

Draft Program of the Communist Party

The Program Committee of the Communist Party is making available for publication letters and articles which it has received on its "Draft Program: The American Way—to Jobs, Peace, Democracy." Non-Communists as well as Communists have been invited by the committee to send their opinions to the Communist Party at 268 Seventh Ave., New York City, N.Y.

The Worker and the Daily Worker believe that the program and the discussion on it are of general public concern and interest and from time to time are publishing the discussion pieces made available by the Program Committee.

The People in the Fight Against McCarthyism

By CLAUDIA JONES

IT IS AN indisputable fact that the Communist Party draft program and the proposals it projects fully apply to the overall and special problems confronting the Negro people in our country. Moreover, the discussion of the program has evidenced that a broad understanding exists that the Negro people DO represent a chief ally, but the discussion has also revealed that the crucial relation of the Negro-labor alliance to the realization of the central task—the development of the broadest unity to block war and McCarthyite fascism, is not fully understood. Clearly, a new level of consciousness on the crucial issue of Negro rights is required.

The Draft Program correctly asserts that the fight for "the rights of all the Negro people is an integral part of the fight for democracy, for peace, for the rights and living standards of labor and all the people." It further declares that unity of all democratic forces is required for this. It follows, and in my opinion it should be specifically stated in the draft: unity of the Negro people, unity of Negro and white is necessary to achieve this program. Such unity, of course, must be premised on overcoming serious sectarian isolation from the masses of people, who are expressing not merely concern but are increasingly acting on that concern against the pro-war, pro-McCarthy fascist drive in our land.

An outstanding example of this special unity and the new high level of the Negro liberation movement was the recent historic Supreme Court decision outlawing segregation in public schools. This victory was won by the Negro people and their white allies under the leadership of the NAACP.

The imperialists of our country hailed the Supreme Court decision as a "blow to the Communists." As indicated by more than one bourgeois columnist, this high court decision was clearly in-

fluenced by the rising national and colonial liberation movements all over the world—in Asia and Africa, Western Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean. The democratic role of the Soviet Union, People's China and the European People's Democracies was also an important factor.

IT IS obvious that these powerful influences contribute to and do not negate the advance of Negro rights. This is to be seen in the May 29th action of the Southern Presbyterians, calling on their membership to cooperate in enforcing the high court's decision, as did the Southern Baptist Convention and the United Council of Church Women. It is also to be seen in the almost immediate compliance of many border state universities with this and other anti-jimcrow rulings of the high court—and the general lack of open opposition to the decision from the South, except of course, the raucous voice of Talmadge and the earlier threat of Byrnes.

Increasingly, as a nation, we are being forced to gauge the Negro people's fight for first class citizenship not only in relation to gains made at home, but to the anti-imperialist struggles for national and colonial independence around the globe.

These struggles act as an impelling factor to the heightened struggles and national consciousness of the Negro people as a people, and to the movement of all class forces in our country who must reckon anew with this question.

The historic contributions of the Communist Party to the battle for full economic, political and social equality for the Negro people have left their mark on all who deal with the question of Negro rights today. It is therefore imperative that the Draft Program make clear not only the necessity to win equal rights for the Negro people, but the necessity to recognize that those forces who will compose the emerging anti-war, anti-McCarthyite people's coalition will avoid this question at peril to their success. This is certainly true in the current primary contests and the decisive Novem-

ber electoral struggles. Unless this understanding is strengthened and the Negro-labor alliance consolidated, there is danger not only that GOP demagoguery will be successful in the elections, but that the Negro-labor alliance will be counterposed to the unity coalitions which exclude the Negro people.

Now the ruling circles of our country are fiercely determined to eliminate any Marxist-Leninist or Left influence among the Negro people, or any leadership which bases itself on the leading role of the Negro workers in the Negro liberation movement. Therefore, while simultaneously fighting to unify all strata of the Negro people and their leadership and work in alliance with them in all organizations, it is necessary to strengthen Communist influence among the Negro people as well as the influence of that sector of Negro leadership which understands the need for alliances with the working class and other democratic forces. There is no contradiction between enhancing class consciousness and the fight for a correct united front coalition policy in this or any other field of work.

IN SECTION V of the Draft Program the part entitled "Win Equal Rights for the Negro People" should be strengthened so that it first places the question of the fight for Negro rights as being in the self-interest of the white masses in our country. Secondly, while the draft correctly speaks of "the fight for liberation of the Negro nation" and "Negro oppression," it doesn't define the character of this oppression. The working class is also oppressed and exploited, as are women, for example, whose oppression cuts across class lines. It is necessary to define the oppression suffered by the Negro people, according to the past correct historic analysis as that of national oppression—stemming from the situation of the Negro people in the heartland of their oppression, the South. There, due to feudal-like relations in agriculture, denial of land, incompleteness of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, etc., the Negro people occupy the status of an op-

pressed nation. This oppression extends in varied forms to the Negro minority in the North and West.

The Draft Program states: "If there were no oppression of the Negro people in our land, there would be no wage differentials between the North and South." It seems to me that the question of unequal wage rates is due primarily to the type of economy in the South as well as to the super-profits extracted by northern and southern capitalists and plantation owners from the oppressed Negro people and poor white workers and farmers.

Precisely because Negro oppression is bound up with sharecropping and farm tenancy in the South, some demands, even though limited, must be formulated on the land question.

Finally, it is of course true "if there were no Negro oppression . . . there would be no poll tax Congressmen, etc." This contributes to a good and commendable style of polemic. But it lends a tone, not intended, I am sure, that these conditions, once removed, would ipso facto, remove Negro oppression. While the elimination of these conditions would go a long way toward alleviating the grievously oppressed status of the Negro people, it would by no means wipe out Negro oppression. For that self-determination, a bourgeois-democratic demand, capable of achievement under a people's front government, perhaps implemented along lines of bi-national relationship, as William Z. Foster once suggested, would be required. I recommend that this demand—the right of self-determination for the oppressed Negro nation—be inserted into the program. It was a weakness that it was eliminated from the Southern program of the Communist Party. For full and complete equality for the Negro people, of course, socialism is the ultimate and only answer.

Such clarification is extremely necessary in view of the suggestion of certain Party members that the Party should merely agree to place program-wise only those demands which are acceptable to broad masses and leave for other stages of the struggle more concrete aspects of the fight for Negro rights. These Party members, in my opinion, distort the drafting committee's excellent letter on electoral stages in their application of these stages to the Negro question. Such a position would place the Party in an opportunist position and must be rejected. Moreover, there is no guarantee of reaching these advanced

stages if we fail to understand the inestimable ally that the Negro freedom struggle represents at each concrete stage of the struggle or conversely, the relationship of the Party's role in advancing the Negro liberation movement and in struggle for the full economic, political and social equality of the Negro people.

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SUCH AN approach would also clarify many questions wrongly raised by some Negro Communists who have posed in the course of this discussion the question of whether an extension of bourgeois-democratic rights for the Negro people is exempted by the Draft Program's stand that the fight against McCarthyism and the war-makers is the key task of the moment.

Neither those who counterpose the struggle against McCarthyism to the struggle for an extension of bourgeois-democratic rights for the Negro people, nor those who would lay the fight for these rights on the shelf for a more opportune day see the issue correctly, in my opinion.

The former fail to see the dialectical process operating here: that in the fight to defeat the forces of war and fascism in our country we are advancing Negro rights, since the enemies of mankind are the enemies of Negro freedom. (In a McCarthyite America the Negro people would suffer the Mississippi jimcrow oppression a thousand-fold, the Martinsville Seven brutality a hundred-fold, the multiplication of the seven-year imprisonment of Mrs. Rosa Lee Ingram. In a McCarthyite America the Negro people would suffer the fate of the six million Jews who were exterminated by the fascists in Germany).

The second group, suffering from identical ideological weakness, fail to see that the pro-war, pro-fascist forces cannot be defeated in our country without the alliance of the Negro people—one of the inherently anti-fascist, pro-democratic forces in our country.

Here we have expressed both right and left deviations in both positions. Also, a failure to understand the scope of the Draft Program and the fight that will be required to implement it correctly, to weld the unity coalition that the Communists seek to build. Such a fight by no means implies lack of struggle for unity of all democratic forces, unity of Negro and white, or for ideological clarity as to why such unity is decisive.

The fight for Negro equality is one of the major aims of the Com-

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munist Party; it occupies, together with jobs, peace and McCarthyism, the center of the stage in American political life. One way this could be dramatized would be to term the program: "The American Way to Jobs, Peace, Democracy and Equality" instead of the present title, "The American Way to Jobs, Peace, Democracy."

Ability to read the signboards correctly as to the freedom struggles and aspirations of the Negro people will be immeasurably aided by the clear line of the Draft Program. It will be enhanced if Communists strengthen their ties among the Negro people and deepen the wide prestige they enjoy through such Negro Communist leaders as Ben Davis, Henry Winston, and Pettis Perry and others in order to develop the widest discussion of the draft program among the Negro people and the masses of white Americans.