

THE NEGRO QUESTION

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

By J. R. JOHNSON

The Negro in Steel

We must get some general conception of the role the Negro worker has played and plays in industry in this country. We have first to recognize that the race question, the color question, play their part. But we must see below the surface of things and recognize that the color question is not decisive. It is not the factor which plays the greatest part. Until we understand that, we cannot organize for struggle and plan our campaigns. We have not only to understand it but must have it deeply rooted in our minds as the basis of all our thinking. Quite recently an able study has appeared on the Negro worker. It is called "Black Workers and the New Unions," written by Horace Cayton and George Mitchell. We shall use it heavily in these articles on the Negro's role in industry, and we recommend a thorough study of the book to all workers, white and black.

First the Negro comes into the steel industry as a strike-breaker. From 1875 to 1914, whenever the white capitalist wants to break the neck of white workers, he sends for Negroes, most often to the South, and uses them against the workers of his own color. For the great steel strike in 1919 the white capitalists brought in 30,000 Negroes. For these capitalists, the race question was certainly not the main question.

Negroes Enter Industry

This sending for Negroes to help break the struggles of the white workers was part of the general economic movement of the times—the migration of over a million Negroes to the North. Thus in the Allegheny district of Pennsylvania in 1910, there were 100 Negro steel workers, in 1915 there were 2,500, in 1916 there were 8,325, in 1923, there were 16,000.

As an official of the Carnegie Steel Company said in an interview given to Messers Cayton and Mitchell on July 6, 1934:

As far as I am concerned I believe that the Negro has been a lifesaver to the Steel company. When we have had labor disputes or when we needed more men for expansion we have gone to the South and brought up thousands of them. I don't know what this company would have done without Negroes." (Black Workers and New Unions, P. 7.)

On the whole, between 1890 and 1930, the number of Negroes in the iron, steel, machinery and vehicle industries, increased from less than 25,000 to 250,000.

The Dirty Work for the Negro

What sort of jobs did Negroes get in the industry? Naturally nothing but the unskilled, the lowest paid, the most unpleasant jobs. Between 1910 and 1930 the Negro made little progress in getting the better kind of job. Take for instance the work in blast furnaces and steel-rolling mills. In 1910 there were between 45 Negroes out of every 1000 working as laborers in these industries. In 1930 there were 85. Thus the number of Negroes almost doubled. But it was chiefly laborer's jobs that the Negroes got. In 1910 out of every 1000 laborers, 69 were Negroes. In 1930, there were 165 Negroes out of every 1000. But whereas in 1910 there were 29 Negroes out of every 1000 skilled workers, in 1930 there were only 40. Thus 96 more laborers got jobs, proportionally, but only 11 skilled workers. That is a point we have to keep our eye on. As for office jobs there were 3 Negroes out of every 1000 in 1910, and only one out of every 1000 in 1930.

All the nasty jobs are for the Negroes. But here again we must have some historical perspective. All the white groups, American born and foreign born, discriminate against the Negroes. But the American-born whites discriminate against the foreign-born whites. The American born usually take all the best jobs for themselves and the bosses encourage them. (For the boss loves, how he loves to see the workers divided.)

Discrimination Among Foreign Born

But that is not all. Even the "foreigners" discriminate. Sixty or seventy years ago Irish did all the dirty work. After a generation they moved up in the scale and the Poles, Czechs and other central Europeans did most of the dirty work in their turn. The Negroes came last into the industry and so quite naturally Poles, Czechs, and these latest immigrants did to Negroes what the Irish had done to them. The bosses naturally encouraged this. The class-conscious workers tried to break it down. Only whereas the American-born, Irish, and Central European workers were all white, they could get together more quickly as workers than they could get together with Negroes.

Was the Negro an Inferior Worker?

Was the Negro an inferior worker? The bosses at one time used to say so, but as they found it necessary to use the Negro more and more, they changed their tune. Take this interview with a Buffalo superintendent of a steel plant:

"We found most of them good workmen. There are some who are poor, but in general they are good men. I don't see any difference between the races."

Or this statement by the assistant superintendent of a steel plant in Cleveland:

"Some of the very best workers we had were Negroes—I will say that the colored are on a par with the white."

Take this from a Superintendent of Safety and Welfare in Homestead, Pa.:

"The Negroes that we brought up are superior to the whites that we brought in. We got one group of whites from Kentucky Hills district. They were just the poor white trash and were no good at all. We also got a shipment of whites from around Buffalo but they were just riff-raff. The Negroes are superior to them as workmen and morally. Also I believe they are better physically." (Black Workers and New Unions, P. 35.)

Where did the white bosses learn this? They wouldn't have said it twenty years ago. Some of them deny the Negro's capacity up to today. But on the whole they have been driven by economic necessity to accept the Negro in the industry and then to recognize that he can do the job as well as any other.

But the workers were having a much longer time to recognize the Negro. First it seemed to them that being white meant a better chance to get a job and a better-paid job. Which was true, though it wasn't the whole truth. And secondly, although the white bosses were forced to recognize the ability of the Negro, they did not go out of their way to help the workers, white and black, to overcome the prejudices. For them to do that would have been suicide. It would have meant the unity of black and white workers, which, for the bosses, is the beginning of the end. So in some plants Negroes and whites continued to be segregated in the lunch-room. In another plant the company built a swimming pool with money collected from both white and black and they prohibited the blacks from using the pool. In Gary, Indiana, the United States Steel Company took it upon itself to see that Negroes were kept out of all the municipal parks except one.

By this means the company aimed at keeping the Negroes and whites in the plants divided. The superintendent and officials of the plant actually told the Negro workers that if they used a certain park they would lose their jobs. Why? Every white worker and Negro worker should ask himself this question and think over it until he got the answer. Why were the bosses so anxious to prevent Negro workers and their wives and children from using a park along with white workers and their families? Was it because the bosses loved the whites so much that they wanted to save them from Negro contamination? But since when have bosses been so concerned about what happens to workers after they leave work? The reason is obvious. The boss wanted to keep them apart.

Naturally the white workers should have opposed this immediately, should have demanded that the Negroes be allowed to use whatever park they wanted, should have insisted upon it. But the workers are not as quick as the bosses at seeing these things. They see them in time, however. In succeeding articles we shall see how the white steel-workers as a whole, recognized the necessity of cooperating with their Negro brothers in industry. We shall have to note particularly why they recognized it, and how this recognition expressed itself.

CHRYSLER ORGANIZES VIGILANTES

(Continued from Page 1)

Iticians are beginning to holler for night sticks and riot squads. Over the air goes the voice of Representative Clare E. Hoffman, mouthpiece of the auto barons in Washington: "Enforce the law by letting those men who want to work go through the Chrysler picket lines."

In the meantime, the corporation is going ahead full blast organizing the vigilante and fascist mobs to be used for purposes of strikebreaking at the first favorable opportunity. A big meeting is organized for Gerald Smith in the Olympia stadium. The papers ballyhoo the meeting to fill the hall with a big anti-union mob. Smith rants against the United Automobile Workers and against "communism." On the same program are Pat McCartney and William Nowell, posing as labor leaders but spilling the familiar union-busting line that always parades under the name of "Americanism" and "patriotism."

Martin Goons with Smith
Nowell spilled his guts about having been a member of the C.P., about a trip to the U.S.S.R. he had taken financed by the Stalinist party. He forgot to tell that he had joined the Lovestoneites after leaving the C.P. It might be added that the only service McCartney after saw in the service of labor was queuing on militant workers before the Dies Committee or slugging them on picket lines. McCartney and Nowell are organizers for Homer Martin's AFL union.

Homer Martin has just announced an "organizing drive" in the Chrysler plants. The only men he will organize will be scabs and strikebreakers.

Who is financing Gerald Smith who has suddenly appeared on the scene with unlimited resources? For the last few months Smith has been dodging process servers all over the country. The hotel keepers are trying to collect big unpaid bills.

Why the sudden interest of fascist Father Coughlin in the Chrysler lockout? Yesterday the fascist priest went on the air to denounce the corporation and the union with "equal" vehemence. A dirty discredited name—what of it? Its another voice in the back-to-work campaign.

Gangs Invade C.P. Meeting
The gangs of reaction are being given free play in this city to beat and terrorize all militant workers and create a more favorable atmosphere for strikebreaking. This gang made its appearance on the scene last Friday when a mob of 5,000 hoodlums led by Pat McCartney set upon workers attending the Communist Party meeting here.

All of the preliminary steps of the Mohawk Valley Formula in creating "public sentiment" and organizing vigilante gangs have now been taken. The open strike-breaking moves come next. But here the corporation will find it is overplaying its hand.

Despite the weak publicity of the union and the failure to issue any daily strike bulletin to counteract the propaganda of the capitalist press, the fighting spirit of the workers will boil over at the first overt strikebreaking move. More than 500 pickets appear at the gates of the Dodge plant daily. The picket line has been restricted to this number because of the admonition of union leaders instructing workers to stay away from the line so as not to interfere with their receiving social insurance. The first struggle will see the lines swell with invincible power.

Workers Will Fight

The workers will fight. The biggest turnout thus far of local union officers was seen last Thursday night at a special meeting. At this meeting it was decided to issue a tabloid paper for city-wide distribution explaining the union's position on the lockout. This Wednesday a huge mass meeting in Cadillac Square in support of the Chrysler workers will be held by the UAW-CIO.

In a front page editorial in the United Automobile Worker, the auto workers union gives corporation and their stooge press the only answer they can understand: "We Accept the Challenge!" The headline reads: "Solidarity Will Defeat the Corporation's Union-Smashing Drive."

"We know the corporation is acting tough. But we have an answer that - has humbled mightier would - be - dictators than the Chrysler coupon-clippers. "We have solidarity; and we have a just cause. With that combination, we can more than match the Chrysler Corp. and all its mouthpieces. We will hold our ranks. No matter what the corporation may force on us, we will win."

The Difference Between Fritz Kuhn and Earl Browder

AN EDITORIAL

When American Legionnaires and other hoodlums attacked a public forum of the Communist Party in Detroit, last Friday night, they did so with the assurance that it was in line with the Roosevelt government's policy. For that was the meaning of the Federal government's indictment of the head of the Communist Party on a patently flimsy technicality. The government was putting the Communist Party outside the pale, and reactionaries everywhere are taking the hint.

The assault on the meeting was, of course, facilitated by the growing isolation of the Communist Party. Its brazen justification of the Hitler-Stalin alliance has branded it among workers as a tool of the Hitler-Stalin war camp. Tens of thousands of workers, formerly friendly to it, feel nothing but hatred for this agency of Cain-Stalin. How else explain the attack of the hoodlums—these creatures are scarcely daring—unprecedented, certainly, since Detroit became a stronghold of the labor movement.

Part of Roosevelt's War Drive

We have previously condemned the increasingly generalized attack by the government on the Communist Party, and the latest incident serves to underline the importance of this problem. The government is attacking the Communist Party as part of the government's drive to crush all real opposition to America's entry into the war. The Stalinists are being attacked, first and most prominently, precisely because the Communist Party today meets with so little sympathy in the labor movement. But this attack is paving the way for attacks against all anti-war militants and against all labor militants who will resist the regimentation of labor by the war machine.

Browder and his mates are of course reaping what they have sown. The Stalinists, up to the Stalin-Hitler pact, were the most vociferous supporters of Roosevelt and his war preparations. They covered up every attack that the government made against labor. They tried to create a lynch spirit against all anti-war elements. Their present attempt to pose as anti-war martyrs is poppycock. They remain war-mongers, with this difference: they are now whooping it up for the war camp to which Roosevelt is opposed.

Only Labor Can Cleanse Labor

It is not for the sake of the Stalinists, but for the sake of the labor movement and the real anti-war fighters that we call upon the working class to condemn and oppose the legal and illegal pogroms launched against the Stalinists.

We are for cleansing the labor movement of the poison of Stalinism—but that's labor's own job, which cannot be farmed out to the government, reactionary hoodlums or, for that matter, to John L. Lewis and William Green. Only the conscious, democratic action of the rank and file of labor can put an end to Stalinism.

It is necessary to emphasize sharply this fact, because there is a dangerous tendency in certain sections of the labor movement to refuse to condemn the persecution of the Communist Party. For example, the Socialist Party organ declares editorially:

"It (the Socialist Party) does not believe that the present legal difficulties of Browder and his men are civil liberties or labor issues. Not any more than the legal difficulties of Fritz Kuhn, Father Coughlin, and other foreign or native fascists." (The Call, Nov. 11.)

And the organ of the Independent Labor League (Love-stone) says:

Hoodlums Raid Stalinist Meeting

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Meanwhile, two blocks from where the CP meeting was taking place, more than a thousand hoodlums had gathered at the Church of the Rev. Frank Norris. Norris aided the Legion hoodlums in preparing their attack. Two years ago, at the time of the Black Legion investigation here, Norris assisted in the freeing of one of its vice-commanders, Harvey Robinson, and made the latter an usher in his church.

Mounting a sound truck, the Rev. Norris led the goons in singing patriotic songs as they marched toward Finnish Hall. As the indoor meeting ended and workers fled from the hall, men and women were indiscriminately attacked by the Legion mobsters as the handful of police under the direction of Inspector Lochbiler stood by silently.

Attack Jews and Negroes
So ferocious was the assault that men and women accidentally passing the hall were beaten by the goons. Those workers fortunate enough to receive even the pitiful protection offered by the police were again fallen upon blocks from the hall once their police escorts had left.

The hoodlums, scores of whom were drunk, made Negroes and Jews the chief victims of their attack. At least one Negro, Harry Williams, of the National Negro Congress and the NAACP, is in the hospital suffering severe skull fractures.

Attack Premeditated
That the attack was premeditated is confirmed by evidence in the hands of the State Office of the Communist Party. Before the meeting was held, information of an impending attack upon the hall was relayed by the local CP to the Detroit police.

"The Communist party is in no sense of the word . . . a bona fide part of the labor movement of whatever tendency. . . . It is a force outside of and hostile to the labor movement, its organizations, aims and aspirations. It is on the same plane with the German-American Bund of Fritz Kuhn, which is notoriously an agency of the German Nazi regime and the Gestapo." (Workers Age, Nov. 4.)

Quite illogically, in another article on the same page, the Workers Age goes on to register a protest against the indictment of Browder, correctly pointing out that it is directly linked with Roosevelt's foreign policy, and that in the process of persecuting the Stalinists, vital democratic rights and liberties are bound to be sacrificed. Quite illogically, we say, because the Workers Age does not dream of protesting the prosecution of Fritz Kuhn although it puts him on the same plane with Browder.

We don't give a damn what the government does to Kuhn, except to point out its significance as an index to Roosevelt's commitment to the Chamberlain-Daladier war camp. For the quarrel between Roosevelt and Kuhn is one between two imperialist bandits. It does not touch the labor movement, because Kuhn is an avowed enemy of the labor movement and any Nazis found in the labor movement should be thrown out forthwith.

Against Patriotic "Logic"

But to lump Kuhn and Browder into the same category is a dangerous error. It can only be done by one kind of logic: the logic of "democratic" patriotism, whereby the enemies of the "democratic" war camp are all on the same plane. That is precisely the logic by which the war-mongering New Leader, organ of the Social Democratic Federation, supports the persecution of Browder.

The Socialist party and the Lovestoneites, in their identification of Kuhn and Browder, have done what they are doing in so many important issues today: they are yielding to the pressure of the democratic imperialist war camp. Militant labor can follow the Socialist party and the Lovestoneites in this false course only at the peril of surrendering entirely to the war-mongers and the war dictatorship.

Earl Browder is part of the labor movement in exactly the same sense as Louis Waldman, leader of the war-mongering social democrats. The Communist party and the Social Democratic Federation are on an equal plane. One is the agent of the Hitler-Stalin war camp, the other is the agent of the democratic war camp. We would like to see labor free itself from the influence of both these agents of the war-makers. Nevertheless, so long as they are part of the labor movement, so long as their members play a role in the trade unions and to their own organizations, our quarrel with them is a quarrel within the labor movement. In settling that quarrel we want no "help" from anybody outside the labor movement. Government repressions against the Communist party and the Social Democratic Federation are repressions by the capitalist class against a section of the labor movement, and we defend all sections of the labor movement against the capitalist class.

Our position is the only class position on this question. The factional position of the Social Democratic Federation, the Socialist party and the Lovestoneites, plays into the hands of the class enemy.

CURRAN BACKS FINK SCHOOLS

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maintained absolutely silent, thus far, on the "training bases," The leadership fears to put its position in print.

No referendum, no consent of the rank and file of the N.M.U. was ever received for this fink plan. A referendum vote of the rank and file against the "training bases" and for WPA jobs for the unemployed seamen would sweep the coast like a prairie fire, and put the war-making "fink" plans of the Roosevelt-Maritime Commission - Curran combination behind the eight-ball.

Vigilant action and organization of the war conspiracy of the Roosevelt of militant struggle against the Maritime Commission can save the N.M.U. from a smashing anti-union blow.

ST. LOUIS MEETING Can American Labor Win the War?

Speaker: B. J. WIDICK TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21 8 P.M. OLIVE HALL 3830A Olive Street

Let the People Vote on War!

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How Gandhi 'Fought' the Last War

By SHERMAN STANLEY

It is instructive to contrast the records and activities of Mohandas K. Gandhi, leader of the 5,000,000 strong Indian Nationalist Congress, in the last war and the present war.

Gandhi, just returned from South Africa where he had first developed his theories and methods of non-violent, passive resistance, rapidly asserted himself as the leading figure of India's nationalist cause.

The Congress, which previously had been a small pro-British organization of wealthy Indian "liberals" and civil service bureaucrats, began to grow rapidly under his leadership. It became a mass organization of the Indian middle class.

A SUMMARY OF HIS 1914-1918 RECORD

When the war began, Gandhi, in consultation with leading British authorities in India, gave his unqualified and unhesitating support to the war. He proclaimed that it was a war for right and justice.

And what of India? Why should she support the war? Gandhi accepted completely certain vague promises (which were never kept) made by the British Viceroy. Nothing concrete was given. Gandhi became an open recruiting agent for the British. He toured the country raising money, troops, etc. He urged Hindu and Moslem alike to join the British armies.

What was the result? India sent more men into action than all of the British dominions combined (close to 2,000,000). They fought in France, China, the Gallipoli peninsula, Arabia, etc. Hundreds of thousands died, particularly in the Dardanelles. A stream of wealth poured from India into the British war chest. The British plundered the country to satisfy the needs of the war. India mobilized its huge man-power and resources for the British . . . and obtained absolutely nothing.

GANDHI'S RECORD TODAY AND WHAT IT MEANS

When the Second imperialist World War opened up, Gandhi expressed his immediate willingness to perform his 1914 role all over again. He alone of the Congress Executive Committee wanted to give unconditional support to the British. He didn't even ask for any promises as he had in 1914! He was prepared to betray the nationalist cause even more shamefully!

But not the millions of workers and peasants. If Gandhi had proceeded in his first intentions when the war began, he would have been knocked aside and uprooted like a sapling in a thunderstorm. He would have lost his entire following and influence. For India refused to support dying British imperialism under any conditions. That is the will of the people.

This is the explanation for the militant stand taken today by Gandhi. He reflects the ferment, the action, the determination of India's masses. His latest demand for immediate independence (without going through stages) expresses the desire of every Indian worker and peasant. The Congress slogan of a freely elected Constituent Assembly for India is the burning revolutionary slogan of the hour, rallying tens of millions to its banner. Gandhi, desiring to stay at the head of the masses so as to prevent the movement from developing too rapidly and becoming revolutionary, is forced to swing into line.

Every revolutionary worker will give his full support to the freedom demand and endorse the proposed Constituent Assembly. But he will have not the slightest trust or confidence in Mahatma Gandhi or the conservative leaders who surround him. Their desire is not for a genuine revolutionary struggle, but to remain at the head of the masses so as to hold them within the bounds of "legality" and pacifism.

What is the meaning of the complete change in Gandhi's attitude since the war began? Without the slightest hesitation we can state that India today is a seething cauldron, bursting with the revolutionary energy of the masses. It is the workers and peasants of India who have already given the first call to revolt against the imperialist war. They are acting and forcing the Gandhists to act with them. The revolutionary upsurge of India has just begun!

It is carrying Gandhi along in spite of himself. Once it begins to feel its full strength and to reach out for freedom and revolutionary power, it will lightly toss aside Gandhi or anyone else who stands in its way.

ANNOUNCEMENT

DOUBLE ROOM WANTED for two people. Must be furnished. Address all letters to S. Stanley, care of Socialist Appeal, 116 University Place, N.Y.C.

LOCAL PHILADELPHIA is pleased to announce the opening of a new headquarters, at 1836 West Poplar Street. There will be a Housewarming Party there Saturday night, November 18th, to which all comrades and sympathizers are cordially invited.

BRONX ELECTION VICTORY SOCIAL. The Lowdown on how we dunnit!! Guaranteed! One hour of entertainment including Singing, Dancing, Imitations and an expert Marxist magician!! Absolutely no buxalax or general fund. Saturday, Nov. 25, at the newly renovated headquarters of the Liebknecht Unit of the Y.P.S.L., 1334 Wilkins Avenue, Freeman St. Station on the East Bronx line. Refreshment Specialty: Old-fashioned Apple Cider. Don't miss it! A good time is always assured at a Bronx social!

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THEATER PARTY tendered by the Friends of the Russian Opposition Bulletin. "Chaver Nachman," by I. J. Singer, a Jewish play based on the Russian Revolution, with Joseph Ben-Ami, Celia Adler, and Ludwig Satz. At the National Theater, 2nd Ave. at Houston St., N.Y.C., on Tuesday evening, Dec. 12. Tickets are available at the National Office, 116 University Pl. Get yours early for choice seats.