Waller Sentenced To Die in Electric Chair

NATIONAL DEFENSE MUST BE BUILT TO SAVE HIM

Chatham, Va., Oct. 27. — Ode Waller, the young Negro sharecropper who shot his boss, Oscar Davis in self-defense after a dispute on division of the crops, had been found guilty of first degree murder. He was sentenced to death in the electric chair by the jury of 12 landlords. Judge Clement set the date of execution for December 27, thus leaving Waller one more Christmas to look forward to. The jury was out only forty-five minutes.

The trial was marked by the determination of the white ruling class to crush all resistance from the oppressed Negroes and sharecroppers. Commonwealth Attorney Whitehead made a vicious and blood-thirsty plea for death. Edmund Campion, investigator for the Waller Defense Committees, testified to the violent prejudice against Waller in the county.

PLENITY OF PREJUDICE

One local businessman stated that “the damned Communists and niggers defending Waller ought to be lynched”. The of all testified that he had heard rumors of lynching and had strengthened the guard around the prison, but he “did not think there was any serious danger” and “did not believe there was any doubt of Waller’s receiving a fair and impartial trial”. On this basis the defense petition for a change of venue was denied.

Waller’s conviction was guaranteed in advance, although the doctor in attendance on Davis stated that he died as a result of the operation, not as a result of the wounds. Again we see that the only place in which the ruling class will allow the Negro equal rights is with the white in the electric chair.

(Continued on Page 4)

Axis -- Jap Pact Increases U.S. Bosses' Drive For War, Encircles Soviet Union

BRITISH EMPIRE DOOMED BY PLANS OF AXIS AND UNCLE SAM

The new treaty between the Axis and Japan now makes public what close observers have known ever since the fall of France. It is timed to suit the needs of the Axis powers, just as Italy’s entry into the war was timed. Its announcement now is primarily as a warning to American Imperialism. At the same time it puts an end to British efforts to woo Japan, and strikes another heavy blow against the British position in Asia.

This means that England will have to make still more concessions to the United States.

STALINISM AND JAPAN

The pact also affects the Soviet Union, under Stalinist control, to the greatest extent. While the attempted encirclement of Ameri
can Imperialism is only in its initial stages, Stalinism is now definitively encircled by the German Imperialism and its allies. The Hitler statesmen are now working for a Soviet-Japanese treaty along the lines of the Hitler-Stalin Pact whereby Stalinism will obtain concessions in northern Asia which is Japanese influence, while the Japanese armed forces prepare further southward. Such a pact will signify a further capitulation of Stalinism to German Imperialism and greatly weaken the chances of the Soviet Union and the bureaucratic caste for survival, unless a proletarian revolution and a new Workers State comes to the rescue of the warred Workers State.

Stalinism understands its precarious position quite well, and has already set very high demands for negotiations with Japan. At the same time it is quite likely that the bureaucracy is sounding out American Imperialism, and is considering the possibility of another switch back to the “democratic” imperialists. But Germany and Japan can easily make concessions to Stalinism, since if they win the war, they will then certainly turn against the Soviet Union and not only take back all “concessions”, but completely destroy the Workers State and make it a capitalist sphere of influence for these imperialist powers — if they win.

GERMAN SET-BACK IN AT-TACK ON BRITAIN

The failure of German Imperialism to take the British Isles on schedule has been a severe blow to its entire plans. The danger of a continued blockade of Europe, even if Gibraltar fails, and the increased material aid from American Imperialism to Britain, place the Axis powers in a most delicate position, which is further complicated by the continual strain of the war on their economy, food shortage, etc.

(Continued on page 8)

Fight Boss Conspiration!

PRACTICAL STEPS IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST

Sixteen millions youthful American wage-slaves and farm boys, on the verge of being turned into cannon-fodder, await Registration Day, October 16.

With the registration, militarism and open dictatorship in the “cradle of democracy” take seven leaps forward.

Each young man will walk in a “free” man, and will walk out with a “yellow ticket”, which he will have to have available at all times. Militant trade union members, blacklisted by the bosses’ association, will now have no way of overcoming the blacklist, will be unable to change their name. Fingerprinting may come at the same time or slightly later.

This is the first GIANT step along the road — as Mr. Roosevelt put it in his acceptance speech — of “cancelling the private lives of all citizens”.

Conscription is only one phase of the present militarization of the American people. Those people who are so tickled over the possibility they may avoid the draft are slightly premature. The war program of Roosevelt-Wilkie comes out one step at a time. The next step will include even more stringent measures to cancel the private lives of all citizens.

GROWING MILITARIZATION

Government control of hours, wages, working conditions; a government blacklist system of all non-patriots — that is all who are unwilling to work at slave labor conditions; and even forced labor of “apprentices” (something for which there already exists a precedent in the marine industry) are now imminent.

The whole militarization scheme is brazenly pointed at the working class. Sons of president Roosevelt

BOSS CLASS MILITARISM

merely visit General Marshall’s office and come out as full-fledged captains in the Air Corps — like Elliot Roosevelt. But the sons of the poor in the draft army will be able to rise only as high as lieutenants.

The rich will no doubt be quick to enlist; and the bourgeoisie press will undoubtedly give these “enlistments” great publicity. But the poor will do the dying as usual, while the scions of wealth are given big titles lucrative posts, and spend their time in some “dangerous” civilian work such as ordering bullets from dad’s munitions factory.

Every worker, betrayed by his trade union leadership — the Lewis and Greens who made the labor movement impotent to fight the draft — is asking the question: What now?

(continued on page 2)
The dollar-an-issue *Fortune* Magazine, a mouthpiece of J. P. Morgan, is conducting a poll of the leading corporation heads, capitalists and bankers of the country. This poll is very revealing to show how the bosses feel about "demo- cracy," the war and future policies.

These big shots are thumbing down even on those concessions that Roosevelt has thrown to the workers, and 91.5% of them feel that Willkie can do "a better job on preparedness and industrial mobilization for war". Get that, for war. Generally speaking they raise no big criticism of Roose- velt's war policies—preparedness but they want Willkie to handle it so they can tighten up on the war policies against the workers. This may be why Will- kie is able to endorse most of Roosevelt's war policies— con- cession, aid to Bolivia, etc. because these big bosses endorse these moves for "war", but they want Willkie to move faster to smash the concessions thrown to the workers.

**OUTLAW STRIKES, LENGTHEN HOURS**

For example, "Should the Gov- ernment require labor to give up the right to strike for the duration of the emergency?" The capitalist answer is—"Yes, 56.6%"; only 28% say—no, and the remainder say yes "in certain instances only". Obviously all the important ones. But these are the big bosses of Amer- ican capitalism who are the loudest about "defense of demo- cracy", but 56.6% of them want to outlaw the most fundamen- tal democratic right which the workers have won. Fascist Ger- many has outlawed strikes, so the American bosses want to "defend democracy" by doing same thing! This is ample proof that they are going to fight not "for democr- acy" but for their profits.

Another question shows this a- gain and also why they want Will- kie. "If short time develops, and the restrictions on hours are lifted, what is maximum work week which can be attained in your businesses without net loss of pro- duction?" (Note that it is not a question of what hours should be, but of how it effects production.) Only 45.5% want to retain the 40 hour week. All the rest want from 48 to 60 or more. So—a great gain of the American working class the 40 hour week will be won out, just as in France, and Germany. Again the big shots show they want profits, not "democracy".

**WANT PROFITS FROM GERMANY**

In case there is any doubt on this, the next question shows clearly: "If cessation of hostilities leaves Germany with a large eco- nomic bloc, would you favor doing so much business as possible, or as little as possible even if it means the sacrifice of considerable prof- its?" Only 26.6% say "none at all" 35.5% "don't know" 37.4% won't commit themselves by saying it "depends on circumstances". And the rest 56.4%—will NOT "sacrifice profits" and want either "as much as possible", "all that comes our way", or "little as possible" (practically the same). This is clear—these big finance capitalists talk about "fighting Hitler", but they will not sacrifice profits to do so. They now give aid to England (at plen- ty of profit; they will soon go to war for profit, and after "cessa- tion of hostilities" they will still want profits! That is the kind of war they want us to fight.

**DUPLICATE HITLER'S GESTAPO**

The next question is even more significant. "If Hitler wins, do you think that American business will have to be reorganized in a manner resembling the totalitarian?"

**PRACTICAL STEPS IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST FIGHT FOR DEMOCRATIZATION**

(Continued from Page...)

**WHAT TO DO?**

As a partial answer to this question the Revolutionary Workers League proposes the following:

1. Expose the role and imperial- ist greed of American imperialism in the war.

2. By demonstration, strike and other class struggle methods con- tinue the fight for the abolition of the draft.

3. Organize immediately armed WORKERS DEFENSE CORPS under the rank and file control in the factories to protect the work- ing class from the next stages of American militarism, forced labor and slave labor conditions in the plant. The Workers Defense Corps is the only organization of a military nature that any worker should volunteer.

4. Do not claim deferment or exemption on the pacifist basis that you are opposed to war. If you are drafted take the gun and the training they give you, but remember always that the main en- emy is not the worker in the "for- eign" army, but your own boss and his fellow oppressors HERE AT HOME.

5. Say you are being drafted to "save democracy". Put the capitalist state to a test: expose its hypocrisy. Demand full de- mocracy in the army itself.

**FIGHT FOR BECOMING MILITARY**

mean that sections of the boss ar- my will come over to the revolu- tionary struggle against the bosses and their armed forces. The level of class action, we must frankly admit, has not reach- ed the stage where a struggle a long these lines can immediately succeed. But the perspective of the future nevertheless must be in that direction to further the strug- gles of the workers.

The first wave of enthusiasm and the glamor of the soldier's uni- form will soon wear off; and the workers in uniform will swing more and more towards defeat- ism. The present official position weak, but politically correct pro- gram will then become an all-con- suming fire of revolution.

**BOSS CLASS MILITARISM**

This is a polite way of asking if they think we will have to have Fascism.

48.1% still believe that "demo- cracy"—with outlawed strikes, conscription, smashed working class standards—for that is their version of "democracy"—will be OK. This is another way of saying that they still want to maintain their capitalist rule through fake "democracy" which is really a conscious dictatorship. But the rest are moving further to the right, 35.3% say there will have to be similar reorganization "in the foreign field". By this they mean barter economy, blocked dollars, etc. But this can only be accomplished by greater state con- trol and lowering further the stand- ard of living. As a matter of fact 14.1% openly state, "yes, at home as well as in such foreign trade as we do".

In other words, over a majority of these big bosses, by going toward support of some form of fascist rule. The 14.1% which op- portunely declares for fascism is not important in showing, as we have previously pointed out, that these blocs are crystallizing around the bosse as to how to continue to rule: by the "old" method of "dem- ocracy" or by open dictatorship in the form of fascism.

The Democrats are trying to use this to prove that the "appeasers" are in the camp of the Republic- ans, and the therefore say: "Sup- port Roosevelt". But the differ- ence is only one method as to how to continue the profit rule. Roosevelt, like the 33.3%, is mov- ing toward barter economy and blocking dollars, not with the "cartel" plan for South American trade. All agree on fundamentals to save the profit system and wage war; they differ on ways and means of doing so.

These differences are of import- ance to the workers for it is the extent that they show precisely what sections of the bosses stand for which methods. But the basic fact is that, despite these tactical differences, the big finance capitalists are agreed in fundamentals: for war profits, smashed living standards and democratic rights, steps to- wards greater dictatorship.

The workers must recognize this boss class unity and organize workers' unity to fight for the extension of democratic rights, against the imperialist war of profits, and the plans for greater dictatorship. Just as the ultimate solution of the bosses lies inevitably in Fascism, so the ultimate solution of the work- ers lies inevitably in the struggle for the overthrow of the bosses system and the establishment of a Workers Council Government based on Workers Control of Produc- tion for Use.

October 3, 1940.
SOCIALIST DEFENSE OUTFIT FAILS TO ANSWER PLEA FOR WALLER

In an effort to broaden both the legal and labor defense of Odell Waller, Negro cropper who murdered his landlord over the division of crops, the Revolutionary Workers League approached the Socialist controlled Workers Defense League.

The letter below deals with the League's proposal for the handling of a sub-committee. Significantly enough, there has been no reply to this letter for two weeks.

Is the Socialist Party and its members unwilling to handle a genuine labor defense case if they can't squeeze out all other political and labor organizations? Do they have a sectarian approach to this question?

The League offered to give them organizational majority position of the case, providing they conduct it on a class struggle basis: Their silence may be a refusal.

The letter follows:

September 25, 1940

Comrades:

Heiser has just informed us of the acceptance of your telegram on the Waller case.

The Revolutionary Workers League became interested in this case when Waller was being extradited, and engaged three attorneys in his behalf, as well as publishing the case nationally. Our perspective has always been, however, to involve non-partisan labor defense organizations and other labor forces in the campaign.

We would have no objections whatsoever to the Workers Defense League's handling of the case, providing:

1.—It is agreed between us that the case shall be handled on a class struggle basis, with the legal defense and auxiliary to attempt mass action of trade unions, Negro organizations, political organizations, etc. We believe that as a concomitant of the legal defense it is essential that every effort be made to organize a political and mass organizations into united front defense committees; CLARIDAD PROLETARIA

El Imperialismo Americano: La Fuerza Principal Que Empuja Las Leciones de Espana 5 Cents

October 15, 1940

THE FIGHTING WORKER

Vol. 5, No. 18

Central Organ of the REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS LEAGUE, U. S.

(Affiliated to the Provisional INTERNATIONAL CONTACT COMMISSION

For a New Communist (4th) International)

Published twice a month by The Fighting Worker Publishing Company

1904 Division St.

Chicago, III.

Subscriptions: FIFTY CENTS PER YEAR

Axis -- Jap Fact Increases U.S. Bosses' Drive For War, Encircles Soviet Union

It is for this reason that they have to give such concessions to Japan.

If Germany had defeated the Isles, she would never have given this agreement to Japan, for she would not now need Japan's help to keep American Imperialism busy in the Orient. Thus the failure of Hitler to take the Isles forces him to try to break out of the British blockade through the pact with Japan and intensified military operations against the Empire. This calls for attacks through Spain against Gibraltar, northern Africa and the Near East operations by Germany and Italy, which Japan keeps Britain and the U.S. busy in Asia.

THE BREAK-UP OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

The German-Italian deal with Japan and Spain, which will be home base with an attempt to win Turkey and Greece, is a new rovers' agreement of the "have-not" imperialists. In effect, they are saying that these have-not powers are trying to divide up the British - French - Dutch colonial empires, and freeze out American Imperialism. But the latter giant has its own robber plans for the division of the British empire; is already picking up possessions in the western Hemisphere, and is making public its desire to take over Asia (as well as exclusive control of South America). In brief, American Imperialism wants the lion's share of the loot, and the means to "organize the world" to its own needs, thereby reducing Britain to a second-rate power.

HYPOCRISY OF AMERICAN IMPERIALISM

The rulers of America are just as much robbers and just as guilty as the other imperialists. They spew forth tons of propaganda for mass consumption that they want "America for the Americans" under the Monroe Doctrine; but they raise hell when Japan calls for "Asia for the Asians", and Germany demands "Europe for the Europeans"; and they denounce the latter as fakers and liars. The truth of the matter is that the U.S. bosses are just as great fakers and liars. Their propaganda of "democracy" etc. is for home consumption to conceal from the masses their real predatory aims. And the Axis uses the same form of propaganda. Thus all the imperialists are equally hypocritical in this first step to reorganize their base as a means of world conquest.

WALL STREET ACTION

The U.S. imperialist state men knew of the treaty in advance, so they announced the embargo on iron to Japan a day before the kept press made the news public. Germany is badly mistaken if she thinks that Japan will keep Wall Street so busy that the American rulers cannot supply England with aid. All signs indicate that the American rulers well understand the role it must play if it is to obtain the lion's share of the redivision of the earth, and it is therefore planning to drive full ahead on all fronts.

STALINISTS MAY SWITCH

Today Hitler is trying to keep the Stalinist bureaucrats as a tail of his new pact. But because Stalin understands the danger it is quite possible that he will switch. American Imperialism is working for such a deal. Well of the State Department is in conference with Oumanskii, the Stalinist ambassador. If a deal is made with the D. L. Stalin will again come out for support of "democracy" and repeat its previous treachery. If a deal is not made, the D. L. Stalin will be deceived again, as they were in Spain and France. The support of the Western exploiters, right-left, colonial bourgeois, etc., is a betrayal of the working class.

BOSSES FEAR WORKERS MORE THAN HITLER

We must face facts. Despite their imperialist antagonism, the powerful Axis combine and the American imperialists (the combined forces of fascist and "democratic" imperialists) will always unite to smash the outbreak of the revolutionary revolution. Hitler is counting on this. He hopes to repeat on a world scale what he did in France. There he understood that when the French workers threatened to take power (as all competent observers of what he was doing) the French bosses, together with the representatives of the worker class, would turn over the country to fascism. Hitler too, as we Marxists have pointed out, understands that the bourgeoisie democrats fear the workers a thousand times more than they fear fascism.

That is why the workers must reject "national unity" and move in class unity against the Fascism by smashing Capitalism.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

OCTOBER ISSUE

The Balkans and the Near East

Mexico, War and the Workers

Notes on Trotsky's Funeral

Developments in 'red' Germany "International News" R.W.L. Position on the Czech Question 5 Cents
SAVE ODELL WALLER FROM THE CHAIR

WALLER DEFENSE

(Continued from Page 1)

The Waller Defense Committees organized in many cities already are raising funds for an appeal on the case. Here is a real working-class issue which needs the support of every working class organization in the country. All the denunciatory appeals to "Save America from Fascism" are best exposed in this flagrant example of boss class democracy. Odell Waller is a symbol of all the oppression suffered by the Negro for three hundred and twenty years in America. He is also a beacon to the share-croppers throughout the south and to the workers everywhere. The fight for this freedom is the fight for working-class democracy; now proudly being abolished by the war hysteria of the bosses.

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD IN THE CRY FOR ODELL WALLER FREE! Protest the conviction in Judge Clement's court at Chatham! Demand that the verdict be reversed! Only the united efforts of the workers, black and white, can short-circuit the electric chair.

Send your contribution and messages to the Waller Defense Committee, urge your organization to participate in the Committee, build the Committee in your city. Address the Committee, c/o Thomas H. Stone, 1519 E. Main Street, Richmond, Va.

Waller Gives Interview

DEALS WITH PLIGHT OF NEGRO SHARE-CROPPER, ETC.

Odel Waller, the Negro sharecropper convicted of self-defense against a white landlord and therefore doomed to the chair, gave our reporter an exclusive interview during the trial. The interview follows:

"I was born twenty-three years ago, and have spent my entire life right around Gretna (the village in south-western Virginia near which the killing took place). I went all through grade school (Negro, of course) and had three years of high school. I went to work for Oscar Davis around January 4th of 1939. Right after that I got married.

"I was working for Davis on quarter-shares of corn and wheat, and half-shares of tobacco. Last year I only got about sixty dollars from Davis and had to spend a lot more than that to get the crop out. What's more, he had my mother doing 'tinner' work and hardly paid her anything.

WORKED FOR ALMOST NOTHING

"This year I was working for Davis just for about nothing. He allowed under the crops after I had paid for planting them, and I didn't get a cent for the money or work I put into the crop. Then I told him I needed a bigger tobacco crop to make a living. He only let me plant one acre of tobacco, and I told him I couldn't live on that. Then I told him I couldn't do it. So I told him I'd have to find something else to do, and asked him to let my mother and wife stay on the place for a while. He said he'd have to think it over.

At this point we were interrupted by the return of the jury. Waller took the verdict for granted and said: "You'll keep on trying to get me free, won't you?" He was assured that his case would be fought through the highest courts in the country backed by working class pressure.

CONTACT WALLER

Waller needs many of the necessities of life which he denied him in the Chatham jail. He needs cigarettes, letters from sympathizers, etc. Send your letter to Odell Waller, County Jail, Chatham, Va., and send copies to the Waller Defense Committee. Otherwise there will be no way of making sure that Waller gets the mail.