

THE NEGRO QUESTION

"LABOR WITH A WHITE SKIN CAN NOT EMANCIPATE ITSELF WHERE LABOR WITH A BLACK SKIN IS BRANDED"—KARL MARX.

By J. R. JOHNSON

The Negro and the War

All of us know how Negroes suffer in America. But you have to go to Africa to see how brutally the "democracies" treat Negroes. In South Africa, a Negro cannot even lay a stamp in the same place where a white man buys one. There is a special window for him even in the post office. He lives in a part of the town that is marked off for him, and he cannot leave there after nine o'clock without a pass signed by a white man. Any white man, any dirty drunkard of an Englishman or a Boer, can sign a pass for a sober, self-respecting, hard-working Negro. But any Negro who is caught out of the Negro district after nine o'clock without his passes will be locked up by the first policeman who stops him. There are not ten colored doctors in the Union of South Africa where over seven million Negroes live, and the imperialists have been there for 400 years. That is the culture and civilization they give to the Africans in South Africa.

In Kenya more than five people cannot meet without police permission. One day six of them went home after church for a cup of tea. In comes a policeman. "One, two, three, four, five, six. This is sedition. You are under arrest." They were taken to jail and the next day fined. Every working African in Kenya is fingerprinted and must carry the print around with him wherever he goes. Caught without it, he is sent to jail. Wages in Rhodesia and Kenya are sometimes four, sometimes ten cents a day. A Negro is no more than a dog to these people. And this is under the rule of the great "democratic countries," Britain, France and Belgium. James Ford is a dirty traitor to tell Negroes that they must go to war for the "democracies" for the benefit of civilization. Aren't Negroes part of civilization?

How did the "democratic" imperialist nations get hold of Africa? They got it as Hitler got Austria and Czechoslovakia. Hitler lied, made promises and broke them, bribed and sent armies to massacre all who resisted. In exactly the same way, these great "democracies" robbed the Africans of country after country and hold them in chains. And now Roosevelt, Browder, and Ford tell Negroes that they must all get together with the great "democracies" and shed their blood. Shed it for what? To win back their country? To live as free men? Not at all. But to go and help Britain and France fight against Hitler and Mussolini about Danzig and the Polish corridor, and who should dominate the Chinese and Latin-American markets, and who should dominate Africa.

Remember What they Did in 1914

These imperialist bandits encouraged workers to fight in the last war with the same talk about democracy, freedom and civilization. But after defeating Germany, Britain, France and Belgium simply took over the German colonies and continued to treat the Negroes as before. Now they are fighting another war. If the fascists win they will take the colonies back. If the "democracies" win they will keep them. But whether "democracies" win, or fascists win, the Africans remain slaves in their own country.

Now Republicans like Dewey and Democrats like Roosevelt, men like John L. Lewis and William Green, all the war-mongers for "democracy," have never told Negroes anything about the situation of Negroes in Africa. Lewis encouraged Negroes to join the CIO and Negroes were right to join. But when Lewis tells Negroes to fight for democracy, as he most certainly will, they simply have to ask him the same questions that they will ask Ford and Roosevelt, and Lewis will be able to make no better reply.

But James Ford and Browder and the Communist Party are different. For many years they have posed as the special friends of the Negro people, ready to lead them out of their bondage into the promised land of freedom. They know, and used to expose the situation of the Negro not only in America but in Africa and the West Indies. Listen, for instance, to James Ford, the Negro Stalinist, in an article, "The Negro and the Struggle Against Imperialism":

"The native population has (in South Africa) no electoral rights (with the exception of the Cape Province), the power of the state has been monopolized by the white bourgeoisie which has at its disposal the white armed forces. The white bourgeoisie, chiefly the Boers, defeated by the arms of British imperialism, at the close of the last century, had for a long time carried on a dispute with British capital. But as much as the process of capitalist development goes on in the country, the interests of the South African bourgeoisie are becoming more and more blended with the interests of British financial and industrial capital, and the white South African bourgeoisie is becoming more and more inclined to compromise with British imperialism, forming together with the latter a united front of whites for the exploitation of the native population."

Situation Has Changed for the Worse

That is what Ford wrote in The Communist (January 1930, p. 27). Has the situation changed? Yes it has. The votes that a few Negroes in the Cape had (referred to by Ford) have been taken away from them. So they are worse off than they were before.

We could print scores of such passages from the writings of the Stalinists. Only three years ago, Ben Davis Jr. had the following to say about Negroes in America. It is a long passage, but every line is worth recalling today. Says Davis, "One has merely to look about him for the rising atrocities against the Negro. The news broke in July that Silas Coleman, a Negro worker, was killed (for the hell of it) to 'thrill' members of the Black Legion, a super Klu Klux Klan connected with the Michigan Wolverine republicans. Recently three Negroes were lynched in the space of one week in the South—a new record for the southern ruling class. The "grass roots" convention of Governor

During the Last World War a Few Individuals Bucked the Stream And Blazed the Trail to Revolution

By JOSEPH CARTER

In the early days of the First World War only a few isolated voices were raised against the criminal madness of workers fighting workers in the interest of their exploiters at home.

The powerful socialist parties and trade unions became war-mongers. "For defense of little Belgium," shouted the British turn-coats as they rallied the toilers behind the Union Jack. "For national defense!" cried the French social-patriots. "Against Kaiserism and for democracy!" rang the appeal of the Russian traitors to socialism as they supported the Tsarist armies. "Against barbaric Tsarism!" replied their German comrades of yesterday as they prostituted themselves to their own ruling class.

In a word, in each country the official leaders of labor defended the imperialist war in the name of democracy and socialism. And the chorus was powerful, impressive and effective. Could anything be done to fight against the tidal wave of treachery and chauvinistic hysteria?

THE FIRST ANTI-WAR FORCES APPEAR

In little Serbia, the Socialist deputies Lapchevitch and Katerovitch exposed the lying talk of national defense, proved that Serbia was but a pawn in the hands of the Allied powers, and therefore refused to vote war credits or support the war.

In England, four members of the Independent Labor Party voted against the war in the House of Commons, while 38 representatives of the Labor Party supported the war.

In Russia, the fourteen socialist deputies in the Tsarist Duma—Bolshevik and Menshevik—refused to vote war credits or support the war.

In Germany, the small anti-war forces assembled around Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. On December 2 (1914) Liebknecht in the Reichstag electrified the world by his eloquent denunciation of the war as a robber struggle between the two groups of powers. In defiance of party discipline, he answered the roll-call vote on war credits with a powerful "NO!" One man against the German Empire and the Social Democratic Party!

"The main enemy is at

home!" Liebknecht declared in opposition to the social-imperialists.

But in the first months of the war only a handful followed him.

LENIN AND TROTSKY AGAINST THE STREAM

Alone also were the socialist internationalists Lenin, Zinoviev, and Trotsky, swimming against the current of reaction; analysing the causes of the war; denouncing the ruling classes and their predatory governments; attacking the socialists of yesterday who now were the lackeys of militarism; warning the workers against those who declared that a truly democratic peace could be achieved by the imperialist powers. Only the overthrow of the governments, the conquest of power by the working class, they constantly reiterated, could bring a lasting peace by destroying capitalism and establishing a socialist society.

As dark and hopeless as the situation appeared, they had faith in the recuperative powers of the working class, certain that once the masses learned from the frightful experiences of the war itself that they had been betrayed, they would turn on their old leaders and conduct a revolutionary struggle to end the war.

They were called hopeless dreamers whose wish was father to the thought, insane fanatics who were dealing with a world of their own imagination. A handful of people will stop the war by socialist revolution? No, replied the internationalists, the masses will make the revolution. Our duty is to point the road, utilize the experiences of the workers patiently to explain to them the meaning of the events, and the methods they must employ at each stage of development.

ANTI-WAR FORCES GATHER TOGETHER

The anti-war socialists reassembled slowly their ranks. In March, 1915 an International Socialist Women's Conference was held at Berne, Switzerland. In the same city, in April the International Conference of Socialist Youth took place. Both conferences adopted clear statements against the war but were vague on what was to be done. The differences were expressed in clearer form at the

conference of anti-war socialists at Zimmerwald in September of the same year.

The left wing at the conference, grouped around Lenin, insisted that opposition to the war must be expressed in explicit preparations for revolutionary action as the way out, and for an immediate split with those who either supported the war or were in an alliance with the pro-war socialists.

Those who opposed the left wing thought that the differences with the pro-war socialists and their allies were temporary, and would be overcome once peace was again established. They did not believe that socialist revolutions would develop during the war and therefore concentrated on getting the belligerent powers to adopt "democratic peace terms."

LENIN BECOMES LEADER OF ANTI-WAR FORCES

Lenin's position was supported by only a minority at the Zimmerwald Conference. But when the second conference was held at Kienthal in April, 1916, his program had made such headway that the official resolution of the conference explicitly condemned the social-chauvinists (the pro-war "socialists") and the social-pacifists—(those who taught that peace could be achieved by the imperialist powers through disarmament, compulsory arbitration and democratization of foreign politics). The resolution called for revolutionary action as the only way to end the war.

This program was supported by the German group of Liebknecht and Luxemburg. One month after Kienthal, Liebknecht spoke at a mass May Day rally in Berlin. "Down with the war!" he shouted. And though thrown into prison, his slogan echoed throughout the country by means of illegal leaflets, pamphlets and papers. Strikes began to break out in country after country; reports of fraternization of soldiers on both sides began to seep through the censored press. In England, for example, army men were sentenced for acts of sedition and mutiny; in 1916, 60; 1917, 221; 1918, 676, according to the official reports.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION BLAZES THE TRAIL

These anti-war actions were given added impetus by the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in March 1917. But the Kerensky government continued to support the Allies. The Bolsheviks unleashed a tremendous campaign to achieve the aim they had set for themselves at the beginning of the war: peace through the Socialist revolution.

And with their victory in November 1917, the first great breach was made in the World War.

The Bolshevik Revolution accelerated the strike movements in the warring countries, particularly in Germany and in Austro-Hungary. The mass actions of 1918 culminated in the German and Austrian revolutions of November. Peace was being achieved by the actions of the working class!

But only in Russia were the revolutionary socialists in control of political power. In Germany and Austria those who had supported the war, those who were the most active opponents of the revolution, succeeded in forming the new governments. As during the war, their main task became the suppression of the revolutionary workers' movement and the assurance of capitalist stability.

THE BOSSES' PEACE PREPARED THIS WAR

The Allied statesmen and their social-patriotic agents had promised a democratic peace. They imposed the oppressive Versailles Treaty on the German people. The revolutionary Socialists time and again warned that only socialist revolutions, workers' governments united in a Socialist United States of Europe could bring about a lasting and democratic peace. The Bolsheviks showed the way in Russia. They made clear during and after the war that unless the Russian Revolution was extended internationally, reaction and more bloody wars would follow.

How tragically accurate were the predictions of the revolutionaries! What scurrilous lies were the promises of the "democratic" imperialists and their lackpittles!

The second World War is now a stark reality. Once again the masters, and their agents in the labor movement, are repeating the old slogans. The anti-war forces are once again reduced to a handful. But as in 1914-1918 the masses will learn that they are being de-

IRISH MASSES OPPOSE ENTRY INTO THE WAR

Expose the Hypocrisy Of Britain's Concern With "Democracy"

Exposing the fraudulent claim that British imperialism is fighting for the independence of Poland, the Irish-American press is urging opposition to American involvement in the European war. This view, expressed in the current issues of The Irish World, The Gaelic American, and the Irish Echo, expresses the sentiments of the broad masses in Eire and the Irish people in this country.

Attack de Valera

Commenting on a recent interview with Premier de Valera, the Sept. 9 Gaelic American comments editorially:

"Evidently de Valera believes that England is a break-water against the Continent and if he gets his way, he will involve his country in the war to 'make the world safe for English imperialism.' He has probably made a secret agreement with England without consulting the Irish people. The young men of Ireland, at least the majority of them, will refuse to line up on the side of their centuries-old enemy. They are more likely to embrace England's difficulty as Ireland's opportunity. Every friend of Ireland hopes and prays that she will keep out of wars to safeguard her relentless enemy. . . ."

The Sept. 9 Irish Echo reports the cablegram sent by the Northern Council for Unity, held in Belfast several days before the outbreak of the war, calling upon President Roosevelt for assistance against Britain's oppression of Ireland. "Great Britain still holds six counties of Ireland by force and allows a tyranny to prevail here over the native population unequalled in Europe today. The Irish race counts on your assistance to have this aggression ended," reads the appeal.

The Irish of course do not expect Roosevelt to help the Irish people. As the Echo comments: "He may not see fit to request England to cease her aggression in Ireland, a thing which he has not hesitated to do in the past when Germany was the aggressor and a Central European country the victim, but it may teach him that the ideals of this country (Ireland) are not those of Great Britain."

Expose British Hypocrisy

The same meeting of the Northern Council for Unity issued a statement denouncing the hypocritical slogans under which the English ruling class is waging war:

"At this time of world crisis we again call the attention of all lovers of liberty to the continued military aggression of England in the most Irish of the provinces of Ireland, and emphatically protest against her use of the German-Polish situation as a smoke-screen to hide her own age-long brutality towards our country and, particularly, to divert attention from her greatest crime of all—the Partition of Ireland.

"Unlike the fraudulent zeal that is born of political expediency the warm regard of the Irish people for Polish liberty is no characteristic of mushroom growth.

"During Poland's long night of suffering, and while England was callously indifferent, she had no more sincere friend and sympathizer than Ireland or common hope for a glorious deliverance.

"Every injustice and indignity practised towards Poland, England has inflicted on Ireland, the Poland of the West-ern Seas' . . .

"The charges of duplicity levelled by England against other nations, whom she rebukes for disregard of solemn treaties, have a cynical ring in Irish ears. England has always been regarded as the world's leading treaty-breaker, and for that reason the French appropriately dubbed her Perfidious Albion. Every treaty she entered into with the Irish people she brazenly repudiated. . . .

"Ireland is a justice-loving nation with only one enemy in the world, and, anxious as she is for friendship, there shall never be peace between her and England while the crime of Partition endures."

and will unite their forces against the war. They can stop the war, and bring about a lasting peace, only by struggling for the socialist revolution, for the Socialist United States of Europe and a World Socialist Federation.

The WAR DEAL

By DWIGHT MACDONALD

It is worth paying some attention to President Roosevelt's letter of Sept. 9 explaining why he was cancelling his radio address on "Democratic Women's Day." "A week ago," he wrote, "I might consistently have spoken words primarily addressed to our Democratic women. But the events of the past few days render it imperative that every utterance of mine in these days of tension be addressed to all of our citizens, regardless of sex, age or political affiliation. We must all stand together in a firm resolve to bear witness before all nations to our unshaken patriotism. . . . Our plain duty now is to fulfill our obligation to the nation, regardless of political or partisan considerations."

This is more than the usual star-spangled stuff about "national" interests coming before any "petty partisan" concerns. It is the most dramatic expression of a new major tendency in American political strategy.

In issuing a formal invitation to Republican leaders to confer with him on current state affairs, Governor Lehman of New York writes: "Partisanship and political interest must at this time be outlawed. I propose a truce on politics. . . . Political parties should combine their efforts for the good of the nation."

Addressing the heads of the National Youth Administration, Mayor LaGuardia expresses the hope that the youth of America would remain "calm and serene" in these stormy times and would join in the movement for national unity, which "would serve as a fine example" to Europe.

The President of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce talks of "goodwill" and "great tolerance" as prime requisites for this crucial time.

EVEN DIES JOINS "NATIONAL UNITY"

The sweet atmosphere of tolerance and brotherly love has even spread to the Dies Committee. When one unregenerate member the other day tried to infer from Browder's testimony that the New Deal was "Communist," one of his colleagues angrily rebuked him for "playing cheap politics." And Chairman Dies actually took some pains to lead Gitlow to admit that neither William Green nor John L. Lewis is a Communist. Furthermore—"Mr. Dies asserted that the committee did not want any implications drawn from the testimony that either the AFL or the CIO were Communist or Communist-dominated organizations."

All this means that when an imperialist nation like the United States prepares to go to a war, the first thing that must be done is to cajole and browbeat the masses into suspending hostilities on the class-war front at home. Any sort of political disagreement becomes potentially dangerous, since it may open the door a crack for a workingclass attack on the status quo. Hence the bourgeois politicians try to establish a sort of "moral disarmament" of all politicians, especially those with labor following. A truce in the class war is the required condition of a declaration of war abroad.

THE STRATEGY OF DISARMING LABOR

There are two main aspects to this strategy. On the one hand, the forces of labor are crushed, gagged, or persuaded to keep silent. The Dies Committee's new-found concern for the good names of William Green and John L. Lewis simply means that the Congressional reactionaries are beginning to see the trade union bureaucrats as, potentially, a means of easing the American workingclass into the coming war, just as they thus served in the last war. The iron hand concealed in the velvet glove of persuasion has already made itself felt. The day before the President wrote his little message to the Democratic women, he announced, in his decree of "limited emergency," that the Department of Justice is to take on a number of extra G-men to help combat "subversive activity."

There can be little doubt that, as the war crisis sharpens over here, the Administration intends to crack down more and more widely on any sort of labor and left-wing opposition to its war drive. "We must, in these critical times," said the President to the Democratic women, "maintain our old loyalties and the old ways of life upon which all of our happiness rests. To do this we must exercise a vigilant guardianship over our children. We must protect them from every evil force which would shake their faith in our fundamental institutions of democracy." It is pretty clear just what these "evil forces" are, and just what sort of "unity" the President wants to enforce on the nation.

The other arm of this "national unity" strategy is to turn the actual running of the government over more and more to the direct representatives of big business. In a capitalist society, "unity" means that the masses accept the status quo, which means in turn that a reformist government like the New Deal can increasingly dispense with the pretense of being independent of and even antagonistic to the ruling class.

WALL STREET MOVING INTO WASHINGTON

In my last article I described the beginning of the influx of Wall Street leaders into the government. In the last two or three days, the process has gone on faster than ever. The crucial post of assistant secretary of the Treasury in charge of customs and shipping (described as "the government's chief neutrality officer") has just been given to Basil Harris, vice-president of the U.S. Lines and a prominent shipowner. The War Resources Board has acquired a new member: John Hancock, a partner in the powerful Wall Street banking firm of Lehman Bros. Three more "dollar-a-year" men have been appointed to the Treasury: two conservative economists, and Walter W. Stewart, one-time aide to the late Ogden Mills and American adviser to the Bank of England.

Since the European war began, as I also noted last time, there has been a tendency for under-secretaries to shove aside the regular cabinet members. Another example is the fading out of Harry Hopkins as Secretary of Commerce and the rising star of his assistant, Edward J. Noble, a wealthy, energetic young manufacturer (Life Savers candy mints). In the words of Arthur Krock of the N. Y. Times: "As the war offers new problems and perplexities to commerce, and the blockade of Germany offers opportunities to regain South American trade in this country, Mr. Noble's function is steadily broadening and increasing."

The President's cabinet has been expanded to meet the crisis. From now on, three new men will take part in all cabinet meetings—though none of them is of cabinet rank. One is John Carmody, the mildly liberal head of the Federal Works Agency. The second is Jesse Jones, head of the Federal Spending Agency, a professional banker and a Garner Democrat. The third is none other than Paul V. McNutt, the semi-fascist Indiana politician whose appointment to the post of Social Security Administrator so shocked the President's liberal supporters a month ago. McNutt is evidently becoming one of the inner circle of Presidential advisers.

And what has happened to the bright young liberals who used to have the President's ear? What has become of Jerome Frank? Of Tommy Corcoran and Ben Cohen? Of Mordecai Ezekiel and David Cushman Coyle and Leon Henderson? The outbreak of war seems to have snuffed out their flame overnight. As Stephen Early, the President's confidential secretary, put it the other day, when reporters asked him what had become of the "Brains Trust"—"That's all out the window now."

Socialist Appeal
116 University Place
New York City.

I would like to get better acquainted with your paper. The Socialist Appeal. Please send me sample copies for the next few weeks.

Name

Address

City

(Continued in Next Issue)