

Review of the Paris Peace Conference

By George Padmore

THE present Paris Peace conference presents some similarities with like convocations of the past, as well as some fundamental departures. At the Paris conference of 1815, which marked the downfall of Napoleon, France, the defeated power, was represented at discussions and framing of the treaties by Talleyrand.

There was a studied purpose in thus drawing France into the comity of Europe, which was to restore as much as possible of the pre-Napoleonic regime. The Paris conference of 1918 which drew up the peace after the First World War was primarily concerned with the settlement of Germany, but the defeated power was excluded from discussion of the treaty terms, despite the Wilsonian slogan of "open diplomacy openly arrived at." Britain, France and America imposed their dictated terms upon the successors of the Hohenzollerns and, at the same time, linked up the Treaty of Versailles with the League of Nations, the organization which was to guarantee world peace, and which came into being simultaneously.

While there were certain differences between Lloyd George, Clemenceau and Wilson, the chief architects of Versailles, there was fundamental agreement among them to prevent revival of German militarism, which offered a threat to their imperialisms. Having, then, completed the settlement of Germany, the main enemy, it was relatively simple for the Allies to impose treaties upon Germany's satellites. The Peace of St. Germain in September, 1919, settled the agreement with Austria, the Treaty of Trianon with Hungary in June, 1920, and the Treaty of Sèvres with Turkey in August, 1920, although this last treaty remained unratified. Settlement with Bulgaria was made under the Treaty of Neuilly in November, 1919.

Procedure Reversed

At the present conference the procedure has been reversed, simply because the victorious powers are unable to arrive at any agreement on the German question which, today, just as twenty-seven years ago, is the key to peace or war. The reason for this im-

The real issue at Paris was not peace but power political maneuvering between the Western and Eastern blocs for future control of the world. "At Paris there was neither idealism nor morality" as this illuminating analysis of the issues by an on-the-spot observer makes clear



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Premier-president George Bidault of France,
host to the conference.

passé lies in the fundamental cleavage between the Anglo-American powers and the Soviet Union, which, for the first time since the Russian Revolution, has been drawn into the vortex of European power politics, filling the vacuum created by the elimination of Germany. The tense economic, political and ideological clash of interests between the Great Powers prevents any agreement on the settlement of Germany, even a year after the capitulation of the Nazi regime. In order, therefore, to break the deadlock the Council of Foreign Ministers, which was charged with preparing the draft treaties and the whole machinery of peace-making,

was forced to start with secondary questions.

And even in this compromise approach from the periphery to the centre, they have discarded from the agenda of the present conference an important peripheral question, namely, the distribution of Italian colonies in Africa. After the first World War, the question of Germany's and Turkey's colonies was settled as part of the Versailles treaty by the simple procedure of annexing them under the camouflage of mandates. The Foreign Ministers Council did attempt to settle the Italian colonial question under a system of trusteeship, the new euphemism for colonial annexation. But the intrusion of Russia's claim for a place in the African sun, in the form of a trusteeship over Cyrenaica, so alarmed Mr. Bevin that this new custodian of British imperial interests declared that it would cut the British throat. Hence the whole colonial question has been deleted from the Paris agenda.

It took eleven months of laborious and discursive work for the Big Four foreign ministers and their deputies to arrive at the draft treaties which the conference is discussing, and they therefore represent a finely balanced compromise which, if upset, can only result in deadlock. In a sense the compromise was forced upon the Big Powers by the pressure of world public opinion, which was becoming restive at the long delay and the urgency of the need to resolve the chaos reigning in Europe. Unable to attack the German problem because of their basic differences, they resorted to the line of least resistance by beginning with the secondary question of Germany's satellites.

The present conference is only dealing with the treaties with the ex-enemy countries, Italy, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and Finland. It is assumed that the settlement with Japan and Germany and the question of the Italian colonies will engage other gatherings, so that the assembly now meeting in Paris can really be regarded as the first of a series of peace conferences.

Having, for the purpose of the Paris conference, achieved a compromise, the



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The United States delegation occupies the front row in the chamber of the Luxemborg Palace, scene of the Paris peace conference. L. to R., Secretary of State James Byrnes; Jefferson Caffery, ambassador to England; William Clayton, assistant secretary of state; Ben Cohen, special assistant to the secretary of state; W. B. Smith, ambassador to Russia; and Averill Harriman, former ambassador to England. American foreign policy is being determined and executed by James Byrnes, the country lawyer from Spartanburg, S. C., who believes in free democratic elections in Bulgaria, but not in his native South Carolina.

Big Four were committed to steering through their draft treaties, and in order to guarantee this they had agreed upon the principle of a two-thirds majority vote. They then decided to invite the seventeen small states who had given "substantial military support in the war," and the Western Powers were obliged, because of their lip service to the principle of democracy, to commit themselves to the methods of open diplomacy. Some of the small powers, desirous of making themselves heard, took these principles literally and projected their views strongly.

Dr. Evatt of the Australian delegation, undoubtedly an ambitious man, was determined, in the absence of Mr. Bevin, to secure the limelight. He accordingly proposed that amendments securing a simple majority vote should have the same value as those receiving a two-thirds majority. The Soviet Union delegation, anxious to maintain the compromise which the Foreign Ministers Council had achieved at such great pains, stood intransigently for the two-thirds majority vote, and the whole question at once revealed a division at the conference into a Western and Eastern bloc. Since the majority of the states represented operate within the Western bloc, if decisions were to be based upon a simple majority, it is primary arithmetic to see that the Soviets would always be in a minority and could never, as in a parliamentary constituency, hope to become a majority.

Mr. Hector MacNeil, who was

deputising for Mr. Bevin, and Mr. Byrnes, who had committed themselves beforehand to the two-thirds majority, could not, however, turn against Mr. Evatt and his Dutch supporters and put them in their place, in view of their also being committed to democratic procedure. Mr. Molotov and Mr. Vyshinsky, however, were not limited by such considerations and they pressed their view strenuously. It seemed as though there would be a head-on clash, so the British delegation, recognizing the dangers in the situation, came forward with their compromise that amendments securing a simple majority should go forward for consideration, while those with a two-thirds majority should get *serious* consideration.

This struggle in the plenary sessions over voting left its heritage of suspicion among the Russians, who are in any event always suspicious of the motives of the Western Powers. They believe that the Anglo-American powers were ready to double-cross them and that they had put Dr. Evatt up to the maneuver. Knowing that no small state within their orbit could behave in such a fashion, it was natural for the Russians to assume that the latitude taken by Dr. Evatt could only have been with Anglo-American consent, and they turned their big guns upon the Australians.

Much time, it was generally felt, had been wasted over a trifle, as in the ultimate result it will be the Big Four Ministers Council which will have the final word on the treaty drafts. Dr.

Mackenzie King, leader of the Canadian delegation, had from the beginning emphasized that the peace rests upon the Big Four and that the small states should be sensible of their limitations. It was largely as a result of his insistence that the successful conclusion of the conference would only be achieved by the harmonious working together of the Big Four that Mr. Bevin took the initiative in the fifth week of the conference of convening a meeting between the Foreign Ministers. This was an endeavor to extricate themselves from the mess in which they had entangled themselves during the preceding weeks and to give guidance to the conference. By that time, Dr. Evatt, having done his best to torpedo the conference, had packed off to Australia, leaving his colleagues, Dr. Walker, Mr. Beasley and Colonel Hodgson, to carry on a rear-guard action in the territorial and reparations commissions.

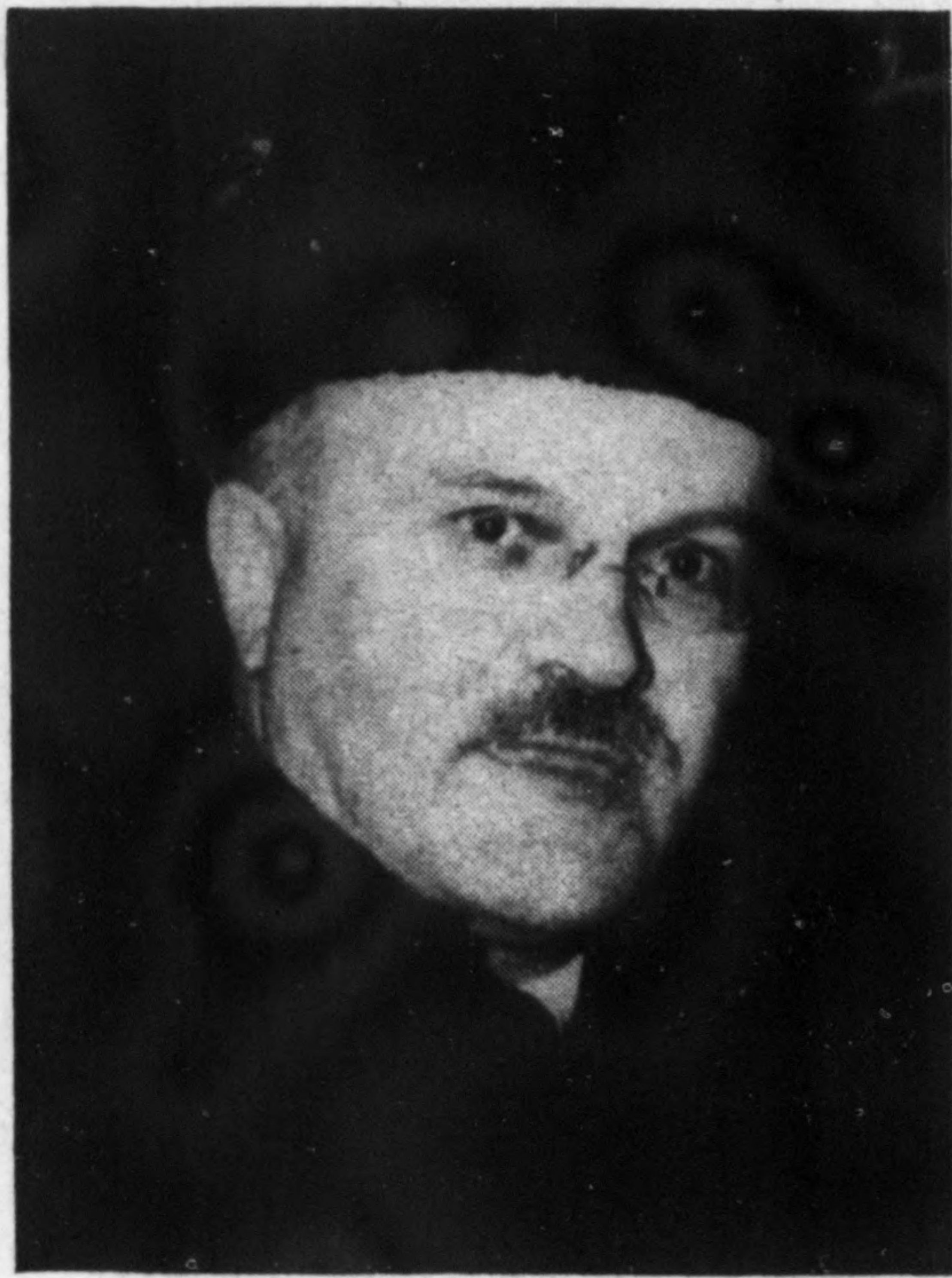
More Democratic than Versailles

With all the shortcomings of the present conference, however, its limitations and power political maneuverings, one must admit that in its structure and procedural methods it is certainly more democratic than that of the Paris conference of 1918. The small states associated with the Big Four have been invited and allowed to air their views, both in the plenary sessions and commissions, while the ex-enemy countries have also been provided with an opportunity to make statements in plenary session on the draft treaties. All the proceedings have been duly reported in the press. Twenty-seven years



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Dr. Herbert V. Evatt, Australian minister for external affairs, after "having done his best to torpedo the conference," packed off to Australia.



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Russian foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov, at the closing session, denounced the conference results in stinging terms.

ago this state of things would not have been tolerated. Lloyd George and Clemenceau would turn in their graves at the thought that ex-enemy states were allowed to come and publicly express their opinions upon their treaties. And as for the Press, they were fed upon official handouts!

It is in this sense that the conference has satisfied the idea of "open diplomacy openly arrived at." In fact, it is thought by many observers that it has even been carried too far. Photographers' bulbs flashed all the way through plenary sessions and speakers reacted until the atmosphere was like that of Hollywood. It was also the very public nature of the meetings which gave rise to so much recrimination and bickering, for delegates were addressing their people back home as much as the assembly. Many commentators went so far as to say that the method of procedure was giving an unfair advantage to the Russians, who, practiced in the art, used the conference as a platform to propagandise against the Anglo-Saxons. This was particularly obvious in Mr. Molotov's warning to Italy, and to France, not to allow themselves to become the economic slaves of Anglo-American imperialism.

Among the most controversial issues in the treaties are those of minorities and reparations, both of which are inextricably bound up with the economic and strategic aims of the Big Four. It is absurd to think that an imperialist war can finish in a non-imperialist peace. If the finish of the war had seen the establishment of socialist regimes in all the countries of

Europe, then the Soviet Union could have afforded to enjoin a peace with "no indemnities and no annexations." But the Soviet Union finds itself vis-à-vis the great capitalist Colossus, America, which, with the willing support of Britain and her satellites, is trying hard to resuscitate capitalists regimes in Europe. Towards this objective they are seeking out and backing those pro-capitalist elements who are not hopelessly compromised as collaborationists, but were to some degree associated with the resistance movements, like Bidault in France, for instance.

These elements are mainly to be found among the Catholic, so-called "democratic" parties, which have popular support. This factor, therefore, brings the American and British foreign offices into close association with the Vatican, whether they wish it or not. And since the capitalist elements see in the mass Catholic movements their best means of entrenching themselves, they give them their financial support, which also links the Vatican with big business. This is exactly what is happening in France now in relation to the M. R. P. [Popular Republican Movement], and is also the position in Austria, where outside of the Socialist kernel in Vienna, the population has always been overwhelmingly Catholic and gave its support to right-wing governments from Dolfuss to Schuschnigg, and even up to Hitler.

Doubtless the Soviet Union has fixed its reparations in relation to the support which it expects from the new governments established in the ex-enemy countries, while the Americans maintain that the economic treaties which Russia has already signed with Hungary and Rumania are designed to keep them out of the Danubian countries. Mr. Brynes has raised considerable opposition to these arrangements, and has noisily debated for the right of the United States to operate their traditional economic imperialism in the countries of eastern and central Europe in the form of the "open door" policy. And it is significant to note that American big business aspirations so blatantly voiced by Mr. Brynes at the Paris conference have the strong endorsement of the British Labor Government, which, in its domestic policy, is pledged to the abolition of trusts, cartels and monopolies, the powerful economic influences behind America's foreign policy.

Untrammelled Capitalism

It is understandable that America, wedded to untrammelled capitalism, should fight vigorously for the right to have access to the raw materials (espe-

cially oil) and the markets of eastern and central Europe. Mr. Molotov, however, has made it clear on more than one occasion that Soviet Russia is determined to protect the territories which have come within her sphere of interest from falling under the influence of American or British monopoly-capital, which looks to the opposition groups in those countries as their potential allies. Without such external support from the West, it is inconceivable that those elements opposed to the regimes now functioning under Soviet patronage could sufficiently reassert themselves as to revive the pre-war economic *status quo*. The Soviet Union sees that the new democracies painfully emerging in these defeated countries can only consolidate themselves if their economic systems operate on the basis of a planned economy, reinforced by agrarian reforms which share-up the large landed estates among the peasants.

To carry out such a program, the governments of these countries must encroach not merely upon the property of their own nationals, but of necessity more especially upon that of American and British interests, who largely controlled the basic resources, such as oil in Rumania. It is to recover the rights of American trusts and cartels in these properties that Mr. Brynes has so passionately raised the claim to the "open door" policy in the Danubian region. He has stigmatised the Russians for what he calls their excessive reparations demands from the enemy countries, which he asserts are heavier than the American claims for the restoration of damaged property in the

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Foreign minister Ernest Bevin of England shows no more eagerness to liquidate the Empire than Winston Churchill.

The first library of Encyclopaedia Britannica films in a Negro college has been established at the KENTUCKY STATE COLLEGE, and sixty-three films have been purchased through Encyclopaedia Britannica Films Lease-to-Own Plan. These films illustrate all studies in the fields of the arts and sciences.

KONXVILLE COLLEGE began its 72nd year on September 24 with a capacity enrollment of 330 students. This is one of the largest enrollments in recent years.

New faculty members are: L. E. Jordan, biology; Mrs. Mae S. Williams, music; and Mrs. Lenora Kloefer, homemaking. Professor H. J. Kloefer returns to the college after a leave of absence for study at the University of Colorado.

F. E. Mapp, biology, and James E. Parker, physics, are studying in the graduate school of the University of Chicago on General Education Board Fellowships for the year 1946-1947.

FISK UNIVERSITY was host to the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference on September 6. The conference, comprising fifteen colleges, met to discuss procedures and schedules for the major competitive intercollegiate sports during the forthcoming school year.

New faculty members are: H. Gamick Williams, vocational appraiser at the Veterans Administration Guidance Center; Dr. Samuel P. Massie, Jr., instructor in chemistry; John T. Fields, training officer for the Veterans Administration Guidance Center; Lee Osborne Scott, philosophy and religion; Walter Taylor, physics; and Clarence H. Barber, music.

Dr. Charles S. Johnson, director of Fisk's department of social sciences, has been appointed as one of the forty members of the National Commission advising the State Department on United States participation in the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY (Mo.) opened its 81st year on September 21 with an enrollment of 1,011 students.

First winner of the \$400 Robert S. Abbott Memorial Scholarship in Journalism, awarded by the Chicago Defender for study in the Lincoln school of journalism, was Mamie Ruth Butler of Palestine, Texas.

Marchita Hackney and Loyce Arnold, two Lincoln seniors, received prizes at the Missouri State fair for their art work. Miss Hackney's poster, "Mildred Pierce," placed second in commercial art; and Miss Arnold's picture,

"The Village Church," won third prize in oil painting.

Dr. Meddie D. Taylor, professor of chemistry, was one of a dozen Negro scientists listed in a War Department release as being among workers in the atomic bomb development.

A "Check List of Negro Newspapers in the United States (1827-1946)," No. 2 in the Lincoln university journalism series, is now being distributed by the college. The 37-page booklet lists 468 newspapers, their locations, date founded and in case they are extinct, date of expiration, editor, and the issues on file as well as where these issues are available.

Dr. Sherman D. Scruggs, president of Lincoln, attended, upon the invitation of G. L. Maxwell, chairman, the seven-day meeting of the Hazen Conference on Higher Education held at Estes Park, Colorado, August 24-30.

Paris Conference

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ex-enemy countries. On the other hand, the representatives of the ex-enemy countries at the Paris conference have generally conceded that Russia has been generous in her demands.

In any event, these reparations represent very little more than token payments for the vast damage and devastation which the troops of these countries wrought upon Soviet territory. The Anglo-American claims, however, are in respect of the property of their capitalist trusts and monopolies, and not for the damage committed upon British and American soil, for it is quite well-known that not a single Hungarian or Rumanian battalion marched on New York or London, while they overran the Ukraine, destroying and pillaging as they went.

This fundamental conflict over the right of Anglo-American capitalists to enjoy the trade of eastern and central Europe produced the suggestion from the Australian delegation in regard to Rumanian reparations that these should be made not in goods but in sterling or dollars, which brought the reply from Mr. Molotov that it "would simply make Rumania dependent on the Anglo-American monetary system," and that such dependence "is not compatible with Rumania's true interests and could only worsen her general situation." Australia's solicitude for the small eastern European countries inspired the suggestion from her delegation that no final amount of reparations from Rumania should be fixed for six months. This drew from Mr. Molotov the gibe that Australia, which

is thousands of miles away, was showing a greater interest in Rumanian affairs than the Rumanians themselves.

All these happenings are evidence of the fierce struggle to secure and consolidate spheres of influence in Europe as between the Eastern and Western blocs. The Soviet Union's approach is motivated by her concern to secure her frontiers against the aggression which she so strongly feels is bound to come, sooner or later, from the West. Why, to achieve this end, has she reversed so completely the policy of the early post-Revolution years? It is my opinion that the proletariat outside the Soviet Union have not responded to the early gestures of the Russian Revolution, so that today the Soviet leaders feel that they cannot rely upon such an uncertain ally, but must endeavor to safeguard their frontiers by more direct means.

Unique Liberality

In the past, the Soviet Union showed a most unique liberality towards her neighbors, but each one of the states to whom she was so liberal immediately after the Revolution—Finland, Poland, the Baltic countries, Turkey—came under the domination of reactionary governments which allowed themselves to be used by the Western Powers as instruments of power politics directed against the Soviet Union. Without the aid which the Soviet Union gave to Turkey in her fight against Britain, and also by the mere fact of the Revolution, which eliminated the secret treaty between Britain and Russia which allocated Constantinople [now officially Istanbul] to the latter, Turkey would not be in existence today as a sovereign nation.

The salient fact to be borne always in mind is that the Soviet Union is still the only country in the world without a stock exchange, operating in opposition to powerful American capitalism. Having little or no reliance upon the support of the European proletariat, she is forced into the field of power politics, and is determined as far as she can to secure her strategic boundaries against the threat of a Western onslaught.

This is the explanation of the struggle which is being waged at the Paris conference. There is no mystery about the Soviet Union's motives, any more than there is about that of Mr. Byrnes, who is but the mouthpiece of Wall Street. The support which "Socialist" Britain's delegate, Mr. Alexander, has given to the American arguments for "free enterprise" in the Danubian and Balkan countries can be explained by the fact that the Labor party has sold the future of Britain, lock, stock and

barrel, to the United States, in the hope that America will underwrite the remnants of the British Empire. Labor, having no distinct policy of its own, is, in effect, through its delegation at Paris, carrying out the policy laid down by Churchill in his Fulton speech.

Here was a glorious opportunity for the British Labor Government to have given an independent lead to the libertarian Socialist forces in Europe by offering an alternative policy to that of the Soviet Union on the one hand and America on the other. But instead, because of its adherence to empire, it has linked its fortunes with those of Yankee imperialism, and British Socialists must not be indignant if the Russians have taken up the challenge. At Paris there is neither idealism nor morality.

American Artist

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clarinet joined to give a little excitement to the finish.

Gentle placed his horn on his lap, and wiped his forehead.

"I had it once," he muttered. "Nobody could tell now. I ain't got it no more."

He reached for the bottle. It was empty. He went to the bar. "Gimme a drink," he said. The bartender filled a glass. Gentle seized his wrist. "Let the bottle stay here." He threw a bill to the bar, and took two slugs in quick succession.

"What do you say, Charlie?" called Morison. "How about making another? We really swung that time!"

"You swung all right. Not me," said Gentle.

"Come on," pleaded Morison, "just one more."

Gentle wheeled around.

"Lay off me man!" he shouted. "What in hell you want from me? I ain't taking no more choruses! I been

dead five years, just waitin' for them to bury me. I knew I was through, I knew it! I just didn't want to admit it to myself. Now what in hell did you have to come down from New York to prove it to me for? Where in hell was you ten years ago, when I had it, and I didn't have the price of a good meal, and my teeth went rotten? Where in hell was you then?" He passed Morison, and turned to the rest of us, glowering, his head tilted down, and his body swaying. "Now listen," he said, in a throaty voice, "you lay off me! Lemme be! I ain't takin' no more choruses on this goddam horn. I'm through with you, and I'm through with this horn, see?" He pressed his lips together, breathing hard, and turned again to Morison. "I don't need your lousy horn, see? I don't need it no more!"

He faced the door and flung the trumpet toward it with all his might. It sailed far wide of the mark, and crashed through a window pane. The sound of the shattering glass arrested him momentarily. Then he waved his arm drunkenly, staggered, and crumpled to the floor, unconscious.

I didn't see Gentle again. Morison and O'Neil carried him home. The following afternoon we left Athens.

Back in New York I didn't have the taste for rejoining a big band. When the Beach Club on Fifty-second Street asked me to organize a small group. I did so at once. Morison dropped into the club one morning after I'd been there a month. I asked him if he had heard anything further from Gentle. He had. Gentle had returned a check Morison sent him. Morison showed me the accompanying note:

"Mr. Morison, Dear Sir. I am sorry that I could not do nothin much for you. In the way of playin on the horn. Thanks for what you send me but rather not take it. Mr. Lebowitz give me back my job. So I'll be o k. Yrs truly. Chas. Gentle."

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