

Only Path to Liberation of Negro Masses

NEGRO LIBERATION, by James S. Allen. International Pamphlets No. 20, 10 cents.

Reviewed by **MILTON HOWARD**

THE workers of America will not be able to overthrow the rule of their exploiters, the American capitalists, if they do not win over to their side the 10,000,000 oppressed Negro workers from whom American capitalism sweats even greater profits than it does from the white workers. And, conversely, the Negro workers will never be able to win their freedom from all oppression without the aid of the millions of American white workers and small farmers. It is therefore obvious that a proper understanding of the Negro question as a basis for correct action is absolutely vital for all workers, Negro and white. Tremendously important as this understanding is, it is not too much to say that before appearance of this pamphlet it was impossible to obtain in compact form a popular Communist analysis of the whole question. But this pamphlet takes up the whole question, its beginnings, its history, its development and its present status, thus providing the key to an understanding of why the Communist Party demands and fights for "Equal rights for the Negroes and self-determination for the Black Belt."

KEEN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

James S. Allen, who is also the author of another pamphlet in this series, "The American Negro," correctly insists that to consider the Negro question in America from a Marxist-Leninist viewpoint means to consider it historically. He shows by keen historical analysis that the Negro people are a developing nation. But what is a nation? Allen gives a good summary of Stalin's teaching on this question. A nation is a historically developed, permanent community of people having a common language, a common history, a common economic and cultural life, and living on a common territory. By the end of the Civil War the Negroes already had many of the elements of a nation. And by 1900, with the development of a Negro petty-bourgeoisie and class antagonisms among the Negro people, the Negroes, says Allen, "had already developed all the characteristics of a nation—of an oppressed nationality." In other words, the Negro masses in the Black Belt constitute today a young nation whose tremendous cultural and social forces American capitalism is trying to strangle in order to preserve the tremendous super-profits which it sweats out of the Negro toiling masses.

THE Communists all over the world fight for self-determination for all nations. In the Soviet Union they have put this theory into practice. Allen's chapter on this problem is exceptionally clear. He shows that Communists believe in bringing all nations closely together in one international unity. But he points out, quoting Lenin, that a "fusion of nations on a truly democratic, truly international basis is unthinkable without the freedom of separation. . . . The working class strives to bring all nations closely together, to fuse them, but it intends to bring that about not by the use of force, but only by a free, brotherly union of the workers and toiling masses of all nations."

WHAT SELF-DETERMINATION MEANS

Then the author goes on to show how this conception applies to the Negroes of this country. He says: "The right of self-determination means that the Negro people in the Black Belt, where they have formed the majority of the population for many generations and where they have developed as a people, have the right to set up a republic of the Black Belt in which the Negroes would exercise governmental authority (and where the significant white minority would have full equal rights with the Negroes) and determine for themselves whether their country should be federated to the United States or have complete political independence. . . . The Communist Party strives to unite the Negro toilers and the white masses of the country, but this objective cannot be reached until the Negroes have the freedom—which they do not have now—to enter of their own free will and without coercion into such a union." It is obvious from this how reactionary and false is the propaganda of the Socialists, especially Norman Thomas, (who allowed Jim-Crowism of the Negro workers in meetings on his Southern speaking tour), that self-determination means segregation, when it actually means the opposite, complete freedom and absolute equality.

Allen shows how the very existence of the Negro bourgeoisie and its leaders, DuBois, White, Pickens and others, depends on the existence of Jim-Crow districts where Negro business can thrive. That is why these "leaders" are trying to keep the Negro masses faithful to capitalism.

THE only path to liberation for the Negro and white workers is the path of revolutionary unity under the leadership of the Communist Party.

This is the lesson which Allen points out is forced upon us by the situation today and the history of the Negro people in America.