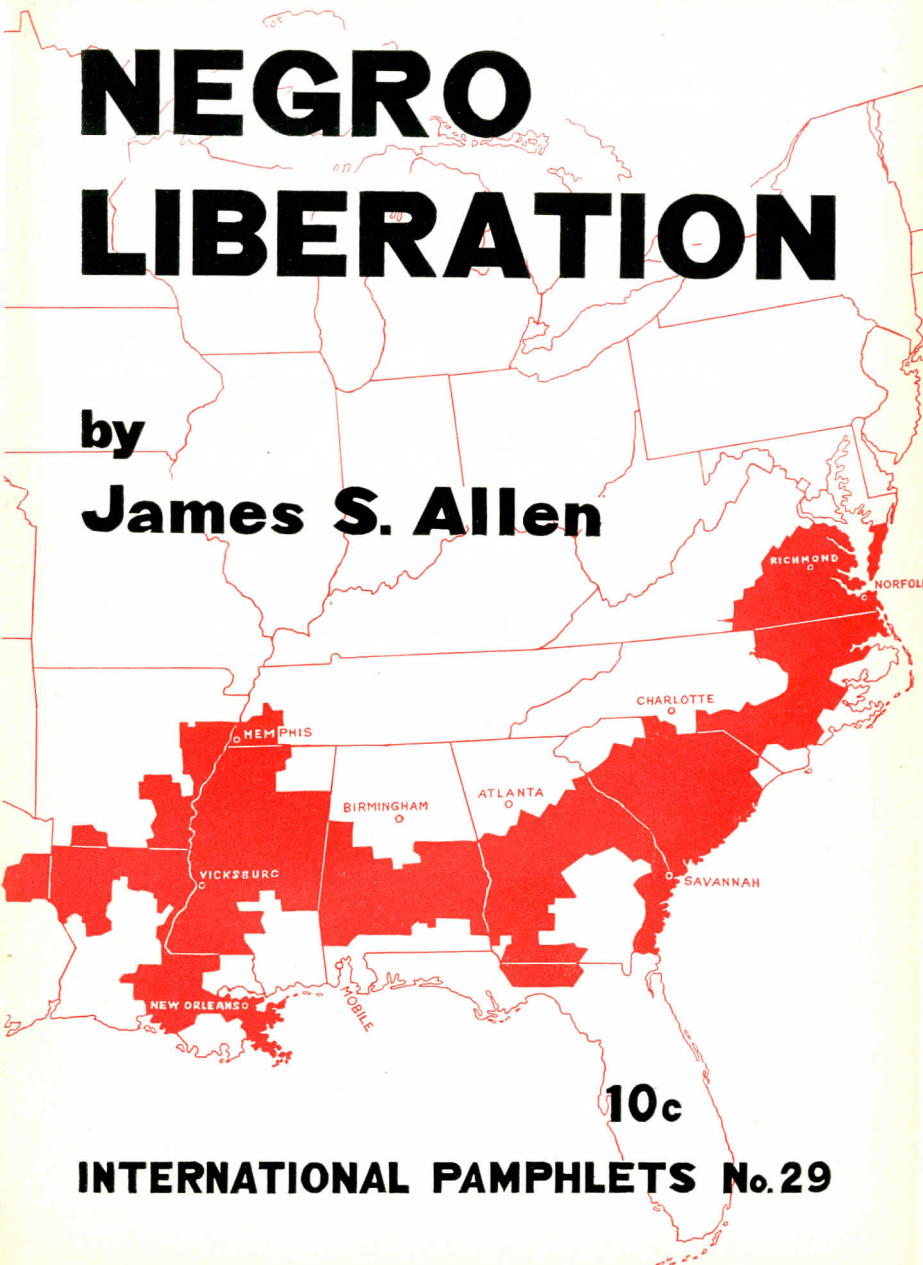


# NEGRO LIBERATION

by  
**James S. Allen**



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**INTERNATIONAL PAMPHLETS No. 29**

## PUBLISHERS' NOTE



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*Printed in the U. S. A. (1932)*

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# NEGRO LIBERATION

By JAMES S. ALLEN

IN the light of a full moon a group of Negro croppers gathered at the rear of a cabin in Sumter County, South Carolina, intently studying a map roughly sketched on the ground. They had come from the surrounding plantations to hold a stealthy meeting of what was then just the beginnings of a Croppers Union. A Negro worker stood in the center of the group explaining the meaning of that rough map. He had sketched a map of the United States in the earth with a twig and marked off those sections of the South in which the Negroes were in the majority.

The croppers were greatly amazed. For the first time they realized that not only in Sumter County, S. C., do the Negroes make up more than half of the population but that there is a continuous stretch of land extending like a crescent moon from southern Maryland to Arkansas in which Negroes outnumber the whites.

Throughout this entire section the Negro peasantry and workers face the same poverty and persecutions which the Negro croppers of Sumter County were now preparing to fight.\* And as the Negro worker and a white worker from a nearby city talked further, the Negro croppers in that dim circle were beginning to gain a full realization of what the struggle for liberation means. It is precisely this understanding that is now gaining ground among the masses of Negro people and which, combined with the increasing impoverishment due to the crisis, is unleashing a tremendous revolutionary force.

\* A more detailed discussion of the present-day conditions and struggles of the Negro peasantry, as well as of the Negro people as a whole, will be found in my pamphlet, *The American Negro* (International Pamphlets, No. 18). The purpose of the present pamphlet is to indicate the road, pointed out by historical and socio-economic facts, to Negro liberation.

The Negro people know, better than anyone else, that promises and ideas about liberation are not to be trusted until they are well examined and tested. Too often and too long have the Negroes of this country been fooled by white and Negro "leaders" alike who have taken advantage of the deep and profound aspirations of the oppressed black people for real freedom. Many times have the Negroes struggled militantly under the banners of a leader who, they thought, was their friend, only to have this "friend" either betray them directly or turn the struggle into other channels. But these struggles have shown the tremendous revolutionary will and power of the Negro people. They have also left their lessons deeply branded in the common knowledge of the Negro masses. Today, under conditions of the widest mass suffering due to the crisis, the Negro masses are looking for a way out more resolutely than ever before; and the white working masses, deep in suffering, are looking for militant and sincere allies in their struggle against the system which breeds starvation and war.

The struggle for Negro liberation is of such tremendous importance to the whole struggle of the working class and is so much a part of it, that it becomes imperative for both the Negro and white workers to understand how the Negro people are to achieve their liberation and the relation of the working class movement to this task.

## THE NEGROES AS AN OPPRESSED NATION

### *What is a Nation?*

It is in the concept of nationality that we are to find the real key to the understanding of the Negro question.

What is a nation? To what degree do the Negro people fulfil the conditions for being a nation?

A complete and comprehensive definition of a nation is given by Joseph Stalin, who is a careful student of this problem and who, under the leadership of Lenin and together with the collective efforts of the Russian Bolsheviks, hammered out a theory

and practice on the national question which has proved its correctness in actual life in the Soviet Union today. Stalin says:

A nation is an historically developed lasting identity of language, territory, economic life, and psychology manifesting itself in identity of culture.

To simplify this very concise definition: A nation is an historically developed community of people; this community of people cannot be temporary, but must be lasting; the people in this community must have a common language, they must live together on a common territory and have a common economic life. The conditions of their life and work in common create more or less uniform ideas, customs and institutions which are manifested in a common culture.

Nations do not begin to arise until the period of the growth and development of capitalism. Thus, all those peoples considered nations today only appeared in history as such with the beginning of capitalism. It was the great French Revolution, which destroyed the feudal power of the landed nobility and ushered in the rule of the manufacturers and merchants, that marked the emergence of France as a nation.

A people must fulfil *all* the conditions enumerated in Stalin's definition in order to be a nation.

Certain confusions must be guarded against: A state must not be confused with a nation. Certain nations, because capitalism has developed more rapidly for them, are stronger and have been able to subdue weaker peoples and forcibly annex them to their own state. Within the Czechoslovakian state, for instance, there is the Croatian nation; within the British Empire, the Irish nation. Nor is it necessary for a people to have a language different from that of any other people in order to be a nation. The Irish, the Americans, the inhabitants of England, the Canadians all speak English, yet they are separate nations.

A nation does not drop out of a clear sky ready-made; it has its beginning, its development and its decline.

## Slavery

By the time slavery was abolished the Negroes already had many of the characteristics of nationality.

The Negro slaves came from various parts of Africa, from different tribes in varying stages of economic and social development, speaking different languages and having varied traditions and customs. In order to prevent insurrections members of the same tribes and families were separated and dispersed over the plantations on their arrival in this country. Their native tongue was prohibited. A foreign language was forced upon them. *English, the language of the slaveholders and a strange tongue to all the slaves, became their common language.* From their birth the slave children knew no other language.

With the spread of the plantation system toward the Mississippi, most of the slaves were put to work on the land. Although many of them came from tribes in Africa which had not yet learned to till the soil, the American slaves were forced to learn a new occupation. *The Negroes were transformed into an agricultural people.*

Their common suffering under the slave system, the abuse and persecution heaped upon them, their common labor on the plantations, created in the Negroes common feelings, thoughts and ideas. *The common aspiration and striving for freedom were powerful factors in welding the Negro people together spiritually.*

All these conditions would not have exerted so powerful an influence in creating a *Negro people*, were it not for the fact that *the Negroes were concentrated in one continuous stretch of territory, the cotton country of the South, where there was a uniform social system based on slavery.* This uniform environment in which the enslaved Negro peasantry developed gave uniformity to the characteristics of the Negro people. Living in close proximity to each other, the Negro slaves developed a common folk-lore and tradition reflecting the condition in which they all found themselves.

Thus the Negroes had many *elements* of nationality even by the end of the Civil War. They could develop further as a nation only

when they had been drawn more directly into the orbit of capitalism.

### *Civil War and Reconstruction*

The Civil War and the period of Reconstruction laid the basis for the further development of the Negro people into a nation. The Civil War was the continuation of the American bourgeois-democratic revolution, the first stage of which had been fought in 1776 when the yoke of British rule was overthrown and the road cleared for the beginnings of manufacture and the further growth of commerce. The Civil War was a social revolution in which the southern slaveholders were finally ousted from the national government, their economic and political power crushed and destroyed by the rapidly developing capitalism of the North. As a result of the Civil War the northern capitalists won undisputed sway over the country, unified the land, and cleared the way for the further development of the United States as a capitalist nation.

The avowed purpose of the war was not to free the slaves; but the slaves were necessarily freed as a result of this revolution. The Emancipation Proclamation was issued by the northern bourgeoisie during the most critical period of the war to win the Negroes as allies against the southern slaveholders. The freed Negroes were the most revolutionary force in the South. By "guaranteeing" the demands of the Negroes for the right to vote, hold office, public education, jury service, etc., the North retained the Negroes as allies during the period of Reconstruction (1865-1877). The help and active participation of the Negroes were invaluable to the North in maintaining its armed dictatorship in the South and in destroying the power of the former slaveholders.

The period of Reconstruction was one of the most revolutionary in the history of the Negro people. As a part of the broader bourgeois-democratic revolution, the Negroes—organized in their rifle clubs and state militia—helped to disfranchise the slaveholders and destroy their political power. For themselves they won civil rights which they have never enjoyed since. Together with

representatives of the northern bourgeoisie (carpetbaggers) and certain sections of the southern poor whites and of the white middle class (scalawags) they dominated all southern state governments with the exception of Georgia; they participated in all phases of political life, maintaining their newly won rights by force of arms and with the help of northern troops.

But while the bourgeois-democratic revolutions in other countries had generally raised the serf to the position of a petty proprietor of land (although remnants of the old feudal relations still remained), the Negroes did not win this most important of all demands. They demanded and fought for "forty acres and a mule," the expropriation of the land of the former slaveholders for division among themselves. On many occasions, they even took possession of such lands, but were driven off by *northern troops*. The North agreed to support certain demands of the Negroes only in so far as they contributed to the defeat of the southern bourbons. To grant the Negroes land would only defeat the aims of the northern bourgeoisie for the establishment of a "New South" after its own heart.

The "poor whites" of the South, who had also been practically disfranchised and denied democratic rights under slavery, won some of these rights during this revolution. In the Black Belt, where the Negroes were the majority of the population and where they were the most revolutionary section of it, the "poor whites" obtained these rights as a result not only of the general bourgeois-democratic revolution, but particularly of the revolution to the extent that it affected the Negro people. It was the Negro people, released from years of servitude, who by the progressive and eager striving for freedom and for the enjoyment of equal rights made these rights possible for the "poor whites" also.

### *Reenslavement—As an Oppressed Nationality*

The election of Hayes as president in 1876 was one of the results of a definite understanding between the northern bourgeoisie and the former slaveowners and marked the complete desertion of the Negroes by the northern ruling class. The capitalists needed cotton for their northern mills and cotton could



only be grown profitably on plantations employing the cheapest of labor. The commercial ties between the northern manufacturers and bankers and the southern slaveholders had always been strong and they had to be strengthened even further to assure a continued supply of the raw material. Cheap cotton, of which there was a great shortage, had to be procured; the plantations had to be set going again. This was done at the expense of the Negro people: the class interests of the northern capitalists dictated the severance of the temporary alliance with the Negro people demanded by history and a new alliance with their former enemies against the Negroes.

By 1877, when the northern troops were removed, life was already running in new channels in the South. The northern bourgeoisie had assured the domination of its class in the South by laying the ground for the reorganization of the whole economy on a capitalist basis. Under the complete domination of northern capitalism, the South became a tremendous hinterland, a source of raw material, chiefly cotton, and an exclusive market for the North's manufactured goods. At the same time the basis was laid for the development of industry in the South.

The Negro had been forced back on the plantations as a farm worker under a labor contract, or as a share-cropper. He became a peon on the land; the former slaveholder became his employer; through control of finances and credit the northern capitalists and bankers together with the southern bankers became the real bosses of the freedmen.

This reenslavement was not accomplished without sharp resistance by the Negro. With the help of the Ku Klux Klan, the chief counter-revolutionary army of the southern ruling class, the Negroes were forcibly disarmed; the right to vote, to hold office, to jury service, to universal and equal public education were taken away from them.

### *The Growth of New Classes*

The Negro people began to develop those sharp class lines so distinctive of all nations. Out of a nucleus of Negroes who had been freed during slavery there had already developed in the northern

cities and, to a much less extent, in the South, a small group of Negro workmen. From this same nucleus there had also developed a small Negro petty bourgeoisie. With the rapid growth of capitalism, however, the development of these classes was greatly accelerated. While in 1867 there were only 400 Negroes engaged in about 40 lines of business, on the eve of the World War Negroes were engaged in 200 lines of business in which they had invested \$50,000,000. There was also a growth of the Negro professional classes—teachers, doctors, dentists, clergymen, government employees, etc.

On the other hand, there was a growth of the Negro proletariat. In the South, Negro workers were to be found in lumber, steel, metal, and mines from the very beginnings of these industries. Strikes of Negro workers occurred as early as 1867 in Virginia and the Reconstruction period saw the convening of the first Negro national labor convention.

But Negro peasants did not—and do not today—enter the orbit of capitalist agriculture in the South, nor did Negro workers enter industry, on the same basis as that of the whites. Within the new capitalist structure of the South a special place was hewed for the Negroes. Theirs was the lowest position, whether on the land or in the factory. They were forced to supply the super-exploited labor necessary for the large-scale production of cotton demanded by the growing market. From them the capitalist obtained the greatest profits, for their wages were and still are the lowest and their conditions of work and life the hardest. They are more exploited than the white workers and farmers, super-profits are wrenched from their labor. Into this new position, the Negro people was forced by violence and kept there by terror.

### *“White Superiority” in a New Garb*

The hang-over of slavery, the deeply ingrained doctrines and practices of “white superiority” which had been used to justify the system of slavery and to console the poor whites in their misery with the thought that they were, at least, members of a “superior race,” was further embellished to justify the new situation and to win the white workers as allies in the oppression of the

Negro people. The racial characteristics of the Negroes served as easily discernible marks with which to set off the Negroes from the rest of the population. Physical Negro characteristics were turned into social uses by the ruling class. A drop of "Negro blood" was enough to brand a person as a member of the specially oppressed group. Race prejudice, whose source lies in the greed of the exploiters, condemned any person with discernible "Negro blood" to his place within his people, a place which had been carved out with an eye to super-profits. The characteristics of race, on the one hand, aided the oppressors in welding the chains of slavery, on the other, resulted in further coalescing the Negro people under their common "stigma" of color.

The ruling class was forced to the greatest extremes of oppression to "keep the Negro in his place" by the fact that the "poor whites," living in such close contact with the Negroes in the South, had matters to settle with the ruling class on their own score. During the Civil War and early Reconstruction sections of the "poor whites" had demonstrated that they would fight shoulder to shoulder with the Negroes against the bourbons; again during the latter part of the nineteenth century the poor white farmers had shown that they would ally themselves with the Negroes in a struggle against the capitalists and landowners when the oppression of the bankers, credit-merchants and large white landowners became unbearable. To prevent this alliance, which the capitalists knew spelled their doom, it was necessary to win the poor whites as allies against the Negroes. To this end, the white toilers had to be impressed with the falsehood that the interests of all whites, regardless of whether they be rich or poor, are the same. Chief of these interests, it was impressed, was a common struggle against the Negro, against "Negro domination."

This division could only be brought about with sledge-hammer tactics. Segregation and Jim-Crow were enforced by lynch law and legal law; in every phase of life the Negroes were separated from the whites. Socially and politically, as well as economically, the Negro people was forced to the lowest position. By 1900-04 this situation was given a more complete legal status in the new constitutions of the southern states, which disfranchised the

Negroes by setting limitations on the right to vote such as the grandfather clause, requirements of property, literacy, etc., which were enforced almost entirely at first against the Negroes alone.

At the state legislatures where these constitutions were passed it was frankly admitted that *the purpose of the new constitutions was to disfranchise the Negroes, but at the same time to guarantee the franchise to the poor whites*. Thus by giving the white toilers those rights denied the Negro people, the white ruling class hoped to win them to the policy of oppression of the Negroes.

The Negro bourgeoisie—a petty bourgeoisie—by this same policy of segregation and Jim-Crow was forced to operate within its own people. Wherever it spread and grew to greater proportions it did so only under the wing of the white capitalists. Its base was that of the Negro people, the only field open for its exploitation. Segregation and Jim-Crow assure Negro business its own market. Segregation and Jim-Crow give it its livelihood. Any threat at the institution of Jim-Crow is also of necessity a threat at the economic foundation of the Negro petty bourgeoisie.

Thus, by 1900, the Negroes had already developed all the characteristics of nationality—of an oppressed nation. Added to those traits it already possessed at Emancipation from chattel slavery were the division of the Negro people into classes by virtue of its place in capitalist society and the development of capitalism within the people itself. With the growth of the petty bourgeoisie a more stable and lasting culture was developed, expressed in literature, art, music, the Negro church, the press, etc. It was the culture of the Negro petty bourgeoisie, strongly influenced by, although containing many elements of revolt against, American bourgeois culture.

### *Common Territory—The Black Belt*

Even from the very beginnings of the slave-plantation system the Negroes were in the majority in the plantation area of the Southern Atlantic states. As the cotton plantations spread toward the Mississippi the area of Negro majority traveled with it. At Emancipation the Negroes outnumbered the whites overwhelmingly (about 60%) in the cotton country. Today the continuous

strip of land on which lives the Negro majority remains practically unaltered, although, due to migration to the North and West, the majority has been somewhat reduced.

This territory is the *Black Belt of the South*, the old cotton country which sweeps through parts of twelve southern states, from the southern border of Maryland into the Mississippi delta. Today there are 5,000,000 Negroes on this territory proper, constituting the majority of its population. In the immediate environs there are another 3,000,000 Negroes, forming between 25% and 35% of the population. The proportion in which the Negroes outnumber the whites in the Black Belt varies: in large portions of southern Virginia, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi they outnumber the whites overwhelmingly; in other portions the Negroes have a very small majority; in still others the whites outnumber the Negroes. If the twelve state and the 350 county boundaries in the Black Belt proper are ignored—they are, after all, purely mechanical divisions set up for the convenience of state and county administration or for political purposes—and the total Negro and white populations for the territory as a whole are added up, it will be found that the Negroes outnumber the whites. The greater majority of Negroes in one place sets off the majority of whites in another.

If we draw a tentative border for this country, ignoring the mechanical divisions of the existing states, we will obtain a clear picture of the territory common to the Negroes.\* If there is anyone alarmed by the sweeping away of old established boundary lines and their replacement by new ones, let him remember that in this very territory in the period after Reconstruction, the southern states reshifted the county borders in an effort to minimize the majority of Negroes in any one county and thus decrease their political effectiveness.

It must also be recognized, after a little reflection, that the existing borders within the Black Belt today are utilized by the ruling class primarily to destroy the unity of this territory. An unwillingness to recognize the basic territorial unity of the Black

\* See map on cover.

Belt amounts to an acceptance of the policy of American imperialism toward the Negro.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONS

To what extent does the position of the Negroes as a nation resemble the position of other oppressed nations? Only by realizing the peculiarities of the national question as applied to the Negro people can we determine correctly what course to pursue in the struggle for liberation.

Lenin distinguished three epochs in relation to the development of nations. The first epoch, 1789-1871, from the great French Revolution to the Franco-Prussian War (marking the establishment of a united Germany), was the epoch of the rise of the bourgeoisie, when feudal society and its institutions were destroyed. In this period the only revolutionary class able to gain victory over the old class, the landed nobility, was the bourgeoisie. During this period it was a revolutionary class, for it carried through a social revolution against the old, the outworn system of society, and laid the basis for the new capitalist system. It was during this period that the powerful capitalist nations of today established themselves. It was during this period that the second American bourgeois revolution was carried through to victory by the northern bourgeoisie. The Negro slaves could only obtain their freedom from chattel slavery by an alliance with the then revolutionary class, the northern bourgeoisie, against the slaveholders. There was no other revolutionary class, for the working class was still small and weak.

The second epoch, 1871-1914, to the outbreak of the World War, is the period in which the bourgeoisie had reached its full growth and had already begun to decline. It is in this period that the bourgeoisie lost its progressive character and became reactionary, that wealth and domination were concentrated into the hands of a few large magnates, that one national bourgeoisie struggled with another for the distribution of the world and for world domination. Capitalism enters the stage of imperialism, fattens on the subjugation and exploitation of the colonial peo-

ples. At the same time there developed within each capitalist nation the class destined to supplant the bourgeoisie as the ruling class. The working class grows, becomes stronger and gathers its power.

### *The Period in Which We Live*

The third epoch is the period in which we now live. It is the period of the decline of imperialism, which is the final stage of capitalism, and the period of the world revolution in which the bourgeoisie is placed in the same position as the landed nobility during the first period. In this period the working class is the most revolutionary class, the only class able to carry through a successful revolution against the old, outworn capitalist system, which spells starvation and mass misery for wider and wider masses of the population. It is the only class able not only to destroy the old system, but also to create the new, the socialist society, in which there will be no classes, in which the producers are also the owners, in which it will be impossible for one class to oppress another. Conditions are created for the unhampered, universal and unprecedented development of all peoples to a point never yet achieved by humanity.

This is, in brief, the history of the development of nations, the final goal of which is the wiping out of all classes within nations and all antagonisms between nations, the amalgamation of the peoples of the whole world.

In the period in which we live the nations and colonial peoples oppressed by the advanced capitalist nations, can only achieve liberation from the yoke of imperialism by an alliance with the proletariat in the capitalist countries.

This final epoch in the life of capitalism and the new era in the life of humanity is far beyond its initial stages. In the Soviet Union, where capitalism has been buried forever, the workers and peasants are constructing a socialist society. The general crisis which has shaken the whole capitalist world to its very roots is hastening the final destruction of the old order. The working class gathers its strength in the fight against starvation. The colonial peoples are struggling to throw off the yoke of the

imperialist oppressor and are welding a common front with the working class of the oppressing nations.

In the world today there are nations in various stages of development. On the one hand there are the advanced capitalist countries, which have long ago completed their bourgeois revolutions, and are now in a stage of capitalist decay. On the other hand there are the vast colonial and semi-colonial peoples. Their whole economy and social life are deeply affected by the domination of the foreign imperialist powers. These powers are interested in the colonial lands as a source of raw material, a field for investment and a market for manufactured goods. Their main policy is forcibly to retard the economic development of these peoples in order to retain them as a poaching ground for their predatory interests. In these countries, the revolution against the old and outworn system of society, traveling hand in hand with the struggle against the imperialist yoke, is developing rapidly. In China, one-sixth of the territory is already ruled by Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Soviets; the struggle of the Chinese people against imperialism gains momentum. In Africa, Indo-China, Central and South America, the revolutionary struggle grows.\*

The so-called independent republics of Central and South America are in reality subjects of American and British imperialism. Yankee imperialism counts among its subject nations Haiti, the Philippines, Cuba, Porto Rico, Panama, etc.

In Europe there are oppressed nations such as the Croats in Czechoslovakia and the Ukrainians in Poland, the Irish in Britain, the numerous nationalities in the Balkans, who are oppressed within the states to which they have been either forcibly annexed or retained against their will by the ruling class of more powerful nations.

### *The Negroes in Relation to Other Nations*

The position of the Negroes as an oppressed nation in the United States basically resembles the position of the oppressed

\* See *War in China*, by Ray Stewart; *Soviet China*, by M. James and R. Doonping; *Yankee Colonies*, by Harry Gannes. International Pamphlets, Nos. 19, 20 and 7.



colonial peoples, with certain differences arising from the conditions peculiar to the development of the Negro people.

Within this short pamphlet we can only indicate these differences:

(1.) Unlike other oppressed peoples, with the exception of Haiti, the Negroes were the chattel slaves of the oppressing nation. This historical factor strengthens the persistency of the "white superiority" idea and heightens the atmosphere of social ostracism.

(2.) The Black Belt is situated within the territory of the United States as a whole and the masses of the oppressing nation live in close proximity to the oppressed Negroes. American imperialism, therefore, finds it necessary to utilize the sharpest methods possible to separate the white toiling masses from the Negroes in order to prevent a fighting alliance. This, together with the first factor, explains the special sharpness of all methods of oppression—Jim-Crow, segregation, lynching,\* etc.

(3.) Industrialization has affected the Black Belt (directly and indirectly) more than it has affected colonial countries, creating a proportionately large Negro proletariat, which together with the white proletariat, is the revolutionary leader of the Negro people.

(4.) The white imperialists, through their foremen, the southern bourbons, have complete control of agriculture and industry in the Black Belt and retard the development of a Negro bourgeoisie, much more completely and more easily than in colonial countries.

(5.) As a result, the Negro bourgeoisie has no major industries of its own and but few large landowners. It develops only under the wing of the white bourgeoisie.

(6.) The mass migrations of Negroes from the South during and after the World War have resulted in the formation of a large Negro minority in the North, which is treated as an oppressed national minority by the northern ruling class. A powerful section of the Negro working class is located in the North. This results, on the one hand, in widening the base of the Negro

\* See *Lynching*, by Harry Haywood and Milton Howard. International Pamphlets, No. 25.

bourgeoisie; on the other hand, because of close association with the more developed northern working class and the growth of class solidarity, it results in strengthening the decisive revolutionary class in the struggle for Negro liberation.

## THE STRUGGLE FOR NEGRO LIBERATION

No longer can the Negro people, as the Negro misleader W. E. B. DuBois advises, look to the white bourgeoisie as their ally in the struggle for liberation. The day is long past when the American bourgeoisie was a revolutionary class. Today it is the most reactionary class, under whose direct imperialist domination 40,000,000 colonial and semi-colonial people suffer; which tightens the chains of wage-slavery around "its own" toiling masses, and whose power must be completely destroyed before either the Negro people or the toiling whites can be really free.

### *The Struggle for Equal Rights*

In every phase of life, whether it be in the shop, or in social or political relations, the Negroes suffer most, and therefore must *demand more* than the white workers or poor farmers. Self-professed friends of the Negro people, such as the leaders of the Socialist Party (in particular—Norman Thomas, James Oneal and Frank Crosswaith) and the so-called progressives in the labor movement (A. J. Muste, Abram L. Harris, Ernest Rice McKinney) hold that the solution of the Negro question differs in no essentials from the solution of the labor problem as such, and that if the demands of white workers are met, those of the Negro workers will also be satisfied at the same time. This is a complete distortion of the truth and an evasion of the fact that the Negroes are an extra-exploited and especially oppressed people. In practise it unavoidably leads to the desertion of the fight of the Negroes for equal rights and a capitulation to white chauvinism. For such a placing of the question ignores those extra demands, over and above those of white workers, which arise from the super-exploited and oppressed condition of the Negro masses.

These extra demands are summed up by the demand for equal

rights in all phases of life. In industry this demand takes the form of equal wages, equal conditions of work, etc.; in social life, the wiping out of all Jim-Crow and segregation, and the right to be treated on a plane of equality with the whites; in political life, the right to vote, to hold office, etc.

Many of these rights, of course, are not enjoyed by the white workers either, or are enjoyed in a very restricted way. White workers must struggle today for the right to hold meetings, to organize and strike, against the restrictions placed on voting, for the right to run their own candidates in elections, etc. To demand equal rights for Negroes means to demand also those rights which the white workers do not have and for which they are also fighting.

These rights are termed democratic rights, because they were conceded the workers as a result of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. They are conceded by the ruling class only in so far as the enjoyment of these rights by the masses contributes to the development of capitalism and only for so long as they do not threaten the domination of the bourgeoisie. As soon as the workers, becoming more class conscious, seize upon these rights in earnest as a weapon in the struggle against the ruling class, as soon as they are no longer duped by the sham of a democracy which cloaks capitalist oppression, the bourgeoisie does everything in its power to withdraw them. Today, these democratic rights are being denied workers on every side and as the revolutionary struggle develops the cloak of democracy is completely dropped and the government bares itself as a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. This we call *fascism*, and see it in highly developed form in Italy, Poland and in several Balkan states. A strong fascist movement exists in Germany, and many elements of fascism are to be found in the United States.

But in the struggle to obtain and hold these democratic rights, the working class strengthens its own position within capitalism, solidifies its ranks and develops the offensive against the bourgeoisie. "Just as victorious Socialism is impossible without the achievement of complete democracy, so the proletariat will be unable to prepare for victory over the bourgeoisie unless it wages

a many-sided, consistent and revolutionary struggle for democracy," says Lenin.

While the demand for equal rights meets all the *special* demands of the Negroes in the North, it but partially fulfils the urgent need of the Negroes in the South. For it is in the South that the majority of Negroes live and in the Black Belt where they form the majority of the population. It is here that the masses of Negroes are farm workers and croppers, living under conditions of semi-serfdom, reenslaved on the soil which they have tilled for a century.

The oppression of the Negroes in the North, in the final analysis, finds its roots in the position of the Negroes in the Black Belt. For it was from this super-exploited and oppressed area that the capitalists recruited their "cheapest" workers for northern industry and obtained and continue to obtain from the labor of the Negroes on the cotton plantations some of the surplus profit used in strengthening the power of capital generally. The social and political discrimination of the Negroes in the South serves as a pattern for similar discrimination in the North. As long as the Negroes in the South remain oppressed and exploited within the semi-feudal tenant system of agriculture and the industries closely related to it, the Negroes in the North will remain an oppressed national minority, suffering all the economic, social and political discrimination of such a group.

In the South, and therefore in the North too, the Negroes can only be assured true equality by winning the demand of the right of self-determination, the most important of all democratic political rights.

### *The Right of Self-Determination*

In general, the demand for the right of oppressed nations to self-determination means the right to free political separation from the oppressing nation. It does not necessarily mean that separation need be carried out. But it does mean that an oppressed people has the right to decide for itself whether it wishes to live as an independent political unit, or be federated with other na-

tions within one state. It means that no people be politically oppressed by another or kept within a state by coercion.

We demand the freedom of self-determination—says Lenin—not because we dream of an economically atomised world, not because we cherish the ideal of small states, but on the contrary because we are for large states and for a coming closer, even a fusion of nations, but on a truly democratic, truly international basis, which is *unthinkable* without the freedom of separation. . . . [The working class] strives to bring the nations closely together, to fuse them, but it intends to bring that about not by the use of force, but only by a free, brotherly union of the workers and the toiling masses of all nations.

The right of self-determination as applied to the Negroes in this country means: That the Negro people in the Black Belt, where they have formed the majority of the population for many generations and where they have developed as a people, have the right to set up a republic of the Black Belt in which the Negroes would exercise governmental authority (and where the significant white minority would have full equal rights with the Negroes), and determine for themselves whether their country should be federated to the United States or have complete political independence.

Before a people can have equal rights with other peoples of the world, it must have the right itself to determine its relations with other nations. We can in no sense speak of the Negro people having achieved full equal rights until it has won the right of self-determination.

Communism strives to bring the peoples of the world closer together, to unite them into larger and larger states. The Communist Party of the U. S. A. strives to unite the Negro toilers and the white masses of the country, but this objective cannot be reached until the Negroes have the freedom—which they do not have now—to enter of their own free will and without coercion into such a union. They must first have the *right* to choose before we can say that they have chosen freely.

The right of self-determination does not necessarily imply separation. It means the right to separate, if the citizens of the proposed new republic so choose, and it means the right to remain

a federated part of the United States, if that suits the interests of the Negro people better, which depends upon the circumstances. For instance, under conditions of capitalism in the United States today, when they are ground under by the heel of Yankee imperialism, the Negroes would achieve immeasurably greater freedom by separation. Should there, on the other hand, be a truly workers' and farmers' government in the United States today, the real interests of the Negro masses would be served best by federation with such a government, as is shown by the position enjoyed by the numerous formerly subject nationalities in the Soviet Union.

Nor does self-determination mean, as the leaders of the Socialist Party would have it, the right to set up a Jim-Crow state in the South, which would consist *only* of Negroes. This is a purely reactionary idea, based on the idea of the forcible separation and division among peoples. It evades the only logical and correctly democratic interpretation of the right to self-determination by making concessions to white chauvinism, by agreeing to segregate the Negroes from the whites. The real test of self-determination lies in the willingness of the southern white masses to recognize this right for the Negro people and to help in its realization; it lies in the determination by the white workers that they will no longer permit themselves to be used by the white ruling class in the oppression of the Negro people, and, as a white minority within the Black Belt, recognize the right of the Negro majority to governmental authority.

This idea of a Jim-Crow state is the same reactionary nationalism which pervades the ideas and activities of Marcus Garvey, who—quite conveniently for the white ruling class—ignores the right of the Negro toilers to the land they have tilled for generations in the Black Belt, and would transport them to Liberia to be used by Yankee imperialism to subject the natives and recruit forced labor for the Firestone rubber plantations and slaves for Fernando Po. This is the Negro counterpart of Zionism and serves to divert the Negro masses from the liberation struggle in the United States. It tries to utilize Amer-

ican Negroes to help Wall Street combat the struggle of the Liberian native masses for liberation.

To speak of the right to set up a republic in the Black Belt means to recognize that the Black Belt is a united territory with definitely set borders distinguishing it from the general territory of the United States. The right of self-determination for the Black Belt implies the recognition of this territorial unity, which has been broken up by state and county boundaries the better to suit imperialist oppression. It necessarily raises as one of the principal demands that the troops of the United States government, now stationed in the Black Belt to enforce the national oppression of the Negro people, be withdrawn.

### *The Struggle of the Negro Peasantry*

As we have pointed out, every bourgeois-democratic revolution attained its mass momentum by the movement of the peasant masses against serfdom or bondage to big landowners. Today in most of the colonies and semi-colonies, as well as in the Black Belt, this agrarian struggle lies at the root of the popular democratic revolution, for, because of the backward nature of these countries, the vast majority of the people are still peasants whose bondage to big landowners or feudal and patriarchal lords has been intensified by the growth of native capitalism and the power of foreign imperialism. The peasantry, in striking off these chains, must strike at the big landowners and capitalists, who are tools of imperialism.

In the Black Belt, the majority of the Negro people are still exploited as semi-serfs and peons by the big white landowners. Their "forty acres and a mule" have never been realized and their present condition of servitude differs only in form and degree of intensity from chattel slavery. With financial support from the imperialists of the North and the capitalists of the South, the big white landowners have been able to intensify and strengthen their domination over the Negro peasantry. The real exploiters of the Negro peasantry are the big capitalists who realize the main profits out of the cotton produced by the Negroes; the big white landowners of the South, the small credit

merchants, are but the foremen for Wall Street, who "horn in" on the profits gained from the super-exploitation of the Negro toilers. The general crisis now shaking capitalism is felt most severely by the Negro peasantry, which is made to bear the main burden of the crisis as it affects cotton—the landowners cut off the food advances, take whatever possessions the Negro farmers may have in payment for "debts," cut wages down to the bone, take the whole crop from their tenants and croppers, dispossess the few small Negro landowners and force them to become tenants; fill the chain gang to overflowing with "discontented Negroes," multiply the victims of lynch law, repeat Scottsboros on smaller and varied scales. Exploitation and oppression go hand in hand; as one increases the other grows in proportion, for oppression is merely a means of enforcing exploitation.

It is in this struggle against semi-feudal bondage that the peasantry kindles the flames of the struggle for the liberation of the whole Negro people. The struggle is necessarily directed against the big white landowners and capitalists and their whole machinery of government in the Black Belt. *It aims at the destruction of the share-cropping system and at the possession of the land by the Negro toilers.* The power of the white landowners and capitalists in the South must be overthrown and destroyed and their land confiscated and distributed among the tillers of the soil before the Negro people will be able to exercise the right of self-determination.

This struggle of the Negro peasantry is directed against the whole capitalist class, for the power of the Southern ruling class rests, in the final analysis, on the power of American imperialism. This is the same enemy that the white and Negro workers are now fighting and must continue to fight. It is in the struggle against this enemy that the working class seeks allies, and a most powerful ally is the Negro people struggling for liberation from the yoke of American imperialism. On the other hand, the Negro people must realize that its only immediate, possible and trustworthy ally in the struggle is the American working class. This alliance is being forged in the daily struggles of the white and Negro toilers for social insurance and unemployment relief,



in the struggle against wage cuts, in the struggle of the farm workers and poor farmers, in the struggle for Negro rights and against white chauvinism.

### *The Negro Bourgeoisie*

In our day the Negro bourgeoisie because of its close connection with the white ruling class, under whose paternal care it has been permitted a measure of economic headway, can in no sense be revolutionary. Although it is a bourgeoisie of an oppressed nation, restricted in its direct exploitation of the Negro masses and suffering social oppression (to a much less degree than the Negro toilers), the very dependency for its precarious existence upon Yankee imperialism and the imperialist policy of segregation precludes any possibility of a struggle for democratic rights from that quarter. Although numerically insignificant its ideological hold upon the Negro petty-bourgeois masses is increased out of proportion to its size by its ties to the American bourgeoisie. It is most outspoken in its professions of friendliness to its paternal guardian although the same "provider" does not hesitate to destroy its incipient industrial, large business and banking enterprises in times of crises. The exhortations of its outstanding leaders to the Negro masses for unity with the white bourgeoisie is but the accompaniment to its cringing supplications to the white masters for more leeway in its economic growth. It strives to increase its direct exploitation of and market among the Negro masses, a striving expressed in organizations such as the National Negro Business League which encourages bigger Negro business; in the National Urban League, which carries out the program of the Negro bourgeoisie and the white ruling class directly among the Negro workers; it is expressed by the program of *segregated* economic advancement, voiced by such people as R. R. Moton, Principal of Tuskegee Institute, and by such newspapers as the *Pittsburgh Courier*.

From the Negro petty bourgeoisie it recruits the apologists for its policy of submission to the Yankee bourgeoisie, and through them attempts to direct its domination over the Negro toilers. The Negro professional people and mushroom business pro-

prietors, suffering economically not only because imperialism is steadily expropriating them but also because they are the petty bourgeois of an oppressed nationality, are restricted to but half-hearted and futile gestures of struggle against imperialism—when they do not openly support imperialism. Depending for their dwindling livelihood upon segregation, they have, perhaps more than any other petty bourgeoisie of an oppressed nation, submitted to the will of the imperialist master. Any concession won in the way of more friendly treatment, either economic or social, from the white bourgeoisie, they interpret as a victory won for the whole Negro people, although it is nothing but a condescending and genteel tolerance of the “less obnoxious” and “more cultivated” Negro.

An imperialist policy, softened with meaningless mumbling of protest, is followed by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and its leaders, Dr. DuBois, Walter White and William Pickens. Until recently these gentlemen were quite outspoken in urging unity between the Negro masses and the white ruling class against the white workers, which, no matter how decorated with frills of protest against persecution, is an open policy of submission. When, under the leadership of the Communist Party, the fighting unity of white and Negro workers showed in action the only path for the Negro masses, DuBois and company changed their song. At the 23d Annual Conference of the N.A.A.C.P. (1932), the vigilant DuBois urged the N.A.A.C.P. to go directly to the *Negro masses*, instead of remaining aloof and restricting its direct activities to the petty bourgeoisie. His speech and the proceedings of the whole conference showed a recognition by the Negro bourgeoisie and its white masters that they could retain their rapidly slipping hold upon the Negro masses only by the use of honeyed words and lip service to the demands of the struggle for liberation. The Scottsboro Case, more than any other recent single event, has permanently weakened the hold of the “race leaders” upon the Negro masses.

In so far as the Negro bourgeoisie enters into a fight against discrimination and for equal rights, it takes the road of re-

formism, of bargaining with the white imperialists. It attempts to spread reformist illusions among the Negro masses, thus doing direct damage to the whole struggle for Negro liberation, blurring over the basic class interests of the Negro toilers, and trying to kill their will for militant struggle by injecting liberal antitoxin. In the face of growing struggles against the mass misery and intensified oppression arising from the crisis, its "race leaders" try to throw out the bait of legislative reform and vague plans for "government ownership," "economic planning" and Negro co-operatives. In this period of sharpening class struggles especially, such programs are dangerously damaging to the struggle for Negro liberation and of the working class as a whole.

Honest Negro intellectuals and members of the petty bourgeoisie, sincere in their struggle for equal rights, must realize and are realizing under the blows of the crisis that the liberation of the Negro people can be obtained only by alliance with the Negro and white working class. Lenin, speaking of the struggle for democratic rights, says:

...all these [democratic] demands must be formulated, not in a reformist, but in a determined revolutionary manner. One must not limit himself to the confines of bourgeois legality but break these confines, not to satisfy oneself with parliamentary steps and open protest, but draw the masses along in the active struggle, broaden and stimulate the struggle around every democratic demand to the direct attack of the proletariat upon the bourgeoisie, *i.e.*, to the socialist revolution which will expropriate the bourgeoisie.

### *Friend or Enemy?*

Some of the Negro misleaders are members of the Socialist Party. In general, very general, terms the Socialist Party claims that it is the friend of the Negro people. But Norman Thomas, its leader and presidential candidate, in the same way as the leadership of the Socialist parties of all countries during and since the war supported the imperialist policies of its own bourgeoisie, refuses to acknowledge the right of self-determination for the Black Belt. He even denies the existence of any such continuous territory and distorts the meaning of self-determination into

segregation and Jim-Crow, attempting to show that any such program as proposed by the Communists for self-determination in the Black Belt would lead to "race war."

This position of the Socialist Party leadership is consistent with its rôle as a "third party of capitalism" and as a party of social-fascists (socialists in words, fascists in deeds) within the working class. It has been following this policy in relation to the Negro consistently. Thomas simply develops further the statement of A. F. Von Blon, a leading "socialist" of Texas and candidate for lieutenant-governor in 1930, who wrote in a letter to the Communist Party when it ran a Negro worker from that state for the United States Senate: "You know the South well enough to know that it will not be class conscious enough for at least 50 years to tolerate voting for a colored man." Working on this reactionary conclusion, the "Socialists" have considered the Negro to be backward and unfit for organization, and oppose in the South the organization of white and Negro workers together on the same grounds that Thomas objects to self-determination—it will bring race war! The Communist Party has shown by the struggles of white and Negro workers and poor farmers it has led in the South that far from bringing "race war" such solidarity strengthens the *class war* and lays the agitational and organizational basis for the final struggle for Negro liberation and working class emancipation.

While the Socialist Party talks of "equal rights" it is a good example of just the thing we warned against: its actions have shown it to be a part of the ruling class machine—it supports the League of Nations, which by its system of mandates, perpetuates the exploitation of colonial peoples; it supports the capitalist alliance against the Soviet Union by spreading the most vicious slander against it and supporting the attempts of sabotage and wreckage within the Soviet Union; it lends its official support to the N.A.A.C.P. The whole psychology of national hatred so thoroughly pervaded its upper strata that at the National Convention of the party in 1932, to which but *one* Negro delegate was elected, charges and counter-charges of race prejudice against the Jews filled the air. Its whole position in regard to the Negro is

best summed up by one of its own leaders, Heywood Broun, who wrote:

If I were a candidate for high executive office, or judiciary office, I would say, even without being cornered, that I would not now sanction the efforts to enforce the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States [one granting citizenship to the Negroes, the other the right to vote].

### *The Working Class and the Struggle for Negro Liberation*

Both the Negro workers and the white workers have special tasks to perform, given them by history, in relation to the struggle of the Negro people for liberation. While the interests of the working class of all peoples and nations are essentially the same—to struggle against *their own* bourgeoisie, to overthrow capitalism and build Socialism—the conditions of the oppression of the Negro people have created a difference in the approach and necessary activity of the white and Negro workers.

The differences in the position of the white and Negro workers are:

(1.) Sections of the white workers have received crumbs from the super-profits made by the white capitalist class which were obtained from the super-exploitation of the Negroes. Because the Negroes are made to fill the unskilled and lowest paid jobs, more white workers fill the skilled and higher paid jobs. Out of profits made from the robbing of the Negro peasantry and workers as well as from those obtained by the exploitation of the colonies, the capitalists can pay higher wages to a section of the white workers and thus create a larger labor aristocracy, which it uses against both the mass of white and Negro unskilled and unorganized workers. Thus the American Federation of Labor—which organized only the skilled workers, the upper strata of the working class—is used against the mass of unorganized workers to break their struggles and keep their conditions poor. The officials of the A. F. of L., the agents of the bosses in the working class, try to perpetuate the boss policy of splitting the white workers from the Negro by refusing Negro workers admittance to their unions. Thus, these white workers who have been given crumbs

from the tables of the rich, are forced to participate in robbing the Negro workers.

(2.) In a political sense, the white workers occupy a privileged position as compared with the Negro workers.

(3.) The white workers have been taught in school and in everyday life to look with disdain and contempt upon the Negro workers, have been polluted by white chauvinism. They are trained to participate not only in the economic robbing of the Negro people, but also in the vicious social persecution of the Negroes. They are fooled into becoming tools in the hands of the white ruling class in perpetuating the system of lynch law and Jim-Crow.

The masses of Negro workers, remembering what they have suffered from the hands of whites without distinction to class, look with deep distrust upon all whites, including white workers. In this deep distrust against *all* whites they have been encouraged by the Negro upper class which has counseled, in one form or another, from Booker T. Washington to Garvey and DuBois, an alliance with the white bourgeoisie, holding up the "poor whites" as the worst enemy of the Negro people. They point to the mob of 10,000 poor and backward whites outside the courthouse in Scottsboro when the eight Negro boys were sentenced to the electric chair, but take care not to rest the blame where it belongs: with the big white landowners, bankers and credit merchants of this drought-stricken area who are starving the poor whites to death and, fearing revolt, attempt to shift the hatred of the poor whites from themselves to the even more exploited Negroes. They forget to mention that this mob was organized by the merchant- and landlord-owned newspapers of the vicinity and nearby cities, which carried the vilest slander against the Negroes and whipped up the lynch spirit. The aim of it all was to retain the alliance of the white toilers in the oppression of the Negroes.

### *The Special Task of the White Workers*

The greatest responsibility in destroying the wedge between the white and Negro workers rests with the *white workers*. Only

the white workers—by action—can overcome the deep distrust in the Negro workers. “No people can be free which oppresses another people,” said Karl Marx. The white workers must say: “No longer will we participate in the robbing and persecution of the Negro people so that our oppressors may become richer and strengthen the bonds of our own slavery. No longer will we permit the capitalists to undercut our wages and worsen our conditions by keeping the Negro worker at so low a status. We must expose the slander of DuBois and others like him by showing the Negro people by deeds that we are their only true and reliable friends.”

And words alone will not do. Only by deeds can the white workers show that they have cast from them the filth of oppression and prejudice. They must wipe out all traces of the “white superiority” idea in themselves and be the first to demand and fight for the special demands of the Negro people, for equal rights for Negroes, for full economic, social and political equality.

They must be among the first to demand for the Negro people the right of self-determination. This right the white worker must consider among the most important, for in supporting and fighting for it they decisively disassociate themselves from the ruling class in the oppression of the Negro people and themselves strike out for Negro liberation.

Wherever white workers have done this, the distrust of the Negro workers has been dispelled and they have shown themselves to be the most militant and revolutionary of fighters. The growing unity of white and Negro workers in the fight against starvation and war and in the fight for Negro rights, under the leadership of the Communist Party, especially in Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, the mine fields, the South, shows the powerful revolutionary force of such a unity, without which the working class as a whole can make no progress against the bourgeoisie.

### *The Special Task of the Negro Workers*

The Negro workers, on the other hand, must make the Negro masses understand why and how the white workers are their friends and allies, they must do their part in dispelling distrust of white workers. They must, above all, expose their own bour-

geoisie before the Negro masses, and themselves, as a part of the organized revolutionary proletariat, lead the Negro people in the struggle for liberation.

Negro workers must remember that the main struggle is for the overthrow of capitalism and that the winning of the democratic rights for the Negroes is a part of this struggle. For the mere winning of equal rights and even self-determination does not necessarily mean that exploitation and wage-slavery will be wiped out. Cuba, for instance, has formal self-determination and its people had won a measure of democratic rights, but they are still being viciously exploited and oppressed by American imperialism and the bloody dictatorship of their own bourgeoisie. The struggle against imperialism is the most important task of the working class—black or white.

The Negro workers, therefore, while fighting for the right of self-determination, for the right of the Negro people to a republic in the Black Belt and for the right to decide for itself its relations to the United States government, will not necessarily be in favor of separation. They will make their decision dependent upon the state of the revolutionary movement as a whole, depending upon what, at that particular moment—while obtaining the greatest possible freedom for the Negro people—would at the same time weaken the power of American imperialism or advance the cause of the whole working class.

## THE ROAD TO LIBERATION

The struggle for equal rights for Negroes and for self-determination for the Black Belt is to be recognized as of tremendous revolutionary power by the whole working class. One year before the Russian Revolution of 1917 Lenin wrote: "The social [proletarian] revolution cannot come about except as an epoch of proletarian civil war against the bourgeoisie in the advanced countries, combined with a *whole series* of democratic and revolutionary movements, including movements for national liberation in the undeveloped, backward and oppressed nations." The Russian Revolution has shown how true were these words



of Lenin. The Tsar was overthrown as a result of the popular democratic revolution of March, 1917, which was led by the workers in alliance with the soldiers, most of them peasants. But the Russian bourgeoisie continued in power; it was in its interest to continue the World War and continue the oppression of the workers and peasants. But when the revolutionary proletariat, led by the Communist Party, grew rapidly in numbers and influence and it was seen by the broad toiling masses that it was the only force which could provide peace, bread and land, the peasant masses and the oppressed nationalities joined forces with it and put an end to capitalism in the successful proletarian revolution in November, 1917. Under the leadership of the proletariat and its Party, seemingly unsurpassable difficulties were overcome and the Soviet Union today is the beginning of the new society, Socialism, which is bound to spread all over the world.

### *The Soviet Solution*

The proletarian revolution solved the national problem in Russia, the country which had been known as "the prison of nations," where close to 200 nationalities had been oppressed by tsarism, where national hatred and prejudice had run rife, where the Tsar's methods of mass murder and brutal persecution had threatened whole peoples with extinction or forced assimilation. The revolution, by destroying tsarism and overthrowing the bourgeoisie, made possible the independent economic and cultural development of the formerly oppressed nations and national minorities. The program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union states:

In order to overcome the distrust felt by the working masses of the oppressed countries towards the proletariat of states which used to oppress those countries, it is necessary to abolish all and sundry the privileges enjoyed by any national group, and to establish complete equality before the law for all nationalities, and to recognize the right of colonies and subject nations to separation.

This program has been carried out to the letter by the Soviet government and the Communist Party. All remnants of chauvinism inherited by the people from tsarism are energetically fought by the government and by the Party and are being wiped out.

But the prime, the most important basis for national oppression—the economic, social and cultural retardation of a people—is being swiftly removed. While the policy of tsarism, like that of Wall Street towards the American Negroes, was to forcibly retard development of the non-Russian nationalities, the Soviet government and the Russian proletariat encourages, helps and gives special attention to the all-around development of the formerly oppressed peoples. In the economic and social growth of these peoples *the stage of capitalist development is being skipped and they are developing along the lines of Socialism.*

All this is done in a very practical way, by organizing industries and collectivizing and modernizing agriculture in the backward national areas *at even a greater rate than in Central Russia.* While for the Soviet Union as a whole under the Five-Year Plan, the average growth of industrial capital reached 289%, the average growth in the backward national republics reached 350% and in some cases even 1,000%! Retardation is replaced by extra-rapid development.

The rate of collectivization (combining the small peasant holdings into large collective farms) in the national areas is greater than in Central Russia. In a number of national republics collectivization is already completed. Hand in hand with this process, the old and out-dated methods of agriculture are being done away with. It is interesting and instructive to draw a parallel here with agriculture in the Black Belt of the United States. In the South, the croppers and poor farmers are made to grow cotton as a money crop, as raw material to be sold by big landlord, merchant and banker for profit. There is no effort made to preserve the soil, to avoid planting in small patches by inefficient methods. As a result there is a definite retrogression in the agriculture of the deep South which, of course, spells even greater ruin and misery for the Negro peasantry and small white farmers and tenants. Through socialist re-organization in the Soviet Union, the government and the Party of the proletariat helped the backward nationalities in many ways to restore their agriculture, which had been ruined by tsarist oppression. The retrogression of Southern agriculture, which is bewailed as hopeless by many “experts,” which is be-

lieved by some to doom the Negroes to perpetual poverty, can be most effectively stopped, and by collectivization under a system of Socialism the Black Belt can be made one of the most productive and efficient agricultural areas in the country. Together with complete industrial development in the South, where until now much of it has been restricted to territory outside of the Black Belt, the whole economic level of the Negro people can be raised, serving as a basis for full social and cultural growth for the masses.

Culturally the nationalities in the Soviet Union have made tremendous strides forward. While tsarism had retarded cultural development even more thoroughly than economic—not permitting activities in the native tongue, enforcing almost complete illiteracy, etc.—illiteracy today is being rapidly wiped out, native newspapers appear literally by the hundreds where there were none or but a few before, new publishing houses cannot turn out enough to meet the needs of the masses, the end of 1932 will see 100% attendance in the elementary public schools (compare with the Negro children in the South, 30% of whom do not go to school at all and most of the others only for short terms of two or three months a year). A new rich and varied culture, “national in form and socialist in content,” is being rapidly developed.

To achieve the same result—overthrow capitalism and build Socialism in the United States—is the aim of the Communist Party of the U. S. A. As the Party of the American proletariat, to which both white and Negro workers belong, it is naturally and inevitably the friend and ally of the Negro people. By its actions (vigorous campaign against white chauvinism, militant struggle for Negro rights, organization in the South, nominating as its candidate for vice-president in the 1932 elections the Alabama Negro worker and party leader, James W. Ford) it has shown that, as the rapidly growing leader of the working class, it considers the struggle for Negro liberation of paramount importance. In its 1932 election campaign platform, one of its six main planks is: “Equal rights for Negroes; self-determination for the Black Belt.” It is the only working class party which can lead the struggle for the liberation of the Negro people and of all the exploited and oppressed.

# RECOMMENDED BOOKS



## THE LITTLE LENIN LIBRARY

Lenin's shorter writings and selections dealing with special topics.

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