

The New _____
INTERNATIONAL

JANUARY • 1945

NOTES OF THE MONTH

A NATIONAL SERVICE ACT

Negroes and the Revolution

THE LESSONS OF TEN YEARS

By Leon Trotsky

The Language of Hollywood

By James T. Farrell

Airpower in World War II

By Walter Jason

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VOLUME XI

JANUARY, 1945

NUMBER 1

NOTES OF THE MONTH

A National Service Act

It was a profound remark of Lenin's that every "minor" crisis a capitalist state experiences discloses to us in miniature the elements and the germs of the battles which must inevitably take place on a large scale during a big crisis. In his "state of the nation" message, President Roosevelt asked Congress to place the labor force of the whole nation under the control of the government. The remarkable impudence with which this proposal has been made is matched only by the levity with which it has been discussed in labor and political circles.

A National Labor Service Act is a landmark in the life of a nation. It places the whole working population at the disposal of the government. Where a worker must work, in New Jersey or in Alabama, what wages he must receive, the conditions under which he works, authority to send whole batches of men from the Army into industry, disrupting all union standards (and conversely, to place whole groups of laborers under military discipline or under the control of the Army), official subordination of the unions to government authority, penal regulations for disobedience, these are the constituents of a National Service Act. How far a government would be able to carry them out is another matter. No laws in the world can prevent resistance by an aroused population. But the mere passing of such legislation would be already a terrible blow to the workers. It is a kind of permanent martial law in the vital and all-embracing process of production. In the fifth year of the war when the main question is: how long can Germany continue to stave off defeat, this is what the President proposes to impose upon the American people. And what is the cause? There is a shortage (of 300,000 men) in important spheres of production; the act would be used "only to the extent absolutely required by military necessities"; it would raise the morale of our armed forces; and demoralize the population of the Axis, etc., etc.

The strongest implication is made that it is the recent reverses in Europe which make such legislation a necessity. That is a manifest untruth. A year ago Roosevelt asked Congress for a similar act, on the same general ground of military necessity. Congress turned him down. Congress may or may not turn him down again, though pressure is exceedingly heavy and many are falling into line. But the insistence on the proposal raises the question of why. What motive directs the super-democrat, the friend of humanity, the hope of the progressive forces, the co-creator of the Atlantic Charter and the sole originator of the Four Freedoms? What drives him, on such flimsy grounds, to ask for such would-be totalitarian power?

It is here that we can see the nature of the American crisis and, according to Lenin, "the elements and the germs of the

battles which must inevitably take place on a large scale during a big crisis." It is here too that we can see the dire necessity of labor mobilization, industrial and political, to defend our democratic rights.

The Psychologists and Reality

The leaders of the CIO, the AFL and the Railroad Brotherhoods accuse the President of trying to meet a supposed crisis in manpower with "hysterical" methods. According to them, "the indispensable" has lost his head. These psychologists are making a mistake. The President has not lost and is not losing his head. His head was never so sound as when he proposed this bill. It is your heads which are in question, Messrs. Labor Leaders. Not today, or perhaps tomorrow, but sooner or later. A year ago, in a New Year message to the American people Philip Murray showed himself well aware of the grave problems facing the nation.

When public apathy allows ignorant, selfish and short-sighted men to get into Congress... it makes us dread to think of what might happen if such men should be in control when the terrific problems of the war's end arise. It was bad enough last time. This time, with a far greater war on our hands, and consequently with far greater problems of converting back to peace, such reckless courses might shake the foundations of the very democratic system we have been fighting for. We believe that the years immediately ahead are the most critical we have ever faced—"the years of decision," when new patterns will be formed.

In its sense of the irresistible conflict the article was a notable one. There are others who see the impending conflict as clearly as Murray. One of these is President Roosevelt, and he is preparing for it. The irresistible conflict of nineteenth century America was the conflict between capitalists and slave-owners. The capitalists disciplined the slave-owners by force—the Civil War. The irresistible conflict of the twentieth century is the conflict between labor and capital. Capital must discipline labor or labor must triumph over capital. Roosevelt has hitherto disciplined the workers by fraud. By his use of the war emergency, the workers are hemmed in at every turn by boards of production, boards of labor, manpower commissions, all sanctified by the magic prefix "war." Labor is not only shackled externally. Through the assistance of Murray, Green and the other labor bureaucrats, labor has been demoralized internally by the no-strike pledge. Also for the duration of the war. But the workers are in revolt against this pledge. The critical nature of the post-war period ("the years of decision," according to Murray) looms ever larger as the war takes its catastrophic course. A National Service Act clamped on the working class will be the final climax of the whole fraud by which the workers have been increasingly handicapped in their power to struggle.

It is Roosevelt's special political function to use misrepresentation. He has had some eminent predecessors. Bruning in Germany, Azana in Spain, Blum in France all recognized the inevitability of the social crisis and the necessity of disciplining the workers in the service of capital. But their régimes rested on the support of the workers. All they could think of doing was to attempt to apply the controls themselves, whittle away steadily at the workers' democratic rights, hamstringing

their organization, in the face of their growing wrath plead "the national emergency" and strike still heavier blows at them. In all this, the labor leaders assisted faithfully, their protests being but preliminary flourishes to their consistent capitulation. It is in this way that the great paladins of democracy soaped the rope for the necks of the workers and paved the way for Fascism. We are some distance from that climax as yet. We have time, but to use it properly we must read the omens of the future in the present., and take action to correspond.

Roosevelt's Real Purpose

Roosevelt's claim of an emergency due to military necessity can be dismissed without any lengthy argument. Members of the capitalist class itself have ridiculed this view. Even the National Association of Manufacturers (which has had for the time being enough of government regulation) announces in an official bulletin that to control a civilian labor force of 53,000,000 in order to solve a shortage of 300,000 workers would be like sending a colossal tank out to crush a mouse. The president of the NAM, Ira Mosher, has expressed himself to the same effect on high economic and social grounds. "Compulsory labor never has and never will be as productive as voluntary labor, and I believe a national service act would hurt rather than increase our war production." This from an NAM president! Political observers say that Congress will not pass any such measure, that it is unwilling to take that responsibility before the workers. If the President must have such an act, he will have to say so openly, get his party leaders to take it to Congress and push it through. Does anyone doubt that if the expected victory was in danger, Roosevelt would not have at once (or long ago) adopted more serious measures to get his bill passed? One interview with leaders of both parties, placing before them the facts, and the capitalist state would have mobilized all its forces to agitate the nation and put across its legislation. That is the method he is using for his "work-or-fight" bill. But for a year now he is feeling his way with the National Service Act. Some reorganization by capital is necessary for its capitalist war but nothing demanding a National Service Act. What, then, is Roosevelt after?

The head of the government prepares, first of all, a counter-offensive against the working class resistance to the restrictions imposed on it by the war machine. The no-strike pledge was in serious danger until the recent German offensive and the situation is still so uncertain that a sharp change in the international or national situation might imperil the pledge again. In addition the workers have no confidence in Roosevelt's 60,000,000-job program. By thousands they are leaving the war industries and seeking jobs which they hope will last after the war is over. The stench of the war itself rises. Churchill's performance in Greece, the unwilling but at last bitter realization of what Stalin proposes to do in Poland, the naked power politics of the "big three," all this has resulted in a wide-spread and growing disillusion. It is becoming terribly difficult to keep the workers in hand. As one labor journalist wrote the other day: "If the world's largest union—the aircraft makers—is forced publicly to announce such action [breaking of the no-strike pledge] then anything may break loose this winter."

Roosevelt knows all this and by his mournful wail about the necessity of a National Service Act, he hopes to counteract the growing desire of the workers to break the bonds which have held them tight so long. But by this also he prepares for the drastic rationing and lowering of the workers living standards which he is even now preparing to impose. There are

food shortages already. From all sides in the press we get hints and warnings of the new restrictions on clothing, fuel, etc., which are on the way. It is the workers who bear these burdens. The propaganda for a National Service Act seeks to terrorize them and make them accept the additional penalties with more docility.

But a National Service Act for the necessities of the war does not necessarily end with the war. Once it is on the statute-books there is nothing to prevent it being extended for years afterwards. Roosevelt in fact proposes to tack on to it a conscription act. He knows that, difficult as it is to control the workers now, it will be ten times more difficult to do so when the war is over, or even when half the war is over, i.e., by a victory over Germany. The time to fasten the post-war chains upon the workers is now. Like Murray he is perfectly aware of what the post-war holds in store. In his budget message, he showed exactly by what measures he proposes to facilitate his conception of reconversion.

We must also see to it that our administrative machinery for the adjustment of labor disputes is ready for the strains of the reconversion period. We must apply some of our wartime lessons in labor management coöperation in working out a sound long-range policy implemented by permanent mediation machinery for the adjustment of labor disputes.

A National Service Act is wonderful mediating machinery for adjusting labor disputes—in the interests of capital. Not only for the national crisis which he foresees does Roosevelt need control of the workers. The suppression of the European workers is on the order of the day. He made that as clear as could be in the budget message. But great strikes and mass political unrest in the United States would stimulate European resistance to domination by the United States. It is for this purpose that he requires a National Service Act. He may have missed his chance this time. But he keeps plugging away. If at any time there should be a serious reverse in the war, or a national or international crisis of any kind, Roosevelt will do his utmost to imprison the workers within his National Service Act. The ground is being carefully prepared by these repeated requests which serve both an immediate and an ultimate purpose. The danger is that by the timid conciliatory character of the opposition hitherto expressed by labor he is being encouraged to press for the bill.

The Futility of the Opposition

Every minor crisis discloses the elements and germs of the bigger battles to come. Roosevelt has shown his hand. A National Service Act is aimed at labor and one would have expected a vigorous reaction from labor. The war is being sold to labor as a war for democracy. One would have thought that the labor leaders would at least have resolutely exposed this brazen fraud and warned the workers that their democratic rights were being wantonly threatened for motives which were obviously ulterior. Instead, when the news broke, Philip Murray was, according to the press, "not available for comment." Green did a little better. He opposed it immediately but with "reluctance." Both of them, and the Railroad Brotherhoods have based their opposition on the plea that the National Service Act is not needed, that the Administration has "mis-managed" the manpower problem, that employers are hoarding labor, etc., etc., etc. Murray finally proposed a conference of labor, management, agriculture and government to work out ways of overcoming manpower shortage. But Murray's approach to the whole question was "affirmative." The CIO statement explained that the CIO was not opposed to national service in principle. None of them gave the slightest sign or warning to the workers that they recognized what is at stake.

It can be urged that their support of the war compels the

labor leaders to acquiesce in all the fraudulent proposals of Roosevelt. That is true, but it is only part of the truth. These laborites support capitalism and the capitalist state. At all critical moments—and a mere request for a National Service Act is a very critical moment—at all such critical moments the labor leaders, as a body, behave in much the same way. War or no war, they call upon the workers to submit themselves to the bonds which the capitalist democratic government is preparing to impose upon them in the name of the national crisis. In time of war the excuse is the danger of Fascism (abroad); in time of peace the danger of Fascism (or “reaction”) at home. To mobilize the instinctive hostility of the working class in a principled defence of its democratic rights, that is the last thing which ever comes into their minds. In their pusillanimous, shame-faced, cringing opposition to the National Service Law, Green and Murray have shown themselves to be body and soul of the Social Democracy and the labor bureaucracy as we have seen it in crisis after crisis in Europe. Roosevelt knows that with this handicap the workers cannot powerfully express their genuine will to resist. This only makes him bolder.

The Liberals and Democratic Rights

When official labor behaves like this, it is easy to imagine the reaction of the liberals. True to the principles of liberalism all over the world, the newspaper *PM*, like its friends of the *Post*, first vacillated but on January 9, came out decisively for the policy of suspending judgment. In an editorial pompously signed “I. F. Stone, for the Editors of *PM*,” the following policy was laid down.

As for national service by itself, we hesitate to be dogmatic about it at a time like this, and we suspend judgment until we hear what the heads of the War and Navy Departments will have to say in their testimony on pending national service legislation. At this time, on the basis of the facts as we now know them, we fear that national service alone might prove a quack remedy.

These people, it is clear, have capitulated in advance. Roosevelt in his message quoted from a letter written jointly by the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy. They demanded national service. They said that “their considered judgment” was “supported by General Marshall and Admiral King. . . .” Says *PM*: Let us hear what they have to say. As if they have not said it already. But in a full page editorial there is not one word about what this will mean to the hard-won rights of the workers. With an insouciance that amounts almost to boredom, the *New Republic* brushes the problem aside.

It is hardly worth while to discuss in detail the proposal for universal service, since it seems pretty clear that it has no hope of passage. . . . If universal service were shown to be needed, or there was even a good probability that it was needed, the *New Republic* would support it without reservation. But there is no evidence that this is the case.

A man is making a *second* attempt on the life of a friend of mine, but he is not likely to succeed, so why discuss it? It isn't my life anyway.

Of the same stamp is the comment of the *Nation*. “We should think that it would be wise at least to couple national service with action to raise sub-standard wages.” They are concerned with the workers: bribe them.

Such is the liberal conception of democracy and democratic rights. Not one of them has troubled to ask: If it is so obvious that national service is not needed, why does the President commit himself for the second year in succession to so drastic a regimentation of the labor force of the country? All the forces of the so-called left, all the progressive forces, labor leaders, bureaucrats and intellectuals show themselves ready to hand over the workers to the government. Their opposi-

tion, such as it is, is unprincipled, opportunistic, and in some cases ignorant to a degree where ignorance becomes criminal. The workers had better take note. “Labor,” and particularly “organized labor,” is always on the lips of these people. The history of Europe during the last thirty years affords one proof after another that this reaction of theirs to the threat represented by the National Service Act is not accidental. They have given us a pre-view of what can be expected of them in the crisis of the “years of decision.”

The Communist Party to the Rescue

Officially the Democratic Party and the Republican Party leave the matter up to President Roosevelt. However, so far they are busy trying to do as much as they dare without compromising themselves. The out and out reactionaries, however, have jumped with glee into the breach opened by the President. On the question of the draft of 4F's, Representative Parnell Thomas of New Jersey, during hearings in the House, suggested that in the “work-or-fight measure,” there should be a provision for making strikers go back to work. Representative Colmer of Mississippi wanted all workers put under the Articles of War. Presumably this would facilitate shooting them for striking or even protesting. Knudsen wanted all defaulters sent to jail. These are the vanguard for what is called a “limited” National Service Act. But even Roosevelt's own party has not come out in full support of the national act as proposed by the President.

There is, however, one political party in the country which knows its own mind, or rather the mind of its leader, Stalin. That is the Communist Party. It has no hesitations. Its policy is set. This policy is to chain the working-class to the Roosevelt war-machine, to suppress every capacity to struggle, every germ of militancy, in order to gain for Roosevelt the freest possible hand at home and abroad. All they ask in return is that Roosevelt support Stalin in his effort to annex Poland and dominate all of Eastern Europe. For this they are prepared to act as decoys to the American working-class. On January 8 the *Daily Worker* published an editorial entitled: “National Service for Victory.”

The country should back the President fully upon every one of his demands. There can be no question over the fundamental democratic principle that every citizen must contribute services for victory whether it is on the home front or the war front. His request for measures, legislative or otherwise, to provide the necessary nurses, to channel 4-F's into war work and fill skilled manpower needs, should be met with the speediest dispatch.

Note here and all through the completely shameless manner in which they tackle what they know will be the objections of the workers. They merely claim that what seems to be black is really white. Thus the National Service Act becomes a “fundamental democratic principle.” This technique of the lie has been carried to a high pitch of perfection by Hitler and Stalin. It is the technique of totalitarianism. The Stalinists by their use of it show both their origins and their aims.

On January 12 Rober Minor informed readers of the *Worker* that the American people are the masters of the Roosevelt war-machine. Unlike some of the stupid liberals, this unspeakably corrupt old scoundrel knows very clearly what a National Service Act is and what it means:

The President's proposals of a service act is quite the opposite of the draconic measures, legislative and otherwise, of 1917-19 and the early 1920's. Those were directed, first, toward the chaining of labor to a war machine whose functioning and purpose was utterly alien to democracy. Secondly, they were directed toward smashing all salients of trade union organization that were then for the first time penetrating into our basic industrial life.

The situation is not the same today. Labor would be chained to no war machine by a service act of the kind proposed by Mr. Roosevelt. On the contrary, such a service act, supported by the unions,

would serve the supreme interest of labor, which is to place its full strength into the war effort. The war machine today is not the master but the instrument of the whole nation, including the 80,000,000 Americans who are industrial workers and their families. Precisely because the people are the masters of the war machine, therefore the vilest and most dangerous enemies of democracy within our country are doing all in their power to weaken the war machine and to cause its defeat. The proposed service act and other recommendations of the President are not aimed at the destruction or restriction of the development of the trade unions, but are formed on the assumption that our great industrial nation, to conduct effective war, to achieve victory, must rely upon the strength and growth of the trade unions.

This is the genuine political prostitute. Every sentence is a lie and Minor knows it. But the very care he takes to meet the real arguments shows that like the wolf or the mad dog the Stalinist jumps at the throat. On January 14 Browder followed Minor. He too knows exactly what a service act would mean. "Such a law is the precondition the government requires for regulating the employers' use of manpower, much more than it is needed for directing labor where it might not otherwise wish to go." That is exactly what the law will do, send labor where it otherwise would not wish to go. That, says Browder boldly, is not what the law is for. Not exactly; that is what the law is for, but that would only, for Browder, be a precondition for the government's organizing the employers' maldistribution of manpower. The Editors of the *New Masses* do not write for workers. Hero-worship and rhapsody are the rouge and lipstick with which they attract their clients. "This," they say of the President's message, "is leadership of the very highest." As for the workers, their is but to obey.

Though we would have preferred the inclusion of additional proposals, such as the taxation of unreasonable profits and the cost of food law which Mr. Roosevelt urged that year, we don't think support for national service legislation should be contingent on any *quid pro quo*.

In other words, the workers should bow their heads, do as they are told, be sent where they do not want to go, and not ask anything in return. The *Nation* was willing to offer a bribe to the workers. The *New Masses* does not think that even that is necessary. In this reaction of the Stalinists can be discerned the elements of the shamelessness, the contemptuous brutality with which they will operate in the working class during the big battles to come.

The time is fast approaching when whoever seriously aspires to leadership in the American working class and refuses to align himself in merciless struggle against the Communist Party will thereby prove himself either a traitor or a blind fool.

Organization Is Needed

And yet if a National Service Act is not enacted in the near future it will be because the masses of the workers are opposed to it. Labor in the mass knows that the service act will, in intention, be more savage than the draconic measures passed in 1917-19 and the early 1920's for today labor is more powerful and therefore more difficult to control. Labor knows that such an act would be aimed at crippling the unions. Labor knows that it would be chained to the war machine by such an act, and labor knows that the war-machine is not controlled by the people (that bold and venomous lie) but by Roosevelt's appointees, big capitalists and capitalist politicians who run the War Production Board, the War Labor Board, the War Manpower Commission. Labor has suffered too much at their hands not to know them. A National Service Act would be the greatest blow labor has yet received and it has received many under the plea of the national emergency. From this recent experience, symbolical though it is, workers must learn the germs and the elements of the greater battles to come. In this significant episode and the alignment of forces which it pro-

voked labor can see who are its friends and who are its enemies. It can see the enemies on the opposite side and the enemies, the mortal enemies, within its own ranks.

What is to be done? Labor must resist, it must make known its opposition not only to national service in general but to every step by which national service is being steadily prepared. The time to fight is now. One way to fight is to repudiate the no-strike pledge. Another way is to demand withdrawal of labor's representatives from the War Labor Board. Still another is to demand the breaking of the Little Steel formula. It is not only a question of denouncing national service, in however limited a form. It is necessary to take an offensive, to demonstrate that labor will no longer endure the old burdens—far less tolerate the imposition of new ones either in limited or in total form. The indomitable opposition of organized labor—that is the only resistance which will check the President in this bold attempt.

The American crisis has not yet reached its acutest stage but it is moving inexorably to desperate conflict. Labor, by its instinctive hostility, may be able to hold off a complete National Service Act. But already it is clear that drastic repressive legislation is on the way. Any such act, dangerous in itself, would be but a stage in the development, a defeat for labor in the gigantic class battles inherent in this period of capitalist decline.

The enormous labor force, the concentration of tens of thousands in huge plants, the increasing socialization of production, the coming unemployment, all these pose insoluble problems for the capitalist class. During the last twelve years, in peace as well as in war, the Roosevelt government has responded to this inexorable economic movement in the only way possible to it—by creating a huge bureaucratic machinery aimed, above all, at cajoling the workers on the one hand and limiting their independent action on the other. But every step in that direction leads only to further steps, multiplying the contradictions and creating greater difficulties than those which it sought to cure.

The workers want to resist, but the huge machinery of government directed against them, aided and abetted by the labor leaders and liberals, adds to their burdens, demoralizes them, divides them, robs them of perspective and, as we have repeatedly seen in Europe, leaves them ultimately a prey to the undisguised forces of reaction. These are well aware of the insoluble nature of the crisis and will strike as soon as Roosevelt's boards and commissions and TVA's can no longer hold in check the pent-up waters of social catastrophe. It is only in offensive action that organized labor can know its own strength and impress the consciousness of that strength upon the unorganized millions. These, helpless before the enormous powers of coercion wielded by the government, are thereby inclined to accommodate themselves to it and thus become tools of capitalist reaction. Even among the liberal rank and file are many who need only to hear and see labor express its power to recognize where lies the only defense of democratic liberties in an economic system that has long outlived its usefulness. The most dangerous error is to see this attempt to fasten national service upon the working class as due to the necessity of war and not as a stage in the imperative necessity of capitalism to use all means to suppress the organizations of labor.

All political action hinges on the recognition of this conflict. The war is only an expression of it. Equally dangerous it is not to see in the response of political groupings to this threat the shape of things to come—unless labor offers another perspective.

We have shown in outline the forces opposed to labor and

the pitiable leadership of labor's supposed leaders and friends. These tendencies will only increase with the sharpening of the crisis. Only labor can reverse the trend and it can reverse it only by the most comprehensive action. A revolutionary party is needed, composed of the most resolute, the most far-seeing and devoted members of the working class, ceaselessly teaching and organizing for the great battles ahead, pointing out the significance of events as they take place, steeling the instinctive hostility of the workers with knowledge,

organization and the will to conquer, impressing upon them the necessity of forming a mass political organization of their own in which all the political tendencies of labor and its natural allies will be represented.

Such for years now has been the policy advocated by The NEW INTERNATIONAL. The proposed National Service Act and the response to it have confirmed the validity of our views and the necessity of acting upon them—not after the war, not tomorrow, but now.

Negroes and the Revolution

Draft Resolutions of the Workers Party Open a Discussion

(With the publication of the following two resolutions on the Negro problem in America, The NEW INTERNATIONAL opens its columns to a discussion of this all-important question. These draft resolutions were presented at the last convention of the Workers Party held in 1944. The resolution by David Coolidge was adopted

by the National Committee of the Workers Party, while the resolution by J. R. Johnson represents a minority position. Both documents are now before the Workers Party for general discussion. With the opening of the columns of The NEW INTERNATIONAL to an objective discussion of the Negro question, contributions are naturally invited.—The Editors.)

RESOLUTION OF THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE

For the furtherance of its revolutionary aims and in order to effect its proletarian orientation to the most exploited section of the population, the Workers Party must turn its face resolutely to the Negro masses in the United States.

The Negroes are a race of toilers; the most oppressed and proscribed group in the country. But despite the most loathsome discrimination and the most barbaric treatment accorded human beings in any civilized country, the Negroes have revealed no tendency to submit to this mistreatment. After 300 years of debasement the Negroes continue to strive for their democratic rights.

As workers Negroes have ever been ready to enter the trade unions and join with the white workers in the struggle for the economic demands of labor.

The Negroes thus constitute a vast reservoir of potential revolutionary manpower. Here is a fruitful field not only for party recruiting, but also a force which under the inspiration of the Workers Party and the program of the labor movement, can give a great lift to the revolutionary forces and the advancement of the interests of the proletarian revolution.

The Blight of Slavery and the Struggle for Democratic Rights

The debasement of the Negro in the United States has its roots in slavery. Two and a half centuries of bondage placed a stigma on the Negro which even after several decades of freedom he has not been able to wipe away. While the Negro as human property was a means of capitalist accumulation for the English and the United States bourgeoisie, it was this same slavery which fastened on the Negro the stain of racial inferiority and forged the chains for holding him to the lowest social, economic and political status after emancipation. Not only this, but it was during slavery that what were in effect class divisions, were established among Negroes. This was based on the difference of status which obtained between a half million free Negroes with \$50,000,000 in property in 1860 and the Negro slaves in the fields and swamps. It was a cleavage between men of property, who had visions of getting on in the world, and the propertyless slave whose main and all-possessing aim was to cease to be nothing more than a piece of property.

Another division was established in slavery which laid the basis for caste distinctions among Negroes. This was the system of concubinage, cohabitation between master and slave woman. The result of this type of race mixing was the degradation of the slave woman, the degeneration of family life and the emergence of a mulatto caste which often considered itself superior to the black Negroes.

This offspring was either freed or retained on the plantation

as house servants. The fact that these slaves did not work in the fields, and lived and ate at the "big house," set them apart as a caste and engendered in them a feeling of superiority over the Negroes from the fields and the cabins. Among the house servants and the favorites of the slave owners divisions were created, often based on color, which carried over after emancipation.

The mass of Negroes, however, initiated during the slave days a struggle for democratic rights. The slave insurrections, the passage to freedom over the underground railway, the desertions to the Union army, were all blows struck by the Negro for liberation and the opportunity to function as free men in a world of free human beings.

The Negro After Emancipation

After emancipation the freemen were thrown immediately into competition for jobs with Northern white labor and the poverty-stricken white workers of the South. The black slave rebellions were in the past and the freeman was ready for integration into the life of the nation under the ægis of bourgeois-democratic abolition humanitarianism. But the integration did not take place. Expanding Northern capitalism was more interested in economic penetration of the South than in the equalitarian notions of the abolition-democracy. The Negro was turned over to the erstwhile slave owners with their Black Codes and KKK. In return the way was cleared for the new Northern finance-industrial bourgeoisie to begin the economic exploitation of the South.

The difficulties of the freemen were intensified by the indifference or downright hostility of the new trade union organizations and white labor. The stage was set in this period for barring the Negro from industry, from the benefits of union membership and from the simple democratic rights promised him in the Constitution and the 14th and 15th amendments.

The Northern bourgeoisie found a new rôle for the ex-slave to play: a unique rôle. The Negro was assigned the function of a special labor reserve. The presence in the country of nearly five million freedmen, untrained and illiterate, was a boon to the young system of "free enterprise" just beginning the conquest of the North American continent. Thus began the triple oppression of the Negro: exploitation as a wage-earner, economic robbery as a Negro, and political and social inequality.

The conscious plan of the Northern bourgeoisie was to hold the Negro in reserve in the lowest paid and meanest jobs, and then to inculcate in him the belief that his plight was due wholly to the antagonism of the white workers or to some sort of inferiority of the Negro which unfitted him for anything but the dirtiest and heaviest labor.

It was the definite intention of the Northern bourgeoisie to provide capitalist enterprise with a mass of cheap labor; a group that could be fitted into an hierarchical scheme: Negroes, poor

white common labor, white skilled labor. This plan also envisaged the use of the Negro as a strike-breaker and a constant threat, to be used at will, to frustrate the social, economic and political presumptions of white labor.

Thus did Northern capitalism begin its post-Civil War career of exploitation and robbery. Thus the bourgeoisie drew white labor into its net, incited fratricidal warfare between white and black workers and laid the foundations for the continued misery and exploitation of the proletarian masses: white and black, North, South, East and West.

The political apex of the structure of bourgeois rule was the Republican Party, the party of Lincoln, the Northern bourgeoisie with its Southern comprador underlings, and the Northern abolition-democracy. The Negro masses followed the Northern bourgeois liberals and the petty bourgeois Negro politicians into the Republican Party, where they remained until the New Deal revolt of 1932.

It is not difficult to understand how and why the newly emancipated Negroes turned to the Republicans. This was the way it looked to the ex-slaves. They were not acquainted with the intricacies and ramifications of slavery and the slave trade, and the participation of the North in this trade. Neither could they have understood that the Republican Party was first of all the political instrument of the Northern finance-industrial bourgeoisie and that this class was primarily interested in control and domination of the national resources and the national market. This was illustrated, for instance, in the infamous Compromise of 1876, in its attitude toward the Homestead Acts and the conniving at the grabbing of the public domain by the railroads and their raiding of the national and state treasuries.

The perfidious treatment of the Negro was also occasioned by the desire of the Northern bourgeoisie to placate the Southern leadership, establish the ex-slave barons as an appendage of Northern capitalism to the end that the Southern market and natural resources would be available to Northern enterprise and investment. In the political sphere the Republican Party became the administrative and managerial agency of the bourgeoisie for effecting this transformation.

The Freedmen and the Labor Movement

The vicissitudes and struggles accompanying slavery had thrown up a militant group of Negroes who took their places at the forefront of the fight for Negro rights in the uncertain days following emancipation. Their leaders were of two types: Republican politicians and office holders, and the embryonic trade unionists. Douglass and Langston were symbols of the former and Myers, Downing and Martin as well as Douglass (who at one time was president and his son secretary of the Colored National Labor Union) of the latter. That Douglass and Langston were in the CNLU did not mean that all of these men had the same outlook on the questions affecting the masses of Negroes. In fact, the difference in attitude of the two groups resulted in Negroes being led to petty bourgeois politics and into the web of the Republican Party. This was a triumph for the petty bourgeois ideology of the Negro leadership and the capitalist ideology of the Northern abolition-democracy.

This conflict between the inchoate economic viewpoint of the Negro trade unionists and the conscious political ideas of the Negro politicians was carried over to the relations between the Colored National Labor Union and the National Labor Union. The NLU leaders were opposed to the Republican Party and inclined toward the Populist propaganda. Such political heterodoxy was anathema to the Negro politicians. The controversy reached a climax in 1872 when the CNLU passed a resolution repudiating the NLU.

This action was not due alone to differences in political outlook. It is reasonable to believe that if the NLU had not been so lukewarm on the matter of the admission of Negroes and had put up a fight against the anti-Negro forces in the labor movement, the views of a man like Downing might have prevailed in the CNLU. Downing had already taken the position that the Republicans should have been more consistent and harder in dealing with the enemy. He appealed to Negro and white labor to work together in the cause of labor. He also expressed the opinion once that the economic problems which the Negro faced were more fundamental than political activity.

The next phase of the Negro's relation to organized labor was in connection with the Knights of Labor. The KL was the first trade union which took an unequivocal and unambiguous position on the Negro. It stood for the complete assimilation of the Negro

worker into the labor movement. In all about 60,000 Negroes became members of the Knights.

The KL, however, with its all-inclusiveness and rather hazy notions about contemporary capitalism, the class structure of bourgeois society and the prominence of the skilled worker, could not compete successfully with the AFL. The very fact that the KL decided to include the Negro and the common white working masses, only added to its difficulties and was one of the causes of its decline and disintegration. The KL leaders did not understand that in this period the skilled artisan was the decisive section of labor, that the AFL was seeking control of the labor market, basing itself on the skilled worker. The AFL was not only opposed to taking in Negroes but was indifferent to the plight of the unskilled white worker.

This was the apostasy of the labor movement: its indifference to and misunderstanding of the question of the Negro as a proletarian question that could not be handled by labor after the pattern of the bourgeoisie. The failure of the white workers to realize the meaning of what Marx was talking about when he said that labor in a white skin could never be free so long as labor in a black skin was enslaved, was the great tragedy of the Civil War and post-Civil War days. The fact that white labor left the freedmen unprotected from the designs of the industrial bourgeois political dictators was a guarantee for the spoliation of the Negro people that was to proceed unchecked for decades after emancipation.

The abolition-democracy which essayed the rôle of defender of the Negro was a part of the Northern bourgeoisie and in full ideological support of capitalism. It is probable that a large part of the support of the main economic ideas of the new capitalist enterprisers and financiers came from the abolition-democracy. They were the propaganda shock troops of the anti-slavery North. In addition to their support of capitalism they were firm believers in the rights of man and human equality. They were themselves, and also the foreparents of the philanthropists who established schools, churches and missions all over the South for the Negro. On the matter of Northern philanthropy, Spero and Harris have the following to say in *The Black Worker*: "White Northern philanthropy by accepting the Southern doctrine of racial separation became a powerful instrument for fortifying 'white supremacy' and 'keeping the Negro in his place.'"

The consequence of all these untoward events was to place the Negro on the fringes of industry and determine his treatment as a pariah for seven decades after emancipation. This means that Negroes were left to fend for themselves and to protect themselves against a young, vigorous and predatory bourgeoisie bent on enriching itself by the shortest route possible. Thus for seventy years the Negro was debased by a bourgeois-democratic government apparatus and locked out by an organized labor movement gripped by the most stupid policy of class collaboration yet seen in the New World.

This was the lot of a group which had been in bondage for 250 years, which had produced courageous, daring and militant journalists and insurrectionists, which had fought heroically in Northern armies and exposed itself to the most inhuman retaliation from slave owners; they were refused a place among labor which was rightfully theirs. The Negroes were denied the right—which they had earned—to contribute their loyalty, faith, courage and their numbers for the further enrichment of the great heritage of the world labor movement.

In the face of this situation the Negro masses were well-nigh helpless. Unorganized, untutored and misled, socially degraded, sold over the political bargain counter and industrially ostracized, they were safely delivered to the leading political organ of the bourgeoisie and locked out by a labor movement that could and should have taken the lead in fighting for their freedom. It should be emphasized that Negroes were ready and willing to enter the labor movement. They proved this by the thousands who joined the Knights of Labor, by their continuous gestures at forming all-Negro unions, by their support of the IWW and finally by their rush into the CIO when it came on the scene.

After the débâcle and betrayal of the Reconstruction Period, the freedman found himself pushed into a definitely inferior social position. He had passed from chattel slavery through a brief period of political exaltation to the status of an oppressed race with a civil and social status comparable to that of the Jews in Czarist Russia or in fascist Germany today.

The short-lived block between the plundering Northern bourgeoisie and the Negro was broken and the Negroes were cast asunder. This bourgeoisie, keeping its eye on the fat profits to accrue from industrial exploration of the South turned the Negroes over

to Southern rapine. The Negro was a freed slave; he was branded with this mark, stigmatized and prepared for super-exploitation and robbery. This was easy because the color of his skin told the story.

The Negro, of course, did not understand these things. When he saw that his own class did not want him he turned to the class enemy and the real culprit in the drama: the Northern bourgeoisie. Willing as always to sow seeds of discord in the working class, Northern capitalists made the most of the Negro's impotency—which the capitalists themselves had engineered. They posed as friends of the Negro, building schools and churches and establishing funds and foundations for Negro welfare. Booker Washington said that in slavery the black worker looked to his master for protection against the poor white. After emancipation, he looked to his employer for protection against the hostile white worker.

Today, even in the midst of the war, which its defenders say is a war against fascism and for democracy, the Negro is confronted with the denial of democratic rights, the persistence of his inferior status and the necessity to struggle for social, political and economic equality. The Negro people are still faced with the problem of bringing themselves up to the level of the white workers. This has served to bring home to the Negro not only the necessity for examining the meaning of bourgeois democracy in the United States but the validity of the claim that he should support the war.

This struggle for democratic rights is not a struggle against the backward sectionalism of the South nor the rampant anti-Negro attitudes of that section but a consistent struggle against a national policy of Jim Crow. It would be a serious political error for the party or the Negroes to fall prey to the illusion that this is even mainly a problem of the South. While there are important and significant differences between the North and the South, the differentiation is not basic. What is significant is that in both sections, in the country at large, the Negro is looked upon as inferior and given a status of second-class citizen.

It is this group disability which constitutes the Negro an oppressed race: this denial of social, political and economic equality. The crudest manifestations of Negro oppression: terroristic practices, Negro-baiting, mob law and lynching are but the continuation by other means of the non-violent Jim Crow policy of the national bourgeoisie and the federal government.

The party must participate in this struggle for democratic rights in a practical way. This means for the party and its members to support and work in all movements that have for their purpose the elevation of the Negro to the same level as other racial minorities in the country; to the same level which has been attained by the white proletariat.

This struggle must not be placed in the same category as the general struggles of the working class for democratic rights. This would be a false approach that could only be taken by those totally ignorant of the dual disability of the American Negro. Neither should the party or the Negroes be guided by the reformist dictum that the only struggle against Jim Crow is a direct struggle for socialism. The WP rejects this social-democratic and reformist cringing before the bourgeois conspirators and the misguided white proletarian purveyors of hate and class disunity. For the Negro now, the first stage in the struggle for socialism lies through the struggle for democratic rights: the struggle to bring himself socially to the stage the white worker has reached.

The WP does not consider the struggle for democratic rights an end in itself. The party does not look upon Negro or mixed organizations formed for leading this struggle as ends in themselves, to be permanently maintained and useful in all situations and in all circumstances. While the party is positive and sincere in its demands for Negro equality, urging the Negro to carry on the fight ceaselessly and relentlessly, the party has its own correct Marxian outlook and aims: the consolidation of the whole proletariat, irrespective of race, color or nationality.

The main strategy of the WP in the struggle for democratic rights and in the Negro organization is to promote the class independence of the Negro proletarian masses from the petty bourgeois and bourgeois Negroes. We seek to win the Negro toilers to the class struggle, class consciousness, the struggle for socialism and the Workers Party. In the concrete circumstances, the ordeal of agitation for democratic rights and the economic struggle of the Negro proletarians in the trade unions is provided the best means for bringing the Negro workers into class struggle and class consciousness. The party will have as its aim, therefore, the transformation of this struggle into the struggle for complete workers democracy.

In view of these considerations the WP will approach Negroes and Negro organizations with an appeal directed primarily to the proletarians. Our aim is to break the wage earners away from the stultifying, defeatist, class-collaborationist Negro leadership. This is the first step in creating a class rupture between the proletarian Negroes and the Negro leader clique, servitors of the white bourgeoisie.

Also it is necessary to break the Negro masses away from their leadership as a prerequisite to breaking them away from the bourgeois parties. This leadership holds the Negro in the camp of bourgeois politics today just as did the Negro politicians and officeholders in the Reconstruction period, and with far less justification. It is necessary to effect this break if the Negro workers are to be won to support of the Labor Party. While the tendency of the Negroes in the union will be toward joining hands with the white workers for independent political action, such action will be greatly retarded if the Negroes remain under the influence of their present leadership, black and white.

The masses of the Negroes today are triply deluded. They are beguiled by white politicians, traduced by the industrial overlords and misled by the Negro leaders, lieutenants of the politico-economic general staff of the bourgeoisie. Herein lies the danger of uncritical support of organizations, even the best of them, fighting for democratic rights. Under the present leadership, white or Negro, the struggle is and will be carried on entirely within the framework of bourgeois democracy and capitalism. The program of this leadership does not include a struggle against capitalism, now or in the future. This in itself will throw the proletarian Negroes into conflict with their leaders and open the way for the propaganda of the Workers Party. It is the task of the party therefore to steer the Negro proletarians to the labor movement and toward organic unity in class struggle with the white proletariat.

While the struggle for socialism and against capitalism is implicit in the demand for equality, it is at the same time—in a sense—a struggle for immediate demands. This is especially true so far as the thinking of the masses of Negroes goes. This is demonstrated in the manner in which their demands are concretized. They make demands for jobs, for promotion to skilled classifications, for equality of treatment in the military service, against separate accommodation and against residential segregation. While even violent struggles may take place around such issues, the aim of the WP must be to lead the struggle for democratic rights out of these narrow confines just as the party aims to do in the wider arena of the whole working class struggle.

The strategy and tactics of the revolutionists must be to liquidate the ideological influence of the present Negro and white leadership of the Negro masses and to replace this leadership with a militant leadership at least moving in the direction of class consciousness. Concretely this could only be a leadership supplied from the trade unions or the WP.

The organized struggle of the Negroes for their democratic rights has a long and continuous history. The first organizations were concerned with emancipation. Most of these societies were mixed groups. Negroes carried on some independent activity in small organizations of their own. Today there are a multitude of organizations, committees, commissions and groups concerned with this problem. The oldest and most outstanding from the point of view of longevity, clarity of program and aim is the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The earliest organization, however, which has had a continuous existence is the Negro church. Notable among this type of organization is the African Methodist-Episcopal Church which was formed during slavery by ex-slaves and completely organized and administered by Negroes.

It is relevant to mention the Negro church in this connection because it has always been more than a religious institution. It played a social rôle in the life of the Negro and functioned also as an uplift organization. At times it has participated in political blocs and in economic activity.

The NAACP mentioned above is an organization which operates to secure and protect the civil rights of Negroes. It is composed of both Negro and white liberals. White liberals are prominent in the leadership of the organization and have been from its beginning. It functions through propaganda, investigation and resort to the courts in cases where the constitutional and legal rights of the Negro have been violated. Outstanding in its achievements was the investigating and securing of first-hand information in connection with lynching and lynchings.

The National League on Urban Conditions Among Negroes took

as its sphere of activity improvement in the employment, housing and recreational facilities for Negroes. It appeals to big industrialists to hire Negroes and to accord them more equitable treatment in the matter of up-grading.

While there are many differences between the Urban League and the NAACP in program and functioning, the dominant opinion in both organizations is wielded by petty bourgeois persons. In the NAACP it is the white and black liberal intellectual and in the case of the Urban League it is either the less conservative white business man or outright reactionaries who have been convinced that it is to their interest to hire Negroes.

Both of these organizations today concern themselves primarily with questions raised by the war: the employment and up-grading of Negroes and the matter of discrimination in the military services, in industry, and in housing. The program of both organizations are proposals for the solution of the problem of the Negro and his democratic rights within the framework of bourgeois democratic and capitalist enterprise. They ask only that Negroes be granted their constitutional rights and that they be given a chance to prove their "loyalty" to the country and their fitness to take their place in industry.

In recent years it has become evident to the leaders of both the Urban League and the NAACP that they were not keeping pace with the demands made by Negroes and, under pressure, a slight reorientation has been noticed. In the case of the NAACP, it begins to broaden its activity somewhat. This organization has discovered to some extent that something more than the technical procedure of the courts is necessary. In various cities from time to time picket lines have been organized by the local branches. On the whole, however, their militancy remains a petty bourgeois brand of militancy. This manifests itself in the seeming inability of the NAACP to recognize that Negroes are predominantly a race of toilers and that for greater effectiveness it would be necessary to base itself primarily among the Negro proletarians.

While the Urban League is less reactionary than it was in an earlier day, it nevertheless remains tied to the corporations which gave it the bulk of its funds. In many cities the League is a member of the Community Fund which, of course, is controlled by boards composed of corporation officials. With the trend of Negroes toward the labor movement, the League has also learned at least to give lip service to organized labor and doesn't aid in the supplying of Negro strikebreakers for which it was severely criticized a few years back.

The upsurge of the Negro in the past decade and his entrance into the labor movement indicated the need for a different type of organization; an organization of the Negro masses with a militant program. Concrete evidence that the mass of Negroes were not satisfied with the program of the elder organizations and the 100 per cent pro-war attitude of the Negro leadership was the outspoken discontent and resentment which supported the formation of the March on Washington Movement.

The MOW was at first visualized and advertised as a militant mass movement of protest against Jim Crow and discrimination, particularly in the armed forces. The leaders of the MOW, however, with the exception of Randolph, being from Negro and Negro-white petty bourgeois organizations, with jobs to protect, soon turned the movement away from its militant beginnings into a sort of pacifist do-nothing organization. Before this stage was reached, however, most of the original Negro leadership in the MOW had withdrawn. They could not reconcile the maintenance of their petty bourgeois prestige and job holding with a militant movement of the Negro masses.

Randolph remained the leader of the organization, but the contradiction between his outspoken and persistent defense of the war and the interests of the Negro masses made it impossible for him to do anything concrete in carrying out the original purposes of the MOW.

All of the Negro organizations, including the MOW, therefore, were broken on the question of the imperialist war. There is no organization among the Negroes today of any appreciable prestige and leadership that carries on a militant struggle for democratic rights. There is need for such an organization, but if it is to serve the interests of the masses of Negroes such an organization will have to be led by militant Negro workers of the trade union movement. Such an organization to be really effective must have the support of the organized labor movement. Militant Negroes who become active in such an organization will not be able to play a proper rôle unless they understand clearly that it is imperative that they differentiate themselves from the class collaborationists and pro-war attitude not only of the trade union bureaucracy but

of the top leadership in the ranks of the Negroes.

The Communist Party, despite its pro-war stand and its complete reversal of its former position of militant leader of the struggles of the Negro, still maintains appreciable influence among Negroes. This is particularly noticeable in the trade union movement. Here where the CP has well organized forces they have been able to corral hundreds of Negro proletarians.

This is a matter for the WP to give especial attention to in the future. The Negroes can be won away from the CP and its influence if the party is able to accelerate its propaganda activity and expose the CP politically and organizationally.

The Role of the Working Class in the Struggle for Democratic Rights

Throughout history, the main current in the struggle for democratic rights for the oppressed has been the organizations of the toilers. This holds no less today than for the past. Consequently the Negroes in the U. S. must lay their case before the trade unions. Not as outsiders seeking a united front but from the inside as an integral and integrated part of the labor movement. Here the Negro proletarians will be caught up in the basic struggles of labor, they will have opportunity to pose the question of democratic rights for the Negro as a part of the struggle for the emancipation of the whole working class. And here too for the first time Negroes will be consciously a component of active and organized class struggle.

The organized labor movement must join in this struggle of the Negro for democratic rights. This is imperative for the labor movement today: this herculean task of increasing class solidarity, of bringing intra-class peace in the ranks of the proletariat. This is a prerequisite for the formation of the working class into a movement against the common oppressor. With such a step the organized labor movement can go a long way toward wiping out the blot placed on labor's escutcheon by the shabby and shameful treatment labor has accorded the Negro since emancipation. Furthermore, giving help and assistance to the Negro can correctly be equated with the struggle of the white worker for the preservation and enlargement of his own freedom.

The white worker must take the lead and the offensive in the struggle for the Negro's democratic rights. This does not mean that the Negroes sit back and wait on the white workers. Already there has been far too much indifference on the part of the Negroes in the matter of leading and pushing white workers into action in behalf of the Negroes. If they remain true to the great traditions of the world labor movement, the white proletarians in the United States will not hold back and leave the brunt of the battle to those least able to carry the load. The white workers are strongly organized, they have had ages of experience and they are powerful. On the other hand, no matter how great their courage and determination, the Negroes are organizationally, financially and numerically weak in comparison with the white workers, and woefully and pitifully weak in the face of present-day capitalism.

The Workers Party must point out to the white workers that they have in the past and still do occupy a preferential position based on the social degradation of the Negro. Over against the Negroes and climbing up on their backs, the white workers have become a sort of aristocracy of labor in this country. A labor movement thus divided against itself, shot through with distrust, suspicion and hatred, can never hope to win its liberation from wage slavery or hold back the hordes of fascism that may appear one day to deepen the slavery of the whole American proletariat.

The struggle for democratic rights must become and remain an integral part of the class struggle in the U. S. Negroes can only attain the strength and confidence necessary to break through the thick walls of Jim Crow to the degree that they are supported by and integrated into the working class and its organizations. To place the main burden of this fight on the Negroes separated from the white workers, or on Negro organizations, no matter how militant, outside the labor movement, is only to wish and dream and send the Negroes out to certain defeat.

The Workers Party will not be indifferent to the militancy of the Negro in his own behalf, neither will it denigrate his heroism. These things will be accorded their proper place, as they deserve. But, on the other hand, the party will not exalt the social, political and economic weakness of the Negro, nor be blind to the low economic status of the Negro. This is not the Marxian way nor the correct way to come to the aid of the Negro masses.

The demand of the WP for social, political and economic equality for Negroes is not directed primarily at the bourgeoisie. It is not merely a slogan for attracting Negroes to the party. The slogan

is addressed directly to the white proletariat: to the white workers in the organized labor movement. The party says to the white workers that the Negroes have already initiated and carried on the struggle for their democratic rights against terrific opposition; even the opposition of white labor. It is now the duty and the responsibility of white labor to step out in front, take the lead and throw its full weight into the fight.

The white workers North and South have not yet grasped the meaning and the significance of the proscription and defiling of the Negro people. White workers do not understand the relationship between Jim Crow as practiced on the Negro and their own precarious condition in capitalist society. They have failed to realize that the achievement of democratic rights by the Negro people and the integration of the Negro worker into the labor movement are a necessary condition for labor solidarity without which even the white workers themselves cannot protect their living standards or make any appreciable advance in social progress.

The main offenders in this respect have been the craft unions. On the whole they have been anti-Negro. Their history in connection with the Negro has been astoundingly reactionary. The main responsibility for the anti-union feeling developed by Negroes can be placed largely at the feet of the AFL craft unions and the railway brotherhoods. The attitude of these craft unions made it possible for Negro demagogues, politicians and leaders to create an anti-union feeling among Negro workers. The exclusionist policy of the craft unions furthermore aided employers in their schemes for winning the Negroes to their side, for using Negroes as strike-breakers and in setting up company groups and unions composed of Negroes only.

While the CIO is officially free from these Jim Crow discriminatory attitudes, this organization has not been able yet to purge its locals of these practices. The industrial union movement has not won over large sections of this membership to the practice of equality for the Negro worker.

The white workers in the United States have not freed themselves from white chauvinism and white chauvinist notions and habits. Tremendous progress has been made, particularly in the CIO but a big job remains to be done. All too frequently the capitalist press carries stories about strikes of white workers who are objecting to the hiring of Negroes, to their being placed in "white departments" or to the upgrading of Negroes.

The more advanced white and black workers have before them the urgent and important task of educating their white brothers out of this anti-labor and anti-working class attitude and practice. This must be a special task the revolutionary workers must take for themselves.

White chauvinism among the white workers is based on their indoctrination by the ruling class with the idea that they belong to a superior race and that the Negroes are an inferior race. White workers holding to such beliefs fail to recognize or understand that the problems faced by the working class do not arise out of the so-called racial divisions of mankind but from the class divisions in capitalist society and that classes cut across any alleged boundaries between races, creeds, color, sex or nationality. The difficulties faced by white workers are at bottom identical with those faced by Negro workers and all workers. They are the problems of an oppressed and exploited class seeking to hold its own and make its way against the capitalist exploiters. The class struggle can know no color line nor make any compromise whatsoever with any doctrine of superior and inferior race. The class-conscious white workers, in the unions and elsewhere, will maintain extreme vigilance against every manifestation of white chauvinism and racial discrimination. The class-conscious white worker, man and woman, will fight for complete economic, social and political equality for the Negro, in the union and in every phase of national life.

Black Chauvinism and Negro Nationalism

The WP is not unaware that Negroes have been indoctrinated with ideas of racial separation, racial sufficiency and racial autarchy. These dogmas have paraded under a banner labelled "race consciousness." The most extreme form of this is promulgated by the advocates of black chauvinism or Negro nationalism.

The root evil of black chauvinism, as of all chauvinism, is disregard of class lines, class distinctions and class struggle. With the Negro today this provides a base for the perpetuation of the present Negro leadership, making more difficult the integration of the Negro proletarians into the labor movement and thus leaving them the private prey of the bourgeoisie. The advocacy of black chauvinism is to say, in effect, that Negroes can win their battle alone, that they are sufficient unto themselves, or at least that they

shall strive for such a consummation in the economic, political and social spheres.

We have said that not even the struggle for democratic rights can be divorced or separated from class struggle. But this is what black chauvinism proposes to do. The theory of black chauvinism lumps the Negro proletarian masses together with the Negro compradore bourgeoisie and turns the struggle into a race struggle under the leadership of the Negro bourgeois and petty bourgeois. Black chauvinism, in practice, provides no way for the separation of the Negro working class from its reformist and reactionary black leadership. Black chauvinism provides no way for the revolutionary Negroes to separate themselves from the reactionary leadership and lead the Negro masses in militant struggles. The theory of black chauvinism builds an unscalable wall between the Negro workers and the white proletariat and perpetuates the present atomization of the working class.

In 1922, writing against the attitude of the white workers to the Negro, Comrade Trotsky said: "The fight against this policy must be taken up from different sides, and conducted on different lines. One of the most important branches of this conflict consists in enlightening the proletarian consciousness by awakening the feeling of human dignity and of revolutionary protest among the black slaves of American capital. This work can be carried out by self-sacrificing and politically-educated revolutionary Negroes. Needless to say, the work is not to be carried on in a spirit of Negro chauvinism—but in the spirit of solidarity of all exploited without consideration of color." (Quoted from M.S. *Communism and the Negro.*)

While the Workers Party rejects all black chauvinist doctrines and conceptions as incompatible with the principles of class struggle and revolutionary Marxism, the party makes it clear that this is not a judgment against the righteous and justifiable anger of the Negro masses against their white oppressors, exploiters and calumniators. The party will not more condemn the Negro masses for this attitude than it would condemn the Jews of Czarist Russia or of fascist Germany for lashing out against their detractors and oppressors. By the same token the party will not join with reaction to condemn white workers who might vent their wrath in most violent manner against the police, the city jail or a particularly vicious employer. If the occasion should arise for a depressed group of white Gentile workers to express anger and hatred at Jewish landlords or Jewish capitalist employers with a record of extreme oppression we should certainly not condemn them as white chauvinists or anti-Semites. In the same way we do not talk of black chauvinism when Negroes express similar sentiments or behave in a similar manner.

The party understands these manifestations of anger and reprisal among all the oppressed. The WP will seek to guide this indignation of the exploited and downtrodden of all races and groups into organized manifestation of class struggle and orient them into effective class solidarity revolutionary channels. This is not the program of chauvinism, white or black.

It is particularly imperative that this attempt be made in the case of the Negro in the U. S. because if the Party cannot guide the Negroes into harmonious relations with the white workers the result might well be a fratricidal blood bath that would defeat the proletarian revolution.

In the place of the dissemination of black chauvinist notions, it is the duty and responsibility of the revolutionary party to win the Negro and white workers to an appreciation of proletarian dignity, honor and morality. It is the further duty of revolutionists to set their faces grimly against every manifestation of injustice perpetrated against any section of the working class, no matter from whatever source the offense may come. Therefore while we temper our judgment of Negroes when they strike out blindly against white workers, we will not glorify such acts. We seek to understand them, to explain them to the white workers and seek their aid in removing the causes behind such outbursts. We must do this even though our act brings the party into conflict with the opinions of the white and Negro workers. To act otherwise would make mockery of our proletarian revolutionary principles and be a blow against the proletarian revolution.

In contradistinction to black chauvinist notions, the WP will support and in its own way attempt to encourage Negroes to respect in life those aspects of their past which are significant for progress as well as emulation of the Negro martyrs who gave their sweat, blood and their lives for Negro liberation. We see these struggles, and so say to Negroes, as one more segment of the ages-long struggle of the oppressed against the oppressor. This is particularly relevant in the case of the black leaders of the slave rebel-

lions: those militant Negroes who through their experience had assimilated the lesson, albeit in a primitive way, that slavery nor any other form of oppression by a master class could be eliminated by peaceful means. In this very crude way these Negro slaves had absorbed the simple meaning of the class struggle.

It is necessary for the WP to emphasize to Negroes especially that the real continuers of the work of the pre-emanicipation militants were the Negroes of Reconstruction who attempted trade-union organization. These men were a hundred times more correct than were the Negro politicians and office holders of the day, who made the freed slaves an appendage of the Republican Party. The Negroes who stand today in the line of succession are the militant Negroes of the labor movement and the Negroes of the revolutionary political movement. These are the real and rightful inheritors of the tradition of Attucks and Gabriel and Tubman.

The Negro as Potential Revolutionary Force

The Workers Party is fully aware that the Negro in the U. S. is a force of definite revolutionary potentiality. This political appraisal flows from the proletarian and semi-proletarian character of the Negro race, his rôle and place in capitalist society, his continuous expression of resentment against his oppression and his tendency to enter into alliance with the other workers and sink his racial identity in the general struggles of the proletariat. It must be stressed over and over to the Negro that the full value of his potentialities can only be realized in connection with the struggles of the white workers: with the black and white proletarians fused in the heat of the class struggle.

With these conceptions in mind, the WP girds itself for winning the Negro proletarians away from the influence of the bourgeoisie, to the WP and to Marxism. Through the struggle for democratic rights, through the struggle in unions for economic justice we will strive to attract the weight of the Negro masses to socialism and to enthusiastic support of the workers' state.

On Self-Determination

Despite all the efforts of the WP, the Negroes in the U. S. might conceivably express the demand for separation and the establishment of their own nation. This demand is implicit in the theory of black chauvinism. We believe on what we hold to be sound grounds that such a demand is unlikely. Considering the whole history of the Negro objectively: his constant agitation to become integrated into the social, political and economic life of the nation; there is no cogent reason to believe that the masses of Negroes would want to risk existence in any society less democratic than the proletarian state. It is extremely unlikely that the oppressed Negroes after observing the struggles of the working class for freedom and after being participants in that struggle, would choose to separate themselves from those who had fought and died for social, economic and political equality for the Negroes.

All the manifest tendencies of Negroes today, especially the proletarians, are in the other direction. As the regular Negro proletarians and the new Negro wage earners enter the factories and take their places in the trade union struggles they reveal a marked tendency away from separation and all ideas of racial separatism. It would be strange, indeed, and the Negro would be a strange phenomenon, if this were not so. It is the bounden duty of the WP to further this development to complete integration and assimilation.

However, if, despite our efforts, the Negroes should demand political independence, the WP, guided by the Bolshevik position on self-determination, would approve such a course; provided, however, that such a course did not violate wider principles of workers' democracy and provided also that such a demand was not made under conditions that would jeopardize the existence of the workers state and throw the Negroes themselves defenseless into the clutches of counter-revolutionary imperialist forces.

The theory and politics of self-determination apply primarily and specifically to nations and groups with well-defined national characteristics. Any scientific criterion for the concept "nation" must be able to show that the people to whom the term is applied have a common language and a separate territory. They must be voluntarily bound to this territory and have developed a body of distinguishable mores and traditions. This is to say that there must be something than can be called a separate culture. This is not the case with the Negro in the U. S.

Whatever position the WP might take in the future when a concrete demand for self-determination arose, we are not now and will not be advocates of self-determination. To be an advocate of

self-determination is to become an advocate of a subtle but vicious form of Jim Crow and segregation. In essence it is a recrudescence of the colonization plans of Civil War days.

We are and remain advocates of the unity of the working class: the fellowship of all the proletarians in the class struggle, the gathering together of all the working class for the coming assault on capitalism and the establishment of the workers' state. This is our aim and the party resolves to hold steadfast and win the Negroes to our side.

The Negro Is a Racial Minority

The theory that the Negro in the United States is a nation was first promulgated in this country by the CP after the meeting of the Stalinized Sixth Congress. (A few Negro charlatans had been talking for years about Ethiopia stretching out her hand some day in the future.) It was at this Congress that the Stalinists devised their fantastic slogan of self-determination in the Black Belt. In order to give foundation to this opportunist Jim Crow scheme, the Comintern declared the Negro a nation within the framework of a definition of "nation" which had been given by Stalin. Stalin said that "a nation is a historically developed, lasting identity of language, territory, economic life, and psychology, manifesting itself in identity of culture." The American Stalinists had great difficulty in making this fit the Negro in the U. S. but their theoreticians finally emerged with the following gem:

"It was during this period [1877-1917] that the Black Belt took on all the characteristics of a nation. A common language, territory, culture, traditions had already been achieved. These continued: the territory of the Black Belt remained a territory of Negro majority, despite the migrations to the North. There now developed a common economic life; the group developed market relations and class differentiation among itself. It now became possible for a Negro to hire a Negro, fire a Negro, buy from a Negro, sell to a Negro."

The only designation for the Negro in the U. S. that even approaches anything that can be called scientific accuracy is to say that he is a racial minority or population. There are other racial minorities and populations: e.g., the Jews. The Negro is the largest of these racial minorities and the most oppressed and exploited.

The Struggle for Proletarian Unity

The big task before the WP is to seize on the opportunities presented by the plight of the Negro and his willingness to struggle against his condition, as a platform for revolutionary propaganda. Negroes must be recruited to the party. They must be prepared inside the party for political and organizational leadership. Not just for leadership among Negroes, although this is of the greatest urgency, but for party leadership and for leadership in the proletarian organizations. The party must disavow every manifestation, within its ranks or out, which in any degree whatsoever tends to relegate Negroes to a separate status or function as a race. Properly motivated and organized as a component of the politics of class struggle and revolution the party will be saved from mistakes in this activity.

The WP as a Marxist Party is interested at all times in the political and organizational conquest of the masses. The principles of Marxism are suitable no less for the Negro than for the white proletarians. The party stands on the threshold of great opportunities today. So far as the Negroes are concerned these opportunities are unparalleled in the history of the country. Negro membership in the labor movement has passed the half million mark. Negroes are more union conscious than ever before. Even the petty-bourgeois Negro organizations now support the labor movement. This includes the Urban League which during the Great Steel Strike of 1919 played the role of scab herder for U. S. Steel Corporation.

The white workers show a great tolerance and more evidence of class solidarity than ever before. The whole industrial union movement provides a greater support for the economic advancement of the Negro than he has ever experienced in the United States.

The decline of capitalist society culminating in the Second World Imperialist War, during which Negroes still find themselves subjected to the grossest social and economic indignities, offers opportunities to the WP that facilitate political propaganda among Negroes. Capitalist decline with its prolonged crisis, dislocations in industry and agriculture has been particularly severe on the Negro worker. The war has brought disillusionment and opposition from legions of Negroes. Here too is the opportunity to drive a wedge between the black proletarians and the petty-bourgeois black social-patriots.

The WP takes unto itself the responsibility for joining with all those forces genuinely striving for proletarian unity and intra-class peace in the U. S. Beside the white heroes of the labor movement we place the black martyrs. It is for us, the revolutionists, to lead the way: to make the white worker and the black worker see and understand that the time has now come for the struggle to be joined.

Unity of the black and white proletarians is a prerequisite for proletarian victory in the U. S. The whole superstructure of economic and political activity must be built on this foundation. Any other foundation is a base of sand, any other propaganda is a hollow promise and a clanking cymbal. Without this conjuncture of forces capitalism may well prove to be an irreducible fortress, holding on until the advent of fascism. This is especially true of the South, a place of the tensest hatreds and open sores. This section could become a shambles of inter-racial strife; the Negroes seeking revenge and the white proletarians going over to the rotten Southern bourgeoisie in self-defense.

The Negro militants have the opportunity not only to lead the

black proletarians into class struggle but they can be a force for inspiring the most enlightened white workers to greater militancy and fortitude.

The party must stand prepared and ready always to take its proper place in the line of fire when the Negroes are under attack and when any of the oppressed are under fire. We direct our appeal especially to organized labor; they are our allies. We must be alert and ready to move against every racial and class barrier and obstruction. We must win over the white and black workers, arm them with our program and principles and inspire them to march arm in arm against the common foe.

The Third National Convention of the Workers Party resolves to carry on political work among Negroes in the spirit of this resolution and grounded in the principles herein set forth. The convention instructs the incoming National Committee to prosecute this political and organizational activity with all vigor consonant with the resources of the party and in harmony with the line of policy set forth in this resolution.

DAVID COOLIDGE.

THE RESOLUTION OF THE MINORITY

The history of the Negro question and the American revolutionary movement in general, and the Trotskyist movement in particular, makes it imperative at this stage to outline in however brief a form the rôle of the Negroes in the political development of American society.

In 1776 the masses of the Negroes played no initiatory rôle and the revolution would have taken the general course it did if not one single Negro lived in the United States. However, as soon as the actual revolutionary struggle began, the Negroes compelled the revolutionary bourgeoisie to include the rights of Negroes among the rights of man. The Negroes themselves played a powerful part in the military struggle of the revolution.

Between 1800 and 1830 the Negroes, disappointed in the results of the revolution, staged a continuous series of revolts. By 1831 the petty-bourgeois democracy of the United States entered upon a period of widespread egalitarian and humanitarian agitation. Disappointed by their failures between 1800 and 1830, the Negro slaves in the South, aided by free Negroes in the North, sought their freedom by mass flight. Owing to this spontaneous action, the petty-bourgeois movement for the rights of the common man was soon dominated by the struggle for the abolition of slavery. The link between the Northern bourgeoisie and the Southern planters was far stronger by 1860 than the link between the colonial bourgeoisie and the British in 1776. The Northern bourgeoisie used all possible means to avoid the revolutionary clash. The most powerful subjective influence which forced the irrepressibility of the conflict upon the consciousness of the people was the agitation of the petty-bourgeoisie, stimulated, maintained and intensified over the years by the refusal of the masses of slaves to accept their position. In the course of the Civil War the revolutionary actions of the masses of the Negroes in the South played a decisive rôle in the winning of the Northern victory.

In the agrarian movement of the '90s in the South the Negro farmers and semi-proletarians, independently organized to the extent of a million and a quarter in the National Colored Farmers Alliance, were a militant and powerful wing of the Populist movement. They supported the break with the Republican Party and the proposal for a third party with social as well as economic aims.

The importance of the Negroes as a revolutionary force has grown with the development of the American economy. Conversely, however, racial prejudice against the Negroes has also grown. Between 1830 and 1860 the Southern planters cultivated the theory of Negro inferiority to a degree far exceeding that of earlier slavery days, being driven to do this by the increasing divergences between the developing bourgeois democracy in the United States and the needs of the slave economy. To conquer the formidable threat of white and Negro unity, particularly that represented by Populism, the Southern plantocracy elevated race consciousness to the position of a principle. The whole country was injected with this idea. Thus, side by side with his increasing *integration* into production which becomes more and more a social process, the Negro becomes more than ever conscious of his *exclusion* from democratic privileges as a separate racial group in the community. *This dual movement is the key to the Marxist analysis of the Negro question in the U. S. A.*

At the same time in the country as a whole, as in the world at large, the rights of democracy become more and more a burning

political question in view of the widespread attack of declining bourgeois society upon the principles of democracy in general. Simultaneously, the rise of the labor movement brings increasing consciousness of labor as a social force in the reorganization of society. Thus the Negro in his century and a half old struggle for democratic rights is increasingly confronted with the subjective consciousness of himself as an oppressed racial minority and the objective consciousness of labor as the great bulwark of democracy in the country at large.

It is in the light of this contradiction that we must trace the development among Negroes of the sense of nationalistic oppression and the modern efforts to free themselves from it.

Negro Nationalism: First Phase

The first reaction of the masses of the Negroes to the consolidation of the Solid South was the policy of Booker T. Washington, who counselled submission, industrial training, and the development of Negro business. For the moment the Negroes in the South seemed to acquiesce. But in reality there grew up a furious but suppressed hatred of whites at the oppression and particularly at the racial humiliation to which Negroes were now being subjected. *The appreciation of this is fundamental to any understanding of the Negro question.*

During World War I the needs of Northern industry brought a million Negroes to the North. The suppressed resentment burst out and was organized and misled as Garveyism. Thus this essentially nationalistic explosion took place immediately the Negroes gained some integration into American society which allowed them free expression. Its first significance was the indication that it gave of the powerful force of social protest which smouldered in the hearts of Negroes. Its second is the fact that it took place precisely because the Negro had made economic and social progress.

The Negro and Organized Labor

The Negroes, due to their place as the most oppressed section of the labor force and their sense of national oppression, have always shown themselves on the whole exceptionally ready to join the forces of organized labor. The exclusion of Negroes from the AFL corresponded to a period of class collaboration practiced by the AFL leadership. When the IWW raised the banner of militant trade unionism among the most oppressed and exploited sections of the working population, Negro labor responded both as rank and filers and as good organizers. Moreover, the IWW gave the Negroes the sense of a social program for the regeneration of society to which also the Negroes have always been responsive.

In 1932 the Negroes, like the rest of the labor movement, followed the New Deal program with its vast promises of a new order in America. But the Roosevelt government, while of necessity including the Negroes in its social service program for the unemployed, did nothing to implement its vague promises for the amelioration of the national oppression of Negroes in the country.

The CIO, being mainly an organization of the heavy industries, was compelled to organize the Negroes in great industries like steel and auto or face the impossibility of any organization at all. The Negro masses, despite some hesitation, responded magnificently and today they constitute powerful and progressive groups in many unions of the CIO.

This entry into the militant trade-union movement is undoubtedly of great significance not only for organized labor as a whole but for the Negro people. Yet the main struggle of the Negro masses in the United States has been and until the achievement of socialism will continue to be their struggle for their democratic rights as a nationally oppressed minority. Their entry into the ranks of organized labor does not lessen their sense of national oppression. On the contrary, it increases it and, in full accordance with their rôle in past American revolutionary crisis and the developing antagonisms of American society, this independent action of the Negro masses is already playing a rôle in relation to the American proletariat which constitutes one of the most important elements in the struggle for socialism.

Negro Nationalism: Second Phase

The tumultuous world situation, the loud-voiced shrieking of democracy by Anglo-American imperialism and the increasing demands of organized labor in America for greater and greater extension of its democratic rights, stimulated in the Negro people by the beginning of World War I a more than usually intensive desire to struggle for equality. Driven by the necessities of war, the Roosevelt government called upon the people of America to make the great sacrifices necessary for war in the name of democracy. At the same time, however, the special needs and practices of Southern society and industry as a whole, fortified by the now deeply-ingrained race prejudice of American society, prohibited any extension of democracy to the Negro people. Instead the persecution and discrimination of World War I have been intensified. The violent attacks and humiliations to which the Negro people have been subjected, in the Army in particular, have raised the indignation of the Negro masses to a high pitch.

The Negroes have responded with a nation-wide offensive. This offensive, which specially sought the right of entry into industry and also into Jim Crow unions, has expressed itself not only in mass movements but in a growing determination to struggle in an individual and often terroristic manner against any manifestation of white superiority. The younger Negroes in particular now walk the streets in many towns determined to assert themselves. And in states like Virginia, the Carolinas, and Tennessee their attitude in street cars, their resentful submission to the old Jim Crow laws have created a degree of social tension unknown in those parts for two generations. This has been one of the main contributing causes to the series of racial outbreaks which have taken place in various parts of the country. The Attorney General of the United States has made the fantastic and unprecedented proposal to prohibit the Negroes from coming into Northern cities and has publicly expressed his fears of imminent race riots. He thus typifies the bankruptcy of the bourgeoisie in the face of the mass offensive of the Negroes.

The character and high stage of development of the nation-wide Negro offensive is best typified by its expression in Harlem. Harlem is the largest urban concentration of Negroes in the country. It is the area in which Negroes feel safest, freest and therefore most able to express their resentment. It is therefore precisely in Harlem that appear most powerfully the nationalistic sentiments of the Negro and the deepest social protests. In 1935 the Negroes in Harlem carried out a spontaneous demonstration against their general social conditions and particularly against the non-employment of Negroes in Harlem stores. The demonstration initiated a movement which has made substantial corrections of this injustice. In 1941 the Harlem community organized and carried to success a demonstration against the non-employment of bus drivers. Similar actions or attempts at action have taken place all over the country, except in the very deep South.

The Negroes have not been satisfied with local or merely regional demonstrations. Highly significant is the organized expression of their boiling resentment. As far back as 1940, Councilman Powell, realizing the need for giving some national organized expression to this wide-spread resentment, tried to summon a national conference of Negro leaders in New York. The movement did not materialize, but by 1941 the pressure of the Negro masses had forced the formation of an organization aimed at marching on Washington and making a forcible protest to the state against the national oppression of the Negroes.

The Negro petty bourgeois leaders found their organizations of the NAACP and the Urban League rejected by the Negro masses as unsuitable for their militant purposes. They trembled before this powerful urge of the Negro masses to confront the capitalist state with a comprehensive protest against their grievances. In the persons of Randolph and White they rushed to head the movement

and immediately turned it over to the Roosevelt Government which transformed itself into leader of the Negro people under the guise of the FEPC. The Negro masses waited patiently upon the FEPC to solve their problems in industry and upon the capitalist state to improve the situation of Negroes in the Army. With the failure of the Roosevelt government and the FEPC to ameliorate their grievances, the masses of the Negro people arrived at the decision that they must take matters into their own hands. The most outstanding expression of this sentiment was the Harlem demonstration, participated in by many thousands of people, viewed sympathetically by the large majority of the people of Harlem and Negroes all over the United States. When examined in its totality it will be seen as one of the most significant manifestations of independent social protest among Negroes that has taken place since the Garvey movement. This is no question merely of bad housing, insufficient playgrounds or increasing poverty.

The Harlem demonstration, like the miners' strike, represents a significant stage in the development of the struggle against capitalist society. The miners' strike was an indication not only of the immediate grievances of the miners but of the stage of development reached by the American proletariat as a whole. The miners did what millions of Americans wanted to do. The Harlem action is equally an indication of the sentiments of the great majority of Negroes in this country. Both of these manifestations in their strength and in their weaknesses are the two most important indications of the developing mass resentment against the existing, i.e., the capitalist, society that have resulted from the strain of the war.

At the same time the petty-bourgeois leaders among the Negroes have issued a political manifesto which, despite all its weaknesses, show that the Negro people as a whole have reached the stage of taking a critical attitude, as Negroes, to both the Democratic and Republican parties. Both the Negroes protesting in the streets and the timid and vacillating petty-bourgeois have now reached a stage in their evolution where, as always in their past history, their next historic step is toward unity with the revolutionary class, in our day, the American proletariat. *To the degree that the Negroes are more integrated into industry and unions their consciousness of racial oppression and their resentment against it become greater, not less.* This dual development of the Negro people during the last few years poses exceptional problems and exceptional opportunities for the American proletariat and therefore for the revolutionary party.

The American Proletariat and the Negro Question Today

The American proletariat is the class whose objective rôle at the present stage is to solve the fundamental problems of American society. Any *theoretical* analysis of the contemporary Negro problem must therefore begin with the developing relation of the Negro struggle to the general struggles of the proletariat as the leader of the oppressed classes in American society.

i. In the present stage of American capitalism the great danger threatening the masses of the people is Fascism. Events in Detroit and elsewhere have shown that the fascistic elements will exploit to the limit the Negro problem in the United States to confuse, disorganize and divide the great masses of the people and to disrupt their natural leader in the struggle against Fascism, the organized force of labor.

ii. The American bourgeoisie, whether Democratic or Republican, is perfectly aware of the permanent nature of the agricultural crisis and has already shown its determination to bribe the farmers to support it against organized labor. However, the problems of the poor farmers, the tenant farmers, the sharecroppers and the agricultural proletariat are insoluble in capitalist society. The solution of the agrarian problem in the United States rests with the proletariat and any solution involves automatically the general *social situation* of millions of Negroes in the Southern states.

iii. The South presents the gravest problem of democracy in the United States. Economic remains of slavery, a large landless peasantry, the development of large-scale and, especially, the extractive industries, the transference of textile industry from the North, a developing labor movement—all these are permeated with a caste system comparable to nothing else in the modern world. Holding together these diverse and contradictory elements is a political superstructure with the external forms of bourgeois democracy. This extraordinary conglomeration of explosive forces is situated not as in India, thousands of miles away from the metropolis, but in the very heart of the most advanced political bourgeois democracy in the world.

Armed with Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution, which we must apply at home as well as abroad, the Bolshevik party must

be able to foresee the telescoping of the industrial, agricultural and social revolution in the South. These contradictions are developing at a time when Fascism, the enemy of democracy and the most outspoken of all proponents of racial domination, is experiencing signal defeats administered at the cost of great sacrifices to the American people. The gross hypocrisy involved has made deep penetration into the minds of Negroes in the South. Familiarity with that situation and the comparative acceptance by the masses, particularly the Negro masses, in the past, should not dull our comprehension of the potential dynamite which the situation represents.

It is possible that before the general economic and political forces in the South have reached the point of explosion, the Negro masses may by independent mass actions pose all questions purely in terms of equality of Negro rights. Whatever the pace of the general development or the forms that it may take, we must expect that in the course of the next period, the period of the social crisis in America, the American proletariat as a whole will be faced with this problem.

iv. Even today, in the day-to-day struggles for democratic rights, the Southern landlords and industrialists have proved themselves the unyielding enemies, not only of the working class but of the democratic rights of the whole American people. Large sections of American society, particularly organized labor and the great numbers of Negroes in the North are now fully aware of this and are aware also that the basis of Southern political power is the economic and social degradation of the Negroes in the South.

From the above four points, certain conclusions of extreme importance to the American proletariat can be drawn. In America as in every other country, the basic struggle is between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie for the control of the economic sources of social and political power. But in every country this struggle assumes special historical forms. It is the task of the revolutionary party first of all to clarify itself in order to be able to clarify the proletariat on the crucial rôle of the Negro problem in the defense of its own position and the socialist reconstruction of American society.

The Negro Question as a National Question

The 14 million Negroes of the United States are subjected to every conceivable variety of economic oppression and social and political discrimination. These tortures are to a large degree sanctified by law and practiced without shame by all the organs of government. The Negroes, however, are and have been for many centuries in every sense of the word, Americans. They are not separated from their oppressors by differences of culture, difference of religion, difference of language, as the inhabitants of India or Africa. They are not even regionally separated from the rest of the community as national groups in Russia, Spain or Yugoslavia.

The Negroes are for the most part proletarian or semi-proletarian and therefore the struggle of the Negroes is fundamentally a class question.

The Negroes do not constitute a nation, but, owing to their special situation, their segregation; economic, social and political oppression; the difference in color which singles them out so easily from the rest of the community, their problem becomes the problem of a national minority. The Negro question is a part of the national and not of the "national" question. This national minority is most easily distinguishable from the rest of the community by its racial characteristics. Thus the Negro question is a question of race and not of "race."

The contrast between their situation and the privileges enjoyed by those around them have always made the Negroes that section of American society most receptive to revolutionary ideas and radical solution of social problems. The white working class struggles against the objective rule of capital and for some subjective goal, which even on the very eve of revolution, is impossible to visualize fully in concrete and positive terms. The Negroes, on the other hand, struggle and will continue to struggle objectively against capital, but in contrast to the white workers, for the very concrete objective democratic rights that they see around them.

But the whole history of the United States and the rôle of the Negroes in American economy and society are a constant proof and reminder of the fact that it is absolutely impossible for the Negroes to gain equality under American capitalism.

Such is the development of American capitalist society and the rôle of Negroes in it that the Negroes' struggle for democratic rights brings the Negroes almost immediately face to face with capital and the state. *The Marxist support of the Negro struggle for democratic rights is not a concession that Marxists make to the Negroes. In the United States today this struggle is a direct part of the struggle for socialism.*

National Struggle and the Struggle for Socialism

All serious problems arising from the Negro question revolve around the relationship of the independent mass actions of the Negroes for democratic rights to the working class struggle for socialism.

In the 2nd Congress of the Communist International, Lenin's theses singled out as examples of the national and colonial question the Irish question and the question of the Negroes in America. This Leninist approach was based upon close study of the economic situation of the Negroes in the United States and the Irish Rebellion in 1916. The whole historical development of the Negro struggle in the United States and its relations to the social struggles of the revolutionary classes show that the Leninist analysis of the Negro question as part of the national question is the correct method with which to approach this problem. It is necessary, therefore, to have a precise and clear conception of the application of this *method*. The most concentrated example of it is Lenin's treatment of the Irish Rebellion during World War I.

Lenin wishes to illustrate the specifically *nationalist* struggle of the Irish Rebellion in its relation to the *socialist* struggle of the British proletariat against British imperialism. He uses the experience of the Russian Revolution in 1905 which took place exclusively *within the national boundaries of Russia*. He uses also, *not* the struggles of the nationally oppressed minorities, but the struggles of the petty-bourgeoisie, the peasants and other non-proletarian, non-class groups, in relation to the struggle of the Russian proletariat. We have therefore a very concrete illustration of the applicability of the method to environments and classes superficially diverse but organically similar.

(a) "The Russian Revolution of 1905 was a bourgeois-democratic revolution. It consisted of a series of battles in which all the discontented classes, groups and elements of the population participated. Among these were masses imbued with the crudest prejudices, with the vaguest and most fantastic aims of struggle; there were small groups which accepted Japanese money, there were speculators and adventurers, etc. *Objectively*, the mass movement broke the back of tsarism and paved the way for democracy; for that reason the class conscious workers led it."

Within the United States the socialist revolution will ultimately consist of a series of battles in which the discontented classes, groups and elements of all types will participate in their own way and form a contributory force to the great culminating struggles which will be led by the proletariat.

(b) "The socialist revolution in Europe *cannot be anything else* than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry of the oppressed and discontented elements. Sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will inevitably participate in it—without such participation, *mass struggle is impossible*, without it *no revolution* is possible—and just as inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors. But *objectively* they will attack *capital*, and the class conscious vanguard of the revolution, the advanced proletariat expressing this objective truth of a heterogeneous and discordant, motley and outwardly incohesive mass struggle will be able to unite and direct it, to capture power, to seize the banks, to expropriate the trusts, hated by all, though for different reasons. . . ."

In the United States social revolution is impossible without the independent mass struggles of the Negroes, whatever the prejudices, the reactionary fantasies, the weaknesses and errors of these struggles. The proletarian composition of the Negro people and the developing labor movement offer great opportunities for a continuous reduction of the prejudices of the Negro people.

(c) "The struggle of the oppressed nations IN EUROPE, a struggle capable of going to the lengths of insurrection and street fighting, of breaking down the iron discipline in the army and martial law, will 'sharpen the revolutionary crisis in Europe' infinitely more than a much more developed rebellion in a remote colony. A blow delivered against the English imperialist bourgeoisie by a rebellion in Ireland is a hundred times more significant politically than a blow of equal weight delivered in Asia or Africa."

Blows delivered by an oppressed national minority so entangled in the social structure of the United States as the Negroes, possess a political significance of greater importance in this country than a blow delivered by any other section of the population except the organized proletariat itself.

(d) "The dialectics of history is such that small nations, powerless

as an INDEPENDENT factor in the struggle against imperialism, play a part as one of the ferments, one of the bacilli, which help the REAL power against imperialism to come on the scene, namely, the SOCIALIST PROLETARIAT."

Within the United States, the Negroes are undoubtedly powerless to achieve their complete or even substantial emancipation as an independent factor in the struggle against American capital. But such is the historic rôle of the Negroes in the United States; such today is their proletarian composition and such is their interrelation with the American proletariat itself that their independent struggles form perhaps the most powerful stimulus in American society to the recognition by the organized proletariat of its real responsibilities to the national development as a whole and of its power against American imperialism.

The ideal situation is that the struggle of the minority group should be organized and led by the proletariat. But to make this a precondition of supporting the struggle of non-proletarian, semi-proletarian or non-class conscious groups is a repudiation of all Marxist theory and practice. *Thus it is utterly false to draw the conclusion that the independent struggle of the Negro masses for their democratic rights is to be looked upon merely as a preliminary stage to a recognition by the Negroes that the real struggle is the struggle for socialism.*

The Marxist Movement and the Negro Question

The Marxist movement in the United States with little exception has failed to grasp the fact that the Negro question is part of the national question. This is not surprising because it has shown little interest in the Negroes except under the direct and insistent stimulus of the internationalist movement.

The socialist movement under Debs considered any special appeal to the Negro people as contrary to the spirit of socialism. Randolph appealed to Negroes to become socialists but proved quite incapable of dealing with the powerful nationalistic current of Garveyism that was prevalent at the time. The Communist Party up to 1928 was unable to understand either the significance of the Negro question in the U. S. or the method of work required. It was only through the drastic intervention of the CI, whatever its purpose, that the Communist Party in 1929 began a serious approach to the Negro question. Despite many exaggerations, the turn to the Negro question was on the whole sound and effective, but it was seriously handicapped by the adoption of a policy of advocating self-determination for the Black Belt. In 1935 with the new turn of the CI toward social patriotism, the work of the Communist Party among Negroes began a process of rapid deterioration. The Trotskyist movement from its foundation in 1928 to 1938 took even less interest in the Negro question than the Communist Party and once more it was only under the insistence of the international organization that the American Marxist movement took action on the Negro question.

Trotsky and the Negro Question

Trotsky began to take a special interest in the Negro question as soon as he applied himself to the problems of the United States from the point of view of building a Trotskyite revolutionary organization. From that time he never ceased to point out the importance of this question. Though scattered and to some degree incidental, his conversations and discussions are organized by a consistent approach and, altogether, constitute a remarkable example of Marxist penetration into the correct basis for any Negro work in the U. S. In any resolution on the Negro question at this stage, it is necessary to summarize briefly his ideas.

On the question of self-determination, Trotsky believed that the differences between the West Indies, Catalonia, Poland, etc., and the situation of the Negroes in the United States were not decisive. In other words, the Negro question was a part of the national question. He firmly opposed those in the Fourth International who rejected outright the principle of self-determination for Negroes in the U. S. In a discussion in 1939 he made it clear that he did not propose that the party advocate the slogan of self-determination for Negroes in the U. S. but he insisted that the party should declare its obligation to struggle with the Negroes for self-determination, should they at any time demand it. Trotsky insisted that if the Negroes should decide, under the stress of unforeseen historical events (e.g., a period of fascism in the U. S.), to struggle for self-determination, the struggle would under all circumstances be progressive, for the simple reason that it could not possibly be attained except through war against American capitalism.

Trotsky's views on the Negro question are most clearly, though not completely, contained in a discussion in 1939. (*Internal Bulletin*,

SWP, No. 9, June, 1939.) In his approach to Negro work, Trotsky based his views on the sentiments of the genuine Negro masses in the U. S. and the fact that their oppression as Negroes was so strong that they feel it at every moment.

Of those suffering from oppression and discrimination, the Negroes were the most oppressed and the most discriminated against and therefore formed part of the most dynamic milieu of the working class. The party should say to the conscious elements among the Negroes that they have been convoked by the historical development to take their place in the very vanguard of the working class struggle for socialism. Trotsky considered that if the party was unable to find a road to this stratum of society, in which he gave the Negroes a very important place, then it would be a confession of revolutionary futility.

While conscious of the rôle of the Negro in the vanguard, however, Trotsky placed a heavy emphasis always on the consciousness of Negroes as being a nationally-oppressed minority. On every possible occasion he emphasized the political conclusions that were to be drawn from the special situation of the Negroes under American capitalism for 300 years. He warned repeatedly of the probability of violent racial outbreaks among the Negroes in which they would seek to revenge themselves for all the oppression and humiliations which they had suffered.

Trotsky took the greatest interest in the Garvey movement as an expression of the genuine sentiments of the Negro masses who were always his main concern. He constantly recommended to the party the study of the Negroes in the Civil War as a historical necessity for understanding the Negro question today. He recommended the study of Garvey's movement as an indispensable indication to the party of the road to the Negro masses. He welcomed the idea of an independent mass organization of the Negro people, formed through the instrumentality of the party. His general approach to the Negro question can best be indicated by the following fact: He recommended that under certain circumstances the revolutionary party could withdraw its own candidate for election to Congress and support a Negro democrat put forward by a Negro community anxious to have its own Negro representative. In all these ideas Trotsky merely exemplified the application to the concrete struggle of the original principle embodied in the right to self-determination.

No task is more urgent than the collation and publication of Trotsky's writings and ideas on the Negro question in the U. S., their close study by all members of the party, and their dissemination in an organized form among the proletariat and the Negro masses.

PART II—THE WORKERS PARTY AND THE NEGRO QUESTION

The problem of the party therefore divides itself into two parts: (1) the struggles of the American proletariat for socialism and its relation to the Negro struggle for democratic rights; and (2) the independent struggles of the Negroes for democratic rights and its relation to the proletarian struggle for socialism. Under no circumstances are these separate elements to be confused or treated as one.

THE WORKERS PARTY AND NEGRO WORK IN THE ORGANIZED LABOR MOVEMENT

The Workers Party approaches Negro work in the organized labor movement from the basis of the approaching social crisis, and the preparation of the proletariat for the socialist revolution. Today one of the greatest subjective weaknesses of the American proletariat is the absence of consciousness that labor is opposed to capital for leadership of the nation. This being so, it follows that the other oppressed and discontented classes, elements and groups have not yet learned to look to labor for a partial or even a "reformist" solution to their problem. Classes learn such lessons only by massive experiences on a national scale; only in the very last stages of the revolution did the Russian peasantry learn that the proletariat was its leader. Already independent action by the Negro masses in the North is at last awakening organized labor to the fact that it must approach the Negro problem not merely as a trade union, but a social and national problem. This new development helps to clarify and define the tasks of the party.

The party continues, as it has done in the past, to agitate for equal rights and abolition of Jim Crow in all aspects of industrial and union life. The party views with great satisfaction the remarkable progress made by the CIO in its appreciation of the Negro

problem as a union problem. The party fights against the Klan and other Negro-baiting elements in the unions but does not allow the outbreaks against Negroes which have taken place in Detroit, Mobile and elsewhere to obscure the steady progress in this field.

The party, however, goes beyond mere progressive trade-unionism. It places before the union movement the grave danger that the very existence of a Negro question in the country poses for the union movement and the country as a whole.

The party warns the labor movement that the fascists and pro-fascist elements in their efforts to batter down organized labor, will not fail to use the growing racial tension in the country as the Nazis used anti-semitism in Germany.

The party warns the labor movement that the coming unemployment will create grave dangers for the labor movement, particularly in developing antagonisms between white and Negro labor. The party points out the dangerous situation in the South and the continuous reactionary and anti-labor activity of the Southern democrats and its basis in the social degradation of the Negroes. The party, therefore, proposes to the labor movement the adoption of its transitional program for a Labor Party as the chief means in the present stage of checking this threat to its very existence. The party boldly poses to the labor movement the necessity of showing the Negroes that labor recognizes its responsibility for solving their problems by radical measures. Labor will thus draw to itself the militant power of the vast majority of oppressed Negroes and will enormously increase its social and political power in the country.

Such a sponsoring of the Negro cause will draw the attention of all the other oppressed groups in society to labor's rôle. It will give enormous confidence and pride to labor itself. It will create a powerful sentiment of good will and respect for the American proletariat among the great masses in Europe, Africa and Asia. The propaganda of the party in this respect must be bold, comprehensive and powerful in its insistence on the dangers to society and the continuing shame of the Negro problem, the necessity of proletarian solution, and the gains, direct and indirect, which will follow even the first decisive steps taken by labor.

The party in its daily agitation draws attention of the union movement to the concrete danger represented by the outbreaks which have occurred in recent months and which sooner or later will recur with probably greater violence. The party emphatically urges the union movement to place the responsibility unequivocally upon the enemies of the Negro people. It urges the unions to recognize that the aggressive spirit of the Negro people is the result of their unending oppression. *Organized labor must not discourage, but must stimulate this militancy as one of the surest defenses of democracy not only for Negroes but for organized labor itself and all the oppressed classes.*

The party urges the labor movement to take the lead in organizing this militancy and linking it to the struggle for the reconstruction of society. To white workers complaining of Negro "excesses" the party points out, with restraint yet inflexibly, the great importance of the Negro mass struggle and relegates these complaints to their proper subordinate sphere. Above all, it points out that in conflicts between Negroes and whites in the Negro community, the labor movement must avoid appearing in any light which may be interpreted as a "guardian of the peace," merely anxious to restore the *status quo*. Only by assisting the Negro movement to express its militancy in effective channels and by militantly advocating both an immediate and a general program for the Negroes as a whole, will the labor movement be able to act effectively in times of crisis and yet avoid the multiple dangers of merely acting as peace-maker. In all Negro manifestations of resistance the organized labor movement must play a leading and active part. The party must unceasingly teach labor that the way to ensure that the resistance of Negroes is directed against capital and its allies is for labor to encourage, organize and support them to its fullest capacity.

The party will remember that propaganda and agitation of this scope is of special importance for it is being carried out by no other political groups. In the present critical period when many are being more and more impelled to think beyond their immediate interests, the Negro question forms a particularly valuable means of educating the advanced workers in the general principles of socialism and mass revolutionary struggle. The party will point out that because the Negroes have insisted on struggle, and owing to the sympathetic attitude of labor due to the large number of Negroes in its ranks, the Negro struggle in Detroit has developed a logic of its own. This has resulted in a political alliance at the recent elections between organized labor and the Negro community as a whole.

Despite the loss of the election, this combination is one of the most significant stages yet reached in the struggle of labor and the Negro masses for emancipation from the ills and injustices of capitalist society. It is along these lines with militant effort on both sides complementing each other that the party must seek, according to its strength, to direct the developing struggle. *Organized labor must learn to turn to its own advantage the increasing racial consciousness and organization which accompanies the integration of the Negro into the social functions of capitalist society.*

THE WORKERS PARTY AND NEGRO WORK AMONG NEGROES

The Negroes Struggle for Democratic Rights and Socialism

The party makes a powerful and insistent propaganda to the Negroes that the leadership of organized labor is necessary and indispensable to their successful struggle for democratic rights. Particularly in this time of crisis, it poses to them socialism as the only solution of their problem. It analyzes the economic roots of racial oppression. It emphasizes, above all, the rôle of competition between members of the working class in destroying white and Negro solidarity. It stresses the national leadership of labor without which the achievement of democratic rights is impossible. It emphasizes the fundamentally class nature of racial oppression and the objective unity of the oppressed in the struggle for socialism.

At the same time the party, with the fullest consciousness of the significance of the mass independent struggles of the Negroes, considers that its main agitational work among Negroes is the stimulation and encouragement of these mass struggles. Basing itself upon one of the most fundamental principles of Marxism, the party recognizes that it is only on the basis of the continual deepening and broadening of their independent mass struggles that the Negro people will ultimately be brought to recognize that organized labor is their only genuine ally in their struggle and that their struggle is part of the struggle for socialism.

The party, in stimulating the independent struggles of the Negro people, teaches Marxism to them in the only terms in which they will learn it, the terms of their own desires and experiences. Thus at the present stage of capitalist development in America, the party seeks wherever possible and feasible to concentrate the attention of the Negro masses upon the responsibility of the government for their oppressed condition. It therefore teaches to the Negroes continuously that the state is the executive committee of the ruling class and on this basis seeks to mobilize them in their own way and according to their own instinctive desires, against the capitalist state and its dominating rôle in contemporary society.

The party brings Marxism to the Negroes by emphasizing to them that the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself. It emphasizes to the Negroes that Negro emancipation cannot take place without the vigorous and self-sacrificing struggle of the Negroes themselves. It sharply condemns that distortion of Marxist truth which states or implies that the Negroes by their independent struggles cannot get to first base without the leadership of organized labor.

The party is on the alert to stimulate and encourage every instinctive tendency to independent organization and militant struggle of the Negro masses objectively directed against American capitalism. The history of the Negro people has shown them fertile in the creation and organization of such struggles. And it is on the basis of analysis and criticism of these creative efforts that the party seeks to exercise its special guiding and correcting influence. It is only by this means that it can help direct the efforts of the Negro masses into channels most powerful and fruitful for their own aims and for this very reason most valuable in developing the general struggle for socialism.

The party encourages the masses of the Negro people to seek the assistance of the organized labor movement in the organization of their own defense and in all stages of their battle for democratic rights. But in its agitation it encourages them to do so for the specific purpose, first of all, of gaining their own democratic demands. *Under no circumstances does it submerge the specific purpose of this alliance in the minds of the Negro people under any general terms of the fight for socialism.* The recognition by the masses of the Negro people that organized labor is their ally in their struggle for their democratic rights can prove a far more powerful step toward socialism than the acceptance by a few Negroes of the theoretic principles of Marxism. It is from the gen-

eral recognition by the masses of the alliance between the Negro struggle for democratic rights and organized labor that the possibility arises of winning not one or two but dozens of Negro militants for the revolutionary party.

The Negro Proletariat

The rôle of the Negro proletariat belongs mainly to the general development of the union and organized labor movement as a whole. The party must be on its guard to scrutinize all policies which may deflect the Negro proletariat in the labor movement from considering itself first and foremost as an integral part of the struggle of organized labor for the rights of labor and for socialism. The oppression of the Negroes as a national minority specially prepares the Negro proletariat in the organized labor movement for a place in the very vanguard of the struggle for socialism.

The Negro proletariat, however, has a special rôle to play in the struggle of the Negro community for its democratic rights. The party will stimulate the Negro proletariat within the Negro communities to take the lead in the struggle for Negro democratic rights in accordance with the rôle of labor in modern society. The Negro community and Negro organizations must be stimulated to use the Negro proletariat as its representative to the organized labor movement in its demand for assistance and organization of the struggle for Negro democratic rights. The link in the struggle for Negro democratic rights is between the Negro community as a whole and organized labor and not between the Negro proletariat alone and the white proletariat.

In the present stage the party must conduct, to the extent of its resources, a vigorous and unflinching propaganda and agitation along the above lines. The present situation offers a fertile field for such work among the Negro masses. The experience of the party with its agitation on the Harlem demonstration has already shown how receptive the Negro masses and Negro proletarian elements would be to agitation of this kind.

The party is certain to reap concrete results because there is not at the present time a single labor or radical organization which looks upon the militant Negro demonstration as anything else except at best justifiable because of unfortunate necessities. This means the party will be listened to eagerly by the Negro masses.

The party needs to analyze carefully and draw the lessons of such outbreaks as that in Harlem. Only thus will it be able to offer guidance to the Negroes and to the proletariat, jointly with them to prepare for future outbreaks, and jointly study the revolutionary development of the American masses. Every "minor" crisis, in a capitalist state, says Lenin, discloses to us in miniature the elements and germs of the battles which must inevitably take place on a large scale during a big crisis.

The Harlem demonstration was no "minor" strike. It was, as has been shown, an organized demonstration, a Negro nationalist protest, on a stage far higher than Garveyism, involving actively or sympathetically, tens of thousands of people. On the day of the demonstration could be seen on one side the masses of the people and on the other, "keeping order," the local municipality (La Guardia), the Social-Democracy (Crosswain), the Stalinists (Max Yergan and Hope Stevens), the Negro petty bourgeois (Walter White and Lester Granger). Dewey announced that he held in reserve the armed forces of the state. These formed one united group while the masses in the streets booted at them.

The party must resolutely take its place with the protesting masses and expose continuously the unity of those arrayed against them. The party will not adopt merely the attitude of explaining why the masses take such steps. It corrects the exaggerations and mistakes of the masses but as one of them, taking part in the struggle with them, and seeking to increase and to direct their justified anger into more constructive channels. In the Marxist tradition it subordinates all to the fact that the masses have refused passively to endure injustice and have violently expressed their hatred. The party propagates these ideas and condemns the judicial or explanatory or social-worker attitude. It is only on this basis that the party, which is then more certain to get the ear of the masses, can help them to realize their mistakes, and help them to organize greater, more powerful and more effective demonstrations which can in turn become nation-wide militant movements.

The Party and the Negro Nationalist Movements

The party wages a merciless war against the Negro nationalist movements such as the Garveyites, the pro-Japanese organizations, etc. It demonstrates their fantastic and reactionary proposals for Negro emancipation. It explains in detail the utter impossibility of their realization and, furthermore, takes the trouble to explain

that even if these were realized, it would not in any way benefit the great masses of the Negro people. The party seizes this opportunity to analyze and denounce the imperialism of the Japanese and the oppression of the Japanese masses. Thus in terms of the Negro's own life and interests it builds a sentiment of solidarity of the oppressed on an international scale.

At the same time, however, the party must study these movements carefully, to differentiate between the Negro nationalist leaders and their sincere but misguided followers. It explains to the masses that the desire for the success of Japan is in reality a desire for the destruction of the apparently unbreakable power of their own oppressor, American imperialism, and the humbling of its pride. The impending defeat of Japan will strike a heavy blow at any hopes of assistance, direct or indirect, to the "colored peoples" from a Japanese victory. The national movements, however, even before the defeat of Japan, used Garveyism and pro-Japanese sentiment merely as an ideological basis for a policy directed towards strengthening Negro nationalism in the United States. The movements which seek "to drive the Jew out of Harlem or the South Side" have a valid class base. They are the reactions of the resentful Negro seeking economic relief and some salve for his humiliated racial pride. That these sentiments can be exploited by fanatical idiots, Negro anti-Semites, or self-seeking Negro business men, does not alter their fundamentally progressive basis. This progressiveness is in no way to be confused with the dissatisfaction of the demoralized white petty-bourgeoisie which seeks refuge in fascism. American reaction can and probably will finance or encourage some of these movements (Bilbo and Back to Africa) in order to feed ill-will. But the Negroes are overwhelmingly proletarian, semi-proletarian and peasant in their class composition. Such is the whole course of American history that any nation-wide Fascist movement (however disguised) will be compelled to attack the Negro struggle for equality. But the struggle for equality is the main driving force of the Negro mass movement.

The party, therefore, while boldly attacking the nationalist movement, does not in any way treat these movements in the same category as it would a fascist movement. It attacks them on the basis of a program for Negro struggle as outlined above. It is the absence of a comprehensive program and action for Negro rights and Negro struggle advanced by organized labor; it is the sectarian presentation of the doctrine of the Negro struggle as class struggle which gives strength to the nationalists. Such is the obvious bankruptcy of the Nationalists' magic-carpet programs for salvation in all parts of the world that their chief strength, in Harlem for instance, is due not to their programs but to their active rôle in protests and demonstrations designed to improve the conditions of the Negroes here in America.

The Party and the Negro Petty Bourgeoisie

An economic examination of the American scene will demonstrate how slight is the economic basis of the Negro petty-bourgeoisie. The Negro petty bourgeoisie is for the most part a woefully disproportionate group of intelligentsia, well-paid personal domestics, stage performers, etc. Bourgeois society has rigidly excluded them not only from social contact with the whites but also from those positions and opportunities of sharing in the surplus value, and gaining distinction, which binds so many of the white petty-bourgeois functionaries to bourgeois society. They can do harm as in the March On Washington Committee, but their impotence to restrain the masses of the Negroes when these are anxious to move has been demonstrated during the past period. Such influence, as for instance, the Indian nationalist bourgeoisie has exercised over the Indian masses, the Negro petty-bourgeoisie can never exercise over the Negroes. The party observes that the instinct for direct action of the Negro masses ignored the NAACP or the Urban League, as circumstances dictated. But the party is on the alert to enter those newer organizations which the Negroes are forming today in such profusion, if even sometimes for only limited purposes.

The party keeps up an unceasing attack on the Negro petty-bourgeois leaders, but is careful to do so, not on general grounds, but because they do not carry on a militant struggle for democratic rights and betray the struggle at every opportunity. In this respect the party attacks the petty-bourgeois leaders of the Negroes in a manner approximating its attacks on the labor leadership of the social democracy.

The Negroes and the Labor Party

The party must carry on a militant agitation among the Negroes on behalf of an independent Labor Party. It is a sign of

their special rôle in American society and the maturing social consciousness of the Negro people that as a body they have made within the last few years a rapid change in their attitude toward organized labor. Should organized labor put forward a militant program for an independent Labor Party the past history of Negroes and present indications show that the movement of the Negroes in its favor will be strong and perhaps overwhelming. The Negroes in all probability will play a rôle in the left wing of the organization. But here also the Negroes' situation as a specially oppressed minority, though not necessarily obtruded, must be taken into consideration. An Independent Labor Party in the United States as in many European countries will probably consist of a federation of various groups, with the union movement providing the base, the driving force and the leadership.

The Independent Labor Party will not tolerate any distinction of color within its ranks. Local non-union organizations of all types will seek affiliation. Negroes should be encouraged to join such local affiliations. *But the party must carry on a vigorous agitation among militant Negro organizations struggling for Negro democratic rights not only to join the agitation for an Independent Labor Party but also to take an active part in its formation.*

At the present stage of capitalist crisis in the U. S. this particular work by the party-offers exceptional means of forming a bridge between the independent struggle of the Negro masses and the general problem of the reconstruction of society.

The Negro organizations should be encouraged themselves to formulate demands for their own democratic rights and the party must insist that neither the Democratic nor the Republican Party is the type of organization which will be able to give the Negroes an opportunity to struggle for these rights within a broader framework. At the same time, even to the most nationalistic of the Negro organizations, the party should pose the question of themselves forming a program not only for Negro democratic rights but for the country as a whole. They must look, not to European imperialism in Africa nor to Japanese imperialism, but to potential allies in this country and make their own contribution to the elaboration of that type of social order in which the Negroes will at last find equality. This must be presented to the Negro organizations as an imperative duty for Negro organizations to perform. It is by this means that the Negroes, on the basis of their own nationalistic preoccupations, are brought to consider their own problems in relation to the fundamental problem of the whole social order. The party will seize this opportunity to present its own transitional program to Negroes, for them to consider in the light of their intensive desire for some solution, not only immediate but general, to the degradation from which they have suffered for so many centuries. Such is the proletarian composition of the Negro people, so hostile are they to the existing social order *because of the special degradation to which it subjects them*, that the political organization which knows how to utilize their preoccupation with their democratic rights can find ample ways and means for carrying on that socialistic propaganda which must always be the climax of revolutionary effort, particularly in this period. Starting from and never ignoring the basis of the independent struggles for democratic rights, the party will find in the increasing contradictions in the social order the possibility of uniting in ever higher stages of development the objective movement of the American proletariat toward leadership of the nation and the movement of the masses of Negro people toward the American proletariat.

Negro Chauvinism

The history of the Negro in the U. S. is a history of his increasing race consciousness, a constantly increasing desire to vindicate his past and the achievements and qualifications of the Negro race as a race. This is an inevitable result of his position in American society, of the development of this society itself, and is not only a powerful but a familiar concomitant everywhere of the struggles of nationally oppressed groups. It does not grow less with the social development of the oppressed and the oppressing groups. *On the contrary, it increases in direct ratio with the development of capitalism and the possibilities of liberation.* This was recognized by the SWP in its 1939 convention when it adopted a resolution which stated in part: "... the awakening political consciousness of the Negro not unnaturally takes the form of a desire for independent action uncontrolled by whites. The Negroes have long felt and more than ever feel today the urge to create their own organizations under their own leaders and thus assert, not only in theory but in action, their claim to complete equality with other American citizens. Such a desire is legitimate and even when it takes the form of a rather aggressive chauvinism is to be wel-

comed. Black chauvinism in America today is merely the natural excess of the desire for equality while white American chauvinism, the expression of racial domination, is essentially reactionary.

So clear is this development that today even the bourgeoisie is recognizing it. In *An American Dilemma* by Gunnar Myrdal, despite its petty-bourgeois humanitarian attitude, there has at last appeared a serious, comprehensive and, in many respects, authoritative study of the Negro question. One of its final conclusions is that: "Negroes are beginning to form a self-conscious 'nation within the nation,' defining ever more clearly their fundamental grievances against white America." Such a movement with such deep historical roots must inevitably bring exaggerations, excesses, and ideological trends for which the only possible name is chauvinism. This trend undoubtedly has dangers. Marxism both in theory and in practice has demonstrated that the only way to overcome them is to recognize its fundamentally progressive tendency and to distinguish sharply between the chauvinism of the oppressed and the chauvinism of the oppressor. The duty of the party is not only to lead the legitimate aspirations of the Negro masses but also to educate organized labor as a whole as to the legitimacy of the feelings of the great masses of the Negro people and the great contribution which this can become to the struggle for socialism. Despite all apparent difficulties, a bold and confident policy on the part of our party has every possibility of success. The reason for this is simple. *Whereas in Europe the national movements have usually aimed at a separation from the oppressing power, in the U. S. the race consciousness and chauvinism of the Negro represent fundamentally a consolidation of his forces for the purpose of integration into American society.*

The Negro Question as an International Question

The Negro question, i.e., the question of slavery, in the U. S. during the nineteenth century excited amazing interest and action among the international proletariat. The emancipation of the Negro slaves and the Civil War are indissolubly connected with the foundation of the First International. The Third International recognized this aspect of the Negro question when in its Resolution on the Negro Question at the Fourth Congress it not only reiterated the support of the Comintern for revolutionary Negro struggles but devoted a special section to the importance of the rôle which the Negroes in the U. S. could play in the emancipation of Negroes all over the world and particularly in Africa. Today the process of historical development and capitalist disintegration have carried the Negro question in the U. S. a stage further in its international relations. Not only among the British masses does the Negro question occupy a foremost place as a test of American democracy but all over the world and particularly in the Oriental countries the situation and struggle of the Negro people in the United States has become one of the criteria by which oppressed nationalities test the possibilities of their own emancipation. Among the American Negroes themselves the rôle and fate of India, of China and of Burma in their struggles for emancipation is recognized as being connected with their own struggles. The Negro press has consistently devoted many pages to the struggles of the Oriental peoples, and the *Pittsburgh Courier* has two regular weekly columns, one by an Indian and one by a Chinese. Negro organizations, in their common manifesto to both the Republican and Democratic conventions of 1944, made "the equality of China" with all the Allied nations, one of their fundamental demands. It is the function of the Fourth International to develop and to clarify these instinctive strivings of the peoples toward internationalism. With the utmost seriousness the party must recognize and expound the historic roots of this development and direct it toward the education and organization of the international proletariat and its present allies in their struggles for world socialism.

Program of Action

1. The first requisite is the systematic education of the party on the Negro question. In the period which we are entering, the period of world upheaval and social crises in America, the party members must above all on this difficult and complicated question have a clear theoretical orientation. In *THE NEW INTERNATIONAL* and in internal bulletins there must be a series of informed studies and discussions on the Marxist interpretation of the development of the Negro in the history of the United States. Such studies do not exist in the U. S. at all except for some beginnings by the Stalinists. It is impossible for the party to make any serious and continued progress in Negro work without some such preparation. For the time being we merely outline a few of the topics which can be immediately considered: (a) The Negroes in the Civil War.

The Civil War is as much the theoretical axis of American analysis as the French Revolution is for modern Europe. And central to the Civil War is slavery, i.e., the Negro question. (b) The Negroes in the organized labor movement, their historical development in this movement and the interrelation of the Negro community to these struggles. (c) Negro organizations in the recent past and in the present, particularly the Garvey movement as the greatest Negro mass movement which U. S. history can show. (d) The Negro in Southern agriculture. (e) Negro social development and political struggles in Africa and the West Indies. (f) The concrete experiences of the WP in Negro work.

These studies, for the most part, are, first of all, matters of fact, but are also matters of interpretation. It is practically a virgin field not only for the party but for all Marxists in the U. S. They are therefore and for a long time must be mainly matters of discussion. It is through attention to these questions that the party will educate its members and enable them to represent Marxism among the Negroes and within the ranks of organized labor.

It is by this means also that the party will be able to influence and to direct the always alert interest of a nationally oppressed people to whatever deals with its national oppression, however unpopular or distasteful the general ideas of a revolutionary group might otherwise be. As a first prerequisite it is necessary to publish the notes and observations of Trotsky on the Negro question.

2. The National Committee must, in accordance with the practice and tradition of the Bolshevik movement, organize a special Negro department to deal with the general work among Negroes. This work must in no way be subordinated to the work among Negroes in the organized labor movement, which is more specifically the work of the trade union department. The work of both departments must be coordinated.

The Negro department should be responsible for a special column in the newspaper on the Negro question and should invite the participation of non-party sympathizers in its theoretical work.

J. R. JOHNSON.

The Lessons of Ten Years

Imperialist Pacts the Road to War

Today the Communist Party, in America and elsewhere, takes the lead in entangling the working class in the leagues, pacts, agreements and other tricks and maneuvers of imperialist politicians. To justify this, they frequently refer to the agreements entered into by Lenin with the Allied military authorities in 1918. Ten years ago they began to advance this argument as a justification of their turn to the Popular Front, entry into the League of Nations, support of Roosevelt and the consistently reactionary course they have since followed which now culminates in Stalin's seizure of Poland and his attempt to dominate Eastern Europe.

In June, 1935, Trotsky addressed the following letter to the French workers, in which he explains the circumstances

of the Lenin agreement and evaluates it. He also, thus early, drew the course embarked upon by the Stalinists to its logical conclusion. Some of his theoretical premises, e.g., the character of the Russian state, have since been rejected by the Workers Party. But American workers in particular and the international working class have today a wealth of experience with which to judge the fundamental validity of his condemnation of Popular Frontism as a defense of the working class in the jungle of imperialist policy. Dumbarton Oaks, regional pacts, agreements of the Big Three, all are the straight road to imperialist war. The Stalinists have travelled far since 1935 but much of Trotsky's analysis reads as if it were written yesterday.

—The Editor.

TROTSKY'S LETTER TO THE FRENCH WORKERS

Dear Comrades:

I leave France today, and this circumstance enables me, at last, to put my case openly before you: so long as I remained on French soil, I was condemned to silence.

Two years ago, the "Left" government of Daladier, in its honeymoon weeks, gave me permission to settle in France, presumably with the same rights as other foreigners. As a matter of fact, I was forbidden to live in Paris, and I found myself immediately under the strict surveillance of the police. Shortly after February 6, 1934, the Minister of Internal Affairs, Albert Sarraut, after a wild campaign in the press, signed a decree deporting me from France. No foreign government, however, could be found willing to accept me. This is the sole reason why the deportation order was not put into effect until now. I was instructed through the *Sûreté Nationale* to live in a certain department, in a tiny village under the strict surveillance of the police. Thus, during my last year's sojourn in France I was cut off from the outside world more than when I lived on the island of Prinkipo, in Turkey, under the surveillance of the police of Kemal Pasha. Thus, the visa of a Radical government turned into a trap, after its own fashion.

Furthest from my mind is any intention to complain about the government of the Third Republic. The most "democratic" ministers, just as the most reactionary ones, have as their task to *preserve* capitalist slavery. I am a member of the revolutionary party which sets as its goal the *overthrow* of cap-

italism. Out of this irreconcilable contradiction there inevitably flows the struggle, with all its consequences. There is no cause here for complaint!

If, however, I took the liberty to call your attention to so minor a question as my living conditions in France it was only because this episode is most intimately bound up with the policies of the Communist International which has today become the principal obstacle on the historic road of the working class.

Two years ago, *L'Humanité* used to harp daily: "The fascist Daladier has called the social-fascist Trotsky to France in order to organize, with his assistance, a military intervention against the USSR." There were to be found quite a number of honest but naïve and ignorant people who believed in this canard, just as in the spring of 1917, millions of Russian peasants, soldiers and even workers believed Kerensky that Lenin and Trotsky were the "agents of Kaiser Wilhelm." One should not accuse uneducated and duped people—one must, instead, enlighten them. But one can and one must accuse the enlightened scoundrels who consciously broadcast lies and slanders in order to fool the toilers. Such enlightened scoundrels are the leaders of the so-called Communist (!) Party: Cachin, Thôrez, Vaillant-Couturier, Duclos & Co.

Today, as everybody knows, these gentlemen have made an anti-fascist "people's front" with the "fascist" Daladier. The Stalinists, who call themselves communists, have stopped talking altogether about the intervention of French imperial-

ism into the USSR. On the contrary, at present they perceive the guarantee of peace in the military alliance between French capital and the Soviet bureaucracy. Upon the order of Stalin, Cachin, Thorez & Co. are summoning the French workers today to support their national militarism, i.e., the instrument of class oppression and of colonial enslavement. These calumniators have exposed themselves quickly and mercilessly. Yesterday they branded me as the ally of Daladier, and the agent of the French bourgeoisie, but today they themselves have actually concluded an alliance with Daladier-Herriot and Laval, and have harnessed themselves to the chariot of French imperialism.

Right now, Messrs. Calumniators are beginning to say (see, for instance, the paper of the Belgian Stalinists) that the policy of Trotsky and of the Bolshevik-Leninists performs a service not to Herriot and Daladier but Hitler, i.e., not to French but German imperialism. This new calumny, however, has the ring of much too old and familiar a melody. During the imperialist war, because I maintained the position of revolutionary internationalism, Messrs. Social Patriots—Renaudel, Vandervelde, Séverac and Marcel Cachin—accused me of “supporting” German militarism against the French democracy. It is precisely for this reason that the government of Briand-Malvy deported me from France in 1916. And the valiant Marcel Cachin, during this very same period, “in the interests of French democracy” and on the instructions of the imperialist government, fetched the money for Mussolini for propaganda in favor of Italy’s participation in the war. All these facts have been frequently attested in the press and may be easily verified and proved. Cachin, incidentally, has never even attempted to deny them.

Betrayers Always Invoke Marx and Lenin

At the present moment Marcel Cachin is resuming the very same social-patriotic labors which so dishonored him during the imperialist war. Cachin is followed by all the other leaders of the French Communist (!) Party. These are not revolutionists, but functionaries. They carry out whatever their superiors order them to do. André Marty alone gave proof in his time of the qualities of a genuine revolutionist: his past deserves respect. But the environment of the Communist International has managed to demoralize him as well.

To justify their social-patriotic turn, these gentlemen invoke the necessity to “defend the USSR.” This argument is utterly false. As is very well known, even the idea of “national defense” is only a mask by means of which the exploiters cover up their predatory appetites and bloody brawls for booty, turning, besides, their own nation into mere cannon fodder. But if we, Marxists, have always maintained that the imperialist bourgeoisie never can and never will defend the actual interests of its own people, how, then, can we suddenly believe that it is capable of defending the genuine interests of the USSR? Can anyone for a moment doubt that at the first favorable opportunity, French imperialism will set in motion all its forces in order to overthrow socialized property in the USSR and restore private property there? And if that is the case, then only traitors to the working class are capable of painting up their own militarism, giving direct or indirect, open or masked support to the French bourgeoisie and its diplomacy. Stalin and his French flunkies are precisely such traitors.

To mask their betrayal they invoke, naturally, Lenin—with the self-same rights as Lebas, Paul Faure, Longuet and other opportunists invoke Marx. Almost daily *L’Humanité* quotes Lenin’s letter to the American workers, in which the story is told of how Lenin at the beginning of 1918 received a French

royalist officer in order to use his services against the Germans, who had launched a new offensive against us. The aim of this unexpected argument is not to elucidate the question but, on the contrary, to throw dust into the eyes of the workers. We shall establish this immediately beyond the shadow of a doubt.

It would be absurd, of course, to deny the Soviet government the right to utilize the antagonisms in the camp of the imperialists or, if need be, to make this or another concession to the imperialists. The workers on strike also make use of the competition between capitalist enterprises, and make concessions to the capitalists, even capitulate to them when they are unable to gain victory. But does there follow from this the right of the trade union leaders to cooperate amicably with the capitalists, to paint them up, and to turn into their hirelings? No one will label as traitors the strikers who are forced to surrender. But Jouhaux, who paralyzes the class struggle of the proletariat, in the name of peace and amity with the capitalists, we not only have the right but the duty to proclaim as a traitor to the working class. Between the Brest-Litovsk policy of Lenin and the Franco-Soviet policy of Stalin there is the self-same difference as between the policy of a revolutionary trade unionist, who after a partial defeat is compelled to make concessions to the class enemy and the policy of the opportunist who voluntarily becomes the ally and flunkey of the class enemy.

Lenin received the reactionary French officer. During those same days I also received him with the very same object in mind: Lubersac undertook to blow up bridges in the path of our retreat so that our military supplies would not fall into the hands of the Germans. Only some utterly hairbrained anarchist will view such a “transaction” as a betrayal. During those same days, the official agents of France paid me visits and offered assistance on a wider scale—artillery and foodstuffs. We very well understood that their aim was to embroil us again in a war with Germany. But the German armies were actually waging an offensive against us, and we were weak. Did we have the right to accept the “assistance” of the French general staff under these conditions? Unconditionally, yes! I introduced precisely such a motion in the Central Executive Committee, issued in Moscow in 1929. Here is the motion:

“As the party of the socialist proletariat in power and waging war against Germany, we, *through the state organs*, take all measures in order best to arm and equip our revolutionary army with all the necessary means, and with this in view to obtain them wherever possible, and consequently, from capitalist governments as well. While so doing [our] *party preserves the complete independence of its foreign policy*, does not commit itself politically with any capitalist government, and in every given instance takes their proposals under consideration from the standpoint of expediency.”

Lenin was not present at this session of the CEC. He sent a note. Here is its authentic text: “Please add my vote *for* accepting potatoes and arms from the brigands of Anglo-French imperialism.” (*Protocol*, page 246.) This is how the then Bolshevik CEC reacted toward the utilization of capitalist antagonisms: *practical agreements* with imperialists (“accept the potatoes”) are entirely permissible; but absolutely impermissible is *political solidarity* with the “brigands of imperialism.”

Stalin’s crime lies not in his entering into this or another practical agreement with the class enemy: these agreements may be correct or wrong, but they cannot be rejected on principle. His crime lies in the fact that Stalin has approved the policy of the imperialist government that keeps guard over the rapacious and predatory Versailles peace. Stalin has not yet taken any sort of “potatoes” from the brigands of imperialism, but he has already *solidarized politically* with them.

The French bourgeoisie is, of course, able to strengthen its army which oppresses sixty million of colonial slaves without Stalin's approval. If it required this approval, it was only in order to weaken and demoralize the class struggle of the French proletariat. By signing the *cum laude* to French imperialism, Stalin behaved not like a striker who is compelled to make temporary concessions to the capitalists but like a strike-breaker who paralyzes the struggle of the workers.

* * *

Workers Cannot Control a Bourgeois State

The betrayal of Stalin and of the leadership of the Communist International is explained by the character of the present ruling stratum in the USSR: it is a privileged and an uncontrolled bureaucracy, which has raised itself above the people and which oppresses the people. Marxism teaches us that *existence determines consciousness*. The Soviet bureaucracy above all fears criticism, movement, and risk: it is conservative, it greedily defends its own privileges. Having strangled the working class in the USSR, it has long since lost faith in the world revolution. It promises to build "socialism in one country," if the toilers shut up, endure, and obey.

To defend the USSR the bureaucracy pins its hopes upon its political agility, upon Litvinov's diplomacy, the military alliance with France and Czechoslovakia, but not upon the revolutionary proletariat. On the contrary, it is afraid lest the French or Czech workers frighten the new allies by their careless actions. It sets as its task: to put a brake upon the class struggle of the proletariat in the "allied" countries. Thus, the source of Stalin's betrayal is the national conservatism of the Soviet bureaucracy, its outright hostility to the world proletarian revolution.

* * *

The consequences of Stalin's betrayal manifested themselves immediately in the cynical change in the policy of the French Communist Party which is led not by the leaders elected by the workers; but by agents of Stalin. Yesterday these gentlemen babbled about "revolutionary defeatism" in event of war. Today they have assumed the standpoint of "national defense" . . . in the interests of securing peace. They repeat word for word the formulæ of capitalist diplomacy. For, every single imperialist vulture stands for "peace," they all conclude alliances, increase armies, manufacture poison gases, cultivate bacteria—only and solely "in the interests of peace." He assumes the responsibility not only for the Soviet government but also for the French stock market, its general staff, and the gases and bacteria of this staff who says that "the Franco-Soviet pact is the guarantee of peace."

L'Humanité writes that the French government will find itself "under the control of the French workers." But that is only a hollow phrase of miserable demagogues. Where and when has an oppressed proletariat "controlled" the foreign policy of the bourgeoisie and the activities of its army? How can it achieve this when the entire power is in the hands of the bourgeoisie? In order to lead the army, it is necessary to overthrow the bourgeoisie and seize power. There is no other road. But the new policy of the Communist International implies the renunciation of this only road.

When a working class party proclaims that in the event of war it is prepared to "control" (i.e., to support) its national militarism and not to overthrow it, it transforms itself by this very thing into the domestic beast of capital. There is not the slightest ground for fearing such a party: it is not a revolutionary tiger but a trained donkey. It may be kept in starvation, flogged, spat upon—it will nevertheless carry the cargo of patriotism. Perhaps only from time to time it will piteously

bray: "For God's sake, disarm the fascist leagues." In reply to its braying it will receive an additional blow of the whip. And deservedly so!

* * *

The Communist International has depicted the entry of the USSR into the League of Nations and the signing of the Franco-Russian pact as the greatest victory of the proletariat and of peace. But what is the actual content of this victory?

The program of the Comintern, accepted in 1928, states that the "*chief aim* [of the League of Nations] is to put a halt to the impetuous growth of the revolutionary crisis and to strangle the USSR by means of blockade or war." Naturally enough, under such conditions, the representatives of the USSR could not enter into the League of Nations, i.e., the general staff of the world imperialist counter-revolution.

But what has changed since that time? Why has the USSR found it necessary to enter into the League of Nations? Whose victory have we here? The leaders of the Comintern dupe the workers on this question as well. The French bourgeoisie would never have made an agreement with the USSR if it continued to see in the latter a revolutionary factor. Only the extreme feebleness of the world revolution has made possible the inclusion of the USSR into the system of the warring camps of imperialism.

Assuredly, had not Soviet industry achieved serious successes, if there were no Soviet tanks and Soviet aviation, no one would have reckoned with the USSR. But there are ways and ways of reckoning. Had the USSR remained the citadel of international revolution, had the Comintern waged a victorious offensive, then the ruling classes of France, England and Italy, without any vacillation, would have empowered Hitler to wage a war against the USSR. But, at the present moment, after the annihilation of the revolution in China, Germany, Austria and Spain, after the successes of European fascism, after the collapse of the Comintern and the national degeneration of the Soviet bureaucracy, the bourgeoisie of France, England and Italy replies to Hitler: "Why run the risk of a crusade against the USSR? Even without it Stalin is successfully strangling the revolution. It is necessary to attempt to arrive at an understanding with him."

* * *

Imperialist Pacts Guarantee War, Not Peace

The Franco-Soviet pact is not a guarantee of peace—what brazen nonsense!—but a *deal in event of war*. The benefits of this deal for the USSR are problematic, to say the least. France is "bound" to come to the aid of the USSR only in the event that its co-signers in Locarno agree to it, i.e., England and Italy. This means that in case French imperialism finds it more advantageous to reach an agreement with Hitler at the last moment at the expense of the USSR, then England and Italy will always assist in legalizing this "betrayal." *L'Humanité* maintains strict silence on this restrictive clause in the pact. Yet everything hinges on it. The pact binds the USSR, but it does not bind France!

* * *

Let us allow, however, that the Soviet bureaucracy, after all its mistakes and crimes, really had nothing left except to conclude this equivocal and unreliable military alliance with France. In that case, the Soviets could have no recourse other than to ratify the Stalin-Laval pact. But matters are entirely different in so far as France is concerned. The French proletariat must not permit its bourgeoisie to hide behind the backs of the Soviet bureaucracy. The aims of the French imperialists after signing the pact with the Soviets remain unchanged: to set a seal upon the old pillages; to prepare for new ones; to

facilitate a new mobilization of the French people; to utilize the blood of the Soviet proletariat. Should the communist and socialist deputies vote in Parliament in favor of the Franco-Russian alliance, they would only give another proof thereby of their betrayal of the proletariat!

The struggle against war is unthinkable without a struggle against one's own imperialism. The struggle against imperialism is unthinkable without the struggle against its agents and allies, the reformists and the Stalinists. It is necessary ruthlessly to purge the working class organizations, both political and trade union, of the social-patriotic traitors to the working class, whatever be their names: Léon Blum or Thorez, Jouhaux or Monmousseau.

* * *

In France there is only a single group that defends honestly, consistently and courageously the principles of the proletarian revolution: the group of Bolshevik-Leninists. Its organ is the weekly newspaper, *La Vérité*. Every thinking worker is duty bound to become acquainted with this newspaper.

The Bolshevik-Leninists have defined clearly and precisely the tasks of the proletariat in the struggle against war in a special pamphlet: *War and the Fourth International*. First-hand knowledge of this pamphlet and a scrupulous discussion of the questions advanced in it are likewise the duty of every advanced proletarian, both as regards himself and his class.

The betrayal of the Stalinists, adjoined to the old betrayal of the reformists, demands a complete renovation of all proletarian organizations. A new revolutionary party is necessary! A new, a Fourth International is necessary! Service to this historic task is the content of the activity pursued by the international organization of the Bolshevik-Leninists.

The betrayal of Stalin did not catch us by surprise. We forecast it since 1924 when the Soviet bureaucracy forsook the theory of Marx and Lenin in favor of the theory of "socialism in one country." Shysters and philistines said our struggle against Stalin was a "personal" struggle. Now even the blind can ascertain that this struggle is being waged for the basic principles of internationalism and revolution.

During the last few years we have said hundreds of times: "Scratch a Stalinist and you will find an opportunist." Today there is no need even to scratch. The Stalinists actually stand at the extreme Right Wing of the working class movement, and to the extent that they continue to drape themselves with the authority of the October Revolution, they are immeasurably more harmful than the old, traditional opportunists.

Why They Hate the Trotskyists

The hatred of the Stalinists toward the Bolshevik-Leninists (the "Trotskyists") is the hatred of the conservative bureaucrats toward genuine revolutionists. In its struggle against the Bolshevik-Leninists nothing is too low and vile for the bureaucracy, trembling for its power and income.

Prior to executing his latest open betrayal, Stalin carried out a new pogrom—for the hundredth time—against the Left Wing in the USSR. He initiated a number of fraudulent trials of oppositionists, hiding their real views and ascribing to them acts which they never committed. Thus, the former chairman of the Communist International, Zinoviev, was condemned to ten years' imprisonment solely because, after a number of vacillations and recantations he was compelled to admit the fatal character of Stalin's policies.

The Soviet bureaucracy made an attempt to implicate me, through a provocateur, in the trial of the terrorists who assassinated Kirov. In the beginning of this year Stalin arrested my

son, a young scientist, a loyal Soviet worker, in no way involved in the political struggle. The aim of this arrest is to wage a relentless terror not only against the Bolshevik-Leninists but also the members of their families. The bureaucracy knows no pity in sight of the impending threat to its domination and its privileges. In this sphere the Stalinists find constant support on the part of the capitalist police of the entire world.

Only recently, in the month of April, Stalin sent the leaders of the Russian Young Communist League to Paris to urge the French revolutionary youth to go over to the patriotic position. These young bureaucrats organized within the Socialist Party a special Stalinist fraction whose main slogan is: "Expel the Trotskyists!" Needless to add that for this disruptive work the Stalinist clique did not and does not spare monetary resources: poor as it may be in ideas, it has no lack of currency.

But revolutionists do not capitulate in the face of terror. Just the contrary. They reply by redoubling the offensive. *Stalinism is today the chief plague of the world working class movement*. This plague must be extirpated, excised, burned out with a hot iron. Once again the proletariat must be united under the banner of Marx and Lenin!

* * *

Dear Comrades!

I have far from said everything I wanted to say to you, nor at all as I wanted to say it. But I am forced to hurry: at any moment the police official is scheduled to arrive who is to escort me and my wife, the faithful companion in my struggle and my wanderings, beyond the frontiers of France. I depart with a burning love for the French people and with an unwavering faith in the great future of the French proletariat but with an equal hatred toward the hypocrisy, greed and cruelty of French imperialism.

I firmly believe that the toiling people will sooner or later offer me that hospitality which the bourgeoisie today refuses. I would consider it the greatest boon if in the near future the French proletariat were to offer me the opportunity to participate in its decisive struggles. Working men and working women of France! So long as I am physically able, I am ready at any moment by word and action to answer your revolutionary call.

Allow me, then, to shake your hands warmly as a comrade, and to close this letter with that cry which in the course of some forty years has guided my thoughts and actions:

Long live the world proletarian revolution!

LEON TROTSKY.

June 10, 1935.

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The Language of Hollywood*

Mass Culture in Bourgeois Society

In America, a tremendous commercial culture has developed as a kind of substitute for a genuinely popular, a genuinely democratic culture, which would recreate and communicate how the mass of people live, how they feel about working, loving, enjoying, suffering, and dying. This culture has become a big business. It is capitalized at hundreds of millions of dollars, returns many millions in annual profits, rent, and interest, and employs thousands of men and women to whom it pays additional millions more in wages and salaries. At times the apologists and propagandists for the cultural industries proudly boast of the "cultural" achievements of these industries: on other occasions, however, they assert that these industries produce entertainment, not culture. Let us not quibble over words. The products of these industries (motion pictures, songs, radio plays and soap operas, cartoons, and so on) recreate images of life: they communicate feelings, no matter how banal these may be; they externalize reveries; they fix ideals; they embody and illustrate moral attitudes; they create tastes which in turn influence how objects are regarded—in brief, directly and by lesson, suggestion, innuendo, fable, story, they tell huge masses of people how and what to believe. If the performance of such functions be described as something other than cultural, then the plain meaning of words is being inexcusably debased.

Usually, the debates concerning these industries—and most especially the motion picture industry—are concerned with the problem of commercial versus artistic values. Critics of the motion picture industry generally claim that pictures are not artistic enough; their adversaries then reply that pictures are as artistic as they can be made, considering the fact that they must be produced for a profit. The claim that the function of pictures is to produce entertainment serves as a justification of the simple and the admitted fact that the fundamental purpose of the motion picture studios is to make money. Not only in motion picture studios, but also in the offices of publishers and theatrical producers, a very common reason for the rejection of many books and scripts is that these do not promise to return a profit.

All this is common knowledge. It is clear that business considerations play a decisive rôle in all these fields.

The laws of commodity production have governed the production and distribution of cultural objects ever since bourgeois society superseded feudal society. The fall of feudal society, the rise of bourgeois society, established the system of commodity production over that of the patronage system in the field of culture. While it is true that many great works of art of the past were not created to be manufactured and sold as commodities, it is nevertheless true that they were manufactured and sold as such. We see this in literature. Most of the truly great literary artists of recent centuries wrote works with the idea that these would be sold as commodities. Thus, Balzac, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy (until he renounced his copyrights) and many others had their books sold as commodities. The best literature of our own day is also sold as a commodity. Therefore, while it is true that the laws of commodity production and distribution play a governing rôle in the production and distribution of cultural products, the analysis of the way that these laws operate needs to be made in terms of specific

times, specific conditions and periods. We will gain little in understanding if we merely protest the harmful effects of capitalism on culture in general, in the abstract. Art which we call good, art which we call bad, art which we call counterfeit—all this is sold on the commodity market. Due to basic economic causes, something of the most profound significance has happened in American culture: it has been invaded by finance capital. American commercial culture is owned and operated by finance capital.

The Double Restriction on the Motion Picture

The motion picture industry is dominated by a few huge studios; the same is the case in radio. The success of *Reader's Digest* and the Luce publications reveals the same tendency triumphing in journalism. Some of the consequences of this fact must be noted. It is seemingly paradoxical but true that the bigger a corporation producing for the consumer market, the more it must depend on good will. The profits of huge concerns are vitally affected by the falling rate of profits: in time the more units of a commodity sold, the lower is the percentage of profit per unit. Inasmuch as the rate of profit falls as the volume of sales increases, there is a driving necessity that the market be expanded. This, in turn, demands the creation and retention of more and ever more good will. Here we see a major reason why the Hollywood studio can permit less freedom in the treatment of subject than the Broadway producer; he, in turn, can allow less freedom than the book publisher. The bigger our cultural industries become, the greater are the restrictions they must impose on the choice and the handling of subject matter. Also, their costs of production are staggering and, to repeat, their rate of profit falls. These economic necessities dominate all else. The aims, the tastes of the men controlling the industries must be harmonized with them. One producer may be more sincere, more artistic than another. But all must adjust themselves; all must work within this system. It allows relatively little real individualism of taste, daring, experiment. One act of daring experiment and bold honesty may cost a million dollars. Similar actions by book publishers can be more easily sustained because the risks are not as great. Those who really control the studios are big capitalists. They think and act according to their class interests. It is folly to expect them wilfully to produce art (and even to lose money on it) that will endanger their class interest. Honest art often threatens that interest. This means that there is a double restriction imposed on the character of what is produced in motion pictures. Besides promising a profit, a picture must not seriously threaten the class interests of the owners.

Genuine works of art have something new and individual to convey. They reveal new aspects of life, of human feeling. They make us conscious of what had been hitherto hidden, concealed, not clearly grasped in our own consciousness. To assimilate them is painful, disturbing, difficult; we must make an effort; we must expand our boundaries of feeling, thinking. Growth and assimilation are almost always painful, disturbing, demanding. For we are then forced to change, to alter the force of habit. It is a truism that in a shoddy culture shoddy art generally gains quicker acceptance than genuine art does. And, as Karl Marx once remarked acutely, that capitalism lives for the moment. The time required for the assimilation

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lation of new, more honest, more revealing pictures would be too long and, during that period, large losses would have to be sustained.

Now and then it may happen that a good picture is produced. This is exception, often accidental. Usually, bad pictures are produced. Here is the explanation of why this is the case. The aim of the studios is to get a return on investment, and to get profits, rent and interest. If returns on investment, profits, rent and interest permit the studios to produce great art, then, and *then only*, will they do it; otherwise, the artistic values, the truth values embodied in pictures, are and will remain merely secondary. In order to be a business man in this system, you must do what business requires; in order to be an artist, you must meet the demands and responsibilities required by art. An artist must be sincere, honest, clear, and for his work he must draw on his own inner life and inner tensions. A business man must stay in business. *Q.E.D.!*

Economic Relationships in Hollywood

My analysis can be extended to encompass the economic relationships which play an important rôle in other fields of culture, as well as in the motion picture industry. I use the latter as an illustration. Hollywood is not a cause; it is a consequence. And it reveals tendencies now at work in American culture with such relative purity that it serves me as a most illuminating illustration of what I want to convey. The rise of Hollywood to the realm of culture is a phenomenon analogous to that of the triumph of machine production during the industrial revolution. In the studios many separate crafts and arts are all linked together, mainly under one roof in one serial process. And this requires a huge capital investment. In other words, we find the division of labor; this means that we have social methods of production carried on for private profits. But those who contribute to this production do not (with rare exceptions) control it. They lose their independence as artists and craftsmen, and become employees. Their economic relationships thereby change. Most writers, for instance, become the wage-working writer. It is true that their wages are generally fantastically higher than those of factory workers, but this is not the decisive factor here. In the economic sense, most writers have a relationship to their employers similar to that of the factory workers to his boss. Just as the worker sells his labor power, so does the writer sell his skill and talent. What he then receives is a wage. All control over the product of his work resides in the employer. Thus the writer suffers from the same kind of alienation, the same kind of self-estrangement, as does the factory worker. He is alienated, self-estranged from control over his means of production, and over what he produces.

And there is a singular character to the alienation of the writer. His real means of production is his skill, his feelings, his needs which feed his work, his way of seeing life; in other words, his real means of production is his soul. This is what he sells. As a consequence of his economic relationships, the writer may write what he feels and wants to write, only if his employer allows him to do so. But he does not determine whether he will or will not do this.

Culture, art, is the most powerful means invented by mankind for preserving the consciousness of civilized man. It externalizes and communicates that in human life which is most important—man's inner life. But here, the writer who plays the rôle of the artist, who is ostensibly the creator, sells his very ability to create as a commodity. There is a clear-cut difference between freely creating out of inner need and then selling the creation, and selling the very faculty of creating instead of the results of that creation. The writer may thus

write out of his inner self, only when his own needs, feelings and attitudes coincide with the demands of his employer. The nature of these demands have already been uncovered in this analysis. Under such conditions, free creation is not a conscious act of will; it is merely accidental, coincidental. Such being given, it is, however, not accidental that so many Hollywood writers, once they become inured to their work, reveal a retrogression in consciousness. When they write they cannot fully draw on their needs and emotions. Much of their writing is reduced to the level of literary carpentering. They are fettered. And the fettered consciousness must retrogress. Here is the real situation. Here is the essential mechanics concerning how they who would be artists are turned into mere purveyors of entertainment. Let each make what he can of this situation in accordance with his values, his moral outlook, and with what he wants in life for himself, and for his fellow man.

Just as there is a huge investment capital in the production end of the industry, so is there in its distribution end. America (the world, in fact) is almost glutted with motion picture theaters, each of which also must return its profit, its rent, its interest. In many instances, they are also organized into chains. Taken together they constitute a huge and voracious mouth forever crying for commodities to be consumed. And they must be fed. They must stay open; they must have customers parading continually to the box office. The studios must supply them. Halt this flow of commodities and bankruptcies will follow. This need, more than any other, conditions the production schedules of the studios. Gigantic blocks of capital are involved in the total structure of the industry. Consequently, it must find the widest possible market. This means, the largest possible audience is necessary. Such an audience can be only a most heterogeneous one, encompassing all age, emotional and mental levels. Such an audience will alone permit this industry to continue. There is no time to waste in educating the tastes of this audience. That would be too costly. Staple commodities based on the lowest common denominator of the mentality and the emotional life of the audience must be produced. Staple commodities in art, produced in this way, and in order to meet such requirements must mean, in the main, counterfeit art. This is the decisive reason why the masses of the American people really "need" so much Hollywood "entertainment."

Actually, the motion picture industry needs the money of the American masses much more than they need its entertainment. We get, thus, an endless barrage of Hollywood publicity, of Hollywood advertising which almost batters the intelligence of the nation into insensibility. Hollywood must do this in order to give the public what Hollywood want it to want. The audience cannot directly choose. It is not given proper alternatives. Usually, it may choose one of various absurd pictures, or none of them at all. When choice is so restricted, it is meaningless to argue that the public really gets what it wants. Also, the contradictions which we have observed in the motion picture industry are apparent in American society as a whole. The conditions of American life create alienated and truncated personalities, a fact which has already engaged the attention of more than one generation of sociologists, political scientists, psychologists, judges, social workers, and others. The conditions of earning one's bread in this society create the self-estranged modern man.

Motion Pictures as a Social Habit

It is such conditions which explain the need, sometimes feverish, for an entertainment which so repetitively presents the same reveries, the same daydreams, the same childish fa-

bles of success and happiness. So much of the inner life of men is dried up that they tend to become filled with yearnings and to need the consolation of these reveries about people who are happy, healthy, and who always succeed. Tastes are thus conditioned. Increasingly deprived of proper alternatives from which to choose, the American masses have also become habituated to this taste for the movies. The movies have, thereby, become a social habit. The kind of profitable commercial culture which we now have would have demanded conditions which would aid in the creation of the necessary audience. The two have developed more or less harmoniously. Hence, parallel to the retrogression of consciousness in, say, the Hollywood writer, there is a more widespread and also more pernicious retrogression of consciousness in the motion picture audience. Social and economic conditions have established the basis for this; the motion picture further enforces it. But such a process can continue only so far. Eventually a limit must and will be reached. Eventually there will be a profound revulsion of popular taste. But this will depend not only on the audience being saturated with what it is given; more than this, it will depend on fundamental changes which are economic, political, and social in character.

Most motion pictures enervate rather than energize. They distract the masses of the people from more clearly becoming aware of their real moral, esthetic, spiritual needs; in other words, they distract from what are the real and most important problems of life. As such, they offer what William James aptly characterized as "a moral holiday." Moral holidays are necessary, but when so much time is used up in a nation in having these moral holidays, we have a social problem to define. The gap between the realities of life in our time and the way that these are represented on the screen is a wide one. However, the masses of the people do not lose their real needs merely because these are not fulfilled in motion pictures.

It should now be clear that this commercial culture is a safety valve. Here I offer in opposition to the conceptions, the apologetics, the theorizations of such a culture, a different idea of what a culture should do. It should help to create those states of consciousness, of awareness of oneself, of others, and of the world, which aid in making people better, and in preparing them to make the world better. Hollywood films usually have the precisely opposite effect; most of them make people less aware, or else falsely aware. This is, to me, the sense in which Hollywood films do not fulfill the real cultural needs of the masses of the people. For really to try and achieve that, one must not merely envision them as they were in the past, and as they are now; one must also envision them as they might be; one must establish as a premise their great potentiality. In other words, one must think in terms of the future as well as of the past and of the present. Such a premise is essential if one has the ideal of a culture that is truly free. Here, in essence, is the great ideal of a free, a human, a socialist culture expressed by Friedrich Engels when he spoke of the possibility of mankind escaping from the kingdom of necessity, and entering the kingdom of freedom.

The content of motion pictures is so familiar that it need not be analyzed here in great detail. The values which pictures generally emphasize are those of rugged individualism. The lessons which they inculcate are those which imply that the world we have, and have had, is the best of all possible worlds. The major qualities embodied in most motion picture heroes are those of the pioneer, plus those of the present which are either consistent with the practices, the standards, the mores of bourgeois America, or else are in no vital contradiction with them. The past is recreated in the accents of weak nostalgia; the present glorified. The future is promised

as no different. All history is, in fact, being gradually revised on the screen until it begins to seem like some glamorous fable. Further, pictures often embody within their very context a kind of visual and illustrative argument that the function of the motion picture is entertainment; thus the reliance which is placed on entertainment within the picture, which is itself an entertainment. Also heroes and heroines are sometimes given new occupations such as social workers; this seems to embody a change in the content of motion pictures. However, it is merely superficial and the heroes and heroines remain as absurd as before.

Outer Impressiveness—Inner Emptiness

But there is no essential change in the pattern, or in the moral, or in their implications. What characterizes almost all Hollywood pictures is their inner emptiness. This is compensated for by an outer impressiveness. Such impressiveness usually takes the form of a truly grandiose Belasco realism. Nothing is spared to make the setting, the costumes, all of the surface details correct. These efforts help to mask the essential emptiness of the characterizations and the absurdities and trivialities of the plots. The houses look like houses; the streets look like streets; the people look and talk like people; but they are empty of humanity, credibility and motivation. Needless to say, the disgraceful censorship code is an important factor in predetermining the content of these pictures. But the code does not disturb the profits, nor the entertainment value of the films; it merely helps to prevent them from being credible. It isn't too heavy a burden for the industry to bear. In addition to the impressiveness of the settings, there is a use of the camera which at times seems magical. But of what human import is all this skill, all this effort, all this energy in the production of effects, when the story, the representation of life, is hollow, stupid, banal, childish? Because a mass of people see these films, they are called democratic. In addition, there is often a formal democratic character embodied in the pictures. Common speech is often introduced; an ambassador acts like a regular guy named Joe; poor working girls are heroines and, now and then, they continue to marry rich men; speeches are introduced propagandistically in which the common man is praised, democracy is cheered for, and the masses are flattered with verbiage. The introduction of such democratic notes is an additional way of masking the real content of the picture; these merely are pressed into service of glorifying the status quo.

Granted that, now and then, an unusual picture is produced, one different from those which I have characterized. Let us not forget that once we saw a picture called *The Informer*. But does one, or do even ten such films justify a greater number of their opposites? One might ask a theologian—if a man steals money and uses some of it to have masses said for the suffering souls in Purgatory, will he thereby redeem his guilt for theft? To argue that because we once in a while get a picture such as *The Informer*, Hollywood is, thus, justified, is to argue that you are forgiven for theft because you use some stolen money for the souls in Purgatory. I leave those who argue in this manner to the theologians who can explain what is wrong with their argument. And similarly, the argument that bad pictures are necessary to make money which will permit the use of profits for good pictures is a fallacious one. The reason that this happens, when it does, is because of the social organization of the industry, and I have already indicated what that is.

Hollywood has not created all of this counterfeit culture. It borrowed most of what it has given us from tendencies which antedate its appearance on the cultural scene. In fact, other than in the technical realm, it has invented very little.

It has used the powerful inventions of the cinema to repeat most of the cheap stories, the cheap plots, the counterfeits which have long been printed as stories in commercial magazines. Many of its jokes were even familiar to our fathers, and perhaps our grandparents. Here Hollywood is significant, mainly because it is a clear-cut example of the development of commercial culture in the period of finance capital. Due to its size, its wealth, its ability to reach such a mass audience, it has a penetrating influence in the whole field of culture, one which far exceeds that which was exerted in the commercial culture of which it is the heir.

Its penetrating influence has long been observed in the drama and the novel. At present, novels are even sold for pictures before they are written. One can guess what most such books will be like; or if one wishes to know without trusting to a guess, then one can read Louis Bromfield. Another penetrating influence of Hollywood in the novel is the stimulation which it has given to a kind of hard-boiled realism which imitates all the manners of serious realistic writing, but contains none of the inner meaning, the inner protest against evils, the revelation of social mechanisms and social structures which we perceive in serious realism. This tendency is illustrated by such books as *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. The influence of the film industry is to be observed, also, in an incalculable way. For instance, there is the diversion of talent, the fettering of talent, in brief, the retrogression in consciousness about which I have already commented. A large proportion of the literary talent of America is now diverted into Hollywood and radio writing. In many instances, there is a certain inevitability in this. For with the rise of these industries, the situation for writers is such that, on the whole, the book market can support relatively fewer of them. By and large, talent flows towards the highest bidder. A writer represents more than an individual talent; he represents so much social labor which had to be performed in order that he may have developed his talents. This social labor has been expended for the development of literary talent in America. Instead of these talents then returning honest work for this social labor which permitted them to develop, they are used up, burned out in scenario writing. This is a positive social loss. And there can be little doubt of the fact that a correlation exists between the success of this commercial culture, and the loss of esthetic and moral vigor in so much contemporary writing. Such must be a consequence when talent is fettered and sold as a commodity, when audiences are doped, and when tastes are confused, even depraved.

A Luna Park of Capitalism

The culture of a society ought not to be viewed as a mere ornament, a pastime, a form of entertainment. It is the life, the consciousness, the conscience of that society. When it fails to serve as such, then, it moves farther and farther away from the real roots of life. Such is precisely and unmistakably the situation in America where we have this tremendous commercial culture spreading itself like an octopus. And consider how many lives, how much labor power, how much talent, how much of social goods is poured, not only into Hollywood, but into American commercial culture as a whole. The social cost is fabulous. We are familiar with the news telling us of the financial costs of pictures. A million dollars. More than that. And then, we go once again and see what has been produced at such cost. Once again, we see a picture so silly that it insults one's intelligence. Once again, the same old stupid and inept story of boy meets girl, framed, mounted, glorified until it becomes a monumental absurdity. And so inured are most people to this that they do not even see anything wrong in it.

This entire structure can be metaphorically described as a grandiose Luna Park of capitalism. And if the serious artist enters it, he well may quote these words from Dante: "All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

This is a culture which does not serve men; on the contrary, it makes men its servants. Its highest measure of worth is revealed in little numerals, written in black and red ink on sheets of paper which record profits and losses. Let those who favor this masquerade try to justify it. Far better is to see it for what it is, and to renounce all of the ideals and aims which it embodies. For the writer to do this places him in that category which one motion picture executive has described as "the irresponsible literati." Correct! Irresponsible to this system; responsible to an ideal of trying to show men what life is like now, of seeking to do what one can in the necessary effort of creating in men that consciousness of their problems, their needs, and their future which will help to create a better society.

JAMES T. FARRELL.

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Airpower in World War II

What Is Its Strategic Role?

The most significant and controversial dispute in military circles everywhere has been over the rôle of airpower in modern warfare. Airpower had a stormy development in its early days. Its place in World War II is by no means a settled question. In America during the 1920's a public rupture between General Billy Mitchell, pioneer advocate of airpower, and the War Department brought the general's court martial. In Europe the hectic career of Mitchell was paralleled by Douhet, the brilliant Italian military theoretician, who spent a year in prison for his fervency in demanding that airpower be given a trial. Today Major de Seversky, author of *Victory Through Airpower*, contributes many ideas that keep alive the dispute over airpower.

The confusion on the subject was illustrated recently by two separated but related events. The bombing of Cassino failed to pulverize the town and drive the Germans out. It required a sharp struggle on the part of the infantry to do the job. Old-line military men rushed to print to remark, "The infantry is still the queen of battle." This was supposed to put airpower proponents in their place. A few months later, General Montgomery, an infantryman, credited the British break-through at Caen to airpower. "Where properly applied, airpower is decisive!" he exclaimed. And what happened to the queen of the battle? The question doesn't end there.

Questions of political and military prestige have been deeply involved in the dispute. Lives of hundreds of thousands of soldiers have been involved. Nor was the sordid hand of Vested Interest missing. General Mitchell publicly charged that airpower developments in America were hindered by steel and auto interests seeking to preserve important and profitable government contracts.

Careless statements of airpower proponents; general misunderstanding of the use of airpower; rock-bound conservatism of the powerful brass hats, always resisting innovations; and the swift twists and turns of world events: all these factors combined to confuse even more than ever before the so-called public on the question of airpower. When Major de Seversky writes: "On the basis of the Battle of Britain, students in America jumped to the conclusion that airpower alone cannot achieve a definitive victory over an enemy," it just doesn't make sense to people who see a vast Army and Navy, working with a powerful airforce, struggling hard to defeat Germany militarily, while the Russian Army rolls in from the East. For de Seversky's statement implies obviously that the Army and Navy aren't necessary.

In fact, Douhet, the original and certainly the most influential apostle of airpower in the world, was accused precisely of such views. His exact views, not those often attributed to him in the American press, are stated succinctly by him: When I say that the aerial arm will be the decisive one I do not mean that the aerial arm will be the sole factor. If I were to maintain that the aerial arm will be the sole factor of victory, logically I would have to ask for the abolition of the army and of the navy, for if victory can be determined by a single factor, and that factor the aerial arm, the other two would be completely useless. Consequently I am completely in accord with Engineer Ettl. In the Franco-Moroccan War, aviation was not the sole factor of victory. I will say more: neither will it be in future wars."

for a realization that airpower would play a prominent or decisive rôle in the next world war. General staffs were accustomed to planning their strategy of warfare on the basis of two factors: land forces and sea forces. The advocates of airpower insisted that airpower be introduced as the third factor vital to any serious calculations of future warfare. They insisted, furthermore, that just as armies and navies had special strategic rôles in their respective spheres, land and sea, that air forces had a similar rôle to play in the skies. The views of the airpower proponents were accepted proportionally by various nations according to their military needs, industrial capacity, and political situation in world affairs. And the military minds of the various nations reflected the status of their nation in world politics.

Airpower in Europe and America

The German general staff took the airpower views seriously. They grasped the potentialities of the new weapon, and sought to work out theories of strategy to enable proper use of airpower. Tactical employment of airpower was especially given attention, and brought, as we shall see, effective results. Russia's military was air-minded, too. Russian economy, however, was unable to furnish the vast quantities and the quality of planes that Germany could produce. Stalin depended on vast manpower superiority and lend-lease equipment to rebuild Russia's war machine after the Nazi blitz successes in 1941. The Royal Air Force, achieving independence as an arm of the military machine, concentrated on the only aspect of airpower the *politics* of England allowed—defensive planes. The British Spitfire which resulted, still is considered the best fighting plane in the world. In America airpower was a step-child. At best it was considered an auxiliary. Only after the *Bismarck*, the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse* were sunk in battles against planes did Navy brass hats, for example, quit their campaign to discredit the use of airpower. (Major de Seversky has written an excoriating chapter on the record of the American military in this connection which is worth reading.) By and large, the record of the military in regard to airpower is similar to its record on the reception of all new weapons and ideas. Only the hardest knocks of world events brought changes.

Even today airpower is denied its proper place in the councils of strategy, although day-to-day events hammer home the vital rôle of the air forces. Confusion between strategic and tactical employment of airpower still flourishes. In the campaign of the Lowlands, which led to Dunkerque, the co-ordination of the various arms of the Nazi military machine was a classic example of the tactical employment of airpower; as part of a team in battle. The entire campaign was literally letter perfect, equalled in military history only by the ancient battle of Cannae. In a tactical sense, airpower can be called "artillery of the air." That is how General Montgomery used it at Caen. It was an effective substitute in that particular instance for the usual artillery barrage.

It would be considered silly indeed to argue whether a rifle, a machine gun, a mortar, or a Browning automatic were the most important weapon in an infantry company. Each has a rôle; each plays a separate and supplementary part to another weapon. Likewise in arguing about tanks, anti-tank guns, artillery infantry and engineers as part of a combat team

Douhet, Mitchell and other pioneers of airpower argued—each is part of a machine. In land fighting in this war the airplane is a new weapon which has been added to this machine. How each weapon is used and what relative weight each has in a battle depend on factors like weather, terrain, strategic objectives, etc. In jungle warfare, strafing by airplanes has little effect compared to strafing on the rolling plains of Poland. Tanks are one thing in swamps and another on plains. There is no fool-proof mixture, guaranteed at all times to produce the same result, like a recipe for a cocktail. Concrete battle conditions alone determine in each particular case whether the plane, the tank, the artillery or the private is decisive.

Tactical Use of Airpower

The bombing that didn't work at Cassino achieved much better results at Caen. At Cassino the air force was called upon to do the impossible. Functioning as "air artillery" it was ordered to wipe out German resistance in that town. If a ground artilleryman had received such an order he would properly have muttered, "Headquarters has gone nuts." But the enthusiasts of airpower, allowing themselves to be misled by the over-optimistic head of the American Air Forces, sought to do the impossible. It took the infantry some hard fighting to finish that particular job. At Caen the British plan called for surprise to be achieved by the use of airpower instead of an artillery barrage to launch the break-through attack. It worked. The British tank and infantry forces didn't expect the air forces to wipe out the enemy. They expected and received co-operation in reducing his strength. This is a good example of proper tactical employment of the airplane as a weapon.

Today the German Stuka dive bomber is pretty much in disrepute. Superior Allied and German planes have reduced its effectiveness to almost zero. Yet in its day, and in relation to the airpower of the world at the time, the Stuka was a perfect weapon for tactical employment in co-ordination with other arms. It did terrorize the civilians, creating panic and road jams. It did frighten inexperienced soldiers. But in pitting this weapon against the modern fighting machines of the British and American air forces, the Nazi high command showed how it had fallen into the usual rut of military minds and thus found itself with an outmoded weapon.

Strategic use of airpower involves planning a campaign via air against enemy industrial centers, and transportation-communication facilities. This is done apart from the tactical employment of air fleets in co-ordination with armies and navies in battles or campaigns. It adds a third dimension to warfare. It attempts to "knock out the enemy by air." The first major attempt along these lines was the German attack on England, the so-called "Battle of Britain," from August 8, to October 31, 1940. Its failure brought the assertions from the military opponents of airpower that "airpower has failed." And bigger and better armies and navies were planned. In reality, the question was not settled by the Battle of Britain. The Nazi attack was actually a gamble on the immediate psychological effect of large-scale bombing on a people. That is why London was the main target. It was a hit-and-miss, hit-and-pray-for-success expedient. For the German military machine had not conceived of the possibility existing either on land or in the air which actually did exist—the relative helplessness of England. German bombers, poorly armed and armored, flew by the hundreds across the channel, unprotected by fighter escorts and operating without sound strategy or tactics. The result was the massacre of the Luftwaffe. The quali-

tatively superior British Spitfires had a field day against the hordes of bombers. Over 2,375 German planes were downed, and that did not include operational losses which were probably equal in number. The Battle of Britain revealed that the Nazis had developed airpower but had not developed a sufficiently rounded-out theory of employing it, strategically as well as tactically.

The question remains: could strategic use of airpower be decisive in winning a war? Or, more exactly, could Germany be bombed out of the war? The question will never be answered. RAF plans to do that were never carried out. The Russian *Drang Nach Westen* and the invasion of *Festung Europa* have removed the question from a possibility to one of those historical "if" questions. In so far as the strategic use of airpower has been carried out, the effect in Germany has been serious. How serious it has been will be known definitely only after the conclusion of the present war. Certainly airpower has won for itself a seat at the strategy council table. A successful invasion of Europe without clear-cut air superiority would have been impossible. The most die-hard infantry or naval officer perforce must admit that today. (It is ironical that this was actually established at Dunkerque as a sort of reverse proof. British local air superiority enabled the badly mauled army to escape successfully.)

It may not be answered, but the question still remains. The flight of the B-29's against Japan's industrial centers once again raises the whole issue of the strategic use of airpower. The Navy men in the "Battleships vs. Airplanes" argument are silent. But the majority still relegate the airforce to an auxiliary arm of the fleet. The work of the B-29's challenges this theory. Suppose, for example, that the millions of dollars poured into the construction of battleships at seventy times the cost and time of the construction of a B-29 had been used for producing B-29's and even more powerful planes. Would island-crawling be necessary? Would the Tarawas and Saipans occur with such deadly regularity? Always in the past the airpower proponents have been shouted down in asking such questions. Each time, if not completely right, they turned out to be more right than their opponents. Even the "crackpot" idea of rocket planes arises to haunt the self-assured military minds. Tomorrow assuredly there will be more surprises. Living events are more powerful than the most rock-bound military theories.

The simple fact of the matter is that technological developments of modern industrial society inevitably made themselves felt in the most conservative of social institutions, the military machine. The airplane represents the apex of this technological development. The sky is still the limit to its future. Until the world shakes off a social system in which wars are an integral part, it is inevitable that airpower, as the expression of industrial and economic might, should play a more and more prominent rôle in warfare and in the armed truce called peace. The airpower advocates have been on the side of historic developments, so to speak. That is why their record looks so good as against the military mind desiring to live always in the status quo.

WALTER JASON.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

CHARLES AND MARY BEARD

The Beards' *Basic History of the United States** has been much heralded as the final work of these outstanding American historians. As the culmination of their lifelong research and writing in the field of American history it demands attention. The stature of the book is, of course, increased by the stature of the authors. The Beards' reputation in their field is entirely warranted since they so obviously stand head and shoulders over any other American historian. Errors and defects in the *Basic History* are, therefore, not merely a criticism of the Beards but of all bourgeois historical writing, of which they are the best example.

The Development of the Beards

The development of the Beards from their early economic determinism has been considerable—and not unnatural. Their economic determinism, unlike historical materialism with which it is often confused, did not provide a sure guide to the understanding of history. As was most clearly exemplified in *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States*, their economic determinism consisted in demonstrating the immediate and personal economic interests of individuals, listing, for example, the stocks and securities held by the members of the constitutional convention. They had no concept whatever of *class* in the operation of society, unless a vague realization that there were rich and poor constitutes such a concept. But the *Basic History* is a long way from even this primitive economic determinism—and in the wrong direction. The guiding factors in American history are now idealistic mumblings about the American Dream and the American Spirit.

The difficulties entailed in writing history from an idealistic point of view and the confusion and misconceptions which it generates become clear when we consider specific examples. For the purposes of this review only a few will be used. There are more—in sufficient numbers to annoy the most phlegmatic person.

Of particular interest and importance is the period of the Civil War and Reconstruction. From the very start we detect some backsliding. No longer is the chapter on the Civil War entitled "The Second American Revolution" as it was in the *Rise of American Civilization*. It is now "National Unity Sealed in Armed Contest." And the change in titles is a reflection of the change in contents. The tremendous expansion of Northern industry during the war, the shift in weight from commercial to industrial capital, the Homestead Act which distributed huge sections of the Western lands to small settlers and the establishment of the hegemony of industrial capitalism over the federal government all receive secondary treatment. What is significant to the Beards is the political manoeuvring of Republican and Democratic statesmen. The war was simply a political affair, a matter of preserving unity in the government and the nation.

Their failure to understand the basic *class* causes of the war is, of course, reflected in their failure to understand Reconstruction. To them there were two sides to the controversy. Those who favored the so-called presidential plan supported by Lincoln and Johnson were those who wanted merely national unity and, having achieved that, were satisfied with

mild treatment to the Southern rebels. Opposed to this mild plan was the Congressional plan, pressed for by the radical Republicans in Congress. The basis for the "firm" plan was the desire to make the Civil War a war for liberty, for Negro freedom. "Utopians," say the Beards, referring to the radical Republicans, "who had wanted to make the whole war a war for liberty yearned to hold the Southern states down, utterly destroy the great landlord class by the confiscation of its estates, divide the land among the Negroes and poor white farmers who had been loyal to the Union, give the suffrage and full civil rights to the hitherto dispossessed, and force upon the defeated Confederacy the principles of liberty that Thomas Jefferson had celebrated as the perfect good." (Page 289.) In a deprecating manner, the Beards refer to the plan of the radicals as "almost if not entirely, arbitrary in nature." (Page 291.)

The Classes in the Civil War

These misconceptions can be cleared away if you examine the relation of the different classes to the war. Why did the federal government wage war against the Confederacy? To preserve national unity? True. But why did they wish to preserve this unity? And on what basis? They could have let the South secede and let it go at that. Or they could have accepted the conditions of the Southern planters and slave-owners and maintained the Union on the basis of *their* program. They didn't do either of these things—and not because they were great believers in the American Spirit.

Basic to the Civil War and to Reconstruction was the fundamental conflict between the industrial bourgeoisie and the slavocracy. The earlier commercial capitalism could live at peace with the slave system. It was concerned essentially with buying and selling, not with producing. The commodities bought and sold were overwhelmingly agricultural—produced by the free farmers of the North and the slaves of the South. With the rise of industrial capital, however, freedom to buy and sell was not sufficient. Industrial capitalism, to protect its market, needed tariff walls and could not go along with Southern free trade policies as commercial capitalism had done. It needed room to expand and came into conflict with the slavocracy in the West into which the Southern planters were also moving. The South needed slavery in the West to replenish worn-out lands and to keep and extend its political power over the nation. Industrial capital could compromise with the South—and then only temporarily—only on the basis of a free West and a protective tariff. But that meant the economic and political death of the slave system.

In Reconstruction, the program of industrial capitalism was the presidential plan, supported by both Lincoln and Johnson. This program was not concerned with freedom or liberty. (It was not until after two years of war that Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the Negroes in Confederate territory.) The economic power of the planting class had been ruined during the war. The possibility that the planters could regain control of the federal government was gone for all time. Why should they bother their heads about the freed Negroes, their civil liberties or their economic rights? The Negroes were free in the only sense which mattered to the big bourgeoisie: they were free to work for wages. The big bourgeoisie traditionally fears the extension of democratic rights. Who knows where such things lead? They were having enough trouble with the free farmers and mechanics in the North and West.

The aims of the huge middle class dovetailed in with those of the capitalist class at the outset of the war. Their primary concern—and in this they were supported and aided by the

*Charles A. and Mary R. Beard: *A Basic History of the United States*, New Home Library ed., New York, 1944.

relatively small working class—was cheap land in a free West. They were driven by their opposition to slavery and to the competition of slave labor. They had their points of difference with the big bourgeoisie—opposition to a protective tariff, for example—but these considerations were secondary. It was from this militant democracy that the Abolitionist movement was formed. And it found at least partial expression in the government through the radical Republicans and the congressional plan of Reconstruction. But, despite their temporary ascendancy in Congress, the big bourgeoisie had its way. The failure to divide the land in the South among the Negroes and poor whites prevented the construction of an economic base for bourgeois democracy. Soon after federal troops were removed from the South the democratic state governments were overthrown and “white supremacy” reigned supreme. In the end the petty bourgeoisie not only lost in the South but was crushed to the earth throughout the nation as industrial capital, already beginning to unite with finance capital, established its uncontested rule over the entire economy and the national government itself.

The Question of Imperialism

This inability of the Beards to relate historical events to the classes and conflict between the classes existent in society is further illustrated in their attitude toward imperialism and war. Imperialism becomes in their hands an evil policy foisted upon the nation by unscrupulous politicians who seek to divert the minds of the people from domestic problems. Say the Beards: “If the politicians were to hold power or to get it if out of office, some new instrument was necessary and they found it in imperialist prophecy. . . . No less important in imperialist calculations was a realization among the shrewder politicians that a foreign war and a ‘strong’ foreign policy would in themselves divert the attention of the people from their domestic tribulations and program of reform.” (Page 341.) Their opposition to imperialism is based on the outworn arguments of pacifists that the cost to the nation of maintaining colonies is greater than the value returned in either markets or sources of raw materials. With an analysis such as that, their support of the present imperialist war occasions no surprise—it is impossible to detect its imperialist nature. Their criticism of imperialist war gets weaker as they approach the year 1944. The Spanish-American War was foisted on the country by imperialistic politicians. It was an evil war for conquest. World War I—certain of the results belied the slogan of “war for democracy,” but we were really forced into it. World War II—we were attacked. Not everything was done that was possible to keep us out of war; but we were attacked anyway, so it makes little difference.

The only way to stand this crazy structure on its feet again is to get to the basic question—imperialism. The policy of imperialism makes sense only when considered as a policy flowing from the economy of a class society, as the policy of a class. Colonies don’t benefit the “nation”? Naturally. The policy of imperialism is the policy of the capitalist class in a certain—the final—stage of its existence. It “benefits” that class. In fact (not in the world of the American Dream) imperialism IS finance capitalism. The two are identical. You can as easily request the capitalists (and the politicians who represent them) to cease and desist in their imperialist-policy as you can ask them to vanish into thin air. Finance capitalism is driven by the falling rate of profit, by the process of capital accumulation, by the shrinking home market to turn its eyes abroad. It must export capital, seek foreign markets, secure sources of raw material and establish military bases. In doing this it comes into conflict with other imperialist powers attempting

the identical thing, powers which must be eliminated, by “peaceful,” economic means if possible, by military means if necessary. And military means invariably become necessary.

A Fantastic Solution

Even this primitive sketch indicates how fantastic is the proposal, implicit in the position of the Beards, that capitalism solve its problems at home instead of seeking solutions abroad. But then, can a solution to the problem of war appear without an understanding of the nature of imperialist war? The Beards seem to be opposed to war. In their own minds they undoubtedly are. But their program, the program of isolationism (in its pacifist form, not in its Hearst-McCormick-Hoffman form) is a pro-war program. It accepts the rule of finance capital and serves only to sow the illusion that it is possible to end war without ending the predatory system that breeds war. Invariably, when you get down to a specific, and especially, current, war, the Beards and the rest of their “humanity-loving” clan can be found on the same side as the recruiting sergeant.

As it is with the rise to full power of American capitalism, as it is with imperialist war, so is it with everything else. History becomes accidental, is based on the whims of politicians or the stupidity of the people. Tying all this together is a mystic idea. An idea which explains nothing, teaches nothing, in short, means nothing. All purpose in writing or reading history is lost. One then reads history for entertainment or to reminisce. To attempt to apply the lessons of the past to the present and the future is futile, for the past teaches no lessons, provides no rules, divulges no laws.

It is when compared to the best in bourgeois historical writing that the historical materialism of Marx and the followers of Marx reaches its full stature. To the revolutionary socialist, history has meaning and purpose. Its meaning: the laws of development of capitalist society. Its purpose: to destroy that society and build a world for free men.

MARTIN HARVEY.

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