

WORKERS' INTERNATIONAL NEWS

VOL.3. No.2.

FEBRUARY 1940

TWOPENCE

BEFORE THE SPRING OFFENSIVE

During the lull in the fighting on the military front, the sappers and miners are undoubtedly doing their mole's work, undermining the enemy entrenchments. The diplomatic moles are similarly busy in an equally unobtrusive way. Only when the underground mines explode will their handiwork be disclosed.

In the last Great War this preparatory work was already almost completed before August, so that the shot at Sarajevo initiated a chain of world-shaking events in a period of days, and humanity found itself divided into two great camps. The line-up today, in the sixth month of the European war is still undecided. But the moles are burrowing assiduously.

The French Yellow Book on the events leading to the war, like the British

Blue Book and White Papers on the same subject, make great play with the personal characteristics of Adolf Hitler as a factor making for war. But economic statistics for the prewar years tell a far more convincing story.

1939 was a year of slump. Figures for new capital issues in Britain, always the most significant index of boom and depression, show that from the peak year of 1936 there has been a devastating drop to less than one third. They sunk to £66,000,000 which is below the level attained in the depths of the last economic depression, some £88,000,000.

Hardest hit of all was France. It was only the outbreak of hostilities in September that halted the development of the social crisis which was universally expected to come to a head

in the autumn of 1939. The interne-cine struggles within the French bourgeoisie were halted momentarily, but only at the price of a war effort which is costing France, according to the estimates of the military budget for the first quarter of 1940, some £4,200,000 per day.

British financial support, the "pooling of resources", the Franco-British Solidarity Committee - all these measures indicate that the structure of French economy cannot stand on its own basis, but needs the British prop.

Like their masters, the valets of imperialism, Citrine and Jouhaux have drawn together in a common effort to win the war and to stave off the threatening revolt of the French workers against the intolerable burdens which the war has superimposed on those already loaded on their shoulders through the depression. Valets and masters on both sides of the Channel draw together too in common struggle against the French Communist Party, the leaders of which are trying to utilise the smouldering rebellion of the French masses to further the plans of the Stalin-Hitler partnership.

The parliamentary immunity of the Communist Deputies from arrest was suspended last November and they were expelled last month. The drive against the Communists expresses the fear of the Daladier regime that the civil war in France might develop more rapidly than the uprising against Hitler in Germany. Their fears are shared by the reformist labour leaders who unite with them in a fight directed ostensibly against the agents of the Kremlin, but in reality against the revolutionary trends now arising within the working class.

The resumption of French trade agreements with Spain, the trade treaties with Belgium and Yugoslavia, the British trade agreements with Sweden, Greece and Turkey indicate faintly the outlines of the future Allied camp. But the central factor in the coming line-up is the attitude of the United States.

The blockade of German exports opened up to the United States the possibility of establishing a monopoly of South American trade. But Japan too received simultaneous benefits from the preoccupation of the Allies in the European war. Japanese exports made a spectacular recovery, the excess of exports for the last three months of 1939 reaching 400 million yen as against 60 million yen for the whole of 1938. Her operations in China were facilitated by the withdrawal of British gunboats from the Yangtse and of Allied troops from Chinese territory. The two remaining rivals for the lion's share of Chinese trade are now left face to face, and there is a sharpening antagonism in the Pacific expressed in the abrogation of the U.S. trade agreement with Japan in protest against the use of military force in China and the violation of American rights and property. The fear of giving Japan a free hand in China limits the degree to which the U.S. can intervene in the European conflict.

Roosevelt, in his crusade for religious freedom and his exchanges with the Pope, is clearing the road for intervention. At the trial of Earl Browder, American Communist leader, on flimsy charges, a leaf was taken from Stalin's book. Donzenburg, one of the witnesses and a foundation member of the Communist Party of the U.S., confessed (according to British Press reports) to having been a secret agent

of the Soviet Union, and in this capacity to have taken aerial photographs of a "certain country" from the plane lent him by its "Ruler." Unmistakably King Carol of Rumania is pointed to in his thinly veiled references which suggest a plan on the part of Stalin of aggression against Rumania. The technique is identical with that of Stalin's witchcraft trials in Moscow, and helps to clear the way for open intervention by the U.S. in the Finnish conflict, limited up to now by "non-military" financial aid and moral support.

In Finland the threads are being drawn together. Volunteers from a diversity of countries are recruited into a foreign Legion symbolising the capitalist front against Russia, gifts and loans of money are being sent by Sweden and the United States as well as arms and equipment, while Citrine and the I.F.T.U. contribute their res-

olutions and appeals. On Finnish soil the combined capitalist onslaught on the Soviet Union is being organised.

From the united capitalist front against the Soviet Union, only Hitler Germany as yet stands aside, for, in Stalin's words, his friendship with Hitler is "cemented by blood." Nevertheless, whether Germany is bribed over into the anti-Russian bloc or whether the cement continues to hold, the intervention against the Soviet Union is becoming a menacing reality. In Finland the threads are being drawn together.

But in all the national states, France and Germany, Britain and Russia, U.S. and Japan, the mole of the revolution is busily burrowing, laying its tunnels beneath those of the diplomats and the warmongers. In this fact lies humanity's one hope. Burrow well, old mole!

Labour and Democracy

The war develops in a way completely unexpected by all the participants. Even the Marxists who had predicted the inevitable outbreak of hostilities are apparently contradicted by events. Totalitarian war and the internal totalitarian regimes which synchronise with it has not yet appeared in its full force at the present time. On the fronts, apart from the obliteration of Poland, the war proceeds more as an intensification of the bitter economic and diplomatic struggle which went on before open hostilities commenced, than large scale military operations. The formal declaration of war has merely initiated intensive prepar-

ations before the belligerents engage in mortal combat.

But already Daladier has promised us "total" war in the spring, a warning emphasised in the reply of Hitler to the speeches of both Churchill and Daladier. There has been a time lag in the development of events. The prologue to the drama has been unduly prolonged, that is all.

In Germany the totalitarian character of the regime has been further intensified by a new series of decree laws. The death penalty for listening in to foreign broadcasts is a typical

example. In France dictatorial powers assumed by the Government have inaugurated a semi-totalitarianism whose character is more and more deepened as the war proceeds.

But in Britain democracy has blossomed forth in its full vigour. We are shown the power of democratic ideals, nurtured by centuries of experience, ingrained in the Anglo-Saxon character, proof against all tendencies of disintegration and decay. At least so we are assured. It is true that this idyllic picture is somewhat smudged by the emergency legislation passed at the beginning of the war, legislation which if applied would immediately inaugurate conditions similar to those in France and Germany today.

It is also true that in India and the colonies the emergency legislation introduced as a precaution has been rigorously carried out and not merely left to adorn the statute book. But the colonies are far away. In Ulster too the totalitarian code has not remained a dead letter. People are arrested and imprisoned without trial. A reign of terror has been introduced. But why quibble? The Irish Sea separates Ulster from the mainland even if it is included as part of Great Britain. And we have been told that the turbulent Irish require special handling quite different from that which is necessary for the more sober and responsible English.

But the problem still remains. For the present, in practice if not in law, the democratic rights gained by the working class are still being maintained. Political life in Britain, on the surface, proceeds as usual. The Hore-Belisha episode, it is true, revealed the cloven hoof of the power of the military clique and the

stranglehold of monopoly capital in the direction of affairs. But this was merely a glimpse, showing rather what was intended in the future than a present reality.

War is the continuation of politics by other means. This quite Marxian aphorism is the key to the question which confronts us. Time and again Government spokesmen have announced that the co-operation and support of organised labour is "essential for the successful prosecution of the war." What was impossible in Germany, and possible only to a limited extent in France, has been achieved in Britain. The ruling class has leaned heavily for support, through the labour bureaucracy and worker aristocracy, upon the working class. The tremendous reserves which have been accumulated in the past few years by British imperialism at the expense of its rivals and the long period of industrial peace, without any major national strikes, have paved the way for this policy.

The Stalinist and Labour agitation for "collective security", a "stand against Hitler," "for the ending of aggression" further facilitated the possibility of this taking place. In the House of Commons, when the issue seemed in the balance, Greenwood was demanding war on September 1st. He was "relieved" on September 3rd, when the declaration of war was made, that Chamberlain had not "betrayed" Poland.

From the first day of the war the Labour Party stood unreservedly behind the Government. A new "political truce" was declared and Labour was invited to join the Government. They declined, but the very fact of the invitation revealed the closeness of their position to that of the Tories.

But now that the first shock of war has worn off the masses are becoming critical. A mood of distrust is spreading throughout the working class and that is why we begin to hear "half oppositional" speeches from the Labour leaders. There is no political truce, protest Attlee and Morrison, only a "standstill agreement" over by-elections which has been caused by the difficulty of holding elections in war time. This is a plea which has inconveniently been exposed by the announcement of a general election in Canada. "We are not supporting the National Government, only the war against Hitlerism and aggression," Attlee solemnly attempts to reassure the rank and file. And adds without a smile "there is a difference between the two." "If Labour gets the confidence of the nation we are willing at any time to take power and apply our programme for the benefit of the nation," declaim the labour leaders from all the public platforms. "In view of Labour's faith, it was impossible for them to blackleg in the present contest by refusing to take their stand against Nazism," says Attlee in a speech at Cardiff on January 29th, but nevertheless ".....the struggle will be a severe one. I am certain that only by the adoption of socialist principles in the organisation of this country can we come through the ordeal of war successfully and meet the difficulties of reconstruction. I am certain that only by the adoption of the principles of Labour's peace aims can we end war and establish peace on firm foundations."

This critical attitude in words of the labour leaders is dictated by the necessity to keep the masses from breaking away and turning towards mass

action against the hardships which war imposes on them, and from there it is just a short step towards mass opposition against the war itself.

So long as the Labour and trade union bureaucrats maintain their hold on the masses, so long can the capitalists continue to afford the luxury of a democratic regime in the metropolis while dispensing with it in the colonies.

But the war has hardly begun and already a stirring is apparent among the workers. With the "total" war the mood of disillusionment and revolt will grow. The labour leaders will not be able by metaphysical arguments to unload responsibility for the war and its consequences from their shoulders. They will probably be forced by the pressure of the government and the mass actions of the workers to enter the Government. The capitalists will attempt to use them to break the opposition of the workers. But this instrument will not be enough. Total war abroad means total war at home, and the capitalists will seek better instruments. They have made all the preparations. The days of democracy are numbered. In its last strongholds capitalist democracy will be extinguished.

What is to take place will be decided by the degree to which the Fourth Internationalists have gathered sufficient cadres to place themselves at the head of the insurgent masses and seize power. The choice before our epoch cannot be evaded. Either the proletarian revolution or totalitarian barbarism. There is no middle road. The road of the labour leaders leads straight to the concentration camps.

Stalinists in Deep Water

We have discovered without any difficulty the official policy of the Labour Party on the present war. The pacifist policy of the I.L.P is clearly visible through its tenuous socialist wrapping, but, despite all our efforts, we are unable to unearth the policy of the Communist Party on this most vital issue.

On January 27th and 28th the London, Scottish, Lancashire and Midlands districts of this organisation held their congresses. Reports appeared in the "Daily Worker" on January 29th indicating the Congresses' condemnation of a war "which Chamberlain is carrying on for imperialist purposes." We might mention in passing that should any of the delegates who endorsed this, inadvertently find his way into the store houses of the waste paper merchants, he would discover that during its first five weeks this same war was a "just" one "against fascism", and some timely advice on how to win it.

"Foremost in every session of the (London) Conference" we are informed, "were the two questions of the working class and how to end the war." As the Conference posed two questions, we naturally look in vain and can only find such nebulous statements as: "to fight for the needs of the People means at the same time to fight for the end of the war. This comes from the General Secretary of the Party, R. Palme Dutt. Ted Bramley's contribution was equally clear: "The issue today is this: with the imperialists and the labour leaders to slaughter,

or with the Communist Party to end the war and end capitalism." But this doesn't help much either because, with the Stalin-Hitler Pact in operation, according to this same party's declaration of August 23rd, a blow has been dealt "to fascist war plans" and we should be enjoying the fruits of the "victory for peace and socialism" which they claimed the pact to be.

At the Lancashire congress we find Mr. Pollitt emerging from exile to "Urge the congress to prepare for far reaching events, to remember that the fight was not alone on the wage issue, but was of far broader dimensions, and to have faith in the role which the Communist Party was playing in all other lands." The author of the historical "How to Win the War" pamphlet showed extreme tact in confining to the "parties of other lands" his appeal for "faith."

The Birmingham Congress was honoured with the presence of William Rust, who stated that "it was vitally necessary to strengthen the fight against war... We must make our mass campaign on wages and social questions part of the fight against war." He also "showed the necessity" of building up a "People's Front from below."

Cynically abandoned by the Lord of the Kremlin to work out their own destiny without making "mistakes", the British Stalinists haunt the Labour movement like a shadow whose body has been mislaid. Grimly they hitch all their statements to the declaration of the Comintern secretary, Dimitrov.

On November 27th, Rust calls for "working class unity and a "people's Front as a way to bring this war to an end." In all, the Stalinists have the choice of four "policies" on the basis of Dimitrov's manifesto. "United Front from below," "People's Front to end war," "The workers will end the war after their own fashion" (whatever this means) and, on the basis of "This war is not in your interests" they justify support for any "stop the war" or "peace and democracy" movement that happens to come their way. Every declaration that the new leaders make, they tie to one or other of these statements.

Incapable of interpreting Stalin's manoeuvres and anxious to avoid the fate which befell the luckless Pollitt and Campbell, Palme Dutt and William Rust take no step without placing the onus on "Comrade Dimitrov" but they will not escape from the meshes, and when Stalin's guillotine falls on Dimitrov's neck, they too will go the way of all (Comintern) flesh.

It is no accident that these agents of the Moscow "father of the people" should not know where they stand. It is merely a reflection of Stalin's own unhappy predicament. "Democracy" is now a thing of the past. Their last democratic friend Churchill, as evidenced by his latest broadcast speech from Manchester, is prepared to face up to Hitler without the aid of Russia. Rapprochement with Britain is now out of the question. The invasion of Finland has brought the forces of world capitalism, with one exception, in line against the U.S.S.R. The one exception is Hitler Germany and it is on Hitler alone that Stalin relies for his continued existence. Hitler must be kept in power, must continue to

wage a war against the Allies.

But whatever happens, Stalin's end is in sight. If the allies defeat Hitler, they will then turn on the Soviet Union. The mouthpiece of allied imperialism, the ludicrous Polish "government" has declared that "Russia cannot stay after Hitler is defeated." A victory for Hitler in the West would in all probability urge him to take back from Stalin what he was loaned in the same sense as Poland was allowed a portion of Czecho-slovakia in the Munich carve-up. The third alternative, the workers "ending the war after their own fashion," if this can be interpreted to mean by social revolution would also mean the demise of the Thermidorian bureaucracy. A successful uprising in any part of Europe, or in the East, would spread across the continent like a fire in an oil refinery and would inevitably have its repercussions in the Soviet Union itself. Whichever way Stalin turns he is in a blind alley and consequently his foreign agents who pose as leaders of the Communist Parties cannot give a lead to the masses in any direction. No policy will meet their needs - or rather, those of their paymaster. That is the reason why all their statements of "policy" are carefully phrased so that they can be interpreted in any way which happens to suit the authors' needs at the moment.

While Stalin and his paid "followers" flounder ever deeper into the quicksands of their own treachery which will ultimately engulf them, we do not change our course. The time is not far distant when the masses will take the only course open to them led by the one world party which now, as always in the past, consistently and clearly points to socialism.

Singapore Strikes

The Singapore workers have gone on strike. From a careful study of the meagre press despatches, it becomes clear that what was cheerfully described as only a strike among the dock workers engaged by the Harbour Board was in fact a general strike involving large sections of the Singapore proletariat. The "Times" of January 13th, mentioned casually that three to four hundred workers engaged in the hospitals have also struck. We were told also that workers in a cane factory had besieged four English officials of the factory and had fought the police who had been summoned to release the officials, using bottles as missiles. Although the correspondent is reticent it is not difficult for us to guess what kind of missiles the police must have used.

The method employed by the authorities in connection with the workers' movement must be noted, for there can be no doubt that in a similar situation in the metropolis, the same methods will be used to deal with British workers.

The ideological preparation for the use of extreme measures had been laid down by the Governor, Sir Shenton Thomas, in a speech on January 1st. "There are some in Malaya", he said, "who are doing all they can to stir up trouble. I do not know if they realise it, but they are behaving as if the Nazis are their friends. I warn these people that I regard them as enemies and that I shall deal with them accordingly."

It was no surprise therefore, when the whole paraphernalia of war-time emergency legislation was imposed upon the workers to break their determination to win a living wage. On January 13th, the "Times" correspondent declared emphatically that the strikes would "not hamper naval work and shipping will not be affected." And yet before two days had passed it was reported that "the strike was hampering military work" and that "it was impossible for the government to tolerate acts of this kind." By January 17th many of the strike leaders, all Chinese, were behind prison bars charged with the offence of "prejudicing the war efforts," under the defence regulations. The last report published by the bourgeois papers informed us that in spite of the strong action taken by the authorities, the strike was continuing.

The Singapore strike is a significant episode in the drama of imperialism in war time. Taken in conjunction with the recent strike movement among the workers in India they not only give us an idea of the effect of the war on the colonial masses, but also of the forces which will end the war.

The Maharajahs, the Nawabs, the Sultans, the Chiefs, the landlords together with the native capitalists - all are as deeply involved in this war as their masters and protectors, the big capitalists of London. Their benedictions on British imperialism can no longer hide the fundamental contradiction between the needs of the col-

onial masses and the needs of British imperialism in war, a contradiction which will blow the Empire into smithereens ere long. The Malayan authorities had kept its working population in unspeakable poverty in time of peace. Today, more than ever, it is compelled to launch heavier attacks on the working masses. On November 23rd, Sir Shenton Thomas tearfully proclaimed his intention of imposing additional taxation. He trusted that "the Malayan Government would offer the bulk, if not the whole of the proceeds to the imperial government as a contribution to the cost of war."

The colonial question is causing many an anxious heart searching among the rulers of the empire. Can they win the war before the disintegrative tendencies in the Empire accumulate the force of an earth quake? The British Empire entered this war, the last that it is destined to fight, torn with internal strife. The economic crisis which weighed most heavily on agricultural production had given rise to a mass peasant movement which is increasingly taking on a political character under the influence of the rising movement of the working class. The German imperialists are hoping that before Chamberlain can deal a death blow to their own ambitions a storm will have broken out in the colonies. That is why from the point of view of British imperialism, every

colonial worker who demands and fights for a living wage, every peasant who demonstrates against rising prices, is an enemy and an agent of Hitler.

It is against this background of the gathering storm in the colonies that we must place the Comintern's slogan "stop the war" if we are to understand the full extent of its perfidy. The Kremlin satraps can see in the gathering forces of the colonial revolt only the signature to its own death warrant. The Stalinist press having for years maintained a significant silence on the colonial issue, has suddenly rediscovered the sufferings and struggles of the colonial slaves in the "democratic" empires. But their noisy advertisements of the struggle of the colonial workers is meant solely for the education of the British and French bourgeoisie, to convince them of the reasonableness of acceding to Hitler's terms immediately before the plebeian revolution sweeps away the entire system. The slogan "stop the war" is therefore directed not only against the Czech and the Polish masses enslaved by German imperialism, but also against the millions in the French and British colonies. Not under the slogan of "stop the war" but under the slogan of the overthrow of capitalism and the freedom of the colonial masses - the slogan of the Fourth International - can the workers win peace for themselves and the whole of humanity.

The Intervention in Finland

The self same League of Nations which moved so languidly and dilly-dallied so long in the case of the imperialist onslaughts on Abyssinia, Albania, China, Spain, Austria and Czechoslovakia was galvanised into swift action when the Soviet Union was named as the aggressor. Sympathy was expressed and aid promised from Britain and France, Argentina and Haiti, Bolivia and Mexico, Venezuela, Colombia, Dominica, Liberia and Uruguay. Ecuador, whose "Liberal" government a few days later provoked and brutally crushed an uprising of the socialist workers declared herself ready to render "all possible humanitarian aid." And the United States, though not a member, replied to the appeal of the League by declaring that assistance was already being organised.

The effect on that other capitalist fraud, the reformist trade union international, was also electric. In the middle of January the International Federation of Trade Unions met in Paris under the joint presidency of Sir Walter Citrine and M. Leon Jouhaux, expressed "sympathy and solidarity with the heroic Finnish people in their fight against Stalin's imperialist aggression" and appealed to its

affiliates to organise "effective aid" for Finland. This is the same organisation which clung to "non-intervention" in the Spanish Civil War until all was lost.

And the world bourgeoisie has found other weapons, too, to wield. The Red Cross is the symbol of compassion, of aid to suffering humanity irrespective of nation, race, religion or political creed. At least, such it claims to be. But at Geneva at the beginning of this month the Swedish Red Cross requested the International Red Cross to investigate civilian bombing in Finland in conjunction with the American Red Cross. The civilian deaths in air-raids reported from Helsinki, where there exists a powerful interest in favour of exaggeration, were if anything remarkably small in comparison with the reported number of Russian machines engaged and bombs dropped. In spite of this the attempt is made to use the Red Cross as a propaganda weapon against the Soviet Union.

Mr. Hoover, who first distinguished himself in the service of imperialism by importing Chinese slave-labourers for the Rand gold mines, who rose to

be the president of the United States and chief slave driver for American imperialism, is now the philanthropic sponsor of the Finnish Relief Fund which sent a million dollars raised in the U.S. to Finland. Further millions were promised by him including a million from organised labour.

From Sweden came £3,500,000 collected from Swedish industries. The Swiss Federal Council voted 100,000 francs. The Canadian Red Cross sent £11,900, the Australian £10,000, while the New Zealand Government voted £5000 for Red Cross purposes. The Pope sent "a large sum" for Catholic relief in Finland. The United States Government has earmarked a million dollars as a "non-military" loan to Finland.

More openly, Argentina has sent 50,000 tons of wheat on the pay-when-you-like system. South Africa has released planes to be sent to Finland. From Italy and the U.S. planes and arms are being landed. British clothing and equipment intended for the B.E.F. has been diverted to Finland, while Mr. Butler has announced plans for the export to Finland of war material from Britain. It was disclosed in the U.S. that during 1939 war material had been exported to the tune of 5,895,000 to Sweden, 4,487,000 dollars to Finland.

Sympathy has taken the concrete form of money, arms and men. By the end of the year, besides the Swedish volunteers, the voluntary enlistment of 2,000 Italians, 2,000 Norwegians and 1,500 Danes was announced. A Finnish Foreign Legion has been formed from White Russians, Italians, Poles, Austrians, Estonians, Latvians, Swiss, Hungarians, Australians, Frenchmen and Britons, according to Helsinki reports. But the army of international capital-

ist intervention against the Soviet Union was incomplete until the arrival of Sir Walter Citrine in Finland on January 25th at the head of the Labour delegation.

The systematic campaign of the Stalinists during their recently buried Popular Front period, the popularisation of the idea of "aggressors", has returned upon their own heads as a boomerang. The most striking feature of the 'Aid Finland' campaign has been that the organised workers have not only passively permitted it to go forward, but have in some cases actively assisted it. 90,000 Swedish workers have donated the proceeds of one day's labour to the Finnish bourgeoisie's war-effort, amounting to a million kroner. From the American workers has been promised a million dollars.

The volunteers and ambulances, the dollars, kroner, francs and sterling, the guns and planes, wheat and clothing that pour into Finland are not only a threat to the rule of Stalin. If that were the case, we might merely note the influx with a comment on the irony of a situation which finds Stalin, sower of illusions about "independence of small nations", the victim of his own propaganda campaign.

But the Soviet Union also is threatened and that is a matter of grave concern. The Soviet house is infested with Stalinist vermin, it is true, but the workers of the world have no interest in burning down the house to get rid of the bed-bugs. The overthrow of Stalin is a job for the Russian masses and for them alone. Our job is to deal with our own exploiters, and thereby render the only possible aid we can to the toilers of the Soviet Union. Down with the intervention!

The "New" Africanerdom

Some four months before the outbreak of the war, Germany began broadcasting in Afrikaans, the language of more than half the white inhabitants of the Union of South Africa. This was the beginning of a solicitude for the sufferings of the subject peoples which was also extended to the Arabs, and parallels the compassion felt by British imperialism for the Austrians, Czechs and Poles.

Fanned by the Nazis, smouldering Boer nationalism is once more bursting into flames. But it would be a mistake to imagine that Mr. Hertzog and his party, who voted for neutrality, split from the South African Party and are now demanding an end to the war, are in any way experiencing a revival of that Boer spirit that led them in their youth to oppose British imperialism with arms.

The discovery of gold and diamonds in South Africa had a twofold effect. On the one hand it opened up the country and initiated an industrial revolution, attracting a large English-speaking population dominated by British imperialist interests. On the other hand, by creating a market for agricultural products and means for exporting them, it transformed the miserable subsistence farming of the Boers into agricultural production for the world market. Two forces grew side by side: British finance capital which is represented by the Chamber of Mines, and the class of wealthy landowners, consisting of some ten thousand rich farmers.

The Rand gold deposits consist of refractory ore, lying at deep levels and comparatively low in gold content. The farming land is unfertile, eroded, subject to drought and locusts. Neither mines nor farms are in themselves rich, but the real wealth of the country lies in the huge resources of cheap, docile black labour that can be sweated from the native population under the sjambok.

The main political struggle in South Africa is the struggle for control of native labour between the imperialist mineowners and the Africaner landowners, the struggle, in short, to grab a greater share of the real wealth of the country. The Jameson Raid, the Boer War, the 1915 rebellion the 1922 Rand Revolt are among the more bloody episodes that have marked this war of wealth.

The landowners have based themselves politically on the hatred of the Boer population for that imperialism which brutally trampled them down, burned their farms and imprisoned their women and children in concentration camps during the Boer War. But the singular series of betrayals which Boer Nationalism has experienced in the past forty years reveals quite clearly that the landowners who head the nationalist movement have exploited it in order to strike a better bargain with imperialism.

General Smuts, who led the nationalist movement in its earliest years, effected the first compromise with

British finance-capital in the years preceding the war of 1914-1918. The "statesman-philosopher" became one of the sturdiest pillars of the British Empire, teaching to the natives with bombs and bayonets in the Bondelswarts huts and at Bulhoek the lessons he had himself learned at the point of imperialist bayonets.

Smuts' defection left his lieutenant, Hertzog, at the head of the nationalist movement. Its ranks were depleted; his following came from the poorer farmers who received no share in the concessions given by the imperialists to the wealthier landowners. But with the help of the white workers whose 1922 revolt was brutally crushed by the Smuts government, Hertzog's party came to power at first in coalition with the South African Labour Party and later with its own majority.

From this electoral victory nationalism gained a new national flag, a new national anthem and a better status for the Afrikaans language, while the wealthy landowners and their politicians filled their pockets.

The world slump which began in 1929 and reached its peak in 1931-32 created a catastrophic drop in the prices of agricultural produce and brought the landowners to their knees. They capitulated to Imperialism and in return for land loans fused with the party of the Chamber of Mines. Smuts and Hertzog found themselves once again sitting side by side, fellow-servants of imperialism as they had once been fellow-fighters against it. Hertzog's lieutenant Malan led the rump of the Nationalist Party which consisted of small-farmer elements. In a desperate effort to keep the Nationalist Party alive without the support of the big landowners Malan has ex-

ploited every device known to the demagogue, culminating in the adoption of the greater part of the Nazi programme and fusion with the fascists. This was the situation on the eve of the present war.

The slump which preceded the war had gradually increased Malan's support, and nationalism saw new opportunities arise when war broke out. Hertzog and his fellow ex-nationalists hastened to put themselves at the head of the new "nationalist" movement, that is, the movement of the landowners to exact a bigger share of wealth from British imperialism, which was now in difficulties. Hertzog became the leader of "the newly constituted Africanerdom."

Passive spectators of the mock battle between "Africanerdom" and Imperialism are the voiceless, voteless native people who outnumber the whites by three to one. Their labour-power is the real prize in the battle and not the principles of "independence" or the "right of secession". As farm-slaves or mine-slaves their lot is equally wretched, and the bond which unites Smuts' backers to those of Hertzog is their common interest in the exploitation of the blacks and their common fear of native revolt. It is this factor that links them together and dictates to the Opposition its tactics of parliamentary obstruction and windy but meaningless stump speeches. Should the sincere nationalists resort to arms as they did in the last war, Hertzog will be found in a similar position to that which he occupied in 1915 - sitting on the fence and cynically awaiting the defeat of the secessionists. That is the significance of his "neutrality."

For the landowners who once again head the nationalists, the movement is

a bargaining counter for their own enrichment. For the rank and file supporters, it is a reactionary attempt to turn back the clock of those happy days of Oom Paul, when the "kaffir" was kept in his place with the aid of rifle and sjambok, when every white man was a king.

But among the native workers a new wave of struggle is slowly mounting. There are on the Rand 300,000 native miners whose obscure, unlauded struggles have passed unrecorded but not unremembered. Among the workers in secondary industry the trade union movement is steadily growing, and in this movement the small cadres of the

Fourth International are in the lead. The only genuine nationalist movement in South Africa is that of the native people. When it gets into its stride, British workers will find fighting allies against the common exploiter. The white workers in South Africa must be shown that their real allies are their native fellow-workers, and not the treacherous nationalist landowners. Side by side they can issue a real challenge to the imperialist bloodsuckers, and set up a socialist republic. But as long as the only dissident manifestation to reach the newspaper headlines is that of Hertzog and Mlan, the British bourgeoisie can well afford to smile, ruefully but without trepidation.