

THE NEGRO QUESTION

By J. R. JOHNSON

Industry and the Negro

The first, the absolute indispensable necessity for Negroes who want to struggle for their emancipation, is to understand that difference of color is not the cause of discrimination against them in industry.

In our pamphlet on the war, (Why Negroes Should Oppose the War; J. R. Johnson, 5 cents) we wrote the following: (p. 23)

To that something more can be added. We must see where the problem is today, then where it was yesterday, then see where it is likely to be tomorrow.

The very opposite of the dialectical method is the kind of argument that runs as follows:

What Makes for Slavery?

It sounds good, but is it? Let us see. First take the question of slavery. To too many Negroes, slavery is the badge of the Negro and his black skin.

Let us now look at slavery in America. The Europeans who came to America in the early days tried to make the Indians slaves. But the Indians could not do the work.

The European invaders then tried to enslave whites. They imported poor white people from Europe and worked them in the fields side by side with the Negroes.

What we must note is that in America the slave-owners tried Indians, tried whites, and then finally settled on Negroes as slaves; obviously not because they were black but because they were the most suitable from an economic point of view.

Here again, therefore, a Negro who is refused a job because he is a black man, must think over history and note how unimportant the question of color was in the history of slavery and how it was the economic factor, the question of highest profit, which predominated.

Slave-Drivers Disguise Truth

Now there is another very noticeable fact about history which we must always bear in mind. In the same way as a man tries to cover his naked body with pleasing clothes, so men like to cover naked economic facts with pleasing moral ideas.

It is in accordance with this historical truth that the slave-drivers, when people began to challenge the system of slavery, did not dare to say "We tried Indians, we tried whites and now we use Negroes because they are the most suitable."

It wasn't an easy thing to do this, even in the South. A hundred and twenty years ago, there were many white people who denounced slavery. Wherever a man had a small farm, or where mines were worked, wherever in fact Negroes were not required for large-scale cotton plantations, the whites as a rule opposed slavery.

This invention could do the work of a dozen slaves. Straightway cotton production began to jump. In 1791 it had been two million pounds. Ten years after, in 1801, it was forty million pounds.

Huge cotton farms employing hundreds of slaves, spread over the country. The small farmers were driven off the land. So strong had been the abolition movement previous to Whitney's invention that up to 1826 there were still 103 emancipation societies in the South.

But even while they proved by the word of God and the laws of man that Negroes were inferior creatures fit only to be slaves, the need for profits made them act in a way entirely opposed to their lying propaganda.

On the Ballot in the Bronx

1 | MAX SHACHTMAN | Socialist Workers

Write number 1 before name in the voting square to the left of his name as indicated above.

After marking your ballot as above kindly give your second and third choices to the American Labor Party candidates by marking the numbers 2 and 3 next to their names.

Take this with you to the Polls as a reminder on Election Day, Nov. 7th.

For the Write-In in Manhattan

1 | GEORGE L. PAINE |

The above is the correct spelling of the S.W.P.'s Councilman Candidate in Manhattan. To count, the name must be spelled exactly as here given.

Carry this with you to the polling booth to help you in voting accurately.

GROWING PROTEST MOVEMENT CHALLENGES WATSON ARREST

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An ex-recruiting sergeant, lied when they inferred that the large crowd which listened to Watson resented his anti-war statements. On the contrary, the crowd listened with great sympathy to his address.

More than seven hundred workers gathered about Watson as the police waited for reinforcements to clinch the arrest. Members of the Socialist Workers League in the milling crowd heard sympathetic comment on all sides.

A public meeting called by the University of Toronto C.C.F. (Social-Democrats) to discuss the preservation of civil rights adopted a unanimous resolution protesting the conviction of Watson.

Bert Leavens, Ontario Provincial Secretary of the C.C.F., and a prominent trade unionist, has publicly stated that socialists would not give up the struggle "until Watson is released."

Public attention, however, continues to focus on the case of Watson. Although the terms of the Act under which Watson was convicted had not been made public at the time of his trial, he was the first person arrested under its provisions and has suffered the most severe sentence.

have already been threatened with prosecution under the same act which was used to convict Watson. In Winnipeg, members of the I.W.W. have declared their support of the Watson Defense Committee while in Saskatchewan, prominent C.C.F.'ers have also rallied to his support.

The Canadian section of the Fourth International has been active in collecting money for the Defense Fund and has pursued independent action by the issuance of leaflets and stickers. The stickers continue to appear in public places despite police efforts to destroy them.

The War Measures Act, under whose provisions Watson was convicted, has become the main weapon in the enforcement of the Canadian military dictatorship. Repressions continue at such a pace that it is difficult, because of the press censorship, to determine the number already arrested. It is estimated that at least thirty workers have been jailed in Ontario alone, the latest victims being four Anarchist workers who were arrested in a raid on the home of one of them.

Public attention, however, continues to focus on the case of Watson. Although the terms of the Act under which Watson was convicted had not been made public at the time of his trial, he was the first person arrested under its provisions and has suffered the most severe sentence. The Watson case, which first drew wide publicity in the Toronto press and which has already received comment in the Commonweal, liberal Catholic monthly, has been given the greatest publicity by the Socialist Appeal, American organ of the Fourth International.

American Labor Aid 125 West 33 Street New York City Dear Friend: I PLEDGE MYSELF to contribute \$..... to the defense of Frank Watson, imprisoned by Canada's government for the crime of speaking out as a worker against the war of imperialism.

G-Men Frame Teamsters Union Leaders As Part of U. S. Preparation for War

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strike was something of a turning point in union organization among Middle West drivers. Some four months later the International Brotherhood of Teamsters signed a one-year contract with the majority of the motor freight operators in over a dozen middle Western states, a contract embracing over 200,000 drivers and helpers.

This organizational progress culminated early in October 1939, with the signing of a new working agreement between the International Brotherhood of Teamsters and more than 2,000 motor carriers, covering 350,000 drivers and helpers in thirteen states and bringing wage increases amounting to millions of dollars yearly.

Upon arraignment on Sept. 23, the union officials—leaders of Drivers Unions in Sioux City, in Des Moines, and in Omaha—learned that the charges leveled against them had to do with the alleged destruction of the bakery truck fourteen months earlier.

Each union official was charged with five things:

- 1. Violation of the Dyer Act (transporting stolen car across state line). Penalty: 5 years in jail, \$5,000 fine, or both. 2. Interference with interstate commerce: 10 years, \$10,000 fine, or both.

Each arrested union official is thus eligible to receive a total

penalty of 29 years in jail, a fine of \$40,000, or both.

The combined penalty facing the eight drivers' union officials amount to 232 years in the penitentiary, a fine of \$320,000, or both. Certainly one would have to agree that this was a disproportionate penalty even if any of the officials had been guilty of damaging a truck, which, of course, none of them was.

FBI Hounded Unionists We furnish you examples of the FBI's behaviour: When Walter Stultz and Louis Miller, president and organizer of the Omaha General Drivers Union, Local 554, two of those charged, were arrested on September 23 and jailed, a \$10,000 bond was immediately secured from two local businessmen, who thus indicated their faith in the integrity and innocence of these unionists.

Bond was at first allowed and both men freed. Then Miller was re-jailed, and the court explained that the \$10,000 property bond was invalid because the property was not tenanted. A second bond was secured. Miller was freed.

On October 17, Federal agents removed Stultz and Miller to Sioux City and again jailed them. Defense counsel immediately presented bond. But the Federal officials refused to free Stultz and Miller. This time they said there was "a technical error" in the bond.

"Out to Get Unionists" 2. At least one FBI agent is reported as boasting before witnesses that he had spent all his time on the case and was out to "get" the drivers' union officials. 3. While the government was expending large sums of money to "get" union officials, trucking operators in this very area were flouting Interstate Commerce Commission regulations of interstate trucking. When this laxity was called to the attention of the government, it invariably gave the excuse that there was "not enough money to enforce regulations."

CAN THE WORKERS ACCEPT MOLOTOFF'S EXPLANATION?

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The Kremlin lied when it made these promises. It did nothing to strengthen the struggle of Poland against Germany. The Stalin-Hitler pact, far from encouraging Polish resistance, undermined it.

Thus did the Kremlin fulfill the promises it had made and which it had asked the world working class to underwrite! But this is not the whole story.

When the Red Army began to march into Poland, repudiating all the previous promises made by the Kremlin, Molotoff made new promises. In his radio speech to the Russian people explaining the reasons for the occupation of the Ukrainian and Byelo-Russian provinces, Molotoff said, as a concluding point to justify the Red Army's march:

More Broken Promises

How were his listeners and the Polish people supposed to understand Molotoff's words? He was promising that the Soviet Union "intends to take every measure" to give the Polish people "the opportunity to live a life of peace."

That promise was, however, not repeated after the occupation of the Western provinces. It is not repeated, or even hinted at, in Molotoff's speech of Oct. 31. On the contrary, the speech is a pro-German speech, calling upon the workers of the world to take as good coin Hitler's offer of "peace," saying not a word about the imperialist aims of the Hitler regime but, on the contrary, laying the entire blame for continuation of the war on the democratic imperialists.

After this string of broken promises in connection with Poland, Molotoff calls upon the workers of the world to accept his version of the Finnish situation. Can the workers accept it? They cannot.

Stalinism Cannot Defend the Soviet Union

We, the Fourth Internationalists, today as before, stand ready to defend the cradle of the Socialist revolution. We stand ready to defend the economic conquests of the October Revolution, the nationalized property wrested from the capitalist world.

We defend it, however, not at the bidding of Stalin-Molotoff, nor on their pretenses, nor by their methods, nor for their reasons. They seek only to preserve their rule. We, on the contrary, seek the destruction of their rule, for if they continue for long to dominate the Soviet Union, the first workers' state is doomed. Only the proletarian revolution in the West can save the Soviet Union. And in the proletarian revolution, the Stalinists stand on the other side of the barricades.

Complete political and organizational independence of the world proletariat from the Soviet bureaucracy—that is the first step in the defense of the Soviet Union and the proletarian revolution.

ery obstacle in the way of the arrested union officials when the latter sought to exercise their elementary legal rights.

Legal counsel have pointed out that the best bond is raised in the district where the defendants live and are known, and that courts have as a common practice allowed such bond.

Put Pressure on Bondsmen Union officials and defense counsel then made an effort to raise the bond in Sioux City. It very quickly became evident that in the background enormous pressure was being exerted on local bondsmen by Federal men and employers to cause the bondsmen to refuse bond. One after another, the Sioux City bondsmen stated frankly that "the heat is too strong on us."

In the interests of the union movement of the United States, we submit the record of FBI operations against the drivers' movement in the Middle West, with the hope that trade unionists everywhere will give these facts serious thought; and with the further hope that even now the weight of public opinion will cause the FBI to withdraw from its present road, a road which is surely leading to the development on American soil of the same sort of anti-labor political police which is the instrument of the ferocious dictatorships in Europe and Asia.

Referring specifically to the indictments returned against drivers' union officials in the nation's capitol, Mr. Padway stated:

"If this indictment is to become law then no union is safe in picking any establishment in the District of Columbia, or any employer anywhere, if interstate commerce is involved." Padway asserted the indictments violated the principles of the Railway Labor Act and the National Labor Relations Act, and virtually "turn the clock back a century to the days when merely formation of a labor union was considered a conspiracy."

Early in November, the trial of the eight union officials will begin before the Federal court in Sioux City. What the outcome will be, no one knows.

What we do know is that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (popularly known as the G-men) has played a startling role in this prosecution. Building on the basis of a minor charge by trucking

SPECIAL! The Labor Bookshop has on hand about 1500 copies of "American's Permanent Depression" by Art Preis. The pamphlets sell at 3 cents per copy. Offers for the lot or any part of the lot should be made immediately by any branch interested in the pamphlet. Write to the Labor Bookshop, 116 University Place.

MASS MEETING on the 22nd ANNIVERSARY of the RUSSIAN REVOLUTION WHITHER SOVIET RUSSIA? THE MEANING OF STALIN'S ROLE IN THE EUROPEAN WAR. What does the future hold in store for Stalin? Have the irresistible forces that erupted in October 1917 really been quelled? Or does a new and vaster revolutionary explosion impend? Will mankind emerge from this war enslaved and be plunged into barbarism? Or will it march emancipated into Socialism? Hear the Answer by James P. Cannon National Secretary, S.W.P. at the IRVING PLAZA IRVING PLACE at 15th St. Wednesday November 15th AT 8 P.M. Aus.: Local N.Y. S.W.P.—4th Int'l ADM.—25c