

The Negro Struggle

"LABOR WITH A WHITE SKIN CANNOT EMANCIPATE ITSELF WHERE LABOR WITH A BLACK SKIN IS BRANDED" - KARL MARX.

By ALBERT PARKER

Recently, Roscoe Dunjee, editor of The Black Dispatch, made the keynote address before the National Colored Democratic Association...

"I want to insist here and now that as American citizens we demand the right to be integrated into every branch of the American Army. Recently I appeared before the resolutions committee of the Oklahoma Democratic State Convention..."

"When I did get an opportunity to talk I told that committee about the obvious discrimination in the American Army. I told them how Pat Hurely, from my state, when Secretary of War under Herber Hoover, had practically demobilized all of the Negro combat troops of the Army..."

Dunjee correctly puts part of the blame for the Jim Crow conditions in the armed forces on the Republicans, who today are promising the Negroes everything they can think of...that may possibly win them a vote.

But how he prostitutes himself when he pretends that the Democrats are any better in this respect! Assume for a minute that the Republicans were solely responsible for these conditions. The Democrats have had eight years now to correct them, haven't they?

Talking about that reminds us about the committee of Frank Crosswaith, William Pickens and Alfred Baker Lewis, who signed that rotten article, "Colored Americans Have a Stake In The War," issued as war propaganda by the Committee to Defend America By Aiding the Allies.

We'll discuss that article again in future weeks. Here we'll limit ourselves to George Schuyler's comment on it in the Pittsburgh Courier of Oct. 12: "They speak of the Hitler menace to freedom of speech, press and assembly, forgetting all about Georgia, Louisiana and Alabama. They say the NAACP would be illegal under Hitler, forgetting how dangerous is membership therein in the Deep South outside of a few cities, one member having recently been lynched outside of Brownsville, Tenn."

"Ironically enough, in proof of the fact that British imperialism is softening," they boast that in Jamaica, Bustamante, a prominent Negro trade unionist and radical, has had freedom to organize and agitate even under British imperialism... In Germany or Italy, Bustamante would have been put in a concentration camp or perhaps executed..."

"Here's the laugh on that...Last week several Negro newspapers announced that Bustamante HAS been thrown into a concentration camp."

Natalia Trotsky Answers A Foul Slander

(Natalia Sedoff Trotsky, widow of Leon Trotsky, has sent the following letter to J. R. Johnson, who wrote an article about Trotsky constituting the bulk of the September issue of the "New Internationalist", a magazine published by the petty-bourgeois revisionists led by Max Schachtman.)

My Dear Comrade Johnson:

Permit me to give you some facts pertaining to that part of your article in the September issue of the New Internationalist where you proceed to "analyze" with such impermissible haste and such utter irresponsibility the causes underlying the tragedy that befell us at 5:30 P. M. on August 20, 1940; and where you also presume in this connection to elucidate, without first ascertaining the facts, certain traits in the character of the man who fell victim to the assassin. This light-minded carelessness and disrespect on your part toward the victim force me to make the following declaration:

Our first meeting with Sylvia Ageloff's husband, "Jason," took place on May 28, 9 o'clock in the morning, and not in March as you so freely assert. Of these 83 days of "our acquaintance," Sylvia Ageloff's husband spent some 27 to 30 days outside of Mexico. In the course of the remaining 50 to 53 days he paid us a total of 7 to 8 visits. He was received by us first and foremost as the husband of Sylvia Ageloff, who in our eyes was completely trustworthy. On every one of his visits, he was received (1) by both of us—L.D. and myself; (2) on each occasion it was in the patio; (3) each time it was when the animals were fed, that is, (4) during L.D.'s rest period; and (5) each visit took place in passing and was very brief, from 7 to 10 minutes, not more, except for the last two visits.

He used to visit us on the most insignificant pretexts: To tell us that his boss was liquidating his affairs and that they were leaving... or that, since he was going away, he should like to leave his automobile with us for two weeks until his return... or that he came to bring me a box of candy from Sylvia Ageloff which he had forgotten to bring before... or that his wife, Sylvia had arrived... and finally with a request that we set the time and the day when his wife could visit us...

TRIVIAL PRETEXTS

The topic brought up for discussion during these visits by "Jason" was his "patron," the latter's "business genius" and how it "baffled the imagination" of his employee, his "fantastic successes in speculation" and so forth and so on, all of like nature. L. D. listened, forcing himself from time to time to make some casual remark, out of politeness, I used to wonder why he talked to us so insistently each time about his "boss" and the latter's shady machinations inasmuch as the R's were precisely worried by the fact that with them "Jason" was persistently uncommunicative, despite his garrulousness, about the



An unposed photograph of Natalia Sedov Trotsky, taken before the assassination of Trotsky.

affairs of his "boss." Later I understood the reason for this. Ask Sylvia Ageloff; perhaps she too now realizes what was involved. Sylvia Ageloff was not her husband's conscious accomplice, but unconsciously she undoubtedly aided him.

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ASSASSIN'S STRATEGY

All this you do not understand, comrade Johnson. As you imagine it, the political assassin had to engage his victim in preliminary and lengthy political discussion for a period of six months. You are mistaken—had he done so, he could have hardly achieved his aim. No, "Jason" was much more clever than you; he understood that political discussions could only disrupt his plan of murder. He had to familiarize himself with our general habits, incorporate them in the very marrow of his bones, adapt himself to them, take into account each minute detail, check and re-check over and over again—that was his task. That is why he began in the last period to visit us more and more often, always at the same hour—during L.D.'s rest period—and always made his visits brief. In this was his strategy, and not in factional political discussion.

and I invited them into the dining room for tea.

ABOUT TO LEAVE MEXICO

This was the first and the last occasion on which a political conversation took place. Sylvia Ageloff defended the position of the Minority heatedly and excitedly. L.D. answered her calmly and in a friendly way. Her husband interjected a few not very astute and jocular comments. All this did not take more than 15 minutes. L.D. excused himself; he had to do his chores, feed the animals. All of us got up. The "Jacsos" bade us farewell, and hurried away, stating, as usual, that they had some urgent business. We did not detain them, not even out of politeness. We knew that these "visits" were about to be terminated, since "Jason" was leaving Mexico... if not today, then tomorrow, and mentally we said to ourselves, "Let him go, the sooner, the better." Not because we had begun to suspect him as an agent of the GPU—unfortunately not—but because in the long run we did not know what to do with this husband of Sylvia Ageloff.

THE PROJECTED ARTICLE

This visit before the last one differed from the others in this, that "Jason" suddenly proposed that L.D. look over his draft of a projected article. And this time—for the first time—he was admitted into L.D.'s study. L.D. re-

ferred negatively to the draft: "Very muddled... only a few phrases..." and without wishing to dwell on it, he added, "I offered a few suggestions, we shall see..." I understood that this time L.D. had seen another side of "Jason." He was somewhat surprised by "Jason's" conduct while in the study, but I shall speak of this at greater length elsewhere. During this same visit he talked to L.D. about French statistics which he claimed to know. The conversation lasted 10 minutes at the most. In connection with French statistics, L.D. mentioned to Joe Hansen that our New York organization could perhaps make use of his knowledge in this field. "For six months," you say, comrade Johnson, "he discussed politics with the greatest living master of politics and Trotsky never detected a false note..." because Trotsky was blinded factually. This is a lie. Why didn't you ascertain the facts, if only by asking his wife, Sylvia Ageloff? It is an insufferable shame to place a lie at the very threshold of what happened. It is insufferable to read this shameful lie. You have been so carried away by your factionalism that you have lost your moral equilibrium and this is a dangerous symptom both for a revolutionist and the party to which he belongs.

NATALIA SEDOV TROTSKY October 17, 1940 Coyoacan, Mexico

Leader of May 24 Attack On Trotsky Admits Close C. P. Connections

MEXICO CITY—David Alfaro Siqueiros, the Stalinist who led the machine-gun band which assaulted Trotsky's house and murdered Trotsky's secretary, Robert Sheldon Harte, was indicted Oct. 12, after having been brought face to face with his accomplices, who confirmed their earlier testimony which first incriminated him.

The most important testimony was that of Alvarez Lopez and Sanchez Hernandez Lopez, one of the chauffeurs for the machine-gun band, states that Siqueiros' own car, a large La Salle, was used in the attack, that the machine guns, revolvers and bombs were transported to the scene in this car.

Hernandez confirms Lopez' declarations, and that Siqueiros himself entered the house. Ana Lopez Chavez states that she was engaged and paid by Siqueiros to spy on the movements of members of the Trotsky house. She was paid five and later ten pesos a day for this work. At first she made her reports to Siqueiros, later to Antonio Pujol, a present a fugitive from justice, and to an individual named Pedro. She says that Pedro told her that "the money is provided by the Communist Party."

Admits C. P. Ties

Siqueiros states that he was a member of the Communist Party from 1922 to 1929 and a member of its National Committee for the last six years; in 1929 he was expelled for "disciplinary reasons and for differences of procedure." He admits that since then: "The Communist Party has me as a sympathizer of confidence; as a member incapable of following a fundamentally contrary political line. For this reason I have been admitted and taken part with a voice in many of its private or public meetings."

Negro Labor Head Jailed By Britain

News has finally reached this country of the arrest of the well known labor leader, Alexander Bustamante, in Jamaica, British West Indies on Sept. 9.

The English governor of the island ordered him seized and placed in a concentration camp for the duration of the war on the charge of "breach of defense regulations" through his speeches and writings in wartime.

When war broke out, Bustamante declared his loyalty to British imperialism. This was all right with the British. But Bustamante also continued his efforts to keep the workers organized and his fight for better conditions. The British overlords of the island didn't like this. And so he has been sent to a concentration camp.

Bustamante won international prominence as the leader of the strike struggles of 1938 in which many workers were massacred when they protested against low wages, averaging 25c a day, and horrible working conditions.

Since Bustamante's arrest, a number of other people have been seized on the same charge for daring to organize a protest demonstration against his arrest.

Protests should be sent to the British embassy in Washington, demanding the immediate release of all those arrested.

Some More Southern Chivalry

A recent WPA ruling, according to the N. Y. Amsterdam News, states that "Negro women must work out-of-doors with shovels and wheelbarrows or quit."

The ruling, reassigning colored women to hard outside labor at \$11.10 a week and telling them they can quit if they don't like it, was brought to light following a protest of the Charlotte (N.Y.) Labor League, affiliate of Labor's Non Partisan League.

"Common labor for Negro women, light work for white women, has no place in 1940. Such conditions are like slavery days. Organized labor must fight such violations of Negro rights. Women should not be forced to do the work of strong men. We demand decent conditions on WPA for all workers regardless of color, creed or political belief. This shameful condition is a disgrace to Charlotte."

And it is "Southern chivalry" that so often does its lynching in the name of "protecting our fair womanhood!"

UNDERSTATEMENT OF THE WEEK

It is announced that those who enlist will have the first choice of the new opportunities for specialization that will arise. But, the article warns, "remember that the services are not organized to suit your convenience."

Our Military Policy--James P. Cannon's Summary

(Continued from page 2)

dination of the workers to the bourgeoisie. We have seen the results of this treacherous policy. Well, we answered in a general way, the workers will first overthrow the bourgeoisie at home and then they will take care of invaders. That was a good program, but the workers did not make the revolution in time. Now the two tasks must be telescoped and carried out simultaneously.

The main thing is that we must operate not under the old conditions of peace, but under the new conditions of universal militarism and war. We cannot avoid the new circumstances; we must adapt our tactics to them. In times of strike, we urge the workers to stay out of a plant. But when the majority decides to go back, we have to go back with them and accept with them, for the time being, the exploitation of the bosses. Sometimes the defeat of a strike goes so far as not only to smash a legitimate union but to drive the workers into the bosses' company union. We are against company unions; but if the workers are driven into them we go along and try to work there in the interests of the proletariat. Analogous tactics must be applied also in questions of war and militarism.

We had a great Marxist for a teacher, and a part of his genius was his never failing application of Marxist tactics. He always took the existing situation, in its totality, as the point of departure. The Bolsheviks set out in 1917 to overthrow the whole capitalist world. They did overthrow the Russian bourgeoisie, but the other countries remained under the domination of the international capitalist class. So, at a certain point, the Bolsheviks drew the balance and said: "Here is the situation as it exists in reality. We cannot overthrow the other imperialist bandits at present. The workers are not yet ready. Therefore, let us open trade relations with the imperialist countries, gain a little breathing space and overthrow them tomorrow." Comrade Trotsky was prompted to elaborate and extend our tactics by the new situation in the world. A party which fails to adapt itself to this situation, to existing war, can play no role whatsoever.

WE ARE PROLETARIAN MILITARISTS

One comrade here tried to justify a policy of anti-militarism. His remarks were, to my opinion, a reminiscence of departed days. Anti-militarism was all right when we were fighting against war in times of peace. But here you have a new situation of universal militarism. It is obvious that all over the world, everything is going to be settled by mass meetings, not by petitions, not by strikes, not even by mass demonstrations in the streets. Everything is going to be settled by military means, with arms in hand. So, can we now be anti-militarists? By no means! Just the contrary. We must say: "All right, the situation, not of our making, is that military force decides. There is only one thing left for the workers to do. That is to learn how to be good fighters with modern weapons." So we anti-militarists of yesterday become positive militarists today. The comrade who tries to represent our position today as still anti-militarist is, in my opinion, decidedly wrong.

I raised this question in our conversations with comrade Trotsky. After he had elaborated his ideas, I put the question

to him and asked him to make his answer as sharp and categorical as possible. I asked: "Can we call ourselves militarists?" And he said, "Yes. It might not be tactically advisable to begin with such a proclamation, but if the pacifists accuse you of it, if you are accused of being a militarist, you take the platform and say, 'Yes, I am a proletarian revolutionary militarist.'" This doesn't contradict the somewhat different attitude we took in somewhat different times—when the possibility of preventing war by revolution could not be excluded.

Was the fight of the social-pacifist elements against conscription right in this last period? No, it was not right. It overlooked realities and sowed illusions. The workers were for conscription. The conscription bill was carried without any serious opposition whatsoever. The fight as we conducted it, for workers' control, was 100% correct. We are positively for conscription, but we do not want conscription of the workers by the bosses. We want conscription of the workers by a workers' organization. If some horrified middle-head of a pacifist asks: "Do you really mean it? Do you want to compel every worker to take up arms and learn how to use arms?" We answer, "Yes, that is exactly what we mean." How do we justify such compulsion? By the necessities of the class struggle which justify everything. There is nothing new in such an attitude. A certain amount of compulsion has always been invoked by the labor movement against the backward, the slackers.

For example, trade unions always strive to make membership compulsory. The intelligent, loyal and serious workers join the union voluntarily. Then they say to the backward, to the ignorant and to the scab-hearted: Join if you will, peacefully, but join this union or else stay out of that factory. That's compulsion for you, my boy. We cannot allow your ignorance or mistaken conception of individual interest to interfere with the class interests as a whole. What is a picket line? Well, some that I have seen at least, had aspects of extraordinary persuasion. I have seen picket lines of such a nature that if anyone wanted to argue about it, he didn't even get a chance to argue. He either stayed out or got knocked out. Compulsion in the class war is a class necessity. We didn't invent it. It must be applied also to military training.

THE DYNAMICS OF THIS STRUGGLE

An interesting question, asked by some workers, was reported here: "How can you tell the workers to put themselves under the control of the unions for military training when the unions are controlled by people like Lewis and Hillman?" Well, if we wait until the unions are led by the Fourth International, we lose all sense of the dynamics of their development. Green and Lewis and their similars—the whole upper bureaucracy of the labor movement at present—are agents of the capitalists in the labor movement, but they are not the same thing as the bosses. Their sole base of existence is the labor movement; and in spite of all the bureaucratism of the unions, they are subject to certain pressures, certain controls from below. When the worsening of conditions, supplemented by our agitation, raises a wave of radicalization in the masses, the workers will solve

the problem of leadership in the workers' regiments as well as in the unions.

We always take the workers' organizations as they are. We join them as they are, support them as they are, try to remodel them from within. Of course, the very idea of a Lewis or a Green heading the military instruction of workers is far-fetched. Correctly understood, our fight for military training under trade union control is a mortal struggle against the reformist, non-fighting bureaucracy. The adoption of our policy, or even a strong movement in favor of it, would spell the doom of the present leaders. Nobody would believe these scoundrels are fit for such a serious enterprise as the instruction of workers for military action.

In 1917, following February, the Soviets of Petrograd and Moscow were in control of the Social Democrats and the Social Revolutionaries, that is, men of the stripe of Lewis and Green, Hillman and Dubinsky; no better and no worse. In spite of that, because the Soviets embraced the workers, Lenin raised the slogan: "All power to the Soviets." In the course of that fight for all power to the Soviets, the Bolsheviks won to their side the majority of the workers. And almost coincidentally with the uprising, the workers threw out the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries and placed the Bolsheviks at their head. That's the way things have to be conceived in this question also.

The question of the referendum on war in connection with compulsory military training was raised by one of the comrades. This question was propounded to the Old Man in a letter from Goldman, and answered by him. The Old Man said: "I don't see why we should drop the demand for a referendum on war. Before they actually enter the war, an agitation for a people's referendum is an excellent means of showing up their fake democracy." It is a means of agitation against them. It is not so simple and automatic; one does not exclude the other.

Comrade Trotsky also answered the question whether our slogan of Workers' Defense Guards is superseded by our military policy. He said he did not see why. He thought they were interrelated. Of course, at the present time, the emphasis is entirely on the question of penetrating the military organizations. But, as the crisis develops, all kinds of reactionary attacks will be made on the unions. Gangs will be organized to break them up. The union members will be under the constant necessity to protect themselves. The workers must be on guard to protect their unions. The slogan of Workers' Defense Guards can be raised at an appropriate time, not in contradiction to our military policy, but in correlation with it.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN COMRADES

On the question of the role of women in the party after conscription. We must not get the idea that all our people will be in the army. Roughly speaking, the same percentage of our party will be in the army as the percentage of their class of the same generation. We have a young party. You will learn from Comrade Dobbs' comprehensive organization report that the average age of our party is 29 years. This means that perhaps a majority of our men comrades are going to be in the army sooner or later.

Some of our leading people will be taken out and in their places women comrades will come forward. We already have indications that we are not without resources in this field. And don't forget we have a few old codgers who are beyond the draft age. Maybe the party can make use of them. Lenin once said, and I always sympathized with him, that when a revolutionist reaches the age of 50 he should be shot. When men get older they usually get tired and conservative. But there are exceptions to all laws, and we come in under the exceptions. If we have the correct policy, and if we have the conception that every member of our party is potentially a leader, potentially a general in the army of the revolution, we will not lack leadership.

Comrade Birchman mentioned the question of the Negro workers in the militarization. Our attitude toward the Negroes in war, like our attitude toward all other questions, is the same as in times of peace. Our line is the class line. We stand for absolutely unconditional equality for every race and nationality. That's a cardinal principle of Communism. We have to fight for and defend this principle under all conditions, including the conditions of militarism.

METHODS OF WORK IN THE ARMY

How do we work in a conscript army? someone asked. We work the same way as in a shop. Indeed, the main purpose of industry now is supplying the army. Where would you draw the line? There is hardly an industry that won't be mobilized either for the manufacture or transportation of materials for the army. The masses are in the army, or working to supply the army. The workers are subjected to military exploitation. We go in and defend the interests of the slaves of military exploitation, just as we go into the factory and fight against capitalist exploitation there. Our basic line everywhere is the class line.

The second point is to be careful, cautious. Make no putsches, make no premature moves that expose us and separate us from the masses. Go with the masses. Be with the masses, just as the Bolsheviks were in Kerensky's army.

Why can't we do that here? And how otherwise can we do it? How otherwise, in a world dominated by militarism, can we see our way to world salvation except through military means? And how can we get these military means except by penetrating the army as it exists?

We have one great assurance. I repeat what I said at the mass meeting. We have our opportunity before us in this country. Even if war is declared and a military dictatorship is instituted, even if all kinds of repressive measures are decreed—we must always remember that a dictatorship of the police and military forces, instituted by fiat, cannot be the same thing as a fascist dictatorship based on a mass movement mobilized over years of time after the workers have muffed their chance to take power. Before fascism can come in this country on a mass basis, according to the historical law elucidated by Comrade Trotsky, the great mass radicalization of the workers will take place. The workers here, as everywhere, will have the first chance to take power. That is all we need. We will have our chance, and we will not miss it.