

The Negro Question

By J. R. JOHNSON

Hoover has already sent \$100,000 to the Finnish bourgeoisie. Let no Negro give one red cent to this counter-revolutionary campaign on behalf of the enemies of the Finnish workers' movement. The road for the workers is a different road—the road that should have been followed in regard to Ethiopia. That road was pointed. Preparations were made. But the working class and the Ethiopian leaders made the fatal mistake of putting their trust in imperialists.

When Italian fascism began its attack on Ethiopia, workers all over Europe felt great sympathy with Ethiopia.

In 1935, as in 1914 and 1939, the leaders of the big labor parties, Blum in France, Attlee in Britain, and the leaders of the trade unions, Jouhaux in France, Sir Walter Citrine and Ernest Bevin in Britain, Lewis and Green in America, were completely reactionary. They always support their capitalist government in any really serious struggle.

But in Britain, France, Belgium, Spain, among the second and third ranks of the leadership, and especially among the class conscious workers, there arose a strong feeling for working class action on behalf of Ethiopia. All the capitalists and the labor fakery were babbling about League of Nations—in other words, looking to the League of Bandits to arrest another bandit for doing what all the bandits wanted to do themselves. But the rank and file workers, and the leaders nearest to them, were saying that the seamen, who were carrying oil to Italy should, supported by the International Federation of Trade Unions, stop carrying that oil.

If the workers stopped carrying it, both Mussolini and his brother bandits would be in serious difficulty, for these gentlemen fear nothing so much as the independent action of the working class.

Why Mussolini Got Oil

Eugene Jagot, official of the War Resisters International, a small political organization, went to the Brussels meeting of the International Federation of Trade Unions, to urge the trade union bureaucrats to sanction this international workers' boycott. Naturally, Citrine, Bevin, Jouhaux, did not want any such thing. But the pressure was strong, the workers were aroused. There was some possibility of at least a partial success, or even, given certain circumstances, of a great victory.

What certain circumstances? The Soviet Union had been clamoring for both action by the League of Nations and independent action of the workers. Now you cannot do both. Either the workers act by themselves, or they support some action by the ruling class or by some section of it. But the Stalinists claimed that they could support the League of Bandits and at the same time have independent workers' action. If, at this critical moment, when the Federation of Trade Unions was actually meeting, not the Soviet Government but the Soviet trade unions had decided on a boycott and called on all seamen, railwaymen, miners, to refuse to ship any materials to Italy, then those who were fighting at Brussels to break the resistance of the European Lewis and Greens would have been enormously strengthened. What happened was exactly the opposite.

The Stalinist bureaucracy is today and has been for many years the most dangerous enemy of the workers' revolution. Stalin and the Stalinists had been calling for this independent working class action. This was for the record. But the moment there was a possibility of getting the millions of trade unionists moving, they sacrificed this to their alliance with Britain and France. A hasty telegram came from Moscow to Brussels, stating that under no circumstances would the Soviet Union support independent action. They would support the League of Nations, and the League alone.

With this blow from Moscow, the movement for working class action was killed.

The masses of the workers, especially in Europe, meant well toward Ethiopia, but they were misled by the labor fakery, assisted by the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Try to Save Ethiopia Again

There was another attempt made to save Ethiopia by the masses of the people. As soon as the war broke out, thousands of young men black and white, volunteered to form an international brigade, to fight with the Ethiopians against Italian fascism. Mr. G. T. Garratt, a British official in India and a correspondent of the Manchester Guardian, states in his book *Mussolini Over Spain* that in the list of names sent into the Ethiopian embassy there were, after all necessary deductions, five thousand men who could have been organized into a powerful corps, ready to stiffen Ethiopian resistance in those early difficult days.

Why did it not materialize? Because the Emperor of Ethiopia and particularly Mr. Martin, the Ethiopian Minister in London, were tied up with the British Foreign Office officials those imperialist bandits, and were looking to them for assistance and not to the masses of the workers. The result was that this splendid beginning, which could have been the nucleus of tens of thousands of volunteers and millions of dollars, was rejected by the Ethiopian Government in order not to offend the imperialists, those same imperialists who were plotting its downfall.

So that today when these same rascals start talk about "poor little Finland," or poor little anybody, let every Negro ponder over the lesson of Ethiopia. Imperialism is on one side. We are on the other. We look always to ourselves. What was needed, what we need today, is an international revolutionary organization, which will agitate in the working class movement for international working class action for working class aims—actions such as Eugene Jagot proposed. Such an organization as it grows stronger will organize international brigades, not to carry out the counter-revolutionary Stalinist policy, as was done in Spain, but to fight for the socialist revolution and the independence of the colonial countries. Such today is the Fourth International.

Sir Stafford Cripps Goes To India To Pour Oil On Troubled Waters

By BRITANNICUS

Sir Stafford Cripps is going to India. The press dispatch reporting his projected trip states that the British government denies responsibility for him. So does the Labour Party. But the dispatch (and common sense) shows that all the war parties in England will deny responsibility for Cripps if he fails, but will no doubt hail him as a hero if he succeeds.

India's resistance to being used by British imperialism is one of the greatest difficulties of the British ruling class today. The Indian revolution is on the order of the day. Gandhi and Nehru fear that revolution as much as does Chamberlain. Cripps can get them out of it, if any man can. And this is why.

Cripps is one of the ablest men in England. A lawyer, he makes perhaps \$100,000 a year. His wife is a millionaire in her own right—and not in dollars but in pounds; and his father is Lord Parmoor, one of the peers connected with the Labour Party. Cripps himself was Attorney-General in the last Labour government. He is not a fool like Major Attlee or a sycophant like the late Ramsay MacDonald. He went to Eton, which in England is much more important than going to Oxford or Cambridge.

WHY CRIPPS IS SO USEFUL TO CHAMBERLAIN

The economic crisis threw him to the left. He began a struggle against the leaders of the Labour Party. When the Ethiopian crisis

began the Labour leaders shouted for war under the flag of the League of Nations. Cripps opposed the war. He said the League was a League of Bragands. He wanted action against Mussolini, but action by the workers. In the House of Commons he made some masterly speeches on the inevitability of war in capitalist society. The Labour Party leaders were not going to have this in war time. They threatened to expel him. Cripps capitulated. "Our differences," he said, "are not fundamental."

As the European situation sharpened and Chamberlain sought collaboration with the fascist powers, Cripps initiated another revolt in the Labour Party. With Cripps was a group chiefly of wealthy or well-to-do men: George Strauss, M.P., a millionaire; Harold Laski, a university professor; D. N. Pritt, K.C., another member of Parliament. They wanted a "more vigorous" Labour policy, they wanted "genuine" collective security, a "genuine" League of Nations. Also, they wanted a Popular Front. The Stalinists formed a unity agreement with them. Victor Gollancz, the publisher; J. B. S. Haldane, the Cambridge University professor; John Strachey, the Stalinist writer, were others of the clique. Those were the days when the Stalinist Utopia was still collective security. The Labour Left Wing, the Stalinist Party, the Independent Labour Party signed a Unity Agreement and toured the country attack-

ing the leaders of the Labour Party. At that time Cripps was the most popular labor leader in England, for he attacked the reactionary labor leadership in inspiring terms.

When the government tried to whitewash a great mining disaster, Cripps exposed them and made rings around the government lawyers. The miners loved him for it. In the House of Commons, when bills affecting the workers came up for discussion, Cripps always led the attack, getting them altered where possible in favor of the working class. He posed as the friend of colonials, spoke at their meetings. George Padmore, the Negro revolutionary in his book *Africa and World Peace*, called for the colonial revolution against all imperialism. Cripps wrote an introduction to the book.

But the Unity Agreement (and Cripps' popularity) took its members nowhere. The Stalinists in Spain began to murder the POUM. But the POUM was allied to the I.L.P., so that in England Stalinists and the I.L.P. were soon at daggers drawn. The Popular Front in France began to collapse, and the English Labour leaders pointed to it in derision. Came the Moscow Trials, and the Stalinists began to stink. The Labour leaders saw their chance and threatened to expel Cripps. Cripps capitulated.

WEARS HALO OF EXPULSION

But he was soon attacking the Labour Party leadership again. He wanted a "radical" program,

a "real" effort to bring in Russia, a "militant" Popular Front. War was near and the Labour leaders stood for no more nonsense. They expelled him.

Cripps did not mind. He represents a constituency of Bristol and nobody can defeat him there, not even a candidate with the full weight of the official Labour Party behind him.

As was to be expected, he supported the war but opposed the Chamberlain government. On November 5th he spoke to his constituents in Bristol:

"Had my advice been taken in the Spring of this year and a Popular Front organized to defeat this government, we should not now be at war. . . . Russia is out to protect Russia and the new civilization of her own country. . . . She has in fact dealt a great blow to the strength of Hitler. . . . As for the Government, . . . they are quite as unscrupulous as Mr. Lloyd George's war-time coalition at its worst, and even more reactionary. . . . This Government represent those whose one desire is to preserve the colonial and social status quo—the old order, things as they are."

But what to do? Oppose the war? Not at all. Cripps is busy with what should be the "real" aims of the war. In his paper, the Tribune, Nov. 10, an editorial dealing with war aims says of India:

"India has provided us with the immediate test, and the demand of the Congress Party for the definition of the war aims of this country enables us to make it clear beyond doubt that we are prepared to give India her freedom, as soon as she is ready to take over the government of the country."

Since that appeared the Indian workers and peasants, pushing Gandhi before them, have made it clear that they have no confidence in anything the British government says. The British government, however, sees that it has to make some concessions.

Who so suitable to put these over as Cripps? The whole world thinks of Cripps as a revolutionary. For years he has been in fierce opposition not only to Chamberlain but even to the Labour Party. He is for the freedom of India, with only one provision, "as soon as she is ready to take over." That is exactly what Chamberlain says. But coming from Chamberlain it means one thing. Coming from Cripps it looks as if it means something else. Gandhi and Nehru now have a chance to use revolutionary words on the same platform with Cripps and put a reactionary "settlement" over on the Indian masses. It is the dirtiest job that any workers' leader can take on at this time.

So near is India to revolution that the British government has had to send this most left of the Labour left wing. In any real crisis all these "lefts" always are ready to help imperialism against its colonies. Cripps has gone back to his masters.

There is a lesson in all this for American workers as well as for British. Many people complain that the Fourth International attacks most fiercely those who are supposed to be "nearest to us." The reason is once more exemplified in the case of Cripps. Those who play with revolutionary policy are the most dangerous enemies of the working class. A Cripps can deceive where a Chamberlain could not.

'Socialist Call' Mobilizes World For Finland

By FELIX MORROW

Reading the articles and editorials on Finland in the recent issues of Norman Thomas' paper, *The Call*, I was reminded again and again of an appropriate comment provided by a sentence in "War and the Fourth International," the theses on war adopted by our movement in 1934.

That sentence reads: "Only a hopelessly dull bourgeois from a god-forsaken Swiss village—like Robert Grimm—can seriously think that the world war into which he is drawn is waged for the defense of Swiss independence." That sentence must now be modified to include Norman Thomas, Lillian Symes, Gerry Allard and the rest of the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, U.S.A. The political and intellectual characterization—hopelessly dull bourgeois—fits them like a glove. They live in New York and Chicago, but that does not abate one bit their hopeless political provincialism.

If these remarks seem harsh, the alternative is even more damning. Either Messrs. Thomas, Allard & Co. do not have the political and mental horizon to understand that the Finnish events are an incident in the imperialist war for the re-division of the earth; or they are agents of the "democratic" imperialists.

Knights In Shining Armor

The editor of *The Call* greeted the Finnish events with an article entitled "Support the Finns!" He concluded with a ringing call: "In that struggle every human being who cherishes freedom will support the heroic Finns." In answer, the Allied Supreme War Council has hearkened to his words.

The next issue of *The Call* (Dec. 16) carried an appropriate eight column banner across its front page: "Finland's Fight: A World Cause." The leading article, by Norman Thomas, left no doubt where he stood in this world cause. "Of course the United States ought to do all that our government and people have done to express their horror at Stalin's crime, that includes foregoing Finland's debt." Thus wrote Norman Thomas.

A full-dress editorial told the world that: "Only among the Stalinists—and those even more talking about "poor little Finland," or poor little Trotskyists—is there any illusion left that Russia is a Socialist or even a Workers' state." No, said *The Call*, the real Utopia is Finland:

"The White Guard generals, including Mannerheim, were deprived of virtually all economic and political power when their estates were confiscated and divided. Mannerheim has played no role whatever in politics for many years." (The editorial neglected to point out that Mannerheim has been reduced to commander-in-chief of the Finnish armies.)

The editorial went on to vigorously denounce the "pretense" that "Finland was acting as the cat's paw of Britain," and to give us the very interesting information that "the British and French governments since the (Naz) pact have disclosed their determination to appease Russia, even at the price of throwing half of Poland, and possibly all of Finland, into its maw. They were even visibly annoyed when Finland threw its problem into the lap of the League of Nations." They have since, presumably, expressed that annoyance by expelling Russia from the League.

Everything else *The Call* has had to say is of the same stripe. Lillian Symes (Dec. 16) cannot contain her contempt for the Trotskyists who say that Finland is a pawn of the imperialists. "This," she counters triumphantly, "in spite of the fact that both England and France have shown their complete willingness to let Finland go the way of Czechoslovakia and Loyalist Spain and have been assiduously courting Stalin ever since the Stalin-Hitler pact."

S.P. Members Protest

It is no secret that the foregoing reactions of the Socialist Party leadership did not sit well with considerable sections of the membership. Even a congenial reformist like Raymond Hofess, editor of the Reading (Pa.) *Labor Advocate*, wrote in: "What worries me is his (editor Allard) apparent belief that it has at last become the business of American Socialists to take the side of war and that, however we may have rejected the proposition that the conflict between Britain and France on the one side and Germany on the other was a holy war, we shall not take the same viewpoint when the opponents are Germany's totalitarian ally and Britain's potential pawn." Various branches of the Socialist Party adopted resolutions attacking the pro-war line of *The Call*.

Under pressure of the protests, the official resolution on the Finnish crisis adopted by the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party (*The Call*, Dec. 23) retreats from the previous positions—but only verbally. Where Allard wrote "Finns," the resolution says "Finnish workers"; it explicitly disavows the proposition that Finland is a socialist state; but then defines it as not a capitalist state either: "We believe that the democracy of Finland differs from that of England and France in degree of workers' control. It is this, taken together with the fact that Finland has no imperialist ambitions and is free from any taint of colonial exploitation, that is a determining factor in our attitude." It asks for "the formation of independent labor committees to aid Finland—in contrast to committees headed by capitalist politicians and perhaps used by them for their own interests." (That "perhaps" is perfect!) "We support the move for the cancellation of Finland's debt"—i.e., they support American governmental actions on behalf of Finland.

What is the difference between the latest resolution and the previous position taken by *The Call*? Verbal only, that is clear. But that raises the question with which we began: are Messrs. Thomas, Allard & Co. simply lacking in the political and mental horizon to understand that the Finnish events are an incident in the imperialist war? Or are they becoming agents of the "democratic" imperialists, like the rest of their brothers of the Second International? Precisely when they abandon their cruder formulations and go over to more subtle, more confusing, but definitely chauvinistic formulations, it becomes more difficult to think of them as merely honest fat-heads.

3. "... We'll Make Peace."

MUTINY!

The Mutinies in the German Fleet

by "Spartacus"

Cutting the soap ration was the last straw. The sailors of the *Friedrich der Grosse* had been getting a monthly ration of three tablets of synthetic soap—crumbling, sandy stuff, made without any fat—and one packet of soap powder. In the spring of 1917 it was announced that this wretchedly inadequate ration was to be cut down. The stokers, who had to wash from head to foot every time they came off duty, were especially indignant. A group of stokers and sailors met in the machine room.

It was finally decided that one watch of the "black squad" (stokers and engine room men) would strike. Sachse, the leader of the stokers and the brains of the whole movement, went ashore at Wilhelmshafen and got in touch with some revolutionary workers. They wrote out, by hand, five hundred copies of a leaflet appealing to all the "black squads" in the fleet.

THE FIRST BREACH OF DISCIPLINE

The *Friedrich der Grosse* put to sea. Sachse gave the word for action at midnight. His watch lined up for duty. The lieutenant in charge gave the order to their places. No one moved. Again the order. Still not a move from the silent lines of men. The officer of the watch was sent for, from the bridge. "Present your requests," Sachse stepped a pace forward, as the regulations prescribed, and asked for the old soap ration. The officers hesitated, consulted — and then, spontaneously, the entire front rank stepped forward and men began to talk all along the line. The war machine had suddenly disintegrated into its human parts. It was the first breach of discipline in the High Fleet.

Hastily, the officers promised the ration would be restored. The promise was kept. "But later," writes Winttingham in *Mutiny*, "when men were washing after their four hours below, they were ordered to parade for 'an inspection of cleanliness', and lost three-quarters of an hour's sleep, standing naked while an officer, very slowly and carefully, went over them to see that the soap was really being used, not carried ashore to trade to women!"

From this beginning, mutinies spread through the whole fleet in the summer of 1917. At one time, fifteen battleships and cruisers were in the hands of the mutineers. The whole affair is well described in the report Admiral Von Scheer wrote after the mutinies had been brought under control:

G. G. 6025 B1
Headquarters of the High Sea Fleet
October 7, 1917.

VERY SECRET

The events that have occurred in the course of the past few months among the crews of the conditions behind the lines. . . . Questions of internal policy, which just at that moment were occupying all minds in Germany, naturally found a lively echo on board the fleet, particularly among the older men already accustomed to political activity. And in this way several of them, whose intelligence distinguished them from the others, acquired certain ideas, such as those for example of the Russian revolution. . . .

The movement became dangerous as soon as contact was made with leaders of the Independent Socialist Party in the Reichstag. . . . The aim was to be to gather in the fleet as many signatures as possible, with which these members of the Reichstag would go to the Stockholm peace conference. . . . They wanted to prove by means of these signed petitions that the crews of the German Fleet were in agreement with them and accepted their aim. And this aim was peace without annexations at the earliest possible moment. . . . With these fine words of "peace soon" it was not difficult to seduce wide circles among the crews, given their state of morale. . . . fighting units under my command are now known in their smallest details. . . .

On all the vessels in the High Sea Fleet command, just as in the German Empire and at the fronts, the conditions of subsistence were defective during the summer. . . . Visits home and complaining letters gave an idea that was not cheering of living

The violence of the revolutionary movement is extraordinary, and it is necessary that all ranks of officers should pay the greatest attention to preventing a new explosion. . . . It is important for commanders to teach their subordinates to remain always, as men in authority, conscious of their high mission — to regard events with candor and assurance, to know not only their duty but their rights in regard to their inferiors, and, strong in this knowledge, to act resolutely and without fear of responsibility.

(signed)
SCHEER

INSPIRED ABOVE ALL BY RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

These 1917 German fleet mutinies arose out of the same general causes as the mutinies in the French army: rigid discipline and miserable food, the economic privations of the sailors' families at home, war-weariness and the

hope for peace aroused by the Stockholm Conference and, above all, the Russian revolution.

A year and a half later, the German Fleet was again in the grip of mutiny—but this time the political situation behind the lines was such that the mutiny developed into revolution. On October 29, the fleet was ordered out to sea in a last desperate attempt to break through the British blockade. The officers talked of going down with the flag flying, but their words awakened no response in the ranks. A strike of stokers forced the postponement of the attempt. Again came the order to put to sea, and this time mutinies broke out on several vessels. Admiral Von Hipper, in command, had no choice but to put back to port again—this time for good.

On November 1st, the sailors began to go ashore on shore leave. At once they got into contact with the trade unions of Kiel. There were meetings, speeches, parades, endless fraternizing between sailors and workers, all through the next few days. At some point in this period mutiny became revolution. Workers' and sailors' councils were set up, police and marines were killed or overpowered when they tried to "restore order"; sailors from Kiel went out to all parts of Germany bearing the message of revolution.

"IN THE DAWN LIGHT OF THE REVOLUTION"

The young Sachse, condemned to fifteen years at hard labor for his part in the 1917 mutinies, heard a great hooting of ship sirens one morning. Looking out of his cell window, he saw a vessel move slowly along the nearby canal, its siren at full blast and a red flag at its masthead. That day two sailors wearing red armbands came to the prison. Sachse was set free.

Later on he wrote the story of the mutinies. "In the first phase," he summarized, "there was a movement against the worsening of conditions of life on board. But when Russia shone 'in the dawn light of the Revolution', the movement in the Navy received also a great political impulse. It began to go along a revolutionary political path. The struggle on the Prinzregent-Luitpold for the liberation of mutineers, the struggle on the *Friedrich der Grosse*. . . were already political struggles. . . . Confused and wavering, our fight nonetheless was a political effort that reached its consummation in 1918 through the Revolution."

CANADA JUDGE REJECTS WATSON APPEAL PLEA

(Continued from Page 1)

many and Italy and the totalitarian regime in Russia. "I said workers in Canada should not rely on the Communists because by their recent pact with the Nazis they had betrayed the workers of the world."

"At that time did you know of the Defence of Canada Regulations?" he was asked. "No."

"You don't think Canada should be in this war?" asked the crown. "No, I don't approve of the war."

Watson Fight Continues

Frank Watson now faces the possibility of a year in prison, unless \$300 can be raised for his fine, which will reduce his sentence by six months.

The only possibility open for a more lenient sentence is a direct appeal to the Minister of Justice at Ottawa. The Frank Watson Defense Committee is addressing such an appeal to Mr. Ernest Lapointe, and urges all sympathetic individuals and organizations to do likewise.

The committee suggests that the following message be forwarded:

"Rt. Honorable Ernest Lapointe, Minister of Justice, Ottawa. I/We strongly protest conviction of Frank Watson under War Measures Act and severe sentence of one year and urge that you reduce his sentence. I/We also urge repeal of Sections 39 and 39A of Defence of Canada Regulations as a violation of elementary democratic liberties."

Permanent Defense Group Needed

The committee is now contacting other groups interested in civil liberties defense work with a view towards a coordination of efforts in this direction. As it predicted, present developments indicate that many flagrant injustices will be committed. Recently C. H. Millard, Canadian C.I.O. organizer, was arrested under a similar charge.

The committee is endeavoring to hasten the convoking of a conference to establish an active, alert and strong defence organization which will vigilantly guard against undue repressions, instances of which are becoming all too numerous.

ANNOUNCEMENT

NEW YEAR'S EVE Celebration: Philadelphia, Pa. December 31st at 949 Filmore St. 9 p.m. until ??? Refreshments, Entertainment, Novelties, Dancing, Noise, Breakfast—All for 50 cents. Don't miss

Government Outlaws Canadian Strike

TORONTO, Ontario, Canada—Federal Labor Minister McLarty has notified the steel workers of the St. John's Drydock and Shipbuilding Co. that their strike for higher wages, to meet mounting living costs due to wartime inflation, is "illegal."

McLarty added that the strike was "illegal" because under the War Measures Act, an order-in-council Nov. 7 extended bans on strikes to cover "shipbuilding and repairs intended for the use of the forces of any of His Majesty's naval, military or air forces, or for the use of the forces of any of His Majesty's allies in the present war."

Jamaica Jobless Picket Officials' Homes on Xmas

NEW YORK—As Queens Borough President Harvey and City Councilmen Conrad and Christensen settled down to enjoy their Christmas dinners, the Jamaica Unemployed and Relief Workers League set pickets in front of the doors.

"Mr. Harvey, you eat turkey while the Di Bernardo family of sixteen starves," said one picket sign. Another—kidding Harvey who is constantly spouting about 200 per cent Americanism while himself an immigrant—read: "Immigrant Harvey, we want jobs at union wages, not rubber hoses."

During the picketing, President Harvey came running out of his house and, peering into the eyes of one of the pickets, shouted: "I know you. You are one of Popovitch's boys." Harvey and Otto Popovitch, Jamaica unemployed leader, have clashed on many occasions.

Threats by Harvey's neighborhood vigilantes against the pickets were followed by the appearance of police, who confiscated the picket signs. The pickets left under threat of arrest—but not before the police had promised to see to it that the Di Bernardo family would be taken care of by the relief bureau.

Alexander Barmine Coming to America

Alexander Barmine, who as charge d'affaires of the Soviet Union Legation in Athens resigned on Dec. 4, 1937 in protest against Stalin's trials and purges, is coming to the United States soon.

He is now in France, where he has worked in an airplane factory.