

Oppressed Nationalities

See U.S.S.R. as a Beacon

By Cyril Briggs

Two contrasting worlds, two opposing systems! In the Soviet Union, the liberation of the formerly oppressed nationalities. In capitalist America, the innocent Scottsboro Negro defendants for four years in the shadow of the electric chair; heroic Angelo Herndon sent to a virtual death sentence on the Georgia chain gang for

leading a successful demonstration of unemployed Negro and white workers for relief; lynching and Jim-crow oppression on the increase.

In the Soviet Union, the great Russian masses and the members of the emancipated nationalities together building Socialism, overthrowing the age-old enemies of mankind: poverty and hunger. In the capitalist world, the democratic rights of the toilers trampled under foot, race hatred openly propagated by the Nazi rulers of Germany, an economy of hunger and sacrifice (in the interest of saving dying capitalism) impudently preached by Hitler and Mussolini; the desperate resort to Fascist terror and suppression by a decaying and doomed class.

It is no accident that only in the Soviet Union has the national question been solved in the interests of the formerly oppressed nationalities. Under capitalism a small minority of bankers and landlords has the right to plunder and exploit the vast majority of the population. Capitalism must divide its victims in order to survive. This it has done with great success in the past, by fostering race and national hatreds, by spreading shameful slanders against the Negro people, for example. This maneuver it finds increasingly difficult today with the growing radicalization of the toiling masses and the increasing influence of the Communist parties.

The white toilers cannot achieve

social emancipation, cannot overthrow their exploiters, without a complete break with capitalism. This is also true of the Negro and colonial peoples. They cannot achieve liberation from national oppression until they recognize in imperialism their relentless enemy and break with all its agents within their own ranks, at the same time allying themselves with the great world-wide anti-imperialist movement.

The Right to Secede

The teachings of Lenin, leader of the October Revolution and teacher of the world proletariat, of the right of oppressed nationalities to self-determination, even up to the point of secession, has become a living reality in the Land of the Soviets. The belief and hope of the imperialists that extension of this right would lead to the splitting up of the Soviet Union into small, fragmentary and impotent states, easy prey for imperialist plunder, have been shattered by the iron unity achieved by the Russian Communist Party between the various nationalities and races of the Soviet Union.

Lenin pointed out that the aim of Socialism was not to promote national divisions among mankind, but rather to knit the various races and nationalities together. This could only be done, however, by first freeing the oppressed nationalities and thereby breaking their natural distrust of the members of the former oppressing nationalities.