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THE NEW YORK TIMES,
SUNDAY, APRIL 30, 1939.

**SEIZE, KILL NEGRO,
OFFICER WATCHING**

**2 Brothers Shoot Taxi Driver
Near Daytona to Avenge
Fate of Third**

OVERPOWERED CONSTABLE

**Victim Had Been Accused of
Running Down and Causing
Death of Florida Youth**

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla., April 29 (AP).—Lee Snell, a Negro taxi driver, was shot to death in a highway near here today while being taken to jail and Constable James Durden told a coroner's jury the slayers were two brothers of a boy fatally injured by Snell's taxi several hours earlier.
/ Durden identified the pair as Everett and Earl Blackwelder.

Snell had been arrested after the death of Benny Blackwelder, aged 12, who was struck by the taxi while he was riding a bicycle.

The constable said the brothers, armed with a shotgun and a rifle, overtook him and his prisoner west of the airport on the Daytona Beach-Deland Highway, blocked the road and forced him to halt. He said he fought but was overpowered. Then Earl Blackwelder shot Snell with the rifle and Everett fired a shotgun at the Negro.

"I had hold of the shotgun when it went off," said Durden. "I thought he was going to shoot me."

The constable said one of the brothers covered him while the other turned their car. The two drove away toward Daytona Beach.

Three Negro motorists who said they saw part of the action corroborated Durden's description of the slaying.

Legion to Honor Col. Roosevelt

Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

PROVIDENCE, April 29.—Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, one of the founders of the American Legion in Paris twenty years ago, is to be guest of honor at a Founders' Dinner to be tendered here Thursday evening by the American Legion, Department of Rhode Island, and other civic and patriotic organizations.

THE NEGRO AND THE DEMOCRATIC FRONT



JAMES W. FORD

THE NEGRO
and the
DEMOCRATIC
FRONT

BY

James W. Ford

INTRODUCTION BY A. W. BERRY



INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK

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THIS ATTEMPT TO SET FORTH A WAY OUT
FOR MY PEOPLE, WHO HAVE RESISTED
THROUGH CENTURIES OF OPPRESSION, IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED TO MY SONS,
HENDERSON, HUGH, *and* KENNETH

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INTRODUCTION

BY A. W. BERRY

THIS volume is a collection of articles and addresses written during the past three or four years. They were composed in the heat of the exciting struggles which they describe; they were hammered out in the midst of the everyday events which they analyze. Underlying every section of the book is the answer to the question: How does a Communist leader contribute to the work of his Party, the interests of his people and the general working-class movement? The author shows how the Party program is forged, and the factors involved in effecting this program. Indeed, the book could justifiably have been titled, "How a Negro Communist Leader Works."

Dealing as he does with the solution of practical problems of the moment, the author furnishes the reader with a documentary political history of the past three eventful years. But instead of merely recording these problems, he gives the reader a guide toward solving them—a Communist answer. Noting that many of the speeches were delivered during or before 1937, the reader has the advantage of checking with history the validity of most of the proposals and predictions.

Not all of the material contained in this volume refers specifically to the Negro question; there are statements dealing with national and international political matters, which come quite properly from a Communist leader. But even here a particular Negro "angle" projects itself: In what other organization, political or otherwise, is a Negro entrusted with the job of shaping basic principles and policies; in what other political

party is a Negro selected as an authoritative spokesman on general problems? It is well-known that even when Negroes serve in executive capacities in non-Communist organizations they are, at best, considered as specialists in the limited field of race relations, and not as leading individuals in molding fundamental programs and tactics.

Although this book consists of contributions made at various times—each complete in itself and prepared for a specific occasion—nevertheless there is a unifying thread which runs throughout the volume. This unifying bond is the author's central theme, which is present in each article or speech and which is steadily and progressively developed from section to section of the book. This central thesis may be summarized in a sentence: *The Negro people, in alliance with the working class and all others willing to fight for democracy, must and can make democracy work.*

The introductory section of this volume gives the reader a bird's-eye view of the current problems facing the Negro people, the background of these problems, and the ultimate Communist solution.

Then the reader is taken through the 1936 national elections, one of the most complex campaigns in American history. The dominant point here is: How to unite the Negro people, and to effect an alliance with labor. However, this subject is not treated in isolation, but as an integral part of the political flux and realignment common to the period; in short, the Marxist-Leninist method is applied to American experiences by a Communist Party leader in the interests of Negro freedom and American democracy.

The last article in this chapter deals with an important question: In what way should the Negro people support the progressive measures of the Roosevelt administration? In working out this relationship, the author makes a singular contribution to American politics; he shows how, by fighting for their special interests and thereby exerting pressure for more pro-

gressive measures, the Negro people, without giving blanket endorsements, create a broader platform from which New Deal supporters can more effectively attack the trusts and monopolies which plunder the nation.

In the following chapter, when the author writes of the National Negro Congress, it is not simply from the viewpoint of abstract political theory but as an active participant. In fact, it is a matter of history that he first raised the slogan, "For a National Negro Congress," a year before the first step was made toward organizing it. As is to be expected, the author emphasizes and clarifies the role of the Communist Party in the movement for the Congress, giving an explanation of the Communist approach to non-Communist organizations in general.

The succeeding section is concerned with specific contemporary issues which serve to unite the Negro people. Chief among these are the Scottsboro and Herndon cases. Since so many half-truths are at large concerning these cases, the author does a commendable job in placing them in their proper perspective, as a focal point in the struggle for national liberation. As such, they have become the greatest factors for unity of the Negro people since Reconstruction. The important role of Harlem as an international center of Negro life is also analyzed.

One of the most interesting subjects treated in the book is the whole matter of the traditions and culture of the American Negro, so long vilified and commercialized by bourgeois reactionaries and Negro-phobes. Here the culture developed by the Negro people is revealed as a fighting weapon and a factor for unifying the people against hardship and oppression.

The section on international politics deals at length with problems that confront the post-war world, facing an impending conflagration—the menace of fascism, and the assistance rendered it by its counter-revolutionary ally, Trotskyism, as well as the rise of the People's Front as an antidote to reaction.

These addresses on world affairs might well become the intelligent Negro's—or any other American's—guide to action for world peace and brotherhood. The author's arguments are not negative or defeatist; they point out how oppressed and minority peoples today can fight for their own interests by allying themselves with the world's democratic majority in the struggle against the nightmare of fascism and war. In the concluding chapter of the book, the author concretizes the meaning of the Democratic Front to the Negro people.

From chapter to chapter of this volume the reader will note the progression and development of the position of the Communist Party during the past few years. This broadening outlook corresponds to the whole trend of recent events, which has charted a new historical course for the Negro, as well as for all other Americans. Ethiopia awakened anti-fascist sentiments among the Negro masses; unity was established in the Herndon and Scottsboro cases; the organization of the C. I. O. stirred the imagination of all sections of the Negro people; the lineup of reactionaries against Roosevelt galvanized the lineup of progressive forces. With the Communist Party moving in the midst of this swelling stream, it is only logical that the author, as a leading spokesman of that Party, should keep pace with this broad development. Therein lies the "secret" of the growing mass influence and contact exerted by the Communist Party and its leaders. To maintain this influence and contact requires flexibility and a sensitiveness to the requirements of the historical moment. To be a thorough Marxist-Leninist is to be able to grab "the steering wheel of history," and thus consciously to determine the course of contemporary development. This is the philosophy underlying all that is written in this volume. And if one finds polemics here, they are not the bickering, hair-splitting kind, in defense of an abstract formula or canon, but always blows in the defense of the moment's need, related to the broader goal of social reconstruction.

Ford's contributions contained in this volume demonstrate the validity of the slogan, "Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism." The rise of James W. Ford to leadership in the Communist Party and among his people is, of itself, a testimonial to the American roots of the Party and its program.

The son of a poorly-paid steel worker, Ford spent a hard childhood in Alabama. However, he attended Fisk University, and while at college became a star football player and a ranking student. He joined the army in 1917, just before graduating. He was made a non-commissioned officer, and was respected by his men. While in France, he showed his mettle by leading his men in a protest against the prejudiced actions of white officers.

Returning from overseas, where he served as a radio engineer, he was honorably discharged, and secured an appointment in the post office at Chicago. In 1926 he joined the Communist Party, and immediately plunged into trade union work. He was a delegate to the Chicago Federation of Labor. Later he became one of the organizers of the Trade Union Unity League, and aided in the formation of the American Negro Labor Congress and its successor, the League of Struggle for Negro Rights.

In 1930, he went to Germany as secretary of the International Committee of Negro Workers. During this time he made a thorough study of the African colonial question. In 1931, he delivered an historic speech at Geneva to a conference on African children called by the League of Nations. His speech, in the interest of African colonials, completely exposed imperialist colonial policy, to the discomfiture and embarrassment of some of the delegates.

The election campaign of 1932 found Ford back in the United States, where he was nominated as Vice-Presidential candidate of the Communist Party. That year he toured the country, covering the most important centers. As a war veteran, he participated in the Bonus March of 1932, and was thrown

in jail during Hoover's infamous eviction of the vets from Anacostia Flats.

In July, 1933, Ford became the leader of the Harlem section of the Communist Party. He attended the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International in 1935, where he spoke on the Ethiopian situation, and where he was elected a candidate to the Executive Committee.

He was again nominated as Vice-Presidential candidate in 1936, and is now a candidate for U. S. Senate from New York. As a member of the Political Committee, the National Committee and the New York State Committee of the Communist Party, Ford brings a wealth of experience and ability to his present post as Executive Secretary of the Harlem Division.

Ford is a regular contributor to such periodicals as the *Daily Worker*, the *Communist* and the *Communist International*, and has published numerous pamphlets, but this is his first book. It should aid the Negro people, and their allies among workers and progressives, to approach the political stock-taking so vitally necessary in these troublous times; and, having drawn the proper conclusions—to act for freedom and democracy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SOME of the articles in this volume were written in collaboration with my co-workers, such as A. W. Berry, Chairman of the Harlem Division and member of the National Committee of the Communist Party, and George Blake, Administrative Secretary of the Harlem Division and member of the New York State Committee. All of the contributions to this book represent the collective thought and experience of the leadership of the Communist Party and of the rank and file Negro and white Communists who are building the Democratic Front in the mines and factories and on the farms and in the cities where Negroes work and live.

I should like to acknowledge also the aid of Theodore Bassett, James S. Allen, Anna Damon, Mary Ford and a number of other comrades who have been kind enough to help in various ways. Above all, this book represents in its political content the collective thought of leading committees of the Communist Party; and in so far as my individual contribution is concerned, it has been an effort to develop and carry out the program of the Party among the Negro people.

J. W. F.

New York City,
September 1, 1938.

THE NEGRO AND THE DEMOCRATIC FRONT

Special Problems of the Negro People in the United States

AMERICA'S most bitter heritage is its Negro problem. Perhaps no other question has aroused such hatreds, such slanders, such suffering in our country. For more than three centuries, ever since 1619, when the first slave ship touched our shores, the presence of this darker race in America has constituted an unsolved problem, reflected, on the one hand, in the bestial cruelty of lynching and, on the other, in the noble sacrifice of a John Brown. One of the major wars in American history was lit by the fire of this conflict; and the failure of the Civil War to free the Negro people economically and socially has brought the problem down to our own day in very nearly as aggravating a form as it presented in 1861.

Because of special forms of oppression—race discrimination, economic distinctions and cultural hindrances—thirteen million Negro citizens occupy the lowermost rung in the social life of the United States. In cities with a large Negro population, the Negro people are forced into a ghetto existence. A large portion of the Negro population is concentrated in a special section of the country, the Black Belt of the South. The poverty and backwardness of the whole South can be traced directly to the medieval mold of its economic and social relationships; hope for prosperity and democracy in this section of the country is therefore indissolubly bound up with the future of the American Negro.

Over one-half of the Negro population is engaged in agriculture; 80 per cent are farm laborers, sharecroppers and tenants, while only 20 per cent are part or full owners of farms. Thus agriculture, and particularly farm labor, is the basis of the economic life of the Negro people.

THE LAND QUESTION

Following the Civil War, the Negroes were led to believe that they would obtain the land ("40 acres and a mule"). This would have brought security to those who had been slaves. But nothing of the kind happened. Only very slowly and with much difficulty was it possible for some former slaves to purchase a bit of land. By 1910, only one-fourth of the Negro farmers owned land—and then it was usually very little and, moreover, was the poorest and the most heavily mortgaged. For the past quarter of a century, capitalism has been taking even this land away from the Negro farmers. In 1930, there were approximately 40,000 less Negro farm-owners than in 1910. Between 1920 and 1930, Negroes lost about 2,750,000 acres of land. How much they have lost since then, no one knows. But it is common knowledge that Negro owners are being deprived of land by the banks, insurance companies, large land owners and other creditors more rapidly than ever before.

This is one side of the land question. The plantation country in the South is like a prison, a veritable hell to which five million Negro sharecroppers and tenants have been consigned. The land, bought as the result of patient and painful labor, and thrift, is being lost. The slavery of sharecropping and tenancy grows.

When the crisis broke out, the large landowners of the South found themselves in a quandary. Many of the banks and credit merchants failed, and those who remained refused to extend credit. This meant that the small landowners who lived from hand-to-mouth were wiped out. From the beginning of the

crisis, to March 1933, over half a million forced sales and foreclosures took place in the Southern states.

The National Farm Credit Administration dumped tremendous funds into the South, most of which went to the plantation owners. In nine months alone, the Farm Credit Administration advanced about \$300,000,000 to the planters. The croppers and tenants saw little of the money which they were supposed to receive.

THE PROMISE OF THE CITY

Many people thought, especially during the World War and the years immediately following, that city life would offer a means of escape from economic and social bondage.

The city and its industry had been practically forbidden territory to Negroes, up to the World War. The plantation masters in the Black Belt kept the Negroes chained to the land and would not permit them to leave. Even when industry began to develop in the South, most factory gates remained closed to the Negro workers. The textile industry, which grew up so rapidly in the South, made it clear that it would not hire Negroes, except a few as floor sweepers, etc.

During the World War an acute shortage of labor developed in industry. Then only did the capitalists make an energetic drive to obtain Negro labor. The great exodus of Negroes from the South began. Negroes also poured into Southern industry in large numbers. But the exodus was already decreasing by 1923. Employers had more labor than they needed. About a million Negroes had left the land of lynching and plantation slavery, but industry and the city have not fulfilled the promises held out to them.

Negroes have not been permitted to advance to the higher paying jobs. They have been forced to the lowest status of all industrial workers: to the unskilled heavy laboring jobs. It has always been a common occurrence in the South, even before

the present crisis, to find graduates of Tuskegee Institute and other institutions, highly trained mechanics and engineers, working at jobs far below their qualifications.

The white workers, it is true, are wage slaves under capitalism. They must sell their labor to an employer in order to live. But the Negro worker is doubly exploited, in comparison with the white worker. The capitalists have done everything in their power, with the assistance of the reactionary leaders of the American Federation of Labor, to prevent unity between white and black labor. That is why the Negro has not been able to advance in industry.

Capitalism is now trying to drive Negro workers permanently from industry. The Negro workers' unemployment is as much as six times as great as that of the white workers. With so many unemployed, with wages falling constantly, the capitalists have less and less use for Negro labor. As if to drive this fact home, certain Negro leaders have been trying to induce Negroes to return to the land in the South. Under capitalism, neither the land nor the city has use for them.

THE STATUS OF THE NEGRO MIDDLE CLASS

Has the Negro fared any better as teacher, doctor, dentist or in the other professions? Here again capitalism has tried to check all efforts at advancement. In the whole country there are only 6,825 Negro physicians, lawyers and dentists. They are victims of segregation and discrimination, suffering from inadequate facilities in the way of training and practice, and are excluded from most white institutions. For a population of thirteen million Negroes, there are only 56,829 Negro teachers, and they are seldom permitted to teach in white schools.

Some leaders have advised Negroes to push ahead in business. One often hears this advice today. But even if the development of Negro business were a way out, it has proven extremely difficult under capitalism. Most of the business enter-

prises operated by Negroes are small, overnight "peddler" affairs. Why? Not because the Negro is not capable, but because big business has the monopoly of commerce and trade! Segregation forces the Negro retailer to sell only in Negro neighborhoods, where he has a poor clientele and the overwhelming competition of the chain stores. Today, many of these small business men are being wiped out.

A small well-to-do class has developed, but only at the expense of the rest of a poverty-stricken Negro community. It gathers its share of profits from the Negro masses in the ghettos. Capitalism has not permitted the existence of any large Negro-owned industrial enterprises, and the white ruling class is the direct exploiter of the Negro masses on the plantations and in industry.

If one examines a list of the wealthiest Negroes, he will find that many of them have made their fortunes by speculating in real estate in the segregated sections of large cities, and by extracting extremely high rents from Negro tenants. Others have built up their wealth in the cosmetic business. Still others have made their money in the insurance and banking business, closely connected with real estate speculation and landlordism. A number of Negro physicians and ministers have accumulated small fortunes, not in their practice but in real estate.*

THE STIGMA OF RACE

There are written laws and there are unwritten laws. The three most important written laws dealing with Negroes are the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States. These amendments are ignored, but written laws in at least fifteen states segregating Negroes on public conveyances are very strictly enforced.

* There are about 25,000 retail store operators. Altogether there are nearly 70,000 small business enterprises. There are 23 banks owned by Negroes. There are several Negro millionaires.

There is also one unwritten law which is very strictly enforced, and that is the law that lynchers of Negroes are not to be punished.

Political inequalities, such as the system of poll taxes as a requirement for voting, prevent Negroes from exercising rights guaranteed by the Constitution. A second hindrance is the educational qualification, which requires Negroes to interpret the Constitution to the satisfaction of election officials. A third trick is to bar them from the primaries of political parties. In the state of Texas, the Democratic Party by resolution denies to Negroes the right to participate in the Democratic primary.

The economic and social status of the Negro is shaped by Jim-Crowism. In industry he receives less pay for the same kind of work as a white worker, while he labors under worse conditions. The middle class is also affected by Jim-Crow policies and practices. Teachers receive about half the pay of the corresponding white teachers, and in some rural districts they earn as little as \$50 a year. The Negro is the outcast of the public school system. The high disease and death rate reveal the severity of capitalist exploitation.

Intermarriage among whites and Negroes is forbidden in most of the states and in all Southern states; and even in those states where there is no prohibiting law, mixed racial couples suffer social ostracism. More than five thousand lynchings of Negroes have been recorded since 1880.

In view of these appalling facts, the bitter details of daily existence, is there any reason to believe that capitalism will or can permit Negroes to rise to their fullest stature?

Some modern methods of struggle against these conditions have already been tested. One of the principal lessons to be gained from the fight for the Scottsboro boys is this: it is possible to obtain certain victories from the ruling class, but not by cringing. The only way such victories can be won is by organizing and arousing masses of people, by raising our

voices high in protest. The Negro people cannot live upon the crumbs which fall from the table of American big business.

One of the most inspiring facts of recent history is that the white workers and intellectuals have begun to overcome prejudice and to lead in the struggle for Negro rights. This is due largely to the economic crisis. As white workers have lost their jobs, as their conditions have grown steadily worse, they have seen the necessity of uniting with their fellow black workers against the exploiters. This awakening of the workers can be traced to the fight of the Communists against prejudice and for working-class solidarity and Negro rights.

As a result of the activities of the Communist Party, the feeling for solidarity is growing in the trade unions, even in the South—as, for example, in the United Mine Workers in the Birmingham region. In the North, as a result of the Communist policy and agitation, larger and larger numbers of Negro workers are participating in the labor movement. This movement of solidarity and of unity has also been joined by Negro intellectuals, teachers, doctors and other professionals who are beginning to understand more clearly the need for a new policy in the struggles of the Negro people.

We should ask: who are the real carriers of prejudice in the labor movement? And we answer: that section of the labor movement which was misled by false and temporary “prosperity” and by the top-leadership of the American Federation of Labor, William Green, Matthew Woll and their cohorts.

Especially dangerous also is the Pacific Movement of the Eastern World, whose main slogan is the so-called “united front of the darker races under the leadership of Japan.” The Japanese ruling class is no friend of the Negro. The Japanese capitalists have not hesitated to subdue with an iron hand Korea and Manchuria, although “colored” people live there. They also carry on a relentless war against the Chinese people.

The present system of finance capitalist society in the United States has meant more suffering and slavery for the Negro

people than for any other section of the population. What are the important changes which have to be made and how are they to be made, if the Negro problem is to be solved?

As long as the plantations and sharecropping remain, it will be impossible for Negroes to obtain equality. It is first necessary to change the plantation system. This can be done only by the organized power of the masses of exploited sharecroppers and farmers. The poor-white tenant farmers will support a change in the plantation system which will mean recognition of their rights to the land. Herein lies the test of real freedom for the Negro people—their right to self-determination.

Let us now consider with whose assistance this change can be made.

SOCIALISM AND THE NEGRO PEOPLE

Only the control of the means of production by the working class can transform the social and economic relations of American society. The organization of production by the progressive forces, not for profit but in the interests of society as a whole, can assure the freedom of the oppressed masses. American capitalism has come into conflict with the American working class. This is the only class which can lead to the great social change. Properly organized and directed, it can rally its allies around it, and lead the rest of the exploited population to defend and extend democracy, and through the struggle for democracy to the creation of a happy and prosperous America.

But in order to accomplish this, the working class needs the support of others. They have allies in the population. These are: (1) the mass of poor and small farmers, who are oppressed and opposed by big business, the trusts, the monopolies and the banks; (2) the middle-class in the cities, such as technicians, professionals, small business men, etc., who are suffering from capitalism; (3) the Negro people, a very important ally of the working class. In addition, there are the oppressed peoples

of the Philippine Islands, Puerto Rico and Cuba, as well as of Central and South America, whose struggles serve as a reservoir of strength for the American working class.

The struggle for change in the land system, the struggle for the freedom of the Negro people and the working-class movement in the country as a whole, will develop hand in hand. Each will lend strength and support to the other. There must be present a conscious organized group of workers, Negro and white. This is the role of the Communist Party. Some people hesitate before the might of capitalism. True, things are bad, they say, but what guarantee have we of being victorious? However, this is not a matter of our own choosing; it is forced upon us by history and by capitalism itself, which degrades us, grinds us down into the dust and makes life unbearable. Struggle has not been strange to the Negro people. Their past has been glorified by it. And their struggle for modern democracy will open a glorious future.

In the South the technical transformation of agriculture is needed. Instead of a one-sided, one-crop agriculture, which is demanded by the bankers and creditors, a rounded-out and planned agriculture is needed. Livestock breeding for food must replace mule breeding, and the tractor and other agricultural machinery will replace the mule. Huge collective farms can become tremendous cotton-growing factories. The mechanical cotton picker, the development of which has been retarded by the present system of harvesting cotton, could be employed and the tremendous energies of the Negro sharecroppers conserved by this labor-saving device. Hundreds of thousands of farm families could have the possibilities of leisure and peace, plenty and abundance, education and culture.

The textile industry would be opened to Negro workers. Birmingham in the Black Belt territory would be a basis for the machine-building industry supported by modernization and improvement of the fertilizer, cotton-ginning and similar industrial plants, and scientific methods in the exploitation of

the pine woods and the development of the furniture industry in connection with lumbering.

By this time much will already have been done in the socialist re-education of the white population. Socialist ownership will have removed the basis of prejudice; socialist education will remove even the remnants of prejudice. The right of self-determination, national equality—that is, to hold public offices, to advance national culture and integrate it with American culture as a whole, and also complete uprooting of economic hindrances—can be realized by the Negro people in the Black Belt.

Only on the basis of socialism will be created the possibility for the full and equal development of the Negro people. Under the slave power and under the capitalist power, the Negro people have been retarded, oppressed and persecuted. Under the power of the workers and farmers, the Negro people can come forth and realize all their potentialities. Only in the all-embracing struggle for democracy will they be able to take their undisputed and equal status beside all the peoples.

Summary of a speech at the National Conference of the Joint Committee on National Recovery, in preparation for the convening of the National Negro Congress, Washington, D. C., May, 1935.

New Times: New Alignments

1. THE FARMER-LABOR PARTY MOVEMENT

AMERICAN citizenship requires that every citizen vote and seek to secure and preserve the democratic rights achieved by the people of the country, that is, to maintain popular government by acting through popular suffrage. Our population is composed of various groupings which act to solve their particular problems. They must move in unison, in united political action. The masses support the parties which can bring benefits to them. The Negro people, an important stratum of the American population, join for this reason in progressive political action.

The Communist Party understands that the various strata, regardless of their special demands, have certain problems in common. It is for us to reach these sections of the population and meet them on their own ground, level and degree of understanding of the issues that affect them. We must raise them to a higher understanding of their problems, and guide them in unison to a realization of their needs and aspirations. It is thus that we approach the Negro people for a Farmer-Labor Party.

What have the Negro people to gain from a Farmer-Labor Party? How can they exercise their citizenship rights in their own behalf, in such a movement, together with other sections of the population? In order to answer these questions, it is

necessary to outline the issues and needs that face the Negro people, and also to show how they have fared in the old line parties, the Republican and Democratic. First let us analyze, without detailed elaboration, the Democratic Party.

The present Democratic Party with its New Deal policies has many shortcomings. Practices of discrimination and other limitations have prevented Negroes from receiving the full benefits of New Deal measures. The Social Security Act, for example, by excluding agricultural labor and domestic workers, bars nearly half the Negro population from its benefits.

In January of 1935, when four million Negroes were on relief (nearly one-third of the Negro population), discrimination in the administration of relief sorely affected them. Despite constitutional guarantees, some four million Negroes of voting age are disfranchised, particularly in that part of the country where the Democratic Party holds sway. According to the 1930 census, the total Negro voting population was 6,531,939, or nine per cent of the entire voting population of the United States. Yet because of the disfranchisement, the voting power of the Negro is only three per cent of the voting population. Certainly in the face of these conditions the Negro people should have cause for grievance against the Democratic Party.

The Republican Party is losing its hold on the Negro people, who began to break away in 1928, and are continuing to do so. Negroes have supported the Democratic Party in increasing numbers. Would it be wise for them now, because of grievances against the Democratic Party, to swing back to the Republicans? No it would not, for the Republican Party is becoming more reactionary in character, with the most reactionary people in the country either heading it or influencing it.* For example, William Randolph Hearst, a reactionary of the worst sort, is playing an important part in shaping the

* For a more detailed and up-to-date analysis of the two old parties, and the relation of forces since the 1936 national elections and the 1937 elections, see *The People's Front*, by Earl Browder.

policies of the Republican Party. He is a supporter of Hitler who says the following about the Negro people:

In each Negro, even in one of the kindest disposition, is the latent brute and the primitive man who can be tamed neither by centuries of slavery nor by an external varnish of civilization. All assimilation, all education, is bound to fail on account of the racial inborn features of the blood. One can therefore understand why in the Southern states of America, sheer necessity compels the white race to act in an abhorrent, and perhaps even cruel manner against Negroes. And, of course, most of the Negroes that are lynched do not merit any regret.

The Republican reactionaries, and the ultra-reactionaries as a whole, oppose President Roosevelt and try to provide a trap to catch those people who for various reasons are disappointed because of certain inadequacies of the New Deal.

PROGRAM FOR A FARMER-LABOR PARTY

Let us now turn to the Farmer-Labor Party. What can the Negro people gain from such a party? What is the Farmer-Labor Party? In the first place, the Farmer-Labor Party has as its fundamental purpose the development of a progressive movement. In this movement the Negro people can ally themselves with millions who have common problems.

What is the program of a Farmer-Labor Party? The ten basic points in the program of the Farmer-Labor Party, adopted at Chicago, in May 1935, are the following:

1. Higher wages, shorter hours and a shorter week, without reduction in weekly earnings.
2. The full right of organization and collective bargaining through unions of the workers' choice; the outlawing of company unions.
3. The fight for adequate relief and genuine unemployment and social insurance, at the expense of the capitalist class and the government; union wages on all public work; opening of closed factories by the government to employ labor at union wages.

4. The fight against sales tax and high utility rates and prices; for taxation of the rich, for lightening the heavy burden of taxes upon the workers, farmers, middle classes and professionals.

5. Immediate full payment of the bonus to the veterans through taxation of big wealth and high incomes.

6. Relief to the starving and impoverished farmers, against evictions and foreclosures; governmental loans without interest to the needy poor farmers; land for the sharecroppers and small tenant farmers.

7. Full support to the program of demands of the American Youth Congress.

8. Full civil rights for the Negroes where they are being denied, especially in the South; against discrimination in every form; death penalty for lynchers; full support to the National Negro Congress.

9. For unrestricted civil and workers' rights.

10. Fight for peace; against armaments and militarism; against the fascist war provocateurs everywhere; alliance with all forces fighting for peace.

Each point of this program meets the vital needs of the Negro people. And a central point in the program is: *equal rights for the Negroes, death penalty for lynchers and an end to discrimination*. The Negro people can see that these ten points affecting the lives of millions give the possibility of a powerful alliance with other sections of the population who want to fight for progress.*

I should like to turn to certain Negro communities, and indicate how they can organize their forces for the Farmer-Labor Party. For example, the South Side of Chicago, Harlem, Detroit—communities where Negroes are congregated in large numbers. What possibility is there in these communities for independent political action? How can the Negro people lift themselves out of the morass of discrimination? What are some of the problems that face the people of ghetto districts? Take Harlem, for example; the main issues there are: (1) discrimi-

* Four main types of mass organizations are leading to the formation of a National Farmer-Labor Party or People's Front, and around which a Democratic Front is developing. (See *The People's Front*, by Earl Browder, p. 47.)

nation in relief; (2) police terror; (3) unemployment relief and social insurance; (4) recreation for children and hospitalization; (5) opportunities for Negro doctors and nurses to work at their professions; (6) a housing program—elimination of fire-traps; (7) Negro leadership in politics. In Harlem there is a demand by Negroes for equitable leadership in both the Republican and Democratic parties. The above seven points, together with the Ethiopian question, a peace issue, are the basis of a people's ticket in Harlem. Suppose we could establish unity of the people on these issues—of dissatisfied Republicans and Democrats, Socialists and Communists, Negro nationalists, the Negro middle class, etc.? Such unity would give the basis of a People's (Labor) Party ticket.

UNITED FRONT ACTIONS

United front actions have rendered invaluable service in Harlem. For example, take the Ethiopian situation. Negro doctors and professionals collected over a thousand dollars to buy supplies for Ethiopia; nearly two tons of material, including medical supplies, was sent to the Ethiopian people. Communists are self-sacrificing in such struggles and are convincing the Negro people, by practical activity, that they are really friends of Negro liberation.

How do we approach the Garveyites, and other nationalistic elements on such an issue? We approach them in a friendly manner, and Negro Communists say: "We Communists are defenders of our people, defenders of the Ethiopian people." In a broad united front meeting held at the Abyssinian Baptist Church, the leader of the Harlem Section of the Communist Party declared: "Now is the time for all men and women of African descent and all friends and sympathizers of Ethiopian independence to stand together in her defense." The Negro nationalists enthusiastically endorsed this position and said:

“Look, the Communists are coming to us. Soon we will have them fighting with us for Negro liberation.”

We welcome this friendly attitude and the possibility of working with all sections of the Negro people to consolidate the united front. We also appreciate the friendly attitude that governs the response of the Negro nationalists. We must say to our Negro Communists: “We have to stop using the word ‘nationalist’ too loosely and in a derogatory manner.”

The key to the further extension of united action is in the trade union field, where the struggle for the rights of the Negroes, for equal rights for jobs and equal status in the trade unions must be undertaken. This is the task of the white progressives, and sincere efforts will bring the Farmer-Labor Party movement into the Negro communities. The resolution by A. Philip Randolph, president of the Sleeping Car Porters, adopted at the 54th Convention of the American Federation of Labor, provides a means for such a struggle and will result in a broad movement for the rights of the Negro people in the trade unions and thus broaden the trade union base of the Farmer-Labor Party. The demands of a Farmer-Labor Party in the South will also heighten the possibility of bringing Negro and white workers together to fight for elementary demands: the right to vote, against discrimination, against lynching, for equal wages. This is correct as a minimum program to draw Negro and white workers closer together in that region. Another task in the South is the organization of “Right to Vote League” which will make the central fight the abolition of the poll tax and restrictions against Negroes voting in the South, and for the election of Negroes to office. Other slogans and demands for the South are: “Land for the tenants at easy payment”; “No interest on land”; “Tax-free land”; “Land that will provide a minimum existence for the Negro people.” The government wants to settle the Negroes on useless marginal land. On such farms it will be impossible for the Negroes to maintain themselves.

What is the possibility for united action on these issues in the South? The Sharecroppers' Union has influence over large masses. It has come closer to the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union, and a broader movement is growing up in the South. There is a growing realization on the part of sections of white toilers of the need for unity of the Negro and white workers and farmers.

Speech at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, U. S. A., November, 1935.

2. FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

Today, when the reactionary forces gathered around the Hearst-Liberty League-Landon* combination challenge our democratic institutions, the colored people have cause to be alarmed at the dangerous threats from these fascist-minded men.

That the reactionaries will stop at nothing to push through their sinister plans is clearly seen in William Randolph Hearst's attempt to frame-up the Communist Party. Hearst wants to confuse the people and shift the issue. He even accuses President Roosevelt of communism, and charges that our Party supports Roosevelt for President. Earl Browder has effectively replied to this charge. The Communist Party has nominated its own national ticket and is conducting the most successful campaign in its history. What riles Hearst so much is that the campaign we Communists are making has been so successful in exposing the Hearst-Liberty League plot to bring fascism to the United States.

My people know what fascism would bring. The activities of

* This address and the ones which follow deal with issues during the 1936 national elections.

the Black Legion, the Ku Klux Klan, the Vigilantes, show that fascism would mean the systematic organization of terror and violence against us, would make lynch rule the law of the land.

It is paradoxical but true, that the worst reactionaries appeal to the colored people for support. The Republican Party has done nothing for the Negro. It has shut its eyes to the violation of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. It is this party of Wall Street which hypocritically uses the name of Lincoln to try to win the colored people. But more and more of my people are able to see through the tricks of the capitalist politicians. They no longer follow blindly this corrupt old party of Wall Street. They realize more and more that only struggle will break down the barriers of Jim-Crowism, segregation and every evil which the Republicans never challenge.

My people are also beginning to see through those colored leaders who are used by the party of the rich to trap us into voting for our worst enemies. These men are without any standing in the high councils of the parties which they support. Typical of this is the way the Republican Negro delegates were Jim-Crowed at the acceptance ceremonies of Mr. Landon, whom the Liberty League is trying to palm off on the colored people as a second Lincoln. These old-line colored politicians are simply decoys who play the game of the reactionaries of the old parties. They do not really strive to win those elementary rights of human beings which are the immediate goals of my entire people.

The colored people should remember that Republican reactionaries deserve nothing but contempt when they appeal to them in the name of the Great Emancipator. At this moment when the greatest danger to our democratic institutions comes from the reactionary sources in, around and behind the Republican Party, the colored people, who have always fought for democratic rights, must do their part in preserving liberty.

Colored people gave their lives in those great struggles for

democracy which were fought in 1776 and 1861. A Negro, Crispus Attucks, was the first man to lay down his life in the struggle against British tyranny, in 1770. But seventy-five years after white and black died so that slavery should be wiped out in our country, the entire colored population is still denied the right to live as human beings. Full social, political and civil rights do not exist for my people. In the South my people are still in chains. They are still kept in a state of semi-slavery. Up North, the colored population is segregated and discriminated against in every field of human activity. The most elementary right of citizenship, the right to vote, is systematically denied us through fraud and violence.

The Supreme Court, which has nullified all progressive legislation in the alleged name of the Constitution, has never uttered one word about the complete nullification of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.

Negro workers are discriminated against by reactionaries in the American Federation of Labor; they are not permitted to join the unions or are segregated into Jim-Crow locals. Today the great progressive unions united in the Committee for Industrial Organization—which is organizing the mass production industries—are breaking down these bars. The colored people must support the organizing drive now going on in steel, automobile and rubber, for the fate of the black workers is linked up with the organization of the unorganized. A powerful labor movement in which all black and white workers are united is a bulwark against reaction, and a guarantee for higher wages and better working conditions.

Our people, the most oppressed and poverty-stricken of the entire population, are threatened with even worse conditions, if the plans of the fascist-minded men in the Liberty League go through. The life of the Negro people today is a thousand bloody Scottsboros, but their entire life would become continuous Scottsboros if the plans of the Liberty League succeed.

Here let us sound a note of warning to the white people as

well. These reactionary forces not only attack colored people; their attack is directed against everything progressive in the country. The white people must realize that only unity of black and white will win democratic rights and some measure of security for the man in the white skin as well as the man in the black skin. Without that unity neither King Lynch nor the monarchs of Wall Street will be dethroned.

We of the colored people in this election can never support the Republican Party, the party connected with the Liberty League which fosters Black Legions and encourages the Ku Klux Klan. A colored voter who supports the Republican Party is helping to put a lynch rope around the neck of his people.

President Roosevelt's administration has made a few concessions to my people. But none of us can forget the reactionary Democrats of the South, who refuse to permit colored men and women to live as human beings. President Roosevelt spoke the other day about "still waters" and "green pastures." In what green pastures do my people lie? By what still waters do they walk? They lie on faggots of fire and red hot coals. They are crucified with burning spikes. They live in the stench of burning flesh and wallow in their own blood.

We colored people must throw our support on the side of those forces working for progress, by uniting our own people, black and white alike, against the sinister forces of Wall Street. In this way too, we can best help our brothers and sisters in Ethiopia and throughout the world.

The Communist Party has always had as one of its fundamental aims the real emancipation of the colored people, and the unity of the black and white masses. It is the Communist Party which calls upon the entire American people to fight for the right of colored men and women to be guaranteed complete equality, equal rights for jobs, equal pay for equal work, the full right to organize, vote, serve on juries and hold public office. The Communist Party is not mealy-mouthed when it

comes to the colored population. It declares that segregation and discrimination against Negroes must be declared a crime. It demands that heavy penalties be established against mob rule, floggers and kidnapers, with the death penalty for lynching. It is the party which fights for the enforcement of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.

The Communist Party is truly the party for the colored people.

Broadcast over a coast-to-coast network of the National Broadcasting Company, New York, September 21, 1936.

3. THE HERITAGE OF DEMOCRACY IN THE SOUTH

It was statesmen of the South who, in the Revolutionary period, ushered in the birth of the United States of America. It was they who gave us those fundamental principles of democracy that every American cherishes and ought to defend. No one can speak of these contributions without recalling the illustrious services to all mankind of Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence. Nor can we speak of the Constitution of the United States without recalling that it was the influence of men like Thomas Jefferson that gave us the first ten amendments to the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights.

No one can recall the highlights of our history without paying homage to a fighter against certain privileged elements of his day, Andrew Jackson of Tennessee. Likewise, the whole world pays tribute to that great son of the South, Abraham Lincoln, born in Kentucky.

But when we recall these names and their achievements, we must pause to consider those sinister forces that have combined to destroy all that these men fought for; to shatter to

dust all that they have so magnificently built. Today there are forces in this country that would deprive us of every democratic right for which we have fought since the beginning of our national existence.

Certainly not since the stormy years that led up to 1860 has any political party dared place Presidential candidates in the field who openly declare war upon the toiling people of the entire country. Today there is such a party in the field, with candidates who have proved by their attacks upon our liberties and rights that they are fit to be its standard bearers. That party which aims to crush liberty in this country is the Republican Party.

The real program of the Republican Party is one designed to crush every vestige of freedom. In the name of liberty they would kill liberty; destroy all those rights for which Americans have fought and died, from the Revolutionary War to the War between the States.

In the face of their vile intent to destroy liberty, we see such people as ex-Senator Jim Reed of Missouri and John W. Davis, Morgan's lawyer, supporting Landon and at the same time calling themselves Jeffersonian Democrats. But we shall not let these people misuse the name of Jefferson any more than we shall tolerate people who try to palm off Alf Landon as a second Abraham Lincoln.

The colored people are alarmed at the threat of fascism in this country. We view with alarm the revival in many places of the Ku Klux Klan, the most un-American organization that ever existed in this country. In Detroit we saw the results of Hearst-Liberty League propoganda in the activities of the Black Legion, which took the greatest pleasure in murdering a Negro ex-soldier. Fascism holds more horrors for my people than three hundred years of chattel slavery, industrial slavery and imperialism.

Not only must we defeat the Landon-Liberty League forces,

but we must secure an extension of democratic rights. Here I must say, as I speak about the struggle for protection and extension of democratic rights, that Democratic machines of the South controlled by reactionaries, the big landholders, the former slave-holding aristocracy and the big industrialists and bankers deny colored people the right to vote, to serve on juries. It is these reactionary Democrats who maintain Jim-Crow laws in open violation of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States. Segregation, Jim-Crowism, lynching, legal and otherwise, are some of the methods whereby the greedy ruling class of the South holds my people down. And by so doing they also enforce misery, poverty and degradation upon the poor white people of the South, keeping them as well as the Negroes in a condition of semi-serfdom. An increasing number of white workers, tenant farmers and sharecroppers, however, are beginning to realize that the one way to improve their condition is to unite with the Negro toiling masses. As long as my people can be kept in a condition of slavery, the whole toiling population of this part of the country, white and black, will continue to exist at the present frightfully low level, or be driven even lower.

This low level of existence of all toiling people of the South is the chief factor that induced textile manufacturers and other industrialists to open plants there. The great difference that exists between the Southern workers and farmers and those of other parts of the country is glaringly illustrated in the differential scales of wages.

The reason why the ruling class endeavors to incite white workers and farmers against Negro workers and farmers is because it knows that the unity of white and black forces can put an end to misery and degradation. Hence every white worker, farmer and sharecropper ought to see that it is to his interest to do everything possible to build organizations uniting

Negroes and whites in order to better his own condition. It is, furthermore, essential that white workers fight to obtain for Negro people those democratic rights denied them, because the improvement of the condition of the Negro must be brought about in order to improve the condition of all.

Terror against the Negro people must stop. Mob rule must end. It can be ended by involving heavy penalties against mob rule, against floggings, kidnapings. Lynching must be made a federal crime. The Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution must be enforced. Right here it must be stated that neither the Republican Party nor the reactionaries in the Democratic Party have attempted to enforce these amendments in the South.

The Communist Party declares that the one way to combat the threat of fascism and reaction is to build up a genuine people's movement, which must embrace the workers, the farmers, the Negro people, the professionals, the middle class—in short all those oppressed by the tyranny of the big bankers and industrialists and the landholding aristocracy of the South.

The Communist Party represents the best American traditions. It is determined to bring freedom to the toiling masses of our country, north and south.

Our Presidential candidate is Earl Browder. He comes from Kansas, the state that is unfortunate enough to have Alf Landon as governor. But Browder is in every way the opposite of Landon. Just as Landon stands for all that is reactionary, anti-labor, un-American, so Browder stands for all that is progressive. Browder is from old American stock. His ancestors fought in the wars against the tyranny of Britain. He carries forward the great traditions of 1776, 1812, 1860-65. We can truly say that Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism.

Radio speech at Richmond, Va., August 12, 1936.

4. LANDON AND THE FARMERS

I wish to take this opportunity to unmask the claims of Mr. Landon to be a friend of the farmer.*

At the outset I must observe that in his entire speech Governor Landon did not mention the horrible conditions existing among the colored people, and the white farmers, in the share-cropping areas of the Southern states. In that part of the country hundreds of thousands of my people, and almost as many poor white farmers, exist in a condition of semi-slavery, where the conditions of the Negro people are maintained by terrorism and lynch rule. Nor did Landon refer to the masses of farmers who have been driven off the land and now vainly seek a means of existence in the overcrowded labor markets of the cities and industrial towns of our country.

Mr. Landon tried to make the farmers believe that juggling the tariff would help the farmers. But farmers know from sad experience that tariff juggling makes matters worse. This country, under ordinary conditions, does not import farm products. On the contrary it ships farm produce to other countries. So when Governor Landon tries to win the farmers to support his tariff planks, he really wants support for the general policy of tariff on industrial products, which results in higher prices for machinery and industrial commodities the farmer has to buy.

Governor Landon said in his speech that he favors arranging credit facilities for the farmer after the crop is harvested and stored. But what the farmer of Iowa and the prairie states needs is money in order to harvest the crop. He wants relief from the loan sharks who have secured a stranglehold on mil-

* The following is a radio address made at Des Moines, Iowa, during September 1936, in reply to a speech of Alfred Landon delivered in the same city during the national election campaign.

lions of farmers through loans at criminally high rates of interest.

The Communist Party declares that the American government is obligated to save the American farmers from distress and ruin, to guarantee to farmers and tenants their right to possession of their land, their homes and their chattels. We do not, like Landon, mock and insult the farmer by telling him that he must wait for federal aid until the crop is harvested and stored, when he has nothing with which even to plant a crop. We say the farmer must be relieved of debt through re-financing of all farm debts with government loans at nominal interest.

With a callousness that is characteristic of the Hearst-Liberty League combination, Governor Landon did not utter one word about the plight of farmers who have been driven from the land and now exist in utter poverty in small towns and cities. We Communists are very specific on farm problems. We demand a halt to evictions and foreclosures, a long-term moratorium on needy farmers' debts, and the immediate adoption of measures to provide land for the farmers who have been driven from their farms.

To those stricken by the drought Governor Landon proposed only a continuation of the meager relief checks they now receive. That is not sufficient. We insist that farmers in the drought regions be given enough to maintain a decent standard of living and to enable them to recover completely from the effects of the drought. That means re-stocking the farms, provision for seed, provision for machinery and enough money for decent living instead of pauper rations as at present.

We demand the full use of the land to supply farm produce needed by the population of the country. The government must regulate farm prices with the aim of guaranteeing the farmer his cost of production, and it must also eliminate the food speculators who are responsible for the high prices the

working people of the town and cities have to pay for farm produce. If the farmers received half of what is paid for farm produce in the cities, they would be fairly well off.

We urge scientific soil conservation, under supervision of the elected representatives of farmers' organizations, with compensation to farmer-owners and tenants for loss of income.

In his speech Governor Landon also exposed his policy of taxation. He said the huge government debt must be paid by the farmers and the rest of the toiling people. "Taxes add to the cost of everything and the farmer is so situated that he cannot escape their penalty." So says Landon. But we declare this is not true. To propose that the farmer who has been exploited and robbed, must be bled white to pay for government expenditures is criminal. The billionaires, the big insurance companies, the land banks and other mortgage-holders are the ones who must pay for social and labor legislation. The budget can be balanced by forcing these Wall Street brigands to pay higher taxes on the incomes they sweat from the poor.

We oppose sales taxes, including processing taxes, and call for their immediate repeal. We say the government must be financed by a system of sharply graduated taxes on all incomes over \$5,000 a year, by taxes upon corporate profits and surpluses, as well as taxation upon the present tax-exempt securities and large gifts and inheritances. This is how the expenses of farm and other social legislation can be met. Thus the Communist Party shows the way to solve the tax question which seems to puzzle the Republicans.

If the inflationist policies of Coughlin were put into effect the farmer, the worker, the middle class would be dealt the most crushing blow yet received at the hands of the bankers. Certain insurance companies which have invested in poor rail and other industrial stocks and have gambled on the stock market, favor inflation so they can pay off their policies in depreciated currency. In Iowa where 57 per cent of all land is

tenanted, the farmer pays an average of \$148 a year in taxes, sales tax, gas tax, personal tax and so forth. In 1934 22.4 per cent of all corn-hog benefit payment checks went to the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

Governor Landon knows that public education is a burning question for the people of the Middle West and the country generally. That is why the Republican machine tried to dramatize that part of his speech by having the Iowa State secretary of public education, Agnes Samuelson, introduce Mr. Landon and praise his alleged good school record in Kansas. In his speech, Governor Landon said: "We should make it possible for farm children to have the same educational opportunities as any children." But what does Landon do in his own state? Kansas educational facilities for children now stand at an all-time low. State aid for schools in Kansas is the lowest of any of the forty-eight states of the union. It amounts to exactly 84 cents per census child. Thus if that system were extended to the whole country, your child would get 84 cents worth of education a year from government sources.

In Kansas nearly 7,000 school teachers average less than nine dollars a week throughout the year. Mr. W. T. Markham, Kansas state superintendent of public instruction said on May 10, 1935: "It is a lamentable fact that 458 schools had to be cleared during the past year with many teachers going without pay. There were 8,557 boys and girls who did not have the privilege of completing a full year."

Thus neither farm children nor city children have a chance for an education in Kansas. Those who claim Governor Landon will aid the people are either consciously or unconsciously helping the most reactionary combination in the country.

Radio speech at Des Moines, Iowa, September 25, 1936.

5. FIGHTING REACTION IN CALIFORNIA

For years in this country sinister forces have tried to crush free speech, free press and free assemblage. In California these forces have been sufficiently strong to force through the legislature many reactionary measures, the most infamous of which is the criminal syndicalism law. This law is supposed to apply to those who advocate violence to bring about social or economic change, or revolution. But instead of being applied to those who actually practice every form of violence against the toiling masses, it has been used exclusively as a means of framing-up workers whose only crime was to organize for better conditions. Thus we have the spectacle of the very people who violate all provisions of the syndicalist law, using it against those who are innocent of any violation either by word or deed. In California also, Tom Mooney remains in jail after twenty years, in spite of the fact that the whole world knows he is innocent of the crime charged against him, and when it is equally well known that those who prosecuted him were criminals, whose acts would disgrace any society in the world.

Further evidence of the contribution to fascism of the ruling clique of this state was the action of a governor of California, publicly defending a shameful lynching as an admirable deed. These laws that are supposed to apply to those who advocate violence do not—in spite of the Hearst press and other reactionary and fascist-minded elements—apply to the labor movement or to our Communist Party. Our Party does not advocate violence, and any member of our Party who would advocate individual acts of violence would be considered confused and, unless he corrected his mistakes, would be expelled from our ranks as an enemy of the toiling people and an agent of the bosses.

Since these syndicalist laws were designed, not to punish

those who commit acts of violence against the people, but to persecute innocent workers, one of the first tasks in the struggle against fascism and reaction in California, and other states with similar laws, is to fight for their repeal.

Reactionaries in and around the Republican Party use every possible means of spreading misinformation about workers and farmers and all those who want to defend and extend democratic rights. One of the worst weapons is the press, especially the Hearst press, that constantly depicts the workers who strive for decent conditions as mobs of criminals. When a strike is on, they refer to strikebreakers as "loyal workers," and to striking workers as "hoodlums." This is part of the general drive against organizations of labor in this country.

California is noted as the center of the most highly concentrated film industry in the world. But we often see the great technical development of that industry utilized to slander, belittle and discredit the working people. Artistic endeavor is perverted, and extras on the lots (themselves sometimes facing privation) are compelled to aid in libeling honest workers. One of the most disgusting of such pictures was the production called "Riff-Raff." While workers are pictured as "riff-raff," the brutal employers who starve whole families, men, women and children, in order to pile up additional millions, are depicted as exquisite gentlemen and ladies. Workers who betray their fellows to the employers are hailed as ideal American citizens. In such pictures, radicals and labor leaders are portrayed as people who talk with strong foreign accents, who look like scarecrows and who act like roughnecks.

The most frightful discrimination is practiced against my people, the colored people, in the film industry. It is seldom that any colored actor or actress is given a good part. Here also the colored extras, and even those who achieve some degree of acclaim as artists, are compelled to perform in such a way as to foster the Hitler-theory of white racial superiority.

Many eminent people in the film industry, those who uphold

the fundamental American traditions of democracy, those who resent the inroads of fascist ideas in the film industry, fight against such perversions. Every liberty-loving American cannot but applaud those who are trying to organize the film industry and make it an instrument for real cultural development.

In the film industry, as in the newspaper industry, the influence can be traced of that person whose life and activity personifies everything that is vicious and degrading in American life—that enemy of progress, that anti-labor, un-American apostle, William Randolph Hearst. It is this same Hearst who is the discoverer and sponsor of the Republican candidate for President. Mr. Landon attracted the notice and won the approval of Hearst because of his actions against the people of his own state.

As governor of Kansas, Mr. Landon has a long record as a strikebreaker. He hurls the armed forces of the state against the people at every opportunity. He used the militia to smash unemployed demonstration for bread. He used the armed forces of the state to crush the strike of lead and zinc workers in southeastern Kansas. His forces evicted whole families from houses they had paid for many times over in rent. He, together with Hearst and the reactionaries in the film industry, is responsible for such pictures as “Riff-Raff,” for he also regards workers and farmers only as cattle to be forcibly herded into corrals.

As a Negro speaking in behalf of the colored people, I must say that we feel most keenly the threat of fascism, because it would mean unheard of tortures for all of us. The Communist Party urges the American people to support its program of unity of action against reaction. The main issue today is democracy against fascism. Support to the Communist Party today is to support democracy against fascism.

Speech at Los Angeles, October 9, 1936.

6. NEGROES BREAK OLD TIES

The national election of 1936 was the most crucial election since the Civil War. Eminent Negro men and women who were thought to be moored to Republicanism became dissatisfied with the reactionary Republican program. A revolt took place among the rank and file. At the opening of the campaign the revolt had not crystallized; it was solidified during a four-month campaign. A tidal wave of resentment grew higher each day.

The Roosevelt landslide saw 25 Negroes elected to the state legislatures of nine states and one to the United States Congress. The majority were Democrats. In several instances Negro Republicans were succeeded by Negro Democrats. No Negro legislative candidate running on the Democratic ticket was defeated.

Negroes gave President Roosevelt a majority of their votes. Only in the second and third wards of Chicago were there Republican majorities, and this was the only Negro community in the country which had such majorities. Chicago was the rock-ribbed haven of Republicanism among Negroes. It was pathetic, up to the very day of election, to see the faith that some colored people placed in victory for Landon. It was regrettable that there was so little means of bringing the breadth of political discussion, going on throughout the country, into Chicago. Only the excellent campaign of the Communist Party brought the real issues to the people of the South Side of Chicago.

It is estimated that 200,000 Negroes voted in Pennsylvania, the majority going to President Roosevelt. Six Negro Democrats were elected to the state legislature in that state. Pennsylvania, which heretofore has been nominally Republican, is another example of the political swing that took place among

Negro voters. And for the first time in history, Negroes in Michigan voted the Democratic ticket in large numbers.

Over 150,000 Negroes voted, four to one in Harlem and two to one in Brooklyn, for President Roosevelt. It is estimated that the vote for the President was 75 per cent in New England, 65 per cent in New Jersey, 60 per cent in West Virginia, 60 per cent in Missouri. In Kansas, where Roosevelt won by a majority of 5,000 votes, Negroes voted two to one against Landon.

Approximately 3,000 Negroes voted in Durham, North Carolina, and 3,000 in Raleigh, the majority going for Roosevelt. Two Negroes were elected magistrates in Durham on the Democratic ticket. In Raleigh, a Negro was elected justice of peace on the Democratic ticket and became the first Negro to be elected to public office in that state on any ticket since Reconstruction. In Indianapolis the Democratic Party claimed every Negro precinct by over 75 per cent.

The Negro people emerged from the 1936 elections in a far better position than ever before. They had taken a step in the political life of the country the like of which had not been seen since Reconstruction.

The underlying causes for political change among colored people reveal depths which shock the reactionaries, and give warning to those who dare ignore the desires of the oppressed masses of Negroes for justice, opportunity and freedom. This triumphal political awakening, which is in the process of transformation, is a logical part of the developments reshaping the political structure of the whole country. The Negro people face the struggle to preserve and extend democracy in America with their heads up, and are ready to play their part in building a People's Front in the United States.

The demands of the Negro people, as put forward by the Communist Party, were: (1) real emancipation; (2) 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; (3) the establishment of heavy penalties against mob murder, floggers and kidnapers, with the death penalty for lynchers; (4) enforcement of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States; (5) building of a People's Front to preserve and extend democracy in America.

Although Negroes fought for their demands and helped to pile up a landslide against reaction, it would be a mistake to think that President Roosevelt was given a blank check.

The Negroes faced a complicated political situation: a collapsing two-party system, the hide-bound traditions of Republicanism and the emergence of new political groupings which have already taken organized form in many sections of the country. In the past the interests of the various financial groups were effectively obscured within the two-party structure and the Negro was trapped into supporting his worst enemies. The situation was made more tragic because of the leadership of the old-line Negro politicians who understood nothing about the capitalist divisions within the limits of the two-party system, and cared nothing about the possible forces that had common interests with the Negro people.

BREAKING THE TWO-PARTY SYSTEM

But the two-party system did not prove an insurmountable obstacle to the colored voter. What was its character? Earl Browder, Presidential candidate of the Communist Party, described it with great clearness:

For generations the two-party system of American capitalism was based upon a regionalism that roughly corresponded to basic economic groups. These were the industrial, banking North, the cotton-tobacco South, the wheat-dairy-livestock-mining West. The party struggle was largely between the bourgeoisie of these three regions for their special interests. They brought forward such issues in addition as were considered necessary to undermine the mass following of the rival group,

or to whip up their own supporters to greater enthusiasm. With Republicans as the party of Northern capitalism, and Democrats that of the special agrarianism of the South, the basic problem of their conflict was always which of them would win the allegiance of the West. This regionalism was accentuated by the federal system of governmental structure, with its forty-eight sovereign states.

The Negro people broke through this superstructure. In some parts of the South they voted the Democratic ticket; they acted generally on the basis of a system of issues and in certain places took direct part in the movement for independent political action.

The political campaign conducted by the Republican Party among Negroes was intense. Roosevelt was attacked as a Communist. Quotations were taken from speeches or writings of Tugwell, the so-called "Communist" "brain-truster" and adviser of Roosevelt, of Karl Marx, of Stalin, Orjonikidze, Vorshilov and Manuisky of Soviet Russia, which intended to prove that Roosevelt was a Communist. Obviously few Negroes took seriously this cry of "Communism."

An elaborate piece of propaganda, consisting of an eighty-page pamphlet published by the Colored Voters Division of the Republican National Committee, was addressed to the "American Colored People," in an attempt to deceive them. The cover page carried pictures of Lincoln, Landon and Knox. The picture of Frederick Douglass, the great Negro abolitionist, was carried on an inside page with the following well-known quotation of Frederick Douglass: "There is no path out of the Republican Party that does not lead directly into the Democratic Party—away from our friends directly to our enemies." *

* Douglass made this statement during a crisis in the Republican Party, while presiding over the National Convention of Colored Citizens, held at New Orleans, in 1872. According to Douglass' remarks at that convention, "eminent men who had hitherto been looked upon as the pillars of Republicanism had become dissatisfied and were breaking away from the Republican Party. The men in revolt were Messrs. Trumbull, Schurz, Greeley and Sumner. Mr. Schurz had already succeeded in destroying the Republican Party in the state of Missouri, and it seemed to be his ambition to be the founder of a new party, and to him more than any other man belongs the credit of what

Landon was "transformed" into a modern Lincoln; the pamphlet stated:

These two men stand out in the history of Kansas: John Brown who kept it free as a territory and Lincoln who, in admitting it to the Union kept it free as a state. Now a third, Alfred M. Landon, stands upon the threshold of greatness.

The Republican Party had the effrontery to appeal to Negroes after years of silence on the violation of their political and civil rights. To top their deceit, the Republican politicians tried to take credit for saving the Scottsboro boys.

While important Southern white politicians were pondering the breakdown of the two-party system, Negroes were seeking office in the South. After the election, these same Southern gentlemen declared that "victory could have been won as well without the Negro as without the Southern vote." One can thus see that something has taken place in American politics.

President Roosevelt was able to voice, to a certain degree, political hopes and aspirations of the Negro people. One of the most important contributions which he had at his disposal was a partial and far from satisfactory record of improvement in the economic conditions of Negroes. The Democratic Party boasted of the following accomplished program:

(1) Unemployment relief inaugurated by the Roosevelt administration saved millions of Negro men and women and children from extreme want by direct relief, W. P. A. and P. W. A. (2) The Civilian Conservation Corps (C. C. C.) started in 1933 gave employment to over 150,000 young Negro men. (3) The National Youth Administration (N. Y. A.) put in operation by the administration gives direct educational and economic benefits to 50,000 young Negro men and women. (4) Negro appointments to key positions in Washington and throughout the country by the administration exceed any such number in history. (5) Against economic maladjustment the administration was once known as the Liberal Republican Party which made Horace Greeley its standard bearer in the campaign of that year." In 1872 Frederick Douglass was nominated for Vice-President of the United States, not on the Republican Party Ticket, but on the ticket of the Equal Rights League, with a woman candidate for President.

stands as a symbol of national revolt against the economic maladjustment sponsored by twelve years of Republican misrule.

One of President Roosevelt's important addresses was delivered at Howard University, where he declared: "As far as it was humanly possible, the government has followed the policy that among American citizens there should be no forgotten men and no forgotten races."

THE NEGROES' MANDATE TO ROOSEVELT

What is the meaning of this great swing of the Negroes from Republicanism to Roosevelt? They believed in the promises made to them. They expect some of the equality of which Secretary Harold Ickes spoke. They trust that there shall be no "forgotten races." This is shown by statements from every section of the country, expressing the hope and determination of the Negro people. I want to quote a series of these opinions from leading Negro newspapers and men in public life.

BALTIMORE *Afro-American*—AN EDITORIAL:

This election has been a clear-cut mandate. It has been an unmistakable answer to reaction and the old order. It has been a constitutional way of saying that the great majority of the people of these United States want to move towards humanitarian progress and take newly carved out roads to that goal despite the selfish stalling of the privileged forces of reaction.

Let it not be said of you [Roosevelt] after January that by one act or a single subterfuge you failed to act toward wiping out the American disgrace of racial discrimination in all New Deal administration.

This should mean a complete equalization of jobs and relief to all workers without regard to race or creed. . . . Your appointment should comprise a proportionate number of colored citizens and this should obtain from top to bottom. The economic opportunity for our citizens should be so broadened . . . there should be absolutely no difference per capita wages and opportunities between colored and white.

This is what we interpret your statement of "no forgotten races" to mean.

THE NEW YORK *Amsterdam News*—AN EDITORIAL:

We congratulate the President upon the almost complete mandate he has received from the people and take particular pride in the role the Negro voter played. . . .

The President has recognized our claim to complete integration in national scheme, and nothing short of that goal will be wholly satisfying. . . . equality of opportunity in every branch of government. . . . Lynching remains a dark spot on the American system of justice. Nothing less than stiff federal legislation will curb mob murder.

THE ST. LOUIS *Call*—AN EDITORIAL:

The voters out-thought these so-called leaders. Took facts which they had seen with their own eyes and heard with their own ears, and reached their own conclusions as to the best way to vote for their best interests. . . .

We are further concerned about the possibilities of the Negroes regardless of their political opinions, being able to get together on a program which will advance the race.

MR. CARL MURPHY, PRESIDENT, BALTIMORE *Afro-American*:

If Mr. Roosevelt goes to bat with the Supreme Court and licks it . . . he'll be a second Abraham Lincoln to colored people.

Many people do not know it, because it has been kept quiet, but the Supreme Court has been far more unfriendly to the colored race than Congress ever was.

MR. ROY WILKINS, ASSISTANT NATIONAL SECRETARY OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF
COLORED PEOPLE:

At any rate, it must be driven home to the Southern Congressional leaders that the November 3 vote was a mandate from the entire nation to run the country so all the people get a square deal. It is not a mandate from the Solid South and a few scattered Northern Democratic states.

These Congressional leaders will have to do something about the denial of the vote to the Negroes in the South. They must do something about lynching. They must act to remedy the starvation, misery and slavery of the share-cropping system. They must use their influ-

ence to see that the Negro is employed in private industry, and not made a permanent pauper class. These things are essential to a new deal, a more abundant life, and a "happier America."

The outlook is not so rosy for the Negro. But the best that can be said is that the forces of reaction have been beaten back for the moment. A hard battle is ahead of us.

WILLIAM N. JONES, BALTIMORE *Afro-American*:

Some of the horny-headed problems of discrimination and governmental inequalities are staring us in the face.

The number of our citizens on relief still increases or remains at a higher level than whites in proportion to population.

Not one single family on relief is getting sufficient to take proper care of a family, nor are the single men and women being thus helped receiving sufficient to think about mating and bringing children into the world.

LESTER GRANGER, SECRETARY OF WORKERS' COUNCILS OF THE
NATIONAL URBAN LEAGUE:

The Negro can expect nothing unless he exerts mass pressure after election. . . . Political history shows that governments respond to mass pressure. If their leadership were well directed, Negroes with their balance of power vote could demand almost anything they want in this country.

REV. A. CLAYTON POWELL, JR., NEW YORK CITY:

We are concerned now with our second emancipation, and will cast our vote only to those who are leading us towards that day. . . . The new American Labor Party, polling 300,000 votes, marks itself as the real third party of New York State. It too, must get busy if it wants to achieve any results in Harlem. It must put Negroes on its executive committess. It must fight within unions for Negro membership. It must organize Negro labor.

Roosevelt is in. He is in with a decisive mandate from the American laboring masses to govern in the interests of the majority. His social ideals must not be allowed to waver, but he must continue vigorously his fight for those who put him in. The Negro is demanding of him an endorsement of the anti-lynching bill and a more prominent place in the administration of national affairs.

Here, culled from the country as a whole, is a cross-section of Negro opinion. They are mandates representative of the desires of the Negro people.

A careful survey of the demands listed above compared with the platform put forward by the Communist Party shows that it was correct in its demands for the Negro people. It was this program that we fought for.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY FIGHTS FOR NEGRO RIGHTS

The day after elections the Associated Negro Press sent out the following dispatch:

One of the surprises of the recent national elections—apart from the almost complete loss of identity of the Grand Old Party—was the remarkable gain, nationally, made by the Communist Party in both voting strength and interest aroused throughout the country. Better organization methods, timeliness of their appeal to the workers of the nation and their unequivocal stand against Jim-Crowism, bigotry and color prejudices are some of the reasons advanced by political observers for the showing made by the Communists at the present election. For the second time, a Negro, James W. Ford of Alabama, was the Communist candidate for Vice President.

Earl Browder's visit with the Scottsboro boys in the county jail in Birmingham, Alabama, during his campaign in the South, was one of the outstanding events in this whole campaign and was hailed by the Negro press in every section of the country. Browder's fight at Terre Haute was considered by leading Negro people as a part of the struggle for civil rights for Negroes. His speech at the state university in Virginia, where he raised the problems of the Negro in the South, was also praised as well as his great fight at Tampa, Florida.

The Communist Party was hailed as the only real fighter for Negro rights. The writer, as Vice-Presidential candidate, traveled more than 13,000 miles in 38 states; spoke at fifty mass meetings organized by the Communist Party and at more than

twenty gatherings of Negro leaders and people. One of the features of the campaign was the national radio broadcast on "The Negro People and the 1936 Elections." Two thousand replies congratulating the Communist Party on its stand were received by the national campaign committee as a result of this broadcast. Several came from foreign countries—Canada, Scotland and one from a West Indian Negro in Peru.

In addition to this, my campaign consisted of 22 local radio broadcasts. In all of these speeches the problems of the Negro people were raised as an integral part of the struggle of the entire American people. Some of these speeches were featured in the locality in which they were delivered. An outstanding meeting was one at Durham, N. C., which was preceded by a local radio broadcast that aroused the people of the community to the problems of the Negro in the South.

The Communist Party foresaw all the issues that faced the Negro people. Leading Negro people supported the movement for independent political action as the only sure means of effectively pooling their political power to realize their demands.

One outstanding example of this was its activities in helping to build the All-People's Party in Harlem, which brought together many diverse groups and organizations on the basis of a program of the people of that community in line with the general policies for a People's Front.

The All-People's Party was hailed by leaders of political opinion throughout the country. It pooled altogether about 7,000 votes. This vote, together with the vote cast for the American Labor Party, the Communist and Socialist Parties, brought the total potential vote for independent political action in Harlem, for a People's Front, a Farmer-Labor Party, to a grand total of approximately twenty thousand.*

The success of the Communist campaign in the State of Virginia was one of the outstanding political events in the South. Donald Burke, candidate for the Senate against Carter Glass,

* For later developments in Harlem, see pp. 120-132.

received 9,000 votes, and Ed. Wright, Negro Congressional candidate in Norfolk, received 500 votes, showing excellent possibilities for progressive political action in the South.

The task that lies before the Negro people is to strengthen their forces organizationally, in the trade union movement, and particularly in the C. I. O., in the unemployed field and in the movement for peace.

The most immediate task before the Negro people is to develop a broad united front legislative program and to fight for this program in the Congress of the United States. Only unity in mass struggle can bring results. This legislative program should be developed around the following issues: (1) guarantee the Negro people complete equality in every phase of life; (2) equal rights to jobs; (3) equal pay for equal work; (4) the right to organize, vote, serve on juries and hold public office; (5) the abolition of segregation and discrimination against Negroes; (6) the establishment of heavy penalties against floggers, kidnapers, with the death penalty for lynchers; (7) enforcement of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution; (8) support to the bill advanced by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People against lynching.

Already the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which has initiated a movement for Congressional support for anti-lynching legislation, and the splendid united front activities of the National Negro Congress give a real base for broadening and extending the movement for effective legislation in the Congress of the United States in the interests of the colored people. We must keep before us the undying words of Frederick Douglass:

The spirit of the age—the voice of inspiration, the deep longings of the human soul, the conflict of right with wrong, the upward tendency of the oppressed throughout the world abound with evidence, complete and ample of the final triumph of right over wrong, of

freedom over slavery, equality over caste. To doubt this is to forget the great past, and blind our eyes to the present.

It is more than a figure of speech to say, that we are—as a people, chained together. We are one people—one in common degradation, one in popular estimation. As one arises, all must rise—as one falls, all must fall. Every one of us should be ashamed to consider himself free while his brother is a slave. There should be no time too precious, no calling too holy, no place too sacred, to make room for this cause.

Speech at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, December 5, 1936.

III

The National Negro Congress

1. MINIMUM DEMANDS

CONGRESSES of the Negro people are not new in America. But the character and composition of the National Negro Congress, held in Chicago in February 1936, presented something new in the form of united effort of the Negro people on a broad scale.

This new force was indicated with remarkable clearness by A. Philip Randolph, National President of the Congress:

The Negro in politics, industry, education and his entire social life, is faced with a decisive and imperative challenge, to develop and fashion a new and powerful instrumentality with which not only to arouse and fire the broad masses to action in their own defense, but to attack the forces of reaction that seek to throttle Black America with increasing Jim-Crowism, segregation and discrimination.

These words, from an outstanding labor leader, evidence the new and potent force making for a change within the ranks of the Negro people, that is, the growing maturity of the Negro working class, its willingness and readiness to fight determinedly against oppression; and the realization, on its part, of its power and leadership in the Negro liberation movement. This factor was absent in former Negro congresses, which accounts in a measure for the lack of decisiveness of former efforts.

Other factors evident at the Congress were: (1) the chang-

ing attitude of the Negro middle class and its organizations; (2) the growth of a broad progressive bloc in the official trade union movement pledged to industrial unionism; and (3) the general united front mass movement of the toilers against fascism and war.

When John L. Lewis challenged the executive council of the American Federation of Labor, at its 55th Convention, on the Negro question, and later headed the Committee for Industrial Organization, representing over a million organized workers—repercussions could be felt in every Negro community in the country. This development in the trade union movement can be a step toward the elimination of craft barriers now raised against Negro skilled workers in industry. The potential support of Negroes to industrial unionism is tremendous.

Negro youth are uniting their organizations to carry through progressive social activity directed against Jim-Crowism and segregation. A great upsurge has been seen among both white and Negro farmers and agricultural workers who have built fighting organizations during the depression in the heart of the "deep South."

These forces, which grew during the crisis period from among the Negro people, are certain to hew out a positive, lasting program based on their needs and experience. They are the guarantees for a genuine liberation program and organization resulting from the National Negro Congress.

The Congress was guided by the following seven demands:

(1) The right of Negroes to jobs at decent living wages and for the right to join all trade unions. For the right to equal wages and equal labor conditions with other workers. For the organization of Negro workers with their fellow white workers into democratically controlled trade unions.

(2) Relief and security for every needy Negro family; for genuine social and unemployment insurance without discrimination.

(3) Aid to the Negro farm population, to ease the burden of debts and taxation; for the right of farmers, tenants and sharecroppers to organize and bargain collectively.

(4) For a fight against lynching, mob violence and police brutality; for enactment of a federal anti-lynching law; for the right to vote, serve on juries and enjoy complete civil liberty.

(5) The right of Negro youth to equal opportunity in education and in the economic life of the community.

(6) For complete equality for Negro women; for their right, along with all women, to equal pay for equal work; for their right to a suitable environment for themselves and their children—an environment which demands adequate housing, good schools and recreational facilities; for their right to organize as consumers.

(7) To oppose war and fascism, the attempted subjugation of Negro people in Ethiopia, the oppression of colonial nations throughout the world; for the independence of Ethiopia.

The Congress considered ways and means of breaking down opposition to anti-lynching and civil rights legislation. Administration after administration has been able to sidestep this issue because up to now mass pressure has not been united in one campaign. One united campaign for civil rights and against lynching by the Negro people and sympathizers would make Negro rights a successful political issue instead of a political football.

The Congress dealt with the special problems of youth and women. It also dealt thoroughly with the farm question, particularly because of the agricultural crisis which hit the Negro people doubly hard. It was revealed that the problems of the Negroes in the "deep South" form the core of the Negro question in the United States. The Congress took seriously into account the most pressing question of the increasing political reaction, and contrasted the programs and attitudes of the old political parties with that of a Farmer-Labor Party.

The Negro people and the working class have received years of rigorous training in the school of depression and crisis. The lessons have been well learned. The Pullman porters' victory taught the worth of organized working-class power. The slave law of Georgia was successfully challenged by the united front defense of Angelo Herndon. The Southern tenants and share-

croppers won many significant victories. Did not united action behind the *Amsterdam News* strikers in Harlem bring a highly important victory and lesson?

With these experiences as a guide, we might well ask (as many are asking): Why not take the lessons of these victories, affecting tens and hundreds of thousands, as a means of solving the problems of millions? The fact that the Congress organizers took up the question of Ethiopian defense indicates to what heights the Congress rose.

It would be worthwhile for white workers, the middle class and all who are sincerely interested in the problems of the Negro people, to give this movement their careful attention and help to build it into a powerful instrument for Negro rights and democracy.

The National Negro Congress represents a broadly developing movement. It hardly matters how divergent the groups within it may be at the beginning. In all probability, economic and social divisions will emerge within it; no doubt, tendencies to the left and right will grow.

This movement is not yet made up of a large, well-organized progressive group; and there are, consequently, great dangers which must be guarded against from reactionary forces. Various social segments and groups within the Congress are not yet (in the full political sense) aware of unity pacts and the full meaning of united front alliances. Yet there are within the life of the Negro people, factors that tend toward common unified action for Negro rights.

There are certain points to be noted in connection with the rise of a united Negro people's movement: (1) the burdens of the economic crisis and the changes in the country and the world at large, which are leading to fascism and war, have had profound effects on the Negro people. (2) During the period since 1929, great struggles have taken place, involving all sections of the population. The Negro people have learned valuable lessons in mass actions and have become more militant and

determined in the struggle for Negro rights. (3) Many divergent sections of the Negro people and their organizations have been set in motion as never before. (4) A significant development towards militant united action has taken place within the various Negro organizations; many leaders in these organizations, influenced by this change and spurred by events, are taking a progressive course. (5) The Communists have played a big part in this development as well as in the struggle for unity of the Negro people and the white masses. Our Party as a whole has helped to organize the Negro people and has gained wide support for their struggles. (6) There has been a better understanding on the part of Negro Communists of how to work among the Negro masses, bringing to them Communist methods of struggle, and creating faith among them in the ability of the Communist Party to break down the barriers of prejudice, created by the white ruling class within the ranks of white workers.

2. DIVERSE VIEWPOINTS: COMMON OPINION

The National Negro Congress was proposed in May 1935, at a National Conference held in Washington, D. C. The economic and social causes for the plight of the Negro people were very clearly brought out at this conference. The various participants in the Conference dealt with these matters with dramatic forcefulness. Moreover, the speeches and reports of many of the participants indicated on their part a decidedly-growing clearness on the problems of the Negro in modern America, a broader outlook and a desire for united actions in the solution of these problems.

For example, Mr. Albion Hartwell, of the Interprofessional

Association for Social Insurance, showed the position of the Negro in employment and unemployment:

The fifteenth census, taking in 1930, showed 11,891,143 Negroes in the United States, constituting 9.7 per cent of the total population. Of these 5,503,535 were listed as employed. Thirty-six per cent of all Negro workers were engaged in agriculture, nearly 29 per cent in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits. More than 3,500,000 Negro workers—a great majority of all those employed—are found within the categories of domestic and personal service and agriculture, representing approximately 65 per cent of all Negroes gainfully employed.

The figure for unemployment among Negroes in 1932 was placed at 1,500,000; in 1934, between two and three million. These figures mean that in 1934, 50 per cent of the working population were without jobs, whereas it is estimated that between 20 and 25 per cent of white workers were unemployed.

Mr. Edward Lewis, secretary of the Baltimore Urban League, indicated the increase of the above-mentioned terrific burden placed on the Negroes by discrimination in relief:

In the South there has been a sustained movement to keep relief standards for Negroes low and to discriminate on the basis of color. The budget for a family of five is \$7.85. The price of milk is deducted from the budget when it is made out for the client. This means that \$1.54 is subtracted from \$7.85 and the balance of \$6.31 sent for the purchase of food for five people.

An investigation of 75 white families on relief and 75 colored families showed that nine out of every ten colored families were below the standard set by the B. E. R. C. The North is not entirely free from discrimination of this sort, as was indicated in the recent Harlem investigation.

In the Southern sections of the nation the percentage of Negroes on relief is uniformly shown to be from two and one-half to three times larger proportionately than is the Negro population in this section. Although we represent less than 10 per cent of the total population of the United States, the number of Negroes on relief today is more than 20 per cent of the total number of families for the United States.

The plight of the Negro domestic workers was brought out by Mary Anderson, head of the Women's Bureau of the De-

partment of Labor. Quoting a Y. W. C. A. secretary in Brooklyn, she gave the following alarming facts about Negro domestic workers:

The average monthly wage paid colored domestic help amounts to 25 dollars when they live on the premises. In some cases this amounts to as little as 20 dollars. The conditions under which these people work are terrible. Whereas before the depression the laundry work was taken care of outside, now this has been added to the work given to the domestic help. Where the work is done on a daily basis, 20 to 25 cents an hour is common as the maximum compensation.

The representatives of the sharecroppers told the Conference of their heroic experiences. The courageous and determined action of the sharecroppers has aroused the entire Negro people toward organized struggle. The heroic example of Angelo Herndon and results of the united front for his freedom has also brought a significant change in the approach to the solution of problems of the Negro people.

Other speakers at the Conference stressed the need for organization. Mr. T. Arnold Hill, of the National Urban League, stated that "if workers are to have organization to protect their special interests, they must organize as workers. This seems to me to be the only likely means of affecting the mass pressure necessary to achieve the concessions which are critically needed to protect the future of Negro labor."

A. Philip Randolph declared:

The cause of the organization of Negro workers into the trade union movement has suffered greatly and been incalculably hindered by Negro leadership. The old-guard conservative groups are simply opposed to organized labor for the same reason that Mellon or Morgan is opposed to it. As a matter of fact they would oppose a group of Negro workers organizing to fight for more wages and better working conditions. The Negro intellectuals, too, have rendered doubtful service to the cause of the organization of Negro workers, since they have been content merely to proclaim their opposition to the A. F. of L. because of the existence of prejudice in various unions affiliated with it which, of course, nobody denies or condones. . . . But along with a

policy of destruction with respect to discrimination, segregation and Jim-Crowism in the trade unions, there should also be developed a program of construction. Obviously, the only sound constructive program in dealing with the problem of Negro workers is organization.

Dr. W. E. B. DuBois, however, was in a quandary. On the one hand, he warned of the danger of war and fascism and, on the other, remonstrated with the Communists who are outstanding fighters against fascism and war.

Among other outstanding participants were Dr. Ralph J. Bunche, of Howard University; Lester Granger, of the Workers Council of the National Urban League; A. W. McPherson, of the Steel and Metal Workers Union; and Olive M. Stone, of the North Carolina Institute of Social Science.

We Communists were never doubtful about the significance or the outcome of the National Negro Congress. We were not deterred by the charges of "Communist domination." We were guided by what we knew of the desire of the Negro masses for united action.

The trade union delegates were easily the outstanding participants. They discussed: "Discrimination in the American Federation of Labor," "Industrial Unionism," "Organized and Unorganized Negro Labor," "Independent Political Action for Labor," "The Organization of Domestic Workers," "The Randolph Resolution to End Discrimination in the A. F. of L." They endorsed the proposal to support and build labor committees in Negro communities, such as the Harlem Labor Committee in New York.

Another important factor of the Congress was the favorable reception given the Farmer-Labor Party. The program and meaning of a Farmer-Labor Party, the tactics in building a people's Labor Party in Negro communities, the meaning of a Farmer-Labor Party in the South and the possibilities of a million-fold alliance of all the toilers and oppressed, were clearly indicated at the National Negro Congress.

3. AGAINST FASCISM AND WAR

The fight for peace occupied an important place in the Congress proceedings. A description of the danger of war and the fascist forces was given by A. Philip Randolph:

War looms on the horizon . . . already fascist Italy is on the march to subjugate the ancient kingdom of Ethiopia . . . France and Germany are in a state of truce, awaiting the hour to strike for another conflict . . . Italy and England are in a competition for place and prestige in the Mediterranean and Africa, while Japan threatens to close the open door to American investments and advance her claim to the adoption of a Monroe Doctrine over the Pacific which may bring "Uncle Sam" and "Nippon" to grips. . . . Meanwhile Tokyo proceeds on its long conquering trek of China . . . Japan is restive in the face of the constant growth and power of Soviet Russia and is steadily resorting to provocative acts of war . . . Hitler seeks to serve as a spearhead of modern monopoly capitalism against the workers' republic.

The declaration of Mussolini that the Ethiopian war was necessary so that Italy might take the great civilization of Rome to the desolate land of Ethiopia, was never more dramatically given the lie before an American audience than on the opening night of the Congress. A special envoy of the London Legation of Ethiopia spoke to more than 6,000 people. He said:

We have been called barbarians, not able to govern our own land. But Ethiopia is not the only country today in which barbarism exists.

This war is not unlike the American War of Independence. Ethiopia is fighting for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness in her own land. We are fighting to preserve our independence and integrity. Ethiopia's defeat may mean the downfall of the collective security system and perhaps the end of the League of Nations. If Ethiopia wins, as she will if she is supported, it will strengthen the League of Nations and show that world sentiment must be respected.

Compare this analysis and attitude towards the collective security peace policy of the Soviet Union with the barbaric

actions of Mussolini, who rains bombs and poison gas down upon defenseless men, women and children; or with Hitler, who takes advantage of the situation to prepare war on a world scale; or with the Japanese militarist clique, in their drive to bring the entire Chinese people under the heel of Japanese imperialism and to penetrate into Soviet territory; or with the most reactionary forces in England, France and the United States, that actively urge on this slaughter.

THE SHAM NEUTRALITY ACT EXPOSED

The sham Neutrality Act of the United States directly aided Italian fascism against Ethiopia by facilitating the shipment of munitions of war to Italy; and the unwillingness of the United States government to join in collective actions to isolate Italy played into the hands of the most reactionary war forces in the country.

The Congress exposed the weakness of the Neutrality Act of the United States which operates to aid Italy, as against Ethiopia. It demanded that the Congress of the United States extend the Act to include a ban on oil, metals, cotton and other war materials, raw and finished; it called upon the workers in the transport industry to refuse to handle shipments of war supplies to Italy.

The Congress sponsored the setting up of a national organization to aid Ethiopia and issued an appeal for financial and moral support to aid the fight "against atrocities being committed upon Ethiopia by the invading armies of Mussolini and the fascist party."

HEARST CONDEMNED

One of the most dramatic incidents of the Congress occurred when a motion was made to endorse a resolution against the Hearst press. The whole Congress went into an uproar.

Copies of Hearst papers were torn into shreds and flung into the air. This outburst came spontaneously from a people bitterly harassed by hostile, vicious and reactionary Hearst papers. A resolution was adopted which urged Negroes and other opponents of war and fascism to insist that business firms refuse to advertise in the Hearst press.

"Whereas, there is a section of the American press distinctly hostile to the interests of Ethiopia," read the resolution, "therefore, be it resolved that this Congress urge all Negroes and other Americans opposed to fascism and war, to refuse to purchase papers and publications of Hearst and other sections of the hostile press."

WORLD WIDE INTEREST IN THE CONGRESS

The presence of Mr. Max Yergan, from Capetown, South Africa, brought additional international interest and significance to the National Negro Congress. Mr. Yergan, an American Negro who has spent fifteen years in Africa observing the ravages of imperialism, painted a vivid picture of the conditions of Negroes in Africa. He said:

The capitalist trusts divide up the spoils and partition the territories of the world among themselves. This phase of imperialism has manifested itself in every part of the African continent. Britain, France and other European countries have taken much of the land. . . . Various new forms of labor are forced on the people, and labor is drained out of the country. . . .

Imperialism, then, means annexation of land and confiscation of labor . . . it destroys the culture—the basic social fabric of the people's life. In South Africa, through the color laws, Africans are kept out of many phases of skilled labor and on the lowest level, industrially. Laws limiting freedom of assembly make it difficult for them to organize to defend themselves. . . .

This Congress has the opportunity and responsibility to make it possible for all organizations here represented to subscribe to a minimum program—to fight for those things on which the organizations are in agreement.

The Congress was duly influenced by the active participation of these representatives from abroad. The Congress condemned all forms of discrimination against foreign-born Negroes in the United States and opposed any attempt to deport or drop them from relief or employment; it advised better relations between foreign-born and native-born Negroes and went on record to support people of African descent in their struggle for economic and political freedom in their respective countries.

The Congress mapped out a plan to unite the fight for civil liberties for Negroes, against lynching, Jim-Crowism, residential segregation and disfranchisement, with the struggle against gag-laws, such as the Tydings-McCormack Act, the Kramer Seditious Bill, the Washington Anti-Communist Rider, Criminal Syndicalism Laws and Teachers' Oath Laws.

The Negro people and their various organizations have waged years of battle against these evils. But this militancy is now being developed into a political program of united struggle with other toilers.

4. THE DEMAND FOR UNITED ACTION

United action of the Negro people through their basic organizations was stressed by the leading sponsors of the Congress. The Negro people are the most commonly oppressed in every sphere of life. But this is not admitted by some of the so-called "friends of the Negro people," and even by some individuals in the ranks of the Negro people themselves. They cannot understand if, indeed, they desire to, why it is that the National Negro Congress "was solicitous about the needs of small Negro business people." The small business man hates big capital; even more so the small Negro business man hates big capital because of the discriminatory practices which crush

his aspirations for livelihood and cultural advancement. The aim of the united front should be to get the widest section of the masses into struggle under the guidance of the working class and trade union organizations, even on the basis of the smallest grievance. That is why the National Negro Congress expressed the demands of small Negro business men, and also advocated the organization of consumers' and producers' cooperatives and the unionization of employees, as a progressive road toward the solution of the problems of all the Negro people.

In like manner, the Congress endorsed measures of advancing Negro culture and cultural workers. The fight against the caricaturing of Negro culture and the exploitation of Negro artists is no doubt what inspired Rose McClendon, outstanding Negro actress (now deceased), to declare in the *New York Times* of June 30, 1935, that "what makes a Negro theater is . . . the selection of plays that deal with Negroes, with Negro problems, with phases of Negro life, *faithfully presented and accurately delineated* . . . and that a theater can be developed and operated by Negroes as a cultural experiment based on a program of social realism," which "could in the course of time alone create a tradition that would equal the tradition of any national group."

There are thousands of Negro organizations, trade unions, fraternal societies, lodges, social clubs, student bodies, Greek Letter Societies and churches. The membership of these organizations is composed largely of working-class composition and background, and all members are affected by a Jim-Crow status. Hundreds of thousands of men and women, eligible for trade union membership, are members of these organizations.

It is estimated that the membership of the Negro church is five or six million. Some people, however, say: "Never mind the people in the church. Let the hundred thousand Negro trade unionists keep away from these people. We are pure!" But the Negro Congress did not take this position. Neither do really advanced Negro trade unionists. They say that church members

should belong to trade unions. Let us get them into the unions!

The Negro church has solid contacts with the Negro masses. In the long history of the peculiar social life of the Negro people it has always been a center of social activity, at one time being the exclusive center for amusement, drama, club life, etc. Within the church there are study circles, auxiliary committees, Young People's Circles, Epworth Leagues, Young People's Baptist Leagues, where religious and secular topics are discussed.

There are numerous small churches with a large aggregate membership. The leaders are usually very close to the masses and react to the needs of these poorer parishioners. A single talk by the leaders of these churches on the need of joining a trade union could result, for example, in building almost over night a Domestic Workers Union of five hundred members in Harlem alone. This is not a far-fetched possibility.

That is why much importance can be attached to the resolutions adopted by the church session of the National Negro Congress, participated in by influential churchmen. It calls for the church "to work out an adequate technique comprehending social and economic problems affecting our group and working with non-Christian groups whose economic and social ideas are of value to the solution of our economic and social problems."

Today the tactic of the united front is bringing together large masses of Negroes; yet the consolidation of the organized united front among the Negro people is still weak.

The responsibility for this must be lodged with those who stand in the way of unity. And as for those people who claim to represent the interests of the proletariat but who are so simonpure that they cannot or do not care to concern themselves with the problems of the miserable life of the Negro people as a whole,—let them remember the picture of an entire people, so poignantly depicted by the great Negro poet, Paul Lawrence Dunbar:

A crust of bread and a corner to sleep in,
A minute to smile and an hour to weep in,

A pint of joy to a peck of trouble,
And never a laugh but the moans come double
And that is life.

The National Negro Congress recorded progress made by Communists and the many delegates who supported our program, in the increasing work we are carrying on in the various organizations of the Negro people. Our modest successes are, however, just beginnings. We must now undertake to profit from our experiences, mistakes, shortcomings and successes, by showing what changes are necessary in our methods of work to build the National Negro Congress.

The Congress has shown how, by overcoming sectarian methods of work, we can help to develop still further the movement for Negro liberation already started by the American Negro Labor Congress, the League of Struggle for Negro Rights and the International Labor Defense.

We must be very critical of our past work so that we may more easily make the change. It is necessary for the Party membership, particularly the Negro members, to see the need and possibility of strengthening our influence in the existing Negro organizations, by joining them where possible and becoming useful members. We can today unite the Negro people on the basis of their day-to-day needs, and for the preservation of democratic rights in such a way that the greatest number of people will be brought together in common struggle.

The National Negro Congress, if it is to have standing among the Negro people, will have to be active in political struggles. The task is going to become more difficult. The ruling class is not going to stand idly by and allow us to work freely in the organizations of the Negroes.

REACTIONARY ATTACKS

The desire for unity by leaders in the Universal Negro Improvement Association is being attacked by reactionary poli-

ticians of the two old parties. In some cases in Harlem we have seen the police department instigate provocations to disrupt united front actions of the Universal Negro Improvement Association.

The reactionaries of the old-line political parties fear the movement for independent political action which is taking form in a number of Negro communities.

The vicious attacks of the Liberty Leaguers and reactionary forces in the country against the Negro people were seen during the election campaign of 1936 in the campaign of Governor Talmadge in the state of Georgia. A copy of the *Georgia Woman's World*, edited in Atlanta, reached my hands. President Roosevelt is attacked for advocating social equality. The publication carries on a blood-curdling anti-Negro campaign in its columns. The contents show to what depths the reactionary Liberty Leaguers and their agents will stoop to stir up a lynch frenzy against the Negro people. It carries a large picture of Mrs. Roosevelt being escorted by two Negro students of the Howard University ROTC, and labels this "social equality." Another picture, showing President Roosevelt receiving a delegation of Negro Masons, is labeled: "Are We Headed for Social Equality?" The paper is filled from cover to cover with attacks upon the Negro people and is aimed at dividing still more the ranks of the Negro and white toilers.

An editorial, "Social Equality by Force," warns against a so-called civilization of mulattoes. It states:

If the Negroes of the South after they were freed and took control had possessed wealth in the same degree as the white people, the South today would be a mulatto civilization. Not because the whites would have desired it, but because the Negroes would have possessed power to enforce social equality.

Such a civilization of mulattoes is not impossible nor improbable in the not distant future if the policies of the present administration in Washington continue.

It may be recalled that Mussolini a few years back, in an article dealing with the Negroes in the U. S., made a similar statement.

Such are the appeals of the ultra-reactionary Liberty League-Hearst-Talmadge clique to the basest passions in order to develop the near-fascist program of the Republican Party.

Although the Congress resolutions decided against partisanship in politics, the National Negro Congress cannot be neutral in politics. The vital interests of the Negro people demand that the Congress apply the test of its program of minimum demands to every party and every candidate, and determine which candidates and which parties are enemies of its program. The Congress should draw up a legislative program of the demands of the Negro people, and campaign to unite the various organizations to see that this program is realized. Such simple participation in politics will not endanger the broadest unity of the Congress, but on the contrary will bring forward the issues of the Negro people and thereby cement unity and make the Congress stronger as a fighter for economic and social, as well as political rights.

We must revive the best traditions of the Negro people and honor their highest aspirations, their national feelings and desire for cultural expression. But to be able to do this effectively it is necessary to give the greatest attention to immediate needs. This has always been our aim. We are alert to the daily specific problems facing the Negroes as an oppressed nation of people. To fail in alertness in this regard leads to the abandonment of the Negro masses to the wolves of capitalism. We do not contrapose immediate issues to the revolutionary objective; we are concerned daily, hourly, with the miserable life of the whole of the Negro people, as a part of the larger struggle for socialism.

We Communists stand one hundred per cent for the general advancement of the Negro people, against all forms of discrimination, against fascism and war, for equal rights, and on all

issues in line with the interests of the toiling masses for advancing the fight against capital.

NEW POLICIES OF REFORMIST ORGANIZATIONS

We recall that in 1932 the *Crisis*, official organ of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, organized a symposium on Communism, by several Negro editors in various parts of the country. And while these gentlemen admitted the relentless struggle of the Communists for the immediate interests of the Negro people, yet most of them openly stated their opposition to Communism. But today there is an entirely different situation. We are not received with open arms everywhere now; but we must register such important developments as the United Front of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the League for Industrial Democracy, the American Civil Liberties Union, the International Labor Defense, and other organizations for defense of the Scottsboro boys.

In the past, the work of the N. A. A. C. P. in the economic field can be characterized as incidental to its civil liberty program. But we note that certain very definite changes in the policy regarding labor were made at its St. Louis convention. It recognized "the Negro as a landless proletariat in the country and as a propertyless wage-earner in the city, a reservoir of cheap labor . . . more easily exploited than white labor." The N. A. A. C. P. convention took under consideration the setting up by its branches, in strategic industrial and agricultural centers, of councils whose function should be:

- (1) To conduct classes in workers' education designed to create among Negroes a knowledge of their present role in industry and a realization of their identity of interests with white labor;
- (2) to foster the building of a labor movement which will unite all labor, white and black, skilled and unskilled, industrial and agricultural;
- (3) to lay the basis for united action between white and black workers for securing

passage of adequate legislation on immediate problems, such as old age pensions, unemployment and sick insurance, widows' and orphans' pensions, child and female labor, lynching, discrimination and Jim-Crowism; (4) to serve as a force against every manifestation and form of racial chauvinism in the labor movement, and to attempt to break down discrimination on the job and in pay, and Jim-Crowism in local and national trade union bodies.

Indeed, this is a far departure from the previous activities of the N. A. A. C. P. and certainly offers opportunity for common action with the National Negro Congress, as well as the possibility for Communists to work in local branches for the furtherance of this progressive program.

In like manner, certain progressive steps can be noted in the Workers' Councils of the Urban League, under the directorship of Mr. Lester B. Granger. The Workers' Councils of the National Urban League, with branches in more than 32 industrial centers throughout the country, numbering many thousands of members, have as their basic program:

To acquaint Negro workers with the economic nature of their problems, with the essential unity of white and Negro workers' interests, and with the history, technique and necessity of collective workers' action; and to establish understanding and intelligent co-operation among workers of both races, within and without the ranks of organized labor.

The possibility for united action among organizations of Negro people, I believe, is clear. We have had excellent experiences, not only with these organizations, but also with the Universal Negro Improvement Association.

From these observations may follow our approach to the National Negro Congress for extending development of the liberation struggle of the Negro people. This struggle has been in the making for a long time in various organizations of the Negro people. It was given its most vigorous start in such organizations as the American Negro Labor Congress and the League of Struggle for Negro Rights.

LEFT-WING NEGRO ORGANIZATIONS IN RETROSPECT

The American Negro Labor Congress was organized in Chicago in October, 1925. It began to champion the rights of thirteen million Negroes in the United States and "to lead the struggles of the Negro workers and farmers against terrorism, lynching, mob violence, police brutality, segregation and all forms of race hatred; for equal pay for equal work; for better working conditions; for the organization of Negro workers into trade unions on the basis of complete equality."

The preamble and program of the American Negro Labor Congress stated in detail the position of the Negroes in the U. S. and outlined the methods of struggle. It made a summary of the struggles of the Negro people internationally against capitalist imperialist oppression.

The American Negro Labor Congress laid special emphasis on the organization of Negro *workers* and *farmers*. It called for struggle for the admittance of Negroes into the existing trade unions and their full participation in all offices and affairs; it called for the organization of Negroes into unions and in industries where no unions existed; it organized Inter-Racial Labor Conferences for the "promotion of solidarity of all workers regardless of race or color and to take steps to unionize Negro workers."

The American Negro Labor Congress was almost entirely of working-class composition. It represented quite a departure from previous Congresses of national gatherings initiated by Negroes. It served the definite purpose, in line with the trend in the industrialization of the Negro, of bringing the Negro working class forward as the decisive force in the movement of the Negro people as a whole.

Although there was a large migration of Negroes into industry, their organization into trade unions was weak, and their class consciousness was not widespread. There was a

natural suspicion of the trade unions among Negroes because in most cases these unions were led by white leaders who carried out the policies of the ruling class of Jim-Crowism and segregation in the labor movement. The American Negro Labor Congress was faced with a most difficult task which it undertook to the best of its ability.

There were shortcomings in meeting this task. The A. N. L. C. was too narrow in its approach. For the period of its existence it was almost completely isolated from the basic masses of the Negro people; this shortcoming was carried over into the League of Struggle for Negro Rights. The class content of the program of the A. N. L. C., which was essentially correct, was, however, not carefully adapted to the feelings and moods of the Negro people. The local councils were too rigid. Instead of uniting broad masses of the Negro people through their organizations, the councils were built on the basis of individual membership composed in almost all cases of those people and individuals who were dissatisfied with the existing organizations and were breaking away from them completely. In many cases members of the councils were class-conscious white workers but, together with their Negro brothers, were separated from the broad masses, and knew little or nothing about their problems and their life. The white workers quite sincerely desired to carry out their class duty of unity with the Negro people. But unfortunately the form and the methods of work were not fruitful. In many cases sincere Negroes were driven away from the organization by bad methods of work.

I recall particularly the strict and unyielding attitude taken by the leaders of the American Negro Labor Congress toward religion. This attitude prevented the Congress from becoming a mass influence among church people. At an A. N. L. C. meeting in Chicago, 1926, composed of a large number of religious people, a leader of the organization in the course of his remarks, said: "To hell with religion; damn the church." But today in the National Negro Congress church organizations

and religious people work co-operatively with non-church people. Our Negro Communists are fraternizing with church people in order to organize them in the struggle for Negro liberation.

Despite its shortcomings, the A. N. L. C. served a useful purpose. The last convention of the American Negro Labor Congress was held in St. Louis in November, 1930, where, by unanimous decision, the name was changed to the League of Struggle for Negro Rights. There was a change in program also. The program called for the destruction of the plantation system in the South, for confiscation without compensation of the land of the big landlords, and declared for the complete right of self-determination for the Negro people in the Black Belt of the South. Such a program prevented the development of a broad movement. The masses did not understand this full program. Furthermore, the L. S. N. R. fell into the same sectarian methods of work as the A. N. L. C. It did not base its activity sufficiently on immediate, daily needs of the people. Naturally, this narrowed down the L. S. N. R.

The most useful and practical part of the program of the L. S. N. R. was the "Bill of Negro Rights," which aimed to develop a movement to enforce the enactment of legislation for Negro rights and the suppression of lynching.

The organizational weaknesses of the L. S. N. R. were identical with those of the American Negro Labor Congress. Calling for affiliation on the basis of the complete program, the L. S. N. R. tended to make existing organizations suspicious. The by-laws provided for the leadership of struggle for the L. S. N. R. program of immediate and general demands. But many organizations could not be drawn into united front struggle on the basis of the full program of the L. S. N. R.

It is precisely on this point that the National Negro Congress has made a great step forward to the advantage of the united front and joint action of different organizations.

What actually happened was the following: branches of

individual members of the L. S. N. R. became, invariably, as in the A. N. L. C., small sectarian groups, and, as such, remained isolated and even were unable to hold those people who were willing to break away from other organizations. These branches could have attraction only for unorganized Negro people. But contrary to opinions held by many, the Negro people are an organized people, that is, they are members of churches, lodges, fraternal organizations, etc.

There were tendencies to organize into the L. S. N. R. individuals who were either eligible for trade union membership or unemployed organizations. This was a sectarian mistake of all L. S. N. R. branches. Practically no effort was made in any part of the country to build the L. S. N. R. as a united front, federating organization on joint actions around immediate issues.

The National Negro Congress has wisely avoided all these pitfalls. In the first place, it avoids usurping the program of affiliated organizations. It rather works with organizations. It was organized upon the basis of a united front around a minimum program worked out and agreed upon by delegates.

The National Negro Congress is being organized on a regional, or district, and local council basis. A region or district is composed of several states, with a vice-president in charge. There are to be also state organizations. These are made up of city bodies or local councils within the state. The local council is the basic form of organization. The local sponsoring committees, which initiate the movement for the National Negro Congress, automatically become local councils. These councils are to be federated bodies of already existing organizations which affiliate to the council on the basis of a part or the whole of the program adopted at Chicago. There can also be sustaining members.

The life of these local councils can be justified only by their taking up and acting jointly on the issues that affect the Negro people. They can become effective in the community only by

developing campaigns and struggles around these issues and by involving the membership of each organization in these activities. The most important task to be undertaken is to unionize Negro labor and to develop a fight to break down Jim-Crow barriers in national and local trade union bodies.

These are the immediate issues, together with those general political issues, such as the struggle against fascism and war and for the defense of the independence of Ethiopia, which have already been dealt with, that should occupy the immediate attention of the National Congress and all of the supporters and sympathizers.

We Communists must organize all our forces to render great assistance to the National Negro Congress in carrying out its program. If we develop systematic work we shall be able to fulfill very soon the task of developing a broad People's Front among the Negro people in the United States against fascism and war and for the liberation of the Negro people.

Summary of a series of articles on the National Negro Congress, published in the *Communist* during February-June, 1936.

IV

Issues Uniting the Negro People

1. THE NEGRO AND THE PEOPLE'S FRONT

THE elements of a new economic crisis and the blows of reaction and repression are driving the Negro people toward united struggle. The economic situation was never bright for the Negro people; and the crisis has not lifted for them. Let us list some of the more immediate problems retarding the economic and social life of the Negro people: (1) inadequate housing and high rents under Jim-Crow conditions; (2) the rise in the cost of living, higher prices for inferior food and other commodities, particularly in the "ghettos"; (3) inequality, the denial of civil rights, lynching; (4) the lack of security: relief appropriations drastically cut, lay-offs increasing every day and striking especially at the colored population, special provisions denying relief to agricultural workers (Negroes) who refuse to accept low wages in private employment, on farms and plantations and as personal servants; (5) the exclusion from social security legislation of domestic and farm labor, as well as laundry, restaurant and hotel workers, categories which include large numbers of Negroes; (6) labor differential: wage and hour legislation, as at present formulated, permits the same type of labor differential for Negroes as was the case under the old N. R. A.; (7) insufficient or utter absence of farm tenancy legislation for Southern farm

labor; (8) retardation of the cultural life of the Negro people by reactionary policies and inferiority doctrines.

The United States is a modern democratic state. The Negro people are a part of it. But the backwardness of political democratic expression in the U. S. A. can be seen in an electoral system where each city, town or state may have independent methods of election absolutely different, which often prevent unified national action; and in so far as Negroes are concerned, these limitations are still greater. In Northern states Negroes may vote; but in nearly every Southern state this right is denied or abrogated by various methods, and white representatives are sent to Congress on the basis of the proportion of Negroes in the various states of the South.

Even in communities in the North, where Negroes can vote, often the whims of a political machine or the method of regulating a political boundary are so arbitrary and complicated that Negroes are never elected to a high office. Take, for example, the 21st Congressional District (Harlem) in New York.

Another repressive agency against the Negroes is the Supreme Court. There is no section of the ruling class set-up in the United States that is so autocratic, so dictatorial, so anti-Negro, which holds so much power over the whole people as the Supreme Court of the United States. The Negro people are very much concerned with democratic forms in the United States, the exercise of their democratic rights and the fullest extension of democratic methods in government and judiciary.

The working class, which is gathering its forces through the tremendous organization now being carried on by the C. I. O., is bringing together the elements that will extend and guarantee democracy in this country. It is bringing around it all those forces and allies necessary to build a People's Front, which will make the United States a stronghold against reaction and war.

The Negroes have already played a large role in the movement to organize the unorganized, to build powerfully strong labor organizations, to advance the cause of labor as a whole.

The Negroes are rapidly becoming a decisive progressive influence in the political life of the country.

In the United States today, we Communists propose to aid the renaissance in the life of the Negro people. We aim to unite the Negro people in struggle for equal rights, for manhood status, for the fullest cultural advancement—to unite the Negro people as a part of the People's Front for democracy and peace.

THE MOVEMENT TOWARD UNITY

The National Negro Congress was conceived by its initiators as a rallying center to fight off greater oppression. The elements of a broad movement took shape at Chicago, at its first convention, in February, 1936. The aims of this movement, however, have not yet been fully realized. The Congress will have to consider seriously certain tactical as well as organizational methods of work. It will have to give more attention to various strata among the Negro people, and approach the Negro organizations more carefully and with keener understanding. Too often the groupings among the Negro people and their decisive role in Negro life are not properly understood. We find ourselves puzzled over the conservatives, the "middle-of-the-roaders" and those now going to the left, and we wonder whether these strata can be reconciled to work together, or whether it is worthwhile to attempt the job. Once and for all it should be clear to every honest and sincere person, not only that this can be done, but that it must be done!

We want, to the fullest possible extent, to help make the Negro Congress a force uniting the broadest sections of the Negro people, an instrument for combating the many evils which face the Negro people. We are interested in working with all who, like us, want to reach the goal of freedom.

The National Negro Congress cannot become that instrument of struggle and unity if it does not persuade all strata of

the Negro people and their sympathizers and friends to work co-operatively. Let us take as examples, some of the major Negro organizations, and see what relationship they bear to a united Negro people's movement: the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Urban League, the National Colored Women's Federation and church and fraternal organizations. The N. A. A. C. P. has broadened its scope of work in a number of fields. It has conducted an excellent campaign with splendid results for the passage of anti-lynching legislation. The N. A. A. C. P. has wide influence among the Negro people. Similarly the Workers' Councils of the Urban League have to their credit quite a number of progressive undertakings. Certainly we Communists welcome this progress and desire to do everything possible to extend the work of building and broadening the movement of the Negro people in co-operation with the N. A. A. C. P., the National Negro Congress, the Urban League and other organizations.

The Negro people are ready for unity. Expressions of this readiness come from many valuable and influential sources. The other day the following appeared in Mr. William N. Jones' column in the *Baltimore Afro-American*:

We are in the midst of the recasting of our general organizational programs and spheres of operation to meet these rapidly changing times and problems. Since one of the defects and weak spots in one group's battleline against the common enemy is the lack of unified action, the time would seem right for consideration of more united front at the points where most of the organizational objectives merge.

We must let everyone know that we stand for just this sort of action. We must convince others of the correctness of this view.

I do not at this moment want to discuss our differences with the Socialist Party on the Negro question, nor the fact that the Trotskyites within the Socialist Party attempt to distort

the Negro question and disrupt efforts at united action for Negro rights. I simply want to re-emphasize that there are points and possibilities for united action on which there is mutual agreement with sincere Socialists. The resolution adopted on Negro work at the national convention of the Socialist Party reads in part:

Such mass organizations as the National Negro Congress, youth and adult, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the like, are fields for disciplined Socialist work. Their weaknesses are obvious; but no effective attempt in this work can overlook the opportunity for hand-to-hand conflict with the problems of the American Negro and his similarly exploited white brothers which they represent.

This is a big step forward for the Socialist Party. Let all of those who stand for unity welcome it.

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

What position should the Negro people take toward the Democratic Party? We have to answer this question not only in the North and Midwest, but for the South also.

Big changes of tremendous significance for the Negro people are taking place in the political life of the country. The differentiations in the Democratic Party have to be studied and understood. The Negro people are going to play a big role in progressive currents now forming in the Democratic Party in the South. The Republican Party, which has become the rallying ground throughout the country for every reactionary force, is going to try to build itself in the South. It is going to attract all the worse elements of the South. But it will not get the Negro people.

Recently I read an interesting article in the *Daily Worker*. It was an interview with an ex-slave by the name of George Washington Albright, 91 years of age. When he was asked

why he had recently abandoned the Republican Party, in whose ranks he served for more than half a century, he replied:

Do you suppose that at my age I can't tell the difference between a Lincoln Republican and a Landon Republican? Look at all the rich Democrats who've jumped out of the Democratic Party into the Republican!

This is true not only of old Negro Republicans who have gone through the mill of Republicanism, but of the new generation who see and understand the great transition taking place in our country and the great change in the Republican Party. The Republican Party is not what it used to be. Neither is the Democratic Party the same party it was ten or even five years ago. The Democratic Party is being split by the reactionaries. It is only in the light of these changes and shifts that we can consider the attitude to be taken by Negroes to the new line-up of political forces in the country.

What are these changes? It would be incorrect to say, and simply leave it at that, that Roosevelt's administration is based on the solid South. The defeat of Talmadge, in Georgia, as an anti-New Dealer, already shows certain developments in the South. Talmadge represented the most reactionary section of the old South which fights any progressive change whether it is radicalism or the progressivism of the Roosevelt New Dealers. The "Solid South" is being broken up.

The progressive vote in the South may have to express itself through the Democratic Party, leading toward the development of the broadest People's Front movement. The liberals and the progress labor movement of the South that oppose the reactionaries, realize who their allies are in the struggle against the bourbons: they are the Negro people. They are aware of the denial of the right to vote, poll taxes, etc.; and they know they will have to conduct a fight against these evils if both Negro and white farmers, and workers and oppressed in gen-

eral, are to unite against the reactionary Democratic machine. In certain localities movements are already being organized to fight the poll tax, to modify it, and to break down the disfranchisement of Negro and white workers by breaking down the poll tax system.

Our attitude toward the Democratic Party in the South should be governed by the development of a progressive movement within that Party, which will act against political inequalities of the Negro people and will take a clear, definite stand in support of the burning issues before the American people—such as the Supreme Court, relief to the unemployed, against taxation on the poor, for the reorganization of the government to extend democracy, and particularly to extend democracy for the Negroes. We can support, in the Democratic primaries, Negro and white candidates who stand for these issues against the reactionaries.

As far as the North is concerned, we shall find situations favorable for action within the Democratic primaries. To give one example, there is already in Harlem a fight within Tammany. In this fight we can well support those elements struggling against the reactionaries, even in the primaries. There is already a battle on the issue of Negro leadership against the stand-pat reactionaries that want to limit the Negroes. We can take sides on these issues and inject other progressive ones.

In certain communities where the progressive movement has not taken on organizational strength enough to influence the election of a progressive, we can in certain instances support Negro candidates in the primaries, especially in localities where Negroes have not held office for years and perhaps never.

SPAIN AND THE MOVEMENT FOR PEACE

During May 1937, it was my privilege to go to Spain and pay a visit to the volunteers of the Abraham Lincoln Battalion

on the front. It was thrilling to find Negro fighters together with their white brothers, making a splendid record for America in Spain. Ethiopian volunteers were there also. These Negro volunteers were eager to send the message back home that they were fighting on Spanish soil for those principles of democracy (against fascism) which the Negro people have been upholding in the United States for more than a century. The Ethiopian warriors eagerly stated that the fight in the trenches of Spain today was a continuation of the struggle for the liberation of their country from Italian fascism.

Upon their return to our shores, these soldiers are going to take their place in our ranks as valuable leaders of the Negro people and of the entire working-class movement. We hail them! We pay the highest honor and tribute to the Negroes who died for the cause of democracy in Spain—Alonzo Watson, Oliver Law, Milton Herndon (brother of Angelo Herndon) and Harry Wickman.

Spain has great significance for the Negro people. Both German and Italian fascism are intervening directly in Spain against the interests of the Spanish people. Just as in Ethiopia, so in Spain international laws have been trampled under foot by these fascist bandits. In Spain, just as in Ethiopia, liberty is being menaced everywhere by the unbridled aggression of Italy and Germany. The cause of the Spanish people is the cause of the people of the world. A victory for the Spanish people over fascism and fascist intervention is a victory favorable for the Ethiopian people. A new friendly ally of the Ethiopian people will be born with the success of the Spanish people's democratic government.

The success of the Spanish people will strengthen the forces of progress and peace in our own country; it will be of great value for the Negro people here who want to gain, maintain and extend democracy.

BUILDING THE COMMUNIST PARTY

It is a glorious thing to learn that Negro women are clamoring to join the Communist Party. They are beating at our doors. I think that is a fine thing! We must find the way to make it possible for them to come into our Party and into leadership in the Party. We must take lessons from the Negro organizations with active women's leadership on this question. These organizations consider women the foremost leaders of the Negro people.

We must learn to take up in a mass way the special problems of Negro women and organize them for struggle. In the first place, we should give consideration to the organization of women domestic workers. The greatest degree of employment among the Negroes as a whole is found, according to United States statistics, among domestic and personal servants. But they are not organized, and it is difficult to organize them because of the peculiarities of the industry. Among laundry workers, also, we find a great number of Negro women. If we develop struggles among these workers, we shall bring thousands of them into organization. Naturally, there are other categories. There are many white collar workers, thousands of teachers and many in the middle class.

In order to build the Communist Party among the Negro people and to extend the united Negro People's Front, it is necessary to renew our struggle for the immediate and elementary needs of the Negro people. As Earl Browder declared at a recent meeting of the Negro Commission of the Communist Party, held in New York:

I would say that the main feature of the past year has been that in the field of work among the Negro people, as in most of the other fields of our work, we have begun to realize on a mass scale the results of the line of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. We have begun to emerge from sectarian isolation and become

a mass influence, a mass power. As in our Party work generally, this has been accompanied by a sharpening of all the problems involved in our work. All of our weaknesses and inadequacies come out most sharply now, precisely because we have made some tremendous gains and thereby face responsibilities which politically we feel equipped to meet.

Speech at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, June 19, 1937.

2. VICTORIES IN THE SCOTTSBORO AND HERNDON CASES

After six and a half years of struggle, freedom was gained for four of the nine Scottsboro boys. This victory, although partial, serves as a lever to open the prison for the five remaining boys.

The Scottsboro case attracted world-wide attention. Millions of people in every part of the world, of all nationalities, of all religions, of every political viewpoint, people of all classes—writers, lawyers, doctors, artists, workers, trade union leaders, men and women of every walk of life—took part in this universal struggle to free the Scottsboro boys.

“The Scottsboro Boys Shall Not Die!” “The Scottsboro Boys Must Go Free!” “Help Save the Scottsboro Boys!” These slogans were written and read, spoken and sung, carried through the streets, painted on walls in almost every language known to man. It has been one of the most profound expressions of the human conscience against injustice and persecution.

The Scottsboro case established a sharp dividing line between two camps: those who would perpetuate the degradation of the Negro people and keep up endless exploitation and oppression, and those who are organizing to end this oppression

and establish equality and freedom for the Negro people. Rival forces—justice against inhumanity, liberty and democracy against enslavement and reaction—fought for mastery. The Scottsboro frame-up was designed by the reactionary section of the officialdom of the state of Alabama as a signal for an intense terror campaign to frighten the Negro people. Every act of the prosecution in the case gave that signal. Each move was aimed to develop psychological intimidation. The incitements in the Scottsboro case were clearly for the purpose of developing a monstrous psychological setting to overawe the Negro people to “keep them in their place.” It was the intent of the reactionary Alabama officials, in mass murder of nine Negro youths to stifle the spirit of struggle of the Negro people, to mortify their dignity and crush every noble, honest and forward-looking aspiration they might have.

The first trial in the little town of Scottsboro, Alabama, was held in the midst of a raving mob atmosphere, deliberately planned and executed. A band played “There’ll be a hot time in the old town tonight,” as an accompaniment to the death verdicts the jury brought against one after another of the boys.

Alabama jurisprudence, which was dominated by the reactionaries, took upon itself the historic mission of the Ku Klux Klan, that is, to help maintain the dog-eat-dog economic basis in the South. The Governor, most of the judges and the courts in Alabama intended not only to terrorize the Negro people, but to sow hate and distrust between poor whites and blacks so that exploitation might continue.

Alabama reactionaries posed as defenders of “white womanhood.” They raved about saving the South from Bolshevism, from “Jew money from New York.” They did everything possible to stir up sectionalism and the basest racial passions. The staging of the Scottsboro case was aimed to throttle the emerging organization of black and white labor, which is rising against economic slavery and feudalistic remnants. The trial was to serve as a springboard to attack trade unions and all

other forms of organization of black and white labor. But the reactionaries reckoned without certain forces. They failed to reckon with the strength and indignation of the mass movement of progressive forces that was rising among the people, for justice and civil liberties in the United States. They ignored the maturing political consciousness among the Negro people and their determination to struggle for their rights.

Whence came the power and strength of these methods and tactics?

One must speak here of the methods and forms of struggle that have grown out of the experiences of the international working class and that have proved successful in countries where the rankest forms of persecution are practiced by powerful ruling reactionary cliques. The method consists in involving millions of workers, farmers, small business people, working intellectuals and those in whose interest it is to unite against reaction and fascism.

The Communist Party applied these experiences to the Scottsboro case. This method required international unity and leadership. It is this that distinguished our activities from all others. We fully realized that only struggle on a mass basis, only slogans supported by millions could bring success. In the main these forms of struggle may be summarized as follows: (1) The conduct of international campaigns of protest; (2) the conduct of national campaigns of protest; (3) the organization of committees applying the tactic of the united front, drawing in representatives of various organizations of the toilers (trade unions, cultural organizations, organizations of Negro people, etc.); (4) the organization of mass conferences, parades and demonstration; (5) the sending of delegations to protest and to investigate the conditions of the prisoners; (6) the circulation of petitions, signed by thousands of people, demanding the freedom of the victimized; (7) the publication of facts, the exposure to the public at large of the whole system of terror; (8) the enlistment of scientists, writers, artists, etc.;

(9) the popularization of the work rendered by the International Labor Defense in order to win wider and wider masses.

These fundamental forms of struggle of both the Communist Party and the International Labor Defense were not resorted to just when "something happened"; they have been a part of our day-to-day work and activities.

RESUME OF THE SCOTTSBORO CASE

On March 25, 1931, the nine Scottsboro boys were arrested on a freight train in Paint Rock, Alabama. They were charged with rape of two white girls. They were railroaded through lynch trials. Eight successive death sentences were handed down. The boys were not permitted proper counsel. They were indicted by a grand jury, tried before a petit jury, on which no Negroes served; no Negroes had ever in the memory of living man been permitted to serve on an Alabama jury. There was a mistrial in the case of the ninth boy.

On April 1, 1931, the International Labor Defense stepped into the case. Combining its two-fisted tactics of the best court defense with the best mass defense, it challenged these convictions made by the Bourbon section of the South. The Communist Party developed the campaign on a national scale, and beyond the borders of the country, supporting the fight for the freedom of the boys, for vindication and defense of the whole Negro people.

Joseph Brodsky, chief International Labor Defense counsel, went to Scottsboro to demand retrial of the boys. This was denied. Appeals were taken to the State Supreme Court. The Alabama State Supreme Court upheld the verdict against seven boys, remanded the other two to the custody of the Probate (juvenile) Court.

The roar of protest rose, and extended around the world. Tours were organized for the Scottsboro mothers. One of them, Mrs. Ada Wright, toured not only in the United States, but in

company with the late J. Louis Engdahl, chairman of the International Labor Defense and veteran Communist Party leader, toured through 26 European countries. Millions the world over participated in the struggle. In Chemnitz, Germany, police fired upon a demonstration called by the Communist Party and the I. L. D. of that country, resulting in the death of a Communist. A martyr to the Scottsboro cause, Engdahl collapsed from the strain of the tour, contracted pneumonia, died in a Moscow hospital on November 21, 1932.

On November 7 of that year the United States Supreme Court—to which the I. L. D. had appealed the case, retaining Walter Pollack, noted constitutional attorney, to make the argument—reversed the death sentences on the ground that the Scottsboro boys had been deprived of proper counsel in their trial.

New trials followed, this time in Decatur, Alabama, following a change of venue from Scottsboro secured by the I. L. D. Ruby Bates, one of the white girls whom the boys were charged with having violated, dramatically appeared in the middle of the trial. She repudiated all charges and told a damning story of having been forced to testify to a lie in the first trial. From her experiences she learned of the trickery and deception used by the white ruling class to divide and exploit both the Negro and white working people. She saw these Bourbons ready not only to sanction but to organize the mass murder of innocent boys in order to further their selfish interests. Her experiences have made a working-class fighter out of Ruby Bates.

It was proved that Negroes from Alabama juries were systematically and illegally excluded in violation of the United States Constitution.

Haywood Patterson and Clarence Norris were again condemned to death in a lynch atmosphere created by the now-deceased Attorney-General Thomas E. Knight of Alabama, who took personal charge of the prosecution. The campaign mounted to new heights of protest, under the leadership of the

Communist Party and the International Labor Defense. On June 22, 1933, Judge E. Horton set aside the verdicts on the ground that "the evidence preponderates greatly in favor of the defendants."

For yielding to the dictates of justice expressed by the protest movement, the state put pressure against Judge Horton, who was defeated for re-election. Judge William Washington Callahan, Ku Klux Klansman, succeeded him in the new trials. Once again Patterson and Norris were condemned to death. And again the International Labor Defense appealed the case.

With the campaign mounting, the United States Supreme Court reversed the sentence a second time, on the grounds of illegal exclusion of Negroes from the jury. The lives of the Scottsboro boys had been saved again and a major victory won for the Negro people, whose right to serve on Southern juries was established for the first time by this decision.

In December 1935, the International Labor Defense, following out its policy of broadening and extending the defense on a united front basis, initiated the formation of a united Scottsboro Defense Committee. It included the National Association for the Advancement of the Colored People, the American Civil Liberties Union, the Church League for Industrial Democracy (Episcopal), the International Labor Defense, the League for Industrial Democracy and the Methodist Federation for Social Service.

The fourth trial opened in January, 1936. Judge Callahan and Knight sped through the trial of Haywood Patterson, excluding all vital defense evidence by pre-arrangement. Patterson was convicted, and was sentenced to 75 years in prison. The united front campaign had forced a break in the series of death sentences. The other trials were hastily adjourned.

Next day, as the boys were being taken back from Decatur to prison in Birmingham, a deputy sheriff beat and taunted Ozzie Powell, one of the boys, until in self-defense Powell struck back, scratching the deputy's throat with a small knife. Sheriff

Sandlin of Morgan County, who was in the car, got out and deliberately put a bullet in Powell's head, paralyzing and crippling him for life.

On July 12, 1937, the trials opened in Decatur once more. Knight, who had died a few months previously, was replaced as prosecutor by Assistant Solicitor Tom Lawson. Callahan began to grind through the trials again.

In a sudden move the state dismissed the rape charges against five of the Scottsboro boys, explaining that the evidence against them was doubtful. In doing so, the state of Alabama indicted itself of murderous false prosecution against the four who had been sentenced, since the evidence in every case was precisely the same. It depended entirely on the perjury of Victoria Price, who had eighteen times sworn on the witness stand that she was raped by every one of the nine boys.

Four boys, Eugene Williams, Roy Wright, Olen Montgomery and Willie Robertson, were freed, under condition of exile from the state of Alabama.

The first partial victory in the Scottsboro case was won.

LESSONS OF DEFENSE UNITED ACTIONS

Other lessons gained in united front defense go back to the San Francisco general strike in 1934. At that time the International Labor Defense successfully initiated a united front of the most varied elements in the fight against vigilantes. A united committee, including the American Civil Liberties Union and Socialist organizations, was formed on the initiative of the I. L. D., as a national center for the fight against the vigilante terror which was unleashed against the strikers. This was the first step in the series of developments which have reached their greatest heights so far in the Scottsboro fight. For the first time the most diversified elements, some of them representing fundamental divergences in political viewpoints, were united on a specific defense issue.

The most outstanding complete victory of the united front has been the freeing of Angelo Herndon. Except for the Scottsboro and Mooney-Billings cases, broader forces—involving literally millions of people in specific united action through their organizations and individually—were brought into this united front than on any other issue.

This campaign forced the United States Supreme Court to free Angelo Herndon, and nullify the Georgia slave insurrection law under which he had been sentenced from 18 to 20 years on the Georgia chain-gang. The national tour of the reproduction of the chain-gang, the circulation of the Herndon petitions which were signed by two million people through the agency of scores and hundreds of the most diverse organizations, involving the Socialist Party in united action with the Communist Party, the Young People's Socialist League with the Young Communist League, the American Federation of Labor, the National Negro Congress, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, all unemployed organizations, church groups and organizations, the Y. W. C. A., monster mass meetings held for Herndon in every part of the country, the formation of local Herndon committees on a scale even broader than the National Committee to Aid the Herndon Defense—these are highlights in the Herndon campaign which illustrate in the most graphic and dramatic manner the power of the united front.

The Mooney-Billings case is another outstanding example. In this case the I. L. D. has acted as a basic moving force in developing the campaign which has joined the A. F. of L. and C. I. O. forces, together with liberals and professionals in struggle. In the recent struggle against the mistreatment of Tom Mooney in San Quentin prison, the I. L. D. was one of the main agencies through which a nation-wide campaign was organized and which forced the prison authorities to change their tactics, although they had already mistreated him to the point where his life was in danger. The I. L. D. is in close co-operation with the

Mooney Molders' Defense Committee, organizing a new campaign to force action by the Governor and the State Supreme Court of California for Mooney's freedom. The recent visit of Vito Marcantonio, president of the I. L. D., to California, on invitation of the Mooney Committee, did much to crystallize and unify the fight for Mooney and the state.

The Sacramento and criminal syndicalism campaigns, the de Jonge, Putash, and Simpson cases, are outstanding examples of the power of the I. L. D. to initiate and develop the united front.

Other examples can be found in the united front in New Jersey against injunctions, in Philadelphia against vigilantism, where A. F. of L. and C. I. O. leaders are joined together through the initiative and action of the I. L. D.; and to them are linked organizationally the allies of the working class among the liberal and progressive middle class groups. There are many other examples, illustrating the united front lessons in varying forms. Outstanding among these are the trade-union defense committees, such as the King-Ramsay-Conner Committee and the Modesto Committee in California, in the formation of which the I. L. D. played an important role.

In the Scottsboro campaign we have an outstanding example of the effectiveness of united action in winning victory. The united Scottsboro Defense Committee undertook responsibility for the work of conducting the defense. The organizations supporting this Committee—although with varying degrees of energy and initiative, and at times with hesitations or reservations—on concrete measures brought much wider circles into concerted effort which has resulted so far in the freedom of four of the boys.

United action—continued, developed and extended with renewed vigor—is necessary for the winning of freedom for all the remaining boys. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People's branches throughout the country, many of which were already involved in the campaign, were

involved in larger numbers by the establishment of the united committee. Socialists, liberals, civil liberties groups, trade unions, fraternal organizations, church and religious organizations, and many others within the sphere of influence of the organizations in the Scottsboro Defense Committee, were brought into action through the establishment of the united front. The working relationship with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, established in the Scottsboro case, is an outstanding example, and the N. A. A. C. P. and its speakers in many cases have praised the key role of the I. L. D.

The most important lessons to be learned from our united front experiences in defense are the necessity for alertness and vigor in conducting this work; the need for patient, untiring effort to win to united action on specific issues the broadest elements of the people, no matter how sharply they may differ from us on other questions; and the importance of a conviction of the correctness of our united front policies. These policies have been proved in action. The victories of united action in the Scottsboro and other cases were not accomplished overnight, nor was the work easy.

The partial victories gained in the fight for freedom of the Scottsboro boys stand before us. The Supreme Court was forced to affirm the right of Negroes to sit on juries, although this is still denied in practice, and can be realized only by the united struggle of progressive forces. Nobody can deny that among the white masses there is growing tolerance on the Negro question, that among large sections of whites the persecution of the Negro people as exemplified in the Scottsboro case has awakened strong ideals. They are beginning to see the Negro people as a noble and great people.

The Communist Party is proud of the leading part it has played in these achievements. Few have understood the contribution and the change that came over large sections of the South and particularly in Alabama. The best opinion of Ala-

bama and of all of the South is not represented by the acts of the reactionaries. We must give credit to a change in attitude of an influential and large section of Southern opinion—workers, farmers and intellectuals—which finally saw through this shameful frame-up, and out of decency and honesty brought pressure to bear on the state and the courts, which helped to make possible the victories in the Scottsboro case.

Even the transformation in the life and outlook of Ruby Bates, who was born in an atmosphere of intolerance and prejudice, is a plainly-evident example of a maturing new attitude in the South. Those unfortunate utterances of Mr. Samuel Liebowitz at the conclusion of the first trials at Decatur, reflecting on the Southern people as a whole, were certainly not justified.

Following the freeing of four of the Scottsboro boys, the Birmingham *Age-Herald* said:

The statement asserts that the prosecution is convinced of the guilt of the four Negroes who have been tried again and convicted, but in the view of the *Age-Herald* the doubt of the guilt of those who have been convicted will be greatly increased by the action of last Saturday, despite this statement of the prosecution and without questioning the good faith of those who issued it . . . that admission will inevitably deepen the opinion of many fair-minded citizens that the possibility has been more than "mistaken identity" in the cases of those who have been convicted.

This the admission will certainly do. The courts of Alabama stand convicted by their own statement of having tried to execute five Negro boys on a false charge. Why are not the others innocent, who were convicted on the same perjured testimony? This question must ring throughout the land!

A most significant development has been the expression organizationally of the liberal and progressive sentiment in the South. The Scottsboro Defense Committee formed in Birmingham a Southern committee, in which outstanding liberals and trade unionists in the South are joined together. This uniting

of progressive Southern forces contributed a powerful lever to force the Bourbon reactionaries in their subsequent retreat in the Scottsboro case. It should be further developed into a broad movement for progress against reaction and for full rights for the Negro people.

The Scottsboro victory is not complete. The freedom of the remaining boys must be gained. The Scottsboro Defense Committee, the International Labor Defense, the Communist Party and all other organizations and the millions of supporters of the Scottsboro boys and the Negro people have said clearly and unalterably—*the fight is not ended*. It will never end until all the nine Scottsboro boys are free.

We cannot stop here. Scottsboro is a much broader issue. The Scottsboro fight, the issues around the Scottsboro case and the tremendous lessons learned in this struggle must be made a basis for a fight for all Negro rights. A fight against lynchings, mob violence, and police brutality; for the enactment of a federal anti-lynching law; for the right to vote, serve on juries and enjoy complete civil liberty—these are a part of this great struggle developed around Scottsboro.

The right of Negro youth to equal opportunity in education and in the economic and social life is a part of this struggle. Complete equality for Negro women, their right along with all women to equal pay for equal work, their right to a suitable environment for themselves and their children—an environment which demands adequate housing, good schools and recreational facilities—are all part of the struggle around the Scottsboro case.

The fight for the freedom of the Scottsboro boys must be considered as a campaign to fight for the democratic rights of the Negro people, the safe-guarding and extension of the democratic rights of the people as a whole, and against all forms of vigilantism, discrimination of Negroes, against fascist tendencies everywhere. It must be so organized as to develop the unity of Negro and white in the common struggle against

reaction, for progress, and so as to bring the Negro people unitedly into the People's Front in the United States.

From the *Communist*, September, 1937.

3. C. I. O. CONFERENCE OF NEGRO STEEL WORKERS

With the advent of the C. I. O. movement the organization of Negroes into trade unions has taken on a mass character that will have tremendous possibilities for bringing the Negro into labor's struggles and great significance for the whole Negro population. At the same time a new impetus for equal rights for Negroes in the A. F. of L. has been felt recently as never before. A group of Negro leaders have worked out a program to break down Jim-Crow bars in the railroad unions.

A conference of Negro organizations to support the unionization of the Steel Industry was held on February 6, 1937, at Pittsburgh, Pa. This historic conference served to show the necessity of integrating the problems of Negro labor with those of white labor.

Preliminary steps to organize the steel conference were taken on January 9, 1937, at Pittsburgh, Pa. The aims of the conference were set forth by Henry Johnson, Negro organizer of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee of the C. I. O. In opening the conference he stated:

We have been called here today to discuss the Negroes' status in the steel mills and to formulate ways and means of bringing the Negro workers into the S.W.O.C. and the A.A.A. at a more rapid pace.

It will be necessary to consider the election of a representative committee which could call a wider conference for the purpose of involving all sections of the Negro people in the drive to organize the steel workers.

Mr. Johnson pointed out that of the 450,000 workers engaged in the production of steel, from ninety to a hundred thousand were Negroes, who suffer the usual discrimination in jobs, and who are almost wholly employed at unskilled and semi-skilled types of work, with little possibility for advancement. The bosses have always seen to it that wherever Negroes are engaged in skilled work, their rate of pay is much less than that of white workers doing the same kind of work. He further indicated that the low standard of pay and of working conditions for Negroes, together with the strategy of the steel barons to play Negroes against white and vice versa, are the main issues that cause the intense interest now manifested on the part of both Negro and white steel workers for a successful drive to organize the steel industry.

The movement to organize the Negro workers has a larger significance. One hundred thousand Negro workers battling in the great steel industry to win economic advancement and security for themselves and their families will aid the entire Negro people. It is from this viewpoint that the Organizing Committee was far-sighted in its eagerness to involve all sections of the Negro population in the effort to organize Negro steel workers.

This great upheaval among steel workers, and the role that the C. I. O. is playing today to organize the basic industries of this country, have stirred up a keen desire among large sections of the Negro people to join labor unions.

The Conference attracted not only the steel workers who came directly from the mills and from local unions and lodges, but it brought together some of the outstanding labor and fraternal leaders, ministers and other representatives of the Negro people. Present at the Conference were: A. Philip Randolph, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; T. Arnold Hill, of the National Urban League; Bishop J. W. Wallis of Chicago; Dr. J. C. Austin, Pastor of the Pilgrim Baptist Church; Reverend T. J. King of Pittsburgh; R. L.

Vann, editor of the *Pittsburgh Courier*; Dr. Charles Wesley Burton, Vice President of the Chicago National Negro Congress.

The far-reaching significance of the Conference is indicated by the following program: (1) unionization of the Negro steel workers; (2) special demands of Negroes in steel: equal pay for equal work, no discrimination in hiring and firing, condemnation by the steel union of all Jim-Crow practices.

It considered the fact that the steel magnates have always practiced a deliberate policy of discrimination against the Negro workers, forcing them to perform the most difficult labor, often injurious to life and limb, denying them equal treatment in regard to wages, advancement to better jobs and employment in times of depression.

It recognized the fact that the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee worked in the best interests of the Negro workers, because of its declared policy of organizing an all-embracing union of steel workers to establish the principle of collective bargaining in the steel industry for the purpose of improving economic conditions and securing equal rights for all workers in the industry.

The unity of the Negro and white steel workers is of great importance to any successful effort of the workers to organize and to combat the employers who would lower the standard of living of all workers in the present crucial period of American labor.

AN ECHO FROM THE PAST

In the struggles that took place in 1919, the Negroes had obstacles to overcome in order to join hands with their white fellow workers. In the stockyard strike in Chicago of that period, the bosses made every effort to divide Negro and white workers. They stimulated racial antagonisms. They made efforts to organize a company union of Negroes in order to

prevent them from uniting with white workers. Their paid agent among the Negroes issued the following proclamation:

Get a square deal with your own race.

Time has come for Negroes to say now or never. Get together and stick together is the call of the Negro. Like all other races, make your own way; other races have made their unions for themselves. They are not going to give it to you because you join his union. Make a union of your own race. Join the American Unity Packers Union of the Stockyards. This will give you a card to work at any trade, or as a common laborer, as a steam-fitter, etc. This union does not believe in strikes. We believe all difficulties between labor and capital can be arbitrated. Strikes is our last motive, if any at all.

Get in line for a Job!

(Signed)

American Unity Packers Union of the Stockyards

Negro ministers and other leaders wholeheartedly endorsed this program of the packers, as well as that of the steel barons in 1919. But today in the drive to organize steel, the outstanding leaders of the Negro people have a far-sighted point of view. Today as in 1919, we find important white trade union leaders taking a progressive stand on the organization of Negro workers.

In 1919, the Stockyards Labor Council, led by Jack Johnstone, William Z. Foster and other militant trade union leaders, opposed the agents of the bosses with a program of organization of the Negroes and a guarantee of equal rights. The Stockyards Labor Council carried on a militant struggle in the unions against barring Negroes, and forced the abandonment of all discrimination. This struggle for equal rights culminated during the race riots in Chicago in the adoption of a resolution by the Stockyards Labor Council expelling all who refused to accept Negroes on a basis of equality. And today we have outstanding white labor leaders taking a progressive stand on the need for unionizing Negro and white workers jointly.

At the Pittsburgh Conference on February 6, 1937, Mr.

Philip Murray delivered a great speech on the organization of Negroes into trade unions. He declared the conference to be the most important meeting of its kind since the campaign to organize the steel industry had begun.

He dealt with the program of the C. I. O. as a whole and its significance to the entire labor movement. He spoke of the problems that face Negroes in industry. He showed them what they could expect to gain through unionization, and the necessity of the unity of Negroes and whites in the struggle to raise the standards of the steel workers generally. He spoke of the differential in wages between skilled white workers and Negro workers, wherever Negro workers were employed on skilled jobs. He declared that the S. W. O. C. was out to organize the Negro workers for their own economic advancement, and that this movement had prospects of political emancipation for the Negroes. Mr. Murray's speech and the record of the C. I. O. and S. W. O. C. emphatically answer and challenge certain Negro leaders today who, being on the side of the bosses, try to frighten the Negro workers away from trade union organization and to minimize the advantages of organizing the Negroes into the steel workers union.

For example, a certain Negro newspaper in Birmingham, Alabama, which has obviously been bought up by the Tennessee Coal Iron and R. R. Company steel barons, in a frontal attack on the trade unions, asked the following questions:

(1) Am I responsible to my family, my community and my employer as a father or family head, a citizen and employee, or does my responsibility lie in following the leadership of someone not familiar with or interested in my welfare in either direction? (2) After all is it my duty to follow blindly the leadership of some rank outsider who can have no real interest in my welfare or would I not be a better citizen and a better workman if I continued to have faith in my employer? (3) Have I really a grievance against my employer, or after all hasn't he treated me rather decent? (4) To whom am I most valuable—my employer or my walking union delegate whose responsibility really ends when I join the union and pay my dues? (5) Has

my union organizer ever created one productive job or one cent of wealth or one happy home for those in whose interest he professes to work? (6) Has my union walking delegate really ever done anything for me except to create distrust in every manner? (7) Did I when in need get help from my employer or did the union organizer come to my rescue? (8) Have I ever gained by taking sides against my employer? If so, would I have gained more for myself and family by co-operating with him? (9) Shouldn't I leave voluntarily the employment of a company in which I have no confidence?

Again, as in 1919, we see an effort on the part of certain Negro misleaders to oppose the organization of the Negro steel workers. We must condemn such people.

Opposed to this policy, and representing the sentiment of the great majority of people today, was a resolution proposed verbally by Dr. Charles C. Burton, Vice President of the National Negro Congress, at the close of Mr. Murray's speech, amidst a spontaneous outburst of applause and a standing vote of thanks to Mr. Murray:

With a deep sense of appreciation and gratitude for his statesman-like presentation of the steel organizing drive, clearly setting forth the ideals, purposes and objectives of the Steel Workers' Organizing Committee, we do hereby express our high satisfaction and complete agreement with the program set forth by Mr. Philip Murray, and pledge our unstinted support to the achievement of these objectives.

The Conference set forth the following program:

(1) Immediate setting up of committees in every local community to help the organizers. (2) Organizational mass meetings in all cities to hear reports of the Conference. (3) Use of pulpits, press and radio, to urge all Negro steel workers to join the union. (4) A selected Sunday to be set aside for talks in all churches in support of the steel union. (5) Special activity to recruit young Negro workers into the union.

A resolution was adopted on Women's Activity, which had the aim of involving the wives, mothers, sisters and children of the workers in the steel industry, to co-operate with the local

committee and to help in winning the support of all women's organizations and wide public support for the steel workers' organizations.

The Communist Party wholeheartedly endorsed this move to organize the Negro steel workers, pledged its support and urged all of its sympathizers to help in the organization of the steel industry and especially to bring the Negro workers into the union. The Communist Party sees in these Negro steel workers fine, militant forces.*

Based on a stenogram of a report to the Political Buro of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, February, 1937.

4. THE SOUTHERN NEGRO YOUTH MOVEMENT

Edward Strong, a tall, fine, determined young man, a coming leader of the Negro people, opened his message to the All-Southern Negro Youth Conference at Richmond, Virginia, February 13, 1937, as follows:

We are here to save ourselves and our people. In fact, we are the hope of our people. And we have assembled in the most historic setting—the home of Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry. We have met during the celebration of the birthdays of two former believers in liberty—need we name them?—Frederick Douglass and Abraham Lincoln.

This statement shows a new approach to the problems of work in the South.

*The results show that this Conference played a significant role in the organization of the Negro workers. This was particularly evident in the strike of "Little Steel" in 1937. It was in those communities where there were representatives of the Conference that the Negroes were so important a factor in support of the strike, as in South Chicago, Hammond, Ind., etc. Since the organization of the C. I. O., more than half a million Negroes have been brought into the ranks of organized labor.

The conference was an historic event in the life of the Negro people, and of the whole South. The young delegates came from all sections of the South, representing students, steel workers from Birmingham, sharecroppers—a cross-section of the Negro people.

There were young students from nearly every large university of Negroes in the South, as well as from secondary schools. There were Boy and Girl Scouts. There was representation from churches and the auxiliary organizations of churches. There were fraternal delegates from white youth organizations; the Y.W.C.A. in Richmond sent 25 delegates. The University of Texas was represented by a young Southern white man, fresh from the farm and formerly an organizer of Negro and white sharecroppers in Texas. There were adult fraternal delegates and observers; but the conference was truly a youth conference. The adults applauded the aspirations, the energy and outlook of the young people.

The conference was one of hope and determination. The evils against which these young people came to fight did not deter them, but spurred them on to solve their problems and build a future of happiness for the Negro people.

Dr. Mordecai Johnson, President of Howard University, in his sermon Sunday morning, put it aptly when he said: "I understand that this conference of delegates from colleges, schools, mines, mills, factories and farms has been called to fight against the evils, a part of the structure of the system in which we live, that press down upon the people of the South."

The youth of the South know what they want and they know how to organize themselves. They recognized, in the American Youth Act framed by the National Council of American Youth Congress, an instrument around which they could develop a broad movement in their interests. The American Youth Act, providing a "young-age security," makes real the possibility of opportunity for young people to go to school and to work.

There are many other features of the American Youth Act that could be of assistance to all the youth of America.

In the South even more than in any other section of the country, the students are representative of and have close contact with the problems of toiling youth—sharecroppers and mill-workers. Let me make this clear, by mentioning an incident which occurred at the Richmond conference.

At one of the round table discussions a young man rose to speak. He introduced himself as a student of a Southern university. The Chairman said: "We have had enough students speaking. We would like to have a sharecropper speak"; to which the young man replied: "I am a student; I am a sharecropper; I came from a sharecropping region. I also can speak from experience of the conditions of my fellow-sharecroppers."

Farm tenancy is eating into the vitals of the farming population of the South, destroying the existence of a nation of people—the Negro people. The die-hards who will not touch this question, and the Roosevelt committee which proposes to solve farm tenancy by means that "will hurt nobody," is face to face with a new aggressive movement of young people, both black and white, united in the search for a speedy solution for the crisis that faces Southern tenant farmers. The farm crisis in the South can only be solved by "hurting somebody." Feudal remnants will have to be uprooted; the land will have to be divided among the farm population.

One of the most dramatic speeches given at the Sunday evening session of the Conference was the greeting of a young Negro woman sharecropper. She described how sharecroppers work for 35 cents a week, the inadequate schooling given the sharecroppers, the lack of clothes and food, and concluded: "We are here to stand together with all the other young people to fight for a better day for our people!"

There was no effort on the part of anyone to confuse this Conference by raising the Red scare. As Reverend G. C. Scott declared:

They (these young people) have studied carefully the social, economic and religious trends of the age and have come to believe that all is not well. Most of these young people are members of the Protestant church with a few Catholics, Communists and even atheist delegates among them. They are not interested primarily in denominations or political affiliations, or who the president of the nation is, but what is his attitude towards the things in which they believe. Thus they have bound themselves there together, Protestants and Catholics and Communists and Atheists and what-not to wage battle against a common enemy.

Angelo Herndon was an outstanding figure at the Conference. He is loved by the youth, black and white, because in himself he symbolizes the idealism, the courage and the struggles of the young people. Angelo Herndon was cheered when he stated: "Out of this new spirit, out of this new movement, will come abolition of conditions that are forced on us as a minority group—the new movement with all the barbarism and cruelty of this system removed from America."

A program was put forth to secure jobs, more employment and better conditions for Negro youth; jobs in the existing industries, steel, textiles; equal pay for equal work, and the right to work anywhere; for better conditions for domestics, who constitute the largest proportion of the gainfully employed Negro people in the South and who receive on the average \$2.50 a week for unlimited hours of work; support to unions that establish a decent wage standard, and decent hours of work. The Conference endorsed the general movement for the unionization of industrial workers; the organization of Negroes in the steel mills; the right of Negroes to join textile unions.

The Conference was alert to the question of the cultural advancement of the Negro people. This was evidenced not only by the program for better opportunities for Negroes in higher education, but by the enthusiastic applause of the whole assembly to a recitation of a group of poems by nineteen-year-old William Davis, a talented young man of Chicago. It was seen also in that part of Edward Strong's speech in which he said:

We have come, first of all, seeking the right to creative labor, to be gainfully employed, with equal pay and employment opportunity—economic security. Amongst us are those who would be artists or writers; those who would enter the professions or a literary field—for them we want cultural opportunities.

The Negro youth of the South realizes that he is coming to manhood without the right to vote. A ringing and stirring document, "The Proclamation of Southern Negro Youth," stated in part:

We, Negro youth of the South, know that ours is the duty to keep alive the traditions of freedom and democracy. We know that ours must be a ceaseless task, to win the status of citizenship for the Negro people. From Douglass and Lincoln our hands receive the torch of freedom, and we shall hold it high!

The proclamation was a charter of rights for Negro youth.

An unusually interesting discussion took place on "The Role of the Negro Church in Solving the Economic Problems of Negro Youth." Young Negro divinity students were most critical of the attitude of the church on the economic and social problems of the youth. They demanded in no uncertain terms that the church and its ministers change their attitude on these problems. At the same time, a young sharecropper showed the positive, practical role that the church could play in the advancement of the interests of the young toilers.

One of the most interesting contributions was made by a young Southern white man, organizer of the Sharecroppers' Union in Texas. He pointed out that in the small communities in the deep rural sections of the state, most of the churches made it possible for the sharecroppers to hold meetings of the union and mass meetings to inform the people in general of the problems of the sharecroppers.

A militant speech was made by Dr. Charles Burton, president of the Chicago Council of the National Negro Congress, and regional director for Illinois and Indiana. He stated that

if the church is to perform any real helpful service to the Negro masses it must in every section of the country use its influence to help organize steel workers into the steel union.

Adult speakers made invaluable contributions on the problems of young people. Dr. Max Yergan, Y.M.C.A. secretary for South African work, spoke on the people of Africa. He showed that the problems of Negroes wherever they are in contact with a decaying and dying system of capitalism are similar. He stated that "a large part of the world is not away from poverty, dominated by a small group of exploiters, nor away from an imperialism that takes a nation's tools and means of livelihood, and uses labor without compensation, and destroys the culture of a people."

Another outstanding contribution was made by Dr. Mordecai Johnson. "You young people are here to find means to eliminate the evils that face you," he said. "This is a sound and admirable undertaking." He told them that they "must make a critical evaluation of the world and be devoted to that conviction."

But—he continued—success in your cause depends on the degree to which you can deliver yourself from the hypnotic influence of the world.

Every civilization tries to perpetuate itself by developing a hypnotic spell over the people to accept all the evils of that civilization. But you must revolt against this subtle influence.

That influence says—"You are in this situation because you deserve no better. You ought to suffer. This civilization is not the worst. Things have been worse." This is the means by which civilizations in the past have been able to make people accept the evils of that civilization.

And young people must avoid this pitfall. "Every generation has improved the system which it succeeded," Dr. Johnson said. "The Roman empire was destroyed by her own inner corruption. Barbarians came in and kicked out the Romans, because the early reformers had no strike technique, had no political

organization, had no idea that they themselves must make the change."

Dr. Johnson also pointed out that the problem that faces the young Negro of the South is not theirs alone. He said that in Richmond today, not only Negroes are suffering, but the majority of the population is in misery.

The old slaveholders drove the best sections of the white workers off the land into the mountain regions and impoverished the lowlands by hundreds of years of slavery. But a new kind of South is rising. Because that kind of suffering is not necessary in a land of plenty, of abundant resources. It must be changed. There is enough machinery to supply everybody with plenty.

In referring briefly to the political situation, Dr. Johnson said: "The greatest danger to democracy is not Communism or Socialism but first of all Fascism. A danger not only to black but to white men."

Thus the Southern Negro Youth conference created friends of the movement for unity of white and black, that reaches into the farthest corners of the South, to the widest reaches of the social and political life of the country.*

Based on a stenogram of a report to the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, February, 1937.

* The Southern Negro Youth Conference led to a number of important achievements. It aided in the organization of the tobacco workers in Richmond and vicinity. It helped in building the Negro community theater there. It was followed by the Second Negro Youth Conference at Chattanooga, April 1-3, 1938, which laid the basis for a further development of the progressive movement among the Negro people in the deep South. It has aroused a consciousness of the need for greater participation in progressive activity and in exercising the rights of citizenship of the Negro youth. Thus it has paved the way for their progressive organization and for the collaboration of the Southern people, both Negro and white, in solving their common problems.

5. MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN HARLEM

The 1937 municipal election in New York City was a valuable lesson in the struggle against reaction and the process of uniting the Negro people in the Democratic Front. Who could doubt that if Tammany had won, New York would be reeking with attacks against the trade union organizations, while a corrupt boss-controlled City Council would be carrying through reactionary measures against the interests of the people?

Who could have conceived, in a Harlem completely controlled by Tammany, of a situation the like of which has never been seen in the city or state: a Legislative Conference called by a group of Harlem New York State Assemblymen, a conference in which the people of all Harlem Assembly Districts participated through representatives of varied organizations and political affiliations.

As Vito Marcantonio, progressive leader in the 20th Congressional District and prime mover of the Harlem Legislative Conference, said on closing the second session:

This conference is the greatest thing that has ever happened in the city or state. We shall have all of the prominent state and city officials appearing before us to listen to the demands of the people. This is a people's movement.

This conference came as a result of the city-wide progressive victory in the November elections, but particularly the election of the Honorable Oscar Garcia Rivera, Puerto Rican, by a combination of political groups and forces—the American Labor Party, the Fusion Party, the Republican Party, Puerto Rican Independent Democrats and the Communist Party—on a progressive labor and people's platform.

The Harlem Legislative Conference also results from a growing understanding of the problems of the people and the united

action of some prominent Harlem Assemblymen: Mr. Robert Justice, Negro Democrat of the 19th Assembly District, and Mr. Walter Fitzgerald, progressive, Irish-Catholic Assemblyman of the 18th A. D., and Mr. William T. Andrews, Negro Democrat of the 21st Assembly District.

A legislative program on the following issues was worked out at the conference: relief; the right of labor to organize and bargain collectively; the protection of civil liberties; more and better hospitalization, schools, parks and playgrounds; decent houses and the elimination of slums and firetraps; the wiping out of discrimination against Negroes and other un-American practices; and the issues of peace and democracy.

The municipal elections were fought under the slogans of "Peace and Democracy" and "Defeat Reaction," advanced in the beginning of the campaign. The people delivered a shattering blow to Tammany Hall. This victory for progress and democracy has further consolidated the Democratic Front movement. Consequently, this election placed its imprint upon political currents nationally. The coalition of progressive forces around the American Labor Party broke through a ring of corruption which had hamstrung the people and the political life of New York for scores of years. What seemed to be an unconquerable Tammany Hall was almost crushed. This has given strength to the forces of progress, and is convincing thousands of workers and many sections of the population that the policy of the Communist Party for progress and peace is correct.

The Negro people moved forward to secure justice for themselves and to help advance the fight for the preservation of democracy. In all Harlem areas, the many varied national groups living in close proximity are merging their political power in a progressive movement without which no effective defense of their common interests can be made. Here is a profound lesson of the Democratic Front: it is a historic step to unify in common struggle the various national groups. Every Assembly

District in Harlem, with its respective concentration of Negro, Italian, Puerto Rican and Irish population, voted substantial pluralities for the labor and progressive ticket headed by Mayor LaGuardia. The results are especially significant in view of the following:

(1) Tammany Hall waged a desperate campaign in these districts. It poured in thousands of dollars. The Tammany candidate spoke frequently in Harlem, particularly in the final ten days of the campaign.

(2) All of the Harlem and Washington Heights districts have been Tammany strongholds for many years, consistently returning Tammany assemblymen to Albany and defeating with relative ease every anti-Tammany challenge for power within the Democratic organization. In 1933, LaGuardia, then the candidate of the Republican-Fusion Parties, lost the 17th Assembly District, mainly Puerto Rican, the 19th Assembly District, solidly Negro, the 22nd Assembly District, mainly Irish with many Negroes in the lower section. These districts are under the leadership of one of the most powerful and unscrupulous figures in Tammany Hall, namely Jimmy Hines who, with Flynn of the Bronx and Kelly of Brooklyn, sponsored the candidacy of Mahoney and carried through the defeat of Copeland in the primaries.

(3) An important factor was the position taken by the *Amsterdam News*. This influential Negro newspaper of Harlem and the metropolitan area supported Tammany candidates. It labeled LaGuardia a dictator; it denounced him as an irresponsible politician who opposed the enfranchisement of the Negro and followed a conscious policy of discrimination. Above all, it tried to give the impression that Mahoney was identified with President Roosevelt and the New Deal. This demagogic argument was calculated to win for Mahoney the support of the Negro people who in 1936 departed from traditional support of the Republican Party to give Roosevelt a 4-to-1 majority in Harlem. As a matter of fact, in the Democratic primaries,

Mahoney won the 21st A. D. and lost the 19th A. D. by only 26 votes, notwithstanding the fact that Perry and Bruce, white and Negro Tammany chieftains respectively, officially supported Copeland, precisely because Mahoney was generally considered a New Deal Progressive.

(4) In the 18th A. D. (East Harlem) center of Italian political life in New York City, the fascist organizations which dominate the community campaigned actively against LaGuardia. Copeland in the primaries received his largest plurality in this district—10 to 1. The fascists are not completely united, it is true. One section operates within the Republican Party and even flirts with LaGuardia. The strongest group, however, led by Generoso Pope, editor of *Il Progresso*, chief agent of Mussolini in America, and the Circolo Mario Morgantini (largest fascist club in New York) was bitterly opposed to LaGuardia's re-election.

(5) In the 17th A. D., as in the other Harlem districts, the Tammany organization made considerable capital out of the failure of the city administration to provide substantial benefits to the community. Some concessions were granted in Upper and East Harlem, all too meager, it is true; but practically nothing had been done for the destitute Puerto Rican, Negro and other sections of the population of the 17th Assembly District.

(6) Finally, the progressive forces, particularly the American Labor Party, were poorly organized, with the exception of the 17th and 18th Assembly Districts.

THE MAYORALTY RETURNS

In the seven assembly districts, LaGuardia received 62 per cent of the total vote, the same proportion as for the city as a whole.

It is significant to note that the highest proportionate plurality for LaGuardia was won in the 19th and 21st Assembly Dis-

tricts, the districts comprising solid Negro constituencies. These districts gave LaGuardia a majority of more than 2 to 1, in spite of every effort by Tammany to keep them in line. In 1936 the Negro people broke one tradition to support the struggle of the forces of progress against reaction; and in 1937 they broke another, by not turning back to Republicanism but continuing on the same path that inevitably leads to Negro and white unity in the Democratic Front movement of America.

Between the 1933 and the recent elections, the greatest shift of votes occurred in the 17th A. D. (47 per cent Negro vote) and the previously mentioned Negro districts, the 19th and 21st A. D.'s. The average increase of the vote for LaGuardia in these latter districts was 33 per cent as against the average of 17 per cent for the 18th, 20th, 22nd and 23rd districts and ten per cent higher than the city average of 23 per cent.

AMERICAN LABOR PARTY

The American Labor Party played a conspicuous role in the campaign, particularly in the 17th and 18th Assembly Districts, and in the 23rd A. D. (Washington Heights, the largest A. D. in the county). In New York City the A. L. P. vote for LaGuardia was 36 per cent of his total vote; in New York County, 30 per cent; in Harlem 32 per cent.

In the East Side districts of the 17th A. D. (Puerto Rican neighborhood) and in the election districts in the 18th A. D. North (Italian), the A. L. P. vote was considerably higher than the average for the district as a whole, and even exceeded the Republican vote.

The A. L. P. vote in the 17th A. D. was 40 per cent of the total; in the 18th, 44 per cent. The average A. L. P. vote for the remaining four districts, the 19th, 20th, 21st and 22nd, was 28 per cent.

In the 17th and 18th A. D. the A. L. P. established a strong basis when it absorbed the All-People's Party, in January 1937.

With Vito Marcantonio as the Congressional leader of the A. L. P., an active and energetic campaign was conducted in both districts, with the excellent results noted above.

The figures of the increase of the A. L. P. vote in 1935 and 1936 throw additional light on the progressive developments in Harlem. Listing them by Assembly Districts, we have:

	<i>1936</i>	<i>1937</i>
17th	1,343	4,514
18th	1,377	6,357
19th	781	3,148
20th	656	2,800
21st	1,075	4,439
22nd	1,378	4,512
23rd	3,980	11,358
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	11,590	37,128

(These figures do not include the vote for the All-People's Party)

The increase in the A. L. P. strength even in the 19th, 20th and 21st and 22nd A. D.'s, notwithstanding the weaknesses of the local organizations, is an indication of the tremendous possibilities that exist for building a powerful Democratic Front in Harlem.

In 1936, the A. L. P. vote in Harlem constituted but 4 per cent of the total vote. In the city the A. L. P. vote was about 10 per cent. In the current elections, the A. L. P. vote in Harlem rose to 20 per cent, practically equaling that for the city as a whole. Thus, Harlem is catching up with the progressive movement of New York as a whole.

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

In the assembly elections in Harlem, a victory of real significance was won in the election of Oscar Garcia Rivera, in the 17th A. D. Rivera was the candidate of the American Labor

Party and the Fusion Party. He was endorsed by the Communist Party, the City Progressive Party and the Puerto Rican Independent Democrats, as well as by a score of trade unions and local organizations. A united front committee was officially organized and consisted of delegates from each of the groups, including the Communist Party, to carry on the campaign and co-ordinate all activity.

The 17th A. D. has been a strong Tammany district for years. Solomon and Greenberg, who share the leadership of the local Democratic organizations, have ruled the district with an iron hand, contemptuous of the Negro and Puerto Rican constituency. They skillfully played one group against the other, in order to defeat any progressive opposition within the Democratic Party. Neither group ever had an effective voice in making policy in the organization, or ever took up the burning issues in a community where unemployment, high rents, bad housing and general destitution affect the great majority of the population.

It soon became quite clear that the center for fighting for progressive politics in the 17th A. D. was the American Labor Party, headed by Vito Marcantonio. Here was an organization that combined considerable practical experience with the issues of a Democratic Front character; with three clubs in the territory it attracted many former Democrats and Republicans who believed in a progressive policy. The people of Lower Harlem, overwhelmingly sympathetic to the Spanish Loyalists and its People's Front government, know what reaction and fascism mean. They have learned how to fight this menace on their own ground and with the same general policy: Unite all friends and supporters of democracy! Isolate the Tammany forces! Unite for victory!

These slogans were realized in a whirlwind campaign that rocked Tammany. Garcia Rivera spoke to all kinds of organizations, at great mass meetings, over the radio, on the streets. The

A. L. P. canvassed the election districts. A concentrated campaign was organized to win the West Side vote of the Negroes.

Rivera obtained the endorsement of Reverend John H. Johnson, pastor of St. Martin's Church, himself a candidate of the Seabury Committee for City Council and a very popular Negro leader in Harlem. Rivera spoke at Johnson's rally in the Mount Olivet Church, attended by 1,500 people, 90 per cent Negro, a majority of whom lived in the 17th A. D. A list of Negro leaders, including Reverend Shelton Hale Bishop, Reverend Dr. John W. Robinson and James W. Ford, signed an endorsement which was widely publicized in the form of a leaflet. Mr. Rivera attended one of the sessions of the National Negro Congress at Philadelphia; he endorsed the Harlem Scottsboro Conference, and in other ways advanced and popularized a program of Negro-Puerto Rican unity.

The crisis of the Democratic Party deepened as the campaign developed. Three Puerto Rican leaders in the Wichita Club, one a member of the County Committee, signed a statement accusing the Democratic Party of a consistent, deliberate policy of racial discrimination, and ended by endorsing Rivera. Many other Democrats who in 1936 supported Lanzetta came over to support Rivera. It became necessary, however, to reject endorsements of certain Democrats, who were anxious to get on the bandwagon because of their previous unscrupulous connections. Attempts were made to associate Meyer Alterman, the Democratic incumbent, with the progressives and the labor movement. "Didn't he vote for the child labor amendment?" The *New York Post* advanced this argument, and in an editorial even urged the A. L. P. not to oppose Alterman. At a meeting at Park Palace, Marcantonio blasted these arguments.

ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The Lower Harlem Section of the Communist Party played a decisive political and organizational role in the victory of the

united front candidate, Rivera. The united front was originally organized at the initiative of the Communist Party. The withdrawal of the candidacy of Jose Santiago, Secretary of the Lower Harlem Section of the Communist Party, stimulated and advanced the movement for unity. In 1936 Santiago received over two thousand votes as the Communist Party conducted the most aggressive independent campaign of all the affiliated groups.

The mass meeting on October 26, with Earl Browder as main speaker and with Rivera and the Reverend John H. Johnson as additional speakers, attracted an audience of over fifteen hundred people. The Communist Party parade on the eve of the election included about a thousand marchers. The Party is proud of the fact that it participated in the negotiations leading to the endorsement of Johnson and the other Negro leaders, and many of our Party members were active in the day-to-day work of the campaign among the Negro population on the West Side. Rivera on several occasions remarked that the Communists were a vital part of the united front, since theirs was the only Party that could win the support and vote of the Negro people.

Above all, the Communist Party helped to smooth out the many conflicts that continually arose within the committee, and succeeded in defeating all factional maneuvers of enemy groups and individuals that tried to paralyze the campaign within the committee itself. This was no easy task. Republicans (including many elements hostile to Marcantonio in 1936) A. L. P.'ers and Independent Democrats make an uneasy combination. It took the greatest patience and skill of the Party to solve all conflicts. At first a proposal was made by authoritative leaders in the campaign to dissociate Rivera from the Republican Party and identify him with the A. L. P. alone. This the Communist Party opposed. This supposedly "pure" tactic would have ensured the victory of Tammany and the defeat of the progressive movement. The argument was then advanced that the committee

should not co-operate with any of the Democratic groups. This was also a mistake, since it underestimated the possibilities of the Puerto Rican front attracting the support of rank-and-file Democrats and since it took no cognizance of the actual disintegration of the Democratic Party itself. Certainly, there were dangers. Some of the Democrats paid lip-service to Rivera in order to demoralize the campaign for LaGuardia.

The election of Garcia Rivera was a great victory because it advanced the Democratic Front generally in Harlem; because it defeated Tammany in one of its strongest districts, the 17th A. D.; because it created a healthy base for Negro and Puerto Rican unity; and because the people of the district have at last a genuine progressive representative in Albany who will fight for the program of the A. L. P.

Another victory for progress was won in the 20th A. D. with the election of the Republican-A. L. P.-Fusion candidate, Walter Fitzgerald. His Democratic opponent, Michael J. Keenan, the incumbent in office, had voted a consistent "No" on the good bills and "Yes" on the bad bills during the last session in Albany. Fitzgerald's victory came as a welcome surprise. The 20th A. D. was regarded as a safe Tammany district. The coalition that elected him was not the clear-cut progressive movement that was organized in the 17th A. D. But Fitzgerald is not a reactionary Republican. He and the local Republican organization are allies of Vito Marcantonio. During the Republican primaries, an attempt was made by a leader of the Circolo Mario Morgantino, Del Bano, to win the leadership on a fascist program. Fitzgerald and Duggan (local Republican leader) defeated Del Bano on an anti-fascist program, even though hesitatingly and unclearly formulated.

In the assembly elections of the 19th A. D., Robert W. Justice, Tammany candidate, was barely victorious over Ira Kemp (Republican-Fusion nominee); Benjamin McLaurin, A. L. P. candidate, ran third. The campaign of B. F. McLaurin, an organizer of the most popular union of Negro

workers, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, was not sufficiently developed nor utilized.

In the 21st A. D., William T. Andrews, Democrat, was re-elected. Andrews has a good record. On several occasions he has indicated strong progressive convictions and a favorable attitude toward the A. L. P. program. His candidacy was not opposed by the A. L. P. The Communist Party in the 21st A. D. withdrew its own candidate even though the necessary number of signatures was collected to qualify him. Andrews is, with all the limitations that flow from his connections, nevertheless responsive to the needs of the people, and a force for progress.

The governing body of the city of New York contains not a single Negro representative. All five Negro candidates, including Reverend John H. Johnson, candidate of the Citizens Non-Partisan Committee, were defeated. This is a most serious matter which concerns the entire progressive movement in the city, above all the American Labor Party. The City Council represents a genuine step forward in the democratization of city government. Under the old system Harlem elected two Negro representatives to the Board of Aldermen. The system of borough-wide elections necessitates a conscious support of progressive Negro candidates by the progressive groups, if Negro representation is to be assured.

The A. L. P. did little or nothing to popularize the candidacy of Reverend John H. Johnson. True, it endorsed Johnson, together with a number of other progressives, but this was at the close of the campaign; and even then it did not act to promote his candidacy throughout the borough and impress upon its supporters the importance of electing a Negro to the Council. It remained for the Communist Party to take the most decisive action in support of Dr. Johnson. Tens of thousands of leaflets were issued throughout the borough by the Communist Party, urging the voters to support Johnson. Our whole campaign apparatus in the county contributed considerably.

The American Labor Party will not be built into a party of

power in New York without the active participation and support of the Negro people. An indifferent attitude toward the question of Negro representation in city government will fundamentally weaken the A. L. P. Johnson could have been elected if the A. L. P. and the progressives had taken the position of the Communist Party. It is imperative in the near future for the American Labor Party to study the whole problem of the Negro people, in order to avoid the opportunist errors in the development of the organization.

The Communist Party on the whole conducted a vigorous campaign in Harlem. But many mistakes were made. Many tasks were left undone during the feverish months of September and October. One outstanding weakness was the generally poor campaign for the Communist candidate for City Council, I. Amter. Our independent campaign in behalf of the progressive ticket did not sufficiently popularize Comrade Amter's candidacy and, through this campaign, feature the whole program of the Party, including the fight for socialism. This was true even in the 17th A. D., where our campaign forces were best organized. The opportunity was especially favorable in Harlem, where the vanguard role of the Party has been in other ways so clearly demonstrated to the masses.

Another outstanding weakness was the failure sufficiently to concentrate in the 19th A. D., the key Negro district of Harlem. The campaign of the A. L. P. was poorly organized. This was our fault, in the main. It is true the county and the state leadership of the A. L. P. failed to take an active interest in the affairs of the organization of Harlem. The Negro question was completely ignored in the state platform. This attitude was heightened by the general feeling in the LaGuardia camp that no active campaign was necessary to win the Negro vote, that it was inconsequential anyway, and if the *Amsterdam News* called LaGuardia a dictator and spoke for Mahoney, it reached only a small group of people and hence didn't matter!

In addition to these general shortcomings of the A. L. P. it-

self, the Communist Party failed to take all possible steps to build the organization in Harlem. We failed to co-ordinate and bring together in one united campaign the scattered progressive groups that supported the LaGuardia ticket independently. Little or nothing was done to enlist the support of the growing trade union movement in Harlem, particularly the unions affiliated to the Negro Labor Committee. The Negro Labor Committee itself also shares in the failure to develop a campaign for the candidacy of B. F. McLaurin, an ideal candidate and a splendid labor man. If the A. L. P. is to be built in Harlem, if the progressive forces are to be organized around labor, if labor racketeers and fakers are to be defeated, then the Harlem Negro Labor Committee must come out of its present lethargy and organize the unorganized and become an active force in the community.

Notwithstanding many weaknesses, the Communist Party in Harlem accomplished a great deal. Many important lessons were learned. Even our Washington Heights section and the new East Harlem section, with a small membership, impressed the local groups in their districts with the energy and effectiveness of their work. The Party is definitely recognized as an important factor, not only for its propaganda, but for its ability to organize a campaign and get the votes. The Communist Party is recognized as part of the progressive movement. This fact was effectively driven home during the campaign in Harlem.

From the *Communist*, February, 1938.

American Traditions

1. JOHN BROWN MARCHES ON

MORE than three-quarters of a century ago there appeared upon the American scene a great initiator of human freedom—the giant, immortal figure of John Brown.

While he was alive, John Brown was looked upon as a “crazy man.” He was executed as a criminal. But not long afterwards the forces of progress in the country were marching to the tune of “John Brown’s Body.” Why was this so? John Brown saw, as the most important task of democracy and as a means of preserving the Constitution, that the bane, the curse and the evil of human bondage—which had been grafted on the economic and social system of the country by a Southern landowning oligarchy—must be abolished. This oligarchy had inscribed upon the banner of democracy the institution of slavery. In the crisis of his day John Brown would not be side-tracked from his purpose. He refused to be turned away by the heckling and attacks of reactionaries, from attempting to deliver this country from an abominable scourge.

Against this thralldom John Brown was moved to action by those great principles of freedom and liberty which had been promulgated and fought for by the immortal figures of early American history who had preceded him.

John Brown boldly faced the Dred Scott Decision of infamous memory. He fought the essence of that decision, whereby an attempt was made to set up the Supreme Court not

only as the arbiter of the fate of four million Negro slaves, but as the dictator of the destinies of the American people as a whole. The will and determination of John Brown would not accept this autocratic usurpation. The Dred Scott Decision led to four years of Civil War.

The course of the great Emancipator, Abraham Lincoln, taken under the compulsion of history, was anticipated with far-seeing eyes by the immortal John Brown and the Abolitionists. John Brown did not merely acknowledge slavery as bad. He did not shrink from the ultimate, logical inference of the struggle against slavery. He was not afraid of the conclusion which was particularly dangerous to the slave-holders—armed force to abolish slavery.

John Brown saw the central issue of his time. He knew that only the liberation of the Negroes could provide a basis for substantial freedom of white labor. He saw that the slave system had to be crushed, that the slave-owner's property had to be confiscated, that the Negroes had to take up arms to fight for their freedom. John Brown never altered his course or compromised his aims. That is the greatness of John Brown.

He knew that, as the eighteenth-century War of Independence had sounded the death knell of British autocracy, the nineteenth century would have its complement—the destruction of slavery. The Civil War proved that the preservation of democracy and the Union could be attained only with the destruction of slavery, that the Supreme Court must be curbed or Dred Scott Decisions would sweep the land.

This unequalled initiative, this profound understanding explains why, though maligned and tormented, blackened and sneered at as a mad man, the greatness of John Brown looms larger as the years go by, and he emerges as an immortal figure. These are the reasons also why, shortly after he was executed as a criminal, the forces of progress of his day marched to the tune of "John Brown's Body."

Conclusions from the life and times of John Brown must be

drawn for our own time. Our country is in a national crisis—democracy is threatened by the reactionaries, in and around the Liberty League. The position of the Negro people is desperate; we were not completely liberated by the Civil War.

There has been no case in history where progress was advanced and completed at one bound. But three-quarters of a century after the abolition of slavery, the Negro people in the United States remain, in general, in conditions of semi-slavery. We are downtrodden, poverty-stricken and disfranchised. We are lynched and framed-up for demanding our rights. We are kept unlettered. We are the butt of all manner of insults. Negro women are mistreated and scorned; our children are degraded. We are denied equal opportunities in the civil and public life of the country; our liberties and rights, guaranteed by the Constitution are curtailed. Moreover, the culture of the Negro people is abused, and efforts for advancement in these fields are held back. The Angelo Herndon and Scottsboro cases are the Dred Scott cases of our day.

We are discriminated against in the trade unions and not allowed full and equal rights in the labor movement. We have been dubbed "scabs" and non-union men. The unions most guilty of the crime of Jim-Crow are the railroad craft organizations—or more properly, their leaders—both in the A. F. of L. railroad unions and the independent railroad unions.

We face also the crisis of world war. The forces of reaction not only threaten to curtail the liberties of the colored people, but they endanger democracy wherever it exists in the world. The times require men and women of vision and of action—vision to see the value of united action as a mighty weapon in our hands to fight against fascism and reaction, against oppression and national injustices—men and women who see that joint action hastens the day of final liberation.

The open intervention of fascism in Ethiopia, in Spain, in China, and the threat of reaction to labor and progress in our country requires a joint policy, on the part of the Negro

people, with all of the forces of progress in our country and in the world. Anyone who opposes these interests of our people, who goes against the crying demand for unity and united action, not only betrays the Negro people but hinders all progress in our country.

The Negro people have everything to gain from victory of the progressive forces over fascism and reaction. Our best friends are the white workers, and the progressive middle classes. The white workers will win better conditions by fighting for their colored brothers. John Brown symbolized the unity of Negro and white people.

The times call for new John Browns, Abraham Lincolns, Frederick Douglasses, Sojourner Truths and modern Abolitionists. Our people are not lacking in modern figures of this type. Thousands of Angelo Herndons are coming forward. There are John Browns and many Douglasses. The fighters for Twentieth Century Americanism are growing throughout the land.

Every era produces outstanding figures and great movements. Every people in the crisis of their existence produce their means of advancement and liberation. We are marching forward with the collaboration of outstanding men and women of the many and varied organizations of the Negro people. We are marching forward with the support of our sympathizers among white workers, intellectuals and middle classes.

Speech at the National Negro Congress, Philadelphia, October 17, 1937.

2. THREE HEROES OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY: WASHINGTON, LINCOLN, DOUGLASS

In the month of February we celebrate the birthdays of three great heroes of American democracy, George Washington,

Abraham Lincoln and the great Negro Abolitionist, Frederick Douglass. Each in his own way was an outstanding fighter for freedom and liberty. These heroes of our country represent that which is best in the continuous battle for security and freedom which all strata of the American people have waged from the days when the first settlers landed at Jamestown and at Plymouth Rock.

The American Communist Party is proud to honor the memory of these three heroes of our country. We are proud that the men most honored in our country were revolutionists, that our country has a fighting tradition. As the revolutionary party of socialism, our Party honors everything that has been progressive in the past and, in so doing, strives to learn from past battles in order that we may more effectively continue the struggle for security, democracy and peace today. Because we have inherited the revolutionary mantle of these men, we feel that it is our Party which truly pays them homage. Today forces are at work to undermine the Republic which Washington, Lincoln and Douglass fought to establish and extend. It is especially fitting, therefore, that we should take note of how they met the attacks of the vicious forces of their time.

The danger of fascism which now threatens our liberty, our democracy and our peace is a danger brought about by the Tories inside the country and by the fascists from abroad. The movement to stave off this danger is world-wide in scope. The struggles led by Washington, Lincoln and Douglass were not isolated struggles confined to our country alone. These men were world figures in every sense of the word.

The American Revolution was a part of the world-wide struggle of a rising bourgeoisie to free itself from feudalism and absolutism. Vast numbers of heroes from old Europe came to our country to fight in Washington's army. They realized that this was a war in behalf of the liberty of all mankind. Baron von Steuben helped to organize discipline in the people's army led by Washington. Similar aid was given by Kosciusko, Pulaski,

Lafayette and many more. On the walls of William and Mary College of Virginia there stand today marble tablets honoring the memory of scores of French heroes who died near Yorkville. After the Revolution, large numbers of the survivors returned to Europe, to which they carried the spark of American republicanism. Today, our American boys who are fighting in the trenches of Spain, in the Washington-Lincoln Brigade, are repaying the debt we owe these Europe revolutionists.

In spite of his "Farewell Address," Washington was not an isolationist. He took full advantage of the contradictions among foreign monarchies. He did not hesitate to utilize the alliance with the French monarchy which helped to overthrow the grip of the British monarchy on America. This alliance, in actuality, helped weaken French absolutism. In the words of Thomas Paine, "the principles of America opened the Bastille." In recognition of this fact Lafayette, in behalf of the French masses, sent the key of the fallen Bastille to Washington. This key today is to be found in Mt. Vernon—a symbol of the tie between revolutionary America and revolutionary France.

Before the Revolution, the entire American people were being impoverished by British absolutism. Wealth was constantly being drained out of America into the coffers of British merchants, and the development of American trade and industry were being hampered by the Navigation Acts, laws against westward expansion, taxation without representation and similar oppressive measures. All pretenses of civil liberty were denied. The revolutionary pathway became the only course, if the people were to obtain a semblance of security and prosperity.

The army led by Washington was a true people's army, embracing every section of the population. The farmers, the artisans and mechanics, the Negro freedmen, and—just as in Spain and China today—the women all fought for the independence of their country. Is it not true that Crispus Attucks, a Negro, was the first man to fall in the struggle for our independence? The women were extremely active in writing

pamphlets, managing home affairs, carrying out boycotts and in helping their menfolk to fight. These fighting women dealt in no gentle manner with the traitorous Tories who fell into their hands.

Those who are surprised today at the remnants of internal Trotskyist-fascist enemies in the Soviet Union, should read of the struggles that we had with our internal foes during the many years after our Revolution; and of the sabotage and monarchial plots in high places in our government, as indicated by the ambitious treason of Aaron Burr with the connivance of other leading members of the government. We should take lessons from Soviet Russia today in her struggle against internal enemies of democracy and the progress of the country.

As leader of a people's army, aided by its "international brigades," Washington was loved and revered by the entire people. Those who cannot comprehend the love of the Soviet people for their great leader Stalin, should recall this love of the American people for Washington. After the adoption of the Constitution, Washington was unanimously elected President. If there could be almost universal devotion, in a country where classes had not been abolished, for Washington, who was a landlord, who had not led a movement to end all class rule and oppression, but who had led his country to independence—who can be surprised at the universal love in the Soviet Union for Stalin, who has successfully led his people to abolish all exploitation of man by man?

Washington was a wealthy landlord and the owner of slaves (by the fact of the circumstances of his surroundings); yet he was a revolutionist in his day. He advocated the abolition of slavery and in his will provided for the emancipation of his slaves. The class he represented was progressive because it was destroying the shackles of feudalism. Washington was the leader of the all-American united front against British absolutism.

The next major point on the order of the day in American

history was the destruction of the power of the slaveholders. In the revolutionary movement to destroy their power, capitalism was the driving force. Today, capitalism is in its turn no longer progressive, but is seeking to preserve itself through fascism. The task now confronting us is to destroy fascism and, by this means, to destroy the power of the big capitalists.

Abraham Lincoln was the leader of the American people in the second most decisive conflict in our history. Lincoln led the fight for national unity, for the preservation of the Republic.

Victory in this battle required the crushing of the rebellion of the slave oligarchy, which sought not merely to secede, but to reorganize virtually the entire union on the basis of slave labor. To crush successfully this rebellion which, in the words of Marx, "for the first time in history dared to inscribe slavery on the banner of armed revolt," required the destruction of the slave system. In this conflict, Frederick Douglass consistently pointed to the necessary revolutionary course of achieving national unity and the preservation of democracy, namely, the emancipation of his people from slavery and the arming of the Negro people for a decisive struggle against their oppressors.

Lincoln and Douglass were men of toil—Abe Lincoln was a "poor white" from the southern hills, into which the slave-system had forced the toiling white farmers of the South; Douglass was a child of slavery in eastern Maryland, from which he had fled to the north, where he became the most brilliant spokesman of the Abolitionist movement and the outstanding man of his race.

Lincoln and Douglass reflected the growth of democracy, which occurred after the Revolution in all sections of the nation except the plantation South. From 1824 to 1836, the young American labor movement was demanding the right of all men to vote and hold office, and was forming workingmen's political parties. During the same period, the farmers in their westward migration were demanding universal suffrage in the new states admitted into the Union. The result of this popular movement

was Jacksonian democracy, which swept a rugged representative of the poor toiling farmers, Andrew Jackson, into the Presidency. It was during this burst of Jacksonian democracy that Abraham grew to manhood.

Lincoln and Douglass were representatives of all that was noble in this democracy. Men of toil, born under the most adverse circumstances, they lost no opportunity to study and to equip themselves for a life of service to the needs of their people. When they rose to fame, neither one of them forgot the people from which he had sprung. Each remained loyal to the cause of labor. This period was one of bitter struggle, between what Secretary Ickes calls the "democratic instinct," and the forces of reaction of that time. While the workers of the Northeast and the farmers of the West were battling for democracy, the oligarchy of 300,000 slave-owners in the South was striving to enslave the whole nation. Not content with enslaving the South, this oligarchy sought to turn the entire federal government into its slave-catching apparatus and its war-machine. Through one law and one Supreme Court decision after another, it extended its power. It forced on the nation the Mexican war which conquered half of Mexico. It was planning even more ambitious wars. Its armed bandits forced slavery on territories against the will of the populations. When threatened by Jacksonian democracy, the oligarchy sought to negate that democracy by graft and corruption, force and violence. When it foresaw its loss of political power in Washington, the slave oligarchy treasonably planned for armed insurrection through its supporters in the federal government. They sent arms and ammunition to the South and moved all but a small number of Federal troops west of the Mississippi, thus leaving the coast clear for the Confederate offensive against the Union.

Thus Lincoln was confronted with a crisis similar to the one of our time. While we face an assault of the 60 families of monopoly capital upon our democracy, Lincoln was confronted

with the assault of 300,000 slave-owning rebels, who represented the Southern people no more than Franco represents the Spanish people. That this is true is indicated by editorials in Southern newspapers at the time of secession. The *North Alabamian* at the time declared: "It is a remarkable fact, that the substantial, physical force of the country, the hard-fisted, hard-working men, who were expected to do all the fighting when the country calls, were from the beginning opposed to the Ordinance of Secession." The movement throughout the Southern highlands in support of the Union gave full evidence of this fact. Roselius described the situation truly when he declared in the *State Convention* of Louisiana that the Confederate Constitution "did not inaugurate a government of the people, but an odious and unmitigated oligarchy. The people had not been permitted to act in the matter."

The federal government conducted the battle to protect the Union in a half-hearted manner during the first two years of Civil War. It sought a compromise with the border states, and did not advance the revolutionary slogan of arming the slaves. Furthermore, its army command was honeycombed with officers sympathetic to the slave-owners. During this period of hesitation on the part of Lincoln and the Federal Court, Douglass was uncompromisingly advancing the same revolutionary demands as those put forward by Marx, who declared: "A single Negro regiment would have a remarkable effect on Southern nerves." Thus Frederick Douglass, spokesman for the Negro people, was in the vanguard of the revolutionary movement which eventually came to his position, proclaimed emancipation, began to arm the Negroes and to follow revolutionary tactics. Lincoln saw eye-to-eye with Douglass on this issue.

Just as our first Revolution was of international significance, so was our second Revolution, the Civil War. Great numbers of German revolutionists, refugees from the counter-revolution which followed the Revolution of 1848 in Germany, fought in the Federal army. The latter owed much to their military skill.

The British working class, in spite of its suffering caused by the Northern blockade, demonstrated its solidarity with the cause of free labor everywhere by monster meetings in support of the federal government. It was the action of the British working class which really prevented Great Britain from going to war on the side of the Confederate oligarchy. Today, the British Tory Chamberlain is trying to sell out the Ethiopians, Chinese and Spanish people for the reactionary ends of British imperialism.

That Lincoln was aware of the importance of this international support is well shown by his reply, communicated through the Legation of the United States in London to Karl Marx, who had written to him in behalf of the International Workingmen's Association. This letter declared:

Nations do not exist for themselves alone, but to promote the welfare and happiness of mankind by benevolent intercourse and example. It is in this relation that the United States regard their cause in the present conflict with slavery maintaining insurgents as the cause of human nature, and they derive new encouragement to persevere from the testimony of the workmen of Europe that the national attitude is favored with their enlightened approval and earnest sympathies.

This indicates that Lincoln also was not an isolationist. But at the present time even friends of democracy are hesitant and indecisive, while reaction is aggressive. We must demand that the American government take effective measures to aid China, Spain and Ethiopia.

Lincoln's courteous letter to Marx threw all of London's polite society into consternation—especially so since, at the same time Lincoln replied to British bourgeois society with marked coolness.

The slaveholders' rebellion was crushed by revolutionary methods. For a time the Negro people, together with the toiling white people of the South, were on the road to democracy. Subsequently, however, reaction imposed a new form of semi-slavery

upon the Negro people in the form of sharecropping peonage, economic discrimination in every field of work, segregation, disfranchisement, lynching and terror. Thus, the battle commenced by Lincoln and Douglass must still be completed.

Today, a new type of reaction on the part of monopoly capital—big business—is undermining our democracy and threatening to destroy all that remains. The monopolists and their system have hurled us into economic crisis, and they are using their monopoly of all the means of production as a club over the democratic mass movement of the people. But just as the great conflicts at the time of Washington and Lincoln and Douglass were parts of world-wide conflicts, so to an even greater degree now, the threat of big-business fascism is a world wide threat.

Germany, Italy and Japan are waging a war against one-third of the population of the earth, annexing nearby states and howling for colonies. If we are to stave off fascism in our own country, we must curb fascist aggression on an international scale. Every victory of fascism anywhere strengthens fascism everywhere. The struggle for security, democracy and peace at home is inseparable from the world-wide struggle to curb fascism.

In order to defend what security, democracy and peace we have, we must strengthen and broaden the growing Democratic Front of all progressive forces in America for a struggle against the economic sabotage of big business, for jobs and security, to defend and extend democracy, to make America a force for peace—through collective action with the Soviet Union and all democratic nations—to “quarantine” fascist aggressors. It must be understood that such action is to the best interest of our own country.

Just as Douglass in his day declared that the preservation of the Republic demanded emancipation of the slaves, so today the defeat of the big-business fascist offensive demands the emancipation of the Negro people from the bondage under

which they still suffer. The Negro people to be free must have land and full democratic rights. The growing Democratic Front must undertake to win these gains for the Negro people. The fight against the big monopolists cannot be separated from the fight against the Bilbos, Ellenders, and all their kind. This filibustering rabble does not represent the Southern *people*, who gave us Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, Lincoln and Douglass.

The fight for democracy of all the common people of our country is as old as our great Republic. The Democratic Front of all the people against the Tories was born together with our Republic. We Communists, who are convinced that "Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism," are calling upon the people to unite more than ever before for the defense of our glorious past, our present and our still greater future.

Speech at Madison Square Garden, New York, February 23, 1938.

3. HISTORIC ROOTS OF THE NEGRO LIBERATION MOVEMENT

In 1928, the Communist Party of the United States formulated a clear-cut program on the Negro question, based on the teachings of Lenin as applied to American social life. Efforts to refute the Leninist analysis were made by the Lovestoneites, who were expelled from the Communist Party a year later. Their "man of letters," Will Herberg, seeking to disprove the concept of the Negroes as an oppressed nation, a political entity, portrayed the Negroes during the Reconstruction period as having been graciously freed by humanitarian Northerners, Abolitionists and politically-conscious capitalists. According to his thesis, it was necessary only that Negroes recognize their common interests with the white working class; for the white

workers, the Negroes were labeled a "subject caste," a possible "reserve of reaction," which would have to be neutralized rather than won.

James S. Allen answered Herberg in a polemical article published in the *Communist* for February, 1933, entitled, "Prologue to Negro Liberation." The article was important in that it stimulated the taking of stock on material dealing with the Reconstruction period. Among other things, it helped to neutralize the harmful influence of that part of Simons' *Social Forces in American History* that deals with the Negroes and Reconstruction; Simons presented a Social-Democratic position on the Negroes, and he might be called (at least on the Negro question) the spiritual ancestor of the Lovestoneites.

In his book, *Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy*, James S. Allen shows that what appeared as a "war between Northern and Southern states" was, in reality, "as fundamental a social revolution as it would have been if the slave system were uniformly spread throughout the country and the middle class, evolved in the course of commercial and capitalist development, had risen to take power."

The revolutionary character of the war was not apparent to the Federal leaders for the first two years of the war. These were two costly years of "constitutional warfare." The contradictions within the Federal front were such that they hampered a clear revolutionary war program. The composition of this front was: manufacturing interests, composing the Left; frontier and city middle classes—represented by Lincoln—composing the Center; and the city commercial classes, bankers and financiers, composing the Right.

The Radical Republican Congressman, Thaddeus Stevens, gave a full revolutionary tone to the parliamentary debates. Only his voice, representing the more revolutionary wing of the bourgeois democrats, could be heard above the din of legalistic and constitutional confusion.

Eventually the revolutionary character of the struggle be-

came apparent and—ceasing to “bury their noses in law books” to find justification for their compromise slogan, “Save the Union”—the middle classes, led by Lincoln, hesitantly adopted the revolutionary slogan, “Negro Emancipation.” The pressure of the Negroes and the radical bourgeoisie was effective in this change of policy.

If American revolutionaries and progressives want a source, the raw seed, of the present-day Communist position on the Negro question, let them listen to Thaddeus Stevens, answering the compromisers of the revolution who feared slave insurrections: “What puerile inconsistency! Which is more to be abhorred—a rebellion of slaves challenging their masters or a rebellion of free men (slaveholders) fighting to murder the nation?”

And further, referring to the need for arming the slaves: “Those who now furnish the means of war but who are the natural enemies of the slaveholders, must be made our allies.”

In developing these slogans in accordance with the higher stages of struggle today, the working class can proudly claim the heritage of this spirit and zeal of the American bourgeois-democratic revolutionaries.

American followers of Karl Marx during the Civil War—like Weydemeyer—recruited men for the Northern Army, and themselves served actively in it, stimulated by Engels’ summary of the European revolutions which served as a guide to the more politically developed working-class leaders. They were able to see that there could be no independent, nation-wide working-class movement until the country had been unified on the basis of an industrial economy. This unification was predicated upon the abolition of slavery.

Those schematic labor historians who see the Civil War and Reconstruction as a period in which only capitalists made great gains, negating the stake the workers had in it,—only shut off the progressive sections of the labor movement from its his-

torical past. Such misappraisals of history are the basis for much of the sectarianism evidence in left-wing labor circles.

The military defeat of the slaveholders' regime heralded a new and higher phase of the revolution. How was democracy to function in the cotton belt? What class was to take power? Having no city middle classes, no freeholders to speak of, no proletariat and no developed industry,—the two dynamic classes confronting each other in the slaveholders' domain were the ex-slaves and the former slaveholders. Therefore, as Allen points out:

“If this was to be a people's revolution, they (the freedmen) would have to be the core of it; if democracy was to be established they would be its chief bearers.” This conclusion was backed by the actions of the armed Negroes—confiscating deserted plantations, burning the hated auction blocks, disarming former rebels and their sympathizers. The “foreboding, menacing” black army gave a ready answer to the complex question facing the struggle for democracy in the South. With “rough, calloused hand . . . the ex-slave brushed aside the polished lumber of aristocracy.” *

But this tide of revolutionary fervor, ecstatic in its sweep and spirit, went tragically unanswered and unguided. Again the bourgeoisie “attempted to don the revolution in a constitutional toga [and] tripped constantly in the folds of the ill-fitting garments.” Seizing on the states-rights slogan, President Johnson “reconstructed” the Southern states by temporarily restoring the slavocracy to power. The Southern middle classes, which he represented, shied from the growing power of the Northern capitalists and fled to the decadent bourbons. An independent working-class movement might have presented Johnson's class with another alternative. Allen infers that the alternative would have been an alliance with labor against both Northern and Southern oligarchies. But a developed working-class movement might have curbed the rapacious capitalists and

* James S. Allen, *op. cit.*

held the middle class in the progressive front. Lack of further discussion of this point in Allen's book is an omission of an aspect of the question that merits fuller development.

Johnson's ignominious "Presidential Reconstruction" (1865-67) did not defeat or still the progressive opposition. Abolitionists and bourgeois democrats now attacked "Restoration" with the same zeal with which they had hitherto attacked chattel slavery. It is interesting to note that "Restoration" was not fought on the basis of abstract principles. Land to the freedmen and from the slaveholders, as the basis of spreading democracy to the cotton belt, was the foremost issue. Stevens called for a revolutionary program which would "exile the aristocracy." It must be said to the undying honor of Stevens and Sumner that, though in the very heat of the struggle, without a formal revolutionary education, they were consistent fighters for the revolutionary aims of their class and gave a clear perspective to the progressive front of their day (and the working class of our day).

Not once did the bourgeois radicals of the Civil War period conclude that the Negroes were oppressed and deprived of rights because of their race and color. They knew that Negro rights and democracy were imperiled because the plantations were allowed to remain in the hands of the aristocrats. And they fought for confiscation.

But wise Mr. Herberg, Lovestoneite detractor of Leninism-Stalinism, sees the Negro in the United States as "a member of a subject caste... doomed to an inferior position because of his birth, his race." Herberg might, by his distorted logic, have added that the Southern white workers suffer lower living standards and wage differentials because of their drawl.

The Negroes did not try to change their race. Without benefit of parliament, they were writing land laws with gun, stick and measuring rope; they were placing, with these crude implements, the slogan, "Confiscation of Rebel Estates," squarely on the government's program. But bourgeois legalism

again turned from a progressive slogan to parliamentary and "Constitutional" *fol-de-rol*.

Although 800,000 acres were taken over by the Freedmen's Bureau, the distribution of these acres would not give more than cabin space to the four million landless peasants. Much of the land was sold to Northern interests, government officials and, in some cases, to former slaveholders. Sharecropping and convict labor were instituted, with labor relations supervised, ironically enough, by the Freedmen's Bureau. It was with such devious reforms that the road to counter-revolution was paved. Herein lay the germ of "reconciliation" between the North and the South, the subsequent betrayal of the Negroes and the desecration of democracy.

In sharp contrast to these land reforms was the action of General Sherman in granting possession of the Sea Islands to a Negro Refugee army. This order, as Allen puts it, "turned the Sea Islands into the most advanced outpost of the revolution." Was it due to the high level of struggle?

Later, when the attempt was made to dislodge the Negroes from the islands, the invading soldiers met an organized community, already feeling the results of land ownership. The Negroes had a firmer platform on which to stand than did those who had to take the offensive for obtaining land.

The Negroes struggled against the Black Codes and Johnson's Reconstruction. Freedmen's conventions were held in various Southern states. The demands put forth by these conventions, while still limited to bourgeois rights, were, nevertheless, democratic rights as applied concretely to the Negroes. Reading an account of these conventions, one is impressed at the similarity of many of the slogans to the progressive Negro and labor slogans of today: (1) free labor; (2) right to a fair trial, vote and to hold office; (3) land confiscation and Negro land ownership; (4) free public schools.

The land demands of the South Carolina Negroes were most clearly formulated. The land demand for break-up and sale of

plantations was directed at both Northern speculators and ex-slaveholders. Far from following the Northern capitalists blindly, the Negroes proved themselves by those events "a vital force capable of exerting independent pressure for the attainment of their demands."

The industrial bourgeoisie, having grown up swiftly during the Civil War, wished to consolidate its political power. The immediate step toward this consolidation was a revolutionary course. In one stroke Johnson's scheme for restoration was upset. Congress took the center of the stage in the drama of Reconstruction. There followed swiftly, the Committee on Reconstruction, the Civil Rights Bill, the Freedmen's Bureau Bill and the Fourteenth Amendment. The fraudulent "corporation rights" joker placed in the amendment was the logical expression of a capitalist class belatedly ascending to power—therefore, with one eye on the plantation owner and the other guarding bulging pocketbooks, they pressed to guarantee "due process" for the growing corporations. But even with these limitations, the bourgeoisie opened, as Allen says, a "revolutionary cycle as grandiose as any in American history."

The Union League Clubs formed the mass bulwark against counter-revolution. The mechanics of the democratic processes of the time are explained here; and one gets a glimpse of a glorious period which, for the most part, is buried in obscure libraries or is shamefully distorted by white ruling class apologists and Negro-phobes.

While the bourgeoisie was thus consolidating its political rule, the working class was growing, and beginning the eight-hour day movement. Already the abolition of slavery was fulfilling the prophecy of Marx and Engels—labor was developing as an independent class movement. The relations of this movement with Reconstruction and the Negro have some pertinent lesson for the working class today.

Beset on the one hand by reformism and on the other by sec-

tarianism, the newly emerged working class could not master the problems in connection with the Negro, which it had inherited from the bourgeoisie. It was isolated from the Negro people because of this, although fruitful contacts were made with Negro labor leaders.

The early Marxists made sincere efforts to effect a realistic approach; but they, too, soon foundered on the rocks of reformism. A contributing factor was the fact that the Negro working class was not developed enough to act as the cementing element between the Negro people and the working class as a whole. Such a development came only in comparatively recent times.

The Amnesty Bill, though resisted by the Left, was soon passed, removing political disability from the former Confederates. This Bill was a blank check upon the face of which the ex-slaveholders wrote in Negro blood and tears the word—Restoration. The Southern aristocracy was finally restored with the aid of the middle class. In the South the middle classes were won from the Radical Republican coalition by anti-Negro anti-capitalist slogans. In the West the agrarians, and even the workers, were tampering with money reforms. In the political flux the bourgeoisie salvaged its own skin at the expense of the Negroes, democracy, labor and the farmer. As Allen states:

The issues of that revolutionary epoch of Reconstruction still persist—land, suffrage, civil rights—casting their shadow upon the whole country. They strike fire again, in a new setting and on a higher plane of social development. When the bourgeoisie betrayed democracy in the South it chalked up on the scoreboard of history a whole series of obligations which only the new revolutionary and progressive forces of our epoch can fulfill.

From the *Communist*, February, 1938.

4. THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CARPET-BAGGER GOVERNMENTS

Our democracy is threatened from within and from without. The best traditions of Lincoln are being attacked. Recently the American people witnessed a disgraceful spectacle in the United States Senate, a shameless caricature of elementary democratic procedure by Southern Bourbon democrats in their filibuster against the Anti-Lynching Bill. This minority was only able to do this effectively, because of the open backing of reactionary Republicans. Thus the slaveocracy speaks again, out of the past. In a situation where unity of the nation behind a platform of social progress is demanded, the representatives of the landlords and mill-owners of the South appeal to all the outworn shibboleths of racial and sectional animosity, and arrogantly disregard the expressed interests and desires of the great masses of Southern people, that is, to attain full equality of economic and political status with the rest of the United States. Behind the scene, pulling the strings of its puppets, stands Wall Street. The real aim of the filibusters is to preserve the rule of reaction in the South which is now being threatened by an advancing labor and progressive movement in that section of the country. The concept of a reactionary "Solid South" is being challenged in the South itself. The awakening white masses are joining with Negro people. Together these two democratic forces are breaking through the age-old barriers of sectional and racial hatreds, which served reaction so well in the past. A stream in the South is surging forward into the mainstream of the American people's Democratic Front.

That is why the traditions of the Second American Revolution, the Civil War and Reconstruction, are of such great importance for us today, for the labor and progressive movement throughout the country and for the Negro people and the white

masses of the South. Lincoln had before him three well-outlined principles which served as his guide. The first was:

Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and never could have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital and deserves much higher consideration.

The second was:

The strongest bond of human sympathy, outside of the family relation should be one uniting all working people, of all nations and tongues and kindreds.

The third was:

The country with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it.

These traditions must be preserved.

What were the positive achievements of the Second American Revolution? What did it do for the South? What did it mean to the Negro people? How did it benefit the poor whites?

First of all, let us clear up the essence of the "Carpet-bagger" governments. These governments represented the dictatorship of the revolutionary North over the conquered South. But this dictatorship was based upon a revolutionary democratic alliance of the majority of the Southern people. These governments had the historic task of consolidating the victory over the slave-owners, of preventing them from reactionary reprisals—and thus of reconstructing the South on the pattern of democracy.

Who were the "Carpet-baggers"? They were the Freedmen's Bureau, workers, soldiers, doctors, nurses, teachers, social workers and ordinary businessmen. For the most part, they were

leaders of the Abolitionist movement prior to the Civil War.

The reactionaries try to cover up the truth of this period and to conceal the revolutionary actions of the masses, particularly the Southern white masses. The book, *Birth of a Nation*, tries to depict the Reconstruction period as one of unrestrained violence, bloody terror, carnage and rapine, in which the naive but "semi-savage" Negro, freed from benevolent slavery, roamed the land robbing, stealing and venting lust upon unprotected white womanhood; while in the background, directing this horror, stalked the "carpet-bagger" adventurer.

A whole literature has been built up on such revolutionary distortions and misrepresentations of the Reconstruction period. The "carpet-bagger" bogeyman has been used to frighten little children and the whole population of Southern whites. The influence of the reactionary myth of "Carpet-bagger Reconstruction" is not only confined to the South: this fallacy has been built up in the North also. It is one of the crimes of bourgeois historical scholarship that it has buried the profoundly significant revolutionary struggles of the Negro and white masses in the South during the Reconstruction period.

We can, of course, brush aside the writings of a Thomas Dixon, Jr., or a Claude Bowers, as the rantings of admitted Negro-phobes and spokesmen for Bourbon reaction. However, it becomes exceedingly alarming when such an outstanding liberal historian as Charles A. Beard concedes to the myth of Reconstruction and says:

The freedmen were in no way prepared to become an effective factor in the new order of society. . . . They were powerless in the hands of the governing group that directed the revolution and reconstruction from Washington.

The wide popularity of such an utterly false and malicious novel as *Gone with the Wind* should also alarm all true democrats and progressives. Raising the specter of a second "Carpet-

bagger Invasion" to be accompanied by "black domination," the demagogues step forward as the "protectors of white womanhood" and preservers of Anglo-Saxon racial purity. They seek in this way to block the growing movement for democracy in the South, and to rally the white masses behind the reactionary Southern ruling class. This will only result in perpetuating the backwardness and poverty in the South, as a base from which Wall Street finance capital can wage its battle against a Democratic Front rising throughout the country.

Thus the falsification of the history of Reconstruction, the concealing of its real lessons from the masses, has become a whole system of ideas by which the American finance capitalist reaction seeks to justify its rule. It is clear to the forces of progress of both North and South, that real lasting unity of democratic forces of this country cannot be achieved, that racial sectional hatreds and friction cannot be removed, that a united Democratic Front cannot be consolidated, without a persistent struggle against these ideas and this falsification of American traditions.

The reactionaries try to keep hidden from the poor whites of the South the historical fact that the first real rights they ever enjoyed were achieved by the joint efforts of the newly-emancipated Negroes and the "poor whites" delegates in the state legislatures and constitutional conventions following the Civil War. That is the truth of the situation, that is how civil rights were established for the despised whites.

For example, the State Convention of South Carolina, with more than 60 per cent of its delegates newly-emancipated slaves, put through a constitution providing for complete democratic rights for both Negro and white, including the immediate abolition of all property qualifications for holding office, universal suffrage, proportional representation according to numbers and not by property, no imprisonment for debt, universal education and a public school system, recognition of the

rights of women, no discrimination against Negroes and the reorganization of the state and county governments to provide for the fullest participation of the people.

It was such conventions as these in which Negroes from the plantations, boldly throwing off the heritage of slavery, proclaimed the full sweep of their struggle to democratize the South. The splendid history of the struggle of the Negro population for the achievement of democracy, the promise this struggle held for the rapid development of the South and the liberating effect it had on the "poor whites," has been brilliantly described by James S. Allen in his book *Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy*, and also in W. E. B. DuBois' book *Black Reconstruction*. It was the most democratic period the South has ever seen.

This goal can be re-attained today. If the Southern white masses are to attain freedom and democracy, economic and cultural quality with the rest of the country, they must resume that alliance with the Negro people and the democratic forces of the North which was broken by the treachery of the Northern Wall Street financial capitalists, together with the Republican Party, in the "gentlemen's agreement" of 1877.

The Southern reactionaries are raising a hue and cry against the "New Carpet-bagger Invasion" from up North. They apply this term to C.I.O. organizers, Communists and liberal defenders of the Scottsboro boys alike. They are trying in this manner to whip up sectional antagonism against the growing forces of labor and progress in the South. They use the term "Carpet-bagger" as a badge of disgrace.

Apart from humanitarian considerations, the white workers and farmers of the South must support the liberation struggle of the Negro people, from the standpoint of their own class interests, functioning as two fundamental forces against capitalist reaction in the South, against the common enemy of both

Negro and white toilers. Any underestimation of this struggle plays into the hands of reaction.

Summary of a discussion held in the Executive of the Harlem Division of the Communist Party, February, 1938. The summary, edited by Theodore Bassett, appeared in the *Communist*, April, 1938.

VI

Some World Problems *

1. DEFENSE OF THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE

WITH the imminent danger of war and fascism confronting the whole of humanity, not a moment can be lost in developing the broadest People's Front against fascism and war—twin monsters of big finance capital.

Fascism, the terrorist dictatorship of big capital, instigates war for the enslavement of colonies and small nations and the destruction of the Soviet Union.

The Italian fascists' invasion of Ethiopia threatens the world with a new world war.** What Italian fascism plans to do in Ethiopia is what German fascism plans to do to small nations in Europe and the peoples in the colonies. Hitler fascism wants to "civilize" and divide the Soviet Union. It is necessary therefore for us, in order to develop a militant fight against international fascism, to understand the Ethiopian situation for its own problems as well as for its world implication. The struggle of the Ethiopian people, the last independent Negro state in Africa, in the fight to retain its independence has aroused a bond of sympathy among millions of toilers, black, white, yellow and brown, throughout the world. Numerous fully-substantiated reports are coming out of Italy of waves of indignation

* The following is a series of public statements, on aspects of the international situation, made during 1935-38. Three of the addresses were delivered, to capacity audiences, at Madison Square Garden, New York.

** This was written in 1935, during the Ethiopian war.

against the invasion of Ethiopia by Mussolini and giving details about strikes, peasant actions, people's protests and other spontaneous acts of resistance. In the United States the American Negroes are seething with indignation against this attack on the Ethiopian people. In like manner, the toiling masses from South Africa to north Africa, groaning under the heavy yoke of imperialist domination, are awaking to the call of battle for defense of the independence of Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is a feudal state, under the rule of powerful native feudal lords. But the war of Ethiopia against Italian aggression must be regarded as a national (liberation) war. Japan as well as other imperialist nations are attempting to utilize it for their own imperialist aims. The international proletariat must regard the struggle of Ethiopia as a just war, as a national defensive war, and support the Ethiopian people.

The whole course of diplomatic negotiations and numerous maneuvers in the Ethiopian situation is a typical example of "slipping into imperialist war."

The reactionary Tories of Great Britain are the most deceitful enemies of the Ethiopian people. Did not England secretly promise Italy after the World War a share in Ethiopia? Does not England now control great territories on the head waters of the Red Sea—the route to her territories in India, and also east, north and south Africa?

Japanese imperialism, in its strategy and its aims of imperialist expansion, is attempting to exploit the so-called "colored races" for her war policy. If we weakly support the Ethiopian people in their struggle, we make it easier for Japanese imperialism, the same Japanese militarism which is now enslaving the Chinese people in Manchuria and north China, and the Korean people, killing those who fight for their freedom; this same Japan will try to cheat the Negro masses by pretending to be "defenders of Ethiopia." We have to warn both the Negro people and the white masses of the dangers of the reactionary racial theories.

We also find that Japanese imperialists are following the policy in the Philippine Islands of trying to link the independent movement of the Philippine people with Japan's aims for expansion. Because of these international connections the Ethiopian situation is not a separate, isolated, "African" question, but has world-wide importance.

In the heyday of colonial expansion, in the latter part of the past century, Africa was shared among the imperialist powers. Britain, France, Germany, Portugal and Italy swallowed up ninety per cent of the black continent. Only Ethiopia, which had retained its unity, its culture and its governing power for centuries, was able, through heroic and successful battles, to retain its independence.

Although late on the scene, the United States also has imperialist aims in Africa. In 1927 she began to maneuver in Ethiopia. The Anglo-American Oil Company (a subsidiary of the Standard Oil Company) gained an option on a concession to exploit oil lands. In 1928 the White Engineering Company of Wall Street bought a twenty million dollar contract to build a dam on Lake Tsana, whose control would determine the flow of water to irrigate the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan cotton region. Both England and Italy also want Ethiopia for growing cotton. Their interests are therefore in conflict with the Southern cotton interests in the United States.

The American people, and particularly the Negro masses in the U. S. A., oppose the war against and the enslavement of Ethiopia. But the house of Morgan is the main financial agent for floating Italian government loans in the United States, of approximately one billion dollars. American finance capital therefore supports Italian fascism and favors plunging the world into a new world war and attacking the Soviet Union. It should also be remembered that Italy gets munitions from the United States, as well as raw materials and manufactured products, such as oil, coal, iron, chemicals and automobiles which are convertible to military uses.

Several agreements, extending as far back as 1906 and up to the recent Rome Pact, have been made between Great Britain, France and Italy, giving the latter the right to invade the territory of Ethiopia.

So deeply has the desire to assist the Ethiopian people seeped into the political consciousness of the American Negro, that in his own struggle for freedom against American imperialist oppression, he has raised high the cry of solidarity with his Ethiopian brothers. In the outbreak in Harlem of March 19, 1935, in New York, Negroes expressed their hatred of Italian fascism and its plans for war on their Ethiopian brothers. They went through the streets crying: "Down with Mussolini!" This wave of indignation extended into broad united front struggles throughout the United States. On August 3, 1935, nearly a hundred thousand workers of New York, in a united front movement initiated by the Provisional Committee for the Defense of Ethiopia, The League Against War and Fascism and the Harlem Communist Party, held a monster protest demonstration in Harlem. The masses in this demonstration also used the slogans, "Down with German fascism," "Free Ernst Thaelmann."

Certain Negro nationalist organizations, under the influence of demagogic propaganda and reactionary race theories, would have nothing to do with the white people; they were willing to work with Negro Communists but not with white Communists. It was under these conditions that the Negro Communists helped to initiate the united front. We began to expose the reactionary racial theories and to bring forward a clear line of joint struggle of all anti-fascist forces for the national liberation movement. The Negro Communists, working patiently, were able to break down the suspicion of some of the more sincere elements within this united front. Negro delegates were sent to a conference of Italian workers, where the question of Ethiopia was discussed. They went but were so suspicious of the Italian workers that they took along with them weapons to

be used "in case the Italian workers would attack them." Our Italian comrades, however, received these Negro delegates very cordially and in such a manner as to impress them of their sincerity. These delegates reported to the Ethiopian Defense committee and advised that the Italian workers should be drawn in with them. It was because of these and other activities of the Negro Communists that the broad united front, anti-fascist, anti-war demonstration of Negro and white people, on August 3, 1935, was consolidated.

While we supported and aided all serious movements for the defense of the independence of the Ethiopian people, we pointed out that protest demonstrations and extension of the anti-imperialist front in the U. S. A. would render more practical aid to the Ethiopian people. The March 19 outbreak has shown that powerful forces exist among the Negroes in the fight against war, fascism and the enslavement of small nations and colonial people.

How have the Italian people responded to this situation?

Never before has the Mussolini government had to face such active mass unrest. The united platform of the Communist and Socialist parties of Italy mobilized anti-fascist and anti-war resistance to Mussolini's economic and war measures. Maximalists, anarchists and Catholics, as well as other workers, were drawn into this united front. For some time before the military mobilization for the Ethiopian invasion, peasants in scores of places began to fight against tax increase, foreclosures, price fixing and fascist political oppression. Demonstrations were held in the southern part of Italy, at times reaching the proportions of revolts. Outstanding demonstrations took place in Lombardi and Piedmont as well as the north of Italy.

We must also make it clear to everyone that what Mussolini fears most is the rebellion of the Italian workers and peasants against the fascist state and against its plans for war on Ethiopia; and that to raise the cry of "all Negroes" against "all whites" is to play into the hands of Mussolini's campaign of

race hatred. The best allies of the people of Ethiopia are the enemies of Italian fascism. And the bitterest enemies of Mussolini in Italy are the revolutionary Italian toilers led by the Communists of Italy. They more than any others want to destroy fascist rule in Italy. The Italian toilers know that the victory of Italy in Ethiopia would mean a victory for fascist dictatorship, the further enslavement of the Italian people; and that therefore a fight must be conducted for the military defeat of the Italian bourgeoisie—against the banks, finance capital, all of those who get rich out of war—for bread and peace for the Italian toilers. By rallying millions of toilers of races in support of Ethiopia we can inspire the Ethiopian people so that they will help strike the vital blow against Italian fascism.

Mussolini and his fascists boast of maintaining the best heritage of the Italian people. They claim to preserve Italy's "honor" for the defeat in 1896. But it is the revolutionary Italian toilers and anti-fascists of today who are bearing forward the best traditions of the Italian people of 1896. At that time labor and peasant insurrections against this previous invasion of Ethiopia opened up the gates for a wave of socialist activity in Italy. Today the anti-fascist and Communist Italian toilers can maintain this heritage by opening the way for Communism in Italy, by defending the independence of the Ethiopian people. Because, as Karl Marx has said, "no nation can be free that enslaves another nation." What can we do to help further struggle for the defense of the Ethiopian people?

In all countries, in all working-class organizations, trade unions, workers' clubs, fraternal organizations, co-operatives, churches, etc., we can build up "Hands Off Ethiopia" committees. The central task of these committees should be to develop the widest movement among the people against the attack on Ethiopia, to mobilize the masses to stop the shipment of troops, munitions and military freight to Italy's theater of war. None of the democratic countries aid Ethiopia. We should encourage the arming of the Ethiopian people for their defense. Special

efforts should be made to organize the Italian emigrants in the United States, France and Belgium for the defense of Ethiopia and also to assist the revolutionary movement inside Italy. The revolutionary workers in Great Britain should make every effort, using the parliamentary tribune, to unmask the British Tories.

The British Communists should be able also to help further develop the movement which is now growing among the Negro population of London and in the British colonies. Our French Communists, from the tribune of the broad People's Front in France, should expose the hands of French imperialism in the Ethiopian situation, and develop a broad movement in defense of the Ethiopian people.

We have heard reports of the heroic actions of our Japanese comrades, under the leadership of the Communist Party of Japan, who are defending their Chinese brothers. We take great pride in these actions and believe that our Italian comrades will continue to emulate our Japanese comrades.

We have viewed with joy and Bolshevik pride the long heroic struggle of the great Chinese people led by the heroic Chinese Party of Communists against the militarist invasion of China. I believe from these great acts of heroism and examples of struggle that the Ethiopian people, and indeed the Negro people everywhere, must learn and are learning that only by valiant, militant, uncompromising struggle against war and fascism, in solidarity with their class brothers of all races, can their freedom be won and the barbarism of fascism and war be erased from the face of the earth. We declare that the liberation and freedom of the Negro people can only be achieved through struggle to abolish all oppression of man by man, to abolish all reactionary forces, to defend the Soviet Union, to overthrow world capitalist imperialist power.

At this time when the politics of Italian fascism is to destroy the independence of small nations and colonial people, when Japanese imperialism holds large portions of China under her

iron heel, when German fascism is ready to plunge the whole world into a new war to subjugate small nations like Czechoslovakia and attack the U. S. S. R., when American imperialism oppresses a nation of Negro people and holds in subjugation a whole series of colonial people such as the Filipinos, the Cubans, the Puerto Ricans, Hawaiians, etc.—we can contrast the policy of the Soviet Union, where national minorities have been liberated and where the freedom of the peoples grow. The peace policy of the Soviet Union coincides with and corresponds to the aims of all world toilers and the defense of the rights of small nations; and with the principles of Marx and Lenin, and the Communist International under the leadership of Stalin.

Speech at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, August, 1935.

2. THE SOVIET UNION AND THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

The Soviet Union is powerful and strong. Its friends and the working class love it as their stronghold. Its enemies are trembling. If it was not for the Soviet Union, a world war would have long ago become a fact. The Soviet Union is doing all in its power to preserve peace, in the East and in the West. The fascists of Germany, Italy and Japan are working shamelessly to bring about war.

By war, the fascists hope to distract the attention of the masses of people from their terrible situation. They have tried to drown in blood the peaceful Ethiopian people; they are trying to wipe from the surface of the earth the dearest things for which the Spanish people have labored for ages. They barbarously tear apart great China. These gangsters, with slogans directed against Communism, are actually trying to destroy everything that is progressive in humanity.

Can they be held back? Yes, if and when the peace policy of the Soviet Union will become the main instrumentality of the peace-loving people of the world. This means collective action of all the democratic countries and peoples not only in words, but in deeds. It means an end to the maneuvering of the Tories of England, who sell out the interests of the people with deceitful phraseology—such as their slogan “to keep the Spanish war within the borders of Spain,” whereby they aid Franco against Republican Spain.

The Chicago speech of President Roosevelt in October, 1937, was encouraging. But speeches alone, good as their intentions may be, do not solve the problem. We are convinced that this problem can be solved if the United States, Great Britain, France, Czechoslovakia will come to an understanding as the great Soviet Union has—that the people of Spain are rightfully entitled to rule their own lives, that the independence and territorial integrity of China should be preserved. The democratic nations, U. S. A., Great Britain, France and Czechoslovakia, have the power to stop the aggressors, to avoid a world war, to help the German, Italian and Japanese people rid themselves of the maniacs who are destroying hundreds of thousands of lives by their rule. Instead of false neutrality, the Chinese people need real help. Japan must be outlawed, boycotted and isolated. The Spanish people need help, and if help is given them, and the hundreds of thousands of Italian and German soldiers are withdrawn from Spain, the war will be over in a short time. We should do all in our power as peace-loving people of America, with revolutionary and democratic traditions, to compel the Congress to make President Roosevelt's speech, delivered at Chicago, a *law of peace*.

The Soviet Union is strong. The right to work, to education, to enjoyment, to security, is the rule of the socialist land. The people are building the greatest society in history, in which food and culture exist for everyone; where no oppression of the

many by the few, or nationality by nationality, is tolerated.

A strong prosperous Ukranian people are developing the culture that was suppressed and destroyed by Czarist Russia. Uzbeks, Tartars, Georgians, Armenians, Jews, White Russians—all are free and belong to one great family of socialist builders. That is an example of how the national question related to the Negro people in the United States could be solved. Is it not true that thirteen million Negroes in our country are denied liberty and freedom, are suppressed, and their culture destroyed?

Formerly backward peasants have become the builders of the greatest agricultural industry in the world in the Soviet Union. All this was achieved not by exploiting colonies and conquering foreign territories, but by the hard work of 180 million people. This achievement comes from their own flesh and blood. That is why the people acted sharply to destroy the wreckers before they had a chance to realize the fascist dream to destroy and dismember the great Soviet Union.

It is no wonder that the indignation of the people of Spain was so strong against the Trotskyites. I was in Spain in May, 1937, at the time of the attempted uprising in Barcelona, led by the Trotskyites. The Trotskyite POUM, headed by Andre Nin, was the organization which grouped around itself all the criminal elements and provocateurs, who committed acts of sabotage, who engaged in assassination and who, wherever possible, tried to weaken the armed forces of the Republic and the war industry.

In America, the Trotskyites, as in other countries, are rallying all unprincipled, morally bankrupt elements into one counter-revolutionary front, of which the small group of Lovestoneites is an integral part. The Lovestoneites have become part of the same bloc. They are destroyers of unity. They create doubts and suspicion about the possibilities of the unity of the working class and the various strata of the population in building a People's Front against war and fascism. In Spain,

as in the Soviet Union, appropriate action has been taken against the Trotskyites and all disrupters.

It is no accident that the enemies of the Soviet Union should seize, particularly at this time, on the success of the Soviet Union in detecting and ridding itself of spies, wreckers and assassins, in order to represent this cleansing as a moral blot and an expression of weakness and disintegration of the Soviet Union.

The new-found sense of moral indignation by the worst enemies of labor and the Soviet Union, the parade of outraged virtue by the masters of deceit and hypocrisy, the crocodile tears of the newly acquired friends of so-called "old Bolsheviks,"—may deceive some innocent and uninitiated people, but it will hardly impress the toiling millions in whose hearts and minds twenty years of the successful socialist revolution have stamped themselves deeply and indelibly.

The exposure and elimination of the widespread network of fascist-Trotskyite spies, wreckers and assassins in the Soviet Union, carries a profound lesson for the working class and labor movement in every country, particularly in the United States. The agents of fascism, of course, exert themselves to represent this as a natural outgrowth of the socialist revolution and the Soviet system, hypocritically shielding the real instigators and the real source of the spying and wrecking activities. They conceal the fact that the enemies of the Soviet Union have never given up their efforts to intervene in the Soviet Union, to prevent its development, to transform their prophecies of collapse into reality.

It is a wonder then, that the Soviet Union, the particular object of fascist ambitions and conquest, should be a victim of fascist espionage, wrecking and assassination?

The rise of fascism has created an entirely new international situation. If the Soviet Union has always been encircled by capitalist enemies who have prayed and worked for its destruction, the emergence of the fascist aggressors has increased the

menace to the Soviet Union a thousand-fold. The fascists have seized particularly on the Trotskyite enemies of the Soviet Union, linking themselves with these traitors in the common aim of wrecking socialist industry, assassinating Soviet leaders and seizing Soviet territory. The fascists found a natural ally in the Trotskyites and their Bukharinite friends, because the Trotskyite policies and methods dovetailed with the objectives of the fascists. The fascists found a certain amount of ready material to recruit for their spying and wrecking activities among some elements who failed to keep pace with the march of history, who failed to understand the necessity of new policies, and who thereby became the object of fascist solicitude and the subsequent instruments of fascist spying and wrecking activities.

By ruthlessly cleansing itself of all these elements, the Soviet Union has dealt a mortal blow to the fascist preparations for attack against the land of socialism. It has deprived fascism of one of its most vital arms. It has strengthened the force of democracy everywhere.

The experience of the Soviet Union offers a profound lesson to the friends of democracy and peace in the capitalist countries. Nothing is too base, no method is too foul, for the fascist barbarians to employ. From all of this it can be seen and understood that the cause of labor, the cause of democracy and peace, requires the greatest vigilance, the most relentless struggle against the fascist spies and provocateurs whose aim is to prevent the unity of labor and of all lovers of democracy and peace and to prepare the victory of fascism in every land. The enemies of labor unity, the enemies of the Soviet Union, the fascist spies and provocateurs, the Trotskyite bandits, must be driven out of the labor movement!

What country in the world can record the achievements of the Soviet Union? What nationality living in any country can be so free and secure as in the Soviet Union? There are some people, however, to whom the freedom of an individual gangster

means more than the security and happiness of 180 million people. In a recent issue of the Sunday *New York Times*, Professor Calvin Hoover tries to impress upon the American public mind that there is no democracy in the Soviet Union. According to his understanding, the presence of the wreckers and disrupters, counter-revolutionary elements, is contradictory to the principles of building a socialist society. He tries to show that, while building socialism, the power of the state should become less and less. But the power of the Soviet state is becoming stronger, and it can act freely against spies because it has the full support of the entire people.

It is strange to see how a man of education, who poses as a liberal, should not attack the main evil that at the present time threatens all progressive humanity. Why doesn't Professor Hoover explain the difference between the achievements and strivings for peace of the Soviet Union and that of the shameful, destructive roles that Hitler, Mussolini and militarist Japan are playing at the present time? Or point to our own country, where Mr. Evans, the chief of the Ku Klux Klan, that shameful organization that has lynched thousands of Negro people, boasts that the Ku Klux Klan is growing stronger.

Why doesn't Professor Hoover see the increase in unemployment in our country, the persecution and killing of labor organizers in the steel strike; why doesn't he see the big American financial interests, who are working with reactionaries in Mexico to drown the Mexican people in blood and make of Mexico another Spain? Why doesn't he see that the fascists are operating in the western hemisphere, where Hitler and Mussolini are trying to establish centers for the spread of fascism throughout South and Latin America? The American people must help the South American people to stop this spread of fascism which endangers the fundamental principles of democracy and the traditions of our democratic country? Why doesn't Professor Hoover see that the Liberty Leaguers are

engaging in widespread sabotage against every progressive means and trend within the Roosevelt administration?

But Professor Hoover is closing his eyes and covering his ears to all of these things and is crawling on his knees before the reactionaries like a lackey. "Yes, master reactionaries," he says, "I am at your service. You see, I am attacking the Soviet Union. You see, when I do it, I do it cleverly and 'objectively.' I recognize many good things in the Soviet Union. But I do not attack it so bluntly as the reactionary fascists are doing. I have more of a chance to confuse, to mislead, to distract some good and honest people from the main issue."

That main point at issue is this: the aggressors are the fascists, the reactionaries, abroad and at home.

But I am sure that the achievements of the Soviet Union will grow stronger and stronger, and that these so-called educators will find themselves in the garbage can of history, together with Hearst, the Liberty Leaguers and all other reactionaries. We have faith in the people. False prophets come and go but the people are immortal. Scientific socialism—Marxism-Leninism will everlastingly guide all progressive humanity. The Bolshevik Party, under the leadership of Stalin, the heir of Lenin, has been able to lead from success to success for fourteen years without Lenin, because it fought ruthlessly against the destroyers, revisionists, counter-revolutionary agents, fascists and reactionary, corrupted individuals; and it has built socialism in the true Leninist way. Scientific socialism will be victorious the world over.

We see the People's Front against war and fascism growing in all parts of the world. World history has made the immediate task of the American people that of building a People's Front in our country. We are beginning to learn how to organize a People's Front, and millions are gathering to defend our democracy, to fight against fascism, reaction and war. The honest people and workers of America are learning through experiences and contact with Communists, what we stand for, and

how we are building the people's movement against fascism. The Communists everywhere are building the People's Front. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, the French people have raised a mighty bulwark against fascism.

We are filled with admiration at the courage of the Spanish people who are heroically defending their freedom and independence. We have great pride in our American boys of the Abraham Lincoln and George Washington Battalions, who went over there to help clean out the fascists. They are doing a glorious job.

I want to conclude by telling you about a typical American, who went through the World War and returned to America. On his return, he entered the employment of a national manufacturing organization. But he was not there long. Because of unemployment, he drifted from job to job and finally found himself blacklisted out in California, in the midst of the labor unrest there. Here is what he said about his experiences:

During the great belt strike in Lodi in 1933, I saw agricultural workers herded out of town like animals, by vigilantes wearing American Legion overseas caps. In Salina, in 1934, I was picked up as an outside agitator, taken for a ride, and branded with a tire-iron. Again and again in the literature of the Growers' Association, and in several California newspapers, I have seen my name as one of those who would overthrow our government and substitute a Soviet. I have been threatened by telephone, by letter, and by having my car wrecked.

I am not a Communist; I have never been a Communist. . . . Only, so long as the Communists are willing to join with me in guarding and fighting for democracy, and against fascism and vigilante gangsterism, am I willing to fight side by side with them.

One can become a really effective force against fascism, reaction and war by facing boldly the realities of the situation in our country, and drawing the conclusion which has been drawn by this American—to fight together with the Communists.

We are a real party of the people, flesh and blood of the people, and we work with all progressives to save America from

destruction by reactionary forces. We grow because of our broad policy in the trade union movement, among the farmers, among the Negro people and in the struggle against the high cost of living and for a better life for the American people. We grow under the leadership of two American sons of the people, one from a home in Kansas, the very heart of America, our leader, Earl Browder, General Secretary of the Communist Party; the other William Z. Foster, Chairman of the Communist Party.

Speech at Madison Square Garden, New York, November 13, 1937.

3. THE SINO-JAPANESE WAR AND THE NEGRO PEOPLE *

In the January 15 issue of your estimable paper, you ran an editorial entitled "The Case for Japan," in which you justify the invasion and destruction of China's national existence by Japanese imperialists.

Your editorial says: "The *Afro-American* believes that Japan is fully justified in the foregoing objectives."

These are grave questions for us and our people.

In the problems that face the world today as a result of the spread of war across the great oceans which separate us from Europe and Asia, the Negro people have an interest which will affect our own fate. International fascism rains bombs and destruction on the peace-loving peoples of Ethiopia, China and Spain. Human lives are being taken, properties destroyed, national sovereignty and territories violated, international law and agreements trampled underfoot, all human decency and humane sentiments outraged, in order to satisfy the greed for

* This open letter was addressed to the Baltimore *Afro-American*, January, 1938.

material gain of Mussolini, Hitler and the Japanese war-lords.

The Negro people correctly saw in the murderous attack on the Ethiopian people by Italian fascism, a blow against them. Similarly, with the latest invasion of China by the armies of Japan, what shall our people think of the Chinese-Japanese war? When Mussolini was shedding the blood of Ethiopia, we felt anger, indignation and hate for the oppressor of that country fighting for its independence. But when the military rulers of Japan strike at another nation, the Chinese nation, are we to rejoice? No. Such a course for the American Negro is suicidal, a dangerous wounding of our own best interests as an oppressed, wronged people.

The American Negro and, indeed, Negroes everywhere, cannot be free, cannot advance toward liberty and equality, if they support the oppression and despoiling of other subjugated peoples. Our task must be to assist all peoples in the struggle for freedom, even as we expect and require their sympathy and assistance. The Chinese representative, bringing greetings to the recent National Negro Congress at Philadelphia, declared:

In this dark hour of our human history, I am glad that the peace-loving peoples all over the world have realized the danger confronting them and voiced the strongest condemnation of these fascist gangsters and murderers. Today in my own country, China, Japanese imperialists are trying to enslave our 450,000,000 Chinese people with "blood and iron."

The top cliques in Japan today are brutal and bloody oppressors, not only of the millions of people in Korea, Manchuria and today in Central China, but of their own people in Japan.

Does Japan desire to advance the cause of China to "be a man," as you express it? On the contrary, Japan is fearful of a "manly," progressive and powerful China. So long as China licked the boots of the Western imperialist cliques which came to rob her, the Japanese were content with their share of the spoils. In fact—and this is well-known history—the present

rulers of Japan themselves worked hand in glove with the white British, Wall Street and French agents to subjugate China.

In 1927, the present rulers of Japan sent their troops to cooperate with these other powers, in crushing the Chinese efforts to set up their own independent, free government. In 1927, Japan shared with Britain, the United States and France the so-called "white man's burden" of plundering the Chinese people. Is this the "friend" of the people of Asia? Is this the power we can depend on to fight against the tyranny and oppression of the imperialists?

The Japanese military cliques have been steadily extending their yoke over the people of Korea, the Ethiopia of the Far East. Is this the "friend" of China, the "friend" of the oppressed darker peoples?

You say that you do not approve of Japan's alliance with Hitler and Mussolini, the Negro people's worst enemies. You may not approve. But this alliance is an undeniable fact. I ask you in all earnestness whether our people can place trust in the friends of Hitler and Mussolini, murderers of our people? Hitler applauds the lynching of Negroes in America. Shall we give our sympathy to Hitler's ally, Japan?

We must be realistic in our thinking. In our struggle for progress, it is a good axiom that "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." But is Japan the enemy of our enemies? No! Japan is the friend of our enemies, and is getting their support at this very hour! The friend of our enemy is also our enemy!

We have to seek our friends elsewhere. We have to find our friends among the hosts of peace, democracy and progress, not among the hosts of the war-makers, the despoilers of the people, the fascists and the plunderers.

And who is so blind today that he cannot see in the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo military alliance a mortal enemy of the democratic forces of the world? Who is so blind that he cannot see how these ruthless powers, branded by President Roosevelt as "international bandits" needing to be "quarantined," aim their dag-

ger at the heart of the Soviet Union, where the oppression of dark people, minority people, has been forever abolished?

May I urge your consideration of the fact that Japanese war policy is allied with the Hitler and Mussolini policy under the banner of "War against Communism," which means the crushing of democracy wherever it is to be found, which aims fundamentally to crush the liberated Russian peoples.

We have felt admiration and respect for the splendid manner in which your paper has given the truth about the status of Negroes in the Soviet Union. Your paper only recently carried a splendid photo of the Soviet elections, where all colored peoples exercised the democratic rights for which we have been striving in this country.

Will you say that it is to the interests of the American Negro people, who have watched with joy the achievements of that great country, to support the fascist military scheme to drown these achievements in blood?

And this is no mere fancy. I call to your attention the latest propaganda of the Hearst newspapers, whose policies regarding the Negro people are well known to you. They are now advertising a series of articles stating that "the white man can be driven out of Asia only over the prostrate body of the Soviet Union."

This terrible scheme, which cannot but arouse horror in the hearts of our people—who know what progress Paul Robeson and many other Negroes found in the Soviet Union—is the inevitable conclusion of pro-Japanese support in the present situation. Are we to make ourselves a part of this horrible plot to destroy what has been erected at so much sacrifice for all progressive mankind?

Our sympathies should be with the heroic Chinese people, who are trying to win the same independence which we want for ourselves. Our sympathies should be with the masses of Japanese people who suffer the tyranny of their own rulers.

Our sympathies must be with the Soviet people, who are building a new world of freedom and equality for all races.

Is it not significant that the bitterest enemies of our people in America—the economic royalists of Wall Street, the Hearsts, etc.—tend to oppose any policy that will seriously hinder the advance of Japan in China and are looking for a way to make a bargain with Japan?

In our country, our sympathies should be with those groups who oppose fascism wherever it is found, who want to see President Roosevelt's policy for co-operation with other democratic nations and forces to halt the aggression of Hitler-Mussolini and the Mikado carried out.

The Negro people belong with democracy, not with tyranny.

My earnest opinion is that we would make a tragic error in giving our support to any member of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Alliance.*

4. MEXICO FIGHTS FOR DEMOCRACY

In the summer of 1935, it was my privilege to attend the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. At that Congress, the threat of fascism to people who love liberty

* The following reply to the above communication was received by the author:

Dear Mr. Ford:

Thanks for your kind letter on the "Case for Japan."

Especially do I wish to commend you on your *argumentum ad rem*.

We disagree about a matter and you think I am making a tragic error, but with utmost good temper you master all the arguments your side affords and bid me look at them.

I like that because you haven't called me names and predicted I will end up in perdition.

May your tribe increase. I hope our editor can print most of your letter and discuss it thoroughly.

You have honored us with your letter.

Very truly yours,
THE AFRO-AMERICAN COMPANY
Carl Murphy
President

and aspire for a noble and happy life, was thoroughly analyzed by assembled delegates from all parts of the world.

I have just returned from Mexico,* and I wish to speak briefly about the growth of reaction and the development of the People's Front in that country.

The Mexican people are almost unanimous in their hatred of Trotsky, whose presence in Mexico brings danger to the unity of the entire people against reaction and counter-revolution. The Moscow trial of the counter-revolutionary Trotskyites revealed how they never understood the national question, and how they planned to sell a liberated nation, the Ukrainians, to fascist Germany.

Mexico is a grand, beautiful country, enormously rich in natural resources. Its people love liberty and freedom, and during the last quarter-century have carried on a heroic struggle for the liberation of their country from foreign capitalist domination. In that fine country, 30 million hectares of land are in the control of foreign landowners; foreigners own more than a three billion dollar interest in the oil, mines, railroad and electrical industries of Mexico.

Mexico is pictured to the outside world, by her enemies and exploiters, as a wild, lawless country. But, on the contrary, despite periods of revolutionary struggle for freedom, the Mexican people have enjoyed longer periods of peace and tranquillity than the United States. Yet conspiracies are being hatched at this moment, on the soil of the United States, by exiled reactionaries, who are supported by reactionary forces in this country, to intervene in the affairs of Mexico and overthrow its government.

Mexico has the longest unbroken line of cultural development of any nation on this continent, beginning as far back as 600 B.C. and extending down to the present moment. Mexico is mainly an agrarian country, semi-feudal and semi-colonial.

* The author was a delegate to the Sixth Convention of the Communist Party of Mexico, in January, 1937, representing the Communist Party, U. S. A.

The big imperialist nations take advantage of this character of the country, using the reactionary big landowners to struggle against the peasants and enslave the Indian nationalities.

These conditions, in the main, have brought about the process of the formation of a Popular Anti-Imperialist Front of the Mexican people, for the elimination of backward feudal remains, of the domination of foreign capitalists and of other forms of reaction.

The present government in Mexico, more than any previous government, has carried through a huge task. It has extended land and credits to the peasants, and undertaken measures against foreign exploiters of the country. It has expelled the traitor General Calles, and also Louis Morones, traitor to the nation and to the working class. It favors the organization of workers and peasants. It has established the broadest democratic freedom, and in general has followed a progressive anti-imperialist policy. In all of these progressive actions, President Cardenas has received the enthusiastic support of the Communist Party of Mexico. Clearly all of this forecasts and accelerates the emergence of the People's Front in Mexico.

But the presence in Mexico of Leon Trotsky, counter-revolutionary, endangers the fruition of the unity of the people. However, insofar as the masses of people of Mexico are concerned, Trotsky does not have enough influence to form a corporal's guard. The working class, upon learning of the permission granted to Trotsky to enter the country, protested and demonstrated against it.

The outstanding personality in Mexico today is a man who has a clear understanding of the dangers of Trotsky and Trotskyism, and the need for developing a People's Front against reaction. It is in him, and in the tireless effort of our brother Communist Party of Mexico led by Herman Laborde, that there is great hope for the full fruition of the People's Front. I refer to Comrade Lombardo Toledano, general secretary of the General Confederation of Workers (C. T. M.) of Mexico. In a

recent statement given in the name of the C. T. M., Señor Toledano has made clear the position of the trade union movement in Mexico on Trotsky. Allow me to quote from that statement:

The Popular Front has as its aim the supporting of the progressive acts of the government in which General Lazaro Cardenas is President, and to obstruct the development of reactionary activities, guaranteeing meanwhile the development of the Mexican Revolution without its being endangered from within and without.

Non-support of the Mexican Popular Front, as Trotskyism demands, is to act against the special interests of the working class. But not only that, it means to go against the normal fulfillment of the government program and to act against the general interests of the nation, which needs the support of all the oppressed sections of the population, and needs this especially because of its characteristics of a semi-colonial nation.

This statement shows a clear understanding of the danger of political asylum for Trotsky. We are convinced that President Cardenas will realize the danger of Trotsky and Trotskyism in Mexico. The fact that he has given his approval and support to the building of a Popular Front in Mexico bears witness to this.

This important political development took place on January 23, 1937, when Señor Lombardo Toledano made known the acceptance of the Popular Front pact by the P. N. R., that is, the government party, of which President Cardenas is the nominal head; by the General Confederation of Workers of Mexico, led by Toledano; by the National Peasants Confederation and by the Communist Party of Mexico.

Another evidence of the hatred of the Mexican people for Trotskyism was the successful Writers' and Artists' Congress held in Mexico City. This Congress was attended by more than five hundred delegates from all parts of the country. It was composed of writers, intellectuals, engineers, teachers. In short, it consisted of a cross-section of the intellectual and middle

class of Mexico, a class which reaction tries to win as its base for fascism. But the Writers' and Artists' Congress was definitely progressive, anti-Trotskyist and anti-fascist, and endorsed whole-heartedly the Popular Front for Mexico.

The renegade Diego Rivera, now the host of Trotsky, did not have the courage to come near this Congress. In fact, only a lone, insignificant Trotskyist photographer had the audacity to attend the Congress and speak. But he was booed and hissed. On the other hand, outstanding writers and artists, progressive Congressmen and other influential men and women of Mexico, gave their full approval and support to the Congress. Señor Orozco, one of the great artists of the world, attended the Congress and was a member of its presiding committee.

But the real danger of Trotsky is not in Mexico. It lies in the United States, where a small band of counter-revolutionaries, who commute between America and Mexico, are laying the basis for a conspiracy against the Mexican people, and are assisting Trotsky in violating the agreement for non-intervention in the affairs of Mexico from within and from without. Seditious activities have for months centered around General Cedillo, who on the eve of the Presidential elections in the United States, was preparing an armed uprising in case of Landon's election as President of the United States.* It is around such forces that the counter-revolutionary Trotskyists gather.

I have the honor of extending to liberty-loving people throughout the United States, the good-will of the Mexican people and the warm revolutionary greetings of the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Mexico. The Mexican people request our aid in helping them to fight off the counter-revolutionary agents who conspire against their country in the United States. The growing progressive movement in the U. S. must take steps to render support and aid to the Mexican and

* In the late spring of 1938, when Cedillo rose in arms against the Mexican government, his rebellion was quickly suppressed.

Brazilian peoples and to all of our Latin-American neighbors. We must give a true progressive content to the "Good Neighbor" policy in Latin America.

The Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Mexico was a most colorful gathering. There were more than 250 elected delegates, workers, peasants, intellectuals and representatives of the Indian nations of Mexico. It was the first open congress of the Communist Party in ten years in that country. The Communist Party has grown from a membership of 1,500 to 12,000 as reported at the Congress. It has organizations in every state in Mexico. Its members are leaders in the trade union movement in Mexico.

The Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Mexico fully endorsed the Popular Front movement to combat the growing forces of reaction and forestall a fascist insurrection, such as was engineered in Spain.

It pledged itself wholeheartedly to live up to the program enunciated by Dimitroff at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, under the guidance of the great Stalin, who leads the progressive forces of the world, for peace.

The American people have a sacred duty: to frustrate the counter-revolutionary plans of Calles, Cedillo, Hearst, the Catholic hierarchy and the American royalists in their attacks upon the Mexican people.

I call upon the American people not to heed the Trotskyite slanders against the Leninist-Stalinist policies, which have liberated tens of millions of oppressed nationalities and made free and prosperous nations of them. My people, the Negro people, must help to drive out the Trotskyites, the agents of the K. K. K., of the Black Legion and of reaction.

Speech at Madison Square Garden, February 5, 1937.

5. LENIN AND SOCIALISM

We commemorate Lenin as one of the greatest of men, teacher and leader of all oppressed and exploited. We pay tribute to Lenin, and to Karl Marx, more than to any other individuals in history. Lenin left the greatest heritage, the greatest monument for progressive humanity, a socialist society on one-sixth of the globe—a community of sixty nations and nationalities, a free and prosperous country.

No party in the world—except the Party of Lenin—great as its promises may have been and the individuals heading it, was ever able to overthrow capitalism and to solve basically the problems of the majority of the people.

The triumph of Marxism-Leninism in the Soviet Union is a beacon light to the toiling masses the world over. We maintain and defend the principle: *that real and true salvation for humanity is socialism*. The society for which we strive abolishes classes, race hatred and discrimination; it does away with the horror of insecurity and makes life happy and prosperous for the broadest masses. That was Karl Marx's, Engels', Lenin's ideal; that is Stalin's ideal. We are loyal to these noble concepts, and they are not foreign to our great country. The people of our country and our nation have always striven for a secure, happy and prosperous life. We are entitled to it! Because of the strength of our country and the noble ideals and principles which are our heritage, we have a mission to perform assigned to us by history. Lenin, in his address to the American working class, stated:

The history of modern civilized America opens with one of those great, really liberating, really revolutionary wars. . . . It was a war of the American people against English robbers who subjected America and held it in colonial slavery. . . .

Lenin was referring to the American Revolution of 1776. We had a second edition of that struggle in 1861-65. Since that

time, and amid many difficulties, the people of America have built up the most developed country in the world, having possibilities for happiness and for complete freedom of all the people who inhabit it. The American people will not give up this heritage nor submit to the modern tyranny of an oppressive minority. My people, the Negro people, who fought at Bunker Hill, at New Orleans, and throughout 1861-65, will never forget nor forego the struggle to maintain these principles so basic in our country. And the best of the American people and the working class support the Negro people in their struggle for full democracy.

If the 60 families who rob and terrorize the people of this country should be successful in their aim today, America would be an enslaved fascist land. Their agents in the Congress of the United States and among the people are plotting a counter-revolution. They are trying to use everything at their command to tie our country to the policies of Hitler, Mussolini and Japanese imperialism. An unholy bloc of oppression, lynching, obstruction and reaction is their ideal, as long as blood, tears and sweat of the masses can fill the treasuries of that small minority of parasites.

It is a well-established fact that if Social-Democracy in Germany and in Austria—when this leadership was in a commanding position—had curbed the monopolies, torn out the economic roots of the German Junkers and not allowed the fascists to arm and to organize, the situation in those countries would have been much more favorable for progress than for fascism. Instead, their main efforts were to disorganize the labor movement, and their main target for attack was the Communist Party. By this tactic they organized the betrayal of the interests and ideals of socialism. They sold out the elementary rights which the masses had under bourgeois democracy. Years have passed since Hitler came to power and fascism was victorious in Austria. Today the fascists are invading Spain, the Japanese militarists are tearing great China apart—and Nor-

man Thomas is following the same policy as his friends did in Germany and Austria. In words Norman Thomas advocates socialism, but in practice makes his main attack against the Party of Lenin and Stalin.

We fight for socialism! But it is only possible to achieve socialism if we preserve our American revolutionary democratic traditions. That is why, in commemorating Lenin's death, we say to the people who misuse the word socialism, "Stop mouthing 'leftist' phrases." At a time such as ours, when polemics and debates and the obstruction of the reactionaries are carried through not only with words but with bombs and poison gas, we cannot tolerate within the labor movement corrupt and degenerate elements who are agents of fascism and reaction—the Trotskyites. The best examples of how the Trotskyites have acted to carry through wrecking and obstruction is in the Soviet Union, in Spain and China.

On this day of commemoration of Lenin's death, we proclaim once more that there is only one enemy, the big finance-capitalists and their agents—the fascists and Trotskyites.

To fight for socialism we must fight for democracy, peace and security. The greatest tribute to Lenin is the growing consciousness among the masses for a united People's Front, because only in unity of all the oppressed and exploited is there the guarantee for the victory of progress over reaction!

We draw lessons from our great American traditions, and we repeat the noble words, enriched by our Leninist understanding—"United we stand, divided we fall!"

Speech at the Lenin Memorial Meeting, Madison Square Garden,
January 19, 1938.

VII

The Democratic Front

1. THE NEGRO PEOPLE'S SECTOR

THE Negro people are one of the important allies of the working class, and a great force for the Democratic Front.

What has the Democratic Front to offer the Negro people? Well may this question be asked, in the light of the political past, as well as in the urgency of the present. In the light of the past: The Republican Party has always lavished sweet words upon the Negro, but not since Reconstruction has it done anything effectively to solve the burning problems of the Negro people. The Democratic Party has been traditionally based upon a so-called "Solid South"; but there are differentiations taking place in the Democratic Party in the South that are making it possible for the Negro people to find the way toward alliance with the progressive forces.

All democratic issues of the Negro people come to the fore in the Democratic Front. These are: the fight against discrimination; for full civil rights and citizenship; for the right to vote; the right to sit on juries and hold public office; the enforcement of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments; the passage of the Anti-Lynching Bill; and the defeat of all reactionary forces. These issues necessarily form a programmatic segment of the Democratic Front.

In the recent struggle for the passage of the Anti-Lynching Bill, the progressive forces nationally—Labor's Non-Partisan League, the C. I. O. and other labor, liberal and progressive

groups—began to understand the relationship of the Anti-Lynching Bill to the progressive movement as a whole. These organizations were rallied by the National Negro Congress, in support of the campaign of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

In the filibuster against the Anti-Lynching Bill, the reactionary forces—both the Republican Party and the reactionary Southern Democrats—tried to find a new way, as they put it, of solving the question of the Negroes in the South. Among these proponents in the South was Senator Bilbo of Mississippi. We have the *Congressional Record* of May 24, 1938, in which Mr. Bilbo proposes to solve the question by the deportation of thirteen million Negroes back to Africa. He says there are already two million signatures of Negroes who are willing to go back to Africa! And Mr. Bilbo goes back to Jefferson to justify this! Here is a man who distorts the history of our country in the interests of the Bourbons.

There were proposals during Jefferson's time to deport the Negroes to Africa, in order to solve the question of slavery; but slavery was not solved that way. Slavery was solved by the progressive democratic forces, in a revolutionary way, by civil war. We hope, however, that in the present period it will not be necessary to have civil war, civil strife, to solve the Negro question in the South: to "adjust" the relationship of the Negro people and the white toilers. We propose rather that the Negroes give all aid in solving this problem through the growing Democratic Front, by joining together with the majority of the people to defeat the reactionary forces and to make this country a democratic country for all people, Negro and white. Mr. Bilbo, on the other hand, proposes to solve the problem in another way. In alluding to Jefferson, the Mississippi Senator says the following:

It never occurred to Mr. Jefferson when writing the Declaration of Independence, or any time thereafter, to assume the false position of

recognizing the Negro upon terms of perfect equality with the white man. The Declaration of Independence was written by a white man, the Constitution of the United States was framed by a white man, and both are conceived in the interest exclusively of the white man.*

Mr. Bilbo slanders the history of our country, the real Jeffersonian principles and teachings. In speaking of Jeffersonianism, Earl Browder said: "There can be no social health and progress in a society where the selfish private interests of a minority are imposed upon the masses of the people through governmental coercion; government must, therefore, be based upon the will of the majority, democratically expressed." That is the Jeffersonian idea. That is really what Jefferson meant and understood when he framed and wrote the Declaration of Independence. Browder has made this idea a part of our traditions today, despite the Bilbos and others, who speak not for the masses of Southern toilers but for the reactionary minority, against the democratic forces.

It is our task to follow these traditions of Jefferson and the entire progressive heritage of our country—to continue these traditions; to unify all the people and, in the South, to unite those two basic democratic forces, the white toiling population and the Negro people; to solve the question of democracy in the South, to join with the other sections for national unification of the country against the monopolies and reactionary forces. While Bilbo speaks for those who fattened on the plantation system, Jefferson struggled to prevent such a development. Jefferson advocated the breakup of the plantation and the establishment of free-holding, even in his native state of Virginia, as a guarantee of democratic political life.

When we speak of the traditions of our country, it is necessary, in the field of Negro work, to delve down and dig out the traditions of the Negro people, from the revolutionary epoch of Jefferson and Washington, on down through the Civil War

* Congressional Record, May 24, 1938.

period of Lincoln and Frederick Douglass; to make these traditions inseparably a part of the present struggle in our country, and to extend them. It is necessary to clear away the false conception of these traditions which has been fostered by the white ruling class, which has been accepted by certain of the Negro middle class, and which wrongly influences the psychology of the Negro people. This false conception is based on the idea that the Negro people is an inferior race. It is used as the justification of social segregation and oppression and economic super-exploitation of the Negro. First, this conception brazenly asserts the doctrine of national inferiority, as a basis for the historic conception of the Negro which the capitalist press, the radio, Hollywood movies and the stage have publicized. The slanderous lies of Senators Ellender, Bilbo and others during their filibuster against the Anti-Lynching Bill were a flagrant distortion of the spirit of the Negro.

THE TRADITIONS OF NEGRO CULTURE

The American Negro has been popularly represented as comic; as a humble, long-suffering character to be pitied—Rastus and Uncle Tom. The Negro has been forced to play the clown. From the pre-Civil War minstrel show to today's radio skit, the Negro has played the role of a happy-go-lucky, ponderously ignorant buffoon—a "natural" liar, a "natural" coward, "naturally" lazy.

The American Negro's culture cannot be dissociated from his struggle against slavery, and against the acute economic exploitation and attendant evils which have their source in the survival of the plantation economy in the South. The tradition of the Negro has been the tradition of revolt against his oppressors. The complete story of the slave insurrections led by such men as Cato, Gabriel, Denmark Vesey and Nat Turner during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is one of

the chapters of American history which yet remains to be studied adequately. Historians in the past have greatly discounted both the number and importance of these slave insurrections and have in general written from a prejudiced point of view; many works on Negro history by Negroes echo these same defects. It has been recently declared by a student of Negro revolutionary tradition that "there were at least 160 *reported* American Negro slave conspiracies and revolts between 1663 and 1865." * In the post-Civil War and Reconstruction period there is another neglected chapter of history relating to the story of the struggle of the newly-freed slaves for land and for the fulfillment of the other promises of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

This continuous tradition of protest is reflected in the poetry, songs, tracts and addresses of the Negro. There was Jupiter Hammon, the first American Negro poet of whom there is record, whose poetical broadsides appeared in 1760. There was George Horton, the slave poet, whose "The Hope of Freedom" was published in 1827. And there was Frances Harper, whose poems the Abolitionists found useful for their cause. There was also that body of anonymous slave songs and shouts, the authentic voice of the people.

David Walker's "Appeal Addressed to the Colored Citizens of the World" (1829), was a very fiery protest against slavery. Such works were confiscated and destroyed wherever found. There were many others whose work was in one way or another directed toward the overthrow of slavery: Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Ruggles, James McCune Smith, Patrick Reason, Mifflin Gibbs, James Forten, Robert B. Elliott. But greatest of all was Frederick Douglass, whose speeches and writings still hold a powerful inspiration for the Negro masses.

Prior to the Civil War, the Negro church was the only insti-

* Herbert Aptheker, "American Negro Slave Revolts," *Science and Society*, Vol. I, No. 4, and Vol. II, p. 386.

tution in which Negroes were permitted to organize. As a consequence, religious zeal was frequently a part of the struggle for freedom and liberty—as in the case of Nat Turner—and religious services were often the screen for plotting against the slave masters. Among the first organizations to take up the fight for Negro rights was the American Missionary Association, which developed out of the defense of the Negroes who revolted on the high seas in 1837 and captured the slave ship *Amistad*, which was carrying them into slavery.

Following the Civil War, there developed a hierarchy of middle-class leadership in the church, which was interested in its own advantage rather than in the struggle of the race for freedom; and the Negro church became, in large part, an agent of reaction—a buffer between the class of exploiters, both black and white, and the Negro masses. In recent years, however, under the stress of economic depression, the Negro church is resuming its original role of militant social leadership.

It is the life, the work, the struggles of the Negro masses—in the cottonfields, on the wharves, on the railroads, in the factories—which constitute the essence of the authentic culture of the American Negro. More and more the younger writers, artists and musicians among the Negro people are coming to recognize this fact. The revolutionary tradition, the true folk experiences of the race, are being newly appraised and utilized in all the arts. Langston Hughes and Sterling Brown have done outstanding work in reinterpreting this folk experience in poetry. Richard Wright, Frank Davis and others make up a group of younger writers who are keenly aware of the Negro's past and present position in American history. In art, in music, in the theater, a similar awakening to the recognition of the true role of the Negro in American life is taking place. Significant of this trend is Paul Robeson's recent statement, upon quitting the fashionable West End stage for the Workers' Unity Theatre in London:

When I sing "Let My People Go," I want it in the future to mean more than it has before. It must express the need for freedom not only of my own race. That's only part of a bigger thing. But of all the working class—here, in America, all over. I was born of them. They are my people. They will know what I mean.

In general we must aim to bring about the recognition of the fact that the cultural tradition of the American Negro is basically of the same pattern as the tradition of American democracy in general.

I want to express publicly the highest appreciation of our Negro comrades and the Negro people of the splendid contributions of Richard Wright and Langston Hughes, and other artists and musicians of our people.

It is the reactionary filibustering Senators, the Ellenders and Bilbos, who are trying to distort our contributions to real culture, and to the political and social and economic life of our country. They began to be frightened by the prospects of Negroes in the Congress of the United States, as governors of states, and in state legislatures. The Communist Party is bringing to life the true role of the Negro people in American politics and is leading them in a concrete fashion. Who has cause to fear the role of the Negro in American life? The reactionaries. They fear that a new type of Negro will emerge and come into Congress.

THE HARLEM LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

We in Harlem have already given very serious consideration to this question, and we say, "Yes, we will have outstanding Negroes in Congress!" In the Harlem Legislative Conference this has been placed as a central point. The people of Harlem aim to send to the Congress of the United States a Negro who will speak for his people, and for all the progressive forces in his community.

The Harlem Legislative Conference is concerned, not only with sending to Congress a Negro Congressman, but with defeating the present Tammany anti-progressive Congressman of the 20th Congressional District and the replacing of him with an outstanding progressive who will be a tremendous addition to Congress, who can unite the progressives that we hope are sent to Congress from various parts of the country.

It is on this basis that the power of the Legislative Conference was organized. Spade-work was done by the Communists over a period of years. How was this done? What were the steps taken?

In the first place, the spade-work over a period of years resulted in the 1937 municipal elections, around the American Labor Party, in the election of a true progressive to the state legislature.

This was assisted actively by the Communist Party and was aided by all progressive forces in Harlem, in lower Harlem particularly, which is composed largely of Negroes, Puerto Ricans and Italians. This victory laid the basis for the first practical steps taken after the election.

The state legislators from the Harlem area, twenty or more, came together to talk things over. Four state legislators—two Negroes, one Puerto Rican, and one Irish Catholic—held an informal banquet, with Vito Marcantonio, former Congressman from the 20th Congressional District, as sponsor. They discussed the question of “the next steps before the people of Harlem.”

They decided to call together their constituents and ask them what they wanted the legislators to do in the legislature. The next step was to issue, in the name of the legislators, a statement to civic leaders throughout the country and Harlem. At the first meeting of the Harlem Legislative Conference, nearly every representative appeared. They listened to the people on the questions of housing, unemployment, discrimination against

the Puerto Ricans, discrimination against the Negroes—yes, and even discrimination against the Italians. They listened to the people demanding better schools, raising all burning questions—the question of democratic freedom.

The state legislators pledged themselves to go to the state legislature and fight for these things. And they did. They fought for the principal issues of the Negro people, and all of the working class. That is not all. They launched a campaign to replace the present reactionary leader in the 20th Congressional District by a progressive. Organization has been set in motion for political action. Forces are working in the trade unions and the American Labor Party to develop a united front of all forces, to elect a progressive.

The question of a Negro Congressman was much more difficult. A majority of the Negro people in Harlem live in the 21st Congressional District. There are nearly 200,000 voters, but the Negroes are only about 25 per cent of this total, even though the majority of the people living there are Negroes. In the upper section of the district there are mostly white people: progressives, trade unionists, etc.

This now presents the possibility of working for the nomination of a Negro in the primaries; and the consideration of an outstanding Negro, who is acceptable to all progressive political groups, to run in the primaries for the nomination for Congressman in the 21st Congressional District. There are possible individuals coming forward on the basis of a program in the interests of the people. What is required is one who is acceptable to all progressive forces, one who agrees to the program of the Democratic Front for the people of Harlem—Negroes, Irish Catholics, Puerto Ricans, Italians.

These are some of the practical aspects in our approach to the election of a Negro to Congress—one who will be an outstanding progressive in the Congress of the United States. We have a similar situation in Chicago. There we have the question

of the Negro Democratic reactionary, Mitchell, who is a United States Congressman, and the fact that a progressive Negro Republican has been endorsed against him.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND NEGRO PERSONNEL

I think our next task should be confined to training our Negro forces, bringing forward both our old and new Negro forces, giving them systematic training, so that they will be able to carry out in practice and in life the Leninist-Stalinist approach to our work, so clearly mapped out by Earl Browder.

We have splendid new Negro comrades coming forth. We must train them in the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, on how to make contact with the Negro masses, how to lead branches and make them a part of the life of the Negro people.

We have just concluded a National Negro Training School, largely attended by Negroes, a school dealing specifically with Negro problems. We have made the beginning, in an organized way, in giving serious attention to the training of our Negro personnel. We also have Negro comrades in the general National Training School. We have Negro comrades in our state, county and section schools. We must give more attention to systematic training. We must bring forward these new comrades in the light of the present situation. They must understand the tactics of the present situation: how to bring the Negro people as a democratic force into the Democratic Front in our country.

This is not an easy task; but I think our Party has been making splendid advances in that direction. We must continue, however, to bring the problem forward, to bring it to the trade union organizations and industries where Negroes are not employed, to raise their specific problems and learn how to direct these struggles in Negro communities against the big monop-

olies, and against those people who try to stir up anti-Semitism. We have that problem in Harlem and also in the South Side of Chicago. That is one of the problems we will have to consider in the near future. The districts are now beginning to understand and work in the Negro field, in Chicago and other places, in the trade unions and among the white comrades who are organizers in the Negro communities.

I want to conclude with a remark on the contribution of leading white comrades in Harlem, of the many splendid forces we have there. Here our white comrades, such as Comrade George Blake, are organizing and helping to develop the movement. Likewise, our white comrades in the trade unions have been working over a period of years in a manner that promotes the work of our Party in Harlem. These comrades know how to approach the Negro problem because they have worked in Harlem, and gained experience there.

With this splendid union of white and Negro workers which our comrades are helping to promote, the work of cementing the forces of the Negro people and of achieving their alliances with the white working class and with the vast progressive movement in the land is bound to succeed. Let us go back to our various territories resolved to assist vigorously in developing the Democratic Front, through the National Negro Congress, among Negro men, women and youth. If we develop this work, we shall unite the Negro people for the Democratic Front, and we shall advance the great historic movement of struggle for Negro national liberation.

Speech at the Tenth National Convention of the Communist Party, U. S. A., May 29, 1938.

2. SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY

No doubt you have been reading in the press of the "diabolical" and "sinister" new tactics of the Communist Party which bears the apparently harmless title of the Democratic Front.

Has the Communist Party suddenly removed a mask, or put on a new one? Has it abandoned the principles of Marx and Lenin? Has Earl Browder written the "epitaph" of the Communist Party in America? Of course not! The goal of the Communist Party has been, still is, and continues to be—socialism. But the Communist Party has no interests other than the interests of the masses of the American people. Our Party is a minority party and will never seek to impose its ideas on the majority; we hope to convince that majority to accept them of its own free will. We do not burn Reichstags to come to power, nor do we frame innocent men by throwing bombs into parades. Those are fascist and capitalist ruling-class methods. The Communist Party believes in the expression of the will of the majority of the people.

Is there a contradiction in the fact that the Communist Party believes in socialism and democracy, at the same time? No, because socialism is only a higher form of democracy. Democracy was defined by Lincoln as a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." It is the rule of the majority, in the interests of all the democratic people. The Communist Party says that true democracy must include economic democracy as well as political rights. If what we have already of democracy in the United States is preserved, and political, social and economic rights are extended in an ever-widening circle,—this extension will ultimately reach the highest form of democracy, which is socialism.

Fascism has brought about a new international situation.

The rise and spread of fascism makes it imperative that the democratic forces of the world unite to protect their rights from this new invasion of Attila the Hun, which threatens to destroy civilization. The enslavement of the working class, the impoverishment of the middle classes, to whom fascism made such elaborate promises, the denial of the findings of science and the kindling of wars in three continents—that is what democracy has to fear from fascism.

The brazen flouting of science by the Nazis—whose theory of Aryanism was long ago shown by scientists to refer to a language, not to a race at all—is repulsive to every honest student of science. The newspapers have quoted Italian fascist professors as saying that the Italian race is pure “Aryan” also. This, in the face of the incontrovertible fact that Italy has been one of the world’s great melting pots, in which every race, including Moors, Arabs, Negroes and Jews have amalgamated with Europeans to form the modern Italian people! What will these fascist professors dare to assert next!

Race hatred, pogroms, war—in Ethiopia, in Spain, in China. That is what the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis instigates under the banner of a war on “Communism.” But it is not Communism alone which these vicious beasts aim to destroy, but every non-fascist government as well—every democracy. And against the poisonous bites of these mad dogs we must use the Pasteur antidote of the Democratic Front, if we do not wish to die in the writhing agony of their hydrophobia.

Our enemies say we Communists are not sincere when we say that we defend democracy. But I ask you to judge—is it not logical for believers in socialism to call for resistance to fascism, for protection for workers’ rights, for the extension of democracy? Is that not the most reasonable, clear and direct road to socialism?

We ask to be judged, not by our words, but by our deeds. If you will examine every progressive movement in this country, the labor movement, the peace movement, the youth movement,

the struggle for women's rights, against anti-Semitism, for Negro rights, for jobs, social security and increased educational opportunities,—you will see the active work of the Communist Party. In every organized campaign to raise the economic and cultural level of the United States, members of our Party are working with devotion and self-sacrifice.

We Communists can point with pride to the Soviet Union, where the extension of democracy is every day increasing. Take the question of the right to vote. The great Stalin Constitution declares that:

All citizens of the USSR who have reached the age of 18, irrespective of race or nationality, religion, standard of education, property status or past activities, have the right to vote . . . and to be elected with the exception of the insane and persons convicted by a court of law to sentences including deprivation of rights.

As to the nomination of candidates:

The right to nominate candidates is insured to public organizations and societies of toilers: Communist Party organizations, trade unions, co-operatives, youth organizations, and cultural societies.

Under collective ownership, socialism is freed from crises and economic insecurity. There is no unemployment. Exploitation of man by man is abolished. The land of the collective farms is secured to the farmers, "for their free use for an unlimited time, that is, forever." Sexual and racial inequalities have given way to equal rights for all. In other words, the Soviet people have a government, "of the people, by the people, for the people."

Our enemies have raised a campaign of slander against the Soviet Union which has befuddled some well-known liberals, such as Professor John Dewey. The excuse was the recent treason trials. That there are spies and traitors in the Soviet Union no one can deny, just as the early American Republic had its Benedict Arnolds and its Aaron Burrs, and just as American citizens are corrupted by Nazi agents to deliver over

secrets of this country's defense. The Soviet Union is surrounded by hostile countries which would go to any length to destroy her. We Communists are convinced of the correctness of the Soviet government in crushing treachery with extreme measures. We know that if President Cardenas had not used arms against the traitor Cedillo, we would have a Nazi-controlled Mexico at our borders. We know also that if the Republic of Spain had not allowed freedom of plotting to the fascist generals, there might never have been two years of mass bombings and bloodshed on the other side of the Pyrenees. The Soviet Union knows what it has to expect from fascism and is taking every precaution to defend itself, within and without.

We Communists say that there is no more sincere champion of democracy than our Party. In the concrete situation of present day America and international fascist threats, we advocate the building of a Democratic Front of all the people.

The Negro people came into the great Democratic Front as natural allies. Many of them represent descendants of "first families," their ancestors having come here in the seventeenth century. For centuries the Negro people have toiled to build up this country and fought in its wars. Yet they are branded "lazy" and movie caricatures such as the roles of Stepin Fetchit are applauded. How ironic all this is when you think that in the mines, the steel mills, in the engine rooms of ships, on the farms of the South—that wherever heavy, difficult and basic labor is in progress, Negroes are to be found. The reward they reap for their blood and sweat is oppression of such an inhuman character that it is almost impossible to imagine such treatment of man by man.

To those of you who have been brought up in America, perhaps the full import of this national oppression has been dulled by custom and habit. I remember a friend of mine, a young white American, who traveled in Europe for the first time. He said to me on his return, "I had never fully realized how incredibly insane and barbarous was America's treatment of the Negro

people until I tried to answer the question of intelligent Frenchmen and other Europeans. I found I simply couldn't explain our general attitude to the Negro problem."

What seemed such an inexplicable phenomenon to my young friend is really one of the basic features of American capitalism. It is the old policy of divide and rule, which the lynch lords of the South have used so skillfully to split the mass of Southern workers. I do not need to give you examples of Negro oppression. The Scottsboro case has dramatized it to the entire civilized world, and so much material exists both in a sociological and a literary form that with only a little reading you will be overcome with the savagery of it.

To examine this fascist attitude in its new rantings, let us consider the words of Senator Bilbo of Mississippi during the disgraceful filibuster against the Anti-Lynching Bill. They are no more than a paraphrase of what Hitler has said:

The trouble with the Negro who is guilty of the unthinkable crimes that are sometimes committed are that he is abnormal. He is not normal. The sutures of the skull have ossified and the brain has stopped growing and expanding, and the passionate animal instincts are developed to such a high point that they overcome awful crimes in retribution for which the white man in his desire to sustain white supremacy and protect his womankind sometimes does things that he ought not do; namely, destroy the perpetrator of the crime.

These are samples of the policies which would direct our country under fascism. That the Negro people are aroused to the menace of fascism, was shown in a very interesting and dramatic manner in the Harlem demonstrations after the Louis-Schmeling fight. Thousands of colored people paraded behind the signs of the Communist Party and other organizations which read: "Louis Up—Hitler Down, Drive Race Hatred Out of Town"; "Aryan Supremacy Taboo"; "Louis K.O.'s Fascism"; "Ethiopia Fights On," etc. I think I may say without boasting that the Communist Party of Harlem has done more than any other group of people to arouse the people of

the community to the danger of fascism. The Negro people have everything to gain and nothing to lose by joining in the Democratic Front.

Already the Negro people are in motion, in the direction of progress. Great united front organizations such as the National Negro Congress, which transcends old political alliances in order to join forces around basic issues of the entire Negro people—such as those mentioned above—will be an important sector of the Democratic Front. The significant tendency of the Negro people to break their old political affiliations in support of progressive candidates was demonstrated during the 1936 and 1937 elections.

The real history of our country, now being excavated from under the refuse and falsifications of race prejudice, shows that the American Negroes have always played a progressive role. The Reconstruction Period after the Civil War, in the *Birth of a Nation*, *Gone with the Wind* school of literature—as well, I am sorry to say, as in most textbooks put into the hands of American school children—has been pictured as the role of scalawags and half-savage Negroes. As a matter of historical fact, Reconstruction was one of the most progressive periods in American history and a study of the laws passed by those black and poor white legislators show clearly that the bourgeois democratic revolution was in the process of development in the South, and would have been completed but for the treacherous alliance of the big monied interests of the North with the Southern plantation owners. President Roosevelt's recent speech calling for the economic rehabilitation of the South, as one of the wealthiest and yet one of the poorest sections of the country, is important. The struggles of the Negroes, for voting rights, the Herndon case, the Scottsboro case, the organization of Negroes and whites in unions on the waterfronts, in the steel and textile mills, on the farms, will be an important factor in awakening the South to progressive action.

So far I have spoken of the building of the Democratic Front

on a broad scale. I want to give you now a concrete picture of how it can be built on a community scale. In Harlem, the Democratic Front is on the march. In the Job Campaign, a committee, under the leadership of the Reverend Adam Powell, Jr., directs a large movement to obtain jobs for Negroes in the big corporations which take thousands of dollars out of Harlem every month. It was found that the semi-public utilities such as the Edison Company, the Telephone Company, the IRT and the BMT employ only a handful of Negroes, and all of those in a menial capacity. An attempt to turn the campaign into an attack upon small Jewish storekeepers in Harlem was frustrated, and Jewish and Italian support enlisted in the fight on the utilities by these national groups who are also discriminated against in employment. Already the job campaign has "cracked" several of the utilities and many of the big stores.

One of the most interesting developments in Harlem is the Legislative Conference. Picture for yourselves how really astounding and significant is this action of four state assemblymen, a Negro Democrat, a Negro Republican, a Puerto Rican Laborite and an Irish Laborite, in inviting the voters of Harlem to express their legislative desires in an assembly under the chairmanship of an Italian-American ex-congressman, after these assemblymen had already been elected! Such a democratic procedure has been unheard of up till now. This unity of the different national groups in Harlem—Negroes, Italians, Finns, Latin-Americans, Jews and Irish—is all the more unusual and hopeful because reactionary politicians have so often used the trick of setting each group snapping at each other's heels.

The Job Campaign and the Legislative Conference are only two examples taken from a number of united front activities in Harlem, and I am proud to state that the Communist Party in Harlem plays a role in all of them. There is an important move now being undertaken which will be of particular interest to those of you who live and study in Washington Heights. That

is a move to unite the progressive white voters in the Heights behind the thoroughly just demand of the Negro voters to elect a progressive Negro to Congress. Such a man as A. Philip Randolph, President of the Pullman Porters' Union, would be an asset in the United States Congress not only to his own people put to progressive America as a whole.

In closing, I wish to say a few words about the Communist Party, the intellectuals and the Democratic Front. The Communist Party understands the value of culture, of a national culture, if you will. I think you will find that left-wingers, many of them members or close sympathizers of the Communist Party, have brought a new zest and vitality into American art and letters. Our young artists have given a *hypodermic* of rejuvenation to the "lost generation." You will find Communists prominent among the best new writers, dancers, artists, playwrights and actors.

The Communist Party has been an ardent supporter of the New Deal program to aid intellectuals and intellectual pursuits. Another reason why the Democratic Front must be forged, and quickly, is to protect the measures Roosevelt has initiated for the benefit of the white collar workers, such as the arts projects, the federal theater, the adult education program and all the cultural divisions of the WPA. Helen Hayes, while touring the country in *Victoria Regina*, ascribes the awakened interest she found in the stage to the influence of the Federal Theatre Project. In spite of the great spread of culture and education represented by the WPA program, reactionaries stop at nothing in their efforts to cripple the projects. The unity of progressives is more than ever necessary to protect the New Deal gains.

While Professor Conant of Harvard calls for the use of birth control in the graduating classes of our universities, because trained intellectuals without jobs make for discontent, the Communist Party advocates more schools, more teachers,

more universities and more professors. The residents of America, from the big city dwellers to the isolated mountaineers, need more education and culture, not less! The American masses have a right to the best our civilization can offer.

The contribution of my people, the Negro people, is a part of modern American culture. In less than seventy years of a dubious freedom, the Negro people have pushed forward in every field. I mention only a few names of the scores of important ones. There are sociologists like W. E. B. DuBois, social workers like Lester Granger of the Urban League, Dr. Max Yergan, the student of African affairs, Dr. Carver of Tuskegee, one of America's foremost biologists. In music we have Hall Johnson, Roland Hayes, Jules Bledsee, Caterina Jarboro, Nathaniel Dett, Paul Robeson, Edna Harris, the late Rose McClendon and Louise Beavers. The Federal Theater has shown what Negroes can do with good plays such as *Macbeth*, *Turpentine* and *Haiti*, etc. We have artists such as Augusta Savage and Aaron Douglas, and writers like the late James Weldon Johnson, Sterling Brown, Zora Neal Thurston, Langston Hughes and our new comet, Richard Wright. Although most of you are intellectuals gathered here today, and therefore interested primarily in intellectual pursuits, I am sure you have all thrilled to the achievements of Negro Americans in the field of sports. The prestige of our country has been carried all over the world by such men as Jesse Owens, Metcalf, Johnson, Armstrong and, last but not least, Joe Louis.

In addition to these well-known names, there are thousands of colored teachers, social workers, musicians, newspaper reporters who do not make the headlines but who mark the forward surge of Negro culture. If my oppressed race has accomplished so much, are the possibilities not vastly increased by the building of a Democratic Front which will extend their rights and opportunities?

As a Communist, and above all as a Negro Communist, I see that there is only one solution to the problem facing the work-

ing class of America, the progressives and the Negro people. That solution lies along the road I have indicated—through the forging of the Democratic Front against fascism and the extension of that front until it reaches the goal of true democracy which is socialism.

Speech to teachers and students, Columbia University, July 19, 1938.



APPENDIX

Appendix

1. SPEECH ACCEPTING THE NOMINATION FOR VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES ON THE COMMUNIST PARTY TICKET (MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, NEW YORK, JUNE, 1936)

Comrades and Friends:

This is indeed an honor that the Communist Party has conferred upon me. But I do not take it as an individual tribute. It is a tribute to the entire Negro people; it is another proof that the Communist Party is the outstanding fighter for their freedom from segregation and oppression of every kind. The other parties lavish sweet words on the Negro people; but it is only the Communist Party which, day in and day out, fights for every demand and need of the Negroes—in the terror- and lynch-ridden South and the poverty-stricken slums of Harlem and the South Side of Chicago.

The American people face their greatest crisis since the Civil War. This recalls the heroic part played by Negro regiments in turning the tide towards victory, and the role played by that great Negro liberation leader—Frederick Douglass. His close associate was John Brown, who saved Kansas from slavery and who died that the Negro people might be freed.

John Brown died in a brave but individualist attempt to free the slaves. *Earl Browder symbolizes an invincible international movement dedicated to the liberation, not only of the Negro people but of all oppressed races and nationalities.* Earl Browder and the Communist Party are the inheritors of the tradi-

tion of Frederick Douglass, Abraham Lincoln and John Brown. We Communists, Negro and white together, will carry out what they dreamed of.

The Republican Party has always posed as the friend of the Negro people. It even sent a Negro Congressman to Washington. But Mr. De Priest was part and parcel of the corrupt machine which brutally suppresses the Negroes in Chicago. The Republicans have not fought against segregation, against discrimination on jobs and relief. Today, the Republicans, sponsored by the Liberty Leaguers, are in alliance with the worst enemies of the Negro people. It was they who subsidized the infamous Grass Roots-Ku Klux Klan convention of hate, led by Governor Talmadge of Georgia.

The Democratic administration has been a little more favorable to Negroes. But in the South, the reactionary Democrats have openly countenanced lynchings and tortures, are responsible for the continued imprisonment of the Scottsboro boys, and for trying to send Angelo Herndon to the chain gang.

I urge the Negro people in their own interest, in the interest of freedom and equal rights, to support the Communist Party, which saved the Scottsboro boys, which stands for every Negro demand, which is the party of the Negro people.

I appeal to the white workers, Communists and non-Communists, to remember that the Negro people must not be left to fight alone. The responsibility lies with the white workers to help free their brothers in a black skin. Unless the Negro people are freed there can be no freedom for the white workers. Both must fight shoulder to shoulder against their common enemy, Wall Street, which waxes fat on their misery and suffering. Both must defeat the sinister forces of reaction which plan to enslave, not only the Negro workers, but the white workers as well. Let us unite to defeat reaction. Let us go forward to freedom and equality for the Negro people in a free, happy and prosperous America.

2. A SOUTHERN WHITE WORKER INTRODUCES A NEGRO CANDIDATE OF HIS PARTY *

Friends:

Before introducing the speaker, I should like to say a few words about the significance of his candidacy for Vice-President of the United States.

We live in Virginia, a Southern state. We all know that the South is ruled by a small minority, by men who have never agreed to the freeing of the slaves, or to the enforcement of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.

Senator Glass, about whom Mr. Randolph Leigh has so aptly remarked that he shed blood for the House of Morgan, has been credited with being more responsible than any other man for the suffrage laws of Virginia, which make voting so difficult and discriminatory. Not only by the poll tax, but by other obstacles, the vast majority of the people are disfranchised, both Negro and white, and they never vote.

The position of the Negro people in the South is that of semi-slaves. They are denied the right to vote, to serve in office or on juries, to equal or even adequate education, the right to work; they are even denied the right to live as human beings.

Those responsible for the plight of the Negro people, responsible for lynchings, for Jim-Crow laws, for keeping the Negro down, have tried to justify themselves with the theory of "white superiority."

Such a theory has been proven false, utterly false, both by science and by life itself. What becomes of "Anglo-Saxon superiority," on which Hitlerism justifies its wholesale persecution and massacre of the Jewish people, when Jesse Owens proves himself the outstanding Olympic athlete?

* Speech of Donald Burke, state secretary of the Communist Party of Virginia, introducing James W. Ford, at a radio broadcast from Richmond, during the national election campaign of 1936.

Where given an opportunity, where freed from oppression, the Negro people rise to any height attainable by man!

This then is the position of the Communist Party. We declare our belief in the complete equality of all races and all nations. We fight especially against the oppression of the American Negro, and work night and day to convince the white workers and farmers, that they have been fooled, duped, into believing that they will benefit by keeping the Negro down.

We say: "Labor with a white skin cannot emancipate itself where labor with a black skin is branded!"

That is why tonight it is my pleasure and privilege as a white workingman, who has overcome the race prejudice with which he was filled as a child, to introduce to you the man whom the Communist Party has selected as its candidate for Vice-President of the United States.

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