

Padmore Sups with Kings and Emperors

Discussion on the Negro Question for the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International

By JAMES W. FORD

In "Negro," a book by Nancy Cunard, appears an article by George Padmore entitled, "Ethiopia Today—The Making of a Modern State."

In this article, Padmore strays a thousand miles from Communism, goes completely into the camp of the petty bourgeois nationalists, ignores the role of Soviet Russia as the friend of oppressed peoples and small nations, and falls headlong into the lap of Japanese imperialism which he hails as the friend of the "darker races." A few sentences from this article will suffice to expose Padmore's mockery of Communist political analysis, his stupidity and treachery. The following sentence sets forth Padmore's premise:

"It is less than ten years ago that Ethiopia suddenly emerged out of a condition of isolation. Since then, her orientation towards modernity and her relationship with the capitalist countries of the West has been so rapid, that she is today a full-fledged member of the League of Nations, and maintaining embassies in such important capitals as London, Paris, Rome, Berlin and Washington."

Make the latter part of this statement read: "Ethiopia today a full-fledged capitalist state, with embassies in the leading capitalist cities in the world," then we draw Padmore's logical conclusion: that the salvation of Ethiopia lies in the country becoming a bourgeois capitalist state.

The false idea of Japanese imperialism as the friend of the "darker races," is more fully enlarged upon by Padmore. He says that a commercial treaty has been made between Ethiopia and Japan, "an alliance which might have tremendous and far-reaching importance not only for Ethiopia, but for all BLACK AFRICA." (Emphasis—Padmore's).

He develops the idea still further by the following words:

"Ethiopians, like the Japanese, are a proud and independent people jealous of their national freedom and conscious of the fact that they are the first non-European people since the Haitian Revolution to defeat the white race at arms—the Abyssinians over Imperial Italy in 1896; Japan over Czarist Russia in 1905." (Emphasis, mine J.W.F.)

Here one sees not only the complete smoothing over of the relations but the stirring up of bitter race poison. Any one who knows anything at all about the Haitian Revolution knows that it was not a question of race against race. It was a struggle of the slaves, led by Toussaint L'Ouverture against slavery and the domination of the rising French imperialists over Haiti. In this struggle it so happened that whites were allied with blacks against France and in some cases blacks allied with whites to continue the enslavement of the blacks.

History also records the important fact that Toussaint L'Ouverture stopped sharp in his tracks; and demanded that a group of Polish people (mostly immigrant workers and peasants who lived at that time in Haiti) should have protection as a national minority.

Or let us take the Russo-Japanese War. Has Padmore forgotten (?) that the Bolsheviks as early as 1905 fought against the invasion of Japan by the Czarist armies as an act of aggression against the Japanese people and an act against the interests of the Russian workers and peasants? Of course Padmore is aware of this act of internationalism on the part of the Bolsheviks.

Then why does Padmore issue the slogan "defeat the white race

at arms?" This slogan covers up these facts and the principles of the class struggle and is of great value to the imperialists who are now stirring up nationalist chauvinist feelings in preparation for war. This slogan aims at splitting the ranks of the working class. Moreover it lumps all whites together, white workers with white bourgeoisie, and calls for "race war" instead of "class war." It is a treacherous slogan of nationalism.

Padmore carries this vicious idea still further when he says:

"Ethiopians, like the Japanese knowing that all other colored people are under the yoke of white imperialist domination, are suspicious of the white man." (Emphasis, mine J.W.F.)

What about the subjugation of the Koreans and Manchurians by Japanese imperialism (so-called colored races), Mr. Padmore? Are there no class divisions in Japan?

Praise of the Bourgeois Rulers

Padmore loudly praises the Ethiopians and the Japanese rulers for their thousand-year lineage and sees the present day rulers as the cream of the "great" past. He says:

"Ethiopians, whose history is one ranging over a thousand years, claim a line of sovereigns dating back to 4530 B. C. . . . with over 300 rulers including the Queen of Sheba."

"The history of Ethiopia is similar to that of Japan," says Padmore. "The latter has her 'Son of Heaven' and the Ethiopians their 'Lion of Judea.' These are the two most important personages in the two countries." The Ethiopians "swear fidelity to the Emperor, whose official title is Kadowawi, i.e. the Power of Trinity, Kings of Kings." This sounds like a monk extolling the virtues of the Pope.

The Emperor, the "Liberator" of Ethiopia

"The church, which has controlled over one-third of the land since the thirteenth century, and the feudal lords form a mighty bulwark of reaction."

From this premise, he begins to develop a "lesser evil" theory. He says, "it is against this formidable opposition [the church and the landlords, J. W. F.] that the Emperor, an enlightened monarch, who favors the progressive modernization of his country, has to carry on struggle." (Emphasis mine J. W. F.)

What utter nonsense! Is it not a fact that the Emperor, the church, the landlords and the whole ruling class stand on the backs of the Ethiopian masses? And is it not a fact that through them the foreign capitalists enslave the people of Ethiopia? Of course it is! The colonial and semi-colonial policy of imperialist nations in relation to oppressed peoples is built and sustained by the various ruling cliques. Let me quote from the colonial thesis of the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International:

"Where in the colonies imperialism is in need of a social support it first of all allies itself with the ruling strata of the previous social structure, with the feudal landlords and with the trading and money-lending bourgeoisie against the majority of the people."

"The bourgeoisie of China, India and Egypt [etc., Ethiopia—J. W. F.] is by its immediate interests so closely bound up with landlordism, with usury capital and with the exploitation of the peasant masses in general, that it takes its stand not only against the agrarian revolution but also against every decisive agrarian reform."

Who is this "liberator," the Emperor of Ethiopia that Padmore so loudly praises? He is bound by all kinds of ties with the feudal landlords, the church and in turn with

the foreign capitalists against the majority of the people of Ethiopia. For this reason he is afraid of the revolt of the masses. Padmore unwittingly admits as much when he prepares the following excuse for the Emperor's army:

"In order to better cope with the problems of reform [suppress any rising of the masses—J.W.F.] the whole state apparatus has undergone drastic changes. A well-disciplined, centralized army, loyal and devoted to the person of the Emperor, is the only force capable of guaranteeing PEACE AND ORDER."

But the bourgeois rule must be secured by future bourgeois leaders and trained militarists. So Padmore says, "In order to avoid the danger of open revolt and possible overthrow . . . the Emperor is adopting a policy of 'gradualism,' is sending young students abroad to be trained in the military sciences in France, Italy, England and the United States," and is also inviting young American Negro specialists to Ethiopia. Who doubts that some day Padmore himself will not be a part of this fascist set-up?

According to Padmore, Ethiopia is the last remaining independent black state in Africa not bound by any such machinations as the Firestone Company in Liberia, and he racks his brain in vain and hopelessly to find out how Ethiopia is to keep herself free from imperialism and international finance-capital. How can the rich natural resources, ores, minerals, raw products, etc., of Ethiopia be developed without flooding the country with foreign capitalist exploiters? There is no way out, concludes Padmore:

"Whether the Ethiopian ship will arrive at its destination safely, only history will tell."

But Padmore has his way out for Ethiopia. Despite his mouthing about the independence of Ethiopia from foreign domination, he is forced to admit the domination of foreign capitalists over Ethiopia and he sees in them a way out.

"A FEW CONCESSIONS have been given to foreign capitalists. A French company is working platinum mines; while an Italian company is exploiting potash deposits . . . Three Belgian companies are cultivating coffee, and a French syndicate is developing cotton. The only railroad is owned by the French-Ethiopian company . . . but the management is largely in the hands of the French."

The way to pursue this path according to Padmore, is by "utilizing the deep-rooted jealousies and economic contradictions between these imperialist powers." Padmore tries to prostitute for petty bourgeois nationalists uses the proletarian internationalism of Lenin, who speaks about utilizing the contradictions of imperialist powers for the benefit of the revolutionary movement.

However, with the world set up as it is today, with the imperialists choking and strangling the Ethiopian masses, this idiotic talk about utilizing imperialist contradictions is the height of nonsense.

In the case of Ethiopia or any semi-independent country today, in the period of wars and revolutions, the contradictions of imperialism lead only to two conclusions (1) imperialist nations struggling to gobble up Ethiopia, and (2) the organization of the masses on the basis of their economic misery and oppression to fight for the overthrow of bourgeois-imperialist domination. The path of independence and liberation for Ethiopia and the liberation of the masses lies in the latter road.

But Padmore contemptuously ignores the masses of Ethiopia; he completely ignores the path laid out by the Soviet Union; he ignores the significance of the growth of

plights—and their ills and problems—and he had learned to sympathize with them. He felt what they felt and did all that he could do to assuage their terrible misfortunes. Mr. Cojuangco's peculiar love for the poor has brought to him, unrestricted, numerous cases of suffering of farmers."

WEeping crocodile tears, Mr. Cojuangco, continues to ride on the backs of his serfs, becoming the richest member of the Lower House. In fact, Mr. Cojuangco will do anything for his tenants (they are his beloved children) but get off their necks.

It is not for nothing that the aristocratic Cojuangco hobnobs with the "laboring mass" (he probably likes horses also). For the Herald informs us:

"Having previously rubbed elbows with the masses, Mr. Cojuangco has easily acquainted himself with the essence of vote-getting."

UNDER the type of colonial domination in the Philippines, it is not only the task of the Filipino native landlord-bourgeois to maintain their feudal mastery over the peasants, but to obtain the serfs votes in favor of this relationship.

It is these gentlemen, aided by that crafty corporation lawyer, Governor-General Murphy, who proclaim their objective of writing a constitution for a "free Philippines."

HIS Majesty, the Emperor of Manchukuo (Henry Pu Yi to his older acquaintances), will make a pilgrimage to Tokio in April. Henry will board a Japanese battleship whence he will be taken to kowtow to the Son of Heaven, the Emperor Hirohito.

This is not a mere social visit, but part of the Japanese plans of openly making Manchuria Japanese territory. The same thing was done with Korea.

The first step was the visit of Prince Chichibu to Manchuria, as a sort of demonstration of the Japanese emperor sending his deputy to observe the newly acquired territory.

Pu Yi, who is as far away from the Manchurian people as President Roosevelt, announces the purpose of his forthcoming visit is "to express the friendship of the Emperor and his people of Manchukuo for Japan and also to return the courtesy of H. I. H. Prince Chichibu shown to the emperor and the people of the new state on the occasion of his recent visit."

JAPANESE imperialism is making a new intensive drive for Latin American markets. Foreign Minister Koki Hirota has dispatched Commercial Attache Yasundo Sudo of the Japanese embassy at Washington to Central and South America.

"Although Japan's trade volume with Latin America has almost trebled during the past three years," declares the Osaka Mainichi, "the Foreign Minister believes there is considerable room for further expansion there."

The Mainichi also admits that this action will sharpen the rivalries of the imperialists in Latin America, saying:

"In the event that Japan makes an advance in that part of the world, she must anticipate fierce competition with European and American countries having the priority advantage."

the revolutionary movements in China and India, and on the continent of Black Africa itself. The Chinese Soviets, the Chinese Red Army, the Soviet Revolution in China, these facts have no lessons for Padmore. "Semper novi quid ex Africa," concludes Padmore. Freely translated from Latin this phrase means: "New things always come from Africa."

Petty bourgeois nationalism leads only into the camp of the enemy. Only proletarian internationalism assures the victory of the proletariat, the liberation and freedom of oppressed peoples.