation facilities. By 1942, the factories would have turned out enough artillery to make possible an attack on the Siegfried Line.

While, in the course of the Winter of 1939-1940, the Anglo-French troops were softened up by inaction, the German army was being trained in a new and terrible strategy by means of which it was soon to unleash its torrents of lead and fire upon its astonished adversaries.

Bourgeois democracy thus proved to be just as impotent in international war as in the preceding "peaceful" struggles. Its methods, its parties and its men belonged to another epoch. The very fact that Hitler was able to find conniving support within France is not a matter of chance, but one of the clearest symptoms of the decomposition of democracy.

Inside each country Fascism cannot be combated victoriously now except by means of proletarian arms: workers' militia, the arming of the working class, active defense which prepares to go over to the offensive, with the seizure of power by the working class as the aim. Likewise, on the international arena, the war cannot be prevented, nor the positions of Fascism shaken, except by means of the proletarian revolution.

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FRANCE'S DEFEAT

Since 1934, under the pressure of the Fascist menace, of the economic crisis and of the general decline of the French empire, a revolutionary crisis was maturing in France. In June 1936, the French workers occupied large numbers of factories. The frightened bourgeoisie remained silent and went into hiding.

But the workers were soon to witness a strange spectacle. While the bosses right on the spot conceded all demands, the workers' "own" leaders, who they themselves had brought to power, were placing restraints on the workers. Leon Blum and the Socialist parliamentarians, Leon Jouhaux and the trade union officialdom and, gesticulating wildly right behind them, Maurice Thorez and the other Stalinist satellites—all formed one big chorus calling for calmness from the workers and for social peace.

In that case, it would mean growing misery and despair in Europe, with famine immediately in view. Everywhere national passion will ally itself with revolutionary aspirations in the struggle against Hitler. Revolts are inevitable. In the coming struggles the workers will appear as the most resolute elements and they will give the fighting a class content. Hitler has wiped out the boundaries. From the Northernmost point of Scandinavia to the Pyrenees, from Brittany to the

Vistula, the sabre of the German colonel rules supreme. Whether it is lit up in Prague or in Rotterdam or in Paris, any revolutionary explosion will immediately be echoed in the other countries far more directly than was ever the case before the war.

OUR COMRADES WILL LEAD FRANCE AGAINST FASCISM

In France the military catastrophe immediately marks the downfall of the traditional party of democracy, the Radical-Socialist Party. On the Right, all sorts of Fascist adventurers are raising their heads. But the best they can hope for is to become agents of the German command.

ATTORNEY FOR TROTSKY'S WIDOW BLASTS STORY OF GPU ASSASSIN

David Alfaro Siqueiros, the leader of the machine-gun band which attacked Trotsky's home on May 24th, 1940, less than three months before another GPU assassin, "Frank Jason," was successful in assassinating Trotsky, is now awaiting trial in Mexico City for the first attempt on Trotsky. He was captured after a five months' hunt. Upon his arrest his leading role in the machine-gunning was confirmed by accomplices who have been in jail since June.

By ALBERT GOLDMAN

Stalin's GPU may be skillful in organizing cowardly murders, but it is not at all skillful in creating stories to explain the criminal activities of its agents.

The story which Siqueiros wants us to believe in explanation for the May 24 assault on Trotsky is as bad as the story which the GPU created for explaining the murder of Trotsky.

If one is to believe Siqueiros, he transformed himself into a detective overnight. The motive for the May 24 attack, according to Siqueiros, was "to find documents in Trotsky's home proving Trotsky's counter-revolutionary activities, nationally and internationally."

Now it is well known that there were thousands of documents in the Trotsky home. It took six huge cases, especially constructed for that purpose, to ship the documents to Harvard University. It took six guards and secretaries two days simply to get all the documents together and to pack them for shipment.

If Siqueiros was such a good detective, he undoubtedly knew all about the number of documents in the Trotsky home and he also knew that he would have to send into the house at least six people who knew three or four languages, who could spend two or three days in examining all the documents in order to find the ones that he wanted. But the evidence shows that he only sent men with revolvers and machine guns.

The most peculiar thing about this alleged search for documents was that none of the people armed with machine guns and revolvers touched a single document. On the contrary, they threw incendiary bombs in order to destroy the documents. Of course Siqueiros claims that the people who got inside did not do a very good job, but it is peculiar, to say the least, that they did not indicate the slightest desire to find any kind of documents. They did indicate a great desire to kill people and to destroy documents.

When the Judge very astutely asked Siqueiros whether it required 300 or more bullets in order to find documents, he nonchalantly replied that it "depends upon circumstances." We presume that the next time, having learned the lesson that 300 bullets are not enough, Siqueiros will use at least several thousand bullets.

today, they alone remain to represent to the workers an unswerving banner.

Confusion is not lacking in the ranks of the working class at the present moment. The first task of the Bolshevik-Leninists is to explain patiently what has happened. Just as the Imperialist war was not our war, so this defeat is not our defeat. It is a defeat of bourgeois democracy, to whose fate the treacherous leaders wanted to link the proletariat.

The French Bolshevik-Leninists can lay claim to that role. The struggle which they have led for more than ten years against reformism and Stalinism has found complete justification in the most recent events. Our French comrades raised their voice against the alliance of the workers' organizations with the Radical-Socialist Party, the party of decaying democracy. And it was the support of these bankrupt bourgeois politicians by the workers' leaders which led up to the present catastrophe. The Trotskyists have had to undergo ignoble insults and incessant persecution at the hands of the bourgeoisie, the social democrats and the Stalinists. But Sept. 2, 1940

John Brown's Ideas Go Marching On

By J. INGRAM

October 16, 1940, the date set by the ruling class of this country for the registration of the conscript army, is the 81st anniversary of John Brown's attack upon the arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Va., on October 16, 1859!

John Brown's plan was to arouse and arm the slaves and lead them in the struggle for freedom. His attempt was foredoomed because he failed to prepare and properly organize the slaves in advance of his uprising, so that only a handful joined him.

Though he was unsuccessful and paid with his life for it, his audacity set into motion the imagination, will and energy which finally attained the freedom of the slaves, broke the backbone of the Southern Slavery, and brought us a step closer to the complete emancipation of the working class of the world.

He first struck a blow against slavery on the plains of Kansas. In the Spring of 1855, he had sent his sons there to settle and help win the territory for the free-soil party. In May, his son and namesake sent the following appeal to Old John Brown: "While the interest of despotism has secured to its cause hundreds and thousands of the meanest and most desperate of men, armed to the teeth... the friends of freedom are not one-fourth of them half armed," with the result "that the people here exhibit the most abject and cowardly spirit... We propose... that the anti-slavery portion of the inhabitants should immediately, thoroughly arm and organize themselves in military companies..."

Without hesitation John Brown set about securing military supplies and in August left Chicago with a wagon-load of guns and ammunition. Shortly after his arrival he was elected captain of the anti-slavery forces and led them in bloody reprisals on the pro-slavery sympathizers. In a short time the mere mention of his name struck fear into the hearts of the slave-owners, and inspired the forces of freedom.

The struggles of the next year, resulting in the pillaging and burning of the settlement of Osawatimie, saw Brown's son killed, his forces beaten and scattered. Thereafter, Brown and his band were outlaws, living on the run, launching sudden raids on the pro-slavery forces. He continued this guerilla warfare until Kansas was "pacified" by the Federal troops.

For the next two years John Brown shuttled back and forth between Kansas and the East, seeking support for the struggle to make Kansas a free state. But under the conditions of armed neutrality, there was not much room in Kansas for him.

He reverted to his long cherished scheme of mountain warfare in the Southern states. He supposed that he could hide in the mountains, make raids on the plantations, inspiring the slaves to rise up and join him. Then they would form a new free state in the mountains, composed of Negroes and whites.

Early in the summer of 1859, he rented a farm near Harper's Ferry, collected his men there and prepared the attack. He felt that arms were needed, that he could seize them, distribute them to the slaves nearby, and spread the struggle.

They seized the armory, took a few prisoners, aroused some of the slaves, and then they were surrounded by companies of militia and marines headed by Robert E. Lee. After a fierce battle, in which two more of Brown's sons were killed, they were overpowered. On December 2, Brown was hanged.

FREEDOM MUST BE FOUGHT FOR

John Brown's great place in American history rests on the fact that in addition to recognizing the necessity of emancipation, as did many others, he alone at that time saw the general road it would have to take, and was willing to take it. It was he who taught that those who want freedom have to fight for it arms in hand.

He knew that he had to organize, gather men and materials around his ideas. He spent his life doing this, under immense personal hardships, talking, exhorting, opening schools for slaves, assisting in the work of the "underground railroad," giving all of his tremendous energy and singleness of purpose to the cause.

He knew also that you need more than enthusiasm and well-wishing to meet the guns of the slaveholders. He gathered fighters around him and trained them in the military arts, he taught the free settlements to form their defense guards. He knew this when he organized the League of Gileadites whose purpose was "to band Negroes together, teach them to advance their own interests, and resist their pursuers." He understood this when he ordered a thousand pikes to be made, to arm the slaves for his invasion of the South. And in spite of his mistakes at Harper's Ferry, his aim of arming the slaves was fundamentally the correct one.

There is still much that we can learn today from Old John Brown, just as there is much we can learn from his mistakes. For it is as true today as it was 81 years ago that those who want freedom must be prepared to fight for it.

Workers of all races take inspiration from the heroism of John Brown. In the same way that he surveyed the situation in his day, and on the basis of the concrete line-up of forces decided that the next stage in the struggle was to be with arms, we must today look about us and decide what our tasks are.

The best way to honor John Brown's memory today is by joining the fight for trade union control of military training. Conscription is a law, and as a result, the oppressed and exploited of our times will learn how to use guns, will learn how to defend themselves against their enemies. Just as John Brown, and after him the slaves during the Civil War, did not shrink back from the struggle, we too must take our place among the workers.

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