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*The* **NEGROES**  
*in a*  
**SOVIET**  
**AMERICA**

## FOREWORD

**T**HE world is caught in the depths of a great crisis. Masses of people live on the brink of starvation. Discontent and unrest are more widespread than ever before. Changes are taking place in society and in government. Intensive preparations for war and movements towards fascism are developing quickly. These are times of great changes and of quick transformations.

The old ideas, upon which generations of people have been raised, are crumbling because life no longer justifies them. New ideas take their place. People in all walks of life are seeking new solutions, an effective way out of present conditions.

What is the relation of the Negroes in the United States to this rapidly changing world? They are now living through one of the most trying times in their history. What is the way out? This question presents itself more sharply to the Negro masses than to any other section of the population.

It is our purpose in this pamphlet to answer this question.

We believe we express the minimum desires of the Negro masses when we say that they want at least:

1. A decent and secure livelihood;
2. The rights of human beings;
3. An equal, honorable and respected status in all public and social life.

Capitalism has not been able to provide these needs, and is less and less able to do so. There are those who say that by reforming capitalism it can be made to fill the needs of the masses. We will show why this is impossible.

There is only one real, effective way out for the masses. It is not an easy one. But no basic change in society is easy. This way leads to a Soviet America. This is the only realistic vision of freedom possible today. It must be achieved, it can be achieved.

How? We will first show the basis of Negro slavery in the United States today. We will then show how all events are pushing towards another revolution in the United States and what role the Negro people will play in this revolution. We will then try to describe the tremendous vista of freedom and advance possible in a Soviet America.

## THE NEGROES

in a

## SOVIET AMERICA

by

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and

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# The Negroes in a Soviet America

By JAMES W. FORD and JAMES S. ALLEN

## I. THE NEGRO IN CAPITALIST AMERICA

**B**OOKER T. Washington once said: "No race that has anything to contribute to the markets of the world is long in any degree ostracized." He thought that capitalism would permit the Negro to develop business and manufacturing, and increase his ownership of land. In this way, he believed, the Negro could achieve an important economic place in the capitalist world. His whole philosophy was based upon this belief. "Agitation for social equality," he said, "would be extreme folly." Let each Negro train himself in industrial pursuits or in business, hew a place for himself in capitalist America, and only then will he be treated with respect, was his advice.

But what has this wisdom led to?

### Economic "Progress"

Let us first consider the question of landownership. During the Civil War and immediately after, the Negroes thought that they would obtain the land—"forty acres and a mule." But nothing of the kind happened. Only very slowly and with much difficulty was it possible for some to purchase land. By 1910 only one-fourth of all Negro farmers owned some land, usually very little, the poorest and most heavily mortgaged.

But for the last 25 years, capitalism has been taking even this land away from Negro farmers. In 1930 there were 40,000 less Negro farm owners than in 1910. In ten years, between 1920 and 1930, Negroes lost almost 2,000,000 acres of land. How much they have lost in the last five years, no one knows. But it is certain that land is being taken away now from Negro owners by banks, insurance companies, large landowners and other creditors, much more rapidly than before.

On the other hand, the most brutal form of slavery in the country has been growing rapidly. The Negroes are the principal victims of this slavery. It is share-cropping and planta-

tion tenancy. Everyone knows that when chattel slavery was abolished the plantations remained. Most of the Negroes became share-croppers and tenants on these plantations. They were actually prisoners, almost chattel slaves. Almost three-quarters of a century has passed since Emancipation. Has capitalism done anything to abolish this new slavery?

On the contrary! The plantation country to this day is like a prison, a veritable hell to which 5,000,000 Negroes have been consigned without any prospect of immediate escape. In fact, the slavery has even increased. In the cotton plantation area of the South, twenty-five years ago, 80 per cent of all the Negro farmers were croppers and tenants. But in 1930 their number had grown to almost 84 per cent.

There are those who say that President Roosevelt and the "New Deal" are changing this situation. But it is clear to every Negro in the plantation country that Roosevelt has been helping only the big planters. His policies have resulted in increased slavery.

When the crisis broke out in this country the large landowners in the South found themselves in a quandary. Many of the banks and credit merchants failed and those who remained refused to extend credit. Many of the small landowners, who lived from hand to mouth, were wiped out. From the beginning of the crisis to March, 1933, over a half-million forced sales and foreclosures took place in the Southern states.

Roosevelt came to the rescue of the large landowners by pumping tremendous funds into the South, most of which went to the modern slave-master — the plantation owner. In nine months alone the Farm Credit Administration advanced about \$300,000,000 directly to the planters. In this way, Roosevelt helped to bolster up the plantation, on which millions of Negroes are enslaved. The Federal Government took over many of the debts from private banks and insurance companies and is now the biggest holder of mortgages in the South. This means that it now has a direct hand in maintaining the plantation slavery, that it is part owner, together with the big planter, of a vast prison country.

The second step taken by Roosevelt was to increase the profits of the large landowners and the commission merchants by reducing acreage in the South. In 1933, while millions of people were in need of clothing, we were faced with the astounding

picture of ripe cotton being plowed under by poorly clothed farm workers. The croppers and tenants never saw the money which they were supposed to receive from the Government for this act of destruction. The plantation masters, the credit merchants, the bankers, got the government checks. This is what a government farm agent in Mississippi said:

"You know, the government in Washington caused me a little trouble here. By mistake they mailed some of the checks made out to 'nigger' croppers. They probably didn't know what they were doing when they did it. Imagine giving a check to a 'nigger' cropper! Of course, I turned these checks over to the landlords anyhow. They'll have to get the croppers to endorse them before they take them to the bank. But that won't be hard."

Acreage was cut again in 1934 under the Bankhead Bill. It is being cut again in 1935 as a result of a "democratic" election in which the plantation owners forced the Negro croppers and tenants to vote for reduction.

This is not only a decimation of crops; it is also a decimation of hundreds of thousands of human beings. Whole tenant families are being sent "down the road" by the planters, or are being permitted to eke out a miserable existence in their cabins doing forced labor for the government or the planter in return for some crumbs called relief. These landless and workless farm families are being "kept on hand" to be forced to work at plowing, chopping or cotton picking at starvation wages. Wages on most plantations are now between 25 and 50 cents a day.

Roosevelt's policies have had the effect of increasing the slavery of millions of Negro toilers in the South. Cotton, the need of millions of unclothed, a necessity of mankind, has been turned into the mark of Negro slavery by capitalism.

### The Promise of the City

It seemed to many people, especially during the World War and the years immediately following, that city life and industry would offer a means of escape from slavery on the land.

The city and its industry had been practically forbidden territory for Negroes up to the World War. In the first place, the plantation masters and government agencies of 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, the factory gates remained closed to Negro workers. Hope was

dimmed when the textile industry, which grew so rapidly in the South, made it clear that it would not hire Negroes. The place of the Negro, it was said, was on the plantation; their slave labor was needed there. Even to this day, the textile mills do not have any Negro workers at the machines.

But during the World War a great shortage of labor existed in industry. Then only did the capitalists make an energetic drive to obtain Negro labor.

Who does not remember the great hope of the exodus? It was compared to the Emancipation Act. The South was the land of the Pharaohs, the North "the Land of Promise". The Red Sea of capitalism was opening up to permit the Negroes to pass. But the exodus was already petering out in 1923. Employers had more labor than they needed. The Red Sea again flowed back into its normal course.

Almost twenty years have gone by since the mass migration started. Years before, Negroes, in smaller numbers, had been engaged in industrial pursuits. Yet it is a well-known fact that Negro workers 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. Today, no more than 10 per cent of all the Negro workers have held skilled or semi-skilled jobs. It is not because they cannot be skilled workers. Many of them are. It was a common occurrence in the South, even before the present crisis, to find graduates of Tuskegee Institute, highly trained mechanics and teachers, working as bell-boys in the hotels. But capitalism has not given the same opportunities to the Negroes for advancement and training as it had given to white workers. The white workers, it is true, are wage-slaves under capitalism. They must sell their labor to an employer in order to live. They, also, are exploited. But it is clear to everybody that the Negro wage-worker is exploited even more. He is held back to the lowest level of the wage-workers, he is pushed back by capitalism every time he advances.

Under President Roosevelt's "New Deal" this state of affairs has been officially recognized and given a legal status. The Industrial Codes have placed the official stamp of the Federal Government upon the double standard. The differential wage established by these Codes said in effect that the wages of Negro workers must remain lower than those of white workers. One

example will show how this works. The Code for the lumber industry placed the minimum wage for the North at 42½ cents an hour, and for the South, where most of the lumber workers are Negroes, at 24 cents an hour.

Now capitalism is trying to evict the Negro workers from industry for good. Today there is an army of at least 15,000,000 unemployed in the United States. Among the Negro workers unemployment is many times greater than among white workers. The number of Negroes in families on relief increased from 2,117,000 in October, 1933, to 3,500,000 in January, 1935. In many places even jobs which were always held by Negroes are being given to white workers at the same or even lower wages.

Nor has the Negro fared any better in the professions. Here again capitalism has held back with a heavy hand all efforts at advancement. In the whole country there are only 6,781 Negro physicians, lawyers and dentists. They also have been victims of segregation and discrimination, suffering from inadequate facilities in the way of training and practice, and excluded from white institutions. Many of them are starving today. For a population of 12,000,000 Negroes there are only 50,000 Negro teachers, most of whom are not permitted to teach in white schools. The yearly salary of most of these teachers does not exceed \$300.

Push ahead in business, was another advice of Booker T. Washington. One is even met with this advice on all sides today. But even the development of a large Negro middle class has proven to be impossible under capitalism. In the whole country today, there are only about 25,000 retail stores operated by Negro proprietors. Most of these 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. He has a poor clientele. He has no chance against the chain store. Today, many small business men are being wiped out.

A small, well-to-do class, however, has developed among the Negro people. The Negroes also have a millionaire or two. But this class has developed only at the expense of the rest of the Negro community. It gathers for itself a goodly share of the profits arising from the exploitation of the Negro masses. It is true that capitalism has not permitted the existence of any large Negro-owned industrial enterprises. The white ruling class is

the direct exploiter of the Negro masses on the plantations and in industry. But the Negro upper class has found another way to exploit the Negro masses.

It makes its profits by taking advantage of segregation and the ideas of "white superiority"! 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 their Negro tenants (Watt Terry, the Negro millionaire; John E. Nail, Oscar DePriest, etc.). Others have built up their wealth in the cosmetic business by commercializing the idea of "white beauty" (Madame C. J. Walker, Mrs. Annie M. Turnbee, Anthony Overton, etc.). Still others have made their wealth in the insurance and banking business, closely connected with real estate speculation and landlordism (Anthony Overton, C. C. Spaulding, etc.). A number of Negro physicians and ministers have accumulated small fortunes, not in their practice but in real estate. These people live on the body of the segregated Negro community. They are in favor of segregation and oppose all efforts to wipe out segregation, for it would mean destroying the basis of their wealth.

It is clear, then, that capitalism has hindered the economic progress of the Negro people. With the exception of the small layer of parasites, the Negro people are retarded, held down, pushed down to the lowest level. This is economic progress during 75 years of capitalist freedom!

### The "Stigma of Race"

"That *thing* over there!"

These were the words with which Thomas Knight, Jr., chief prosecutor in the Scottsboro Case, referred to Heywood Patterson during the second trial at Decatur, Alabama.

These words express the contemptuous and insulting attitude towards Negroes which capitalism breathes. "Keep the Negro in his place"—this is the watchword of the modern slave driver. Social ostracism, persecution, segregation, insult have taken the place of the slaveowner's paternalism and of Simon Legree's whip.

The facts of Jim-Crowism, lynching, discrimination are so generally known and are so deeply branded in the heart of the Negro masses that we need not go into detail here. Suffice it to

say that the rulers of this country, especially and most openly in the South, have made the Negro a social outcast, have treated him not like a human being but like cattle. They have gone to the greatest pains to brand the Negroes with the mark of non-humans. On street cars, trains, in railroad stations and places of amusement, on drinking fountains, the ruling class of the South has broadcast to the world: "Only whites here—only Negroes there!" In the North they do not use signs, but that is the only difference.

There are written laws and there are unwritten laws. The three most important written laws with regard to Negroes are the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution of the United States. These are supposed to guarantee to every Negro the full rights of citizenship and equality under the law. But these are only decorations on the Constitution. Negroes are not permitted to serve on juries in the South. A Negro voter in the South is either an object of a lynching party or a highly privileged character. Although such practices are supposed to be unconstitutional, has the Federal government, since the period immediately after the Civil War, ever done anything about it? These written laws are not enforced. But the written laws in 15 states segregating Negroes on public conveyances are very strictly enforced.

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

What is the reason for this very severe persecution of the Negro masses? It is not to be found in any "natural hatred" of whites for Negroes. These acts of hatred and of persecution are caused by capitalism.

First: The ruling class must use severe measures of oppression and persecution in order to keep the Negro peon on the plantation, in order to maintain that special slavery of the South. The capitalists also make use of the same measures to force the Negro to take the lowest place in industry.

Second: The whole idea of the "superiority of the white race" and the practices of Jim-Crow are used to effect a severe separation of the white masses from the Negroes. Race prejudice grew out of the old chattel slave system. Then the slaveowners were afraid of a union of the oppressed "poor whites" with the Negro slaves. Capitalism has taken over this prejudice and uses it for

the same purpose. This will be clear when one compares the oppression of the Negroes and of the Filipinos by American imperialism. The Filipinos are also an oppressed people. Yet there is not as much prejudice in the United States against Filipinos as against Negroes. The reason is that about 5,000 miles of ocean prevent the Filipino masses from carrying on daily struggles in immediate contact with the American masses. On the other hand, the whites and Negroes come into daily and constant contact in the United States, often exploited by the same boss or planter and engaging in common struggles for their daily needs. The ruling class has therefore used extreme and severe methods to keep them apart.

Let us now consider briefly education and health.

The public school system is supposed to be open to all. We should remember that the Negroes were principally responsible for starting a system of free public education in the South immediately after the Civil War. The first superintendents of the public school system in many Southern states were Negroes.

Today, the Negro is the outcast of the public school system. One million Negro children of school age are not in school at all. More than a third of the Negro pupils never get beyond the first grade and three-fourths never advance beyond the fourth. In many sections of the plantation country schools are open only for two or three months during the year.

More than half the population of Mississippi is Negro. Yet the state spends only \$5.45 a year for the education of the Negro child as compared with \$45.34 for a white pupil. In one county in Alabama it was \$57 per white child and \$1.51 per Negro.

Today, many of the Negro schools have been closed down for lack of funds. Capitalism is sacrificing the education of millions of children.

The high disease and death rates among the Negro people reveal the severity of capitalist exploitation. In Milwaukee, for instance, the death rate from tuberculosis among Negroes was eight times as great as among whites; in Harlem three times as great as compared with New York City as a whole. Deaths from heart disease are twice as great among Negroes as among whites. In Manhattan, where the Negroes constitute only 12 per cent of the total population, almost one-fourth of all infant deaths occurred among Negroes.

This high death and disease rate is due to the hard exploitation of Negroes, to lack of hospitals and of care, to the crowding of the segregated sections.

In view of these appalling facts, knowing all the bitter details of our daily existence, is there any reason why we should permit capitalism to continue?

### The Reformers and the "Race Criers"

There are still those who would have the Negro masses believe that capitalism can do better than it has in the past. These people range from out-and-out reactionaries to those who cover reactionary policies with radical drappings. Let us see what they have to say as to the way out.

### The Bootstrap Lifters

There are still many followers of Booker T. Washington today who would have us lift ourselves up by our bootstraps, when many of us do not even have boots.

But we have already seen, from 75 years of experience, that capitalism has permitted only very few to rise—at the expense of the rest of the people. Today, when the crisis is denying millions even the barest necessities of life, only a quack or an out-and-out reactionary can give such counsel.

But this kind of agitation is still very strong. Pick up almost any Negro newspaper, listen to many of the "race leaders" and you will be advised to help build Negro business. This will solve all our problems, we are told. The executive secretary of the National Negro Business League tells us: "Business points the way to a breakdown of the barriers and handicaps which retard Negro progress." He, and many others, call upon the Negro masses to patronize Negro business, as the most effective means to protect themselves against persecution.

How futile, how bankrupt is this advice! Everywhere the capitalists are *cutting down* production, have closed factories, reduced crops. The big monopolies and trusts are getting greater control of manufacturing and of the market. Small businessmen everywhere are going bankrupt. Even the largest Negro banks and insurance companies, the pride of the followers of Washington, have crashed: the two largest Negro banks, the Binga State and the Douglass National; the "Capstone of Negro business"—the National Benefit Life Insurance Company of Washington.

and others. The P. & H. Taxi Corporation of Harlem, employing 750 workers, saw its last days during the crisis.

The capitalist road of advance is now out of the question. The Negro upper class uses this argument in an attempt to win the Negro market. It has nothing in common with the real interests of the Negro masses.

#### The Ballot and the Drawing Room

In contrast to Booker T. Washington and his followers there arose the group of middle-class reformers. They were not and are not today entirely opposed to Washington's philosophy. We have in mind especially the founders and present-day leaders of such organizations as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Urban League.

We say they are not entirely opposed to Washington and the Tuskegee idea for they only objected to Washington's counsel that it would be extreme folly to agitate for social equality. They, however, accepted the basic part of the bootstrap lifters' program; they accepted capitalism. On the basis of capitalism, it seems to them, it is still possible to make economic headway.

The N.A.A.C.P. began on a wave of resentment and anger against Booker T. Washington's betrayal of the fight for equality. Because, like Washington, the N.A.A.C.P. accepted capitalism, it received the support of members of the white ruling class who believed in reform. The basic idea of the reformers is that it is possible to change capitalism for the better, that within the limits of the present system, by peaceful and gradual methods, it will be possible to do away with the oppression of the Negro people. But actual events have shown these people to be completely wrong. Conditions are actually growing much worse under capitalism. The extreme exploitation of the Negro workers and farmers is not being done away with; on the contrary, it is being increased. Acts of violence against Negroes have multiplied.

The methods of the N.A.A.C.P. have proved to be treacherous. The leaders of the organization are afraid to arouse mass movements. They prefer to meet representatives of the ruling class in the drawing room and make compromises with them. Two recent cases show this plainly.

In the Crawford case, where the Negro defendant was charged with the murder of a white farm family in Virginia, the N.A.A.C.P. made an agreement with the prosecution as a result of

which Crawford was sent to prison for life. It turned out that Dean Houston of Howard University, who acted as defense lawyer for the N.A.A.C.P., did not even try to prove the innocence of Crawford, although there was plenty of evidence to show this. The case was carried on quietly, no mass protest was permitted, the sentence was not even appealed.

From the very beginning of the famous Scottsboro Case the N.A.A.C.P. attempted to wrest the case from the hands of the mass defense movement. They waged a bitter struggle against the International Labor Defense and the Communists. Why? Because they were afraid of the mass movement which had been aroused. They wanted to have quiet sessions with the Alabama lynchers, fix up the case behind the scenes. This would have meant sacrificing the lives of some of the nine Scottsboro boys and prison terms for the rest. The I.L.D., however, fought the Alabama lynch courts and mobs, made the case known around the world, roused millions of people. They fought not only for the lives of the boys but also for the right of Negroes to serve on juries in the South and other rights of Negroes. As a result of this method of fighting, the lives of the boys have been snatched from the electric chair four times.

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, Uncle Tom or Judas methods. The only way such victories can be obtained is by rousing and organizing the masses, by refusing to accept sops.

The reformers have still another idea. They have a great reverence for the ballot, they think it can produce wonders. The leaders of the Socialist Party still cling to this old fairy-tale. The workers, they say, can elect themselves into power and then peacefully bring about a change in capitalism. But what if the capitalists refuse to abdicate? They reply: "We'll see then."

The miracle of the ballot! If the ballot can do all they say it can how are the Negroes going to use it when 4,000,000 Negroes, eligible to vote, are disfranchised? When two out of three Negro eligible voters are not even permitted into a voting booth?

We say that Negroes must have this right to vote, as well as the other rights of citizenship. We must fight for these rights. We say that the workers and the oppressed masses should use the ballot, the right of free speech and assembly, to elect their



own representatives, and create their own organizations. We fight against every effort to take these rights away.

But at the same time we emphasize that capitalism cannot be done away with by the ballot. We believe in using elections and our representatives in elected bodies to rally the people against capitalism. As long as capitalism permits the rights of citizenship, the working class should use these rights against the capitalists. But anyone who tells you to depend upon the ballot and civil rights for your defense is betraying you. For, as has happened in Germany, in Italy and in Austria, the capitalists take these rights away, forbid the right of free press, free assemblage, free speech and the vote. And what then? Does not the ruling class in the United States more and more deny the rights of citizenship to workers, have they not always denied these rights to Negroes?

### The "Race Criers": Black Patriotism

Dr. W. E. B. DuBois, former editor of *The Crisis* who recently departed from the N.A.A.C.P., is today the clearest and foremost exponent of Black Patriotism and race solidarity. We will examine his arguments one by one, for they are the most complete and best arguments for this point of view. We will then show how dangerous such ideas are to the struggle for Negro freedom.

**First argument:** The Negro upper class, says Dr. DuBois, is not an exploiter of Negro labor.

We have already shown that this is not true. It is correct that there are very few Negro manufacturers or large landowners who hire labor and exploit Negro workers directly. But there is a Negro upper class which lives by means of segregation. It is in the interest of this class to defend segregation, or the very basis of Negro business would be wiped out. On the other hand, segregation is the worst feature of the oppression of the Negro masses. It is in the best interests of these masses to wipe out segregation. The interests of the masses and of the Negro upper class clash. In order to obtain real equality, which means doing away with segregation, it is necessary to fight not only against the white ruling class but against the Negro upper class as well.

Furthermore, it is clear that the interests of the Negro upper class are the same as those of the white ruling class. Both classes wish to maintain segregation, and with it, the basis of Negro oppression. This unity of interest is shown clearly in

action. On many occasions we have seen the so-called "respectable leaders of the race" openly cooperating with the ruling class.

**Second argument:** The members of the Negro upper class, says Dr. DuBois, "bear the brunt of color prejudice because they express in word and work the aspirations of all black folk for emancipation." He goes on to claim the Negro upper class as the leader of the Negro people towards a new future.

We know that a class which lives from crumbs off the table of American big business, of the Rockefellers and the Fords, which accepts capitalism as the basis for its own existence, can not lead a strenuous and militant struggle for Negro liberation. But DuBois tries to dress this cringy warrior in shining armor, for he fears another class. He fears the working class.

The workers as a class are the only consistently revolutionary class in present-day society. If properly organized and led, they can stop the wheels of industry. They are like an army: big industry has thrown the workers together, in large disciplined masses. They organize in unions to fight for better conditions. To win better conditions they *must* fight against the capitalists. This struggle develops into a struggle against capitalism itself. The workers are the only class with the power to overthrow capitalism and build a new society. They lead the rest of the exploited population to this goal.

It has been one of the most inspiring facts of recent history in the United States, that the white workers have begun to overcome white prejudices and lead in the struggle for Negro rights. This is in part due to the economic crisis. As they 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 employers. But it is also because of the fight of the Communists against prejudice and for working class solidarity and Negro rights. In the last six years, since 1929, the following highly significant events have occurred:

A share-croppers' union, under Communist leadership, has been organized in Alabama and other Southern states, with a membership, at the time of writing, of close to 10,000 members. This is the first time that such a large and fighting union of share-croppers has been able to exist, to lead struggles against the plantation masters and to continue to grow.

The Communist Party has been organizing white and Negro

workers in the South. As a result, the feeling for solidarity has grown even in the American Federation of Labor Unions in the South, as, for instance, in the United Mine Workers of America in the Birmingham region.

Under the leadership of the Communists, a mighty struggle for Negro rights is being waged in the South. The outstanding example of this is the Scottsboro Case.

In the North, largely as a result of Communist policy and agitation, larger and larger numbers of Negro workers are participating in the labor movement. There is a growing solidarity of white and Negro workers in the fight for unemployment insurance and relief and in the struggles of the trade unions.

This movement of solidarity and of unity has also been joined by Negro intellectuals, teachers, doctors and other professionals, who have left the reformers and understood the need of a revolutionary struggle against capitalism.

Dr. DuBois expresses the fear of the Negro upper class for this movement. He is in favor of "race" solidarity and opposes the solidarity of white and Negro labor, which he tries to prevent.

*Third argument:* He uses an old weapon of the white ruling class. He tries to turn the anger and resentment of the Negro masses not against the white capitalists and the Negro Uncle Toms, but against the white workers. The exploitation of the Negro workers, in Dr. DuBois' own words, "comes not from the black capitalistic class but from the white capitalists and *equally* from the white proletariat". He goes even further, charging the white workers with causing the "lowest and most fatal degree" of the suffering of Negro labor.

The prejudice of the white workers, according to Dr. DuBois, is inborn and cannot be changed. The white workers cannot be trusted. They are the enemies of the Negro masses. To believe Dr. DuBois means to give up all hope of liberation.

It cannot be denied that race prejudice exists among large sections of the white workers. On many occasions, white workers have participated in acts of discrimination against Negroes. But, any sensible person will ask, what is *the cause* of this prejudice? Is it instinctive and unchangeable?

We have already seen that race prejudice arises like a stench from the plantation system and from capitalist exploitation. We have seen that capitalism has fostered this prejudice in order to

maintain the oppression of the Negro masses and prevent the unity of the white workers with them. But we have also seen that this prejudice begins to fade into the background as the white workers unite with the Negroes in a struggle to obtain their needs.

We should also ask: Who are the real carriers of prejudice in the labor movement? And we must answer: That section of the labor movement which includes the more skilled, the better-off sections of the workers who have been misled by the false and temporary "prosperity" and by the top leadership of the American Federation of Labor. This section of the workers had been lulled to sleep by the dream of perpetual well-being and the treacherous promises of peace made by William Green, Matthew Woll, and their cohorts.

But prejudice depends so much upon the conditions under which we live, that even this section of the workers influenced by the Green crowd is also changing its attitude towards the Negro workers. The reason for this is that these "aristocrats of labor" are losing their privileged position because of the economic crisis. Many skilled workers have been thrown out of employment, their wages have been reduced, their general conditions are worse. They, too, are being forced to fight in order to live. They begin to realize that the great mass of unorganized workers, including the Negroes, must be organized into the unions in order to defend themselves against the attacks of the employers. Proof of this is the great wave of trade union organization and strikes which began to sweep the country in 1933.

The Southern workers, who form the most backward section of the American working class, have been for generations most persistently inculcated with race prejudice. Now, in the course of a growing wave of struggle against their exploiters they are developing solidarity with the Negro workers. More than anyone else, we realize the difficulty of overcoming prejudice among these workers. They have been fed it since infancy. But the fight for bread and life is stronger than prejudice. Let us illustrate this.

In an industrial city of the South there was a group of about a dozen white workers, most of them unemployed molders, who became interested in the Communist Party. They would meet once a week to discuss the situation with a Communist organizer. From their own bitter experience they knew and agreed that it was necessary to organize together with the Negro workers in

the same unions. For during the great railway shopmen's strike in 1922 their union had been smashed by the employers simply because the union had refused admittance to the molder's helpers, who were Negroes. When the strike broke out, many of the Negro workers saw no reason for helping the white workers who had refused to admit them into the union and fight for their demands. The result was that the employers now placed the Negro helpers in the molder's jobs, at lower wages of course, and broke both the strike and the union.

But these white molders in their discussions with the Communist organizer, objected to social equality. One conversation ran somewhat as follows:

*White worker:* I don't like Negroes, and I don't see why I should sit beside one at a meeting or on a street car.

*Communist:* Now you agree that white and Negro workers should organize together in the same union. Let us imagine that there is a strike. There will be a strike committee. On this strike committee there will be both white and Negro workers, for especially in time of struggle we must keep our ranks united, strong.

*White worker:* That's right. We'll have to keep our picket lines strong, and stop any white or Negro scabs.

*Communist:* It will be necessary for this strike committee to meet almost continually. You will not be able to meet in a public hall, for thugs and the police may be after you, and you cannot afford to have the leadership of the strike put out of commission. You may have to meet in your own house, perhaps.

*White worker:* Yes, if there is no other way out.

*Communist:* Your home is small. You will have to use your largest room, the parlor. You will have Negroes in your parlor, for you cannot exclude Negroes from the strike committee meeting. The strike is the most important thing. This strike may be a very hard one. During the most crucial time, it may be necessary to meet late into the night, and go into action again early in the morning. Some of the Negro members of the Committee may live in the opposite end of town. They cannot go home. They may have to stay over. Would you deny them the hospitality of your home? Social equality, you see, becomes a necessity of the strike, of the class struggle. If you do not practice this social equality, you will lose the support of the Negro workers and the strike will be lost.

The white workers were a little taken aback. They thought it was driving things a little too far, although they could not deny the logic of this argument. When in the local election campaign the Communist Party ran a Negro worker as candidate for Mayor, these white molders refused to meet with the Communist organizer. But their attitude changed quickly enough.

Shortly after, the city cut down on relief. The Unemployment Council and the Communist Party called for a demonstration of protest. Fully five thousand workers, both whites and Negroes, responded. But the police broke up the demonstration immediately, beating up one of the speakers and arresting three. The workers were incensed. Large numbers came to the Unemployment Council hall which could seat no more than 100 persons. On the long wooden benches were seated white and Negro workers side by side, talking excitedly about their experiences, and cursing in common terms the police and the city administration. And talking just as excitedly with a group of Negro workers were some of these white molders whom it had been so hard to convince. The actual facts of life, their common experiences with the Negro workers, had brought them together.

This is the way working class solidarity is built. Prejudice may remain, but it becomes less important, is superseded by the needs of the daily struggle. The white workers will overcome the hindrance of prejudice, because they must do so in order to live.

Now, Dr. DuBois, in rousing the enmity of the Negroes against the white workers, as do other upholders of "race solidarity", helps to prevent this unity. He takes advantage of the distrust of whites which has been imbedded in the hearts of the Negroes by long years of oppression. He fans and builds this distrust.

*The conclusion:* And what is the solution proposed by Dr. DuBois?

"The only thing that we not only can, but must do, is voluntarily and insistently to organize our economic and social power, *no matter how much segregation is involved.*"

Now if this is not an outspoken defense and support of segregation, we do not know what is. Negro salvation is to come—through segregation, the watchword of the parasites among the Negro people!

We have not much to add about the new Garveyites, about the movement led by the "Black Hitler" Sufi, the exponents of

the 49th State and other similar race movements. They are all based on the same ideas expressed so well by Dr. DuBois. Whether it be a return to Africa or the creation of a 49th state for Negroes or some other such Utopian, unrealizable schemes, these provide no way out for the Negro masses. These plans assume support and cooperation of the white ruling class. They distract the Negro masses from effective struggle against American imperialism. They lead deeper into the dangerous net of race segregation, which satisfies only the present interests of the Negro upper class and the ruling class of the country.

These movements towards race segregation have recently had a new lease on life. They have grown as a result of the crisis which has ruined many Negro middle class people, who are desperately seeking a way out. The increased persecution and terror against the Negroes has fanned this movement. Many participate because they honestly believe that this is the way out.

Among the new movements of this character are those which aim to obtain "jobs for Negroes". Among these are the Costini movement in Baltimore, the Negro Alliance in Washington, D.C., and the Sufi movement in Harlem. These movements confine their activities to individual establishments in the Negro communities. So small and few are these business houses, that it is clear that they could only provide a limited number of jobs for Negro workers and would in no way help solve the problem of mass unemployment. These movements, then, have the effect of hindering the struggle for unemployment insurance for all workers and for adequate relief. They shunt this struggle into a closed alley.

But just as dangerous to the real interests of the Negro masses is the effect of this movement in strengthening separation of the white and Negro workers. For the leaders advocate the replacement of white workers employed in Negro neighborhoods. In this way they direct the resentment of the Negro workers not against the ruling class but against the white workers. Instead we should direct all our efforts towards the organization of the Negro workers together with the white, the opening of the doors of all unions to Negroes, equal opportunities for jobs *in white as well as in Negro neighborhoods*, and to obtaining adequate insurance for the unemployed from the Federal Government.

Another movement especially dangerous at this time is the

Pacific Movement of the Eastern World, which has as its main slogan: "United Front of Darker Races Under Leadership of Japan." The agents of the Japanese ruling class have organized and sponsored this movement in the United States. Their purpose is to try to create difficulties for the ruling class of America in case of a war between Japan and the United States. Such a war is now very possible—a war between two brigands for the spoils and riches of the East. But the Japanese ruling class is no more a friend of the Negro than is the ruling class of the United States. The Japanese capitalists have not hesitated to subdue and rule Korea with an iron hand although the Koreans are a colored people. They have made all haste to grab Manchuria and other sections of Northern China. They carry on a relentless war against the Chinese people. They are now intriguing even in Africa and are penetrating the Philippine Islands with the purpose of seizing territory there also. At the same time, the Japanese ruling class is carrying on the most ruthless kind of terror against the toiling masses of Japan, suppressing trade unions and peasants' organizations, smashing strikes, etc.

In this struggle between the Japanese and American ruling class for the division of the East and for the right to exploit additional masses of toilers, we side with neither. We wish for the defeat both of the Japanese and of the American ruling class. We wish to see them both overthrown; capitalism in Japan as well as in the United States destroyed. Our task is to fight *against American imperialism*, just as the task of the Japanese workers is to struggle against Japanese imperialism.

Japanese capitalism is now one of the principal enemies of the Soviet Union. It is seizing additional territory in North China in order to be better prepared for a war against the Soviet Union. Japanese statesmen freely admit this. Japanese troops are concentrated on the Soviet borders.

The Soviet Union is different from all the other countries in the world. There capitalism has already been overthrown, the workers and farmers rule; machines, factories, banks, railroads and land are in the hands of the toilers. Colored peoples of all races live in the territory of the Soviet Union. These peoples enjoy the fullest equality and freedom. Any act or expression of race prejudice is considered a crime. These facts have been fully confirmed by such people as Paul Robeson and

other prominent Negroes who have either visited or who live and work in the Soviet Union. Robinson, a Negro mechanic, is a member of the Moscow Soviet, the chief governmental body of the capital of the Soviet Union. The Soviet government has renounced all the special privileges formerly held by the Tsar in China, Persia, Turkey and other Eastern countries.

And yet the agents of Japanese capitalism are spreading the lie that the Soviet Union is one of those "white nations" which seeks to dominate the colored peoples of the world!

From Dr. DuBois through the new editions of Garvey and the intrigues of Japanese capitalists there runs a common streak: race loyalty, race solidarity, race patriotism! Will these solve the problem of the Negro people? For a reply one need only ask: Has segregation solved this problem? Is it not true that segregation is *the* problem, the very thing which has to be wiped out? And these saviors propose to heap still more and ever more segregation upon us!

#### The Threat of Fascism

One of the leading fascist journals in Germany says:

"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 the Negroes. And, of course, most of the Negroes that are lynched do not merit any regret."

Spoken like a Kleagle of the Ku Klux Klan! This expresses the threat of fascism to the Negro should it come to the United States. The country would be one domain of the super-K.K.K. The Negro would be the chief victim of fascist persecution and murder. Lynching would become the national sport of the fascist mercenaries. Already the budding fascist organizations in this country have written the degradation of the Negro into their program as their most sacred principle.

Fascism is rapidly growing in the United States today. As conditions grow worse, as the masses of people become more and more dissatisfied and seek a way out of the misery imposed

by capitalism, the capitalists turn to the road of fascism. It is the last line of trenches for capitalism before the onrush of the revolutionary army. When fascism comes into power, as we see in the fascist countries of Europe, the last liberties are taken away from the masses. The trade unions and all independent organizations of the masses are smashed; only government or company unions and fascist organizations are permitted. An open dictatorship of the capitalists rules the country. One can well imagine what the lot of the Negro people would be under such a dictatorship.

Under President Roosevelt, the road is being paved for fascism. With the help of the N.R.A. labor boards, the attempt is being made to force the workers into company unions, to abrogate the right to strike, or to place the unions entirely under government control. More and more power has been concentrated into the hands of the President who turns more directly to the high financial moguls of Wall Street for his orders. There are rapid preparations for war and increased propaganda of nationalism and patriotism.

But the President and his aides carry out these policies under cover of many phrases and promises about helping the people. The people are radical-minded; Roosevelt, therefore, uses some radical phrases. This also is a method of the fascists, who have made demagoguery a supreme art. He talks about "chasing the money-changers from the temple", but aids big business.

But there are others with their ears close to the ground who go even further than Roosevelt in the use of anti-capitalist language. These are the budding fascist leaders, like Father Coughlin, William R. Hearst and Huey Long. Father Coughlin and Huey Long are clever men who talk about the inequalities and injustices of capitalism and because of this get a ready response from many people who do not yet understand how to do away with these injustices. Hearst throughout his whole life has been a vicious enemy of the workers and a loyal defender of capitalism. He realizes that the Coughlin and Long methods are today the best way of trying to prolong the life of capitalism. He therefore supports them and offers them the services of his chain of anti-labor newspapers. But it was with language such as these men use that Hitler built his fascist storm troops in Germany. Hitler obtained his funds from the biggest industrialists and finan-

ciers of Germany, just as certain big bankers in the United States are today beginning to support budding fascists in the United States. Hitler also talked about limiting fortunes, doing away with unemployment, re-dividing wealth. etc. But these only remained empty promises after he came into power.

That Huey Long, a representative of the plantation masters of the South, that Father Coughlin, linked to Wall Street through the Committee for the Nation, that Hearst, the king of anti-labor and anti-Negro propagandists, should have to talk against outstanding evils of capitalism in order to save it shows one important thing. Capitalism is on the brink of destruction. People no longer believe in it. The turning point in history has come.

The masses of Negro people certainly have no desire to see the present system of society in the United States continue. It has meant more suffering and slavery for them than for any other section of the population. What are *the* important changes which have to be made? How can they be made?

## II. THE NEGRO AND REVOLUTION

### Two Revolutions in One

The problem of Negro liberation has two aspects. The first is the question of equality. Here we ask: what must be done to remove the basis of the special persecution and oppression of the Negro people, to wipe out lynching, segregation, social ostracism as well as extra-exploitation on the land and in industry?

The second is common to all workers and exploited, whether they be white or Negro. Here we ask: what must be done to wipe out wage-slavery, unemployment, poverty, crises and war?

These questions are not entirely separate, but are connected with each other. We shall first consider each separately and then show how the solution for the first flows into the solution for the second.

### The Rebellion of an Oppressed Nation

The special oppression of the Negro people in the United States is due to the firmly rooted remainders of chattel slavery. Every one knows that while chattel slavery was abolished as a result of the Civil War, freedom—such as even the white workers have under capitalism—did not take its place. Elements of the old chattel slave system remain to this very day.

These remainders of chattel slavery can be divided into the economic and the social. The most important economic remainders of slavery are the plantation system and share-cropping in the South, which we have already described. But the existence of these in the South not only enslaves the Negroes in the Black Belt, but drags down the Negro population throughout the country. It also affects the white population in the South. There are many white share-croppers whose conditions are only little better than those of the Negroes. They will not be freed from the leftovers of the chattel-slave system unless the Negroes are liberated.

The most important social heritage of the chattel-slave system is the idea of "white superiority" and race prejudice. These ideas were not wiped out because chattel slavery was not entirely wiped out. Alexander Stephens, the vice-president of the Confederacy, said that the cornerstone of the South rested "upon this great physical, philosophical and moral truth that the Negro is not equal to the white man, that slavery—subordination to the superior race—is his natural and normal condition." That remains the philosophy of the ruling class of the South today.

To fully realize how much of chattel slavery still remains in the South one has only to know that the largest mass of Negroes still live in the territory of the old slave plantations. The plantations have remained and have imprisoned a large portion of the Negro population. On this territory—the Black Belt—the Negroes are in the majority of the population. Yet precisely here is the center of the enslavement of the Negro people.

As long as the plantations and share-cropping remain, it will be impossible for Negroes to obtain equality. For in order to rise above the plantation level, it is first necessary to remove the plantation and divide the land among the tillers of the soil.

This can only be done by the organized power of the masses of exploited share-croppers and farmers on the land. Such a complete transformation, however, will not come overnight and can be successful only as the result of organization, preparation and proper leadership. The rapid growth of the Share-Croppers Union of Alabama and of the Tenants' Union of Arkansas shows that the situation is ripe for rapid organization.

This land revolution will also be joined by the hundreds of thousands of white share-croppers and poor farmers who have suffered from the plantation and credit system. They, too, will

see the necessity of throwing the large landowners off their backs, escaping from the tyranny of the credit masters and the usurers, and of giving land to the landless.

Seventy-five years ago, the North went to war in order to destroy the power of the slaveowners. That, too, was a revolution. But it was not finished. Our task is to finish it.

But the revolution will not stop with the seizure of the land. That will just be the beginning of a complete, really basic change in the homeland of lynch terror. For just consider where this land revolution will take place: precisely in the plantation country, where the Negroes are today the most oppressed section of the population and where they form the majority of the population. Let us imagine such a revolution taking place in the Mississippi River Delta. Here there are huge plantations. In some counties the Negroes are as high as 90 and 95 per cent of the total population; throughout this area they are not less than 60 per cent. With the power of the plantation owners destroyed, a new kind of government will be set up by the farmers and the workers in this territory. For the first time Negroes and oppressed "poor" whites will really enjoy democracy. The Negroes will play the leading role both in the land revolution and in the new revolutionary governments.

The same will occur throughout the plantation area—from southeastern Virginia, down through the Carolinas and central Georgia, across Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana, reaching even into Arkansas and parts of Tennessee and Texas. Now will be the opportunity to really establish the basis of Negro freedom. This land, on which the Negroes have been enslaved for generations, can then be made into a free land. It can be proclaimed as a new country, in which the land has been freed from the exploiters, where the majority—the Negro people—rule with the cooperation of the white masses in the territory.

The white masses on the land will support this new government for it will mean that their right to land is also recognized, that for the first time they, too, will have the benefits of free public school education, freedom from usury, etc. The old South will no longer remain. The Negroes will come into their own.

The real test of freedom for the Negro people in the Black Belt lies in their right to self-determination. Unless they can chose freely for themselves what the relationship of this new

government will be to the United States as a whole, they will not be free. If the capitalists are still in power in Washington we can rest assured that they will oppose and try to crush the rebellion of the Negro people. The Negro people need powerful allies to carry through and to defend this revolution for freedom. They will have such an ally in the working class, the leading force in the struggles of all oppressed sections of the population of the United States against capitalist exploitation.

We must now consider the revolution which will take place throughout the country.

### The Proletarian Revolution

Capitalism is giving birth to revolution. The United States was created as the result of a revolution against British domination. It strengthened itself as the result of a revolution against the slaveowners in 1861. Now capitalism is decaying. It can no longer supply the needs of life to those who produce. It is an outworn system. It must give way to a new system of society. A complete transformation must take place, which can come only as the result of a social revolution.

What basic change must be produced in order to do away with wage-slavery, unemployment, war? Capitalism is based upon the private ownership of machines, factories, railroads, land and all other means of production. The means of production are in the hands of a small class, the capitalists. The greatest principles of capitalism are private property and profit. Millions of workers produce together the necessities of life. But these necessities become the property of those who own the machines, the land, etc., while the workers do not have the money with which to buy them. Crises occur, masses of people suffer. Colonies are seized by the capitalist powers in a race for profits and booty. Capitalism gives birth to war.

Only one thing can do away with the basis for the existence of capitalism: the expropriation of the capitalists. Take the means of production away from them, place them in the hands of the workers who will produce, not for profit, but for the needs of society. The working class is in a position to bring this change about. It alone, by its own organized efforts and supported by the rest of the oppressed population, can really and truly change, transform the system under which we live. This change is inevitable. The workers are driven towards it by capitalism itself.

But an attempt to bring about such a basic change would immediately meet the opposition of the capitalists and their State power. This State power consists not only of the bodies of government, but of the army, the police, the courts. In order to expropriate the capitalists the workers first need to discard the existing government machinery and to institute a working class government. Such a revolution was successfully carried through in Russia in 1917, under the leadership of the Communist Party.

This is *the basic change*. Such a revolution frees the workers from wage-slavery and from oppression by the capitalists. The workers are in power. The workers' government suppresses every effort of the capitalists to restore the old system. Under this new workers' government, which guarantees the widest democracy for the masses, the building of socialism begins. Only then is it possible to have social planning to fill the needs of all the masses, to abolish unemployment, to abolish war for profit.

But in order to accomplish the revolution and to defend it the workers need the support of the other exploited sections of the population. While the workers are in a position to organize and lead such a revolution, they cannot carry it through by themselves. They have allies in the population. These allies are:

1. The mass of poor and small farmers, who are oppressed by big business, the trusts, the monopolies and the bankers; also the middle class in the cities, such as the technicians, the professionals, small businessmen, etc., who are suffering from capitalism and who have everything to gain under socialism.

2. The oppressed Negro people.

3. The oppressed peoples of the American colonies—the Philippine Islands, Cuba, etc., and of South and Central America who are under the domination of the capitalists of the U.S.

*Among the most important allies of the working class is the Negro people in the United States.* This fact determines the relation between the two aspects of the revolution which is developing in this country.

### The Combination of Two Revolutions

The revolution for land and freedom in the South and the proletarian revolution in the country as a whole will develop hand in hand. Each will lend strength and support to the other. The working class—both white and Negro—will lead both.

How does it come about that the white workers not only will, but must lend their support to the struggle for Negro liberation?

First of all, because the workers will not be able to overthrow capitalism unless they have the help of the Negro people. This is why we say that it is inevitable that the white workers, even the Southern white workers, fight for Negro freedom and support the struggle of the Negro people. They will do so because it is necessary for their own victory.

The Southern white workers especially will support the Negroes in their struggle. For in the South the power of the landlords and capitalists is threatened most of all in the Black Belt. Here the class struggle is very sharp. This is the weakest front of capitalism. Just imagine what consternation will seize hold of the ruling class of the country when the struggle in the plantation country reaches the stage of revolution! The revolution which breaks out here might indeed be the spark for the proletarian revolution throughout the country. The white workers will understand that the struggle of the Negro people for freedom weakens the power of their own oppressors, the capitalists.

Between the proletarian revolution and the revolution of the Negro people for land and freedom there is a living link. This is the working class. It is among the workers that solidarity first develops and is the strongest. In the cities and towns of the South and in the big industrial centers of the North this solidarity between white and Negro labor is forged. Here reposes the leadership of the two aspects of the revolution.

But there also must be present a conscious organized group of workers, which realizes the necessity of revolution and which leads the masses in their daily struggles towards this end. This is the role of the Communist Party. Communists do not only talk about the future revolution, but are active fighters for the daily interests of the masses. In unions and other working class organizations, in strikes, in demonstrations, in elections, we Communists endeavor, while playing a leading part in the struggles of the masses, to convince them of the correct, revolutionary way out. And one of our principal lines of activity has always been to develop now the solidarity of the white workers and Negro masses, to build this alliance in our daily life and struggles, to assure the combination of the two aspects of the American revolution.



In building this class solidarity there is a division of labor, but with a common aim, between the white and Negro workers. The white workers must realize that the main responsibility for establishing working class unity rests upon their shoulders. They must lead the fight against race prejudice in the ranks of the white masses. They must remember that for centuries the Negro people have been oppressed by white nations. Among the Negro masses there is a deep distrust of all whites. The plantation system and capitalism have created this distrust and it cannot be done away with merely in words. Race prejudice pollutes the air in this country. After having been excluded from a number of labor unions, having been ostracized by many sections of whites, there is no reason for Negroes to believe in words only. They can only be convinced by action. If they see larger number of white workers actually fighting for Negro rights, fighting against race prejudice, insisting upon equal treatment in all places for Negroes, then they will have cause to rely upon the white workers as their ally. This is the only way this distrust can be overcome. This is why the Communists, especially the white Communists, vigilantly guard their Party against the influence of race prejudice. No white worker is deserving of the name of Communist unless he constantly carries on a struggle against every manifestation of race prejudice among the workers.

The Negro workers, in order to achieve working class solidarity, have the chief task of fighting against "black patriotism" and "race solidarity". They must constantly fight against the ideas of such people as Dr. DuBois for, as we have seen, they strengthen the Negro's distrust of the white workers. No Negro has the right to call himself a Communist unless he fights constantly against the Negro "race" leaders, unless he is always exposing the role of those who call for separation between white and Negro, unless he is constantly explaining the unity of interests of the Negro masses and of the working class. The Negro Communist is first and foremost the exponent of the *proletarian* revolution, for he realizes that this alone will guarantee not only freedom for the Negro but also emancipation of all toilers.

#### How Will the Question of Self-Determination Be Settled?

The Communists fight for the right of the Black Belt territory to self-determination. This means not only that the Negro people shall no longer be oppressed but shall come into their

rightful position as the majority of the population in the Black Belt. It means equally the right of the Black Belt republic freely to determine its relations to the United States.

One cannot tell in advance under what circumstances the question of the right of self-determination for the Negro people in the Black Belt will arise for definite solution. There are two distinct possibilities.

First: The revolution in the plantation country might mature sooner than the proletarian revolution in the country as a whole. This is a possibility because of the fact that capitalism is weakest in the South and the enslaved Negro masses on the land are a revolutionary force of great power. It is certain, however, that the revolution in the plantation country cannot come to a head and press for victory unless capitalism throughout the country is in difficulties, already being threatened seriously by the rising working-class movement. In this situation the rebellion of the Negro people would give new strength to and hasten the proletarian revolution. The working class, led by the Communist Party, would come to the aid of the masses in the South to prevent the capitalist ruling class of the North from suppressing the revolution in the Black Belt. Under these circumstances the Communists in the Black Belt would favor, and would do everything in their power to win the laboring people of the Black Belt to favor complete independence from the capitalist-ruled republic of the North. For complete independence of the Black Belt region would then mean greater freedom for the Negroes and a serious weakening of the power of capitalism in the country as a whole. *All* Communists would defend the right of the Negro people to make their choice.

Second: The proletarian revolution may overthrow capitalism and establish a Soviet Government for the country as a whole before the revolution comes to a head in the Black Belt. However it must be kept in mind that the two phases of the revolution will not develop separately. Thus, while the workers are leading the onslaught against capitalism, the revolutionary seizure of the plantation land and large-scale farms may at the same time be proceeding in the South. But once the workers come to power in the United States the revolution for land and freedom will be hastened and completed. One of the first steps of the central Soviet government will be to grant the right of self-determination to the Negro people in the Black Belt.

This would mean that the Negro people in the Black Belt will have the right to choose for themselves between federation with or separation from the United States as a whole. The Soviet Power, the workers and their government, will guarantee this right: First, because there will be no reason for the forcible annexation of the Negro Republic. With the overthrow of capitalism, the basis of all exploitation will have been eliminated, thereby also the basis for the exploitation and oppression of the Negro people. Second, the free union of peoples on the basis of equality is possible only through free choice arrived at by the majority of the people. The very fact that the victorious working class and its Soviet government would guarantee complete and unlimited freedom of choice would in itself be a guarantee of freedom in the full sense of the word. Under such circumstances the Negro Communists would urge and fight for federation with the Soviet republic of the United States, for this course would be to the best interests of the Negro people and all workers. In the event, however, that the choice is against federation—the Communist Party and the Soviet government would respect the will of the Negro people.

In stating our position on this question, we are guided not only by the theoretical principles of the Communist Party but also by the actual experience of the Russian Revolution. Here a number of developments in the solution of the question of self-determination occurred simultaneously. The Great Russians, whose ruling class oppressed the other peoples within the Tsarist Empire, comprised only about 45 per cent of the population of the old Russia. Both during the first revolution in March, 1917, when the Tsar was overthrown, and during the second revolution of November, 1917, when the power of the capitalists and landowners was destroyed and the Soviet Government established, the workers had the support of the peasants not only in central Russia but also in a number of outlying regions where the oppressed national people lived. But the revolution did not develop evenly everywhere. Under these circumstances, how was the question of self-determination settled?

The first act of the Soviet Government was to issue a decree granting the right of self-determination to all the nations of the former Russian empire and full equal rights within the Federated Soviet Republics. In those regions which were not occupied by

troops of the foreign powers and where the workers and peasants had succeeded in establishing autonomous Socialist Soviet governments, these Soviet governments at once federated themselves to the central Russian Soviet Republic. Only as the revolution developed in the other regions and as the counter-revolutionary intervention armies were defeated, were Soviet governments established there. Although the working class of central Russia gave direct aid to the struggle of the peoples of the outlying regions against the intervention armies and the counter-revolutionists, none of these regions was forced to federate with the other Soviet Republics. To this very day, the constitution of the Soviet Union permits the right of self-determination to all the nations at present in the Union.

There were also other developments. In some regions the people were still under the influence of reactionary leaders who were supported by foreign powers. Either the proletarian revolution was suppressed or the proletariat was not yet strong enough nor independent enough from the bourgeois leaders to carry through the revolution to victory. Such a case was Finland, which at one time was a part of the Russian Empire. Towards the end of the World War Finland came under the domination of the German Army, with whose aid the Finnish ruling class suppressed the proletarian revolution and established an independent republic under the domination of the capitalists. Did the Soviet Government try to force Finland into the Union of Soviet Republics? On the contrary, Lenin, as the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Soviet Republic, himself personally acknowledged to a representative of the Finnish Republic the right of that country to secede and gave him official sanction to do so.

"I very well remember the scene at the Smolny," said Lenin later, "when it fell to my lot to grant the charter to Svinokhod, the representative of the Finnish bourgeoisie who had played the part of hangman. He amiably shook my hand and we paid each other compliments. How unpleasant that was! But it had to be done because at that time the bourgeoisie falsely persuaded the people, the toiling masses, to believe that the Moscovites were chauvinists and that the Great Russians wanted to crush the Finns."

And if the Soviet Government had not granted the Finns the right to secede and attempted to keep them by force, this would have meant annexation. The Finnish masses would have looked upon the Soviet Government as a foreign oppressor, no better than

**Tsarism.** Today, the Finns are under the hard and brutal reactionary dictatorship of the Finnish bourgeoisie, but there will be no doubt that once they have overthrown this bourgeoisie there will be no hesitation to federate with the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Government and the Communist Party recognized the rights of all the nations which had formerly been oppressed by Tsardom. The Soviet Union is composed of more than 100 different nations and national minorities. The oppression of these nations is now impossible because the masses of that nation which formerly oppressed them have overthrown the bourgeoisie and the landlords and are building socialism. These numerous nations live in complete harmony with each other. They have received direct aid from the Great Russians in building their industry, improving their agriculture and achieving complete economic equality with the other peoples of the Soviet Union.

The proletarian revolution first wiped out the basis of national oppression. Then it began rapidly to lay the basis of equality. For many of these formerly oppressed peoples had been retarded and held back by Tsardom. It was necessary to carry through the development of industry and agriculture in the regions where the formerly oppressed nations lived, at even a quicker pace than in Central Russia. We have witnessed here the most rapid development of peoples that all of history can show. Nomadic peoples were lifted out of their backwardness, almost overnight developed into an industrial and modern agricultural people without having to go through the stage of capitalism. Cultural development is equally swift. The basis for inequality is rapidly disappearing even in most backward areas.

The Soviet Union has proved the correctness of the Communist program. If in the former "prison of nations", where the question of national liberation and of national prejudices is very much more complicated than in the United States, such signal success has been achieved, can there be any doubt about the realization of equal and even greater success here?

### The Revolutionary Way

We have seen that only a basic change can guarantee to the Negro the possibility for a decent livelihood, the rights of human beings and an equal, honorable and respected status in all public and social life. The ruling class will not permit such a change.

The masses of exploited must therefore organize in order to make use of their right to revolution.

Revolution is not a matter of our own choosing. It is forced upon us by capitalism itself, which degrades us, grinds us down into the dust, makes life unbearable. As long as exploitation and oppression have existed there have been revolutions.

The revolutionary way has always been the way of human progress. Capitalism came into being as the result of a revolution against feudalism and the nobility in Europe. Socialism came into being in Russia as the result of a revolution against capitalism. Revolution has marked the birth and progress of the United States. Now another revolution is necessary to remove a decaying system and make way for further progress. But the proletarian revolution differs from all the other revolutions of history. All previous revolutions resulted in a new exploiting class coming into power and suppressing the majority of the people. The proletarian revolution results in the majority coming into power, suppressing the exploiting minority and removing the basis of all exploitation and oppression. Only then is the possibility created for doing away with all classes. Society, organized in a new social and economic system—the Socialist system—can now provide the necessities of life in abundance.

The revolutionary way has not been strange to the Negro people in the United States. Revolutionary struggles have glorified their history. Have we forgotten the courageous struggles of the African peoples for life and liberty against the slave merchants of Europe and the American colonies? Even the few incidents which have been preserved in written history testify to the determined struggle of the Negroes against enslavement from the very beginning. The Negro people can find inspiration in the revolutionary attempts of Gabriel, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner and untold thousands of fighters in the numerous slave revolts in the United States, and in the underground railroad. Many Negroes participated in the revolutionary war of the American colonies against the British. The Civil War itself was a revolution in which the Negroes—those who were yesterday chattel slaves!—fought for land and liberty.

That glorious Civil War decade when the embattled Negro fought with gun in hand against the bloodhounds of reaction for the rights of citizenship and of land is today an heroic, revolu-

fore be faced with the need of obliterating this inequality which it will have inherited from capitalism.

The fundamental policy of a Soviet Government with regard to the Negro generally would therefore be to create even relatively greater opportunities for advance and progress for the Negro than for the white. Special emphasis would be placed upon training more Negro skilled workers, upon technical and other forms of education, upon inducing larger numbers to take up engineering, science, etc. The technical schools, colleges and universities, most of which are today either out of the reach of or closed to Negroes, would be placed at the disposal of Negroes even to a proportionately greater degree than of the rest of the population. This is the only way that special privileges for the whites can be done away with. A Soviet Government must confer greater benefits upon the Negroes than upon the whites, for the Negroes have started with less. This is the real test of equality. This is the only way that the basis for real equality can be established.

Any act of discrimination or of prejudice against a Negro will become a crime under the revolutionary law. The basis of race prejudice and oppression will no longer exist because capitalism will no longer exist. But it would be entirely Utopian to believe that the day after the revolution all prejudice will disappear. Capitalism will leave some of it behind like a stench, just like it will leave behind other capitalist ideas and prejudices. But these will be systematically fought by the Soviet Government and the Communist Party until they are extinguished. Then it will no longer be a question of wiping out the basis for such prejudices, but of merely obliterating the remnants. Socialism will remake man. To the first generation of new Soviet Americans race prejudice and discrimination will appear like a horrible disease of a past age.

In affairs of State, in the political activities of the country, in management, in all phases of public life, with the removal of all discriminations, the Negro will be playing a prominent part, just as Georgians, Tadjiks, Ukrainians, etc., are today among the leaders of the Soviet Union and its Communist Party.

The horrors of segregated, over-crowded ghettos will disappear. All residential sections of the city will be opened to the Negro. There will be no segregated areas. If Negroes wish to remain in Harlem, for instance, they will be perfectly free to