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WAGE DIFFERENTIALS BASED ON RACIAL discrimination exploit the labor of the Negro worker and undermine the bargaining power of the white. The decision rendered by Federal Judge W. Calvin Chestnut in Baltimore requiring the payment of the same salaries to Negro school teachers as to white is a victory in the fight for wage equality. It will also aid in the establishment of greater educational equality for Negroes in the South. The Maryland Teachers' Association and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People deserve great credit for the fight they waged to win the Chestnut decision. What has happened in Maryland should set an example in the North as well as the South, for wage inequalities based on race exist above the Mason and Dixon Line as well as below it.

"By Fire and Sword"
BY Freda Kirchwey

The "ideology" behind the Russian invasion of Finland is summed up with beautiful brevity in the words of a Stalinist worker at a meeting in a Moscow factory, reported by G. E. R. Gedye in the New York Times just before the invasion. "We will punch them so hard that not one gentleman ruling Finland will be able to gather them together again. Long live the peace policy of the Soviet government!" The words were symbolic. In military terms they were quickly translated into the bodies of civilians smashed to fragments in buses or on the streets of undefended towns by bombs dropped from Soviet war planes. The horrors that fascism wreaked in Spain are being repeated, in the same name of peace and socialism, in Finland. And the contemptible pretenses that have accompanied fascist aggression—pretenses brilliantly exposed and exorcised by Litvinov in his unforgettable speeches at Geneva—are now being revived by the government that dismissed him in forms so brazen and bizarre as to seem almost like caricatures of their fascist models.

After the conclusion of the Nazi-Soviet pact, Louis Fischer wrote in The Nation: "The pendulum of the Kremlin clock swings fast and never stops halfway." This week it has swung all the way over to the right.

What are the reasons for the Russian invasion of Finland? Let us ignore the shocking nonsense in the Soviet press and look only at the facts. Russia demanded certain islands in the Gulf of Finland; a naval base at Hangö, Finland's chief fortification; the port of Petsamo close to the nickel mines owned by the International Nickel Company, Finland's one outlet on the Arctic Ocean; a piece of territory near Leningrad on the Karelian Isthmus; the demilitarization of the frontier. In return Finland was offered a strip of Karelia, larger in area than the territory Russia demanded, but of no particular value. Long negotiations in the Kremlin failed to produce an agreement. Finland's representatives announced that they had accepted a majority of the Russian demands but could not go the whole way without sacrificing the country's independence. They went home, leaving the door behind them open for further talks. But the country was put on a war footing in case of trouble. Soviet and Finnish troops faced each other across the frontier. Tension mounted, and the Soviet press launched a systematic campaign designed to terrorize the Finns into surrender. Out of the mass of abuse and lies the one point consistently made was the present vulnerability of Leningrad and Russia's need of controlling the approaches to the city both overland and through the Gulf of Finland. This point is valid if Russia is preparing to meet an attack from Germany or from Britain in alliance with Germany. While neither looks probable for the duration of the present war, the Soviet government is obviously determined to utilize the freedom from interference which the war provides, to guard against the hazards of a longer future.

Without invasion the Soviet Union could have obtained the boundary concessions and the islands in the Gulf of Finland it has now taken by force. The one thing it certainly could not have gained is the fortified Hangö peninsula; if Finland had granted it would have been as if England allowed a Continental power to establish a naval base at Plymouth. Rather than relinquish any part of its demands, the Russian government preferred a war of conquest. How long ago it decided on this no one knows, but certainly the policy was laid down before the British-French negotiations began last summer. The terms of that undefined Russian demand for concessions in the Baltic states, made during the negotiations, are now revealed in the bombs dropping in the streets of Helsinki. When the demand was rejected, Stalin turned to Germany, and his advance in the Baltic may well have been part of the deal that preceded the division of Poland.

Since I am not in the power-politics business, it is hard for me to understand the necessity of pretense. If Russia was determined to enforce its claims upon Finland, even by bomb or bayonet, why could it not have issued a direct plea of national necessity such as I have outlined here? Bad as its case might seem to sticklers for peaceful methods, it would be better than the palpable, barefaced lies with which the Soviet government draped its cold-blooded purpose. Does any living man believe that Finland intended to attack the Soviet Union, much less to extend its domination to the Ural Mountains? Does anyone believe that Finland was encouraged to resist Soviet demands by British "imperialists and warmongers" when
Britain even today is officially ignoring Russia’s aggression in the interests of friendly relations with the Soviet Union. Does anyone really believe that the new “democratic” regime set up at Terijoki by the advancing Russian army represents the interests or desires of the Finnish workers and peasants? What is this grotesque nonsense designed to accomplish? One can only suppose that it is aimed at people who read and hear nothing to the contrary—at the people of the Soviet Union. But a war is not an internal affair, and opinion in other countries will have much to do with the final outcome of Moscow’s adventure in imperialism. The Kremlin obviously needs a censor.

For no conqueror ever had a worse press than Stalin has today. Even the Nazis are finding their own invention-machinery requirements inadequate to the demands of the newest exploits of their partner. Forced to think up reasons for approving a development that holds obvious threats to German interests, the Nazi press has belatedly decided to blame the whole affair on Britain. The Volklicher Beobachter argues that the Russian-Finnish dispute proves that peace will not descend upon Europe until its quarrels are left to those “immediately concerned.” “The experiences of the present war prove,” it says, “that collective security is ineffective in protecting the strong from the weak...” I think that this comment should be preserved as fascism’s happiest contribution to the literature of international relations.

Italy makes no pretense of approving Russia’s attack. Mass student demonstrations in support of Finland have been permitted, with the police ostentatiously guarding the Soviet embassy from assault, and the press has expressed cautious sympathy for the Finns. The Italian attitude has elements of irony considering Mussolini’s record, but it proves how intense are Italy’s fears of Soviet advance in the Balkans and reflects an antagonism to Nazi policy which is now almost outspoken.

In the rest of the world, abhorrence of Soviet imperialism is expressed as clearly as fear and national self-interest permit. China, depending still on Russian supplies, is silent; Japan, worried about its own security and glad enough to have Soviet attention directed to the west, says nothing officially, but its press warmly supports Finland’s case. The Balkan states, especially Rumania, watch with obvious trepidation, reading their own fate in the progress of the struggle. In the Scandinavian countries, of course, popular indignation against Russia runs hot, and hundreds of young men are offering their services to the Finnish army. The governments expect ultimate involvement. The possibility that Russian troops may push through to the Atlantic is in every mind, and the even more desperate fear of a joint German-Soviet attack on the peninsula and Denmark, which might develop either as the result of a prearranged deal or as a counter-move by Hitler to prevent Russian domi- nation of Scandinavia. Sweden has formed a new emergency Cabinet.

As for the United States, opinion is divided only as to the form and appropriate degree of protest. The President offered the good offices of the United States government in an effort, which he doubtless knew would be vain, to prevent the invasion. He has followed it with two official acts: a message to both governments urging that they refrain from bombing civilian centers—a proposal which Finland agreed to and Russia ignored; and a public request that American firms refuse to sell planes to the aggressor, unnamed but clearly designated. Much pressure is being brought to bear to force the Administration to break diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, but only part of it can be traced to righteous indignation. The rest is partisan politics which has driven a few Republicans to the perilous length of attributing the invasion of Finland to the Administration’s recognition of the Soviet government in 1933. The President’s course seems to me beyond criticism. I hope and believe he will not go farther and end diplomatic relations.

So far Finland has resisted the Russian attack with amazing vigor. The government has been reorganized to draw in representatives of all parties, including Valio A. Tanner, Social Democrat, former Finance Minister, and head of Finland’s greatest cooperative society. The new Cabinet’s offer of peace negotiations has of course been flatly rejected. After all, Moscow has already set up, recognized, and signed a mutual-assistance pact with a Finnish “government” of its own—a government which has gracefully yielded all that the legally constituted government at Helsinki refused. It would be improper, to say the least, to ignore the existence of so amenable a puppet and negotiate with the government it is supposed to have superseded! On similar grounds Moscow has refused to attend the meeting of the League Council, called at Finland’s request. Aside from such mummery, it is clear that Russia is now determined to have its way with Finland, to smash its military power and achieve domination of the Baltic.

The Finns are fighting for their lives and for the independence of their country. And whether they are conscious of it or not, they are fighting to resist a concept of revolution that threatens every ideal that the working-class movement has stood for. Only a few weeks ago Izvestia pointed out that you cannot change an ideology “by fire and sword,” a simple fact that all honest revolutionary leaders accept. Today the followers of Stalin all over the world are repeating in other words the formula of the Moscow factory worker. Whether or not that formula will prevail in the Balkan states and even in the strong democracies of Scandinavia may well be settled among the lakes and forests of Finland.