

THE NEGRO QUESTION

By J. R. JOHNSON

The Negro and the War

It should now be clear to every Negro that the Communist Party is today as great a deceiver of the Negro people as the Republican and Democratic Parties. There was a time when the Communists and Soviet Russia were the greatest leaders of the poor and oppressed in every country including the Negroes. They used to call upon all the workers and peasants to fight against imperialists and capitalists everywhere, above all in a war. But these days are over and they have been over for many years.

Stalin sold oil to Italy all during the martyrdom of Ethiopia. That was proof enough for any Negro. Since that time Stalin and the Stalinists have been encouraging Negroes and all workers to fight for the British and French democracies against Hitler and Mussolini; that is to say, with one gang of bandits against another gang. And after encouraging workers to do this for years, Stalin suddenly turns and signs the Stalin-Hitler pact. Thus he encourages the fascists and throws the workers in every country into confusion and dismay. Unlike Roosevelt, the Communists at one time used to put forward a policy of militant struggle for Negroes. Precisely for this reason, they are the most dangerous enemies of the Negroes in this attempt of the rich to shove them into the war. Why do they do it?

Revolutionists No Longer Rule Russia

They do it because revolutionists like Lenin and Trotsky no longer rule Russia. Stalin and millions of officials, engineers, trade-union bureaucrats and others, now have the country in their grip. They live easy lives with great power and privileges. They oppress the Russian people, they murder all the old revolutionists like Zinoviev and Kamenev in frame-up trials, they have tried several times and are still trying to murder Trotsky, the last of the great revolutionists. They do not want revolution anywhere. Bureaucrats never do. They want to prevent the revolution, for revolutions will not only overthrow Hitler, Chamberlain and Roosevelt, but will give the Russian workers a chance to overthrow Stalin.

Therefore Stalin and his army of bureaucrats give money to the Communist parties in the various countries, and these parties no longer lead militant struggles as in the old days, but try to fool the workers, white and black, and keep them subordinate to Roosevelt, Chamberlain, and Daladier. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Their policy is to support the democracies in a war for civilization. And this, every Negro knows from his own experience, would be a damnable treachery and betrayal. Any one, parson or president, black or white, who encourages Negroes to shed their blood for this so-called "democracy" is a damnable traitor and betrayer.

What Happened to Negroes in 1917

Some people, however, including the Communist party, state that there is a possibility of Negroes gaining their rights and participating freely in American life, if they show that they are willing to die for democracy. Let us look back at the last war. They said then that the war was being fought for democracy, was being fought to make the world a better place than it had been before. Also, and this is what is important, many Negro leaders told the Negroes to support the war wholeheartedly. By showing themselves good citizens, they would win the sympathy of the whites and gain all the things of which they had been deprived. That is what was said but how did the rulers of their country actually treat the Negro?

First of all, they took many more Negroes than they should have taken. Out of every hundred persons in the population, ten were Negroes so that, roughly, out of every hundred soldiers, ten should have been Negroes. More than that, the Negroes are the worst paid, live in the worst houses, in the worst localities, get the worst food and the poorest medical attendance. Thus, taking the Negro population as a whole, the number of persons fit for military service should have been proportionately less than the number of whites. This through no fault of the Negroes, but through the lives and conditions to which they are condemned. So that instead of ten out of every hundred of the soldiers being Negroes, we could reasonably expect that there should have been about seven or eight. But instead of some number like seven or eight per hundred there were more than ten. So that this American democracy seized the opportunity to kill off as many Negroes as possible as a means of helping democracy solve the Negro problem.

Soldiers—But Jim-Crowed

The war was a war for democracy, but the Negroes were segregated. There was not a single regiment consisting of white and Negro soldiers mixed. American democracy did not want to have even American colored officers, and it took a hard fight to have a few hundred. When they did agree, they trained Negroes as officers in a special camp of their own. And these men were informed by the State Department that when they visited the South, they should not wear their uniforms. Democracy was sending the Negro to fight for democracy, but could not bear the sight of him in the officer's uniform of democracy.

The old lynch spirit continued. The Negroes were beaten up in the camps, they were stoned and jeered as they marched along the streets. When they were on leave and attempted to enter cafes and restaurants frequented by white people, they were driven out in many places.

When they went to France, the discrimination continued. American democracy forced most of the black soldiers to be common laborers. Of the 200,000 Negroes who went to France, some 160,000 were used as servants and in labor battalions. Even when fighting democracy, the Negro was kept in his place. Negroes were made to build roads, wash

Patriotism Puts Blight On Finnish Movement

By TAUNO VUORI

The recent tour through the Finnish sections of this country by Mr. Hjalmar Procope, Finnish Minister to the United States, became the occasion for a display of the complete degeneration of the leadership of what was once the revolutionary movement among the Finns of America.

The Social-Democratic Finnish Federation long ago forgot whatever Marxism its leaders ever knew, so it was no surprise to see the Social-Democratic paper, *Raivaaja*, going into fits of patriotic joy about Procope, his capitalist government, the traditions of Finland, the great virtues of the Finnish settlers in Delaware, etc., etc. These folk are old hands at the game of worshipping at the altar of middle-class nationalism. Stalinists hail white guards.

The attitude of the Communist Party, expressed in the pages of *Eteenpain*, organ of their Finnish Workers Federation, is revoltingly identical. Their only criticism of the tour of this representative of the White Guard government of Finland, the government that drowned the Finnish Soviets in blood, the government that still today keeps Antikainen, leader of their own party, in jail, appeared in their paper on August 19. They protest, (and this is one for the books, a real gem!) yes, these "Communists" protest—because they weren't invited to a party for Procope in Boston! In an article bristling with outraged nationalism they denounce the Boston vice-consul who overlooked them in favor of his friends, "of whom but one-half

clothes, cook food, clean up camps and trenches and clean latrines, though they had enlisted as soldiers of the line.

Far from practicing any sort of democracy to Negroes, the American commanders did their best to make the French maltreat the Negroes. The French people are not as prejudiced as one would expect from their treatment of natives in Africa, and great numbers of French people in France do not differentiate at all in any way between Negroes and whites. But when the American officers saw this and the friendly way in which Negro soldiers were being welcomed both by French men and women, they issued a military order, Order No. 40, instructing Negroes not even to speak to French women. For this offense against democracy, many Negroes were arrested, though the French people, men and women, had made no complaint.

The American officers, in this war for democracy, wrote a special document to the French commanding staff, telling them that Negroes were a low and degenerate race, that they could not be trusted in the company of white people, that although some Negroes were officers, the French officers should have nothing to do with them, except in matters relating strictly to fighting. The French, said this American order, should not eat with Negroes, nor even shake hands, and above all, they wanted the French to use their influence to keep the white women who worked in or near the camp from forming any associations with Negroes.

This was the way in which the American ruling class fought side by side with Negroes in the great war for democracy.

Negro Bravery—And the Reward

The Negroes, believing that by fighting bravely and showing that they were men as good as any other, they would gain freedom from their oppression, performed feats of distinguished bravery. Of all the American soldiers in France a Negro was the first to win the Croix de Guerre (War Cross), and one Negro regiment, the 8th Illinois, received more decorations than any other regiment in France. Another American Negro regiment stayed a longer spell in the trenches than any other regiment in the Allied forces. No one after that could say that Negroes were inferior. They had stood the stern test of modern war and came out with a great record.

What happened to the Negroes, after this fine showing, should be branded on the forehead of any so-called Negro leader who tries to thrust them again into war. For as soon as the war was over, there was such a desperate series of race riots in America as had not been seen for many years. In Washington, in Chicago, white mobs inspired and encouraged by American employers and American capitalist police, shot down Negroes, many of whom had lost relations in the great war for democracy. The Southern whites were so anxious to put the Negro back in his place that they lynched Negroes who dared to wear the uniform of a private. The great war for democracy and the bravery and the sacrifices for democracy of the Negro people ended with thousands of them having to fight desperately, not for democracy, but for their lives in "democratic" America.

Now let Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt and Earl Browder and James Ford and some so-called Negro leader, stand up and tell Negroes that the present war is another war for democracy and that they must go again to fight in it.

(Continued in Next Issue)

You Can Aid the Fight Against War by Signing Nominating Petitions for SWP Candidates

All citizens resident in New York who sympathize with the campaign of the Socialist Workers Party to place a candidate in the Bronx and one in Manhattan on the ballot for the Councilmanic Elections are asked to sign a nominating petition immediately.

Drop in at headquarters, 116 University Place, N.Y.C., or at the headquarters of the nearest branch to place your name on a petition. If you have friends who are registered voters too and who will sign the petition, bring them with you or give us their names and we will have a canvasser call upon them.

The circulation of a petition for signatures among your shopmates, if you are in a position to do so, will give the campaign a big boost.

Absolutely no obligation is entailed in signing. Without any commitment on your part, by signing a petition, you give the only anti-war party in the United States a chance to fight against the second world war from the vantage point of the ballot.

We need your help now as never before in placing our anti-war, anti-fascist candidates on the ballot for the coming election.

were Finns" (tsk, tsk), but they make sure only to attack the small fry vice-consul, while in the same article they speak of Procope himself as the "diplomatic and democratic envoy."

Since even the Finnish "Little Brothers," Paasikivi and Co., can feel the questioning attitude developing among many of the Finns, especially the younger, English-speaking ones, they are now conducting a drive to cut out from the youth section of their paper all this "political bunk" that you can find in all the regular (i.e., capitalist) papers, as one inspired correspondent actually put it. But in this country and in Canada the Fourth Internationalists are beginning to spread their influence among the thinking Finns. This development is being quickened by the stories that are reaching here by letter and word of mouth of the rotten conditions of the Finns in Soviet Karelia, where the imported Russian Stalinist bureaucrats are cracking down, in Ukraine, and even trying to stop the teaching of Finnish.

PACKINGHOUSE WORKERS SHOW LEADERSHIP COURSE OF ACTION

Victory Lies in Union Militancy, Not in Polite Committee Negotiations

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than a whole carload of beautifully adorned appeals.

Action Got Results

Here are some of the most outstanding examples from various parts of the country: A few weeks ago the Armour superintendent fired 13 shop stewards from the Chicago main plant because they had left the assembly line to demand a grievance hearing on wage adjustments. The same evening a meeting of 650 shop stewards elected a strike strategy committee and ordered it—merely authorized—to call a strike immediately unless the 13 were reinstated. Results followed quickly. The company yielded. While Armour officials were permitted to indulge in a little empty face saving by declaring that the punishment—firing—had been too severe, the thirteen were reinstated.

At the Denver Armour plant workers similarly made demands for grievance adjustments during working hours. The plant manager fired the protesters. But he quickly agreed to complete reinstatement when confronted with the threat of an immediate strike.

Chicago Tie-Up

And now just a few days ago 2,700 workers in the killing department at the main Armour plant of the Chicago stockyards tied up the production line for a hour in protest against the increased speed-up. (Elimination of the speed-up is now the major demand of workers in every yard in the country.) Yet, startling as it may seem, a statement issued by the plant superintendent said that: "union leaders disclaimed having planned the stoppage and termed them runaways."

The same day 2,400 men in the John Morrill and Co. plant at Ottumwa, Iowa, went on strike in protest against the firing of four workers prominent in the organizing activities of the PWOC. This is the largest individual packing plant in the country.

Leaders Back Down

In Washington, however, the union delegation started out by making an important concession to Armour and Co. It withdrew its previous demand for a single nation-wide wage agreement covering all of the company's plants. It declared the union was willing to negotiate with the packing firm on a

F. D. R. Sheds Hypocritical Mask In Persecuting Minneapolis WPA Strikers, Says Plentywood Union

(Special to the Socialist Appeal)

PLENTYWOOD, Montana—At a special meeting of Federal Labor Union No. 21760, AFL, called to discuss the persecution of WPA workers in general and WPA workers of Minneapolis in particular, the following resolution was forwarded to President Roosevelt, Attorney General Frank Murphy, Col. F. C. Harrington and Governor Staasen of Minnesota:

"Whereas, it has taken approximately 75 months for President Roosevelt to shed the mask of hypocrisy and disclose the fact that like all capitalist spokesmen he is a bitter enemy of labor and a regular pal of the 'Economic Royalists' whom he previously pretended to de-

nounce as forces inimical to the welfare of the people, and "Whereas, he has further shown his contempt for the sufferings of the great masses of unemployed in so many ways, viz. reduction of relief budget, appropriation of billions of dollars for the building of a huge war machine, depriving WPA workers of making a very poor living by ordering hundreds of thousands dropped from the WPA pay roll, the attempted slashing of prevailing wages by the institution of a slave standard of wages, and lastly, his dragging from some hitherto undiscovered hole known only to himself the scab-herding pronouncement: 'You can't strike against the government,' and

"Whereas, he has directed the legal machinery of the nation against workers who have challenged his right to dictatorial power by insisting on their right to maintain a decent wage whether paid out by the government or through the offices of his industrial cohorts, and

"Whereas, FBI agents, under the direction of Attorney General Frank Murphy, who takes his orders from President Roosevelt, are known to have acted as agents-provocateur to draw the brutality of the police on the heads of workers defending their rights to existence, and

"Whereas, Deputy United States Marshals, gloating in the opportunity afforded them to persecute and humiliate WPA workers in Minneapolis, have dramatically raided the homes of workers under indictment during the hours of the night in company with photographers of the capitalist press who publish pictures of those workers

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JUDAS GOAT

"We liberals have the choice between the battlefield and the concentration camp, and we shall choose the battlefield. We prefer to die on our feet rather than to live on our knees."

—Harold J. Laski, noted liberal historian, in an address to students of the U. of Wisconsin, April 7, 1939.

have enrolled under its banner a total of 84,000 out of the 129,000 organizable workers in the packing industry. It is true that these figures are being disputed by the meat packers; that is to be expected. But there need be no doubt that union organization is making gains in the stockyards right along.

Time and again the workers have taken action at the drop of a hat, using the strike weapon as a means of redressing their grievances. On the other hand, as Van Bittner announced, the leadership seeks to prevent a strike. It attempts to start the battle by giving heavy concessions to make a plea for negotiations become more palatable. Continuing this, what will happen to the demands of the workers? Are not labor organizations built for the fight to defend the workers' interests? An organization drive which does not voice clearly and precisely the demands of the workers is foredoomed to failure; and a leadership which does not prepare for struggle in defense of these demands is not worthy of a militant union. The workers have already set the example for union policy.

Workers Have Set Example The PWOC now claims to

in handcuffs whose only crime consists of fighting for a right to exist, while corrupt judges and bankers, who have disgraced and plundered the country are treated with servile courtesy, and

"Whereas, the full strength of Governor Staasen of Minnesota was thrown into the scale of oppression against the laboring class of Minneapolis in consonance with Roosevelt's wishes, now therefore

"Be It Resolved, that in accordance with our constitutional rights we condemn each and every act of President Roosevelt and his underlings, including Attorney General Murphy and Col. F. C. Harrington, etc., and call on labor to unite in opposition to the 'easy' introduction of Hitlerism in this nation and pledge our fullest support to the victims of Roosevelt oppression in Minneapolis."

President, A. N. Wankel

SWP MEETINGS PROVE MASSES AGAINST WAR

By B. J. WIDICK

National Labor Secretary The deeply rooted anti-war sentiment of the masses of people reflected itself in the mass meetings on the war crisis and the Stalin-Hitler Pact which I addressed in the Middle West last week.

It was an inspiration to see the many new faces at the mass meetings in Akron, Youngstown and Cleveland.

Two leading Stalinists attended the Akron meeting, and asked sympathetic questions. In Youngstown a new group of workers listened attentively when Roosevelt's war aims at their expense were exposed.

New headquarters in Cleveland furnished a good background for delivering an anti-war talk to the audience of nearly 100 people. Roosevelt's emergency proclamation had been headlined in every newspaper just before that meeting and the impact of this event could be felt among the people.

"What can we do to stop war? To keep America out of war? To keep from going to Europe to fight?" These questions were paramount in everyone's mind as radio bulletin after bulletin brought the latest moves in the imperialist war.

Party Mobilizing Although the meetings were arranged at very quick notice, the fine work done by the branches was a significant indication of how the party ranks are determined to fight unceasingly against war.

Of course, there was the moment of shock felt by everyone when the bloody spectacle of mass murder, destruction, and pestilence unfolded before the world. The ghastly nightmare had become the reality.

Perhaps the bitterest comments against war came from the women in the audiences. Women whose husbands or sons face the prospect of death while Wall Street sucks the profit out of their blood.

Significantly, while many asked questions on various aspects of the Socialist Workers Party program, one fact was accepted by all—the Socialist Workers Party is the only anti-war Party in America.

NOW

more timely than ever is the literature of the Socialist Workers Party for those who have left the Communist Party and for those who desire to understand the nature of the present imperialist conflict.

The following books and pamphlets should be obtained as soon as possible from the

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