

THE NEGRO QUESTION

By J. R. JOHNSON

The Negro and the War

The Socialist Workers Party says to the Negroes: "After your experiences in America during the last hundred years, after your experiences during the last war and after it, you would be making the greatest mistake of your lives if you were to give any support to the coming war."

If Negroes supported the war, Franklin Roosevelt, Jack Garner, Cotton Ed Smith, Senator Bilbo and all that bunch in the Democratic Party would be able to sit back and say, "We give them the nastiest jobs, we pay them the lowest wages, millions of them are unemployed. Even in Washington here, the Federal capitol, we kick them out of restaurants and theatres. We lynch them whenever we think that they should be reminded of where they belong. We treated them like dogs in the last war. We lynched them after they came back. And now, when we want them to do some more dirty work for us, we just snap our fingers and whistle, and look at them! They come running to do anything we want them to do! We have only to make a few promises and they are ready to be fooled again. Truly these Negroes are the most ignorant, backward and slave-like people in the world, and deserving of no more consideration than the scraps we throw to them."

But no, large masses of Negroes have no wish to support this war. Their memories of the last war and the great deception and fraud which were practiced on them are too vivid in their minds.

So bitter was their disappointment after the last war, that millions of Negroes supported Marcus Garvey. They were ready to follow even the fantastic, impossible scheme of going back to Africa rather than to continue to live in the American democracy for which so many thousands of them had suffered and died.

What Is the Negro to Do?

What then is the Negro to do? Before we act we must understand the forces acting with us and the forces against us. Many Negroes in America feel that they would be ready to shed their blood and take any steps to break the chains which bind them. Yet they feel also that their numbers are too few. They think that they would be overwhelmed by the number of the whites, their power, their authority, and their control of the means of destruction.

That, however, is a short-sighted view. Today we are dealing with an international war, and the problem is an international one.

Let us look at the last war. That also was an international war. It was fought in Europe, in Asia, and in Africa. The British armed the black man in Africa. The French armed nearly half a million Negro soldiers to fight for them. These fought not only in Africa, but in Europe. There was a regiment of West Indian Negroes. Now today, the millions of Negroes all over the world are more politically conscious, more bitter against oppression and humiliation than they were in 1914. They have not only had the experience of the last war. They have suffered from the effects of the crisis. They have seen the rape of Ethiopia, and they know that in Africa, for instance, whether they are ruled by Italian Fascists or British "democracy," their situation is the same. Their lands are stolen, their wages are often ten cents a day. They are driven away to live in segregated areas, where at night they are kept jailed as if they had committed a crime by being born with a black skin. They are thinking the same things that the Negroes in America are thinking; only more fiercely because they have more cause. Many of them, particularly in the French and Italian colonies, have arms in their hands which they have learned how to use. Now that the war has begun, many more of them will be armed and trained in order to go and fight for their masters. But despite all the shouting about democracy by James Ford, the great millions in Africa only need leadership to use their guns, not for British or French democracy, but for their own independence, for a free Africa, liberated from all sorts of imperialist domination, liberated not only from Fascist Italy and Germany, but also from those democratic bandits, Britain, France, and Belgium. They outnumber by many millions the whites who keep them in subjection today. And these whites, in the course of a war, will have to arm more and more of these despised and oppressed blacks. The Africans are only waiting for the opportunity and for that powerful organization which will give them a policy and leadership. In a war fought on an international scale, the Negroes in America will have the Negroes in Africa as their allies. American Negro soldiers who may be forced by conscription to go to France to fight, will be certain to meet hundreds of thousands of African soldiers there.

An Alliance of the Millions

Contact can be made and plans made for the struggle on an international scale. But there are other allies as well—millions. For two hundred and fifty years, the British have been squeezing the lives out of the millions of people in India. There are well over three hundred and fifty million people in India today, and the large majority of them are just awaiting their chance to get arms in their hands, drive the British imperialists into the sea, and make their country their own again. The same in Burma, in Ceylon, and in Indo-China. So that from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, you have over five hundred million people, oppressed colonials, who are thinking in terms of freedom from the domination of imperialism. Imagine the enormous power which these colonials can exert for their own emancipation in the tremendous crisis which will soon be loosed upon all peoples in the world.

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

Have Hitler and Stalin Agreed to Partition Poland?

New York Councilmanic Candidates of SWP Charge Subway Swindle

(Continued from Page 1)

In excess of \$450,000,000! In 1894, through their representatives in City Hall, a group of Wall Street sharks engineered a notorious deal called the "Dual Contracts," through which they set up two holding companies, the Interborough Rapid Transit Company and the Brooklyn Manhattan Transit Company for the purpose of operating the two city-owned subway and elevated lines for a period of 75 years.

Guaranteed Profit
Upon the signing of the "Dual Contracts" the city sank \$326,000,000 into the lines for their development and extension; the Wall Street sharks put up only \$287,000,000. The "Dual Contracts" guaranteed the Wall Street sharks a minimum profit of \$10,000,000 a year; that is, a guaranteed minimum profit for the period from 1894 to 1939 of \$450,000,000—the actual profits being far greater.

During this same period under the terms of the "Dual Contracts," the city, which owns the lines, sustained a loss of \$325,500,000 which was made up through taxes wrung from the pockets of the workers of New York City.

Enormous Take
From 1894 until the first world-wide slaughter ended in 1918, the take of the Wall Street sharks through their lease on the city-owned lines was enormous. But with the post-war period when operating costs rose and it became necessary to begin replacement of antiquated equipment, profits dropped until they fell below what Wall Street could obtain from investment in other fields.

Immediately Wall Street launched a drive to raise the five-cent fare. But the "Dual Contracts" carried a clause which reads: "the rate of fare shall be five cents but no more." Even the Supreme

All this seems very commonplace and obvious. Millions of Negroes and other colonials, in Africa, in the West Indies, and India think of these things in a vague way. They understand them the moment they are placed clearly before them. Why is it, then, that so few people are saying all this in public speeches and writing it? Why is it that a pamphlet of this kind is published only by the Socialist Workers Party? The reason is very important and is fundamental to an understanding of the political situation not only as it is today, but as it will be tomorrow.

Poor as the majority of Negroes are, and despised and humiliated as all of them are, in every community, particularly in America, there is a small number of Negroes who have better jobs than the others, who have managed to climb onto a little ledge, a little higher than the rest of their fellow-Negroes. These are, in America, for instance, a few doctors, a few people who do well in business, and a few racketeers—Numbers kings, and so on. They are thrown out of the restaurants, excluded from the theatres, Jim-Crowed and discriminated against as all Negroes are. They will complain, and pass resolutions, and sometimes will carry a case to the courts. But because they get something between thirty and fifty dollars a week, they are prepared to do anything that the American ruling class really wants them to do. They are Negroes, and they are forced to live with the large masses of Negroes. But in reality, they are much closer to the American ruling class than they are to the great millions of their own people. It is the same thing in every other community, even in the South. The large majority of Negroes live in dirt, in poverty, are subjected to all sorts of humiliation, and a few are allowed special privileges, a few dollars more per week, etc. Whenever something serious turns up, these may make a protest and demand a little more for themselves, but they are always prepared to do what the American ruling class wants the American Negroes to do. It is so in America, it is so in Africa, it is so in the West Indies, and you have a similar situation in India, Burma, Ceylon.

Uncle Tom Negroes

Now these traitors are the people who have the best chances, who have the opportunity to get sometimes quite a good education. They run newspapers and magazines. They get subscriptions from rich white men. They are enabled to borrow from white banks. These lick-spittles, Uncle Tom Negroes, constantly speak in the name of the Negro people or in the name of Africans, when in reality, they are only saying what the imperialists want them to say. If they didn't, they would be thrown out of their jobs, and lose their little privileges and benefits. And so for the sake of the crumbs and bones that they get from the big table, they are quite prepared to sacrifice the interests of the majority of Negroes. They are the most dangerous people. It is they who deceive the Negroes every time. They, despite their black skin, are no more than agents of the white imperialists. They are not saying much now, but when the time comes, they are going to shout for "democracy" as loudly as the American ruling class. Some of them are going to get jobs in the government service. A few of them are going to be given positions a little higher than the ones they have at present. Some of them will be allowed to train as officers. This one here will be made a major, the other one there will be made a colonel. These appointments and others will fill the pages of the imperialist press and the Negro press. Meetings will be held at which these Negro traitors will speak and agitate and do their best to bluff the Negro people to take part in a war and be deceived and maltreated just as they were in the last war for democracy. The bait that they will dangle will be promises of a better world. They will say that after the war, things will be different. We know better than that. So that the first preliminary step for action is to be ready to condemn and drive out of the Negro ranks those traitors who sell their birthright for a mess of pottage. Whether they are in America, in Africa, or in India, they are traitors. Whoever tries to drag Negroes into a war for "democracy" is a traitor and a Judas. They will come preaching about unity. But the workers and farmers want no unity with them. What we must struggle for is the unity of the masses.

(Continued in Next Issue)

What Your Dollar Can Do

A dollar puts a Socialist Appeal salesman on an important street corner for one day.
Five dollars permits free distribution of two hundred Socialist Appeals.
Ten dollars puts a full-time field organizer to work for one week in the anti-war campaign.

Anti-War Campaign Committee
Socialist Workers Party
116 University Place, N.Y.C.

Dear Friends:

I enclose as a contribution to the anti-war work of the Socialist Workers Party.

Name
Address

LEGIONNAIRES BREAK UP SWP ANTI-WAR MEET

(Special to the Socialist Appeal)

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 14—A mob of Jewish war veterans, some of them armed with black some of them armed with black anti-war meeting of the SWP held at 31st and Norris Sts.

In the scuffle that took place, Sid Kaye, a party member, was injured and arrested. Later the magistrate held Kaye for a further hearing on September 18th under \$1000 bail.

The vigilantes had a carefully arranged plan to break up the meeting. They had announced the week previous that they were not going to allow any "ism" to hold any meeting against war.

Despite the fact that a detective from the radical squad, who has been following all street meetings of the SWP, was present, and saw that the attack and provocation was started by the legionnaires, he did nothing to protect the SWP, which not only had a permit for the meeting, but who were also greatly outnumbered by the hoodlums.

The magistrate discharged all the veterans and held only Kaye, stating that he was determined to stamp out all "Un-American activities."

The Philadelphia local is going to have a mass distribution of a leaflet in the neighborhood exposing the vigilantism of the legionnaires, and asking the workers to come out and protect the future anti-war meetings that the Party is going to hold in the neighborhood.

Several workers did join in the attempt to beat off the veterans but they were also outnumbered. Efforts are being made to contact these militants.

Another meeting will be held at the same corner in the very near future.

Release Twenty-five Minneapolis WPA Prisoners on Bail

(Continued from Page 1)

they must support; all are long-time residents of Minneapolis. Despite these circumstances, bail for each woman was set at \$2,000; a few got off with \$1,500. Of course neither the prisoners nor the WPA Defense Committee had the bail available and the women were jailed.

Fifteen other women had been arrested earlier but were released on their own recognizance.

Plan Defense

Obviously the court's resumption of its policy of demanding excessive bail is being dictated by the national administration and the reaction in Minnesota, and is an attempt to break the morale of the labor movement and confront it with a seemingly hopeless task.

But Murphy and Roosevelt and Stassen don't yet understand the temper of the organized labor movement in this section. The WPA Defense Committee will of course take up the task of raising bail for those newly arrested, and is already laying the plans for the legal defense of the strikers.

The WPA Defense Committee was heartened by a resolution passed by the Minnesota State Federation of Labor convention Wednesday, calling upon all unions in the state to come to the aid of the Defense Committee and its fund.

Twenty-five Released

The 25 men released yesterday on bond were Max Geldman, Ed Palmquist, Leslie Wachter, Arnold Mullen, George Palmquist, Victor Nicholas, Charles Grider, Oscar Shoenfeld, Walter Russell, Ralph Core, Glenn Smith,

Events Indicate That Stalin Intends to Take Polish Ukraine

(Continued from Page 1)

front, and that is not indicated at the present moment. It is a prospect, something for the near or distant future.

Stalin Seeks a Pretext

Far more likely is that, by agreement with Hitler or not, Stalin is planning to bring under his rule the Ukrainian and White Russian territories and populations now under Polish domination. The inspired reports in the Moscow press about "frontier incidents" and "minority uprisings" are unmistakably calculated to create a pretext for Stalin taking his share of the division of present-day Poland.

The "democratic" and social-democratic press is of course terribly indignant at the prospect of carving up "poor little Poland." They never managed to work up the same indignation when the arch-reactionary Polish militarists brutally seized the very same territories that are in question and established their brutal domination over the national populations inhabiting them. Nor were they so outraged when Poland, last year, helped Hitler in the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia.

Out of the Frying Pan Into the Fire

The working class, in any case, has no cause to shed tears over the prospect of the rotten ruling class of Poland losing control of their Ukrainian and White Russian subjects.

At the same time, however, the kind of "liberation" which is now the prospect of the former Polish minorities, is very much like being taken out of the frying pan and hurled into the fire. Life under Hitlerite rule or "protection" would be worse, if anything, than life under Polish rule for the Ukrainians or White Russians—to say nothing of the Jews who are suffering so horribly from the war.

Then is the choice to be the rule of the brutal and cynical Moscow bureaucracy? That seems, at the present writing, to be Stalin's sinister plan. The Bonaparte of the Kremlin appears to be planning to place his bureaucratic, militaristic yoke over the necks of the Ukrainian and White Russian peoples now in Poland. How much that would improve the lot of the latter, they already know. They know the situation and the sentiments of their fellow-nationals on the soil of the Soviet Union, who, in the Soviet republics of the Ukraine and White Russia, are so arrogantly terrorized by the Kremlin clique as to be reminded of the persecutions they suffered in the days of Czar Nicholas the Bloody. They know that their fellow-nationals in the Soviet Union aspire to liberation from that clique, for independence and separation which alone is the road to the revolutionary freedom and unity of the Ukrainian and White Russian masses now dispersed over three or four of Europe's eastern countries.

For a Free, Independent Soviet Ukraine

Months ago, in an article in these pages, Leon Trotsky foresaw how acute the Ukrainian question was sure to become. The choices of the Ukrainian—and the White Russian—peoples are not confined to domination by the Polish militarists, by Hitler's fascists or by Stalin's G.P.U. There is another choice! A free, independent, united Soviet Ukraine—fortress of defense from the attacks of the enemy in Berlin, Warsaw or the Kremlin.

Stalin's seizure of the Polish Ukraine would be an attempt to crush the movement for a united Soviet Ukraine under his iron heel, with the aid, in all likelihood, of Hitler. Here as everywhere else, the interests of the Stalinist oligarchy are in diametrical opposition to the interests of the workers and oppressed peoples of all countries.

OCTOBER NEW INTERNATIONAL TO BE EXCEPTIONALLY GOOD

The management of The New International announces an unusually splendid October number, which will be out in a week.

The leading article is devoted to the world situation today. It is, "A Panoramic Survey of the Second World War," and concerns itself with the political, economic and social aspects which finally culminated in the outbreak of war in Europe. The Hitler-Stalin Pact, the role of American imperialism, prospects for early American participation in the war, and the attitude and policy of the labor and revolutionary movement are analyzed.

Trotsky on France
A second feature, held over from the previous number, is by Leon Trotsky, entitled, "On the French Political Situation."

The issue of a War Referendum by the people is again before Congress and is being widely discussed by the masses in this country. Harold Draper reviews this question in an article entitled, "Friends of the War Referendum."

Sherman Stanley contributes an article, "British Imperialism in India."

Dwight Macdonald's usual sparkling column, "Reading From Left to Right," will appear, and the first of a series of historical articles by George Novack on Negro Slavery in America.

Other interesting features complete what will unquestionably be among the banner issues of The New International.

The management wishes to announce that increased orders must be placed in advance. In view of the critical situation of The New International at this time, agents and readers of the magazine are requested to give their assistance, by paying on bundle accounts at once and by sending in their subscriptions to:

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL
116 University Place
New York, N. Y.

Behind the Lines

(Continued from Page 1)

with the gaping bloody wounds of Stalin's purge. In its desperate effort to preserve itself, Stalin's ruling clique has succeeded only in enormously weakening the Soviet Union.

That is why the adventures into which the war is forcing it must be a source of the most agonizing anxiety to the Kremlin gang. Hitler's drive into eastern Europe will at least have the effect—even if only temporarily—of reinforcing his ability to prosecute the war against his great rivals in the West. Any move by Stalin into this bloody cockpit will only add to his weakness, his difficulties, and his fears. Stalin knows any involvement will hasten his own doom and yet he cannot avoid becoming involved. His only hope is to be able to hang on until his enemies, including Hitler, begin to grow as weak as he already knows himself to be.

Join the Socialist Workers Party