

THE NEGRO QUESTION

By J. R. JOHNSON

The Negro and the War

IX

But suppose the war does begin. What do we do then? WE CARRY ON THE STRUGGLE RELENTLESSLY THAN BEFORE. For capitalism here in America will still be the chief enemy. Naturally we shall not be able to fight in the same open manner as before. We will not be able for instance, to hold an anti-war meeting. But in a factory some militant workers may propose a strike against wage-cuts or oppressive conditions.

There will be traitors who will join the government and capitalists in saying: "Now that there is a war we must sacrifice for victory." But all true fighters against the war will refuse to accept this treacherous advice and will fight as bitterly for the rights of the workers during the war as before it. That is the way to fight against war.

Many Ways to Fight War

There are many other ways which we cannot discuss in detail here. For instance, the Negroes can form small groups who will discuss the anti-war struggle, distribute leaflets against the war among themselves and their fellow workers and friends, and cooperate with all others who are doing the same important work. Some cowards will say that this is against the law. Of course it is against the law. But it is the capitalists who make the law. And he is a great fool who obeys the capitalist law when he realizes the necessity of fighting against capitalism.

The result of all this will be, that when the great bulk of the people, black and white, begin to feel the strain of the war and begin to revolt against it, they will have leaders and people who are well prepared. They will have organizations ready to lead the great masses in their assault against the chief enemy, the enemy who is at home.

The workers and farmers, white and black, must never forget this important fact. The statesmen and the politicians did not stop the last war. It was the workers of Russia who brought Russia out, by the great revolution of October, 1917. And in November, 1918, it was the workers of Germany who chased the Kaiser and his government out of the country and brought the war to an end. That is what we have to aim at. Fighting against the capitalists to prevent them going into war, and if we fail to stop them, carrying on the fight to bring the war to a close as quickly as possible. And not only bring it to a close, but sweep away capitalism altogether if we get the chance, and so prevent this mass slaughter which is inseparable from the cursed capitalist system.

If America is dragged into the war, during the early days the struggle against war will be difficult. It will seem hopeless. But in Germany, in December 1914, only one man, Karl Liebknecht, raised his voice against the war. Four years after, the great masses in Germany were following the advice of Liebknecht and bringing the war to a close by dealing with the enemy at home. At the beginning those who oppose may be few, but the masses will come to us in time as they came to Liebknecht. The mistake that the German workers made in 1918 was to change one capitalist government for another capitalist government, instead of sweeping away capitalism and establishing a workers' government instead.

We Are International

In all this difficult work, the Negroes of America must fake the lead. They have most to win. Similar work is going on in every country at the present time, though naturally the capitalist press does not publish it. The Socialist Workers Party has brother parties in England, in France, in Poland, in India, in Africa, in China, all over the world who are carrying on this work. We recognize that this is an international struggle and therefore, our organization is international in scope.

Lenin and Trotsky formed the Third International to assist the workers, particularly in crises of this kind.

But today Stalin has the Third International working only to serve him in the bargains that he makes with imperialist governments like Hitler. One day the Stalinists say to fight for democracy. That is because Stalin wanted an alliance with Britain. When Stalin joins with Hitler, the Stalinists begin to say that the war is not a war for democracy any longer, that it is a war between imperialist countries. That may sound alright but if Stalin changes tomorrow, they will change again. They are not leaders of the working class but agents of Stalin. They are particularly dangerous because they use revolutionary words and have a lot of money. That must be avoided like poison.

It is because of the treachery of the Third International that genuinely revolutionary workers everywhere have formed the Fourth International. Negroes who see the situation clearly should join this party. The workers can never succeed without a powerful and clear-thinking revolutionary party. But if a Negro does not feel that he wants to join a revolutionary party today, that does not prevent him from joining or from forming an organization of Negroes to fight against war. Such Negro organizations will work side by side with all other groups who are fighting against war in the only way this can be done, by fighting against capitalism.

Real Enemy Is at Home

Negro men and women in every country, in America, in the West Indies, in Africa; the Fourth International summons you to fight for your own liberation, for full social, political and economic rights in America, for the independence of Africa and the formation of Negro states in that continent so long oppressed. The enemy of your freedom and of your independence is capitalism. Do not support the capitalist war. Fight the capitalists in peace, and fight them

'Cash and Carry' Plan Speeds U. S. War Entry

(Continued from Page 1) may transport arms and airplanes to Canada under the act. And this is called a cash and carry neutrality measure!

The subterfuges employed by Roosevelt and his office boys in the Senate are made necessary by the existing overwhelming sentiment of the masses against involving the United States in the war. They must proceed under the slogans of keeping America out of war, for neutrality.

Roosevelt's Plan

Roosevelt expects that the adoption of the Pittman bill will lead to a big boom in industry engendered by large orders from Canada, England and France. That the available cash and restricted credits of the Allies will soon be used up, and that they will then ask for more extended credits. The alternative would then be a crisis in industry as a result of the cessation of orders from abroad or the extension of large-scale, long-term credits. Roosevelt feels confident that at such a moment the sentiment of the masses can be changed into support of the Allies, including American military intervention in the war to guarantee payment of the credits.

In the coming period there will be heated debates in Congress between the isolationist forces and the Administration supporters. Borah and his friends will oppose the lifting of the arms embargo. But they are unable to rally the people against the plans of Wall Street and their agents in Washington. They are for the defense of the system of capitalist imperialism, for increased armaments and for "continental defense." The pro-war forces know that the opposition of the isolationists will collapse like a house of cards if they succeed in dragging the U.S. into the war. They know that these gentlemen will be invaluable recruiting sergeants under such conditions.

A third force must intervene to stop Roosevelt's dastardly scheme: the organized might of the working class and genuinely anti-war elements of the country.

Begins Bronx Open-Air Speaking Tour



MAX SHACHTMAN

Leading Militants of Communist Party Resign to Join the S. W. P.

We who have been for many years active members of the Communist Party, after long and careful analysis, have come to the conclusion that the CP has abandoned the revolutionary positions based on Marx and Lenin. We, therefore, resigned from the CP on September 11. After an equally careful examination of the program of the Socialist Workers Party we feel satisfied that it is the only party adhering to the class struggle program of Marxism-Leninism. We therefore announce our agreement and support of the program of the Fourth International.

For the past few years we have witnessed the shameless and open support by the CP of the capitalist New Deal—the blanket endorsement of the Roosevelt strikebreaking policies that led to the sellout of hundreds of thousands of WPA workers who were ready for militant strike action. While the AFL members were on strike against wage cuts and the Woodrum Relief Bill signed by the President which called for the firing of 1,000,000 WPA workers—the Workers Alliance, through Herbert Benjamin, a member of the National Committee of the CP, sent a declaration to President Roosevelt in which he stated: "The Workers Alliance of America has a fixed policy with regard to

strikes and has not departed from this policy in this instance. We have not called any strike and are not now calling strikes of WPA workers." (Daily Worker, July 18, 1939). In our opinion, by this statement the CP, through the action of its responsible representatives in the Workers Alliance, stands condemned as a strikebreaker and a tool of the Roosevelt Administration. As far back as May 1937, we had an experience in the Yorkville section of the CP which served as an example—an eye-opener—of the sabotaging tactics with regard to strikes of the CP. We refer to the well-known sidewalk strike of 130 cigarmakers of the Auton-Bock Cigar Co., located in the Yorkville district. When the strike was brought to the attention of the Section Buro by one of us, the shop work director and the section organizer remarked that it involved only a few workers and therefore did not require discussion or action. For taking the initiative in mobilizing support for the strike and for reporting the attitude of the section organizer, one of us was framed by the N.Y. District Committee of the CP as a factionalist, removed as organizer of the Workers Alliance, and "deported" to a different section.

These policies which were a brake upon revolutionary action were explained by the CP as a necessity in order to facilitate the struggle against fascism. Actually, in practice the CP has been not merely passive but an active collaborator with the ruling class in paving the way toward fascism in the U.S. This can be seen by the action of the CP on February 20 when it ordered all its members and sympathizers to stay away from the counter-demonstration called by the Socialist Workers Party. By calling this counter-demonstration the SWP showed the correct way to struggle against fascism. The "democratic" LaGuardia police, while protecting Fritz Kuhn and his followers, brutally attacked the anti-fascists. This police brutality received the praise of the CP. The Daily Worker of February 22 last printed a statement from Mayor LaGuardia: "I think the police did a very splendid job. The meeting was held and that's that."

That the CP and the CI had no intention of fighting fascism or putting up a real struggle against war became clear with the signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact. We had always, and still do, recognize the right of the Soviet Union to make pacts with capitalist powers, including Hitler Germany. But we refuse to accept a Stalin-Hitler pact which means joint military actions and joint "communism" about how Stalin's troops will mop up what Hitler's troops have not yet finished. Above all we refuse to accept the latest turn in the policies of the American CP as a result of the pact. The American CP has suddenly come out for "neutrality" because it realizes that the Soviet Union is today allied with Nazi Germany. We refuse to belong to a party which bases its policies on the maneuvers of the Kremlin foreign office, instead of the legitimate interests of the world working class itself.

We came to realize that our place was no longer in the CP. We therefore took the first occasion to express our disagreement at a membership meeting. At that meeting the pact was hailed as a great victory for peace, as having strengthened the defense of the Soviet Union. In our criticism we pointed out that the pact encouraged Hitler to make war on Poland and was a guarantee from Stalin to supply Hitler with raw materials necessary to carry on the imperialist war. We also stated that defense of the Soviet Union is not guaranteed by a pact with Hitler or with the so-called democratic governments of Britain, France and the U.S. but by the international solidarity of the working class. By this we meant not defense of Stalin and his bureaucracy but defense of the workers state in the Soviet Union. The section organizer, the fuhrer of Yorkville, not having any convincing arguments in defense of the infamous Stalin-Hitler pact, indulged in the most contemptible slanders and cheap name-calling, such as "fascist scum." Only yesterday rumors of any pact between Germany and the Soviet Union were denounced as fascist lies. Today when the pact is a reality anyone who does not applaud is called fascist scum. This is Stalinist logic.

These tactics indicate the complete lack of democracy that exists in the CP. The party maintains its rule over the membership through a Tammany-like bureaucratic machine which is more and more being exposed to the honest members and sympathizers. To those honest and intelligent members who wish to emancipate the working class, we appeal to repudiate the CP and join the Fourth International to fight for Socialism.

SIDNEY LEROY SARAH RICE

WORKERS' FORUM

IN PRAISE OF THE APPEAL

To the Editor: After reading the September 13 issue of the Socialist Appeal, I believe your paper deserves praise for your stand against war. As a former member of the Communist Party, my respects to the Socialist Appeal for unmasking and exposing the Browners and the henchmen of slaughter-house Stalin here in America.

Browder and his stooges stand exposed before the masses of America as the Number One traitors to the American working class. I shall do everything in my power to unmask and expose these enemies of the toiling masses. It is the duty of every sincere rank and file

Communist to come out and openly denounce Stalin and his henchmen in America for what they really are.

The stooges of Browder in this part of the country remind me of a mud-turtle on dry land. They have pulled in their necks and are laying back like a snake in the grass. Stalin has sent them shadow-boxing but this time the sincere American workers will deliver the knock-out punch to the Browners and their type. As one who fought against the World War of 1914, my stand shall remain the same as ever and that is a firm stand against war and the war-mongers in this country—the Browners included.

F. L. Duluth, Minn.

MASS MEETING

Max Shachtman

Editor of the "Socialist Appeal" speaks on

WAR & THE STALIN-HITLER PACT

at the PARK PLAZA 1530 PITKIN AVENUE, BROOKLYN FRIDAY EVE.—OCTOBER 6th, at 8:00 P.M.

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still more in war. Do not join with one group of capitalists against another. Fight against both. The real enemy is at home.

In Britain, in France, in Germany, in India, in China, everywhere workers who do not see this today will see it tomorrow. The united workers and farmers of the world will oppose this bloody imperialist war to the bitter end. We will seek to build the new society, in which all men irrespective of color or race, will be able to work in security and peace, and with full enjoyment of the good things of the earth.

THE END

The Balance Sheet of Stalinist Bonapartism

J. G. WRIGHT

In January 1935, Leon Trotsky, analyzing the degeneration of the Stalin regime, wrote:

"A diplomatic retreat before the world bourgeoisie and before reformism; an economic retreat before the petty bourgeois tendencies within the country; a political offensive against the proletarian vanguard—this is the three-fold formula of the new chapter in the development of Stalinist Bonapartism."

This chapter, approximately from 1934 to August 1939, has come to a close, punctuated, so to speak, by the outbreak of war, which in its turn opens a new page not only in the degen-

eration of Stalinism but in the history of mankind.

In the light of the foregoing formula, I propose to draw a preliminary balance sheet.

PURGES CRIPPLE ECONOMIC LIFE

Little need be said of the Stalinist offensive against the proletarian vanguard, which unfolded in this period in a series of persecutions, frame-ups, and murders unmatched in the annals of history. The facts are still fresh in the minds of all. With the turn in diplomacy, the bureaucratic terror was immediately intensified. After the assassination of Kirov, the terror was unleashed, culminating in the Moscow Trials, the massacre of the generations of October at home, and assassinations abroad (murder of Ignace Reiss, Leon Sedov, R. Klement, thousands of militants in Spain, etc.)

Purge upon purge followed which beheaded the Red Army, and crippled every sphere of Soviet social, political and economic life. Those executed numbered tens of thousands; those jailed, hundreds of thousands, while not less than four million were herded into GPU barracks and concentration camps. Far from insuring the regime at home, this purge only added so much tinder for the explosive forces that have accumulated under the leaden lid of Bonapartist oppression.

On the world arena, Stalin's retreat led swiftly to a capitulation to the fascist wing of the world bourgeoisie (the Stalin-Hitler Alliance). It was preceded by a capitulation to the "democratic" wing of imperialism (the Franco-Soviet Pact, the Stalin-Laval Communiqué, the entry into the League of Nations, the defense of the Versailles Treaty, the policy of the People's Fronts).

THE COURSE OF ECONOMIC RETREAT

But the economic retreat at home has far from followed this rectilinear course. If the capitulation to the democratic wing of the world bourgeoisie was accompanied internally by the return to the market, the introduction of Stakhanovism (1935), the New Constitution (1936), concessions to the peasantry (the right to trade, privately cultivated "farm" strips, ownership of land in perpetuity, mild tax laws, etc.), and rigid legislation against labor (December, 1938)—that is, if Stalin retreated hitherto before the petty bourgeois tendencies within the country, then the immediate effect of the Stalin-Hitler pact has been to halt this retreat.

In a preceding article, the main features of this new development were outlined. With the belated arrival of Moscow papers to this country, additional data is now available on the economic blind-alley of the Stalin regime, and the mechanics whereby it seeks to overcome its newest crisis. The full text of the new agricultural law is not yet available—if it ever will be—neither are any reports of the "discussion" that took place at the sessions of the Supreme Council. But we do have now the text of the report delivered by A. G. Zverev, People's Commissar of Finance, on this law.

The report is very brief, and sets a new mark for evasiveness. Only from the Pravda editorial do we glean the fact that the tax "for privately run enterprises amounts to 11-25% of their income" (Pravda, August 29).

Zverev's report, which carefully circumnavigates this aspect of the new legislation, nevertheless clearly indicates that the actual tax is higher by as much as one-third. The corresponding passage from Zverev's report touching on this point reads as follows:

"I shall not go into detail on all these norms, but I must say that this question—the question of fixing the norms on various staple crops demands exceptional attention and commensurate discussion on the part of the Deputies of the Supreme Council of the USSR. . . . The law gives the People's Commissariats of the Federated Republics the right to fix different norms of (calculating) revenue in various branches of agriculture and various forms of staple crops with a view to increasing or lowering the norms envisaged by the law — up to 30% of these norms." There is internal evidence that the form-

ula "increasing or lowering" is purely rhetorical. The stress is on the increase. This is proved, among other things, by the extremely brief interval set for the collection of the tax, which immediately goes into effect.

BUREAUCRACY EXEMPT FROM TAXATION

The deadline set for the payment of the new tax is: October 1, November 1, and December 1, that is to say, from 60 to 90 days, and even less. On this point Zverev is categorical. He said: "The People's Commissariats of the Federated Republics have the right to speed up the time set for collection of payments . . . but by not more than one month." (Pravda, August 29).

Furthermore, the law provides for the taxation not only of well-to-do peasants but even "the income of (agricultural) laborers and employes" hitherto exempt.

What social prop has the regime to lean upon against the inevitable reaction of the peasantry? The answer is supplied by the exemption clauses in the law. Apart from the aged, the only ones exempt are, and we cite Zverev verbatim:

"Not subject to the agricultural tax are teachers and agronomists, zootechnicians, veterinarians, doctors and barbersurgeons, fertilizer specialists and agricultural technicians, engineers, chief mechanics, directors of the Mechanical Tractor Stations, directors of mechanical tractor shops and directors of Sovkhozses; together with the leading personnel of the district—to the number of not more than 30 persons to a district. . . ." (idem).

In other words, Zverev merely lists the recently constituted bureaucracy, in the rural areas. Such is the composition of the new tops in Soviet Society. It may not be superfluous to quote from a report from Kiev (the country's granary) which casts further light on the leading role of the new aristocracy. In the report, which details the progress of preparations for the coming elections to the local Soviets), it is stated: "Great activity was evidenced in the regional conference of agitators, at which about 600 were present—teachers, agronomists, doctors, the leading personnel of the collectives." (Pravda, August 27).

A stratum of the population that has its roots deep in the petty bourgeoisie is the sole remaining prop of the regime!

A CLUE TO THE BUREAUCRACY'S SIZE

How reliable is this layer? It has all the vices of the classic petty bourgeoisie and none of its virtues, especially in terms of training, efficiency and loyalty to the ruling regime that characterizes the petty bourgeoisie in capitalist countries. In subservience alone do Stalin's petty bourgeois cohorts match their prototypes elsewhere.

The numerical strength of the bureaucracy has been one of the most jealously guarded secrets of the regime. But the official press now supplies us with a clue even in this sphere. In an editorial devoted to the preparations for the coming elections to the local Soviets, Pravda for August 27 states the following: "1,300,000 Deputies will be elected to the local Soviets of toilers' deputies. . . . Millions of toilers in the city and country have been drawn into the preparations for the elections to the local Soviets. Suffice it to adduce a single fact: According to factual reports, in the whole of the USSR there will be approximately 7-million people involved in (the work of) the electoral commissions."

The regime boasts of a supporting army of 7 million. Perhaps that is not exaggerated. One thing is certain, while the bulk of the Deputies (1,300,000) will be composed of "teachers, agronomists, doctors, etc., etc.", the majority of the 7 million must fall into a somewhat different category. The lower tiers of this young bureaucratic army have their roots in and are subject to the pressure of the working class on the one hand and the peasantry on the other.

The actual course of the struggle alone will determine which of these two camps will prevail. An important indication of the actual trends in these two camps, as well as their relative strength, will perhaps be demonstrated in the very next days ahead, specifically, in the elections to the local Soviets which will coincide with the deadline for tax collections.

War--What For?

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