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*The
Struggle
Against
White
Chauvinism*

A Magazine Devoted to the Theory and Practice of Marxism-Leninism

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by Pettis

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* A report
National Commi
24, 1949.

Destroy the Virus of White Chauvinism*

by Pettis Perry

"By its own actions, the Communist Party must set an example before the whole labor movement. Every influence of white chauvinism within its ranks, whether it manifests itself openly or in concealed form, must be systematically combatted and expunged. It is the over-riding responsibility of white Communists to fight white chauvinism relentlessly."

(From the Party Resolution on the Negro Question, adopted in December 1946.)

As Wall Street develops its offensive against the living standards and civil rights of the people as part of its drive to imperialist war for world domination, the American people are more and more being subjected to imperialism's poisonous ideology of white chauvinism. This intensified racist ideological offensive is an inseparable part of the entire propaganda barrage of chauvinist nationalism with the help of which American finance capital seeks to carry through its program of war and fascization. The significance of this is clear when we realize that two of the monster weapons used by Hitler and the Nazi party were anti-Communism and anti-Semitism. These became major demagogic devices in the rise of fascism in Germany and laid the

basis for the propagation of all kinds of vicious "race theories" directed against all other nations. On the basis of such ideological and moral corruption of large sections of the German middle-class and even masses of German workers, Hitler was able to launch the rapacious imperialist war that almost brought the whole world down in ruins.

Yet it must be remembered that Germany did not have the long background of rabid hostility toward internal national minorities such as has existed in the United States since the days when African slaves were first brought to our country. Therefore, we must understand how deadly the poison of white chauvinism is at the present time for the American people and the American working class; we must understand how serious is its threat to our Party, which now

* A report delivered to the meeting of the National Committee of the Communist Party, April 24, 1949.

shoulders enormous responsibilities to the American working class and to all of progressive humanity in the struggle to defeat Wall Street's drive toward imperialist world war.

We must keep in mind the warning of Comrade Foster that in no country have "race theories" based on color of skin played such a role as they have played in our country. White chauvinism goes to such lengths that, as the National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital reported, a dog cemetery in Washington maintains a color bar! In the words of the Report, "In announcing this policy, the owner stated that he assumed the dogs would not object, but he was afraid that his white customers would."*

* * *

The general context for the present-day growth and development of white chauvinism is to be found in the wave of war hysteria. Big Business, promoting various "theories" of American "superiority," brushes aside everything that is "not American," especially white American, and proclaims that white Americans are the "chosen" people. The whole world is told that it must submit to "our way of life," which is to say that it must accept what is dished out by the American trusts and the bi-partisan dollar diplomats.

Viewed in this light, the motives

* *Segregation in Washington, a Report of the National Committee on Segregation in the Nation's Capital, Chicago, 1948.*

for the intensification of open warfare against the Negro people by the American bourgeoisie and by its agents in the Truman Administration and in the G.O.P. become clear.

This intensification is seen in the increasing attacks on the Negro people by police departments from one end of the country to the other. Beatings, murders, and frame-ups of Negroes are becoming more commonplace by the day. This is true even in the Northern states—in New York, Ohio, Illinois, etc. A new wave of lynch terror is also rising in the South. Only a few days ago a couple of Negro men were fished out of a river in Georgia, where they had been murdered the night before by Ku Klux Klan elements. In another recent instance, seven Negroes were taken across the line of Georgia into Tennessee and hanged.

These developments are not disconnected from the growing layoffs whose burdens fall increasingly, and with special severity, on the Negro people. As the economic crisis develops, the bourgeoisie will increase its offensive against the working class and against the Negro people. It will intensify its efforts to divide Negro and white workers and get them one against the other, and will endeavor increasingly to make the semi-slave exploitation and oppression of the Negro nation in the Black Belt the dominant pattern throughout the country.

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The wartime and postwar ideological and moral corruption fostered among the masses by Big Business has not left our Party unscathed or unaffected.

Our Party today is confronted with the pressing need of taking up sharply the struggle against the many alarming manifestations of white chauvinism in our midst. In an examination of the question in the various districts, we have found too many examples of white chauvinism to enumerate—some hidden, others not so hidden. I should like to describe a few of them.

All of us know, I suppose, that in one county in New York, some 46 comrades, including the chairman, signed leases containing restrictive covenant clauses. This was also true of two leading comrades in the trade-union movement. There was a tendency on the part of some comrades to say that those involved "needed a home," and, therefore, because of the housing shortage, it was "all right" for them to sign such clauses. But suppose a comrade and his family are hungry, and there is a strike in a particular industry where the comrade could get a job if he would "only" scab. Would this be accepted as a legitimate thing, on the ground that this person's family was hungry? Would we tolerate any such strike-breaking, even for a moment?

In another instance, a comrade was in the act of moving into the Riverton Housing Project in Har-

lem, but decided against it because, to quote him, "a survey disclosed that only 5 to 7 per cent of the inhabitants of the project were white families, and therefore that would have been a 'bad' environment for my kids."

In another county in New York, a whole group of Negro comrades had been energetically removed from leadership and isolated from the Party organizations on the ground that "they were petty-bourgeois elements." At a time when Negro comrades were engaged in sharp criticism of the section organizer in this area for white chauvinism, the county committee decided to promote the section organizer to a higher position! Naturally this raised a storm of indignation in the area among all of our Negro comrades and a number of white comrades.

Consider another example. White comrades living in a Negro community and holding leading positions in the clubs were not on speaking terms with most of the Negro comrades because the latter had criticized them for white chauvinism. When the Negro comrades raised the question of chauvinism, they were told that they were "too sensitive." To add insult to injury, these same white comrades, going into the mass organizations made up predominantly of Negro people—the Tenants Council in this case—constantly shout that "We must fight for Negro rights." Yet when

they meet Negro comrades and other Negro acquaintances on the street, especially in the downtown area, they do not even speak to them. When, in such a situation, a Negro comrade accused one of these people of being chauvinistic, she was thenceforth referred to by the club chairman as "a social lioness."

In another instance in which the newspapers reported a case of rape, some of the white women in the Party began to develop the idea that they should ask for police "protection" in a manner that fed the usual anti-Negro libels of the white ruling class. But I am sure that when Comrade Bob Thompson's young daughter was attacked by a sex fiend, these comrades did not rush around seeking police "protection" as a security measure that would enable them to walk the streets.

* * *

Let us study some of the other districts.

In New Jersey, there was difficulty in one county in re-registering a Negro woman comrade, whereupon this comrade was informed that either she re-register, "or else it will be your job," thus inferring, irresponsibly, that the Party would use its influence to carry out his threat. There have been a number of instances in this district (and other districts) where Negro comrades are not welcomed into the homes of white comrades. In some

cases, they either are received early in the morning, when neighbors may think they are domestic workers, or are welcomed at night, when the neighbors of the white comrades might not see the Negro comrades at all.

In one of our Southern districts, the Party's outstanding Negro trade unionist in the entire South was energetically removed from leadership for a slight breach of Party discipline. When we began to inquire into this, we were told that the district is "very energetic on all questions." When the question was posed as to how energetic the district is in struggling against white chauvinism, it evoked a great deal of surprise. Thus, a double standard was applied in regard to Negro comrades: when there is a question of Party discipline, Negro comrades must hew to the line, but this is not always the case with white comrades.

In another district, a Party class was organized by one of the county organizers. When the State Educational Director, a Negro comrade, arrived to teach this class, he discovered that there were two classes—one for the whites and the other for the Negroes. An inquiry produced the "reason" that the Negro people "would not express themselves" in the presence of white people, but would do so only if they were alone, to themselves.

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examples of white chauvinism which have come to our attention. The most widespread form of chauvinism takes the form of resistance by Party forces in the trade unions to waging an adequate struggle on behalf of Negro workers. Immediately following the recent war, many of these comrades argued that it was not only "impossible," but also "incorrect," to fight for an adjustment in seniority which would enable Negro workers to retain the gains made during the war. They said that the workers had shed their blood to win acceptance of seniority by the bosses, and that it was "impossible" to win the white workers for any modifications in the provisions for seniority to protect the jobs of Negro workers. Here two things are wrapped in one package—Right opportunism and white chauvinism. Our Party forces are thus being obliged to learn the hard way, by bitter experience, the truth of Lenin's warning that opportunism in program is closely connected with opportunism in tactics and opportunism in matters of organization.

Is it the duty and responsibility of a Communist to accommodate himself to the backwardness of the masses in regard to a given issue, or is it his responsibility to fight to raise the level of understanding of the masses? It would appear to any Communist that the latter is the case. That being so, how is it possible for us to tolerate the erroneous

attitude of "accommodation," which expresses itself in the rejection of, or abstention from, the struggle for Negro rights?

The interesting fact in this connection is that the most decisive battles for Negro rights being waged by the progressive forces in the trade-union movement are to be found in local unions which belong to Right-led Internationals. Examples of this are: the struggles in the rubber industry in the Akron area for the upgrading of Negro workers; the magnificent struggle in the Fisher Body plant in Cleveland; and the struggles in the auto industry in the Packard shops of Detroit which led to the upgrading of more than 700 workers, many of them Negro women.

Of course, Left-led unions, which pioneered in this type of struggle, have not all abandoned it. The Farm Equipment Workers' Union is an outstanding example of continued activity on this issue. In one plant organized by F. E., the company was forced to rehire Negro workers it had fired after a work stoppage called by more than 2,000 workers.

Mention should also be made of the chauvinistic practice of the defense of chauvinism. For example, in a Party school in New York, two section organizers were accused of acts of white chauvinism by a member of the State staff, whereupon the whole school came down upon this comrade with the statement: "You

are trying to undermine the leadership and prestige of these comrades and of the county leadership." Thus, it would seem that the way to "strengthen" cadres is to perpetuate opportunism and white chauvinism instead of fighting against these alien influences in a Marxist-Leninist fashion and strengthening Party cadres by criticizing and correcting them.

Another form of the defense or covering-up of white chauvinism is to be found in the frequently-heard argument that one should speak of "insensitivity," not of chauvinism. Here we have the fear of branding white chauvinism for what it is and of taking the necessary steps to eradicate it.

Still another "theory" which has gained some influence is put as follows: "Oh, yes, I know that I am chauvinistic, and we will have white chauvinism so long as we have capitalism." In this case, two things must be said. First, "chest-beating"—the recognition of the possibility of chauvinism in oneself—does not at all mean that a serious warfare has been carried on against white chauvinism. Secondly, while it is true that there will be white chauvinism so long as we have capitalism, it is likewise true that unless we wage a merciless struggle against white chauvinism—both outside and within the Party—we shall always have capitalism.

White chauvinism likewise ex-

presses itself very often, even in leading committees of the Party, when comrades fail to develop an all-round struggle against police killings and other police brutality directed against Negroes. Here, action is generally left to a section or club working in the Negro community, or to Negro comrades. This is all part of the more general expression of white chauvinism in the Party in the form of refusal to carry on day-to-day struggles among white workers and predominantly white communities for Negro rights. It is not unusual to come across habitual confusion when it comes to action to advance the struggle for Negro rights. Somehow, here, comrades "do not know" what to do, etc., etc.

* * *

It should also be said, and very self-critically by us Negro comrades, that we have in many instances been guilty of blocking the struggle against white chauvinism. Many of us in leading positions have had rank-and-file Negro comrades report acts of white chauvinism to us. Too often, we either attempt to brush aside the opinions of these comrades or else proceed to tell them how "wrong" they are. In many cases, when we get these reports we fail to take them up in leading committees of the Party, much less fight them out, once they are taken up. And it is not accidental that the rank-and-file Negro comrades are

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very critical of some of our leading Negro comrades for this, going to the point, in some instances, of calling them "Uncle Toms."

I have known of cases where, when a rank-and-file Negro comrade accuses a white comrade of chauvinism, the latter immediately starts rushing around to all of his or her Negro friends to ask: "Do you think I am a chauvinist?" Unfortunately, some Negro comrades permit themselves to be played off against other Negro comrades in this way. Many of the Negro comrades, especially leading Negro comrades, forget that the relationships which they as individuals may have with the comrades accused of white chauvinism in most cases are not the same relationships that the rank-and-file Negro comrades have with them; therefore, for them to reject what the other Negro comrades are experiencing is simply to permit themselves to be played off against other Negro comrades.

As for the accused white comrades, this is both chauvinism and factionalism on their part. Because these same comrades are the least inclined to accept the opinion of any Negro comrades on any other question, they are the most guilty in brushing aside the opinions of Negro comrades who criticize them. Yet, should a Negro comrade tell them that they are not chauvinistic, he is thus used—better said, abused—by the white comrades involved,

in their resistance to the founded charge of white chauvinism.

This practice, which usually includes a listing of how many Negroes the accused comrades has invited to dinner, must be ended at once. Negro comrades can meet their part of the responsibility by refusing to permit themselves to be played off against other Negro comrades when cases of this kind arise.

* * *

Today, more than ever, the Party must carry on a systematic, day-to-day struggle against white chauvinism. We must put an end to the situation in which many districts simply record acts of chauvinism, report them at one or another Party conference, make everybody gasp at how terrible those acts are—and then proceed to the next point on the agenda, without taking any adequate steps to mobilize the Party to struggle against chauvinism. Only by a consistent struggle for the equal rights of the Negro people, and by an intensive ideological campaign inside and outside of the Party, will the Party begin to rid itself and the working-class movement of the rotten chauvinist influences of the imperialists.

In the recent period, a number of districts have already opened a vigorous struggle against all forms of white chauvinism.

In New York, for example, the Party has expelled the two persons

referred to with regard to restrictive covenants. All of the other comrades who signed restrictive covenants—some forty-six of them—and the county organizer, have been disciplined. The county organizer has been removed and suspended for six months, while the other comrades have also been suspended for six months; all of them have been assigned control tasks to be reviewed at the end of the period. The New York District Board of the Party has removed one of its members from the District Board and the District Committee for chauvinism. All of the major counties in and around New York are seriously engaging in a struggle against chauvinism.

The District Committee in New Jersey has already begun to take drastic action against a number of the comrades guilty of chauvinism. The District of Eastern Pennsylvania held a two-day conference during the middle of May, as a means of stepping up the struggle on this question.

While these beginnings have been made, all of the districts still have a long way to go. Many districts have not yet gotten started, despite the fact that the National Organization Committee sent a letter to the districts some weeks ago stressing the urgent need for a critical examination of their work on the Negro question, especially as it relates to the struggle against white chauvinism and the fight around the day-to-

day problems of the Negro people.

No one in the Party, especially leading comrades, can afford to wage the battle from the sidelines and say that he has done his job. Every leading committee in the Party, from the National Committee down, needs to examine its work in this field critically.

* * *

Our tasks in the coming period must include a merciless political fight against white chauvinism in which we must do everything possible to raise our Party's understanding of the Negro question as a national question. That means organizational struggle as well.

But we must reject two concepts that are all too prevalent in our Party. The first concept is that you should wait for the "open, obvious" chauvinism and then hold a mass trial, with expulsions, which "proves" that we have carried on a struggle against white chauvinism.

Expulsions have their place where they become necessary, but we must remember that the main struggle must be *ideological*. The concept is wrong from another angle—the rejection of what are called "witch hunts" in the Party. If by "witch hunt" is meant that we must look under every bed for a possible chauvinist, then of course our Party is against it. But what happens in too many cases is that under the guise of "preventing witch hunts," Party or-

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organizations drop the whole question of conducting a struggle against chauvinism and do nothing when flagrant instances of chauvinism are brought to their attention.

The second "theory" is advanced when cases of white chauvinism arise and organizational measures are necessary because the ideological struggles have not achieved their objective. Some comrades then raise the question of "how can you expel this comrade? Oh, he is such a good comrade; he has contributed so much to the Party; he has a record of so many years' service in the Party; let's just criticize the comrade and send him to work in the Negro community."

This argument reminds me of the case involving a veteran who had lost his leg fighting in the war and who committed a murder after he came out of the army. His trial came up before a judge wearing an American Legion button. When the defense attorney saw the button, he immediately rose and said: "Your honor, how can you prosecute this man? Why, he lost his leg fighting in the war!" At that point, the prosecutor got up and replied: "Very well, we will take this leg that he lost fighting in the war and bury it with the highest of honors, but we will take the rest of his carcass and throw it on the garbage heap."

All of this should make it clear that we must wage the struggle against white chauvinism as we wage the struggle against all deviations

from Marxism and all ideologies hostile to Marxism—by taking up first the ideological and political battle on the question. Should this not suffice, we must take the necessary organizational measures.

It must also be borne in mind that to carry this battle through successfully, we must fight on two fronts. Recognizing that white chauvinism is the main danger, we must at the same time wage a fight against Negro bourgeois nationalism, which is almost always a reflection of, and reaction to, the influence or existence of white chauvinism. Among other things, this bourgeois nationalism expresses itself in a suspicion of all whites, including the working class and also its vanguard. In order to be successful in combating it, we must keep in the forefront of our activity the struggle against white chauvinism, with the main responsibility for this resting upon the shoulders of the white comrades. At the same time, the main responsibility for the struggle against bourgeois Negro nationalism, in any form, rests with the Negro comrades.

Our self-criticism and self-correction must be constructive and healthy. We must especially safeguard our Party against the danger that agents provocateurs, sent into our Party as F.B.I. spies, or other enemy agents, will try to use the necessary and relentless struggle against white chauvinism as a mask for their disruptive activities. We must also guard against the danger that some honest, but

careless comrades will be deceived by such tactics. At the same time, we must alert the comrades to the equally dangerous possibility that chauvinist elements will try to cover up their own wretched acts and attitudes by raising questions as to whether "this is the time to do it."

The best insurance against such dangers lies in day-to-day struggle for Negro rights, in testing sincerity by daily work and practice.

* * *

What are the main reasons for these manifestations within the Party? First, there is the objective source, the imperialist offensive of the American bourgeoisie toward fascism and war, which is poisoning the very atmosphere of our country. And along with this we witness the growth of unemployment, the developing economic crisis.

Secondly, we slid into the swamp of opportunism on the Negro question during the period of Browder-revisionism. In ridding the Party of Browderism we adopted the correct political line on the Negro question as a national question. However, all of the necessary ideological and organizational steps were not taken to implement this correct theoretical position, to enable the Party to develop an energetic ideological and political struggle against white chauvinism. Instead, we took many things for granted. We proceeded to assume that inasmuch as chauvinism was incompatible with Party ideology, it

was only necessary to lay down the political line and the Party organizations would automatically draw the necessary conclusions as to how to apply it correctly. As we know, that is not how matters turned out in practice.

Thirdly, it must be remembered that we have virtually a new Party membership, which did not, in the main, go through the sharp struggles of the early '30's against white chauvinism, for the equal rights of the Negro people, and for the Marxist-Leninist position on the national character of the oppression and super-exploitation of the Negro people.

Furthermore, because of the pro-imperialist policy and ideology of the dominant labor leadership and the still low level of class consciousness among the workers, the poisonous influences of white chauvinism widely penetrate the American labor movement. To the extent that our Party does not fully meet its task in driving white chauvinist ideas and practices from the labor movement, it itself remains subject to the infiltration of these pernicious influences into its own ranks.

These are some of the chief factors that are feeding white chauvinism, even within our Party. To destroy all such enemy influences, to advance the Negro liberation movement, and to build and strengthen the Party in order to guarantee the fulfillment of our historic responsibilities, the Party must perform two

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major tasks. These are: to conduct the ideological and political struggle against chauvinism as already indicated; and to develop, in a consistent fashion, as an ever-present and unrelaxing feature of our work, the day-to-day struggles for the rights of the Negro people.

Clearly, it would be suicidal for the Party if these struggles were disconnected, that is, if we were to try to wage one without the other. If we simply took up the ideological struggle and failed to engage in the practical struggle, the Party would be tied up in an endless debate divorced from real life, and would be torn asunder with no tangible results.

Conversely, those who say that we should concern ourselves only with the practical side of the question seem to forget that very little headway can be made toward mobilizing the Party or the working class and its allies for the day-to-day struggle on Negro rights without a thoroughgoing theoretical, ideological, and organizational struggle against white chauvinism. It is a rejection of Marxism to hold that only experience can decide the matter. This is a form of expressing contempt for theory and as such must be rejected decisively. We must have, here as everywhere, the unity of theory and practice. Illuminating our path with the light of Marxism, we must engage in the most uncompromising practical struggle.

* * *

All district and other leading Party bodies must answer these questions: What is it that constantly creates the situation within our Party whereby the struggle for Negro rights is shunned or is taken up sporadically? Why does it happen so often, that when other issues are taken up, every single issue that arises pushes the Negro question off the agenda? How else can this be explained except by the infiltration of white chauvinism within our ranks? How can it be explained except as an underestimation of the need to give sustained and vigilant attention to the struggle for Negro rights and Negro liberation through every Party and progressive channel?

The starting point in the practical struggle is the fight for jobs and against discrimination as a special part of the general fight against unemployment and against the whole capitalist offensive directed at the peace, the economic welfare and the democratic rights of the entire American people. We must develop the broadest and most serious struggle against police brutality, the chief and "modern" form of lynching, in every single community in the country. We must carry on, as never before, a fight for the freedom of the Ingram family. Every support must be given to the new committee that has been organized for the release of Mrs. Ingram. Our Party must intensify the fight for the freedom of the Trenton Six.

These two struggles will link to-

gether the Negro liberation movement in the Black Belt and in the South generally with the struggle of the Negro people in the rest of the country.

Everywhere, our Party must more and more begin to link up the defense of our Party leaders and of our Party with the struggle for Negro rights. It is clear that the day-to-day attack of the bourgeoisie is simultaneously against our Party and against the Negro people. One of the main reasons for this is our Party's role as champion of the Negro people and vanguard of the American working class. We must constantly remind the people of this fact; and we can remind them best by redoubling our energies for this struggle.

Lastly, if we are to do our job, we must rapidly build our Party among the Negro workers in every single district in the country. There are already mass struggles arising in New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Detroit, and in many other areas, including the deep South. In the midst of this struggle, our Party must be built. We must reject the concept that the Negro workers are not joining the Party because of fear and intimidation. Many of our Negro comrades are not recruiting Negro workers into the Party because they are ashamed of the chauvinistic practices that exist in their clubs or sections. And many Negro workers refuse to join our Party because they do not see it waging a sufficiently

sharp and sustained struggle on behalf of the Negro people.

In this connection, we must boldly advance a number of Negro comrades into posts of leadership. Here it must be frankly stated that chauvinism exposes itself with a vengeance in our failure to bring forward more Negro women in the Party. Ours is the only organization that operates in the Negro community in which the Negro women do not play a decisive role. We must change this situation, and quickly. We must recognize that here we are dealing with "male superiority" in addition to white chauvinism. Special steps must be taken to overcome this situation. In the fight for Negro rights, special demands must be advanced for Negro women, especially in the shops and industries, as well as in the trade unions, where many more Negro women must be promoted to leading positions.

Despite all weaknesses, our Party is nonetheless the best champion of the rights of the Negro people. It is the only Party with a genuine program for the liberation of the Negro people. The Party has the ability and the determination to make a dramatic turn in the right direction. If we make this turn, we shall advance this struggle to new and higher levels. In 1862, Marx pointed out how one regiment of Negro troops could work miracles on the nerves of the slave owners. Today, there is nothing the bourgeoisie fears more

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than the unity of Negro and white. For the imperialist warmakers know full well that the calloused hands of the working class and of the Negro people, joined together, can and will

sweep aside the debris of capitalism and put an end to misery, hunger, national oppression, and Wall Street's schemes for imperialist conquest and atomic war.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Due to limitations of space, a number of articles dealing with the struggle for Negro rights and against white chauvinism regrettably could not be published in this issue of *Political Affairs*.

These articles, which are concerned with important aspects of the struggle against white chauvinism not treated in this issue, will be published in forthcoming issues of *Political Affairs*.

Strengthen the Struggle Against White Chauvinism

by Bob Thompson

FOR SEVERAL MONTHS OUR Party organization in New York State has been engaged in developing a sharpened struggle against white chauvinism. Although as yet decidedly limited in scope and effectiveness, this has already produced some results and much valuable experience. My main purpose is to set forth certain facts and conclusions arising from this sharpened struggle. I would like, however, first to make a few remarks of a more general character.

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The starting point of any serious struggle against the ideology of white chauvinism, or "white supremacy," is the rejection of all ideas that make a mystery of it. No one can fight a mystery. Furthermore, every attempt to make a mystery of white chauvinism is itself part and parcel of the ideology of "white supremacy." This is true of efforts by apologists of Negro oppression to picture chauvinism as some mysterious quality of human nature, as some strange biological fact. It is true also of the strange efforts of some Communists to reverse the coin by indignantly proclaiming for themselves a mysterious and inherent immunity to chauvinism.

There is, of course, nothing mys-

terious about chauvinism. People are neither born with it, nor with an immunity against it. Chauvinism has its source in specific economic, social and political conditions, and not in the nature of man. It is a political phenomenon, not a biological fact.

Historically, white chauvinism has a two-fold origin: the system of colonial oppression, and the system of chattel slavery as it existed in the South. The ideology of white chauvinism, or "white supremacy," arises out of the world system of colonial and imperialist exploitation and would exist in the United States even were it not for the background of chattel slavery in this country. It is, however, this background of chattel slavery in the United States, and the existence today within the borders of the United States of a Negro nation in the process of rapid development, which give the ideology of white chauvinism in America its specific virulence and exceptionally vicious forms.

White chauvinism, arising out of the soil of the chattel slave system in the South, provided the white plantation owners with an arsenal of ideological weapons "proving" the "inherent superiority" of white people, and therefore their right to be masters, and the "inherent inferior-

ority" of Negro people, and therefore their right to be slaves. The ideology of "white supremacy" was as necessary to the system of chattel slavery as the slave trader, the lash and the bloodhound. This is particularly true because the chattel slave system in the South developed late in history, at a time when the capitalist system with its corresponding concepts of the rights of the individual, wage labor and free trade was in the full flower of development. In the atmosphere of this rising capitalism, the white plantation owners could not defend their economic system of chattel slavery without a ferocious defense and development of the ideology of "white supremacy."

The rising system of American capitalism destroyed the armies and the chattel slave system of the white plantation owners. It left virtually untouched, and in the main took over, their arsenal of ideological weapons. Developing capitalism, which was profoundly antagonistic to the system of chattel slavery, was by no means profoundly opposed to the "white supremacy" ideology that arose on the basis of chattel slavery. On the contrary, the developing exploitation of the colonial peoples, and especially the growing over of premonopoly capitalism into imperialism, of themselves generated a similar ideology of "white supremacy." Also, super-exploitation of the South by Northern capital demanded the cutting short of the bourgeois-demo-

cratic revolution in the South and the re-establishment of the rule of the Southern plantation owners in alliance with Northern capital on the basis of national as well as capitalist oppression of the Negro people. Further, the capitalist class of this country, confronted with a developing labor movement, found in the "white supremacy" ideology of the Southern plantation owners powerful, ready-made ideological and political weapons with which to maintain a category of cheap labor and a divided labor movement.

In the present period, the Negro people occupy a unique position in the front of struggle against American imperialism. Everywhere they are the first targets of the growth of fascist reaction and chauvinist nationalism. Everywhere they are resisting and fighting back. At a time when American imperialism has emblazoned on its banner the goal of enslaving nations on other continents, it is confronted with growing struggles of a national liberation character by the Negro people in the South. At a time when American imperialism is proclaiming the divine right of Anglo-Saxons to run the world, it is confronted with a mounting struggle of 13 million Americans of African descent for a position of equality in American economic, social and political life. The Negro people are a unique ally of the American working class. No other working class in a capitalist country has so natural and so potent

an ally. Without an alliance, without the forging of a common front of struggle, between the American working class and the Negro people, there can be no successful struggle against fascism in the United States. The working class cannot build such an alliance, if its attitude and approach continue to be warped by the capitalist ideology of "white supremacy." The building of this alliance requires that the working class, and especially its organized sectors, break more rapidly and more decisively with the ideology and the approach of the capitalist class. This is the first reason why at this time exceptional importance must be attached to the struggle against white chauvinism.

In this period, white chauvinism operates in the political setting of American imperialism's drive for world domination abroad and fascist rule at home. It has merged with and become the spearhead of a new virulent Anglo-Saxon chauvinist nationalism, which, if unchecked, will prepare the political and ideological ground for a Third World War. It has become the ideological heavy artillery of the forces who are preparing and organizing fascist violence against labor and the people. It is a main instrument of reaction for the dividing of the labor movement and the corruption of sections of the white working class. To fail to fight against white chauvinism is to fail to fight against the most developed expression of chauvinist

nationalism and fascist reaction. This is the second major reason why the struggle against white chauvinism now assumes exceptional importance.

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There is, of course, no such thing as "a struggle in general" against white chauvinism. Chauvinism is always a very concrete, a very tangible matter. When chauvinism, as is often the case in the atmosphere of working-class organizations, adopts a protective-class camouflage and subtle forms, this does not make it any the less concrete and tangible. It only makes it harder to recognize and more difficult to fight.

"Chauvinism in general" is a phantom without substance or form. Phantoms are something which people can talk about, but need not fight against. Phantoms are useful to people who like to talk and hate to fight.

Chauvinism, as it exists in our Party today, is no phantom. It is a very material body of practices carried out by real people, and of ideas held by real people. In order to fight against white chauvinism, one must fight against these specific practices and ideas and the people who are responsible for them. The person who refuses to conduct this fight refuses to fight white chauvinism. The person who is reluctant to conduct this fight is reluctant to fight white chauvinism.

The development of our Party's activity in the fight for the alliance

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between the working class and the Negro people, and in the field of struggle for Negro rights, requires a resolute and consistent struggle against the ideology of white chauvinism. Every improvement of our Party's mass activity in this field represents an advance in the struggle against white chauvinism. This, however, does not mean that chauvinist ideas and practices in our Party diminish or disappear of themselves when improvements take place in Party mass activity in the fight for Negro rights. On the contrary, every advance in our Party's activity in behalf of the Negro people tends to arouse and bring into play latent chauvinist prejudices, tends to expose and bring into the light of day existing chauvinist practices.

During the last six months, our Party in New York has very substantially improved its mass activities and struggles for Negro rights. It has been an important factor in the development of the fight for the job rights of Negro longshoremen, the strikes on the issue of bias in the City Colleges, the formation of the Harlem Trade Union Council, the movement to smash Jim-Crow restrictions in Stuyvesant Town, increased support for the activities of Comrade Ben Davis in the City Council, and on a number of other fronts. This by itself has not and could not lessen the problem of white chauvinist influences in our Party's ranks. On the contrary, it is this substantial improvement in

Party mass activity which is a principal factor making it necessary and possible to place in a new way the problem of white chauvinism and the struggle against it in our Party.

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In our New York Party organization, it is already clear that we are confronted with a very unsatisfactory situation. The sharpened struggle against white chauvinism developed during the past several months has served the purpose of exposing the gravity of this situation and the need for enlisting the full participation of our Party membership in the fight to correct it. This situation is characterized by three basic facts.

The first fact with which we are confronted is that chauvinist acts and practices are more than rare and isolated occurrences in our Party. The truth is that acts and practices which are to one degree or another chauvinistic in character, are at present frequent and widespread in various New York Party organizations. Unquestionably, most such acts and practices are committed unconsciously. This, however, in no way alters their objective character or their harmful effects. Further, these acts and practices are by no means confined to new and politically inexperienced members of our Party. In not a few instances, comrades who have been in our Party over a long number of years and who hold responsible posts in our Party are

guilty of acts and practices of an objectively chauvinist character.

The sharpened struggle developed against white chauvinism during the past several months has brought to the fore and exposed a number of such acts and practices. In several instances, the Party's New York State Committee has had to take sharp disciplinary action. During the last four months the leadership in New York has had to remove, on grounds of white chauvinism, a member of its State Committee, the chairman and organizational secretary of a major county organization, and a leading section organizer. In another county two prominent trade union comrades have had to be expelled and some 40 other comrades sharply disciplined.

What has been the nature of these cases?

The comrade removed from the State Committee of the Party has been a Party member for more than 20 years. He has a fine record in the Party, and has held many responsible posts. He is a Party leader, as well as a union leader in an important local. The Party organization in this local is among the better of our Party organizations in industry. A good, and in many ways exemplary fight has been conducted in this local to break through Jim-Crow job restrictions in the industry. Negro workers have been promoted and developed as a part of the leadership of this local. The particular comrade in question has played the

leading role in all of this positive work. Yet, several months ago, comrades in this local participated in the organizing of an affair in Harlem for a leading Negro woman trade-union leader of the local, which was completely lacking in dignity. In the course of this affair, the former member of our State Committee, who is well known as a spokesman for our Party and the Left, made a speech devoid of any appreciation of the political significance of the holding of such an affair in honor of this Negro trade-union leader. On the contrary, in the course of this speech at an affair honoring a Negro woman trade-union leader, this comrade descended to the level of telling a dirty joke, which, under the circumstances, was a chauvinist act. The nature of this act was all the more serious in its character and consequences because the offense was against a Negro woman, a member of the most oppressed section of the Negro people.

After considerable discussion, the State Committee member recognized the white chauvinist implications of his responsibility in the arrangement of this affair, and of the speech which he had made at it. Following his removal from the State Committee, the comrade has participated fully in a serious effort to drive home among the comrades and workers in his local the lessons from this event, and is carrying forward effectively a number of control tasks set for him by the State Committee. The harm done the Party and the injury

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inflicted upon the Negro people by this act cannot, however, be repaired so easily.

In the county where the chairman and organizational secretary have had to be removed from their positions, and a leading section organizer removed from his position, the following situation existed:

In the Party section led by this section organizer, a number of active Negro comrades were removed from leadership on the grounds that "they were petty bourgeois elements." This followed criticism from these Negro comrades directed at the section leadership, including the criticism of white chauvinist practices and a failure to struggle energetically against white chauvinism. In the midst of this sharp situation, in which the section organizer was being criticized by Negro comrades for white chauvinism, the county committee adopted a position of generally defending this comrade against this criticism and decided to promote him to a higher position of leadership.

Here again, the white comrades involved, particularly the chairman and organizational secretary of the county, were able to understand the chauvinist character of their conduct, and have adopted an outlook of drawing the full lessons for themselves and the Party from this experience and of fighting actively in whatever posts they are assigned to carry out fundamentally the Party's struggle against white chauvinism

and advance the struggle for Negro rights. But here again, the harm done the Party by such acts and practices of chauvinism on the part of responsible, leading comrades is not something that can so easily be repaired.

In another county a situation was uncovered where about 40 comrades had signed restrictive covenant clauses and moved into a housing project barring Negroes. Among these 40-odd people were two leading trade-union comrades. One of these comrades, just before moving into the project barring Negroes, was in the act of moving into the Riverton housing project, which is in Harlem. He changed his mind about moving into the Riverton project and decided to move into the restrictive covenant project, after learning that a survey had disclosed that there were only 5 to 7 per cent of the inhabitants of the Riverton project who were white families, and that therefore this community would be a "bad environment" for his children.

These are the most dramatic and crass of the acts and practices of a chauvinist character which have been exposed and brought to the fore by the sharpened struggle of the last several months. They illustrate the seriousness of the situation confronting us in the Party. When such acts and practices as these take place in our Party, it is impossible to say that the ideological health of our Party is satisfactory. The truth

is that such acts and practices mean that the ideological health of our Party is unsatisfactory.

The second fact with which we are confronted is that we do not as yet have an atmosphere in our Party of militant, uncompromising hostility toward all forms and manifestations of white chauvinism. The truth is that there is all too prevalent among our white comrades a tolerant, liberal attitude toward manifestations of chauvinism. The worst expression of this is that all too frequently acts of chauvinism are first raised, not by our white, but by our Negro comrades. Even after these acts and practices are exposed, it is often our Negro comrades that must carry the burden of the struggle against them. It is an altogether too common occurrence for some white comrades to exhibit a very excessive concern that comrades being disciplined for acts of white chauvinism may be hurt, and an excessive lack of concern over the harm done our Party and the injury done our Negro comrades and the working people, Negro and white, by these acts.

In the case of the State Committee member who was removed, a number of his union co-leaders remain to this day unconvinced of the necessity and the correctness of the disciplinary action taken. They tend to balance off the fine record of the offending comrade against this particular act. Those comrades do not understand the fact that precisely the record and responsible position

of this comrade demand of him an unassailable standard of conduct.

In the case of the leading union people expelled for signing the Jim-Crow covenants, some of their white co-workers have vigorously fought against this expulsion action. One member of the section committee in this industry even went to the point of talking about resigning from the section committee as a protest against this action.

Such reluctance, and even outright refusal, to fight against white chauvinism as it specifically expresses itself in the activities of our Party and the labor movement is a grave danger signal. It shows that our Party membership is far from being mobilized fully in the struggle against white chauvinist ideology and practices.

The third fact that characterizes the situation we are dealing with in our Party is that there are a number of instances of resistance to the development of struggle around issues particularly affecting Negro workers and the Negro people. This situation to one or another degree affects all phases of our Party mass work. The fact that our Party's mass activity on the front of struggle for Negro rights has generally increased and become more effective in the last six months, in no way negates this situation. As a matter of fact, it is only in the atmosphere of a spreading and developing mass activity of the Party on the front of struggle for Negro rights that the

real resistance in specific sectors of our Party comes wholly into the open and can be dealt with.

In regard to the tenants' movement, for example, our various Party organizations have had to deal with situations in which Party comrades who participated in this movement have resisted aggressively fighting for specific measures affecting the Negro tenants. One of the reasons why this resistance has come to the fore is that the housing and tenants' movement is beginning to take up in a more specific way the fight for housing for Negro people. When the demand that Negro tenants be accepted in all apartments and housing projects was a general demand, everything went smoothly. But when this general demand was translated into the specific demand that in houses where a vacancy occurs, the first tenant to move in should be a Negro tenant, then problems developed. This specific demand raised in a new way the problem of actively fighting to convince and win the support of white tenants. It was only then that it was possible to put a finger squarely on those specific cases where comrades lacked real understanding of, or enthusiasm for, the struggle for the Negro people. In this case we see very concretely how a general advance in the struggle for Negro rights, far from removing the problem of struggling within our Party against chauvinist attitudes and tendencies in mass work, on the

contrary brings the problem of waging this struggle into the open and into the fore.

Another instance of this kind is the struggle in the International Longshoremen's Association to prevent Negro longshoremen from being pushed off the waterfront in New York. So long as the demands relating to Negro longshoremen remained general demands, there was no great problem of resistance to these demands. When, however, this general struggle was translated into the specific terms of Negro longshore crews retaining their rights to jobs on specific piers, the problem became a different type of problem. It became necessary, then, to enlist the support of the white longshoremen in a specific struggle. More than that, it became a problem of enlisting the general support of the trade-union movement behind this fight to prevent the exclusion of Negro longshoremen. Again, the general advance of the struggle for Negro rights, far from lessening the problems of fighting against white chauvinism in our Party and among the workers generally, was, in fact, the occasion for the bringing forward of the need in specific terms of the development of this type of a struggle and of exposing islands of resistance in our Party to this struggle.

II

What is the reason for the unsatisfactory state of affairs with regard to the extent of chauvinism in

our New York Party organization? The reason is not to be found in any lack by our Party of a correct main line of policy and a correct program of action in relation to the Negro people. What positive advances have been made since our 1945 Convention—and they have been many—arise directly from the fact that the main line of our Party is correct and from the fact that on the basis of this main line our December 1946 Plenum equipped our Party with a fully adequate theoretical and programmatic position on the Negro question. Neither is the reason to be found in any lack of general calls by Party committees and leadership for a struggle against white chauvinism. The explanation for this situation in our Party must be sought elsewhere in a number of basic facts.

In a general way, the present unsatisfactory situation in our Party with regard to the struggle against white chauvinism is connected with a lack of sufficient overall attention within our Party to problems of an ideological character. More specifically, it is due to the fact that after having formulated, on the basis of our correct general line, a correct theoretical and programmatic position on the Negro question, we have by and large been content to rest on this general position and have not organized a major ideological and political struggle to bring a full understanding of this position to our Party membership.

Failure to understand the national character of the Negro question is a primary source of deviation from Party policy and of manifestation of chauvinism. Many comrades do not understand the fundamental difference between our Party's position of fighting for the "full social, economic and political equality of the Negro people" and the petty-bourgeois concept of favoring so-called "equal treatment" of Negroes. Comrades in the trade-union movement, for example, who say, "We are good Communists because we fight against discrimination . . ." and in the next breath oppose *special* seniority provisions in favor of Negro workers are, whether they know it or not, adopting a petty-bourgeois approach to the Negro question. Comrades in the tenants' movement who say, "We are for the equality of the Negro people" and then proceed to oppose measures which place the fight for housing for Negroes on a *special* footing are, whether they know it or not, adopting a similar petty-bourgeois approach. The petty-bourgeois concept of "equal treatment" is a denial of the national character of the Negro question, a denial of the special forms of national oppression of the Negro people. It is not only fundamentally different from our Party's position; it is fundamentally opposed to our Party's position. The central task of Party educational work on the Negro question is the developing of a fuller understanding of the national character of the op-

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pression and struggles of the Negro people.

The struggle against white chauvinism, which is called for by our Party's theoretical and programmatic position on the Negro question, has remained too much a general and a vague proposition. It has never been made a specific struggle against specific manifestations of white chauvinism. It has never been taken out of the clouds and brought down to earth. Undoubtedly, this is partially due to a serious underestimation on our part of the devastating effects of the years of revisionism on the ideological health of the bulk of our membership, and even leading cadres, with respect to their attitude toward, and understanding of, the Negro question.

Further, there has been an underestimation on our part of the problems which arise from the fact that a majority of our present Party membership has come into our Party since the last major ideological struggles within our Party on this question in the early and middle '30's. Undoubtedly, the large petty-bourgeois composition of our Party membership in New York is a major factor in the strength and stubbornness of chauvinist prejudices.

The second major reason for this situation results directly from the unfolding of the aggressive postwar policies of American imperialism and its intensive war preparations. Emerging out of this war, Ameri-

can imperialism set itself, for the first time in an immediate and practical way, the objective of achieving a position of world domination. Any ruling class that sets itself the objective of achieving a position of world domination must buttress this objective ideologically and politically. The goal of world domination requires the building up in a people of a feeling of national "superiority" over all other peoples, an ideology and outlook of chauvinist nationalism. It is precisely this type of ideology, an ideology of Anglo-Saxon "superiority" and chauvinism, that has been intensively built up in our country since the end of the war. The Negro people are the chief target of this heightened building up of a chauvinist national outlook in our country. This heightened chauvinist nationalism resulting directly from the drive of American imperialism exerts a tremendous pressure on all sections of the people and penetrates into the ranks and organizations of the working class. Unless combatted in an altogether new way, in a way different from what has been necessary at any other time in the history of our country, this growth of national chauvinism could not help but corrupt increasing sections of the working class and penetrate even within our own Party.

The third major reason for this situation arises from the fact that our Party has not deeply enough grasped the fact that the need for a

resolute struggle against white chauvinism arises, not only from considerations of the internal ideological and political health of our Party, but primarily because the working class in this period of its development is confronted with immediate tasks which it cannot cope with unless its advanced and organized sections free themselves from the ideological attitude and approach of the capitalist class to the Negro people.

This has been most dramatically illustrated by the experience of the CIO Southern organizing drive. This CIO Southern organizing drive was perhaps the most important undertaking of the labor movement since the 1936 period when the CIO was organized. Its success would not only have been a major factor in the transformation of the South and the raising of wages and working conditions for a major section of the working class, but would also have immeasurably strengthened the economic and political position of the trade-union movement throughout the whole of the United States.

The CIO approached this drive from an organizational point of view as a major undertaking, throwing in large number of organizers and large amounts of money. And yet, two years after this drive has started, it is necessary to say that it has been an almost complete failure. The central reason for this is that the drive was organized and con-

ducted on the basis of a chauvinist rejection of the leading and decisive role of the Negro worker in the South. This adoption by the top leadership of the CIO of the chauvinist approach of the Southern ruling class toward the Negro people guaranteed the failure of this most vital and important undertaking of organized labor. Could one ask for a more dramatic demonstration of the fact that labor cannot meet and solve its own problems unless it frees itself from the chauvinist ideology of the capitalist class? Could one ask for a more dramatic illustration of the damage that this ideology does, not only to the Negro people, but to the whole of the labor movement?

The same thing that has happened in this Southern organizing drive is duplicated to one degree or another and on a smaller scale in every local, in every plant and in every industry throughout the country.

The task before our Party, therefore, is not only one of developing a relentless struggle within our own ranks against white chauvinism—and this is a precondition for everything else—but is also one of developing a mass fight that will influence the maximum sections of the white working class and people's forces in the direction of rejection of white chauvinism and the adoption of a working-class outlook toward the Negro people.

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The State Committee of our Party in New York has approached the problem of bringing about a speedy and basic change in the present unsatisfactory situation with two major objectives in mind: First, the unfolding of an energetic and uncompromising ideological, political and organizational struggle against white chauvinism in the ranks of our Party. Second, the development on a more specific basis and a broader scale of our Party's initiative and activity on all fronts of the struggle for Negro rights.

These objectives are integrally linked. The struggle within our Party against white chauvinism can develop effectively only if it takes place in an atmosphere of an aggressive unfolding of our Party's mass activity in the struggle for Negro rights. The mass activity of our Party cannot be unfolded unless the ideology of the class enemy, the ideology of "white supremacy," is continuously fought against and liquidated.

Any tendency in our Party to develop the struggle against white chauvinism as an academic and scholastic discussion must be rejected. The struggle on the ideological front is as much a class battle as the struggle on the economic and political fronts. The development of a scholastic debate on chauvinism in our Party could only result in turning our Party away from strug-

gle on the economic and political front for Negro rights and would thus strengthen the main expression of white chauvinism in our ranks, passivity in the struggle for Negro rights. This would be the surest way to guarantee the continuation and growth of chauvinism. Further, many expressions of chauvinism come into the open and can be combated effectively only when Party organizations and comrades are confronted with mass tasks in connection with the struggle for Negro rights.

All tendencies to underestimate the decisive importance of developing the Party's struggle on the ideological and political fronts against white chauvinism must be rejected with equal decisiveness. In the trade union movement and in other phases of Party mass activity, there is a tendency to pit practical work against ideological and political struggle. Comrades sometimes say that what is decisive and what the Negro people are concerned about is not social and ideological manifestations of chauvinism, but the struggle for jobs and economic gains. This, of course, is not true and is itself an expression of chauvinism. The Negro people are vitally concerned about all forms of national oppression, including social, political and ideological expressions of that oppression. Further, these practical workers forget that the ideology of the Southern plantation owners and the American imperialists, namely,

the ideology of "white supremacy," is very poor equipment with which to fight for working-class policies and objectives on the economic and political fronts. They forget that only comrades who are convinced of the theoretical correctness of our Party's position on the Negro question, who have freed themselves from the ideological approach of the capitalist class toward the Negro people, can fight resolutely and effectively for our Party's program and for the alliance of the working class and the Negro people.

The unity of these two objectives (the unfolding of an uncompromising struggle against white chauvinism and the intensification of our Party's activities in this field of struggle for Negro rights) expresses the unity of our Party's theory and practice. There can be no separation of our theory and practice with regard to the struggle for Negro rights. This is the first guiding principle of our Party's approach.

The development of effective struggle against white chauvinism requires the proper combination of ideological and political forms of struggle with organizational measures, and the utilization of the weapon of Party discipline.

It would be wrong to make the starting point of the struggle against white chauvinism in the ranks of our Party the utilization of organizational measures and Party discipline. The starting point is organization of struggle against chau-

vinism on the ideological and political fronts. For this reason, our Party is conducting classes in all Party clubs on the basis of a special outline setting forth its theoretical and programmatic position on the Negro question. It is demanding that all Party committees devote central attention to a creative development and application of our Party's policies in relation to the struggle for Negro rights. It is demanding that all our Party comrades, and especially our leading comrades, devote themselves to basic reading and study on this question. For this reason thorough and patient discussions are organized drawing the lessons and conclusions from specific manifestations of white chauvinism.

It would be equally wrong, however, to permit or tolerate reluctance in the utilization of organizational and disciplinary measures, including expulsion, in order to root out chauvinist practices whenever and wherever comrades responsible for these practices resist correction, or when the particular practices and acts are of sufficient gravity to demand disciplinary action.

White chauvinism is the expression within the ranks of our Party of the influence of the class enemy. In this period, it is the expression within our Party of one of the major ideological weapons of the most war-minded and fascist-minded sections of the capitalist class. Reluctance to develop a struggle against white chauvinism and to

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utilize all weapons—political, ideological and organizational—in the struggle against it, is a most virulent and vicious form of opportunism in our Party.

No vicious and virulent expression of the ideology of the class enemy, such as white chauvinism; no virulent and vicious form of opportunism such as the reluctance to struggle against white chauvinism, can be successfully fought by political and ideological measures alone. Such a struggle always requires a proper combination of political and organizational forms of struggle. That is why our Party in the struggle against white chauvinism is not hesitating to apply organizational measures and Party discipline, including when necessary the extreme weapon of expulsion. That is why our Party is fighting to overcome in its ranks any hesitation, any reluctance, to the application of organizational and disciplinary measures in the struggle mercilessly to stamp out and uproot white chauvinism.

The 1945 Special Convention, which cast off Browderism, reconstituted our Party and equipped it with a correct main line and an effective body of policies and tactics,

thereby laying the foundation for a great stride forward in our Party's fight to consolidate a solid alliance between the working class and the Negro people. The December 1946 Plenum which, on the basis of the correct main line of our Party, elaborated our theoretical and programmatic position on the Negro question, was another great stride forward.

Our Party is the standard-bearer of the cause of the working class, and therefore of the Negro people as well. We have every possibility of quickly overcoming the present unsatisfactory situation in our Party, the present shortcomings of our Party's activity in the struggle against white chauvinism and for Negro rights. By moving with all speed and all energy on this question, we can decisively strengthen all aspects of Party work. The present sharpened struggle against white chauvinism, which is being unfolded by our Party, will prove to be of historic value in the consolidation of the alliance of the working class and the Negro people, in the battle to check fascism and war, in the development of the struggle for socialism in America.

Defend and Extend the Rights of Negro Workers

by John Williamson

AMONG THE MANY initial consequences of the developing economic crisis, one thing is outstanding. The Negro workers are carrying the main burden.

Incomplete data available at this time disclose the following variety of facts:

1. In New York, 20 percent of all unemployed are Negro workers; in Chicago and Toledo, about 50 percent; in Omaha, 25 percent; and in Detroit, 70 percent of all those on relief rolls are Negro workers.

2. In Michigan, William H. Oliver, Co-Director of the Fair Practices and anti-Discrimination Department of the United Auto Workers, told the State Public Affairs Committee on March 23, 1949, that "in recent months 75 percent of all unskilled jobs were closed to non-whites." Further, "in 1945 non-white placements (through the Michigan Employment Service) were 16.5 percent of the total placements. In 1946, non-white placements dropped to 12.3 percent. In 1947, they were 10.3 percent. In the first six months of 1948—10.4 percent. At the same time, applications for jobs from non-white workers are growing. The Michigan Employment Service had 13 percent more non-white applicants in May 1948 than in the same period the

year before."

3. In Akron, the Ohio Employment Service Bureau states that the firing of Negro workers accounts for 25.4 percent of the decrease in employment in 1948 (chiefly in the rubber industry) while the total decrease of all workers (*inclusive* of Negroes) was only 15.6 percent.

4. In the unionized electrical shops in Ohio, the number of Negro workers employed dropped in the past year from about 6,000 to 4,000. A typical example is the Cleveland plant of the National Carbon Co., which one year ago employed more than 300 Negro workers and today employs only sixty.

5. In Illinois, unemployment increased from 101,000 on November 15, 1948, to 175,000 on January 15, 1949, with further increases since then. In the same period, unemployment among Negro workers increased from 20,000 to 38,000. Approximately 22 percent of all currently unemployed workers in Illinois are Negroes. Further, we have the fact that 50.9 percent of all Illinois firms refuse to employ Negroes, while in 72 percent of all Illinois firms, Negro workers make up less than 10 percent of the employment.

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of New Jersey 25 percent of the 7,000 workers employed during the war were Negroes. Today, with employment cut to 2,500, only 200 Negro workers remain.

7. During the war, 8,000 Negro workers, two-thirds of them skilled or semi-skilled, were employed by the Glen Martin Aircraft Co. in Baltimore; today, there are practically no Negro workers left. In the same city, Western Electric employed 1,200 Negro workers as of V-J Day, but today no more than 100 are left.

8. In Connecticut during the war, there were nearly 10,000 Negro workers in the brass industry, but today the number has been reduced to 2,000. Additional figures for this state are provided in the following table:

	Total workers during the war	Negroes during the war	Total workers now	Negroes now
General Electric	13,000	1,500	5,500	400
Bridgeport Brass	6,000	1,500	3,000	300
Remington Arms	13,000	1,000	3,500	100
Chance-Vought	15,000	1,000	Plant moved to Texas	

9. In the steel industry, employment is now beginning to drop and the Negro worker finds the possibility of being hired sharply curtailed. Where there are exceptions to this, the Negro worker is more and more being sharply limited to common labor and to the coke-oven departments.

10. In San Diego, the Ryan Aircraft Co. which employed several hundred Negro workers during the war, now has only twenty Negro workers.

These reports, and many more from all parts of the country, show the disproportionate layoffs of Negro workers, and in some cases, the virtual exclusion of Negro workers from shops; and the substantial percentage (sometimes a majority) of Negro workers on city home relief or unemployment insurance.

It is crystal clear that not only are Negro workers discriminated against and sometimes completely excluded when applying for jobs, but that even those jobs secured during the war by Negro workers are also being systematically taken away.

"THE LAST HIRED AND THE FIRST FIRED"

It is very often said that this is

"nothing new," that this is "merely a manifestation of that long-existing condition" of the Negro worker being "the last hired and first fired." Actually, the present condition is only the result of the *calm acceptance* by the trade unions of this vicious policy of the bourgeoisie.

Shall the labor movement accept this discriminatory status of Negro workers in industry as unchangeable? We say *no!* We Communists say the time has come when the labor movement must not take this

situation for granted. We emphasize that the mere repetition of the phrase "last to be hired and first to be fired" without a powerful struggle against this policy of the bosses will lead to our being dulled into acceptance of it as a "natural" thing. We declare that the time has come for a fundamental evaluation by the labor movement of the fundamental meaning—for white workers as well as Negro—of the condition described in these brutal words, "last to be hired and first to be fired."

The calm acceptance of this situation means that millions of Negro workers are refused employment, forced out of industry, denied the opportunity to accumulate seniority, not allowed to make their contribution to the trade-union movement, and in this period, obliged to bear the most terrible consequences of the developing economic crisis.

These developments constitute a serious threat, not only to the status and role of the Negro workers, but to the entire working class and the whole labor movement. This situation creates the grave danger:

(a) That the Negro workers will lose all the gains of recent years by being completely or substantially excluded from the majority of industries and shunted off to menial service jobs. Such a development would, by the same token, threaten the gains of the white workers and deprive the trade unions of much of their militant, fighting membership;

(b) That the Negro workers will

lose all confidence in the trade unions and that the pro-employer forces will attempt to use the legitimate discontent of the Negro workers in order to divide the working class and seriously weaken the labor movement.

An example of this development can be seen in a recent editorial in the *Pittsburgh Courier* which demagogically states regarding the fight to repeal the Taft-Hartley Act:

It is obvious to anybody able to read plain English that it [the Taft-Hartley Act] protects the individual (Negro, Jewish or Mexican) worker against arbitrary and oppressive union actions or restrictions which have historically kept the Negro workers confined to certain types of low-paid work while leaving the more lucrative jobs to a white labor aristocracy.

Consistent with its policy of alienating the Negro people from its vital ally, the working class, this paper goes on to defend the Taft-Hartley slave labor law:

The fact that the National Labor Relations Board has avoided interpreting these provisions in the manner clearly intended is largely due to the natural opposition of labor lobbyists and to the failure of Negro organizations to make an issue of it because their representatives were too busy denouncing the Taft-Hartley Act as such.

(c) That the Negro worker will be deprived of his legitimate place in the trade-union movement, thereby weakening the working-class move-

ment and at the same its main ally, the Negro people's liberation movement.

FOR A BOLD POLICY AND PROGRAM OF ACTION

The seriousness of this situation must not be minimized. The trade-union movement as a whole has sadly neglected this problem. The Social-Democratic trade-union bureaucrats, like Reuther, Mazey, Carey, etc., in refusing to deal with this seriously acute problem, expose themselves as mere phrasemongers, as lackeys of the capitalist exploiters. The Left- and progressive-led trade unions have not yet grasped the threat to the entire trade-union movement and the need for bold initiative in working out a policy and program of action. At best, they are only dealing with the problem in piecemeal fashion, and at worst, they are evading it altogether.

After the first imperialist world war, when the few Negro workers who had entered industry were ruthlessly thrown out, the trade-union movement was small and the Negro workers, in the main, had not yet gained entry to the labor movement. As a result, there developed among Negro workers mass movements for jobs of a separatist character.

Today, the Negro workers, on the basis of having established their place in industry and made their contributions to the trade-union movement,

legitimately expect the trade unions, and in the first place the Left-progressive forces in the trade unions, to fight unitedly for their right to jobs and against their exclusion from industry.

The situation of the longshoremen on both coasts illustrates this problem very clearly. In New York City, many white longshoremen, with the connivance of the Ryan machine in the International Longshoremen's Association (A. F. of L.), have practically excluded Negro longshoremen from many jobs and from piers where they had worked for years. As a result, the serious danger developed of an actual outbreak of bloody fights between Negro and white—to the benefit of their mutual enemy, the shipowners. The Negro longshoremen are now waging a determined fight (including a daily picket line in front of Ryan's office) to force the I.L.A. to fight for their jobs. The main weakness, however, is the absence of substantial joint participation of white workers.

On the West Coast, where unemployment among longshoremen is also acute, the Right-wing officials in the San Francisco local of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (C.I.O.) recently proposed to reduce the union membership by 1,000 (the majority of whom are Negro workers hired during the war) and thus eliminate these 1,000 workers from the industry. For a time, there was even inde-

cisiveness on the part of some progressive leaders of the International, but this reactionary proposal was finally defeated by a substantial majority, and under the leadership of the International a policy of fighting for jobs for *all* the members is being adopted.

The trade unions must recognize, fully and clearly, that the Negro workers are determined to fight for their jobs, and that they desire and expect the white workers and the trade unions to join them and give leadership in this fight.

This means that the trade-union movement—15 million strong—must boldly assume the initiative for working out a common approach with the Negro workers to wage an all-out fight to secure jobs for the Negro workers and to abolish all discrimination in hiring, seniority, and upgrading. To this end, the trade unions should raise and fight for the following demands:

1. All rehiring of workers must include Negroes;
2. Upgrading of Negro workers and the opening up of all skilled jobs to Negro workers;
3. An end to lily-white shops and industries. (This is still a serious problem not only in Right-led unions, but in some plants and industries organized by Left-progressive-led unions, such as in General Electric, Westinghouse, etc.);
4. An end to white chauvinism among trade unionists. The progressives must intensify the struggle to

elect representative Negro members to posts of national, intermediate, and local union leadership. The situations in the United Steel Workers' Union, and in the United Auto Workers' Union are particularly scandalous in this regard, inasmuch as Negro workers there constitute a substantial section of the membership and are systematically excluded from leadership. Most of the Left- and progressive-led trade unions have recognized this problem and Negro workers are to be found as an active force in national leadership. One important exception to this is still the United Electrical and Radio Workers' Union (U.E.), which, despite certain very good activities in support of the Trenton Six, has not yet faced up to the task of promoting and integrating Negro members into all levels of leadership, including national leadership. If the present progressive leadership continues to neglect this task, one may expect that the Careys will soon exploit this weakness of the progressive leadership demagogically.

5. In addition, the unions must display special alertness to organize a broad fight for the demands of unemployed Negro workers.

ON THE RIGHT OF JOB SENIORITY

Nearly everyone in the Left-progressive camp in the trade-union movement agrees in words with the general demand, "Prevent the Dis-

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proportionate Layoffs of Negro Workers—Maintain the Job Status of the Negro Worker." Progressives also agree in words to fight against the efforts of white chauvinist employers, or of workers influenced by the poisonous white chauvinist ideology of the bosses, to squeeze Negro workers out of the plants. However, there is the greatest hesitancy in boldly outlining a policy that will translate such views into life, because this means bringing the traditional trade-union policy on seniority into accord with this objective.

Even among some Left-progressive trade-union leaders, the argument is heard that to modify the seniority system in any way in order to prevent the exclusion of Negro workers from industry is to "run the risk of destroying the union." *What must be understood is that failure to find, and worse still, to seek a proper answer to this problem creates an even greater danger of the trade unions being destroyed.*

The adoption at the present time of a fighting policy by the trade unions on seniority as related to the Negro worker is only a part of the whole fight to wipe out the practice of the Negro worker being "last to be hired and first to be fired." What is really involved is the *restoration of a right long denied* to the Negro worker through no fault of his own.

The Negro worker has been denied the right and opportunity to accumulate job security over the years because of the bourgeoisie's systema-

tic discrimination against Negroes, because large sections of the white workers, at a peril to their own interests, did not struggle against the divide-and-rule strategy of the trusts, and because a majority of trade-union officials have pursued a white chauvinist and opportunist position.

While the determination of the exact forms of resolving this problem rests with the white and Negro workers in their trade unions, the Negro workers are expecting the Left- and progressive-led trade unions to take the initiative and give leadership on this question.

A number of partial and temporary proposals have been offered, such as: application of seniority on a plant-wide basis, instead of on a departmental basis; and in the event of a layoff that would affect the majority of Negro workers in a plant, the temporary measure might be considered of spreading the work on the basis of a reduced work-week, thereby retaining everyone on the job.

The central question is the retroactive granting of the right of job seniority to Negro workers. Without this, all other measures will be incomplete. Consideration should be given in local unions, or by an entire International union, to granting all Negro workers an automatic accumulation of an agreed-upon number of years' seniority (say, ten years) and then applying seniority equally to all thereafter. This would be a challenge and reply to the employers'

policy of systematic exclusion of Negroes from industry.

The decisive thing that must be understood, irrespective of what forms are finally worked out by the trade unions, is that this whole struggle is a principled one, involving not only rights of the Negro workers, but the gains which the entire working class has made in the recent years.

Immediately after the war, when the Communist Party first proposed the idea of seniority adjustments by the trade unions to prevent the bosses from firing Negro workers *en masse*, considerable discussion, but little or no action, resulted. We must recognize today that failure at that time to fight through on this issue to a satisfactory conclusion increases the difficulty today.

To meet and solve this problem effectively, the trade unions must not limit their approach to this question as though it were merely "another" trade-union issue. It is because of just such a narrow approach that even Left-progressive trade unionists, who have constantly fought for jobs for Negroes, for upgrading, for election of Negro workers to all posts of leadership in the trade unions, etc., have often failed to find an effective answer.

This question is, and must be presented as, a political issue of the highest urgency. The workers must see the struggle for defense of the job of the Negro worker, and the adjustment of seniority, from the

standpoint of:

1. The very life and unity of the unions and their ability to defend the interests of all members. Failure to fight for jobs for Negro workers plays into the hands of the employers and all the forces of reaction and jeopardizes the existence of the union itself.

2. The struggle to unite the working class to defeat the threat of fascism in our country. The Communist Party emphasizes the importance of the problem and the urgent need of defending the unity of Negro and white in the trade unions and of rebuilding the alliance between labor and the Negro people that the pro-imperialist trade-union bureaucrats are severing. To cement a new Negro-labor alliance on a level even higher than in the past, the white workers must fulfill their responsibility toward the doubly-oppressed Negro workers by initiating a common struggle against the Jim-Crow policies of Wall Street and its white chauvinist agents in the trade-union movement.

Faced with the fact that our Party has played an important role in this struggle, the reactionary Social-Democrats, in their usual hypocritical manner, of course, try to distort the Communist position. Thus, in a full-page advertisement inserted in the *Pittsburgh Courier* on April 16, the Reuther-Mazey Executive Board of the U.A.W. stated that the Communists at the end of the war had "tried to get the C.I.O. to go for a system

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of Jim Crow in union plants." The advertisement went on:

They wanted a special quota of Negroes to be kept on jobs to which they were promoted during the war—in violation of all the principles of union seniority. This gage would have broken down the very principle of union seniority by which unions won promotions for Negroes to higher-paid jobs during the war.

To refer to an effort to solve the problem of preventing the exclusion of Negro workers from industry as "a system of Jim-Crow seniority" only serves to expose all the more the basic anti-Negro, white chauvinist thinking and practice of the present U.A.W. leadership.

JIM CROW A LA SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY

This advertisement also tries, in very sly fashion, to shift the accusation of white chauvinism from their own shoulders—where it naturally belongs!—to the shoulders of the Communists, on still another basis. It shamelessly labels as a "Jim-Crow proposition" the Party's struggle to get Negroes elected to posts of leadership in the union! The advertisement states that "The Communist Party has consistently tried to get a Negro elected (as a Negro) to the Executive Board of the U.A.W.-C.I.O." The conventions of the U.A.W. have rejected this "scheme," the advertisement continues, in the usual double-talk of these "socialist" lackeys of the automobile magnates,

"because it is a Jim-Crow proposition, just as much so as if it were a segregated room in a hotel, a seat on a train, or a place to eat in a restaurant."

This technique of excluding Negroes from the U.A.W. leadership under the pretense of opposing Jim Crow discloses the demagogic hand of what Lenin once termed the "Social-Chauvinist"—he who talks socialism and practices chauvinism. However, the end result is in no way different from that which obtains in an openly Jim-Crow union or from the open chauvinism of a Rieve (also a Social-Democrat!) who doesn't want to "hurt the feelings" of the K.K.K.-influenced worker. Like too many other unions, the U.A.W. does not have a single Negro worker among its national officers or on the General Executive Board. But when challenged, these U.A.W. leaders dare to yell "Jim Crow" against precisely those Left forces in the trade unions who have fought most energetically for upgrading of Negro workers to all skilled trades and who have elected Negro workers to all levels of trade-union leadership.

In every trade union, whether C.I.O., A. F. of L., or Independent, a continuous struggle must be conducted to convince all the workers that their interests, including the very preservation and building of their unions, demand the election of militant, progressive Negro workers to positions of operative leadership.

The Executive Council of the A.

F. of L. still has not a single Negro member. The United Steel Workers, headed by C.I.O. President Philip Murray, about 10 per cent of whose members are Negroes, has not a single Negro on the Executive Board or among its officers, and there are less than a score of Negro workers among the several hundred organizers and other staff members.

However, the Left-progressive forces in the C.I.O. must recognize that there are also similar and serious weaknesses in some of the Left-progressive-led trade unions, and if the membership and leadership do not take steps to change this picture drastically, it will be more difficult for the steel workers to wage their struggles successfully.

CHAUVINISM: IMPERIALIST INFECTION

For reasons that are well known, opportunism among trade-union leaders under monopoly capitalism could almost be described as an "occupational disease." The two most virulent forms of this opportunism consist in the tendencies toward "pure-and-simple" trade unionism and to capitulation to the bourgeoisie's white chauvinist pressures on the workers. Both these aspects of opportunism must be combatted vigorously and driven out as a constant threat and danger to the workers and to the whole labor movement.

All Communist trade unionists, especially trade-union leaders, would do well to re-study Lenin's estimate

of opportunism and of chauvinism, which may briefly be summarized as follows: Chauvinism proceeds from opportunism. Opportunism means sacrificing the fundamental interests of the masses, of the class, to the temporary interests of a minority of the workers. It means an alliance of a part of the workers with the bourgeoisie against the mass of the working class and particularly against its most exploited and oppressed sections. (See Lenin's castigation of the Social-Chauvinists, *Collected Works*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 229 ff.)

Chauvinism is opportunism full-blown. It is the imperialist infection of the working class. It means the open alliance of a section of the working class with the capitalist class, the support of the "right" of the bourgeoisie to oppress and wage war against colonial and semi-colonial peoples. And today, when Wall Street is out to achieve domination of the world, chauvinism means supporting the "right" of the barons of U.S. finance capital to turn the whole capitalist world into a gigantic colonial dependency of the U.S. and to unleash imperialist war against the Soviet Union, the People's Democracies, and the freedom-striving colonial peoples. In the United States proper, chauvinism takes the main form of white chauvinism, of supporting the "right" of the white bourgeoisie to oppress the Negro people in the most brutal fashion.

The struggle in the trade unions

for a correct policy and program to defend and extend the rights of Negro workers must be carried to the whole rank and file. Discussions among top leaders—discussions that should be held—will have more meaning if the membership is systematically educated on this vital question and brings its full pressure

to bear. But the membership, as well as the leadership, of the trade unions will understand this question and meet the issue only if our Party forces engage in a thorough discussion of this question and throw themselves into the struggle with great clarity and energy.

The Communist Party: Champion Fighter for Negro Rights

by James W. Ford

WHITE CHAUVINISM is an integral part of monopoly capital's whole pattern of national oppression of the Negro people. A whole host of bourgeois reformist, Social-Democratic, and outright fascist propagandists and government officials have long poisoned the atmosphere of our country with the racist "theory" of the "inherent inferiority" of Negroes.

The chauvinistic doctrine of white "superiority," designed to block the path of struggle for Negro rights and full emancipation, is as old as the American nation itself.* This pernicious ideology has been sys-

* The American Revolution opened up a new era, that of bourgeois democracy. But already when the foundation of the American nation was being laid, the Southern colonists, thriving on the slave trade and on Negro slavery, began to organize their power around the ideology of white "superiority." In fact, the Federal government itself, from the moment of its founding, was nurtured on the ferocious suppression of African peoples by the privileged classes. "If it had not been conceded that three-fifths of the slaves should be counted in the apportionment of representatives in Congress in 1787," wrote the liberal bourgeois politician, James G. Blaine, in his history, *Twenty Years of Congress*, "the Thirteen States would not have been able to form a more perfect union." And "if the African slave trade had not been permitted to continue for twenty more years," he continued, the Southern slave owners would not have accepted the Constitution. To the majority of the government—the merchant capitalists of the North and the Southern slave owners alike—a Negro was not a man at all. He was a beast of burden; at most, he was only three-fifths of a man.

tematically used by the white ruling class to divide exploited and oppressed masses, Negro and white, in order to weaken their forces and block the progress of their struggle against the common oppressor. Today, notwithstanding their claims about "defending democracy," the American monopolists, faced with growing mass opposition at home and abroad to their imperialist offensive for world domination, are fanning with unprecedented intensity sentiments of extreme chauvinist nationalism. This wave of chauvinism is directed especially against Negroes at home, and against the working classes and peoples throughout the world.

As we know, Wall Street imperialism, which received only a comparatively small share of the spoils of Africa in the 19th century, and which is being thrown out of China and other once-lucrative colonial and dependent areas, is following in the footsteps of its Nazi predecessors, is out to enslave Africa and its peoples. At home and abroad, the least demand for better conditions or the least expression of national self-respect on the part of Ne-

goes is enough to bring on the most ferocious brutality, which they are expected to accept without protest. But the protests and struggles of the people of Africa are rising in reply. Waves of strikes and people's revolts, far exceeding anything the imperialists have encountered since the "rosy dawn of capitalist production" on the basis of African slavery, are sweeping almost all of what is called Black Africa. Likewise in the United States, the Negro people seethe with indignation over their brutal oppression by Wall Street financiers in alliance with the Southern Bourbons.

At the time of the American Revolution, there was as yet no modern American working class capable of waging independent struggles for its own demands or for Negro rights. Indeed, a modern working class of sufficient numbers and strength did not arise in the United States until after the Civil War, although the Northern workers played an important role in the military defeat of the Southern slavocracy. As Karl Marx wrote:

In the United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralyzed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded.*

Here, with startling clarity, Marx foresaw the Negro question in the United States as a special question

of utmost significance to the working class in its immediate and basic struggles and of utmost importance for the democratic development of the whole country. It is a historical fact that since that time the Negro people have been a source of great strength to the democratic forces within our country and to the whole working class. That is why the capitalist rulers of our country have found it so profitable to fan white chauvinist sentiments and to strive to break, in every possible way, the developing alliance of the working class and the Negro people. That is why Marxist-Leninists have stressed for so long the vital importance, for the white working class and all progressive forces, as well as for the Negro people, of the struggle to root out and destroy white chauvinism and to build a powerful alliance between labor and the Negro people.

* * *

The history of the American Communist Party has proved the correctness of the views of Marxism-Leninism. By its unceasing struggles, our Party, founded in 1919, has made tremendous contributions not only to the winning of significant working-class victories of great immediate and long range interest, but also, immeasurably, to advancing the national liberation struggles of the Negro people.

Our Party, from its birth, has been the first and only political party to fight, in the North and in the South,

* *Capital*, Vol. I, p. 329.

for the unconditional equality of the Negro people and for their full emancipation. Our Party was born out of the struggles of the Marxist core in the old Socialist Party against the opportunism and chauvinism of the controlling leadership, and of militant trade unionists who came to Communism through parallel paths of struggle.

Opportunist Social-Democracy flouted the miseries, sufferings, and revolutionary potentialities of the impoverished and cruelly oppressed Negro masses. Prior to the founding of the Communist Party, radical working-class groups in general—Socialists, anarchists, syndicalists, and dissident elements in the Socialist Labor Party—while claiming adherence to working-class internationalism and some even to Marxism, maintained erroneous views on the Negro question. They admitted the abusive nature of the capitalist system, and that Negroes were robbed and oppressed with special intensity. But admitting all this, they refrained from struggling for the *special* demands of the doubly-oppressed Negroes and particularly of Negro workers. They made fine speeches and verbal protests about the position of Negroes, but yielded in varying degrees to the bourgeois ideology of white "superiority." This approach determined the objective role in the labor movement of these groupings. Despite minor differences in their views on this

question, their policies definitely blocked the growing struggles of the Negro masses against U.S. imperialism.

Nor was it an accident that the true policy of Social-Democracy began to show itself most openly after World War I, when the hunger program of Wall Street opened with an offensive against the labor movement and a drive to prevent the organization of the basic industries, to cut wages, unleash terror against the progressive forces, suppress the political rights of the workers, and violently intimidate and repress the Negro people. The Social-Democrats and reactionary labor reformists, in true opportunist fashion, ignored or paid mere lip-service to the demands of the workers for unionization, wage increases, and unemployment and social insurance. On the political scene, they abandoned all defense of the democratic rights of the people, failed to demand or openly opposed U.S. recognition of the Soviet Union, did not speak out for defense of the Chinese people, and—as part of this policy of betrayal—turned their back on the struggle for equal rights for the Negro people.

The Gompers-Hillquit leadership in the trade unions and in the Socialist Party served as a transmission belt of white chauvinism from the monopolists to the labor movement. They alleged that Negroes were "strikebreakers" and that white workers would not join them in

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struggle or permit them to enter industry or the trade unions. As a reaction to this, the Negro petty bourgeoisie spread distrust of the labor movement among Negroes; they said that the white working class would never be the friend and ally of the Negro people.

Both groups hindered the development of working-class unity. Negro workers suffered all the miseries of the working class, and in addition, special, national oppression—Jim Crow discrimination and segregation, and lynch terror. It was the Communist Party which sounded the warning that if labor failed to gain the confidence of the Negroes it would lose a valuable and indispensable ally in the struggle against capital while, at the same time, Negro workers would not be able to win full and equal rights to jobs and working conditions.

Only by waging an ideological struggle against the pro-imperialist views in general of the Social-Democratic and reformist leaders, and more particularly in regard to the problems of the Negro masses, was the Communist Party able to clear the path for working-class unity of white workers and the emerging Negro proletariat. By its struggles against white chauvinism and for Negro rights, our Party began to create an atmosphere of mutual confidence between Negro and white workers. Our Party began to popularize the statement of Marx that no nation can be free that en-

slaves another nation.

Our Party pointed out that although the influx of Negro workers in the Northern industrial centers had provided the basis for a mass unionization of Negro industrial workers, the anti-Negro policy of the labor officialdom stood in the way of organizing these industrial workers. At its 1922 convention, the Party adopted a program calling for full support to the struggles of the Negro people for economic, political, and social equality; for a struggle against white chauvinism; and for solid union in struggle against the common capitalist oppressors. The Party pointed out that precisely in those industries (such as steel) and in those areas (the South) where chauvinism was the strongest and where Negro oppression was the sharpest, the conditions of the white workers were the most degrading. The systematic exclusion of Negro workers from the trade unions stood in the way of organizing the mass-production industries. To support the Negro liberation movement, not in words alone, but with deeds, and to build a genuine solidarity of Negro and white workers—this was the approach of our Party.

To carry out this program, an early task of the Party was to struggle against white chauvinism in its own ranks. Party members who were found to be affected by the poison of white chauvinism were educated on the nature and pur-

poses of this bourgeois ideology, and those who persisted in their chauvinist views or practices were expelled. This policy won for the Party staunch supporters among the Negro people and among the best elements of the working class.

Following World War I, the Negro people manifested splendid militancy in struggle. In more than a dozen cities, North and South, they took to mass struggle to defend themselves against armed attacks by lynch mobs. For the first time since Reconstruction, the Southern countryside—Tulsa (Oklahoma) and Elaine (Arkansas)—flared up in militant mass actions. And when we remember that simultaneously with these actions of the Negro masses the organized workers were engaged in tremendous strike struggles in the steel, meat-packing, mining and other industries, we see the situation out of which arose the tasks of the young Communist Party. Manifestly, a Party so recently formed, ideologically still immature, and beset by the notorious Palmer raids, had enormous difficulties in coming forward as an influential factor in the life of the Negro people. As a result of this, also, the Party had not yet mastered fully the scientific, Marxist-Leninist understanding of the true character of the Negro question as a national question, as is testified by the use of the term "race" instead of "nation" in its early resolutions and programs.

In 1924, the Communists took

part in the "race conference" of Negroes known as the "Negro Sanhedrin" which was held in Chicago. The conference was called by petty-bourgeois fraternal and other Negro organizations. Through its delegates, our Party submitted an extensive labor program which, however, was rejected by the petty-bourgeois elements. The potentially powerful revolutionary sentiment among the Negro people was in the early 1920's largely under the influence of petty-bourgeois utopianism, which diverted the attention of Negroes away from decisive struggle against the monopolist oppressors into channels of reformism, philanthropy, "return to Africa" movements, etc. In their servile acceptance of the imperialist theories of Negro "inferiority," "imitativeness," and "servility," certain Negro petty-bourgeois leaders denied the leading role of Negro workers in resisting imperialist terror and oppression and the possibility of common struggle of Negro and white workers against capital. They even went so far as to peddle the shameful slander that "Negroes [meaning, themselves] consider themselves too dependent upon white America [meaning, the white ruling class] to take any chance at losing the crusts thrown to them..." They set themselves against the Communist policy of militant struggle, claiming that "every Negro knows that what he has obtained from white men has been through

diplomacy." They held that resistance by Negroes would do "damage" to "race relations."

But by their action, which was discussed in the Negro press, the Communists succeeded in boldly presenting the Party's stand on the pressing labor and broad issues facing the Negroes and in laying the basis for further extending the idea of labor organization among them.

During all of this early period, the Communist Party was hammering out its program of struggle for Negro rights. At its Fourth National Convention, held in Chicago in 1924, the Party worked out a concrete program for the abolition of all discriminatory practices against unorganized Negro workers, and for their organization in the same unions with white workers on the basis of complete equality of membership, equality of the right to employment in all branches of industry, and equal pay for equal work. All slogans of equality which were current among the Negro masses and which expressed their aspirations for equal rights in social, political, and economic life were placed among the demands of the Communist Party: "for political equality, the right to vote, social equality, 'economic' equality, abolition of Jim-Crow laws and also Jim-Crow customs not written into law, the right to serve on juries, the abolition of segregation in schools and the right of Negro teachers to teach in all schools; equal rights of soldiers

and sailors in the army and navy without segregation (hotels, theatres, restaurants, etc.), and the abolition of all anti-intermarriage laws." (Resolution of the Fourth National Convention of the Communist Party.)

Our Party took up the struggle to organize Negro farm laborers, tenants, and sharecroppers (together with oppressed white farmers) and strove to bring such organizations into the stream of the general labor movement.

The Communist Party's aim, always in the interest of working-class internationalism and of the liberation of the Negro people, was to imbue the Negro workers with class consciousness, to help them assume their historic place of leadership in the Negro liberation movement, and to crystalize their class consciousness into independent political action, with the white workers, against capitalist exploitation.

An instrument for advancing this struggle in the trade-union movement was the Trade Union Educational League (T.U.E.L.) organized in 1921 and led by William Z. Foster, present Chairman of the Communist Party, and subsequently the Trade Union Unity League (T.U.U.L.), also led by Comrade Foster. The T.U.E.L. became the champion of Negro rights and the promoter of the struggle in the trade unions, against the white chauvinist Gompers bureaucracy. This fight was illuminated by the significant experiences which our Comrade

Foster had gained in his work with Negro workers during the great steel strike of 1919 under his leadership, and during the Chicago packinghouse strike of 1922. Because of the conditions under which the Left-wing trade unionists had to work at that time, the T.U.E.L. activities were mainly agitational and propagandistic. However, the work of the Communists had a tremendous influence in meeting the problems of Negro workers and in strengthening their fight for employment. Subsequently, in the T.U.U.L., more directly organizational work was performed by bringing Negro workers into the young, Left-wing industrial unions which were the forerunners of the C.I.O.*

The establishment of the C.I.O. in 1936 came after almost two decades of struggle led by the Communist and Left-wing trade unionists against the anti-Negro policy in the labor movement, particularly in the A. F. of L.

The toughest task which faced the unions that formed the C.I.O. was organizing the Negro workers in non-discriminatory and unsegregated unions. The present leaders of the C.I.O. well know this. Mr. Philip Murray in particular knows this. It was the problem of organizing the politically and industrially disfranchised Negroes, who, said the Communists, must be accorded the same social, political and industrial

rights as white workers, the right to work in all trades, wage equality and admission to all unions on an equal basis. The steel, automobile, maritime, and other unions of workers in basic industry would never have been successfully organized, had they not tackled and solved the problem of discrimination in unions and on jobs. The successful creation of the C.I.O., based on the fight against Negro discrimination led by the Communists over a period of more than a decade and a half, also had its influence in the A. F. of L. As a result, there are today nearly two million Negro workers in the organized labor movement, as compared to practically none thirty years ago. Thus, the charge of reactionary Social-Democratic and other chauvinist trade-union leaders that Negroes were "strikebreakers" and that white workers "would not join with them" was shattered.

In the early period of its existence, when the Party was driven underground, it found a way to agitate for equal rights for Negroes in all organizations where it exerted influence. The Communist Party worked especially toward ending the disfranchisement of Negroes in the Southern states and to broaden the basis for unity of the Negroes with the Farmer Labor Party. In 1924, the Communists introduced the following plank on Negro equality at the Convention of the Farmer-Labor Party:

The Farmer-Labor Party recognizes

* The author was an organizer of the T.U.E.L. and subsequently director of the Negro Department of the T.U.U.L.

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the particularly vicious economic and political oppression of the Negro race in America and pledges itself to extend its struggle to free all toilers to include the political and industrial emancipation of the Negro toilers and farmers.*

Although the Communists were subsequently excluded from the Convention by the Red-baiters, they had succeeded in raising the political demands of the Negro people before the entire country. Following that, in its own election campaign, particularly in the national elections of 1932-'36-'40, the Communist Party not only ran Negro candidates on its national,** state, and local tickets, but, by the "timeliness of its appeal to the workers of the nation and its unequivocal stand against Jim-Crowism, bigotry and color prejudices" (Associated Negro Press), shook the hold of the two old parties of capitalism on the Negro people.

Real emancipation; full exercise of their right to complete equality; full right to organize, vote, serve on juries and hold public office; equal right to jobs; equal pay for equal work; establishment of heavy penalties against mob murder, floggers, with the death penalty for lynchers; enforcement of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States,

were among some of the basic demands which the Communist Party fought for in its national election campaign. (From the Election Pro-

gram of the Communist Party, 1936.)

The heroic struggles of the sharecroppers' union organized by Communists in Alabama in the early 'thirties electrified the South and had its repercussions throughout the land. The struggle of the sharecroppers' union at Camp Hill, Alabama, prevented the landlords from cutting off food supplies of tenants and stood off the terror of the Alabama landowners. During the years of the "Great Depression," Negro and white farmers and city dwellers, led by Communists, fought together against evictions and for unemployment relief. Some of these battles were furious and bitter. In Chicago, Cleveland, and other major cities, powerful struggles were put up against evictions; in some cases, because of the brutality of the police, workers paid with their lives. Abe Gray was killed by police in Chicago, and soon afterward John Rayford was murdered by Cleveland police at an eviction protest demonstration. Ralph Gray, Negro sharecropper of Camp Hill, heroically gave his life in the fight of the starving 'croppers for bread.

At Gastonia, North Carolina, Negro and white textile workers led by Communists successfully organized into a textile workers union, and, for the first time in the South, white and Negro workers jointly waged a dramatic struggle in a major industry.

In all of these struggles, the Ne-

* *Daily Worker*, June 21, 1924.

** Comrade Ford was Vice-Presidential candidate on the Communist Party ticket in 1932, 1936, and 1940.—*Editor*.

gro question began to loom more and more as a special question. The Communist Party, through its own experiences in leading mass struggles, acquired a clearer understanding of the Negro question as a national question. By the firmer mastery of Marxist-Leninist theory, the Party came to a fuller scientific understanding of the Negro question in the U.S.A. as a national question.

Broader experience and understanding was gained, for example, in the struggle for the freedom of Angelo Herndon, who was convicted by a Georgia court to twenty years on the chain-gang for his part in the leadership of impoverished Negro and white farmers struggling against unemployment and for relief in Atlanta, Georgia. It was gained in the defense of Orphan Jones (Maryland), Willie Patterson (Birmingham), Willie Brown (Philadelphia), and in the defense of literally hundreds of other victims of frame-ups and of attempted legal lynching of Negroes.

The crowning struggle was the epic fight for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys. This struggle reached international proportions. This was not only a battle to save the lives of nine Negro victims of lynch "justice." Through the effective leadership of the Party, that fight was transformed into a flaming symbol of the struggle against the oppression of an entire people based on the plantation system of the South and the survivals

of slavery. The Scottsboro struggle exposed Jim-Crow, segregation, the ruined position of the Negroes in the lynch-ridden South, the impoverishment of the Negro middle classes, the discrimination against Negroes in industry, as flowing from one and the same source, namely, the national oppression of the entire Negro people.

The purpose here is to give only some of the historical milestones achieved by the Communist Party in its championship of the struggle for Negro rights and national liberation.

Our Party was able to register these achievements because it understood that only by the cementing of a firm alliance between the working class and the doubly-oppressed Negro people can the democratic forces withstand and defeat the war-and-fascism offensives of the imperialists; that such an alliance is imperative for achieving the liberation of the Negro people from the yoke of national oppression; and that such an alliance, founded on the unshakable unity of the Negro and white proletariat, is imperative for the qualitative advance of the historic struggle to abolish capitalist exploitation and oppression, and establish socialism. Our Party won for itself the place of champion fighter for the liberation of the Negro people because it translated this understanding into daily struggle for the immediate needs of the Negro people and because it undertook earnest

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struggles against the cancerous ruling-class ideology of white chauvinism.

Earl Browder's "integration" theory eliminated the Marxist-Leninist approach to the Negro question as a national question and dulled the struggle for Negro rights. It could only lead to opportunism and to capitulation to white chauvinism. It could only hold back the working class from forging its historical alliance with the Negro people, from assuming its role of fighter for Negro rights and Negro national liberation. Only by ideologically shattering the opportunist and revisionist views of Browder, was the Party able to clear the path for struggle against white chauvinism and get back on the track of Marxist-Leninist struggle for Negro rights and Negro national liberation. As is evident from the currently intensified struggle which our Party is waging against white chauvinism, Browderism had a demoralizing influence and effect on our Party and on the whole progressive movement. The continued alarming manifestations of white chauvinism within our Party, revealed during the present struggle to burn out that pernicious imperialist infection, also reflect the intensified campaign conducted by the bourgeoisie, as an integral part of its drive toward war and fascism, to poison the minds of the masses with chauvinist nationalism directed, on the home scene, primarily against the Negro people.

Only to the extent that white Communists lead the struggle against white chauvinism and destroy the "privileged" position which white chauvinism accords to whites, can Negro Communists lead an effective and successful struggle against petty-bourgeois reformism and nationalism and thereby cement the alliance between the working class and the doubly-oppressed Negro people.

* * *

Today the reactionary Social-Democratic and reformist trade-union bureaucrats are playing a particularly treacherous role in the Negro people's movement and among Negro workers in the trade unions. They are trying to tie the Negro people to the bipartisan war program of U.S. imperialism. Walter Reuther, Joseph Curran, and other Right-wing and reactionary Social-Democratic leaders are worming themselves into the top leadership of the N.A.A.C.P. and other Negro organizations. But yesterday, under Left-progressive leadership, an outstanding union in the struggle for the equal rights of Negro workers, the National Maritime Union, now under the Curran clique, has become a bitter opponent of the Negro workers. Negro seamen are being barred as a result of Curran's connivance with the shipowners, from skilled and other jobs won during the war. In Southern ports, Curran officials, working together with the brutal police departments, are brow-beating Negro seamen and

telling them to keep "in their place." Similar developments are taking place in other unions led by the Murrays, Rieves, and others of their stripe, not to mention the unions bossed by the A. F. of L. bureaucrats.

Working hand-in-glove with these forces are such Negro reformists in organizations of the Negro people and in the trade unions as Willard Townsend, George Schuyler, etc. Schuyler, for instance—a reformist official of the N.A.A.C.P. under the influence of Social-Democracy—is in the forefront of the anti-Communist campaign. Like a true lackey of the monopolists, whose mind cannot transcend the limits of Jim Crowism imposed by his masters, Schuyler is trying to peddle the nonsense that the Negro community of Harlem is "the most desirable" spot for Negroes in Manhattan. A toady of the imperialists, Schuyler rails in the *Pittsburgh Courier* against the Communists, that it is a "fiction" that Harlem is "dangerously overcrowded, bursting at the seams, with a family tenanting such dingy cubicles." He tries to cover up Harlem's Jim-Crow ghetto status and to head off the mounting resistance of the Negro people to the Wall Street program of hunger, discrimination, and war. He is angered because their resistance is "damaging" to "race relations"—that is, to the whole system of Jim Crow.

In their allegiance to the white bourgeoisie, Negro petty-bourgeois

reformist leaders see the opportunity to carve out "careers" for themselves while the imperialists carry on their looting of the Negro masses here and abroad. For instance, Walter White, Secretary of the N.A.A.C.P., in an article in the *New York Herald-Tribune* entitled, "Dr. Ralph Bunche's Triumphant Success in Palestine Offsets Red Propaganda," writes that this "achievement" by Bunche may prove to be "the most effective answer to Soviet propaganda in Asia and Africa against the United States based on racial and religious prejudice." Mr. White cannot help admitting "racial and religious prejudice" in the United States. But this admission of undeniable facts is only a part of the smokescreen behind which the Anglo-American imperialists carry out their intrigues in Palestine, the whole Middle East, Asia, and Africa. On the part of these careerist agents of imperialism, it is designed to wring "concessions"—for themselves.

* * *

In the light of the foregoing, it is clear that the Negro people have a vital stake in the trial of the twelve Communist leaders in the Federal Court at Foley Square. The presence among our indicted national leaders of such valiant sons of the Negro people as our Comrades Ben Davis and Henry Winston is itself indicative of the fact that in seeking to behead our Party and deprive it of its leadership, the

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bipartisan warmakers are placing in the dock our Party's record as vanguard fighter for the socialist emancipation of all the exploited and the oppressed, and for the national liberation of the Negro people.

In indicting our Party leaders, the monopolists are trampling on the basic democratic rights of the people. This gigantic frame-up, conducted by Tom Clark's attorneys and by Judge Medina in a veritable lynch spirit, is designed, among other things, to smash the Negro people's liberation movement, to gag the Negro masses and bind them to the war chariot of Wall Street.

The Truman Administration, which, with the connivance of the Dixiecrats and the Republicans, has laid the axe to its much-vaunted "Civil Rights" program, charges our Party leaders with the advocacy of force and violence.

Force and violence! The more the big capitalists pile up their instruments of mass murder, the more they intensify their terror against the democratic forces, the more they loot and terrorize the Negro masses—the more they raise the demagogic cry (without offering the least proof, of course) about the "violence" of the Communists.

Force and violence! The crimes of the slaves owners from ancient Roman times down to pre-Civil War days in the South pale into insignificance beside the bloody violence of modern capitalism against the exploited and oppressed of all

lands. Capitalist wealth had its genesis in the plunder, pillaging, and outright massacres of colonial peoples. The "rosy dawn of capitalist production" was based upon African slavery. And capital, in its monopoly stage of development, continues to drip with the life-blood of millions of toilers at home and abroad, and makes recurrent world wars its "way of life"! American history might easily be described as a story of capitalist violence directed against the brutally oppressed and decimated American Indians, against the working class and the poor farmers, and, with special ferocity, against the Negro people.

Only a few weeks ago, the Southern Council for Human Welfare reported on a "Pattern of Violence" in the South including lynchings, shootings, and cross burnings by the Ku Klux Klan. Fifty outstanding crimes in one year—"and many more incidents might have been included"—have been committed "in an atmosphere of violence that permeates the South."

And as we know, the fascist-minded ruling class has increasingly been attempting to make the lynch-ridden South the very model for conditions throughout our country. The police departments from one end of the country to the other have become spearheads of violent intimidation and outright murder of Negro citizens. In New Jersey, six Negroes have been framed up in Trenton and sentenced to death in

an atmosphere of Klan terror and violence. Mrs. Rosa Lee Ingram, and her sons, languish in a Georgia prison, under life sentence for the "crime" of self-defense against white brutality.

It is clear, therefore that the struggle for the defense of our Party leaders, for the development of a mass, nation-wide movement for their unconditional acquittal and release, is intimately bound up with our struggles for Negro rights and for full Negro liberation. This struggle must be brought to the masses of workers, farmers, middle classes, women, and youth—Negro and white—as part of the whole struggle against the Administration's bipartisan war program and the drive to fascism, as part of the whole struggle for the defense of the rights of the Negro people.

Simultaneously, we must intensify the campaign for the rights of the Negro people as part of the struggle against war and fascism, against the lynch-like frame-up of our Party leaders. This means developing uncompromising struggles against every form of oppression, against every wrong and act of discrimination directed against the Negro people, against every manifestation of white chauvinism. This means developing a thousand and one "little" daily struggles which cumulatively, are gathered up and directed, not only against individual anti-Negro acts, but against the entire system of white ruling-class oppression of the Negro people.

Further, our Party must increasingly instill among ever larger masses of Negro workers a heightened political consciousness, drawing them into the arena of historic struggle of the entire American working class for the establishment of a new, socialist society. For, only in this way can the workers—Negro and white in unison—raise their struggles to the level of a fundamental struggle, aimed against the entire abusive system of capitalism. For, only under socialism will all exploitation, oppression, and imperialist violence be brought to a final end; only under socialism will the Negro toilers enjoy full emancipation and full national equality.

On a world scale, the tide is turning in favor of the forces of peace and progress, headed by the Socialist Soviet Union; in favor of the working class and its allies, of the oppressed masses in the imperialist countries, and of the colonial and dependent areas. Each blow struck against the system of Jim Crow and lynch terror, against white chauvinism and any toleration of it, against the national oppression of the Negro people in our country, is a blow struck against the whole tottering system of imperialism. Each blow struck against Negro oppression upsets the calculations of the war-makers, strengthens the forces of peace, strengthens the working class, strengthens the defense of our Party and its heroic leaders, and advances the whole Negro national liberation movement.

An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!

by Claudia Jones

AN OUTSTANDING FEATURE of the present stage of the Negro liberation movement is the growth in the militant participation of Negro women in all aspects of the struggle for peace, civil rights, and economic security. Symptomatic of this new militancy is the fact that Negro women have become symbols of many present-day struggles of the Negro people. This growth of militancy among Negro women has profound meaning, both for the Negro liberation movement and for the emerging anti-fascist, anti-imperialist coalition.

To understand this militancy correctly, to deepen and extend the role of Negro women in the struggle for peace and for all interests of the working class and the Negro people, means primarily to overcome the gross neglect of the special problems of Negro women. This neglect has too long permeated the ranks of the labor movement generally, of Left-progressives, and also of the Communist Party. The most serious assessment of these shortcomings by progressives, especially by Marxist-Leninists, is vitally necessary if we

are to help accelerate this development and integrate Negro women in the progressive and labor movement and in our own Party.

The bourgeoisie is fearful of the militancy of the Negro woman, and for good reason. The capitalists know, far better than many progressives seem to know, that once Negro women undertake action, the militancy of the whole Negro people, and thus of the anti-imperialist coalition, is greatly enhanced.

Historically, the Negro woman has been the guardian, the protector, of the Negro family. From the days of the slave traders down to the present, the Negro woman has had the responsibility of caring for the needs of the family, of militantly shielding it from the blows of Jim-Crow insults, of rearing children in an atmosphere of lynch terror, segregation, and police brutality, and of fighting for an education for the children. The intensified oppression of the Negro people, which has been the hallmark of the postwar reactionary offensive, cannot therefore but lead to an acceleration of the militancy of the Negro woman. As

mother, as Negro, and as worker, the Negro woman fights against the wiping out of the Negro family, against the Jim-Crow ghetto existence which destroys the health, morale, and very life of millions of her sisters, brothers, and children.

Viewed in this light, it is not accidental that the American bourgeoisie has intensified its oppression, not only of the Negro people in general, but of Negro women in particular. Nothing so exposes the drive to fascization in the nation as the callous attitude which the bourgeoisie displays and cultivates toward Negro women. The vaunted boast of the ideologists of Big Business—that American women possess “the greatest equality” in the world is exposed in all its hypocrisy when one sees that in many parts of the world, particularly in the Soviet Union, the New Democracies and the formerly oppressed land of China, women are attaining new heights of equality. But above all else, Wall Street’s boast stops at the water’s edge where Negro and working-class women are concerned. Not equality, but degradation and super-exploitation: this is the actual lot of Negro women!

Consider the hypocrisy of the Truman Administration, which boasts about “exporting democracy throughout the world” while the state of Georgia keeps a widowed Negro mother of twelve children under lock and key. Her crime? She defended her life and dignity—

aided by her two sons—from the attacks of a “white supremacist.” Or ponder the mute silence with which the Department of Justice has greeted Mrs. Amy Mallard, widowed Negro school-teacher, since her husband was lynched in Georgia because he had bought a new Cadillac and become, in the opinion of the “white supremacists,” “too uppity.” Contrast this with the crocodile tears shed by the U.S. delegation to the United Nations for Cardinal Mindszenty, who collaborated with the enemies of the Hungarian People’s Republic and sought to hinder the forward march to fuller democracy by the formerly oppressed workers and peasants of Hungary. Only recently, President Truman spoke solicitously in a Mother’s Day Proclamation about the manifestation of “our love and reverence” for all mothers of the land. The so-called “love and reverence” for the mothers of the land by no means includes Negro mothers who, like Rosa Lee Ingram, Amy Mallard, the wives and mothers of the Trenton Six, or the other countless victims, dare to fight back against lynch law and “white supremacy” violence.

ECONOMIC HARDSHIPS

Very much to the contrary, Negro women—as workers, as Negroes, and as women—are the most oppressed stratum of the whole population.

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egro women, in contrast to two out of every eight white women, worked for a living. By virtue of their majority status among the Negro people, Negro women not only constitute the largest percentage of women heads of families, but are the main breadwinners of the Negro family. The large proportion of Negro women in the labor market is primarily a result of the low-scale earnings of Negro men. This disproportion also has its roots in the treatment and position of Negro women over the centuries.

Following emancipation, and persisting to the present day, a large percentage of Negro women—married as well as single—were forced to work for a living. But despite the shift in employment of Negro women from rural to urban areas, Negro women are still generally confined to the lowest-paying jobs. The Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, *Handbook of Facts for Women Workers* (1948, Bulletin 225), shows white women workers as having median earnings more than twice as high as those of non-white women, and non-white women workers (mainly Negro women) as earning less than \$500 a year! In the rural South, the earnings of women are even less. In three large Northern industrial communities, the median income of white families (\$1,720) is almost 60 percent higher than that of Negro families (\$1,095). The super-exploitation of the Negro wom-

an worker is thus revealed not only in that she receives, as woman, less than equal pay for equal work with men, but in that the majority of Negro women get less than half the pay of white women. Little wonder, then, that in Negro communities the conditions of ghetto-living—low salaries, high rents, high prices, etc.—virtually become an iron curtain hemming in the lives of Negro children and undermining their health and spirit! Little wonder that the maternity death rate for Negro women is triple that of white women! Little wonder that one out of every ten Negro children born in the United States does not grow to manhood or womanhood!

The low scale of earnings of the Negro woman is directly related to her almost complete exclusion from virtually all fields of work except the most menial and underpaid, namely, domestic service. Revealing are the following data given in the report of 1945, *Negro Women War Workers* (Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labor, Bulletin 205): Of a total 7½ million Negro women, over a million are in domestic and personal service. The overwhelming bulk—about 918,000—of these women workers are employed in private families, and some 98,000 are employed as cooks, waitresses, and in like services in other than private homes. The remaining 60,000 workers in service trades are in miscellaneous personal service occupations

(beauticians, boarding house and lodging-house keepers, charwomen, janitors, practical nurses, housekeepers, hostesses, and elevator operators).

The next largest number of Negro women workers are engaged in agricultural work. In 1940, about 245,000 were agricultural workers. Of them, some 128,000 were unpaid family workers.

Industrial and other workers numbered more than 96,000 of the Negro women reported. Thirty-six thousand of these women were in manufacturing, the chief groups being 11,300 in apparel and other fabricated textile products, 11,000 in tobacco manufactures, and 5,600 in food and related products.

Clerical and kindred workers in general numbered only 13,000. There were only 8,300 Negro women workers in civil service.

The rest of the Negro women who work for a living were distributed along the following lines: teachers, 50,000; nurses and student nurses, 6,700; social and welfare workers, 1,700; dentists, pharmacists, and veterinarians, 120; physicians and surgeons, 129; actresses, 200; authors, editors, and reporters, 100; lawyers and judges, 39; librarians, 400; and other categories likewise illustrating the large-scale exclusion of Negro women from the professions.

During the anti-Axis war, Negro women for the first time in history had an opportunity to utilize their skills and talents in occupations

other than domestic and personal service. They became trail blazers in many fields. Since the end of the war, however, this has given way to growing unemployment, to the wholesale firing of Negro women, particularly in basic industry.

This process has been intensified with the development of the economic crisis. Today, Negro women are being forced back into domestic work in great numbers. In New York State, for example, this trend was officially confirmed recently when Edward Corsi, Commissioner of the State Labor Department, revealed that for the first time since the war, domestic help is readily obtainable. Corsi in effect admitted that Negro women are not voluntarily giving up jobs, but rather are being systematically pushed out of industry. Unemployment, which has always hit the Negro woman first and hardest, plus the high cost of living, is what compels Negro women to re-enter domestic service today. Accompanying this trend is an ideological campaign to make domestic work palatable. Daily newspaper advertisements which base their arguments on the claim that most domestic workers who apply for jobs through U.S.E.S. "prefer this type of work to work in industry," are propagandizing the "virtues" of domestic work, especially of "sleep in positions."

Inherently connected with the question of job opportunities where

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the Negro woman is concerned, is the special oppression she faces as Negro, as woman, and as worker. She is the victim of the white chauvinist stereotype as to where her place should be. In the film, radio, and press, the Negro woman is not pictured in her real role as breadwinner, mother, and protector of the family, but as a traditional "mammy" who puts the care of children and families of others above her own. This traditional stereotype of the Negro slave mother, which to this day appears in commercial advertisements, must be combatted and rejected as a device of the imperialists to perpetuate the white chauvinist ideology that Negro women are "backward," "inferior," and the "natural slaves" of others.

HISTORICAL ASPECTS

Actually, the history of the Negro woman shows that the Negro mother under slavery held a key position and played a dominant role in her own family grouping. This was due primarily to two factors: the conditions of slavery, under which marriage, as such, was non-existent, and the Negro's social status was derived from the mother and not the father; and the fact that most of the Negro people brought to these shores by the slave traders came from West Africa where the position of women, based on active participation in property control, was relatively higher in

the family than that of European women.

Early historians of the slave trade recall the testimony of travelers indicating that the love of the African mother for her child was unsurpassed in any part of the world. There are numerous stories attesting to the self-sacrificial way in which East African mothers offered themselves to the slave traders in order to save their sons and Hottentot women refused food during famines until after their children were fed.

It is impossible within the confines of this article to relate the terrible sufferings and degradation undergone by Negro mothers and Negro women generally under slavery. Subject to legalized rape by the slaveowners, confined to slave pens, forced to march for eight to fourteen hours with loads on their backs and to perform back-breaking work even during pregnancy, Negro women bore a burning hatred for slavery, and undertook a large share of the responsibility for defending and nurturing the Negro family.

The Negro mother was mistress in the slave cabin, and despite the interference of master or overseer, her wishes in regard to mating and in family matters were paramount. During and after slavery, Negro women had to support themselves and the children. Necessarily playing an important role in the economic and social life of her people, the Negro woman became schooled in

self-reliance, in courageous and selfless action.*

There is documentary material of great interest which shows that Negro family life and the social and political consciousness of Negro men and women underwent important changes after emancipation. One freedman observed, during the Civil War, that many men were exceedingly jealous of their newly acquired authority in family relations and insisted upon a recognition of their superiority over women. After the Civil War, the slave rows were broken up and the tenant houses scattered all over the plantation in order that each family might carry on an independent existence. The new economic arrangement, the change in the mode of production, placed the Negro man in a position of authority in relation to his family. Purchase of homesteads also helped strengthen the authority of the male.

Thus, a former slave, who began life as a freedman on a "one-horse" farm, with his wife working as a laundress, but who later rented land and hired two men, recalls the pride which he felt because of his new status: "In my humble palace on a hill in the woods beneath the shade of towering pines and sturdy oaks, I felt as a king whose supreme com-

mands were 'law and gospel' to my subjects."

One must see that a double motive was operative here. In regard to his wife and children, the Negro man was now enabled to assume economic and other authority over the family; but he also could fight against violation of women of his group where formerly he was powerless to interfere.

The founding of the Negro church, which from the outset was under the domination of men, also tended to confirm the man's authority in the family. Sanction for male ascendancy was found in the Bible, which for many was the highest authority in such matters.

Through these and other methods, the subordination of Negro women developed. In a few cases, instead of legally emancipating his wife and children, the husband permitted them to continue in their status of slaves. In many cases, state laws forbade a slave emancipated after a certain date to remain in the state. Therefore, the only way for many Negro wives and children to remain in the state was to become "enslaved" to their relatives. Many Negro owners of slaves were really relatives of their slaves.

In some cases, Negro women refused to become subject to the authority of the men. In defiance of the decisions of their husbands to live on the places of their former masters, many Negro women took their children and moved elsewhere.

* Today, in the rural sections of the South, especially on the remnants of the old plantations, one finds households where old grandmothers rule their daughters, sons, and grand-children with a matriarchal authority.

NEGRO WOMEN IN MASS ORGANIZATIONS

This brief picture of some of the aspects of the history of the Negro woman, seen in the additional light of the fact that a high proportion of Negro women are obliged today to earn all or part of the bread of the family, helps us understand why Negro women play a most active part in the economic, social, and political life of the Negro community today. Approximately 2,500,000 Negro women are organized in social, political, and fraternal clubs and organizations. The most prominent of their organizations are the National Association of Negro women, the National Council of Negro Women, the National Federation of Women's Clubs, the Women's Division of the Elks' Civil Liberties Committee, the National Association of Colored Beauticians, National Negro Business Women's League, and the National Association of Colored Graduate Nurses. Of these, the National Association of Negro Women, with 75,000 members, is the largest membership organization. There are numerous sororities, church women's committees of all denominations, as well as organizations among women of West Indian descent. In some areas, N.A.A.C.P. chapters have Women's Divisions, and recently the National Urban League established a Women's Division for the first time in its history.

Negro women are the real active forces—the organizers and workers—in all the institutions and organizations of the Negro people. These organizations play a many-sided role, concerning themselves with all questions pertaining to the economic, political, and social life of the Negro people, and particularly of the Negro family. Many of these organizations are intimately concerned with the problems of Negro youth, in the form of providing and administering educational scholarships, giving assistance to schools and other institutions, and offering community service. The fight for higher education in order to break down Jim Crow in higher institutions, was symbolized last year, by the brilliant Negro woman student, Ada Lois Sipuel Fisher of Oklahoma. The disdainful attitudes which are sometimes expressed — that Negro women's organizations concern themselves *only* with "charity" work—must be exposed as of chauvinist derivation, however subtle, because while the same could be said of many organizations of white women, such attitudes fail to recognize the *special character* of the role of Negro women's organizations. This approach fails to recognize the special function which Negro women play in these organizations, which, over and above their particular function, seek to provide social services denied to Negro youth as a result of the Jim-Crow lynch system in the U.S.

THE NEGRO WOMAN WORKER

The negligible participation of Negro women in progressive and trade-union circles is thus all the more startling. In union after union, even in those unions where a large concentration of workers are Negro women, few Negro women are to be found as leaders or active workers. The outstanding exceptions to this are the Food and Tobacco Workers' Union and the United Office and Professional Workers' Union.

But why should these be exceptions? Negro women are among the most militant trade unionists. The sharecroppers' strikes of the '30's were sparkplugged by Negro women. Subject to the terror of the landlord and white supremacist, they waged magnificent battles together with Negro men and white progressives in that struggle of great tradition led by the Communist Party. Negro women played a magnificent part in the pre-C.I.O. days in strikes and other struggles, both as workers and as wives of workers, to win recognition of the principle of industrial unionism, in such industries as auto, packing, steel, etc. More recently, the militancy of Negro women unionists is shown in the strike of the packing-house workers, and even more so, in the tobacco workers' strike—in which such leaders as Moranda Smith and Velma Hopkins emerged as outstanding trade unionists. The struggle of the tobacco workers led by Ne-

gro women later merged with the political action of Negro and white which led to the election of the first Negro in the South (in Winston-Salem, N. C.) since Reconstruction days.

It is incumbent on progressive unionists to realize that in the fight for equal rights for Negro workers, it is necessary to have a special approach to Negro women workers, who, far out of proportion to other women workers, are the main bread-winners in their families. The fight to retain the Negro woman in industry and to upgrade her on the job, is a major way of struggling for the basic and special interests of the Negro woman worker. Not to recognize this feature is to miss the special aspects of the effects of the growing economic crisis, which is penalizing Negro workers, particularly Negro women workers, with special severity.

THE DOMESTIC WORKER

One of the crassest manifestations of trade-union neglect of the problems of the Negro woman worker has been the failure, not only to fight against relegation of the Negro woman to domestic and similar menial work, but to *organize* the domestic worker. It is merely lip-service for progressive unionists to speak of organizing the unorganized without turning their eyes to the serious plight of the domestic worker, who, unprotected by union stand-

ards, is also the victim of exclusion from all social and labor legislation. Only about one in ten of all Negro women workers is covered by present minimum-wage legislation, although about one-fourth of all such workers are to be found in states having minimum-wage laws. All of the arguments heretofore projected with regard to the real difficulties of organizing the domestic workers—such as the “casual” nature of their employment, the difficulties of organizing day workers, the problem of organizing people who work in individual households, etc.—must be overcome forthwith. There is a danger that Social-Democratic forces may enter this field to do their work of spreading disunity and demagoguery, unless progressives act quickly.

The lot of the domestic worker is one of unbearable misery. Usually, she has no definition of tasks in the household where she works. Domestic workers may have “thrown in,” in addition to cleaning and scrubbing, such tasks as washing windows, caring for the children, laundering, cooking, etc., and all at the lowest pay. The Negro domestic worker must suffer the additional indignity, in some areas, of having to seek work in virtual “slave markets” on the streets where bids are made, as from a slave block, for the hardest workers. Many a domestic worker, on returning to her own household, must begin housework anew to keep her own family together.

Who was not enraged when it was revealed in California, in the heinous case of Dora Jones, that a Negro woman domestic was enslaved for more than 40 years in “civilized” America? Her “employer” was given a minimum sentence of a few years and complained that the sentence was for “such a long period of time.” But could Dora Jones, Negro domestic worker, be repaid for more than 40 years of her life under such conditions of exploitation and degradation? And how many cases, partaking in varying degrees of the condition of Dora Jones, are still tolerated by progressives themselves!

Only recently, in the New York State Legislature, legislative proposals were made to “fingerprint” domestic workers. The Martinez Bill did not see the light of day, because the reactionaries were concentrating on other repressive legislative measures; but here we see clearly the imprint of the African “pass” system of British imperialism (and of the German Reich in relation to the Jewish people!) being attempted in relation to women domestic workers.

It is incumbent on the trade unions to assist the Domestic Workers' Union in every possible way to accomplish the task of organizing the exploited domestic workers, the majority of whom are Negro women. Simultaneously, a legislative fight for the inclusion of domestic workers under the benefits of the Social Security Law is vitally urgent and nec-

essary. Here, too, recurrent questions regarding "administrative problems" of applying the law to domestic workers should be challenged and solutions found.

The continued relegation of Negro women to domestic work has helped to perpetuate and intensify chauvinism directed against all Negro women. Despite the fact that Negro women may be grandmothers or mothers, the use of the chauvinist term "girl" for adult Negro women is a common expression. The very economic relationship of Negro women to white women, which perpetuates "madam-maid" relationships, feeds chauvinist attitudes and makes it incumbent on white women progressives, and particularly Communists, to fight consciously against all manifestations of white chauvinism, open and subtle.

Chauvinism on the part of progressive white women is often expressed in their failure to have close ties of friendship with Negro women and to realize that this fight for equality of Negro women is in their own self-interest, inasmuch as the super-exploitation and oppression of Negro women tends to depress the standards of all women. Too many progressives, and even some Communists, are still guilty of exploiting Negro domestic workers, of refusing to hire them through the Domestic Workers' Union (or of refusing to help in its expansion into those areas where it does not yet exist), and gen-

erally of participating in the vilification of "maids" when speaking to their bourgeois neighbors and their own families. Then, there is the expressed "concern" that the exploited Negro domestic worker does not "talk" to, or is not "friendly" with, her employer, or the habit of assuming that the duty of the white progressive employer is to "inform" the Negro woman of her exploitation and her oppression which she undoubtedly knows quite intimately. Persistent challenge to every chauvinist remark as concerns the Negro woman is vitally necessary, if we are to break down the understandable distrust on the part of Negro women who are repelled by the white chauvinism they often find expressed in progressive circles.

MANIFESTATIONS OF WHITE CHAUVINISM

Some of the crassest expressions of chauvinism are to be found at social affairs, where, all too often, white men and women and Negro men participate in dancing, but Negro women are neglected. The acceptance of white ruling-class standards of "desirability" for women (such as light skin), the failure to extend courtesy to Negro women and to integrate Negro women into organizational leadership, are other forms of chauvinism.

Another rabid aspect of the Jim-Crow oppression of the Negro wom-

an is expressed in the numerous laws which are directed against her as regards property rights, inter-marriage (originally designed to prevent white men in the South from marrying Negro women),—and laws which hinder and deny the right of choice, not only to Negro women, but Negro and white men and women.

For white progressive women and men, and especially for Communists, the question of social relations with Negro men and women is above all a question of strictly adhering to social equality. This means ridding ourselves of the position which sometimes finds certain progressives and Communists fighting on the economic and political issues facing the Negro people, but "drawing the line" when it comes to social intercourse or inter-marriage. To place the question as a "personal" and not a political matter, when such questions arise, is to be guilty of the worst kind of Social-Democratic, bourgeois-liberal thinking as regard the Negro question in American life; it is to be guilty of imbibing the poisonous white-chauvinist "theories" of a Bilbo or a Rankin. Similarly, too, with regard to guaranteeing the "security" of children. This security will be enhanced only through the struggle for the liberation and equality of all nations and peoples, and not by shielding children from the knowledge of this struggle. This means ridding ourselves of the bourgeois-liberal attitudes which "permit"

Negro and white children of progressives to play together at camps when young, but draw the line when the children reach teen-age and establish boy-girl relationships.

The bourgeois ideologists have not failed, of course, to develop a special ideological offensive aimed at degrading Negro women, as part and parcel of the general reactionary ideological offensive against women of "kitchen, church, and children." They cannot, however, with equanimity or credibility, speak of the Negro woman's "place" as in the home; for Negro women are in other peoples' kitchens. Hence, their task has been to intensify their theories of male "superiority" as regards the Negro woman by developing introspective attitudes which coincide with the "new school" of "psychological inferiority" of women. The whole intent of a host of articles, books, etc., has been to obscure the main responsibility for the oppression of Negro women by spreading the rotten bourgeois notion about a "battle of the sexes" and "ignoring" the fight of both Negro men and women — the whole Negro people — against their common oppressors, the white ruling class.

Chauvinist expressions also include paternalistic surprise when it is learned that Negroes are professional people. Negro professional women workers are often confronted with such remarks as "Isn't your family proud of you?" Then, there is the reverse practice of inquiring of Ne-

gro women professionals whether "someone in the family" would like to take a job as a domestic worker.

The responsibility for overcoming these special forms of white chauvinism rests, not with the "subjectivity" of Negro women, as it is often put, but squarely on the shoulders of white men and white women. Negro men have a special responsibility particularly in relation to rooting out attitudes of male superiority as regards women in general. There is need to root out all "humanitarian" and patronizing attitudes toward Negro women. In one community, a leading Negro trade unionist, the treasurer of her Party section, would be told by a white progressive woman after every social function: "Let me have the money; something may happen to you." In another instance, a Negro domestic worker who wanted to join the Party was told by her employer, a Communist, that she was "too backward" and "wasn't ready" to join the Party. In yet another community, which since the war has been populated in the proportion of sixty per cent Negro to forty per cent white, white progressive mothers maneuvered to get their children out of the school in this community. To the credit of the initiative of the Party section organizer, a Negro woman, a struggle was begun which forced a change in arrangements which the school principal, yielding to the mothers' and to his own prejudices,

had established. These arrangements involved a special class in which a few white children were isolated with "selected Negro kids" in what was termed an "experimental class in race relations."

These chauvinist attitudes, particularly as expressed toward the Negro woman, are undoubtedly an important reason for the grossly insufficient participation of Negro women in progressive organizations and in our Party as members and leaders.

The American bourgeoisie, we must remember, is aware of the present and even greater potential role of the masses of Negro women, and is therefore not loathe to throw plums to Negroes who betray their people and do the bidding of imperialism.

Faced with the exposure of their callous attitude to Negro women, faced with the growing protests against unpunished lynchings and the legal lynchings "Northern style," Wall Street is giving a few token positions to Negro women. Thus, Anna Arnold Hedgeman, who played a key role in the Democratic National Negro Committee to Elect Truman, was rewarded with the appointment as Assistant to Federal Security Administrator Ewing. Thus, too, Governor Dewey appointed Irene Diggs to a high post in the New York State Administration.

Another straw in the wind showing attempts to whittle down the militancy of Negro women was the State

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Department's invitation to a representative of the National Council of Negro Women—the only Negro organization so designated—to witness the signing of the Atlantic Pact.

KEY ISSUES OF STRUGGLE

There are many key issues facing Negro women around which struggles can and must be waged.

But none so dramatizes the oppressed status of Negro womanhood as does the case of Rosa Lee Ingram, widowed Negro mother of fourteen children—two of them dead—who faces life imprisonment in a Georgia jail for the "crime" of defending herself from the indecent advances of a "white supremacist." The Ingram case illustrates the landless, Jim-Crow, oppressed status of the Negro family in America. It illumines particularly the degradation of Negro women today under American bourgeois democracy moving to fascism and war. It reflects the daily insults to which Negro women are subjected in public places, no matter what their class, status, or position. It exposes the hypocritical alibi of the lynchers of Negro manhood who have historically hidden behind the skirts of white women when they try to cover up their foul crimes with the "chivalry" of "protecting white womanhood." But white women, today, no less than their sisters in the abolitionist and suffrage movements, must rise to challenge this lie and

the whole system of Negro oppression.

American history is rich in examples of the cost—to the democratic rights of both women and men—of failure to wage this fight. The suffragists, during their first jailings, were purposely placed on cots next to Negro prostitutes to "humiliate" them. They had the wisdom to understand that the intent was to make it so painful, that no women would dare to fight for her rights if she had to face such consequences. But it was the historic shortcoming of the women's suffrage leaders, predominantly drawn as they were from the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie, that they failed to link their own struggles to the struggles for the full democratic rights of the Negro people following emancipation.

A developing consciousness on the woman question today, therefore, must not fail to recognize that the Negro question in the United States is *prior* to, and not equal to, the woman question; that only to the extent that we fight all chauvinist expressions and actions as regards the Negro people and fight for the full equality of the Negro people, can women as a whole advance their struggle for equal rights. For the progressive women's movement, the Negro woman, who combines in her status the worker, the Negro, and the woman, is the vital link to this heightened political consciousness. To the extent, further, that the cause

of the Negro woman worker is promoted, she will be enabled to take her rightful place in the Negro proletarian leadership of the national liberation movement, and by her active participation contribute to the entire American working class, whose historic mission is the achievement of a Socialist America—the final and full guarantee of woman's emancipation.

The fight for Rosa Lee Ingram's freedom is a challenge to all white women and to all progressive forces, who must begin to ask themselves: How long shall we allow this dastardly crime against all womanhood, against the Negro people, to go unchallenged! Rosa Lee Ingram's plight and that of her sisters also carries with it a challenge to progressive cultural workers to write and sing of the Negro woman in her full courage and dignity.

The recent establishment of the National Committee to Free the Ingram Family fulfills a need long felt since the early movement which forced commutation to life imprisonment of Mrs. Ingram's original sentence of execution. This National Committee, headed by Mary Church Terrell, a founder of the National Association of Colored Women, includes among its leaders such prominent women, Negro and white, as Therese Robinson, National Grand Directress of the Civil Liberties Committee of the Elks, Ada B. Jackson, and Dr. Gene Weltfish.

One of the first steps of the Committee was the visit of a delegation of Negro and white citizens to this courageous, militant Negro mother imprisoned in a Georgia cell. The measure of support was so great that the Georgia authorities allowed the delegation to see her unimpeded. Since that time, however, in retaliation against the developing mass movement, the Georgia officials have moved Mrs. Ingram, who is suffering from a severe heart condition, to a worse penitentiary, at Reidsville.

Support to the work of this committee becomes a prime necessity for all progressives, particularly women. President Truman must be stripped of his pretense of "know-nothing" about the Ingram case. To free the Ingrams, support must be rallied for the success of the million-signatures campaign, and for U.N. action on the Ingram brief soon to be filed.

The struggle for jobs for Negro women is a prime issue. The growing economic crisis, with its mounting unemployment and wage-cuts and increasing evictions, is making its impact felt most heavily on the Negro masses. In one Negro community after another, Negro women, the last to be hired and the first to be fired, are the greatest sufferers from unemployment. Struggles must be developed to win jobs for Negro women in basic industry, in the white-collar occupations, in the communities, and in private utilities.

The successful campaign of the

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Communist Party in New York's East Side to win jobs for Negro women in the five-and-dime stores has led to the hiring of Negro women throughout the city, even in predominantly white communities. This campaign has extended to New England and must be waged elsewhere.

Close to 15 government agencies do not hire Negroes at all. This policy gives official sanction to, and at the same time further encourages, the pervasive Jim-Crow policies of the capitalist exploiters. A campaign to win jobs for Negro women here would thus greatly advance the whole struggle for jobs for Negro men and women. In addition, it would have a telling effect in exposing the hypocrisy of the Truman Administration's "Civil Rights" program.

A strong fight will also have to be made against the growing practice of the United States Employment Service to shunt Negro women, despite their qualifications for other jobs, only into domestic and personal service work.

Where consciousness of the special role of Negro women exists, successful struggle can be initiated which will win the support of white workers. A recent example was the initiative taken by white Communist garment workers in a shop employing 25 Negro women where three machines were idle. The issue of upgrading Negro women workers became a vital one. A boycott movement has been initiated and the

machines stand unused as of this writing, the white workers refusing to adhere to strict seniority at the expense of Negro workers. Meanwhile, negotiations are continuing on this issue. Similarly, in a Packard U.A.W. local in Detroit, a fight for the maintenance of women in industry and for the upgrading of 750 women, the large majority of whom were Negro, was recently won.

THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

Winning the Negro women for the struggle for peace is decisive for all other struggles. Even during the anti-Axis war, Negro women had to weep for their soldier-sons, lynched while serving in a Jim-Crow army. Are they, therefore, not interested in the struggle for peace?

The efforts of the bipartisan war-makers to gain the support of the women's organizations in general, have influenced many Negro women's organizations, which, at their last annual conventions, adopted foreign-policy stands favoring the Marshall Plan and Truman Doctrine. Many of these organizations have worked with groups having outspoken anti-imperialist positions.

That there is profound peace sentiment among Negro women which can be mobilized for effective action is shown, not only in the magnificent response to the meetings of Eslande Goode Robeson, but also in the position announced last year by the oldest Negro women's organization,

under the leadership of Mrs. Christine C. Smith, in urging a national mobilization of American Negro women in support of the United Nations. In this connection, it will be very fruitful to bring to our country a consciousness of the magnificent struggles of women in North Africa, who, though lacking in the most elementary material needs, have organized a strong movement for peace and thus stand united against a Third World War, with 81 million women in 57 nations, in the Women's International Democratic Federation.

Our Party, based on its Marxist-Leninist principles, stands foursquare on a program of full economic, political, and social equality for the Negro people and of equal rights for women. Who, more than the Negro woman, the most exploited and oppressed, belongs in our Party? Negro women can and must make an enormous contribution to the daily life and work of the Party. Concretely, this means prime responsibility lies with white men and women comrades. Negro men comrades, however, must participate in this task. Negro Communist women must everywhere now take their rightful place in Party leadership on all levels.

The strong capacities, militancy and organizational talents of Negro women, can, if well utilized by our Party, be a powerful lever for bringing forward Negro workers—men and women—as the leading forces of

the Negro people's liberation movement, for cementing Negro and white unity in the struggle against Wall Street imperialism, and for rooting the Party among the most exploited and oppressed sections of the working class and its allies.

In our Party clubs, we must conduct an intensive discussion of the role of the Negro women, so as to equip our Party membership with clear understanding for undertaking the necessary struggles in the shops and communities. We must end the practice, in which many Negro women who join our Party, and who, in their churches, communities and fraternal groups are leaders of masses, with an invaluable mass experience to give to our Party, suddenly find themselves viewed in our clubs, not as leaders, but as people who have "to get their feet wet" organizationally. We must end this failure to create an atmosphere in our clubs in which new recruits—in this case Negro women—are confronted with the "silent treatment" or with attempts to "blueprint" them into a pattern. In addition to the white chauvinist implications in such approaches, these practices confuse the basic need for Marxist-Leninist understanding which our Party gives to all workers, and which enhances their political understanding, with chauvinist disdain for the organizational talents of new Negro members, or for the necessity to promote them into leadership.

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To win the Negro women for full participation in the anti-fascist, anti-imperialist coalition, to bring her militancy and participation to even greater heights in the current and future struggles against Wall Street imperialism, progressives must acquire political consciousness as regards her special oppressed status.

It is this consciousness, accelerated by struggles, that will convince increasing thousands that only the Communist Party, as the vanguard of

the working class, with its ultimate perspective of Socialism, can achieve for the Negro women—for the entire Negro people—the full equality and dignity of their stature in a Socialist society in which contributions to society are measured, not by national origin, or by color, but a society in which men and women contribute according to ability, and ultimately under Communism receive according to their needs.

The People Organize to Re-Elect Ben Davis

by Herbert Wheeldin and George Blake

THE RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT of Councilman Benjamin J. Davis that he will be a candidate for re-election to the City Council of New York brings a new dramatic quality to the struggle for peace.

There are few individuals on the American political scene who symbolize more effectively the innermost aspirations of the people for peace, of the Negro people for national liberation, of the workers for security and democracy, than does this heroic leader of the Communist Party.

THE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CAMPAIGN

It is sufficient to recall the startling impact of the first Davis election in order to see the far-reaching ramifications of his candidacy today. The news of his election in 1943 generated world-wide enthusiasm and interest. English newspapers headlined this event, and American soldiers, particularly the Negro G.I.'s, greeted the news with warmth and the conviction that their interests were advanced. This was true in New Guinea, as in Northern Ireland.

The underground newspapers of the French Resistance movement reported his election. And far off in

South and West Africa, the organizations and newspapers of the liberation movement hailed his election as an electoral victory for all dark-skinned peoples.

In the deep South millions of Negroes derived new hope and fresh confidence from the triumph of Davis, which they viewed as their victory. Thus, the election of Councilman Davis in 1943—his re-election in 1945—mirrored the deep desire for unity of Negro and white which resides among the masses of the American common people.

The candidacy of Ben Davis personifies the struggle for peace by the working class as a whole, but especially the national and colonial liberation struggles of the oppressed peoples.

The postwar era has seen the emergence of a new factor in the world camp of peace. This camp has been reinforced by the development of the national and colonial liberation movement involving millions of oppressed peoples. The victories of the Chinese Liberation Army express the determination of the colonial masses everywhere to have done with imperialism.

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with 150 million people, any exception to the general anti-imperialist struggle. The election of a white Communist by the African voters in South Africa, who are prohibited from electing other than a white candidate, showed an advanced degree of political maturity. The establishment of the African Democratic Rally in French West Africa, with over a million members and with close ties to the World Federation of Trade Unions, indicates further the breadth of the movement.

Highly significant is the fact that this upsurge is taking place among non-whites—that is to say, colored peoples of the world. These peoples comprise the overwhelming majority of mankind, and their struggle merges with that of the working class for peace and democracy.

The candidacy of Davis serves to differentiate the interests of the people of the United States from the interests of the Wall Street bankers. Through his program and person there will be expressed the growing, militant opposition of the American people themselves, which will join with the resistance movement of the peoples abroad. The successful conclusion to this election campaign would be a powerful setback to the warmongers.

Above all, the struggle of the Negro people in the United States for their national liberation is expressed in the candidacy of Ben Davis. At a time when certain Negro leaders

are surrendering to Wall Street, and are advocating reformist, non-militant solutions to the problems of the Negro people, the campaign for Davis will serve to reaffirm the fact that there can be no solution other than the path of uncompromising, joint struggle with the working class. If the previous elections of Councilman Davis have served to inspire the entire Negro people, then this election will bring a new meaning to their aspirations.

AN ADVANCE ESTIMATE OF THE CAMPAIGN

There is no doubt that in the sum total of the mayoralty and councilmanic election contests this year, even though the political alignment of forces has not yet been clearly defined, this campaign will be singled out as the main target of the reactionary camp. The great popular victories of Davis in 1943 and 1945, the unity of Negro and white that made these victories possible, his fighting record on issues in and out of the Council, stand as a striking refutation of, and challenge to, the infamous proceedings at Foley Square. The instigators of this frame-up trial of the Communist leaders cannot but realize that these proceedings must fail, at any rate in the minds of the people, if Davis stands. In fact, the history of the New York City Council in the past two years has been featured, not by any con-

structive legislation adopted for the welfare of the people, but rather by a consistent, unscrupulous and increasingly vicious attack to undermine, isolate and eventually oust Davis from elective office.

As against this evil campaign of the reactionaries, there is nothing which illustrates the tremendous volume of service to the community and the labor movement performed by Councilman Davis, better than the brilliant record of legislative measures for which he has fought over the past five years.

Any cursory survey will disclose that the resolutions introduced or sponsored by this tribune of the people reflect long-range as well as immediate issues confronting the people of New York.

Over one hundred and fifty bills have been initiated by him in the City Council, and each one has dealt with some important question related to the welfare of the common people. More than twenty-five of these measures concerned the protection of Negro rights.

The issue of police brutality against the Negro people and Puerto Ricans in New York would have remained buried in a sea of silence, had not Davis dramatized this question through a number of resolutions which turned the spotlight of public opinion upon it.

The annual commemoration of Negro History week as an official event in the City of New York

would not exist but for the fight waged by Davis which secured unanimous adoption of his bill and has resulted in the formal, city-wide recognition of this occasion.

Labor can take pride in the strong resolution calling for the repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act and its replacement by the old Wagner Act without amendments.

His numerous legislative measures have dealt with such varied problems of the people as peace; living standards of people; parks and playgrounds; the fight against restrictive covenants; civil rights; improvement of wages and conditions of city and transit employees; elimination of discrimination against Negro firemen; abolition of Jim Crow in housing, and especially in tax-exempt Stuyvesant Town; improvement of health and hospital facilities; schools and education; measures in behalf of veterans; employment and welfare standards.

It is pertinent at this point to ask what the outlook of the campaign is. Can Davis win? Does not the abolition of proportional representation (PR) make the election of a Communist impossible?

It is obvious that one cannot at this stage of the campaign discuss definitively the relationship of forces, or guarantee what can or cannot be achieved. There are still many unsettled questions, many intangible elements, that will influence the campaign as it unfolds more intensively

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in the next months. However, one question is clear, and that is that Ben Davis *can* win. This estimate must be the starting point of the campaign. Any other estimate would not correspond with objective reality and would disorient the Party and the progressive movement. It is well to bear in mind in this connection that in a similar campaign a year ago to re-elect Marcantonio to Congress, it was only when an estimate of victory was convincingly adopted that it became possible to break through the atmosphere of defeatism which had immobilized the progressive camp, and thus to facilitate the mobilization, militancy and enthusiasm that in the final phase of the campaign led to his victory.

Councilman Davis can win. But it will take an extraordinary effort to make this possible. It is true that the abolition of PR and the substitution of the present system of electing City Councilmen from each of the Senatorial Districts make for very great difficulties that one cannot underestimate. In fact, the bipartisan unity of the Republican and Democratic parties in the 1947 referendum to abolish PR had as its main objective the elimination of progressive minority representation, and particularly of Communists. The abolition of PR makes impossible the union and the joint participation in the borough as a whole of white progressives and trade unionists with the Negro people of Har-

lem, which operated in past elections. It places the elections of 1949 on a basis that serves the interests of the big party machines, especially that of Tammany and the Democratic Party. Moreover, it places before Negro candidates the extraordinary problem of a gerrymandered district. The Negro population and the voters of Harlem have been deliberately split into three senatorial districts, in none of which do they comprise a majority. As a result, no Negro has ever been elected to the Senate in New York. Thus, the prospects are that the big party organizations will either continue the policy they have pursued in the past, of exploiting Negro constituencies to elect white reactionary machine candidates in the districts where councilmen will run, or, if they do designate Negro candidates for the office, it will be primarily to split the Negro community and its vote, in order to head off the candidacy of Ben Davis. Secondly, such a candidate, obviously, will not serve the people of Harlem, but the corrupt and reactionary interests of these machines that generally are dominated by an anti-Negro policy.

Davis will run in the 21st Senatorial District. This district comprises three Assembly Districts, the 11th and 13th Assembly Districts of Harlem and Manhattanville, and the 7th A.D. of the Upper West Side. It is estimated that the Negro vote, based on past elections, approximates

35 percent to 40 percent of the total. The balance of the district is in the main of Irish Catholic, Jewish middle class and Puerto Rican composition.

The American Labor Party vote in this district has averaged about 14 percent to 16 percent of the total vote since 1944. These figures, to be sure, do not of themselves reflect any overwhelming progressive vote in the district. However, they do not tell the whole story and can only be interpreted properly when analyzed within the context of certain campaigns and struggles that directly affected the interests of the Negro people.

Thus, in 1945, O'Dwyer, running on the A.L.P. ticket, polled fewer than 10,000 votes in this district. Davis, running as a Communist, in the same area, polled over 15,000 votes. The Davis vote in the 11th A.D. alone approximated 70 percent of the total councilmanic vote. If, for the purposes of a more specific estimate, we were to add the A.L.P. vote that was not contained within the vote for Davis, the total would surely have exceeded 20,000.

A similar development occurred in the 1946 senatorial race in this district, where Charles Collins, Negro trade-union leader and candidate of the A.L.P., received 22 percent of the vote, while Mead, candidate for Governor, received only 14 percent on the A.L.P. line. In the 11th A.D., the A.L.P. vote for

Collins was 34 percent. It exceeded the vote of the G.O.P. and came within a very narrow margin of winning the district as a whole.

These facts demonstrate that the coalition potential around Davis goes far beyond the maximum strength of the Communist Party, the American Labor Party, and that registered within the existing progressive mass organizations. It emphasizes very clearly that the key to victory in the campaign is the degree of unity that will be achieved between the labor and progressive forces and the Negro people.

One of the most encouraging developments in the campaign today is that even prior to the announcement by Davis that he would run for re-election, Vito Marcantonio, A.L.P. state chairman, declared at a meeting of the organization in Harlem that he would recommend Davis' candidacy and its utmost support to the A.L.P. There is little doubt that this opinion is shared enthusiastically by the overwhelming mass of the organized progressive movement in the community. It certifies to the validity of a relationship that has been tested and strengthened in all the crucial political struggles in the past period.

The recent organization of the Independent Non-Partisan Citizens' Committee for the Re-election of Councilman Benjamin Davis, headed by the distinguished historian and outstanding Negro progressive leader,

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Dr. W. E. B. DuBois, and the author, Shirley Graham, provides a powerful instrument to register independent support in the Negro community and coordinate it with the activities of the progressive movement as a whole.

SOME IDEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS OF THE CAMPAIGN

Thus, the broad framework of the campaign has been fairly well established. The decisive questions hinge on the political and ideological content of the struggle. The perspective for victory stems, not only from the strength of the movement developed in the past around Davis, but, more importantly, from the new relationships that are arising as a result of the great sharpening of the struggles in the United States and the world.

The changing alignments in the class forces that have occurred since 1945, accelerated by the drive of American imperialism toward world domination and war, have had powerful repercussions within the alliance established in the last decade between labor and the Negro people, and within the Negro liberation movement itself. The progressive fighting union of labor, led by the C.I.O. in years past, and the Negro people, has been seriously undermined by the reactionary shift of forces within the C.I.O. and the alignment of its dominant Right

wing with the bi-partisan war program. This has been accompanied by a virtual abandonment of the struggle for the rights of the Negro people and the deterioration of the status of Negro workers in industry and the unions. The rise in influence of the reactionary Social-Democrats in the unions and the ties they have established with the bourgeois liberal-reformists in the leadership of the mass organizations of the Negro people, operating in the main under the aegis of the Democratic Party, have served to accentuate the whole process of class differentiation within the Negro movement. The strategy of the reactionary Social-Democratic-reformist combination is to isolate the Left-progressive and Communist forces and thus to tie the Negro people to the bourgeoisie. This was vividly reflected in the reaction of these leaders to the splendid challenging speech of Paul Robeson in Paris. The overall effect of these developments can only be to intensify the oppression of the Negro masses by American imperialism.

However, what is most significant are the new trends that are reflected in the struggles of the Negro people, as in the working class as a whole, since the Truman victory in 1948. The vote of the Negro people, even at Truman's moment of triumph, never constituted a repudiation of the policies and program of Wallace and the new third Party. After four months of the 81st Congress, with

the increasing exposure of the demagoguery and treachery of the Administration and its Social-Democratic and reformist agents, the Negro people and the workers generally are searching for new paths of struggle. The recent vote of the Progressive Party in the elections in Michigan, the fact that its candidates obtained 25 percent of the vote in the Detroit area, a vote considerably higher than the Wallace vote in 1948, is a symptom of these new trends. The unprecedented Communist votes registered in Los Angeles and in St. Louis further attest to these currents. The rising militancy of strike struggles, in which Negro workers are playing an extremely important part; the broad response to the recent Cultural and Scientific Conference for World Peace held in New York, as well as the Peace Crusade of the American Labor Party and the Progressive Party; and the splendid strike action conducted by the student body of C.C.N.Y. on the issue of anti-Semitism and Jim Crow; the expanding movements for the freedom of Mrs. Ingram, the Trenton Six, all reveal the growing dissatisfaction of the masses of the people with the present Administration policy. The fear of war, the increasing impact of the developing economic crisis, are furthering the basis of the new people's democratic alignment in the United States.

The Davis campaign can be understood, its significance grasped,

only to the extent that the Communists and the progressive mass movement view and define their perspectives on the basis of these new trends. Victory depends on the rapidity and effectiveness with which these forces will assume the new responsibilities that history places before them.

The present offensive of our Party in the struggle against white chauvinism is a major part of the struggle to strengthen the fighting capacity of the labor movement and the progressive forces generally in tackling the crucial issues affecting the Negro people. The success of the intensive ideological discussion within the Party will be tested in terms of how the values of this discussion are translated within the mass movement into concrete, day-to-day struggles; in terms of how they influence the Communist and Left forces in the unions and the white workers as a whole to view this struggle as a class responsibility and task of first-rate magnitude. The alliance of the progressive wing of American labor and the Negro people's movement is the foundation of the anti-fascist, anti-imperialist and anti-war coalition developing through and beyond the Progressive Party. It is the foundation of the campaign to re-elect Ben Davis. The greatest mobilization of forces in the 21st Senatorial District could not guarantee victory without a considerable break-through in the consummation of this alli-

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ance. In fact, the very mobilization itself and the many-sided mass participation in this campaign will depend on the rapidity and strength with which this alliance is developed.

There is a reverse aspect to this proposition that is also of considerable importance. If it is true that such an alliance is the indispensable basis for broadening the struggle for peace as well as for the re-election of Davis, it is also true that the campaign for the re-election of Davis will contribute to the broadening of this alliance and the people's coalition as a whole, and the strengthening of its class content. To understand this is to understand the need to polemicize sharply against any conception that the Davis campaign must be a narrow campaign, or, what is a more dangerous extension of this view, that Davis' candidacy would limit and handicap the progressive coalition. Yes, Ben Davis is a Communist. He is one of the outstanding leaders of the Party. He is one of the twelve on trial. Ben Davis is also a great leader of the Negro people. He represents, therefore, one of the most vital forces in American political life in the struggle to bring the Negro people into a firm alliance with the working class. Whatever the motives in the opposition to his candidacy, the objective effect is seriously to weaken and to undermine the progressive movement and the struggle for unity.

The Party does not insist that its candidates be uniformly accepted by broader progressive electoral groupings which it supports. This problem of the relation of the Party and its candidates to the united front will undoubtedly be resolved in the course of the further maturing of the united front and the strengthening of the Party itself and of its ties with the masses. What must be stressed here is the unique character of Ben Davis' role as a foremost representative of the Negro people's liberation movement, and as a fighting Councilman whose record of devotion to the interests of the common man has won for him the respect and admiration of broad sections of the people, Negro and white. His is a candidacy, therefore, that, far from narrowing, will broaden and deepen the united front.

The full clarity on this question must be brought into the trade unions and mass organizations to guarantee that all the great popular energies are fully mustered in support of the campaign. A guarantee that the trade unions will be mobilized for the Davis campaign is the establishment of union rank-and-file committees. In stressing this, we must warn that it would be a most serious error to assume that the only or main channel for promoting Davis' candidacy in the unions should be rank-and-file committees. Such committees will have

a vital role to perform in all unions, particularly in unions under Right-wing leadership. However, they cannot be a substitute for the struggle that must be made to win official endorsement and support in unions under progressive leadership. This fight in the unions for Davis' candidacy is part of the fight for a militant class-struggle policy on all economic and political issues. It is part of the fight against the Right-wing misleaders of labor. It is part of the fight for rank-and-file unity, for trade-union democracy, and for strengthening the leadership of the progressive and Left-wing forces in the labor movement. It is part of the fight to cement the alliance of labor and the Negro people and to stimulate a mass socialist consciousness. This campaign to re-elect Ben Davis, in fact, emerges as one of the most vital tasks in the trade-union movement today.

Simultaneously with the growing support which must be forthcoming from the ranks of labor for the re-election of Davis, there must take shape in Harlem, among the Negro people, a united movement of the people around the issues of the campaign.

It is clear that only a broad coalition among the Negro voters which cuts across partisan lines and which expresses the powerful sentiment for unity of the Negro people themselves, irrespective of ideological differences—that only such a coalition

can insure a people's victory in this election.

The sharpening of class differences in the Negro people's movement and the increasing identification of certain forces with the bipartisan war program of the Administration cannot blind us to the most essential truth that the Negro people as a whole are in the democratic camp. Even those sections of the Negro people most affected by bourgeois reformist and Social-Democratic influences are in a most unstable economic and social position which will become even more precarious as the struggle sharpens. The present Wall Street offensive against the Negro people widens the opportunity to create the most powerful unity of all sections of the Negro liberation movement. The re-election of Davis, and the campaign pursuant to that objective, can be, in fact must be, a milestone in the achievement of such unity. While pressing for the broadest approach to achieve this unity, we must simultaneously work to strengthen and consolidate the most advanced sections of the Negro people's movement and solicit particularly the utmost general support to such organizations as the Harlem Trade Union Council, the United Tenants and Consumers organizations, the new unemployed council, etc.

TASKS

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to outline in detail the tasks of the Party in the campaign. What is paramount at this moment is to bring convincingly to the Party membership and to the progressive movement the political significance of this campaign, its vital relation to the central tasks confronting the Party; to indicate the enormous problems of the campaign; and to outline the main prerequisites for victory.

It is already clear, however, that the practical organization of the campaign is an immediate question that cannot be put off any longer without jeopardizing all our objectives. Our ideological approach to this struggle, our realization of its significance, must now be tested by everyone in terms of practical daily performance and work. The campaign will be decided, not in September and October, but in June and July, in the activity which is organized now in augmenting the Party's mass work and in establishing and consolidating the election district organization and apparatus for the campaign. It will be decided in relation to the success that is achieved in expanding the mass struggles on the immediate issues of jobs, rent and housing, and in the fight against police brutality; in strengthening the fight for the freedom of Mrs. Ingram and the Trenton Six, and in connection with activities generated on all vital issues. The campaign must be popularized in the unions and other organizations, and forces must be ac-

tively recruited now for consistent work in the district. Every Party organization functioning in every part of the city has a vital contribution to make in the campaign other than the assignment of active workers. What happens in the Stuyvesant Town struggle, how job issues affecting Negro workers are fought out in shops and industries throughout the city, how every community, union and mass organization reacts to the daily struggle against Jim Crow and the oppression of the Negro people, will all contribute in one degree or another to strengthening the Party's ties with the Negro masses and will heighten the possibility of achieving a victorious outcome in the campaign itself.

One of the most powerful weapons in the campaign will be the Harlem edition of *The Worker*, which was launched on March 7 under the editorship of Comrade Abner Berry. There is scarcely a more important task at this moment than the steps that are taken by the Party in Harlem and Manhattan as a whole to work energetically to promote the subscription campaign and weekly sales of the paper, while also guaranteeing more consistent use of the *Daily Worker*. It will serve to root the Party more firmly in the community, expand its influence, and create among the readers of the Harlem edition a powerful and growing corps of active campaigners for Davis.

The office of City Councilman in New York is among the most important public positions to which Negroes have ever been elected. In this capacity Ben Davis speaks, not only for Harlem, the urban center of Negro life in America, but also for a large progressive constituency in New York City. He truly represents the interests of the majority of the American people, which includes the workers, large sections of the

middle class, and the Negro people.

There were those who offered the opinion that if indicted, Davis could not run; if convicted, he would not be elected; and if elected, he could not serve. He *is* running, he *can* be elected, he *will* serve, if the Party and the labor and progressive movement undertake energetic action now and organize a campaign that will evoke powerful mass support.

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The Struggle for the Negro-Labor Alliance

by Norman Ross

THE AMERICAN WORKING CLASS has many key struggles confronting it today: the fight for peace, the fight for higher wages and better working conditions, the fight for jobs and a decent standard of living, the fight for civil rights and against Taft-Hartleyism.

These are major questions facing labor today, and to the extent that the labor movement is successful in winning these struggles, it leads the entire nation along the path of progress. But while the working class and especially the organized workers must take the lead in the struggle on these major questions, victory cannot be won by labor fighting alone. Only if the working class gains for itself powerful allies in its struggle against monopoly capital will it be able to win victory.

The key ally which it is absolutely essential for labor to win in its struggle is the Negro people and its national liberation movement. The Negro people has proved itself to be the most militant and consistent ally of the labor movement. This, of course, springs from the special, national, oppression of the Negro people by labor's enemy—the owners of the vast productive wealth of our country, the monopolies and trusts.

The necessity of labor developing

an alliance with the Negro people's movement is further shown by the fact that every major step forward that labor has made in the last twenty years, was achieved only in alliance with the Negro people's movement. The fight against unemployment, for unemployment insurance, for work projects, for industrial unionism, for organizing the unorganized, for a progressive domestic and foreign policy as reflected through the Roosevelt coalition, for a correct win-the-war policy—all of the struggles and victories on these major questions would not have been possible without the alliance of the Negro people's movement and labor. And so today, with Wall Street imperialism conducting as part of its plan for world conquest an intense offensive against the American working class and against the Negro people, it becomes essential for labor, in order to withstand this offensive and develop a counter-attack of its own, to guarantee that it wins the Negro liberation movement as its closest ally in this struggle.

This poses new problems today, because the Negro-labor alliance that achieved many of the victories in the previous period no longer exists. It is clear that labor must now

take the initiative in building a new alliance, based on the united struggle below of Negro and white workers.

In order to be better able to build the Negro-labor alliance, it would be wise to examine how the earlier Negro-labor alliance came into existence and what were its experiences.

HOW THE ALLIANCE CAME INTO EXISTENCE

The key to understanding the basis of the alliance is that it came into existence and prospered to the extent that labor pursued a general policy of militant struggle which had its high point in the formation and ascendant stages of the C.I.O. For it was through the Left-wing and Communist forces in the trade unions challenging the class-collaborationist policy of the entrenched bureaucracy of the A. F. of L., and its official Jim-Crow policy, that the alliance first came into existence. It was this struggle by the Left-wing forces in the A. F. of L. for a policy of class struggle which laid the basis for the rise and growth of the C.I.O. And it was the prior organization by the Trade Union Unity League of Negro and white workers in industrial unions pursuing a policy of militant class struggle, that helped to change tremendously the character of the labor movement for the next decade.

The C.I.O., in order to grow, had

to challenge the open shop mass production industries controlled by Wall Street. The very reason for its coming into existence was to organize the workers in the mass-production industries; these were the great open-shop citadels in the steel, rubber, auto, electrical, and other industries controlled by the bankers of Wall Street. Big Business had broken every previous attempt to organize these industries. In order to be successful, the C.I.O. had not only to organize on an industrial union basis, but to give special attention to the Negro workers in these industries. It was the Left forces which made it clear that the success of the C.I.O. would depend on whether the C.I.O. would make a sharp break with the Jim-Crow policy of the A. F. of L. As a result of the pressure from the Left for a policy of no discrimination, the C.I.O. declared: "One of the main objectives of the C.I.O. is to bring about the effective organization of the working men and women of America regardless of race, creed, color or nationality."

The C.I.O. organizing drive received widespread support from the organizations of the Negro people. The National Negro Congress, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (to an extent), and other organizations gave organizers, speakers, and other material and moral support to help organize the workers in the mass-production industries. As a result,

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the C.I.O. organized half a million Negro workers in the trade unions for the first time in the history of the American labor movement. It may be truly said that without the support of the Negro workers and their organizations, the C.I.O. could not have organized the mass-production industries.

The formation and growth of the C.I.O. carried with it in a number of the new unions the struggle for jobs, upgrading, and equal pay, so that, for the first time, in a number of industries (maritime, electrical, fur, and others) Negroes moved into skilled categories and attained, to a degree, security on the job. This new role of Negro workers in the labor movement further reflected itself by Negro militants coming forward into trade-union leadership.

The alliance developed still further when the C.I.O., influenced by the Left forces, began to champion on the political front a number of issues that faced the Negro people as a whole. The C.I.O. spoke out and acted on such issues as discrimination, F.E.P.C., poll tax, Jim-Crow housing, etc. In turn, more and more Negro leaders and organizations began to identify themselves with the progressive economic and political struggles of the labor movement. This alliance, which of necessity came into existence as a result of the militant policies of the C.I.O., became the main base of the Roosevelt coalition. Without this alliance, undoubtedly many of the advances made at that

time would not have been realized. When Roosevelt came under the attack of the fascist-minded Wall Street monopolists, he could always rely on the Negro-labor alliance to come forcefully into the struggle for progress.

The Negro-labor alliance never took on the formal character of written agreement, and it was not fully understood, especially by large sections of the white workers. It had many weaknesses, particularly the insufficient development of its own independent role in the Roosevelt coalition. Nevertheless, the alliance did exist; and its existence and activities helped labor make great strides forward, helped the Negro liberation movement make gains, and played a decisive role in helping to win the war against the Axis powers.

With the ending of the war, American imperialism, through the Truman Administration, embarked on a policy of world domination, of aggression. As part of its war drive, monopoly capital simultaneously launched a campaign of terror against the Negro people and the labor movement.

THE C.I.O.'S BREAK WITH ITS TRADITIONAL POLICY

The welfare of the working class, the trade-union movement, and the nation as a whole requires that labor challenge and fight against the whole Truman program at home

and abroad. While more and more workers are coming into conflict with the bourgeoisie on economic and political questions, the dominant leadership of the organized labor movement has embarked on a course of complete support for the imperialist policies of the Truman Administration. The C.I.O. misleaders of labor have developed a full program of class collaboration.

A most significant aspect of this change in policy is the C.I.O.'s break with its traditional policy of struggle for Negro rights. For, no labor leadership that supports the ruling class which today is the leading imperialist power and the particular oppressor of the Negro nation in the Black Belt and of the Negro people as a whole, can conduct any real struggle for Negro rights.

How does this abandonment of the struggle for Negro rights manifest itself? It shows itself, not so much in the words of the C.I.O. leadership (for these flunkys of American imperialism are past masters in the art of demagoguery), but rather in deeds.

It showed itself at the last C.I.O. convention in November, which had fewer Negro delegates than any previous C.I.O. convention. This convention, outside of a general resolution on civil rights, passed no resolution or took any action on problems concerning the Negro workers in particular and the Negro people generally.

It shows itself in the National

Maritime Union. The shipowners refuse to honor any but prewar discharges, and it was during the war in particular that Negroes moved into the top ratings aboard passenger vessels. The refusal of the Curran leadership to fight this policy of the shipowners leads to a situation where Negroes are not only being barred from top ratings, but are actually being threatened with mass discharge from the industry.

It manifests itself in the Textile Workers' Union, where Emil Rieve, on the floor of the union convention, opposed all anti-discrimination resolutions, from fear of the Ku Klux Klan elements in the union.

The abandonment of the struggle for Negro rights shows itself in the support of avowed white "supremacists" in the 1948 elections in a number of Southern states by C.I.O. leaders. It further manifests itself in the failure of the C.I.O. Southern organizing drive. This drive failed because the C.I.O. in the South attempted to organize workers along Jim-Crow lines, accommodating itself to Southern discriminatory practices, instead of pursuing its traditional anti-discrimination policy. In the A. F. of L., the drive against Negro workers is highlighted by the developments in the International Longshoremen's Association. Here Joseph Ryan, president of the I.L.A., together with the stevedoring companies, is systematically pursuing a policy of driving Negro longshoremen, members of Local 968, from

where they have traditionally worked. This action, of course, is being militantly resisted by the Negro longshoremen, through picketing of Ryan's office and fighting for their rights in the industry and the union.

The failure of the C.I.O. and the A. F. of L. leadership to fight aggressively against the recent bipartisan filibuster on Truman's weak Civil Rights program, and their silence on Truman's Florida sojourn while the filibuster was taking place, are further indications of how far the Murrays, Careys, and Reuthers have strayed from the traditional C.I.O. position of struggle for Negro rights.

The C.I.O. leadership, in undemocratically withdrawing the C.I.O. from the World Federation of Trade Unions, not only broke their ties with democratic labor abroad, and not only weakened thereby organized labor at home, but, as part of this harmful policy which resulted in the withdrawal from its international proletarian ties, the labor misleaders placed an obstacle to the fulfillment of the high responsibility of the American labor movement to the oppressed Negro nation in the Black Belt and to the Negro people as a whole.

Although the National C.I.O. has given up the struggle for Negro rights, and the alliance as it existed in the past does not exist today, the C.I.O. misleaders have not broken all their ties with the Negro people's movement. They are obliged

to maneuver and give lip-service to the Negro people's demands, for the Negro people themselves are showing great militancy in fighting for their rights, despite and against the terror campaign unleashed by Wall Street.

Wherever the struggle takes place—in the unions, in the fight for jobs, or in the fight against lynch terror in the South and against police terror in the North—the Negro people are unitedly and militantly fighting back. This struggle of the Negro people, which comes into direct conflict with the general policies of the monopolists and the class-collaborationist policies of the Social-Democratic and reformist labor leadership, is the most consistent area of struggle against Wall Street's imperialist program. As such, it can have a fundamental effect on the character of the struggle of the organized workers.

THE NEW "ALLIANCE"

It is for this reason that the C.I.O. leaders find it necessary to develop and maintain new ties with the Negro people's movement—not for the purpose of developing an alliance to further the interests of the working class and the Negro people, but rather to deflect the struggles of the Negro people into "safe" channels. For this purpose, they have established a new bridge to the Negro people's movement; and this consists of the Social-Democrats and re-

formists among the Negro people and in the labor movement.

This development reflects itself in the appearance at the C.I.O. convention of Walter White of the N.A.A.C.P. and Willard Townsend of the United Transport Service Employees' Union, who spoke supposedly in the name and in the interests of the Negro people. Their speeches consisted purely of Red-baiting and the lauding of the anti-Communist program of the C.I.O. leadership.

Further, A. Philip Randolph utilizes his union's paper, *The Black Worker*, not for the purpose of guiding the struggle of Negro workers against their oppressors, the capitalist class, but to paint the Communists as the main enemy of the Negro people. His demagogic line is that Negroes would be fools to have, in addition to the stigma of being black, the stigma of being Red as well. In turn, we find that such Social-Democratic labor leaders as Walter Reuther are brought by Walter White into the top policy-making leadership of the N.A.A.C.P. All of this so-called "inter-racial" activity is, of course, designed to cover up the absence of a policy of united struggle for Negro rights on the part of the class-collaborationist labor leadership, and the failure of the Negro Social-Democrats and reformists to fight militantly for the rights of the Negro people.

This new "alliance" between the reactionary labor leaders and the re-

formist and Social-Democratic Negro leaders presents a great danger to both the Negro liberation movement and the labor movement. For it strips the labor movement of its most militant potential ally and deprives the Negro liberation movement of the needed leadership of the working class. The reformist labor leaders are trying to steer the struggles of the Negro people along the path of supporting Wall Street's war drive. This policy, if allowed to develop further, can only thrust the Negro workers who are now part of the organized labor movement back into the status they occupied prior to the organization of the C.I.O. This is indicated by the developments in the National Maritime Union, the Textile Workers Union, in the South, and in the A. F. of L.'s International Longshoremen's Association.

THE TASK OF COMMUNIST AND PROGRESSIVE TRADE UNIONISTS

In the light of the foregoing, what must be the role of Communist and progressive trade unionists?

First and foremost, the progressives must ever more intensively challenge and fight against all the class-collaborationist policies of the dominant leadership of the labor movement and must project a positive fight for peace and a program of struggle for the economic interests of the workers. A fundamental part of such a program of struggle

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must be special emphasis and action on the special demands of the Negro workers in particular and of the Negro people generally.

The progressive forces must launch a special campaign among white workers against the Big-Business weapon of white chauvinism. As part of the war drive, the bourgeoisie has developed an intense campaign of national chauvinism among the workers, and within the framework of this campaign they place special emphasis on the spread of white chauvinism. White chauvinism has always been an instrument of the ruling class to divide Negro and white workers and thereby enable the bourgeoisie to put its policies into effect without meeting the united opposition of Negro and white workers. The campaign against white chauvinism must therefore be conducted among the widest sections of the white working class, who must be made to realize their stake in defeating this vicious weapon of the ruling class. To guarantee the effectiveness and thoroughness of this broad campaign, a struggle against every manifestation of, and concession to, white chauvinism must be waged in the Communist Party itself and in progressive organizations.

Secondly, progressives in both Left and Right-wing unions have to develop much more than they have done to date a program of struggle for Negro rights. Such a program should include:

(1) The fight for jobs. Negro workers must be hired in shops and industries from which they are now banned; there must be a fight for the upgrading of Negroes into higher, skilled categories, with special steps to guarantee that in the mass layoffs now taking place in industry, Negro workers do not lose the positions gained through bitter struggle over the past years.

(2) Active struggle on questions that face the Negro people as a whole, such as breaking down the system of ghetto housing to which the Negro people are now confined. This ghetto system is at the root of the deplorable housing conditions of the Negro people and of the further exploitation of the Negro people through the higher prices and rents which they are forced to pay in these ghettos. Progressive trade unionists must realize that their fight for the economic rights and improved conditions of the Negro workers does not end with winning equal pay and better conditions in the shops. For, once the Negro worker leaves his shop and returns to the ghetto, new forms of discrimination and exploitation confront him. If labor is to develop a fighting alliance with the Negro liberation movement, it must carry its struggle for Negro rights beyond the confines of the shop and union and into the community at large and take the leadership in combatting all forms of discrimination.

(3) Activation of major sections

of the organized workers in the political arena of the struggle for Negro rights. The workers must be made to realize that they have to champion the fight against the poll tax, against lynching, against discrimination, against the Negro ghetto. In other words, they must take the initiative in challenging the whole bourgeois system of discrimination and terror throughout the country. This can only be done by developing the struggle from below in both Left- and Right-led unions. To the extent that the Left-progressive forces develop this initiative in the struggle for Negro rights, will the economic struggles of the workers and the national liberation struggles of the Negro people merge into a general anti-imperialist struggle for peace, democracy, and economic security; and to that extent will the struggle for socialism be advanced.

Progressive trade unionists must also take the initiative in guaranteeing that instruments of the peace struggle such as the Progressive Party place in the forefront of their program and actions the struggle for Negro rights. For, just as the old Negro-labor alliance was the main base of the Roosevelt coalition, so today, in the changed situation, a new Negro-labor alliance based on a policy of class struggle is necessary as an important part of the whole peace movement and essential to the building of the Progressive Party.

Finally, it is clear that if the national liberation movement of the

Negro people is to develop further and ally itself with a militant, struggling working class, it must more and more reflect in its leadership militant, class-conscious Negro trade unionists. The Walter Whites will not and cannot give the type of leadership which will help develop the Negro-labor alliance.

An indication of the type of leadership now needed was projected by the Harlem Trade Union Council which was recently organized by delegates and observers from forty-five local unions. This council elected to its leadership a number of outstanding Negro and white trade unionists. The purpose of this council is, first, to give leadership to the struggles of the people of Harlem against their oppressors, and, second, to aid and assist the unions in their general struggles, particularly on the question of Negro rights. This council can, on the basis of its program and actions, give leadership to the whole Negro people's movement in Harlem. While of course this council cannot take the place of a general Negro-labor alliance, it can be a major impetus to the development of an alliance, and it can expose and weaken the influence of such Negro reformists as Walter White, Lester Granger, and others of this type, who would break the militancy of the Negro people's movement.

What must be appreciated is that only the Negro working class, in alliance with other sections of the Ne-

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gro people can give the national liberation movement of the Negro people a consistently progressive and anti-ruling class orientation.

The working class and the whole American people are fighting for great stakes. These are peace, economic security and an expanding democracy as opposed to atomic war, poverty and depression and an American brand of fascism. These are life-and-death questions for the

American people and as such, every step must be taken to guarantee that we win this battle. Therefore, the alliance of labor and the Negro people's movement must be placed on the order of the day. For without this alliance it is not possible to achieve victory; with it, based on a correct program of struggle, this alliance can lead the American people to achieving its aims.

Consciousness of Negro Nationality: An Historical Survey

by Herbert Aptheker

The following article, with its valuable body of expressions of the aspirations toward Negro nationhood by leaders of the Negro liberation movement over a long range of our history, provides rich material for theoretical analysis.

These recurrent utterances by Negro spokesmen on Negro nationhood are a telling refutation of the demagogic charges levelled by reactionary Social-Democrats and bourgeois reformists against the Communist Party's position which holds that the Negro question in the U.S.A. is a national question. The apologists for American imperialism would have it appear that the Communist approach to the Negro question is not related to and does not arise from the Negro people's interests and aspirations, but that it is an arbitrary "blueprint" a "tactic imported from Moscow," etc., ad nauseam.

But history speaks for itself. The expressions of Negro nationhood by Phyllis Wheatley in 1772, the African Society in 1808, Daniel Walker in 1828, the Negro National Convention in 1853—antedating by many decades and generations the founding of the Communist Party of the U.S.A.—indicate that even

prior to the historical maturation of the necessary material conditions for Negro nationhood in the U.S., the indigenous conditions of slave oppression evoked ideological forerunners of the national liberation movement of the Negro people which was historically to evolve.

However, just as it is not possible to deny the existence of a nation because of the absence of the affirmation of the national status and the political demand for national recognition, so it is not always possible to affirm the existence of a nation on the basis solely of verbal reference to nationhood.

The historical statements and data compiled in this article should stimulate analysis from the scientific, Marxist-Leninist viewpoint, in order to determine the various stages of development of the Negro emancipation movement and the embryonic elements of Negro nationhood which the cited evidence reflect.

This survey by Herbert Aptheker should prove a rich addition to the factual data necessary to draw the fullest theoretical conclusions on the evolution of the Negro national liberation movement in the U.S.A.

—Editor.

In 1947, Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois made explicit an awareness of Negro nationality in an official publication of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People which he edited. The publication constituted an appeal for justice made by that Association to the United Nations, and in it the elder statesman of the American Negro people wrote: "The United Nations surely will not forget that the population of this group [the Negro people] makes it one of the considerable nations of the world." Dr. Du Bois went on to compare the total number of American Negroes with the population totals of Egypt, Canada, Belgium, Hungary, etc., and concluded: "In sheer number then we are a group which has a right to be heard; and while we rejoice that other smaller nations can stand and make their wants known in the United Nations, we maintain equally that our voice should not be suppressed or ignored."¹

American Communists rightly pointed to these words as tending to support their position that the Negro question is a national question, and as marking a high point in national consciousness among American Negroes. It is generally assumed, however, that the existence of such an awareness is a distinctly modern phenomenon going back no further than the distorted and reactionary reflections it received in the post-World War I Garvey movement.

This assumption is false.

The fact of Negro nationality is bound up with, and in large part derives from, the history of the Negro people. The classic definition of a nation formulated by Stalin—"A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture"²—aptly characterizes the facts of the American Negro people, and has characterized those facts—certainly with increasing preciseness in the course of time—for generations, indeed, in important respects, for some two centuries.

Was there a complete absence of any articulate expression of national consciousness until the post-World War I era? This is a question of fact to be resolved by study and research and in no other way. The answer—and the presentation of the available evidence constitutes the purpose of this article—is, no. The fact is that there were many such expressions of awareness, sometimes reaching the stage simply of verbal enunciation, sometimes of attempts at formal analysis. However faulty this analysis may have been, in any case the germ of a feeling, of a consciousness of nationality clearly was present. We shall present evidences of this feeling that appeared up to the twentieth century.

THE SIMPLY VERBAL expression of the concept goes back to pre-Revolution-

ary America, when the African influence was very strong, as is testified by Phillis Wheatley's remark in 1772 on learning that many Negroes were embracing Christianity: "It gives me very great pleasure to hear of so many of my nation seeking with eagerness the way of true felicity."³ This type of usage—and we again emphasize its purely verbal character—appears frequently thereafter and indeed recurs throughout the nineteenth century. Some typical examples may be given. The address of the "First Annual Convention of the People of Color" (1831), in referring to Negro youth, stated: "Yes, it is with us to say whether they shall assume a rank and standing among the nations of the earth, as men and freemen, or whether they shall still be prized and held at market price."⁴ The address of the second annual convention, in calling for higher education for Negroes, said this would reflect "brilliance on our national character which will elevate us from our present situation."⁵ The declaration of the Negro National Convention of 1853, signed by Frederick Douglass and several other outstanding Negro leaders, in referring to the progress made by the Negro people against overwhelming odds, stated: "It is believed that no other nation on the globe could have made more progress in the midst of such an universal and stringent disparagement."⁶ A final example—and others are available—occurring in 1899, comes from the

same Du Bois whose remarks, made half a century later, have already been quoted. Writing on the subject, "The Negro and Crime," Du Bois quite explicitly referred to the Negro people as "such a nation."⁷

More developed expressions of this idea go back to the beginnings of the nineteenth century. Thus, an anonymous member of the African Society in Boston, in an address delivered and published by that society in 1808, said: "Men have exercised authority over our nation as if we were their property, by depriving us of our freedom as though they had a command from heaven thus to do. But, we ask, if freedom is the right of one nation; why not the right of all the nations of the earth?" So highly did the American people value freedom, continued the orator, that they felt it right to wrest this prize by arms from Great Britain. "If desirable, I say, to America under such circumstances, why not to any or all the nations of the earth?"⁸

A passionate sense of nationality pervades the entire body of David Walker's famous *Appeal . . . to the Coloured Citizens of the World . . .* published in 1829, though a clear formulation of the idea, it is true, does not appear. Earlier, however, as in a speech before the General Colored Association in Boston (1828), Walker had appealed for the forging of the closest unity among the Negro people so that they might take their rightful place "among the nations of the earth."⁹

At several pre-Civil War gatherings of the Negro people, inklings of a feeling of Negro nationality were expressed. Thus, the first resolution adopted by a gathering of Philadelphia Negroes in 1830 declared: "That we do most cordially rejoice that the bond of brotherhood, which rivets a nation together in one indissoluble chain, has collected so large a portion of our people together."¹⁰ The call for a State Convention of the Negro people of Michigan issued in 1843 began by urging united, militant action in the struggle for "human liberty and equal rights." Such action was needed, said this call, written by five outstanding leaders of the state: "For as we are an oppressed people wishing to be free, we must evidently follow the examples of the oppressed nations that have preceded us: for history informs us that the liberties of an oppressed people are obtained only in proportion to their own exertions in their own cause. Therefore, in accordance with this truth, let us come up, and, like the oppressed people of England, Ireland and Scotland, band ourselves together and wage unceasing war against the high-handed wrongs of the hideous monster Tyranny."¹¹

At a State Convention of Ohio Negroes in 1849, a heated debate was precipitated by the introduction of a resolution which condemned colonization in all forms. The point of the debate was not that any Negro at the Convention failed to see in the American Colonization Society a

chauvinistic tool of the white ruling class, but rather that some of the delegates felt that the resolution, as proposed, precluded the concept of Negro nationality. Thus, George R. Williams, of Ross County, insisted that "the resolution ought to be discussed with great care, as it affected not only this State, but every State in the Union. He said that he did not want to look up to the white man for everything. We must have nationality. I am for going anywhere, so we can be an independent people." J. Mercer Langston, later a Congressman from Virginia, at this time (he altered his opinion thereafter) agreed with Mr. Williams, and thought "we must have a nationality, before we can become anybody."

The convention, consisting of forty-one delegates from twelve counties, adopted, following this debate, a majority report (in the form of a resolution) of great significance. Here the Negro convention points out that colonization—anywhere—represents flight in the face of the fact of the enslavement of millions of fellow-Negroes and that Negro freedom was the overriding objective to be achieved through struggle. Together with this went a rather clear awareness of nationality. Here are the words of the resolution:

Whereas, the question of colonization in the United States, is being greatly agitated, and whereas, certain colored men, together with whites, in the United States, have taken a position relatively to the matter which we deem

incorrect, detrimental and destructive to our interest; and whereas, we deem it expedient for us to define our position on this point, determined at any hazard whatever, never to submit to any scheme of colonization, in any part of the world, in or out of the United States, while a vestige of slavery lasts; therefore,

Resolved, That in the event of universal emancipation, taking our freed brother as our coadjutor and helper in the work, prompted by the spirit of the fathers of '76, and following the light of liberty yet flickering in our minds, we are willing, it being optional, to draw out from the American government, and form a separate independent one, enacting our own laws and regulations, trusting for success only in the God of Liberty and the Controller of human destiny.¹²

Other statements by Negroes of this period contain an expression of this awareness of nationality though this is frequently placed in terms of expatriation closely parallel, in this respect, to the Garvey movement. Thus, in 1851, a free Negro in Alabama, arguing for the development of Liberia, wrote, ". . . let national pride by kindled . . . and go to and make us a great nation of our own, build our own cities and towns, make our own laws, collect our own revenues, command our own vessels, army and navy, elect our own governors. . . ."¹³

The writings of Martin R. Delany, certainly one of the outstanding pre-Civil War Negro leaders, and during the Civil War commissioned a Ma-

yor in the Union Army, expressed the idea of Negro nationality quite vigorously, although here again it was associated with leaving the limits of the United States. Delany repeatedly used expressions such as: "We have native hearts and virtues, just as other nations. . . . We are a nation within a nation—as the Poles in Russia, the Hungarians in Austria; the Welsh, Irish, and Scotch in the British dominions."¹⁴

The published *Proceedings of the National Emigration Convention of Colored People*, held in Cleveland in 1854 and attended by one hundred and two delegates from eleven states (including Tennessee, Kentucky and Louisiana) and Canada, are filled with similar remarks.

During these same years, Henry Highland Garnet, a leading militant Abolitionist with influence second only to that of Frederick Douglass, "steadily advanced," as his biographer, the Negro physician and Abolitionist, Dr. James McCune Smith, has written, "taking newer and, as he believed, broader grounds for our people in whose behalf he claimed perfect equality in all things, until, by what seemed to him a logical necessity, he proclaimed the doctrine of 'Negro nationality.'"¹⁵

IN THE POST-CIVIL WAR generation the concept of Negro nationality reappears frequently, particularly during the period of the Populist movement, accompanied as that movement was by the fiercest type of armed

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terrorism by the Bourbons acting largely as the agent of a maturing American imperialism.

Some examples of this during the generation mentioned are in order. Thus, the upper-case spelling of the word Negro, which has become fairly general only during the past ten or fifteen years—as the result of continued pressure from Negro organizations—was insisted upon back in 1878, and was justified then, as later, on the grounds of nationality. The *Chicago Conservator*, a leading Negro newspaper of the period, in an editorial entitled, "Spell It With A Capital," which is the first printed discussion of the question this writer has seen, argued:

As a mark of disrespect, as a stigma, as a badge of inferiority, they [white publishers] tacitly agreed to spell his name without a capital. The French, German, Irish, Dutch, Japanese, and other nationalities are honored with a capital letter, but the poor sons of Ham must bear the burden of a small n.¹⁶

In 1890, serious discussion took place in Negro publications and organizations as to the propriety of an independent or quasi-independent Negro republic somewhere in the South—usually in Texas or Oklahoma. A leader of such a movement in Texas was the Rev. J. H. Jones of Brazoria, whose Texas Farmers' Colonization Association attracted considerable attention. Its avowed aim was to carve out a state wherein

Negroes might govern themselves and thus "rise as have other nations."¹⁷ At the same time there appeared a more widespread movement for making a Negro state of the Territory of Oklahoma, though this by no means was meant to exclude the presence of white and Indian peoples.

The leader in the Oklahoma movement, which persisted for several years, was Edwin P. McCabe. Typical of the response this movement evoked is an article published in 1890, entitled "Is The Negro Capable of Self-Government," by the Rev. A. B. Gibson of Milledgeville, Georgia. The effort to establish a state "ruled and governed" by Negroes was considered by this writer "as good news." Should not the Negro people live under the administration of "Negro judges, lawyers, doctors, jurors, sheriffs, deputies, mayors, councilmen, legislators, governors . . . bankers, merchants, manufacturers?" It seemed self-evident to the Negro minister that under these circumstances the Negro people would be in considerably better condition than "under the white man's government" in the South. The Negro writer concluded his remarks, in this formative period of the great Populist movement, by writing: "For my part, I am tired of both parties; the Negro's back is sleek where they have rode him so much."¹⁸

Shortly before this article appeared, a delegation of twenty Negroes "representing the Afro-American press"

visited President Harrison, warned him of accumulating discontent among the Negro people, and urged him to appoint a Negro as Secretary of the Oklahoma Territory then being formed.¹⁹

As late as 1892, the *New York Post* published the following story concerning this movement:

The movement to make Oklahoma a Negro State, which the white settlers were at first disposed to ridicule, is being managed with a great deal of skill. The man who is engineering it is Edwin P. McCabe, ex-State Auditor of Kansas, who asked the Republicans of that state for a second term of office only to be cast out of the party. The political disappointments, together with a great deal of ostracism at Topeka, determined McCabe. . . . He called to his side the most intelligent Negroes . . . began organizing 'colonies' and executed the plan with so much energy that when Oklahoma was thrown open to settlement, 10,000 Negroes crossed the border to get a foothold in the new country. They came, of course, largely from southern states.

To help the cause, McCabe established a newspaper *The Langston Herald* in the interest of his race. This 'organ' he distributed all through the South as well as Oklahoma. It boldly advocated the plan of dispossessing the whites of political power. The idea fascinated the southern Negroes, and they continued to make up colonies in spite of the planters who saw the labor in their fields dwindling in number. At the present writing, there are seven large colonies of Negroes in Oklahoma, and within the next sixty days, there

will be upward of sixty colonies established if McCabe's plans do not miscarry. There are said to be 200,000 Negroes in the South organized for settlement in Oklahoma. A few years may see two Senators at Washington.²⁰

It is this movement which was the wellspring for the twenty-five self-governing all-Negro towns and communities, including Boley, Langston, Summit, Vernon, etc., which exist in Oklahoma today.

The failure of such efforts as those of McCabe, the decline of the Populist movement and the heightened ruthlessness of the American bourgeoisie and of its Bourbon satraps as monopoly capitalism developed, resulted—in the last years of the nineteenth century—in renewed proposals for emigration. These always reflected a concept of nationality. Outstanding in this regard were the words of the Rev. Henry M. Turner, Bishop of the A.M.E. Church and a former member of the Georgia state legislature. Mixed with Turner's insistence that (as he italicized), "*There is no manhood future in the United States for the Negro,*" a view which vitiated his work, there went nevertheless an urgent demand for full and active participation in American politics on the part of the Negro. Similarly, his insistence upon the fact of Negro nationality, which ran through everything he said and wrote, was distorted by himself into a plea for emigration.²¹

It is believed that the foregoing evidence establishes the fact that the

concept of Negro nationality, however rudimentary or distorted the forms, has been expressed by various sections of the Negro population for well over a hundred years. Of no other people within the United States is this true, and this fact constitutes a very significant feature of Negro history.

It is clear that not until the maturing of the social conditions necessary for the realization of nationhood could the nationhood concept achieve its concrete, scientific formulation. And it is only on the basis of such a formulation that there

could be evolved the Communist Party's position on the right to self-determination for the Negro people in the Black Belt. The essence of that position was indicated by Lenin back in 1913, as Claudia Jones has reminded us²²: "In the United States . . . Negroes . . . must be considered an oppressed nation. . ." The early germination of a rudimentary nationhood consciousness, as here recorded, helps to bulwark the Communist position on the Negro question—a position which arises out of the basic aspirations of the Negro people themselves.

NOTES

- 1 *An Appeal To The World!* (N.A.A.C.P., 1947), pp. 13-14.
- 2 Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the National Question* (International, 1934), p. 8
- 3 Letter dated Boston, May 19, 1772, in C. G. Woodson, ed., *The Mind of the Negro . . .* (Washington, 1924), p. xvii.
- 4 *The Liberator* (Boston), Oct. 22, 1831.
- 5 *The Liberator*, Sept. 22, 1832.
- 6 *Proceedings of the Colored National Convention, held in Rochester, July 6-8, 1853* (Rochester, 1853), p. 9.
- 7 *The Independent* (N. Y.), May 18, 1899, II, p. 1355.
- 8 *The Sons of Africa: An Essay on Freedom* (Boston, 1808) pp. 8, 9.
- 9 *Freedom's Journal* (N. Y.), Oct. 3, 1828. See also Robert A. Young, *The Ethiopian Manifesto* (N. Y., 1829).
- 10 Samuel Hazard, ed., *The Register of Pennsylvania*, Feb. 27, 1830, V, p. 143.
- 11 *Minutes of the State Convention, of the Colored Citizens of the State of Michigan . . . Detroit . . . October, 1843* (Detroit, 1843), p. 2.
- 12 *State Convention of the Colored Citizens of Ohio, Convened at Columbus, January 10-13, 1849* (Oberlin, 1849), pp. 8-11.
- 13 See Woodson, cited work, p. 70.
- 14 M. R. Delany, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored Peo-*

- 15 *ple of the United States* (Phila., 1852), pp. 85, 209-15.
- 16 *A Memorial Discourse, by Rev. Henry Highland Garnet . . . with an introduction by James McCune Smith, M.D.* (Phila., 1865), p. 57.
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- 18 *Christian Recorder* (Phila.) Sept. 25, 1890. An earlier editorial in this magazine—March 13, 1890—opposed the establishment of "a great Negro state" within the confines of the United States.
- 19 *Christian Recorder*, June 26, 1890.
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- 22 A typical expression of Turner's views may be found in J. W. E. Bowen, ed., *Africa and the American Negro* (Atlanta, 1896), pp. 195-98.
- 23 Claudia Jones, "On the right to self-determination," in *Political Affairs* (1946), XXV, p. 71

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- The Situation in Biological Science: Complete Stenographic Report of Proceedings of the Lenin Academy of Agricultural Sciences of the U.S.S.R., July 31-August 7, 1948.* (International Publishers), New York, 1949. 636 pp., \$5.00.
- The Case for the Communist Party.* Eugene Dennis (New Century Publishers), New York, 1949. 32 pp., 10¢.
- Handbook of Philosophy.* Edited and Adapted by Howard Selsam from the Soviet publication *Short Philosophical Dictionary* edited by M. Rosenthal and P. Yuidn (International Publishers), New York, 1949. \$1.50.
- The North Atlantic Pact—For Peace or War?* Abraham Chapman (New Century Publishers), New York, 1949. 16 pp., 3¢.
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