

The Negro Movement

A Betrayer of the Negro Liberation Struggle

By Greenwood

The present world crisis has brought untold misery and suffering to the peoples in the colonial, semi-colonial and capitalist countries. Starvation, scanty means of existence, increased terror and denial of elementary rights of mankind are the lot of millions of Negroes. But the capitalist class does not limit itself to terror alone, it also utilises the method of penetrating the ranks of the working class with elements who have ideas which are alien and harmful to the cause of national liberation. Such ideas and an enemy have been discovered in the editorial board of the "Negro Board," the international Negro magazine.

George Padmore, in a small way, has taken his place alongside of the arch-betrayers of the Negro liberation struggle. Padmore has become a petty-bourgeois nationalist with connections with agent-provocateurs and enemies of the Negro liberation struggle.

Let us examine the path taken by Padmore. In a most feeble effort to justify his position and a profound lack of confidence in the revolutionary white workers, he claims: "What you white comrades have never understood and will never be able to understand is the psychology of the Negro." Therefore, he gives the implication that the task of building up a united front, a wall of unity in struggle of Negro and white toilers against capitalism is impossible and the distrust of the Negroes in revolutionary white workers cannot be overcome, thus the gap between the Negro and white workers is being widened and the class enemy is allowed to utilise this division for its own ends. But this theory is enriched with his idea of saving Liberia. Liberia to-day stands in a position of a subject vassal State to the imperialists of the United States and England. The struggle of the Liberian natives for freedom is the struggle in the first place to drive out the American and British imperialists. But the white toilers of imperialist England, America and other countries, according to Padmore, are not interested in this struggle. He considers that Liberia is a free country, that American imperialism, through its agent, Firestone, does not occupy a dominant position and is not enslaving the native population. The main struggle to-day, in the words of Padmore, is to prevent "intervention and annexation" and to raise money for reform of the country. The struggle against slavery conditions on the rubber plantations of Firestone, the struggle for higher wages, the struggle for elementary democratic rights are excluded from the programme of Padmore.

This is not a new theory. It has its origin in race theories, that the race is superior to the class. This theory means the perpetuation of the artificial barriers of white supremacy. Therefore, Negroes must unite to fight for their own interests as a race and against all whites.

The national liberation struggles of the millions of oppressed Negro peoples is closely linked up with the struggle of the white working class (the proletarian struggle) against capitalism. There cannot be any separation of the struggles of the white toilers for the betterment of their conditions from the struggles of the oppressed Negro peoples. The unification of these struggles results in the powerful organisation and concentration of working-class resistance to our enemy and hastens his downfall.

One of the means of increasing the profit of decaying capitalism and attempting to secure its tottering position is the establishment of trustified organisations of the type of Firestone Rubber Company. Such an agent of American capitalism has entered Liberia. Firestone robs the natives of their land, hires the same natives for starvation wages and in the most brutal manner exploits and oppresses the working population in order to produce a greater amount of raw materials to be manufactured and thrown upon the market at the lowest possible price in order to undersell competitors.

At the same time Liberia finds itself in the economic crisis and is forced to take loans from the imperialist countries. These loans naturally subjugate Liberia to the creditor nation. Thus it is that American imperialism and its agents in Liberia are in a position to dictate their policy to this "free" State. To deny the role of American imperialism and at the same time to fail to see the struggle that is going on between England and America for the most dominant position in Liberia is attempting to cover up the enslavement and fierce terror against the native workers and help to continue the system of robbery and oppression. To spread such false ideas makes it more difficult to organise the struggle for complete freedom. But this is a deliberate policy of the white ruling class.

Can the freedom of the native workers be purchased by raising five million dollars or any other large sum? Does freedom come through such a utopian plan? Let us not forget Garvey, the father of such an idea, who introduced the "back to Africa movement" in the same manner. Only the lowest individual, trying to deceive honest toilers and further his own personal ambitions, would, in the employ of our enemy oppressors, introduce the plan, called: "'Save Liberia Committee'—to raise five million dollars through donations to carry out internal reforms and national reconstruction"—without establishing the fundamental fact that these things can only be won through mass struggle. The struggle to abolish slavery (which exists in the real sense of the word) is a revolutionary struggle. As long as huge profits can be made from slave labour, as long as the higher strata of the native population can be bribed by the big corporations and landlords, it is childish to think that the imperialist bandits will give one concession without it being forced from them by the mass struggles of the toiling population. Reforms that will benefit the native toilers will come through revolutionary struggle. To speak of securing freedom in any other way is the same theory as put forward by the social democrats who have their counterpart in the Negro reformists. These people are against mass revolutionary struggle and are the main supports of the capitalist class, in helping to beat back the rising revolutionary movement.

Lastly, the fact that Padmore not only has connections with the renegade elements of the Negro liberation movement and of the proletarian class struggle, but he has given information to the police about the developing Negro liberation struggle. When one stoops so low as to turn over the names and addresses of seamen, who are arrested, it shows where their class interests lie.

The blood of those who have been lynched, shot, tarred and feathered, whipped at the post and cast into dark dungeons, has not been shed in vain. This persecution of our fellow-toilers shall drive us onward to struggle more determinedly for complete emancipation. No betrayer can stop our progress. There is only one way out—the way of revolutionary struggle.

Published weekly. Single copies, 2d. Subscription rates: Great Britain and Dominions, 12s. per year; U.S.A. and Canada, five dollars per year. Remittance in STERLING per International Money Order, Postal Order or Sight Draft on London.

Published by WILLIAM MASSEY, 249, King Street, Hammersmith, London, W.6, and Printed by THE MARSTON PRINTING CO. (T.U.), 44, Worship Street, London, E.C.2.