

# Daily Worker

Central Organ of the Workers (Communist) Party

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## White Chauvinism

An incident, apparently very "small," serves as a means of emphasizing again what was said at the last Plenum of the Central Executive Committee of the Workers (Communist) Party in regard to "white chauvinism" in the Party and especially the corruption of certain sections of the Party in the southern states with this disease.

"White chauvinism" is a corruption of the minds of white workers with an attitude of racial "superiority" toward Negroes. This attitude is of course not based upon any justification in science, reason or fact. From the scientific point of view it is stupid and untrue. The historical sources of this corruption are easily understood. In the past, the source is slavery. In the present, the source of this attitude is the system of double exploitation of Negro in this country and the double exploitation of colonial and semi-colonial peoples—the system of imperialist capitalism. Equally it involves the corruption of a white "labor aristocracy" of the imperialist countries, where the whole culture of powerful capitalist societies is bent to service in saturating the minds of entire "white" populations with the idea of their own racial "superiority" and the racial "inferiority" of, say, the Mexican or other Latin American workers and peasants (as "Greasers"), the Chinese workers and peasants (as "Chinamen"), of Filipinos (as "Bolos") and of Negroes, whom the multimillionaire trust-magnates wish to exploit with an even heavier hand than that with which they exploit the average of workers at home. In order to corrupt the dumb white worker of this country so that he will agree to the murder of thousands of Nicaraguans, Mexicans and Chinese for the benefit of the American ruling class, it is one of the prime necessities of United States capitalism to maintain a whole system of lies and a whole code of "Jim Crow" laws, "white superiority" and the "inferiority" of "darker races."

It is literally true that one of the basic needs for sustaining the criminal capitalist system in this country is to keep the masses of white workers poisoned with the filthy corruption of mind which makes them regard the Negro race as "inferior." Lynching will never be abolished by the American capitalist class, because lynching is a necessary part of the Jim Crow system of practice and ideology, which keeps the ranks of the toiling masses divided, enabling exploiters to enslave the Negro masses at longer hours and lower pay, using the white workers' racial chauvinism to keep the Negro workers out of the trade unions, and using either race at will in breaking actual or potential strikes of the other.

The Sixth World Congress of the Communist International very correctly said:

"One of the most important tasks of the Communist Party consists in the struggle for a complete and real equality of the Negroes, for the abolition of all kinds of social and political inequalities. It is the duty of the Communist Party to carry on the most energetic struggle against any exhibition of white chauvinism, to organize active resistance to lynching . . .," etc.

The Workers (Communist) Party in its recent national election campaign for the first time penetrated with the red banner of proletarian revolution into the southern states. This penetration of the south was an action of greatest historical importance. It begins a process that will continue until the million-fold masses of toiling Negroes of the southern states and the proletarian Negro masses of the northern cities alike, are marshalled as a mighty army against the murderous, lynching, stake-burning, jim-crow capitalist system.

Of course no party can do this—no party can "stir up" the Negro masses and struggle for their social equality—except a party which faces the implications of this complete social overturn. That means, of course, only the party of social revolution, the party fighting for the rule of the exploited masses, the working class—over the exploiters. Of course no mere reformist party could face these implications; the socialist party must necessarily be on the other side of the fight; only the revolutionary Workers (Communist) Party engages in this "indiscreet" work.

But in the penetration of the south, our Party absorbed into its ranks some members, often of the petty-bourgeois class, that are distinctly poisoned with the capitalist "white supremacy" culture which is even more virulent in the south than in the north. These particular members are not the only mem-

bers of the Party thus affected, but they show in some cases grosser aspects.

In the issue of the Daily Worker of January 1 appeared two "workers' correspondence" letters signed "Doc and Lou." The letters came from Jacksonville, Florida, and they dealt with the treatment of the Negro workers in the south. The writers of these two letters seem to have the idea that they are Communists; and the worst of it is that they seem to think that the Workers (Communist) Party is—like the organizations of the labor aristocracy—an organization of white workers, which graciously permits the humble Negro to run along behind, hat in hand, to support it as an inferior. For one of these correspondents (evidently not a worker, but an employer of labor) writes as follows:

I had the following conversation with a Negro worker here:

"Say, Mr. Lou, can't you give me a job?"

"Why, Jack. I thought you were working for Mr. Higgins."

"I was, Mr. Lou, but I only made \$2.50 last week." . . .

"Of course he gives you your meals?"

"No, sir, Mr. Lou, and that's why I came to you. I haven't had no work for two days, and I am hungry."

The other letter is supposed to describe the "Communist" election activities of "Mr. Lou," the employer, who talks down to a Negro worker, in telling him how to vote:

"Well, listen Moses, let me tell you what to do. You vote for the Workers Party candidate. The Workers (Communist) Party is the only Party that's working for the interest of the workers, regardless of their color. There is no discrimination against the Negro. Here, take this card; it has a list of the names of our candidates. You put your cross in front of their names on your ballot and you'll make no mistake."

Three weeks later:

"Hello, Moses." "Hello, Mr. Lou."

"Well, did you vote like I told you to on election day?"

"Say, Mr. Lou, I most certainly did."

DOC & LOU.

It is clear that "Mr. Lou" is not a Communist, not a man who can be a comrade with those Negro workers who must be the strong backbone of the Communist Party and of its leadership in Florida. Our Party is first of all the Party of the most exploited workers. Not "Mr. Lou," but the strong black workers whom he so patronizingly writes about as "Mose" and "Jack," and such white workers as can be equal comrades with them, are those who can be depended upon to build up and lead the revolutionary Party of the working class—against the employers and their class.

The appearance of these letters in the Daily Worker brought to us the following letter from Comrade Cyril Briggs, editor of the Negro Champion, organ of the American Negro Labor Congress:

Editor, Daily Worker:

I want to enter an emphatic protest against publication in the Daily Worker of articles like the enclosed, which are in decidedly bad (Communist) taste, to say nothing of being an exhibition of innate white chauvinism in the mind of the writer. Why in hell the "Mr. Lou" for the white worker and the "Jack" for the Negro worker?

Even if the thing is actually happening in the South where the Negro workers have been terrorized for decades, is this servile custom one that should be given encouragement: this attitude of master and slave, of superior and inferior? Is it a custom that should be paraded before the eyes of Negro workers in the North and in the columns of a Communist paper?

I have seen similar things in the capitalist press, but never thought I would live to see the day when such stuff would be published in the columns of a Communist paper. Surely this stuff must have got through without your notice.

I suggest you advise your correspondent to stick to the usual news form or correspondence in the presentation of his facts, cut the cheap comedy, change his mental attitude towards the Negro or get to hell out of the Workers (Communist) Party.

Fraternally yours,

CYRIL BRIGGS.

We agree 100 per cent with the letter of Comrade Briggs, and he is correct in guessing that this stuff "got through without the editor's notice,"—although this is not enough excuse, for such things must not happen. Comrade Briggs is especially right in saying that those who try to import into our Party this attitude of master and slave will have to "get to hell out of the Workers (Communist) Party."

We are the Party of the Negro workers equally with the white.