

# THE NEGRO QUESTION

By J. R. JOHNSON

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

The Negro petty-bourgeoisie as represented for instance in the Pittsburgh Courier of April 29, can make clear analysis of such a fundamental conflict as imperialist war. It can point out that for the large masses of Negro and other colonial peoples of the world, victory for the "democracies" or victory for the dictatorships would make precious little difference. True the Courier drew the false conclusion that Negro and colonial emancipation could be gained by the imperialists destroying each other. The Courier saw that the majority of white people, i.e., the workers and farmers have little enough "democracy", not nearly enough to die for at any rate. But it failed to show that if white workers in Europe and America, and the millions of oppressed colonials in Africa, India and the West Indies all have nothing to gain by dying for imperialism, the thing to do is to unite against both types of imperialisms, whether fascist or "democratic".

Still the Courier is not a revolutionary Marxist journal. And its policy, muddled and impractical, is not to be lightly dismissed. It has the great advantage of recognizing the fact that violence on a large scale alone will suffice to break colonial slavery. But your petty-bourgeois of whatever race, however revolutionary he may sound, must have a powerful revolutionary party, based on the working class, or he will capitulate before the imperialists at the first sound of a gun.

## Courier Begins to Move Backward

War broke out on September 4. On September 9 the Courier still takes a radical position "The war in Europe need not detain us because it will make no difference to us who wins. Our immediate concern should be the war in which we ourselves are engaged and have been engaged for a long time. That war is at once external and internal against the oppression and exploitation from without and against disorganization and lack of confidence within."

The war of the Negro in this country is to acquire educational facilities for children, more jobs, greater progress in business, social equality in America, and above all self-respect, discipline and intelligent leadership among Negroes. "Our war" concludes this editorial "is no contest between dictatorship and democracy", "our war is a contest between survival and destruction". When this is fully realized by all of us our progress will be much more rapid."

There are still some of the brave words of the April spring-time. Neither "democracy" nor dictatorship. But gone is the idea of self-destruction by imperialism as the only way of Negroes earning full equality. The Courier thinks that when Negroes see things more clearly then "progress will be much more rapid".

How can you in April see hope only when the imperialists destroy each other and in September be sure of rapid progress as soon as you realize things more fully. You realized them fully enough six months ago.

In the following issue, September 16, the Courier takes a great step backward. It notes, in an editorial article, that Roosevelt has declared the United States neutral. But it sees and says that Roosevelt and American business are not really neutral. They want to help France and Britain by sending supplies and will do so as soon as convenient. Where, argues the Courier, do Negroes stand on this question. The reply is astounding. Negroes made great progress in the last war. If America does not export munitions there will be a job-slump (there is one now, since 1929) and Negroes will suffer. So Negroes should support American sales to Britain and France and so assure jobs for themselves. "Oh, what a fall was there, my countrymen!" The great extermination of imperialism by which Negroes were to enter into the promised land has now shrunk into a war to help get jobs for Negroes. You never know where you are with a petty-bourgeois.

## See "Democracy" for What It Is

You never know where you are with them indeed. For in the next issue, September 23, the Courier takes a step forward. It denounces war for "democracy".

"Before any of our people get unduly excited about SAVING DEMOCRACY in Europe, it should be called to their attention that we have NOT YET ACHIEVED DEMOCRACY HERE.

"We cannot save what DOES NOT EXIST.

"None of the hundreds of millions of COLORED PEOPLE under the Union Jack have ANY VOICE in the British Parliament.

"They are ALL AT WAR with Germany, but they had NO VOICE in the matter.

"None of the black people who live in the French Empire have ANY VOICE in the Chamber of Deputies except those from Senegal and Guadeloupe.

"Yet they are ALL AT WAR with Germany and must supply MEN and RESOURCES.

"If democracy means taxation and conscription WITHOUT REPRESENTATION, then these British and French colonials ARE living in democracies.

"There are really NO DEMOCRACIES where black people are concerned, and therefore any talk about black people fighting for democracy when they are fighting for France and England is POPPYCOCK.

"Black people may have a SMALL MEASURE of democracy in the United States, but a VERY small measure."

The article exposes the tricks of American capitalism in its plans on the Negro and ends: "He (the Negro) would have to have some AT HOME before fighting for any ABROAD."

Our petty-bourgeois is again uttering radical sentiments. There is only one point omitted. Suppose the Negro does not get "democracy" at home. What then? Fight against the withholders of democracy here? The Courier says nothing. Take a guess now at what will appear in the next issue. Step forward or backward? Backward you say? Absolutely correct.

## Prosperity Through What?

The Courier editorial column is once more urging American capitalism to use the war as a means of prosperity. Raise the embargo, create jobs and give some to Negroes. But about the destruction of American imperialism? You don't destroy something by making it prosperous. That is the kind of mess you get into when you have not a clear revolutionary program, opposed to imperialism, everywhere, at all times. What the Courier will do tomorrow or the day after we do not know but we can guess. Five steps backward and half-a-step forward. And if the workers and farmers do not prevent Roosevelt dragging this country into war, then when America enters, the Courier is going to call on Negroes everywhere to fight for "democracy", the "democracy" American capitalism has withheld from the Negro for 75 years and which will be promised after the new war is over.

How grand the beginning was in April! Let the imperialists destroy each other. Today it is a question of jobs. In our pamphlet "Why Negroes Should Oppose War" by J. R. Johnson (32 pages, 5 cents) we outline our policy on Negroes and war. But the Courier has no policy. It vacillates from the extreme of bloodthirstiness to using the war for jobs. There you have your petty-bourgeois complete, always grouping between the imperialist and the revolutionary workers. Are they lost? Not by any means. Quite a few can be won today and though some are born traitors, many can be won for the revolution tomorrow.

But there is only one way. Build a powerful revolutionary party. Let it look as if it means business. Let it act as if it does. And when it leads the masses into action on a grand scale, we have a chance to tear the petty-bourgeoisie away from the imperialists. It is power and power alone that keeps these wavering elements from wavering so much. They rush to the imperialists today. But an equal power can pull them away in time, the revolutionary power of the masses. It is up to us to build that power.

# SHACHTMAN SEES N.Y. HOUSING PROGRAM FLEEING THE POOR WHILE REALTORS LINE POCKETS

By RUTH JEFFREY

"2,500,000 New Yorkers, or one-third of the city's residents, live in houses unfit for human habitation," declared Max Shachtman, Socialist Workers Party councilman candidate, in launching his campaign for better housing of New York City's masses. "There are 17 square miles of crime and disease-ridden slum in the city. Basing ourselves on the estimates of the city Housing Authority itself, we see that thirty-five giant housing projects of Red Hook proportions would have to rise in the city each year for five years, in order to wipe out these areas of blight and misery."

"To fill this crying local need, \$2,500,000,000 would have to be expended," Comrade Shachtman pointed out. "In the light of these facts, the total New Deal allotment of \$800,000,000 for 'slum clearance' throughout the nation is seen for the miserably small amount that it is; and Federal Housing Commissioner Straus, who tours the land boasting of New Deal slum-clearance and rehousing, and calls on the workers to demonstrate their thankfulness with 'national unity', is seen for the fraudulent War Deal stooge that he is."

## Straus' Aim

"When Straus calls upon New York Housing Commissioner Rheinheim," Shachtman explained in discussing the much publicized Rheinheim resignation, "not to over-line the pockets of the big real estate boys with federal funds, he is not looking out for the 'public good'. Straus is merely trying to stretch the ridiculously small federal housing grant, so that the flimsy smokescreen of 'New Deal' public works may not blow away entirely before Roosevelt leads us into the war. Straus may also be ear-marking the valuable New York City Housing Commissioner's job for himself for the approaching day when the USHA folds up for lack of funds."

"However," said the Socialist Workers Party candidate, "to take up cudgels for Rheinheim would be merely to exchange one anti-labor housing commissioner for another. It is true that Rheinheim is an experienced builder and has directed most of whatever rehousing New York has seen. But in the process he has leaned over backwards to play ball with the bankers and the real estate interests to the extent of flaunting two of the relatively good provisions of the Federal Housing Act. The USHA's \$1399 ceiling on annual incomes of eligible tenants to housing projects gives a handful of relief families a chance to savor half-decent housing. Rheinheim and his banker friends are, of course, opposed to this frank acceptance of relief as a permanent factor in the government set-up and want this ceiling raised. They do not want to recognize the need for rehousing the dole-supported unemployed, who live in the very worst slums."

Join the Socialist Workers Party

# Union Puts the Lie to Phoney Charges Made by Auto Moguls

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bered, was created on the insistence of the stooges of the auto corporations in the state legislature.

The Chrysler Corporation declares it is willing to negotiate. But behind this smiling front, is the blunt refusal to negotiate on the major points of the conflict—speed of production and the union shop.

## Vote for Strike

The United Automobile Workers (CIO) is backing an aggressive publicity campaign answering each lie of the corporation with pointed truths that cannot be denied or assailed. Meanwhile the workers in the Chrysler plants, Dodge main, Dodge Truck, De Soto, Kercheval-Jefferson, Chrysler Highland Park are casting overwhelming votes for a strike. As in the Briggs strike of last spring, the powerful UAW Chrysler organization will pour onto the picket lines and compel the corporation to characterize demands for a union shop in slightly different terms than "sovietization".

"Again, the United States Housing Authority's ceiling of \$1.50 per square foot on the cost of land—which is, as you can see, \$15,000 for every little 100 x 100 parcel of land involved—already gives tacit approval to cold-blooded fleecing of the masses by the real estate interests. To ask, as Rheinheim does, for an even higher ceiling on land cost is to countenance highway-robbery. It is not for nothing that Chambers of Commerce 'deplore' Rheinheim's resignation. Was it not Rheinheim who arranged that neat little deal in Queens which involved, not removal of slum-dwellings to make way for the Queensbridge project, but the purchase instead of expensive, vacant industrial land?"

"We must have done with grossly inadequate makeshifts of both the Strauss and the Rheinheim varieties. The slums of New York must go! The New York City Housing Authority itself asked the Federal government for \$1,500,000,000 in 1935, to finance the clearance and rehousing of the ten worst square miles of New York slum. But Roosevelt turned down this proposal."

"The people of New York demand the elimination of all 17 square miles of slum, once and for all. The easily-raised sum of \$2,500,000,000 is needed with which to do it."

"We further demand that the slum areas be expropriated by the city, with not a cent in payment to the blood-sucking landlords. These harpies have already received many times over the value of their property in the rentals they have extorted from generations of sweated slum-dwellers. They have cost the people of New York, for social work in these areas, many times what they have remitted in taxes. They have grown fat on the lifeblood of New York's poor. Not less important, expropriation of this land would appreciably lower the rental cost, to prospective tenants, of apartments in the new housing developments."

## SWEET LAND OF LIBERTY

# Garbage Is Yours For the Asking

GARY, Ind.—In a pathetic burst of benevolence, the graying City Fathers of Gary took what they believed to be a long step towards solving the annoying problem of the ill-fed, ill-housed, and ill-clothed.

From now on, it was announced from City Hall, it will be entirely legal for the underfed citizens here to search through garbage cans for surplus foods. According to the notice released by the City Fathers, all scavengers will be supplied with licenses. Applicants, however, must show that they are in real need. Those fortunate who receive the licenses must live up to the code governing the garbage hunt. They must keep their search on a neat and sanitary level.

In a good days search, it is believed here, an enterprising scavenger may be able to believe both the garbage can and his hunger with any number of delectable items. Scraps of top-steak, slightly chewed tea biscuits, slightly burned file and cork-tipped cigarette butts are considered only an idle day's search.

The City Fathers were so elated with their new found "plan" that they posed for photographers in the act of issuing licenses to their less fortunate neighbors.

## Tough Job

Successfully utilizing as pretexts, stalling devices provided

# An Answer to the Latest Hue and Cry Against the Marxist Position on the War

By FELIX MORROW

It is very hard to find a conscientious opponent of the revolutionary movement, remarked Lenin, and especially hard to find one among the centrists—those who stand between the brazen reformists and the revolutionists. At first thought, Lenin's remark may appear self-righteous, but all experience testifies that it is a simple truth.

A current example is the pro-Anglo-French resolution adopted Oct. 4 by the American Labor Party leadership. Those who wrote it—the needle trades bureaucracy and the Social Democratic Federation—on the whole make no bones about the meaning of the resolution. The real purveyors of confusion among the resolution's proponents are the "left wing": the Norman Thomas Socialists and the Lovestonettes. Their vote for the resolution being in flagrant contradiction to their official anti-war stand, they are compelled to defend the resolution deviously and dishonestly, whereas the brazen war-mongers of the Social Democratic Federation can defend it for what it really is.

Instead of attempting to answer our sharp criticism of their cowardly capitulation to the trade union bureaucrats on this important question, the Thomasites and Lovestonettes have now raised a hue and cry against the Trotskyist position on—the inevitability of American participation in the war!

In their indignant protests they are careful to leave unsaid what our complete position is: that American participation is inevitable if the workers permit the democratic-imperialist government to remain in power. But that is only part of what they leave out.

## What Is the Marxist Tradition?

Since the very beginning of our movement (and before that, in the Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky) we have predicted the inevitability of the present war, and the inevitability of American capitalism's participation in it. Yet now is the first time that the Lovestonettes (I can't speak for the Thomasites, who never troubled much about theory) object to this theory. Up to yesterday, in fact, the Lovestonettes (first as adherents of the Communist International, then as an opposition faction, then as an "independent Communist" tendency) avowedly and explicitly adhered to the same theory! When did they abandon it? Not anywhere explicitly, until they began to attack us for holding it.

To establish by documentation that the theory in question was a fundamental tenet of Leninism would not, however, impress the Thomasites, who were never Leninists, nor the Lovestonettes, who have abandoned the fundamentals of Leninism. It is more to the point, therefore, to remind them that the theory of the inevitability of war under capitalism does not begin with Bolshevism. Before the revolutionary years of the Third International, that theory was a fundamental tenet of the Second (Socialist) International. One has but to recall the resolutions adopted by its various congresses. The Stuttgart (1907) resolution, for example, says, after describing the imperialist character of modern capitalism: "Wars, therefore, are part of the very nature of capitalism; they will cease only when the capitalist system is abolished."

The indignation of Messrs. Thomas, Bertram Wolfe and Lovestone should, therefore, be directed against the entire Marxist tradition on war. All their terms of reproach—"false in fact," "deadly poison to any real anti-war struggle," "fatalism, defeatism," etc.—should be directed against the delegates from all countries in the Stuttgart congress, who voted for this doctrine. True, there were those in the international Socialist movement who, even then, disagreed with the doctrine. Strange-

ly enough, these dissidents did not include the real fighters against war—Lenin, Liebknecht, Luxemburg, Trotsky. For some reason which we should like our critics to explain, the real, the revolutionary fighters against war, were so little poisoned by the fatalistic theory to which they adhered, that their fight against the war put an end to it—by revolution, in Russia and Germany. No, to be blunt, those who opposed the theory of inevitability as "fatalistic determinism"—the Fabians in England, the right wing of the Social Democracy in Germany and France, etc.—were precisely those who first accepted the war, who became chauvinists.

## Our Theories Are a Guide to ACTION!

Are we saying that the Thomasites and Lovestonettes will be chauvinists when America enters the war? We can only say, in answer, that we do not see how those who succumbed, on Oct. 4, to the pressure of the ALP bureaucrats, will be able to withstand the far more powerful pressure of the American capitalist government when it enters the war.

For us, the theory of American imperialist participation in the war (our critics concede that this already is the program of the American capitalist class and its government) is not a dogma, but a guide to action. Our strategy and tactics flow from this fundamental perspective.

Just a few examples:

1. Our immediate task is to arouse, to organize, to educate, as many workers as possible in a spirit of utterly irreconcilable opposition to the war, not only before the war—when it is easy enough—but during the war. It is with this purpose in mind that we fight for a popular referendum on war, against Roosevelt's proposal to lift the embargo, against conscription, etc. Our motivation for opposing Roosevelt's proposal is fundamentally different from the motivation of the isolationist Senators. We fight it because we are irreconcilable opponents of the war. They fight it because they consider that particular step inimical to the interests of American capitalism today. Simultaneously, they support Roosevelt in his armament program, in his declaration to defend one of the belligerent nations, Canada, in his hostility to the war referendum, etc. Their opposition to the lifting of the embargo serves, therefore, merely as a cover for the war preparations of American imperialism which they support. They are demagogic exploiters of the anti-war sentiments of the people. To build them up as anti-war fighters is to aid and abet war preparations, to help them delude and mislead the masses. But this is precisely what the Thomasites and Lovestonettes do.

## They Capitulated on First Major Test

2. "War is the continuation of politics." Those who serve capitalism in peacetime will serve it in wartime. The labor bureaucracy, inextricably linked to the fortunes of capitalism, will support the war. That is why we do not give a moment's credence to the hypocritical pacifist remarks of a William Green or John L. Lewis, and exhortate every move they make in support of war preparations. But the Thomasites and Lovestonettes, with the servility which characterizes them, play up every pacifist remark of Lewis and Green, and play down—concoct—the whole course of the AFL and CIO bureaucracy in support of Roosevelt's war plans. Read the last few issues of the "Workers Age" and "The Call," see their reports of the AFL and CIO conventions on the war question—and contrast them to the reports in the Socialist Appeal.

3. Irreconcilable opposition to the war-mongers in the labor movement—that is absolutely indispensable in the real fight against war. But the Thomasites whitewash their war-mongering, Judas-goat brothers in the Second International, and the Lovestonettes whitewash their brothers, such as the impotent, cowardly Independent Labor Party of England. The first major test in this country came on the ALP resolution; the Thomasites and Lovestonettes capitulated.

## There Is a Real Difference

4. From our conviction that American participation in the war can only be prevented by a socialist revolution, we draw the same conclusion as we draw from our conviction that in this epoch of capitalist decline only irreconcilable class struggle can win any concessions for the workers: we try to be the hardest fighters every step of the war. Only those can call our theory "poison" or "paralyzing," who have themselves in reality given up (if they ever held it) the perspective of a socialist revolution.

This is enough to indicate what the real issue is between us and the Thomas-Lovestone camp. We are separated from them by an entirely different conception of the struggle against war. We are more than anxious to make this crystal-clear.

P. S. The latest issue of the "Workers Age" is not content with falsifying our position on war once more; it adds a new difference, on the Russian question, blandly putting into my mouth remarks which only a Stalinist could make. I brand Bertram Wolfe—who heard my own, actual remarks at a symposium in which he participated—as a deliberate liar. In the next issue I shall deal with his falsification of our position on the Soviet Union.

# Stalin—Temporary Holder of Ukraine

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the solution of his program of a "Greater Ukraine." Hitler's policy is the following: the establishment of a definite order for his conquests, one after the other, and the creation by each new conquest of a new system of "friendships." At the present stage Hitler concedes the Greater Ukraine to his friend Stalin as a temporary deposit. In the following stage he will pose the question of who is the owner of this Ukraine: Stalin or he, Hitler.

There are people who dare to compare the Stalin-Hitler alliance with the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. What a mockery! The Brest-Litovsk negotiations were carried out openly before all humanity. The Soviet revolution, at the end of 1917 and beginning of 1918, didn't even have a single battalion capable of carrying on the fight. Hohenzollern Germany attacked Russia, taking Soviet provinces and military supplies. The young government had no other physical possibility than to sign the peace treaty. This peace was openly defined by us as a capitulation of a disarmed revolution before a powerful enemy. We did not worship the Hohenzollerns but, rather, denounced the Brest-Litovsk peace publicly as extortion and robbery. We did not deceive the workers and peasants. The present Stalin-Hitler pact was concluded despite the existence of an army of several millions, and the immediate task of the pact was to facilitate Hitler's smashing of Poland and its division between Berlin and Moscow. Where is the analogy?

The words of Molotov to the effect that the Red Army would cover itself with "glory" in Poland, are to the ineradicable shame of the Kremlin. The Red Army received the order to defeat in Poland those who had been defeated by Hitler. This is the shameful and criminal task that the Red Army was assigned by the jackals of the Kremlin.

# RUSH FUNDS FOR DEFENSE OF WATSON!

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let us own Canada before we fight for it."

**Funds Needed**  
Swinging into the campaign to raise money for the struggle to obtain Watson's freedom, the American Labor Aid has already dispatched appeals to its branches all over the country. James P. Cannon, National Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, hailing the formation of the Defense Fund, called upon all members of the party and the Young Peoples Socialist League to contribute to the fund.

The Socialist Appeal, in a leading editorial on the Watson Defense Fund, stated, "He is a hero in the eyes of the working class, a fighter captured by the enemy. This fighter must be freed and no stone must be left unturned to effect his liberation."

Friends are urged to rush all contributions to the American Labor Aid, Watson Defense Fund, 125 West 33 St., (Room 201), New York City.

# LARGE AUDIENCE TURNS OUT FOR GOLDMAN FORUM

CLEVELAND, Ohio—Albert Goldman spoke to a crowded hall on Sunday night, October 15.

The audience listened attentively as he analyzed the attitude of the European workers toward the war: their lack of enthusiasm and hatred of it. His closing words, which pointed to the road of liberation from war and fascism in the slogan "For the United Socialist States of Europe," received a volley of applause.

An extended question period, during which the audience sat tight, indicated the deep interest which the program and ideas of the Fourth International as expressed by Comrade Goldman held for the group.

This was the first of the weekly Sunday night anti-war forums which the Cleveland branch is holding.

"A World in Flames"  
Speaker:  
ALBERT GOLDMAN  
at  
St. Paul SWP Headquarters  
147 West 5th St.  
OCTOBER 25th—8 P.M.

Note to Readers In Minneapolis:  
The S.W.P. Forum Meets Every Sunday at 3 o'clock at 919 Marquette