

# VI. THE U.S. INDUSTRIAL PROLETARIAT

## 1. "The Communistic and Revolutionary Races"



The industrial system in the U.S. came into full stride at the turn of the century. In 1870 the U.S. steel industry was far behind that of England in both technology and size. From its small, still relatively backward mills came less than one-sixth of the pig iron produced in England. But by 1900 U.S. steel mills were the most highly mechanized, efficient and profitable in the world. Not only did they produce twice the tonnage that England did, but in that year even England — the pioneering center of the iron and steel industry — began to import cheaper Yankee steel. (1) That year the U.S. Empire became the world's leading industrial producer, starting to shoulder aside the factories of Old Europe. (2)

Such a tidal wave of production needed markets on a scale never seen before. The expansion of the U.S. Empire into a worldwide Power tried to provide those. Yet the new industrial Empire also needed something just as

essential — an industrial proletariat. The key to the even greater army of wage-slaves was another flood of emigration from Old Europe. This time from Southern and Eastern Europe: Poles, Italians, Slovaks, Serbs, Hungarians, Finns, Jews, Russians, etc. From the 1880s to the beginning of the First World War some 15 millions of these new emigrants arrived looking for work. And they came in numbers which dwarfed the tempo of the old Irish, German and Scandinavian immigration of the mid-1800s (and that was  $3\frac{1}{2}$  times as large as the Anglo-Saxon, German and Scandinavian immigration of the 1898-1914 period). (3)

They had a central role in the mass wage-labor of the new industrial Empire. The capitalists put together the raw materials and capital base extracted from the earlier colonial conquests, the labor of the Euro-American craftsman, and the new millions of industrial production

workers from Southern and Eastern Europe.

In 1910 the U.S. Immigration Commission said: "A large portion of the Southern and Eastern immigrants of the past twenty-five years have entered the manufacturing and mining industries of the eastern and middle western states, mostly in the capacity of unskilled laborers. There is no basic industry in which they are not largely represented and in many cases they compose more than 50 per cent of the total numbers of persons employed in such industries. Coincident with the advent of these millions of unskilled laborers there has been an unprecedented expansion of the industries in which they have been employed." (4)

In the bottom layers of the Northern factory the role of the new, non-citizen immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe was dominant. A labor historian writes: "More than 30,000 were steelworkers by 1900. The newcomers soon filled the unskilled jobs in the Northern mills, forcing the natives and the earlier immigrants upward or out of the industry. In the Carnegie plants\* of Allegheny County in March, 1907, 11,694 of 14,539 common laborers were Eastern Europeans." (5)

This was not just the arithmetic, quantitative addition of more workers. The mechanization of industrial production qualitatively transformed labor relations, reshaping the masses themselves. Instead of skilled craftsmen using individual machines as tools to personally make a tin sheet or an iron rod, the new mass-production factory had gangs of unskilled workers tending semi-automatic machines and production lines, with the worker controlling neither the shape of the product nor the everincreasing pace of production. This was the system, so well known to us, whose intense pressures remolded peasants and laborers into an industrial class.

This new industrial proletariat — the bottom, most exploited foundation of white wage-labor — was nationally distinct. That is, it was composed primarily of the immigrant national minorities from Southern and Eastern Europe. Robert Hunter's famous expose, *Poverty*, which in 1904 caused a public sensation in settler society, pointed this national distinction out in very stark terms:

*"In the poorest quarters of many great American cities and industrial communities one is struck by a most peculiar fact — the poor are almost entirely foreign born. Great colonies, foreign in language, customs, habits, and institutions, are separated from each other and from distinctly American groups on national and racial lines...These colonies often make up the main portion of our so-called 'slums'. In Baltimore 77 percent of the total population of the slums was, in the year 1894, of foreign birth or parentage. In Chicago the foreign element was 90 percent; in New York, 95 percent; and in Philadelphia, 91 percent..."* (6)

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\*The Carnegie Steel Company was the leading firm in the industry. In 1901, under the guidance of J.P. Morgan, it became the main building block in the first of the giant trusts (which was named the U.S. Steel Corporation).

*The 9th Special Report* of the Federal Bureau of Labor revealed that immigrant Italian workers in Chicago had average earnings of less than \$6 per week; 57% were unemployed part of the year, averaging 7 months out of work. (7) For the new mass-production system found it more profitable to run at top speed for long hours when orders were high, and then shut down the factory completely until orders built up again. In 1910, a year of high production for the steel industry, 22% of the labor force was unemployed for three months or longer, and over 60% were laid off for at least one month. (8)

Even in an industry such as steel (where the work week at that time was seven days on and on), the new immigrant workers could not earn enough to support a family. In 1910 the Pittsburgh Associated Charities proved that if an immigrant steel laborer worked for 365 straight days he still could "not provide a family of five with the barest necessities."

And these were men who earned \$10-12 per week. In the textile mills of Lawrence, Massachusetts, the 15,000 immigrant youth from age 14 who worked there earned only 12 cents per hour. A physician, Dr. Elizabeth Shapleigh, wrote: "A considerable number of boys and girls die within the first two or three years after starting work...36 out of every 100 of all men and women who work in the mills die before reaching the age of 25." (9)

The proletarian immigrants did not see Amerika as a "Land of Freedom" as the propaganda says, but as a hell of Satanic cruelty. One historian reminds us:

"The newcomers harbored no illusions about America. 'There in Pittsburgh, people say, the dear sun never shines brightly, the air is saturated with stench and gas,' parents in Galicia wrote their children. A workman in the South Works\* warned a prospective immigrant: 'If he wants to come, he is not to complain about me for in America there are neither Sundays nor holidays; he must go to work.' Letters emphasized that 'here in America one must work for three horses.' 'There are different kinds of work, heavy and light,' explained another, 'but a man from our country cannot get the light.' An Hungarian churchman inspecting Pittsburgh steel mills exclaimed bitterly: 'Wherever the heat is most insupportable, the flames most scorching, the smoke and soot most choking, there we are certain to find compatriots bent and wasted with toil.' Returned men, it was said, were worn out by their years in America." (10) In South Works nearly one-quarter of the new immigrant steelworkers were injured or killed on the job each year. (1)

In the steel mill communities — company towns — these laborers in the pre-World War I years were usually single, with even married men having been forced to leave their families in the "old country" until they could either return or become more successful. They lived crowded into squalid boarding houses, owned by "boarding-bosses" who were fellow countrymen and often as well the foremen who hired them (different nationalities often worked in separate gangs, so that they had a common language.).

Sleeping three or four to a room, they spent much of their free time in the saloons that were their solace. As

in all oppressed communities under capitalism, cheap drink was encouraged as a pacifier. Immigrant mill communities would fester with saloons — Gary, Indiana had more than one saloon for every one hundred inhabitants. Of course, the local police and courts preyed on these “foreigners” with both abuse and shakedowns. They had few democratic rights in the major urban centers, and in the steel or mining or rubber or textile company towns they had none.

**In the U.S. Empire nationality differences have always been disguised as “racial” differences (so that the Euro-American settlers can maintain the fiction that theirs is the only real nation). The Eastern and Southern European national minorities were widely defined as non-white, as members of genetically different (and backward) races from the “white” race of Anglo-Saxons. This pseudo-scientific, racist categorizing only continued an ideological characteristic of European capitalist civilization. The Euro-Americans have always justified their conquest and exploitation of other nationalities by depicting them as racially different. This old tactic was here applied even to other Europeans.**

So Francis A. Walker, President of M.I.T. (and the “Dr. Strangelove” figure who as U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs developed the Indian reservation system), popularized the Social Darwinistic theory that the new immigrants were “beaten men from beaten races; representing the worst failures in the struggle for existence...” Thus, as double failures in the “survival of the fittest,” these new European immigrants were only capable of being industrial slaves.

The wildest assertions of “racial” identity were common. Some Euro-Americans claimed that these “swarthy” Europeans were really “Arabs” or “Syrians.” U.S. Senator Simmons of North Carolina claimed that the Southern Italians were “*the degenerate progeny of the Asiatic hordes which, long centuries ago, overran the shores of the Mediterranean...*” (12)

The St. Paul, Minnesota District Attorney argued in Federal court that Finns shouldn’t receive citizenship papers since “a Finn...is a Mongolian and not a ‘white person’.” Scientists were prominent in the new campaign. Professor E.A. Hooton of Harvard University claimed that there were actually nine different “races” in Europe, each with different mental abilities and habits. As late as 1946, in the widely-used textbook, *New Horizons In Criminology*, Prof. Hooton’s pseudo-science was quoted by police to “prove” how Southern Italians tended to “crimes of violence,” how Slavs “show a preference for sex offenses,” and so on. (13)

A widely-read *Saturday Evening Post* series of 1920 on the new immigrants warned that unless they were restricted and kept segregated the result would be “a hybrid race of people as worthless and futile as the good-for-nothing mongrels of Central America and Southeastern Europe.” (14) On the street level, newspapers and common talk sharply distinguished between “white Americans” and the “Dago” and “Hunky” — who were not considered “white” at all.

The bourgeoisie had a dual attitude of fearing these new proletarians during moments of unrest and

eagerly encouraging their influx when the economy was booming. It was often stated that these “races” were prone to extreme and violent political behavior that the calm, business-like Anglo-Saxon had long since outgrown. One writer in a business journal said: “I am no race worshipper, but...if the master race of this continent is subordinated to or overrun with the communistic and revolutionary races it will be in grave danger of social disaster.” (15)

One answer — and one that became extremely important — was to “Americanize” the new laboring masses, to tame them by absorbing them into settler Amerika, to remake them into citizens of Empire. The Big Bourgeoisie, which very much needed this labor, was interested in this solution. In November, 1918 a private dinner meeting of some fifty of the largest employers of immigrant labor discussed Americanization (this was the phrase used at the time). Previous social work and employer indoctrination campaigns directed at the immigrants had not had much success.

It was agreed by those capitalists that the spread of “Bolshevism” among the industrial immigrants was a real danger, and that big business should undercut this trend





and “Break up the nationalistic, racial groups by combining their members for America.” (16) It was thus well understood by the bourgeoisie that these European workers’ consciousness of themselves as oppressed national minorities made them open to revolutionary ideas — and, on the other hand, their possible corruption into Amerikan citizens would make them more loyal to the U.S. Imperialism.

The meeting formed the Inter-Racial Council, with corporate representatives and a tactical window-dressing of conservative, bourgeois “leaders” from the immigrant communities. T. Coleman DuPont became the chairman. Francis Keller, the well-known social worker and reformer became the paid coordinator of the Council’s programs. It sounded just like so many of the establishment pacify-the-ghetto committees of the 1960s — only the “races” being “uplifted” were all European.

The Council’s main efforts were directed at propaganda. The American Association of Foreign Language Newspapers (in actuality a private company that placed Amerikan big business advertising in the many foreign language community newspapers) was purchased. With total control over the all-important major advertising, the Council began to dictate the political line of many of those newspapers. Anti-communist and anti-union articles were pushed.

The Council also, in concert with government agencies and private capitalist charities, promoted Americanization “education” programs (i.e. political indoctrination): “adult education” night schools for immigrants, state laws requiring them to attend Americanization classes, laws prohibiting the use of any language except English in schools, etc., etc. The Americanization movement had a lasting effect on the Empire. The Inter-Racial Council was dropped by the capitalists in 1921, since by then Americanization had its own momentum. (17)

At the same time, national chauvinism and the specific class interests of the Euro-Amerikan petit-bourgeoisie and labor aristocracy led to campaigns against the new immigrants. State licensing acts in New

York, Connecticut, Michigan, Wyoming, Arizona and New Mexico barred non-citizen immigrants from competing with the settler professionals in medicine, pharmacy, architecture, engineering, and so on. (18) Under the banner of anti-Catholicism, various right-wing organizations attempted to mobilize the settler masses against the new immigrants. One such group, the Guardians of Liberty, was headed by retired U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. Nelson Miles (who had commanded the military respresions at both Wounded Knee and later in the invasion of Puerto Rico). The Loyal Legion, the Ku Klux Klan and other secret para-military groups were also heavily involved in attacks on immigrants, particularly when they became active in socialist organizations or went out on strikes. (19)

Most significantly, the settler trade-unions themselves started picturing these new proletarians as the enemy. The unions of the American Federation of Labor (A.F.L.) were heavily imbued with the labor aristocracy viewpoint of the “native-born” settlers. This was true even though an earlier wave of German and Irish immigrants had played such a large role in founding those unions. Now they fought to bar the “Dago” and “Hunky” from the better-paid work, from union membership, and even from entering the U.S. In New York, the Bricklayers Union got Italians fired from public works projects. A.F.L. President Samuel Gompers united with right-wing U.S. Senator Henry Cabot Lodge in campaigning to extend the anti-Asian immigration bars to the “nonwhite” Eastern and Southern Europeans as well. (20)

This process was very visible in the steel mills. It became socially unacceptable for “white” settlers to work with the Slavs and the Italians on the labor gangs. Increasingly they left the hard work to the European national minorities and either moved up to foreman, skilled positions — or out of the mills. The companies pushed the separation. Euro-Amerikans applying for ordinary labor jobs were told: “only Hunkies work on those jobs, they’re too damn dirty and too damn hot for a ‘white’ man...No white American works in steel-plant labor gang unless he’s nuts or booze-fighter.” A steel labor history tells us:

*"The English-speaking workman was in general content to ignore the immigrants. Outside the mill he rarely encountered them or entered their crowded streets. But indifference often edged into animosity...Disdain could be read also in the stereotyped Dago and Hunky in the short stories that appeared in labor papers, and in the frankly hostile remarks of native workers.*

*"Eager to dissociate himself from the Hunky, the skilled man identified with the middling group of small shopkeepers and artisans, and with them came to regard the merchants and managers as his models. Whatever his interests may have been, the English-speaking steelworker had a psychological commitment in favor of his employer." (21)*

## 2. Industrial Unionism

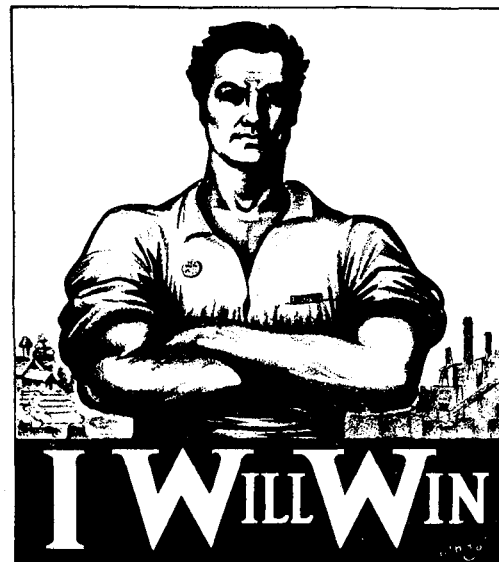
As U.S. imperialism stumbles faster and faster into its permanent decline, once again we hear the theory expressed that some poverty and the resulting mass economic struggles will create revolutionary consciousness in Euro-American workers. The fact is that such social pressures are not new to White Amerika. For three decades — from 1890 to 1920 — the new white industrial proletariat increasingly organized itself into larger and larger struggles with the capitalists.

The immigrant European proletarians wanted industrial unionism and the most advanced among them wanted socialism. A mass movement was built for both. These were the most heavily exploited, most proletarian, and most militant European workers Amerika has ever produced. Yet, in the end, they were unable to go beyond desiring the mere reform of imperialism.

The mass industrial struggles of that period were important in that they represented the *highest* level of class consciousness any major stratum of European workers in the U.S. has yet reached. And even in this exceptional period — a period of the most aggressive and openly anti-capitalist labor organizing — European workers were unable to produce an adequate revolutionary leadership, unable to defeat the settler labor aristocracy, unable to oppose U.S. imperialism, and unable to unite with the anti-colonial movements of the oppressed nations. We can sum up the shortcomings by saying that they flirted with socialism — but in the end preferred settlerism.

The Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) was the most important single organization of this period. From its founding in 1905 (the year of the first Russian Revolution) until 1920, the I.W.W. was the center of industrial unionism in the U.S. It was the form in which the Northern and Western white industrial proletariat first emerged into mass political consciousness. Unlike the restrictive craft unions of the A.F.L., the I.W.W. organized on a class basis. That is, it organized and tried to unite all sections of the white working class (copper miners, auto

So the imperialist era had begun with Euro-American wage-labor still a privileged, upper stratum dominated by a petit-bourgeois viewpoint. And although the new industrial proletariat was overwhelmingly European in origin, it was primarily made up of the oppressed national minorities from Eastern and Southern Europe — "foreigners" widely considered "nonwhite" by the settlers. The U.S. Empire's policy of relegating the work of "supporting society," of carrying out the tasks of the proletariat, to oppressed workers of other nationalities, was thus continued in a more complex way into the 20th century. At the same time the capitalists were raising the possibility of buying off political discontent by offering these proletarians Americanization into settler society.



*Solidarity, August 4, 1917.*

workers, cowboys, hotel workers, farm laborers, and even the unemployed). It was based on the European immigrant proletarians and the bottom stratum — usually migrant — of "native-born" Euro-American workers.

The I.W.W. saw itself as not only winning better wages, but eventually overthrowing capitalism. It was a syndicalist union (the "One Big Union") meant to combine workers of all trades and nationalities literally around the world. This was a period in the development of the world proletariat where these revolutionary syndicalist ideas had wide appeal. The immature belief that workers needed no revolutionary party or leadership, but merely had to gather into industrial unions and bring down capitalism by larger and larger strikes, was a passing phase. In 1900 these revolutionary syndicalist unions were popular in Spain, France, Italy — as well as briefly in the U.S. Empire.

While the I.W.W. was backward in many respects, in others it displayed great strengths. It was genuinely proletarian. As an effective mass labor organization, it showed a fighting spirit long since vanished from white workers. We are referring to an open anti-Americanism. The I.W.W. urged workers to reject any loyalty to the U.S. Unlike the majority of Euro-American "Socialists," the I.W.W. linked "American" nationalism with the bourgeois culture of lynch mob patriotism. Just as the I.W.W. was the last white union movement to be socialist, it also represented the last stratum of white workers to be in any way internationalist.

Great boldness relative to the usual settler trade-unionism characterized the I.W.W. First, it promoted unity on the broadest scale then attempted, in the U.S. including not only the "Dago" and "Hunky" but also explicitly declaring that industrial unionism meant the inclusion of Mexicanos, Asians, Afrikans, Indians and all nationalities. Second, it undertook the most militant campaigns of union organization and struggle, expressing the desperate needs of the most exploited white workers. Third, the I.W.W. was able to advance industrial unionism here by learning from the more advanced and experienced immigrants from Old Europe.

Because of this, the I.W.W. was able to launch strikes and unionization drives on a scale never seen before in the U.S. In the years after 1905 the "Wobblies" led an escalating explosion of union struggles: Hotel workers in Arizona, lumberjacks in Washington, textile workers in Massachusetts, seamen in ports from Chile to Canada, auto workers in Detroit, and so on. And there were many notable victories, many successful strikes. It must be emphasized that to workers used to seeing only defeats, the I.W.W.'s ability to help them win strikes was no small matter.

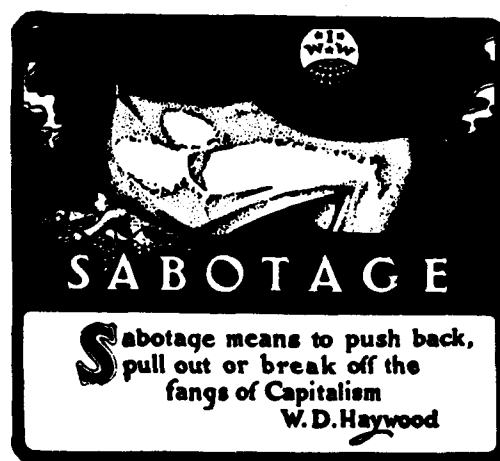
For example, in 1909 the I.W.W. helped the immigrant workers at the McKees Rocks, Pa. plant of the Pressed Steel Car Co. (a subsidiary of the U.S. Steel trust) win their strike. This was of national importance, since it was the first time that workers had won a strike against the mammoth Steel Trust. That strike, which taught so much to union militants here, was led by an underground "Unknown Committee" representing both the I.W.W. and the various European nationalities. The "Unknown Committee" had the knowledge of veterans of the 1905 Russian Revolution, the Italian labor resistance, the German Metal Workers Union, and the Swiss and Hungarian railway strikes. It is clear that through the I.W.W. the more experienced and politically educated European workers taught their backward American cousins how to look out after their class interests. (22)

In 1914 the I.W.W.'s Agricultural Workers Organization (A.W.O.) pulled off an organizing feat unequalled for fifty years. They established the "world's longest picket line," running 800 miles from Kansas up to Rapid City, South Dakota. In distant railroad yards I.W.W. strongarm squads maintained a blockade, in which non-union workers were kept out. Confronted with a critical labor shortage at harvest time, the growers had to give in. This was the biggest agricultural labor drive in the U.S. until the 1960s. The A.W.O. itself grew to almost 70,000 members, becoming the largest single union within

the I.W.W. In fact, at the 1916 I.W.W. Convention the A.W.O. actually had a majority of the votes (252 out of 335 votes). (23)

But by 1920 the I.W.W. had declined sharply. Not from failure in an organizational sense, but from both it and the strata that it represented having reached the limits of their political consciousness. The I.W.W. was able to build industrial unions of the most exploited white workers and to win many strikes, but past that it was unable to advance. Its local unions usually fell apart quickly, and many of its victories were soon reversed. The landmark 1909 steel industry victories at McKees Rocks and Hammond, Indiana were reversed within a year. The 1912 Lawrence, Mass. textile strike — the single most famous strike in U.S. trade union history — was also a great victory, and the I.W.W. also crushed there by the next year. This was the general pattern.

The external difficulties faced by the I.W.W. were far greater than just the straight-forward opposition of the factory owners. The Euro-American aristocracy of labor and its A.F.L. unions viciously fought this upsurge from below. During the great 1912 Lawrence, Mass. textile strike, the A.F.L.'s United Textile Workers Union scabbed throughout the strike. The A.F.L. officially backed the mill owners. In McKees Rocks, Pa. the skilled workers of the A.F.L. Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers used guns to break a second I.W.W. strike.



And the factories and mines were not isolated, but were part of settler Amerika, where the masses of petit-bourgeois farmers, small merchants and professionals joined the foremen, skilled craftsmen and supervisors in backing up the bosses. The European immigrants represented perhaps only one-seventh of the white population, and were greatly outnumbered.

The I.W.W.'s weaknesses, however, primarily reflected its inner contradictions. The syndicalist outlook, while sincerely taken by many, was also a convenient cover to avoid dealing with the question of settlerism. Using the ultra-revolutionary sounding syndicalist philosophy the I.W.W. could avoid any actual revolutionary work. In fact, despite its anti-capitalist enthusiasm the I.W.W. never even made any plans to oppose the U.S. Government — and never did. Similarly, its Marxist vision of all nations and peoples being merged into "One Big Union" covering the globe only covered up the fact that it had no intention of fighting colonialism and national oppression.

If the I.W.W. had fought colonialism and national oppression, it would have lost most of its white support. What it did instead — laying out a path that the CIO would follow in the 1930s — was to convince some white workers that their immediate self-interest called for a limited, tactical cooperation with the colonial proletariats. Underneath all the fancy talk that “In the I.W.W. the colored worker, man or woman, is on an equal footing with every other worker,” was the reality that the I.W.W. was a white organization for whites.

While this new immigrant industrial proletariat was thrown together from many different European nations, speaking different languages and having different cultures and class backgrounds, they were united by two things: their exploited state as “foreign” proletarians and their desire to achieve a better life in Amerika. The resolution of these pressures was in their Americanization, in

them becoming finally integrated into settler citizens of the Empire. In changing Amerika they themselves were decisively changed. Some one-third of the immigrant workers went back to Europe, with many of the most militant being deported or forced to flee.

Looking back this underlying trend can be seen in the life of the I.W.W. While the I.W.W. fancied itself as a dangerous revolutionary organization, in reality it was nothing more nor less than the best industrial union that class conscious white workers could build to “improve their condition.” It was a public, fully legal union open to all. It was, therefore, just as dependent upon bourgeois legality and government toleration as the A.F.L. The I.W.W. could be very strong against local employers or even the municipal government; against the imperialist state it dared only to submit in unhappy confusion. The national I.W.W. leadership understood this unpleasant fact in an unscientific, pragmatic way.





As the Great Powers were drawn into World War I the central issue in the European oppressor nation socialist movements was the opposition to imperialist war. Not primarily because of the mass bloodshed, but because in a war for expanding empires it was the absolute duty of all oppressor nation revolutionaries to oppose the aggression of their own empire, to work for the defeat of their own bourgeoisie, and for the liberation of the oppressed nations. This is the issue that created the international communist movement of the 20th century.

On this most important struggle the I.W.W. was revealed as being immature and lacking as a revolutionary organization. *It was simply unwilling to directly oppose U.S. imperialism.* The I.W.W. verbally criticised the war many times. At the 1914 convention they said: "We, as members of the industrial army, will refuse to fight for any purpose except for the realization of industrial freedom." (24) But when U.S. imperialism entered the war to grab more markets and colonies, the I.W.W. became frantic to prove to the bourgeoisie that they wouldn't oppose them in any way.

The surface problem was that since the I.W.W. was a totally legal and public union, it was totally unable to withstand any major government repression. Therefore, the leadership said, regardless of every class-conscious worker's opposition to the war the I.W.W. dare not fight it. Walter Nef, head of the I.W.W. Agricultural Workers Organization, said: "*We are against the war, but not organized and can do nothing.*" (25) Imagine, a revolutionary organization that built for twelve years, with a membership of over 100,000, but was "not organized" to oppose its own bourgeoisie.

The many requests from I.W.W. members for guidance as to how to fight the imperialist war went unanswered. Even "Big Bill" Haywood, the angry and militant I.W.W. leader, had to back off: "I am at a loss as to definite steps to be taken against the War." (26) Finally, the I.W.W. decided to duck the issue as much as possible. The word went out to white workers to stick to local economic issues of higher wages, etc. and not oppose the government. "Organize now...for the postwar struggle should be the watchword." (27) This surface political retreat only revealed the growing settler sickness at the heart of the I.W.W., and sabotaged the most advanced and revolutionary-minded white proletarians within their ranks.

They never organized to oppose U.S. imperialism because that's not what even the immigrant proletarian masses wanted — they wanted militant struggle to reach some "social justice" for themselves. During the July, 1915 A.F.L. strike at the Connecticut munitions plants, the charge was made that the whole strike was a plot by German agents — with the strike secretly subsidised by the Kaiser's treasury. In a lead editorial in its national journal, *Solidarity*, the I.W.W. hurried to put itself on record as not opposing the war effort. While admitting that they had no proof that the strike was a German conspiracy, the I.W.W. urged the strikers to "settle quickly." The editorial angrily suggested that the strike leaders might move to Germany. Then they came to the main point, which was undermining the anti-imperialist sentiment among the workers, and urging them to think only of getting more money for themselves:

*"The owners of these factories are making millions out of the murderfest in Europe-their slaves should likewise improve the opportunity to get a little something for themselves.*

*"The point may be made here, that we should all be interested in stopping the production of war munitions. Yes, of course, but that's only a dream...so the only thing the workers in these factories can do is to try to improve their condition..." (28)*

The line was very clear. Far from fighting U.S. imperialism, the I.W.W. was spreading defeatism among the workers and urging them to concentrate only on getting a bigger bribe out of the imperialist super-profits. The I.W.W. is often praised by the settler "left" as very "American," very "grass roots." We can say that their cynical, individualistic slant that workers can "*only get a little something for themselves*" out of the slaughter of millions does represent the essence of Amerikan settler degeneracy. In Russia the Bolsheviks were telling the Russian workers to "Turn the Imperialist War into a Revolutionary War" and overthrow the Imperialists-which they did.

The I.W.W.'s pathetic efforts to avoid antagonizing the Bourgeoisie did them little good. The U.S. Empire tired of these pests, viewing the militant organization of immigrant labor as dangerous. Finally cranking its police machinery up, the imperialist state proceeded to smash the defense-less I.W.W. clear into virtual non-existence. It wasn't even very difficult, since throughout the West vigilante mobs of settlers declared an open reign of terror against the I.W.W. In Arizona some 1,300 miners suspected of I.W.W. involvement were driven from the state at gunpoint.


In July 1918, 101 I.W.W. leaders past and present were convicted in Chicago Federal Court of sabotaging the Imperialist War effort in a rigged trial that dwarfed the "Chicago Conspiracy Trial" of the Vietnam War-era. The political verdict was certain even though the prosecution was *unable to prove that the I.W.W. had obstructed the war in any way!* Only one defendant out of 101 had violated the draft registration laws. While the I.W.W. unions had led strikes that disrupted war production in Western copper and timber, the government was forced to admit that of the 521 disruptive strikes that had taken place since the U.S. Empire entered the war, only 3 were by the I.W.W. (while 519 were by the pro-government A.F.L. unions). (29)

Federal raids on the I.W.W. took place from coast-to-coast. Immigration agents held mass round-ups which resulted in long jail stays while undergoing deportation hearings. In 1917 the Federal agents arrested 34 I.W.W. organizers in Kansas, who eventually got prison terms of up to nine years. In Omaha, Nebraska, the 64 I.W.W. delegates at the Agricultural Workers Organization Convention were arrested and held 18 months without trial. In 21 states "criminal syndicalism" laws were passed, directed at the I.W.W., under which thousands were arrested. In California alone between 1919-1924 some 500 I.W.W. members were indicted, 128 of whom ended up serving prison terms of up to 14 years. (30) The I.W.W. never recovered from these blows, and from 1917 on quickly declined.



Such an unwillingness to fight U.S. imperialism could hardly come from those with anti-imperialist politics. The reason we have to underline this is that for obvious ends the settler "Left" has been emphasizing how the I.W.W. was a mass example of anti-racist labor unity. This poisoned bait has been naively picked up by a number of Third-World revolutionary organizations, and used as one more small justification to move towards revisionist-integrationist ideology.

There is no doubt that much of the I.W.W. genuinely despised the open, white-supremacist persecution of the colonial peoples. Unlike the smug, privileged A.F.L. aristocracy of labor, the I.W.W. represented the voice of those white workers who had suffered deeply and thus could sympathize with the persecuted. But their inability to confront the settleristic ambitions within themselves reduced these sparks of real class consciousness to vague sentiments and limited economic deals.



**JOE HILLSTROM**

## Protest Meeting!

**I. W. W. HALL, 208 2d Ave., So.**

**Before the Board of Pardon, he said: "I don't want a pardon, or a commutation, I want a new trial or nothing. If my life will help some other workingman to a fair trial, I am ready to give it. If by living my life I can aid others to the fairness denied me, I have not lived in vain."**

**Q To the press he wrote: "I am going to have a new trial or die trying. I have lived like an Artist and I shall die like an Artist."**

**JOSEPH HILLSTROM**  
I. W. W. ARTIST AND POET, who is sentenced to die Dec. 10, 1934

**"One of the chief causes of social unrest is the denial of justice in the creation, adjudication and administration of the law."**

**— Commission on Industrial Relations**

**Q "I say without the slightest hesitation that the trial which resulted in Hillstrom's conviction was the most unjust, wicked and farcical travesty on justice that has ever occurred in the west. To an impartial Board of Pardon I can easily demonstrate such fact without any argument. Only time would be required to read the record over once."**

**JUDGE O. N. HILTON**

**Sunday, Nov. 14th (8:00 P M.)**

The I.W.W. never attempted to educate the most exploited white workers to unite with the national liberation struggles. Instead, it argued that "racial" unity on the job to raise wages was all that mattered. This is the approach used by the AFL-CIO today; obviously, it's a way of building a union in which white-supremacist workers tolerate colonial workers. This was the narrow, economic self-interest pitch underneath all the syndicalist talk. The I.W.W. warned white workers: "Leaving the Negro outside of your union makes him a potential, if not an actual, scab, dangerous to the organized workers..." (31) These words reveal that the I.W.W.'s goal was to control colonial labor for the benefit of white workers — and that Afrikans were viewed as "dangerous" if not controlled.

So that even in 1919, after two years of severe "race riots" in the North (armed attacks by white workers on Afrikan exile communities), the I.W.W. kept insisting

that there was: "...no race problem. There is only a class problem. The economic interests of all workers, be they white, black, brown or yellow, are identical, and all are included in the I.W.W. It has one program for the entire working class — "the abolition of the wage system." (32) The I.W.W.'s firm position of not fighting the lynch mobs, of not opposing the colonial system, allowed them to unite with the racist element in the factories — and helped prepare the immigrant proletariat for becoming loyal citizens of the Empire. It must never be forgotten that the I.W.W. contained genuinely proletarian forces, some of whom could have been led forward towards revolution.

We can see this supposed unity actually at work in the I.W.W.'s relationship to the Japanese workers on the West Coast. In the Western region of the Empire the settler masses were deeply infected with anti-Asian hatred. Much of this at that time was directed at the new trickle of Japanese immigrant laborers, who were working mainly in agriculture, timber and railroads.

These Japanese laborers were subjected to the most vicious persecution and exploitation, with the bourgeois politicians and press stirring up mob terror against them constantly. Both the Socialist Party of Eugene Debs and the A.F.L. unions helped lead the anti-Asian campaign among the settler masses. In April 1903, one thousand Japanese and Mexicano sugar beet workers struck near Oxnard, California. They formed the Sugar Beet & Farm Laborers Union, and wrote the A.F.L. asking for a union charter of affiliation.

A.F.L. President Samuel Gompers, in his usual treacherous style, tried in his reply to split the ranks of the oppressed: "Your union must guarantee that it will under no circumstances accept membership of any Chinese or Japanese."

The union's Mexicano secretary (the President was Japanese) answered Gompers for his people: "In the past we have counseled, fought and lived on very short rations with our Japanese brothers, and toiled with them in the fields, and they have been uniformly kind and considerate. We would be false to them, and to ourselves and to the cause of unionism if we now accepted privileges for ourselves which are not accorded to them. We are going to stand by men who stood by us in the long, hard fight which ended in victory over the enemy." (33)

Japanese workers were not only unable to find unity with the settler unions, but had to deal with them as part of the oppressor forces. There was a high level of organization among us, expressed usually in small, local, Japanese national minority associations of our own. The news, therefore, that the new I.W.W. was accepting Asian workers as members was quite welcome to us.

In 1907 two white I.W.W. organizers went to the office of the *North American Times*, a Japanese-language newspaper in Seattle. They asked the newspaper to publish an announcement of a forthcoming meeting. As the newspaper happily informed its readers: "... every worker, no matter whether he is Japanese or Chinese, is invited ... This new organization does not exclude you as others do, but they heartily welcome you to join. Don't lose this chance." (34)



The I.W.W. publicly criticised those “socialists” who were part of the anti-Asian campaign. In a special pamphlet they appealed to white workers to see that Asians were good union men, who would be helpful in winning higher wages: “They are as anxious as you, to get as much as possible. This is proven by the fact that they have come to this country.” (35)

But while scattered Japanese workers joined the I.W.W., in the main we did not. The reason, quite simply, is that while the I.W.W. wanted our cooperation, they did not want the hated Japanese workers inside the I.W.W. In order to keep amicable relations with the mass of white-supremacist settlers in the West, the I.W.W. limited their relationship to us. Some Asians would be acceptable, but any conspicuous mass recruitment of Japanese was too controversial. A sympathetic writer about the I.W.W. at the time noted:

*“At the Third Convention, George Speed, a delegate from California, quite accurately expressed the sentiment of the organization in regard to the Japanese Question. ‘The whole fight against the Japanese,’ he said, ‘is the fight of the middle class of California, in which they employ the labor faker to back it up.’ He added, however, that he considered it ‘practically useless...under present conditions for the I.W.W. to take any steps’ to organize the Japanese..” (36)*

This position was seen in action at the 1914 Hop Pickers Strike near Maryville, California; which was the

well-publicized struggle that launched the I.W.W.’s farm worker organizing drive in that state. That year the Durst Ranch hired 2,800 migrant workers at below-market wages, and forced them to toil in isolated near-slavery. I.W.W. organizers soon started a strike in which the Japanese, Mexicano, Greek, Syrian, Puerto Rican and other nationalities were strongly united. The strike led to a national defense campaign when the sheriff, after shooting two striking workers, arrested the two main I.W.W. organizers as the alleged murderers.

Although the strike was victorious — and led to bigger organizing drives — the Japanese workers had disappeared. We were persuaded to withdraw (while still honoring the picket lines) in order to help the I.W.W., since “...the feeling of the working class against the Japanese was so general throughout the state that the association of the Japanese with the strikers would in all probability be detrimental to the latter.” The I.W.W. tried to justify everything by saying that move was on the initiative of the Japanese workers — and then praising it as an act of “solidarity.” Notice that while the Japanese laborers lived, and worked, and went out on strike with the others, that the I.W.W. statement separates “the Japanese” from “the strikers.”

The I.W.W. considered it “solidarity” for oppressed Asian workers to be excluded from their own struggle, so that the I.W.W. could get together with the open racists. It should be clear that while the I.W.W. hoped to establish the “unity of all workers” as a princi-

ple, they were willing to sacrifice the interests of colonial and oppressed workers in order to gain their real goal — the unity of all white workers.

While it was advantageous for the I.W.W. to keep Asians at arms length, in occupied New Afrika there was literally no way to build industrial unions without winning the cooperation of Afrikan workers. In the South the Afrikan proletariat was the bed-rock of everything. The I.W.W. experience there highlights the strategic limitations of its political line.

In 1910 an independent union, the Brotherhood of Timber Workers, was formed in Louisiana and Mississippi. This was to become the main part of the I.W.W.'s Deep South organizing. These Southern settler workers were on the very bottom of the settler world. They were forced to labor for \$7-9 per week — and that mostly not in cash, but in "scrip" usable only at the company stores. Their very exploited lives were comparable to that of the "Hunky" and "Dago" of the Northern industrial towns. In other words, they lived a whole level below the norm of settler society.

For that reason the settler timberworkers were driven to build themselves a union. And because half of the workforce in the industry was Afrikan, they had to recruit Afrikans as well. Half of the 35,000 BTW members were Afrikan — organized into "seg" lodges and not admitted to the settler union meetings, of course. It was not a case of radicalism or idealism: the settler worker was literally forced by practical necessity to gain the cooperation of Afrikan workers. In a major pamphlet in which he calls on settler timberworkers to join up with the I.W.W., the BTW's secretary, Jay Smith, reminds them that the controversial policy of integrating the union existed solely to keep Afrikans under control:

"As far as the 'negro question' goes, it means simply this: Either the whites organize with the negroes, or the bosses will organize the negroes against the whites..." (38)

In 1912 the BTW joined the I.W.W., after integrating its union meetings at the demand of "Big Bill" Haywood. The I.W.W. now had a major labor drive going in the Deep South. But a few months later the BTW was totally crushed in the Merryville, La. strike of 1912. In a four-day reign of terror the local sheriff and company thugs beat, kidnapped and "deported" the strike activists. The BTW was dissolved by terror as hundreds of members had to flee the State and many more were white-listed and could no longer find work in that industry.

The I.W.W.'s refusal to recognize colonial oppression or the exact nature of the imperialist dictatorship over the occupied South, meant that it completely misled the strike. Industrial struggle in the Deep South could not develop separate from the tense, continuous relationship between the settler garrison and the occupied Afrikan nation. The I.W.W. in the South swiftly fell apart. They were unable to cope with the violent, terroristic situation.

The I.W.W. had a use for oppressed colonial workers, and it certainly didn't conduct campaigns of mob terror against us. It publicly reminded white workers of the supposed rights of the colonial peoples; but as a white

workers union it had no political program, no practical answers for the problems of the colonial proletariat. And insofar as it tried to convince everyone that there was a solution for the problems of colonial workers *separate* from liberation for their oppressed nations, it did a positive disservice.\*

The I.W.W. lived, rose and fell, at the same time as the great Mexican Revolution of 1910 just across the artificial "border." For this syndicalist organization to have reached out and made common cause with the anti-colonial revolutions would have been quite easy. On November 27, 1911 the Zapatistas proclaimed the Plan of Ayala, setting forth the agrarian revolution. It was from the U.S.-occupied territory of El Paso that Francisco Villa and seven others began the guerrilla struggle in Chihuahua on March 6, 1913. Hundreds of thousands of peasants joined Zapata's Liberator Army of the South and Villa's Division of the North. Even the Villistas, less politically developed than their Southern compatriots, were social revolutionaries. Villa, a rebel who had taught himself to read while in prison, was openly anti-clerical at a time when Roman Catholicism was the official religion of Mexico. He called the Church "the greatest superstition the world has ever known." The Villista government in Chihuahua founded fifty new schools and divided the land up among the peasants.

This popular uprising spread the spirit of rebellion across the artificial "border" into the U.S.-occupied zone. One California historian writes: *The dislocation caused by the Mexican Revolution of 1912-1917 led to an increasingly militant political attitude in Los Angeles. This led to a Chicano movement to boycott the draft. Vicente Carillo led a drive to protest the draft and to use mass meetings to focus attention upon Mexican-American economic problems.* Again, it is easy to see that the I.W.W. didn't have far to look if they wanted alliances against the U.S. Empire.

Proposals were even made that the I.W.W. and Mexicano workers join in armed uprisings in the Southwest. Ricardo Flores Magon, the revolutionary syndicalist who was the first major leader of Mexicano workers, had ties to the I.W.W. during his long years of exile in the U.S. His organization, the Partido Liberal Mexicano (PLM), led thousands of Mexicano miners in strikes on both sides of the artificial "border." Magon was imprisoned four times by the U.S. Empire, finally being murdered by guards to prevent his scheduled release from Ft. Leavenworth. His proposal for the I.W.W. to join forces with the Mexicano proletariat in armed struggle fell on deaf ears. Although some "Wobblies" (such as Joe Hill) went to Mexico on an individual basis for periods of time, the I.W.W. as a whole rejected such cooperation.

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\*It is interesting to note that even on the Philadelphia waterfront, where the Afrikan-led I.W.W. Marine Transport Workers Union No. 8 was the most stable local in the entire I.W.W., the Afrikan workers eventually felt forced to leave the I.W.W. due to "slander, baseless charges and race-baiting."



Magon once angrily wrote his brother from prison: "The *norteamericanos* are incapable of feeling enthusiasm or indignation. This is truly a country of pigs...If the *norteamericanos* do not agitate against their own domestic miseries, can we hope they will concern themselves with ours?"(39)

In outlining these things we are, of course, not just discussing the I.W.W. Primarily we are looking at the forming consciousness and leadership of a new class: the white industrial proletariat. The same general weaknesses of this class can be seen outside the I.W.W. even more sharply: lack of revolutionary leadership, inability to withstand the sabotage of the labor aristocrats of the "native-born" Euro-American workers, opposition to the anti-colonial struggles. The great industrial battles in steel

at the end of this period show not only these weaknesses, but emphasize the significance of what this meant.

This was evident in the 1919 steel strike, for example, in which for the first time fifteen A.F.L. unions called an industry-wide strike. On Sept. 22, 1919 some 365,000 steelworkers walked out. But while the mass of non-unionized, immigrant European laborers held firm, the unionized Euro-American skilled workers were a weak element. Capitalist repression had an effect — most notably in Gary, Indiana, where a division of U.S. Army troops broke the strike — but the defeat was due to the incredibly bad leadership and the betrayal by the better-paid settler workers. The disaster of the strike shows why even the inadequate politics of the I.W.W. looked so good to the proletarians of that day.

Many of the skilled Euro-American workers never

joined the strike at all in places like Pittsburgh. And many who had struck started trickling back to work, afraid of losing their good jobs. In early November their union, the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, broke from the strike and started ordering its members back to work. By late November the mills had 75-80% of their workforce back. On January 2, 1920, the strike was officially declared over. Some of the most determined militants had to leave the industry or return to Europe. (40)

While the treachery of the labor aristocracy was very evident in this defeat, the most important event took place *after the strike*. During the strike some 30,000 Afrikan workers from the South had been imported by the steel companies. There was a strong tendency among the white steelworkers to blame the defeat of the strike on Afrikan "scabs" or "strikebreakers." And all the more so because the 10% of the Northern steel workforce that was Afrikan refused to join the strike. The bourgeoisie was guiding the white workers in this. Company officials passed the word that: "Niggers did it." In Pittsburgh one mill boss announced: "The Nigger saved the day for us." (41)

In fact, although this was widely accepted, it was clearly untrue. To begin with, 30,000 Afrikan workers fresh from the South could hardly have replaced 365,000 strikers. There also was by all accounts a tremendous turnover and desire to quit by those Afrikan workers, and within a few months supposedly few if any of them remained.

The reason is that most of them were not "strikebreakers", but workers who had been systematically deceived and brought to the mills by force. That's why they left as soon as they could. The testimony during the strike of 19 year-old Eugene Steward of Baltimore illustrates this. He was recruited along with 200 others (including whites) to work in Philadelphia for \$4 per day. But once inside the railroad car they found the doors locked and guarded by armed company police. They were taken without food or water to Pittsburgh, unloaded under guard behind barbed wire, and told that they were to work at the mills. Seeing that a strike was going on, many of them wanted to quit. The guards told them that any Afrikans attempting to leave would be shot down. Steward did succeed in escaping, but was found and forcibly returned by the guards. It was only after a second attempt that he managed to get free. It is obvious that the Afrikan "strikebreakers" were deliberate propaganda set up by the capitalists — and swallowed wholesale by the white workers.

In regard to the Afrikan steelworkers already at work in the North (and who declined to join the strike), it should be remembered that this was a white strike. Many of the striking A.F.L. unions did not admit Afrikans; those that did so (solely to get Afrikans to honor their strikes) usually kept Afrikans in "seg" locals. The Euro-Amerikan leadership of the strike had promised Afrikans nothing, and plainly meant to keep their promise. That is, this strike had a definite oppressor nation character to it and was wholly white-supremacist.

Nor did the white steel strike develop separate from the continuous struggle between oppressor and oppressed nations. During the two previous years there had

arisen a national movement of settler workers to bar Afrikans from Northern industry by terroristic attacks. Between 1917-19 there had been twenty major campaigns by settler mobs against Afrikan exile communities in the North. The July, 1917, East St. Louis "race riot" was organized by that steel city's A.F.L. Central Trades Council, which had called for "violence" to remove the "growing menace" of the Afrikan exile community. In two days of attacks some 39 Afrikans were killed and hundreds injured. The hand of the capitalists was evident when the *Chicago Tribune* editorially praised the white attackers, and told its readers that Afrikans were "*happiest when the white race asserts its superiority.*" (43) Again, we see the organized Euro-Amerikan workers as the social troops of one faction or another of the imperialists.

As the steel campaign was gathering steam throughout 1919 the terroristic attacks on Afrikans increased as well. In Chicago this was to climax in the infamous July 1919 "race riot," just two months before the strike began. Spear's *Black Chicago* recounts:

*"Between 1917 and 1919, white 'athletic clubs' assaulted Negroes on the streets and 'neighborhood improvement societies' bombed Negro homes. During the Summer of 1919, the guerilla warfare in turn gave way to open armed conflict — the South Side of Chicago became a battleground for racial war...the bombing of Negro homes and assaults on Negroes in the streets and parks became almost everyday occurrences."*(44)

On July 27, 1919, an Afrikan teenager was stoned to death on the 29th St. beach, and after Afrikans attacked his murderers generalized fighting broke out. It lasted six days, until the Illinois National Guard was called in. 23 Afrikans were killed and 342 wounded, with over 1,000 homeless after arson attacks (white losses were 15 killed and 178 wounded). Afrikans were temporarily trapped in the "Black Belt," unable to go to work or obtain food. Assisted by the police, Irish, Italian and other white workers would make night raids into the "Black Belt;" homes were often attacked. When Afrikans gathered, police would begin firing into the crowds.



*A Mississippi lynching, captured by the camera.*

The authorities did not move to "restore order," incidentally, until after Afrikan World War I vets broke into the 8th Illinois Infantry Armory, and armed themselves with rifles to take care of the white mobs. (45)

This was the vigorous "warm-up" for the steel strike. It was not surprising that the Afrikan exile communities were less than enthusiastic about supporting the strike of the same people who had spent the past two years attacking them. Given the history of the A.F.L. it was possible that an outright triumph of the A.F.L. unions might have meant renewed efforts to drive Afrikan labor out of the mills altogether. It was typical settleristic thinking to make Afrikans responsible for the failure of a white strike, which was never theirs in the first place.

Both the strike leadership and the bourgeoisie cleverly promoted this hatred, encouraging the European immigrant and "native-born" settler alike to turn all their anger and bitterness onto the Afrikan nation. Perhaps the most interesting role was played by William Z. Foster, the chief leader of the strike. He was one of the leading "socialist" trade-unionists of the period, and in 1920 would become a leader in the new Communist Party USA. From then on until his death he would be a leading figure of settler "communism." Even today young recruits in the CPUSA and Mao Zedong Thought organizations are often told to "study" Foster's writings in order to learn about labor organizing.

William Z. Foster had, as the saying goes, "pulled defeat out of the jaws of victory." Foster based the strike on the A.F.L. unions, despite their proven record of treachery and hostility towards the proletarian masses. That alone guaranteed defeat. He encouraged white supremacist feeling and thus united the honest elements with the most reactionary. Despite the great popular support for a nation-wide strike and the angry sentiments of the most exploited steelworkers, Foster and the other A.F.L. leaders so sabotaged the strike that it went down to defeat. The one "smart" thing he did was to cover up his opportunistic policies by following the capitalists in using Afrikans as the scapegoats.

In his 1920 history of the strike, Foster (the supposed "communist") repeated the lie that Afrikan workers had "lined up with the bosses." In fact, Foster even said that in resolving the differences between Euro-American and Afrikan labor "*The negro has the more difficult part*" since the Afrikan worker was becoming "*a professional strike-breaker.*" And militant white workers knew what they were supposed to do to a "professional strike-breaker."

Foster's lynch mob oratory was only restrained by the formality expected of a Euro-American "communist" leader. His white-supremacist message was identical to but more politely clothed than the crude rants of the Ku Klux Klan. He warned that the capitalists were grooming Afrikans as "*as race of strike-breakers, with whom to hold the white workers in check; on much the same principle as the Czars used the Cossacks to keep in subjugation the balance of the Russian people.*" It's easy to see how Foster became such a popular leader among the settler workers.

No longer was it just a question of *some* Afrikans not following the orders of the white labor. Now Foster was openly saying that the *entire* Afrikan "race" was the enemy. Could the imperialists have asked for more, than to have the leading "communist" trade-union leader help them whip up the oppressor nation masses to repress the Afrikan nation?

The Cossacks were the hated and feared special military of the Russian Czar, used in bloody repressions against the people. Only the most twisted, Klan-like mentality would have so explicitly compared the oppressed Afrikan nation to those infamous oppressors. And was this message not an incitement to mob terror and genocide? For the poor immigrants from Eastern Europe (much of which was under the lash of Czarist tyranny) to kill a Cossack was an act of justice, of retribution. The threat was easy to read.

In case Afrikans didn't get Foster's threat (which was also being delivered in the streets, as we know), Foster made it even more plain. He said that if Afrikans failed to obey the decisions of settler labor: "It would make our industrial disputes take on more and more the character of race wars, a consummation that would be highly injurious



During the 1919 race riots, a white mob chases a Negro into his home—and then stones him to death with bricks. He is dead by the time the police arrive.



to the white workers and eventually ruinous to the blacks.” (46)

The threat of a genocidal “race war” against Afrikans unless they followed the orders of settler labor makes it very clear just what kind of “unity” Foster and his associates had in mind. We should say that once Foster started dealing with the problem of how to build the Euro-Amerikan “Left,” he discovered that it was much more effective to pose as an anti-racist and use “soft-sell” in promoting a semi-colonial mentality in oppressed nationalities. Foster the “communist” declared himself an expert on Civil Rights, poverty in Puerto Rico, Afrikan history, and so on.

The tragic failure of the new white industrial proletariat to take up its revolutionary tasks, its inability to rise above the level of reform, is not just a negative. The failure was an aspect of a growing phenomenon — the Americanization of the “foreign” proletariat from Eastern and Southern Europe. By the later part of World War I it was possible to see that these immigrants were starting the climb upwards towards becoming settlers. Revolutionary fervor, as distinct from economic activity, declines sharply among them from this point on.

This was not a smooth process. The sharp repression of 1917-1924, in which not only government forces but also the unleashed settler mob terror struck out across the U.S. Empire, was a clean-up campaign directed at the European national minorities. Thousands were forced out or returned home, many were imprisoned, killed or terrorized. Historians talk of this campaign as a “Red Scare,” but it was also the next-to-final step in purifying these “foreigners” so that Amerika could adopt them.

The Chairman of the Iowa Council of Defense said: “We are going to love every foreigner who really becomes an American, and all the others we are going to ship back home.” A leader of the Native Sons of the Golden West said that immigrants “must live for the United States and grow an American soul inside of him or get out of the country.” (47)

The offer was on the table. The “Hunky” and “Dago” could become “white” (though barely) through Americanization if they pledged their loyalty to the U.S. Empire. In the steel mills World War I meant wholesale Americanization campaigns. “Hungarian Hollow,” the immigrant slum quarter in Granite City, Ill. was renamed “Lincoln Place” at the prompting of the steel companies (with festive ceremonies and speeches). By 1918 the Gary, Ind. U.S. Steel Works had over 1,000 men enrolled in evening citizenship classes. Liberty Bond drives and Army enlistment offices in the plants were common. Immigrants were encouraged by their employers to join the U.S. Army and prove their loyalty to imperialism. (48)

Americanization was not just a mental process. To become a settler was meaningless unless it was based on the promise of privileges and the willingness to become parasitic. As “nativeborn” Euro-Amerikans continued to leave the factories, the immigrant Europeans could now advance. And the importation of hundreds of thousands (soon to be millions) of Mexicano, Afrikan, Puerto Rican and other colonial workers into Northern industry gave the Americanized Europeans someone to step up on in his climb into settlerism.

In the steel mills, Mexicanos and Afrikans made up perhaps 25% of the workers in Indiana and Illinois by 1925. They were the bottom of the labor there, making up for the immigrant European who had moved up or left for better things. A steel labor history notes:

*“Meanwhile, the Eastern Europeans were occupying the lesser positions once held by the ‘English-speaking’ workmen. As they rose, the numbers of Slavs in the mills shrank. At one time 58 percent of the Jones and Laughlin labor force, the immigrants comprised only 31 per cent in 1930. There were 30 per cent fewer Eastern Europeans in Illinois Steel Company mills in 1928 than in 1912. Now largely the immediate bosses of the Negroes and Mexicans, the immigrants disdained their inferiors much as the natives had once disliked them.*

*“The bad feeling generated by the Red Scare abated only gradually. In Gary, the Ku Klux Klan flourished. But the respectable solidity of the immigrant communities in time put to rest unreasoning fear. The children were passing through the schools and into business and higher jobs in the mills. Each year the number of homeowners increased, the business prospered, and the churches and societies became more substantial. The immigrants were assuming a middling social and economic position in the steel towns.” (49)*

The U.S. Empire could afford gradually expanding the privileged strata because it had emerged as the big winner in the First Imperialist World War. Scott Nearing pointed out how in 1870 the U.S. was the fourth ranked capitalist economy; by 1922 the U.S. had climbed to No. 1 position: “...more than equal to the wealth of Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Russia, Belgium and Japan combined.” (50) Successful imperialist war was the key to Americanization.

Throughout the Empire this movement of the immigrant proletarians into the settler ranks was evident. A history of Mexican labor importation notes: “In the beet fields of Colorado, as elsewhere in the West, other immigrant groups, such as the Italians, Slavs, Russians, or Irish, found that they could move up from worker or tenant to owner and employer through the use of Mexican migrants.” (51)

This point marks a historic change. Never again would white labor be anti-Amerikan and anti-capitalist. Although it would organize itself millions strong into giant unions and wage militant economic campaigns, white labor from that time on would be branded by its servile patriotism to the U.S. Empire. As confused as the I.W.W. might have been about revolution, its contempt for U.S. national chauvinism was genuine and healthy. It was only natural for an organization so strongly based on immigrant labor — many of whose best organizers were not U.S. Citizens and who often spoke little or no English — to feel no sympathy for the U.S. Empire. It was a tragedy that this strength was overturned, that this socialist possibility faded into a reinforcement for settlerism. And yet the contradiction between the reality of exploitation in the factories and the privileges of settlerism still remained. The immigrant masses could not be both settler and proletarian. This was the historic challenge of the CIO and New Deal.



# VII. BREAKTHROUGH OF THE C.I.O.

*It is a revealing comparison that during the 1930s the European imperialists could only resolve the social crisis in Italy, Germany, Spain, Poland, Finland, Rumania, and so on, by introducing fascism, while in the U.S. the imperialists resolved the social crisis with the New Deal. In Germany the workers were hit with the Gestapo, while in Amerika they got the C.I.O. industrial unions.*

In that decade the white industrial proletariat unified itself, pushed aside the dead hand of the old A.F.L. labor aristocracy, and in a crushing series of sit-down strikes won tremendous increases in wages and working conditions. For the first time the new white industrial proletariat forced the corporations to surrender

their despotic control over industrial life.

The Eastern and Southern European immigrant national minorities won the "better life" that Americanization promised them. They became full citizens of the U.S. empire, and, with the rest of the white industrial proletariat, won rights and privileges both inside and outside the factories. In return, as U.S. imperialism launched its drive for world hegemony, it could depend upon the armies of solidly united settlers serving imperialism at home and on the battlefield. To insure social stability, the new government-sponsored unions of the C.I.O. absorbed the industrial struggle and helped discipline class relations.

## 1. Unification of the White Workers

The working class upsurge of the 1930s was not accumulated discontents. This is the common, but shallow, view of mass outbreaks. What is true is that material conditions, including the relation to production, shape and reshape all classes and strata. These classes and strata then express characteristic political consciousness, characteristic roles in the class struggle.

The unification of the white industrial workforce was the result of immense pressures. Its long-range material basis was the mechanization and imperialist reorganization of production. In the late 19th century it was still true that in many industries the skilled craftsmen literally ran production. They — not the company — would decide how the work was done. Combining the functions of artisan, foreman, and personnel office, these skilled craftsmen would directly hire and boss their entire work crew of laborers, paying them out of a set fee paid by the capitalist per ton or piece produced (the balance being their wage-profit).

The master roller in the sheet metal rolling mill, the puddler in the iron mill, the buttie in the coal mine, the carriage builder in the early auto plant all exemplified this stage of production. The same craft system applied to gun factories, carpet mills, stone quarries etc. etc. (1) It was these highly privileged settler craftsmen who were the base of the old A.F.L. unions. Their income reflected their lofty positions above the laboring masses. In 1884, for example, master rollers in East St. Louis earned \$42 per week (a then very considerable wage), over four times more than laborers they bossed.(2)

This petit-bourgeois income and role gradually crumbled as capitalists reorganized and seized ever tighter control over production. A survey by the U.S. Bureau of Labor found that the number of skilled steel workers earning 60¢ an hour fell by 20% between 1900-1910.(3) Mechanization cut the ranks of craftsmen, and, even where they remained, their once-powerful role in production had shrunk. The A.F.L. Amalgamated Association of

Iron and Steel Workers, whose 24,000 members in 1891 accounted for 2/3rds of all craftsmen in the industry, had dwindled to only 6,500 members by 1914. (4)

Mechanization also wiped out whole sections of the very bottom factory laborers, replacing shovels with mechanical scoops, wheelbarrows with electric trolleys and cranes. Both top and bottom layers of the factory workforce were increasingly pulled into the growing middle stratum of semi-skilled, production line assemblers and machine operators. In the modern auto plants of the 1920s some 70% were semi-skilled production workers, while only 10% were skilled craftsmen and 15% laborers.(5) The political unification of the white workers thus had its material roots in the enforced unification of labor in the modern factory.

The 1929 depression was also a great equalizer and a sharp blow to many settlers, knocking them off their conservative bias. During the 1930s roughly 25% of the U.S. Empire was unemployed. Office clerks, craftsmen, and college students rubbed shoulders with laborers and farmers in the relief lines. Many divisions broke down, as midwestern and Southern rural whites migrated to the industrial cities in search of jobs or relief. In 1929 it was estimated that in Detroit alone there were some 75,000 young men (the "Suitcase Brigade") who had come from the countryside to find jobs in the auto plants. (6)

The depression not only helped unite the settler workers, but the social catastrophe pushed large sections of other settler classes towards more sympathy with social reform. Small farmers were being forced wholesale into bankruptcy and were conducting militant struggles of their own. Professionals, intellectuals, and even many small businessmen, felt victimized by corporate domination of the economy. Militancy and radicalism became temporarily respectable. When white labor started punching out it would not only be stronger than before, but much of settler society would be sympathetic to it.

## 2. Labor Offensive From Below



Citizenship in the Empire had very real but still limited meaning so long as many white workers remained “industrial slaves” of the corporations. The increasing centralization of monopoly capitalism repeated aspects of feudalism on a higher level. Both inside and outside the factory gates the settler workers were subject to heightened regimentation. During the 1920s it was not unusual for the persistent speed-up by management to double production per worker, even without taking mechanization into account.

At Ford, perhaps the most extreme of the industrial despots, every tenth employee was also a company spy. Workers overheard making resentful remarks would be beaten up right on the production line by the ever-present guards. (7) In the U.S. Steel plants at Homestead, Pa. the constant spying gave rise to a common saying: “If you want to talk in Homestead, you must talk to yourself.” (8)

The Depression and the massive unemployment only threw more power into corporate hands. Not only were wages cut almost everywhere, but many companies

laid off experienced workers and replaced them with newcomers at a fraction of the old wages. Ford Motor Company, which advertised that it was the highest paying company in the U.S., allegedly paid production workers a minimum of \$7 per day (with inflation less than it paid in 1914). On the contrary, some thousands of Euro-American Ford employees in the '30s found their pay down as low as \$1.40 per day; that was roughly what Afrikan women domestics had earned in Chicago. (9) It takes no genius to see that settler workers would not passively accept being reduced to a colonial wage. Companies in Detroit, Pittsburgh, etc. advertised widely in the South for workers, wishing even larger pools of jobless to intimidate and discipline their employees.

The A.F.L. unions were not only loyal to imperialism, but in their weakened state heavily dependent on enjoying the continued favors of individual corporations by opposing any real struggle. It was for that reason that the old Amalgamated Association had betrayed the 1919 steel strike. In that same year A.F.L. President Gompers actually told the U.S. Senate that Prohibition was a

danger, because alcohol was needed to get the workers' minds off rebellion. In the new auto industry the A.F.L. was receiving hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes from the auto manufacturers (usually via expensive advertisements in labor newspapers or "donations" to anti-communist campaigns). (10)

But when the dam broke, the pent-up anger of millions of Euro-American industrial workers was a mighty force. New organizing drives and new strikes had never completely stopped, even during the repressive 1920s. Defeat was common. But in 1934 two city-wide general strikes in San Francisco and Minneapolis, and a near-general strike in Toledo stunned capitalist Amerika.

The victory of longshoremen in San Francisco and teamsters in Minneapolis were important, but the Toledo auto workers strike — in which thousands of unemployed supporters of the auto workers drove the Ohio National Guard off the streets in direct battle — was the clearest sign of things to come. The victory in the Auto-Lite parts plant was immediately followed by union victories at all the other major factories in town. Toledo became in 1934 the first "union city" in industrial Amerika. The tidal wave of labor unrest affected all parts of the U.S. and all industries.

The new Sit-Down strikes became a rage. It was customary strategy for employers to break strikes by keeping the plants going with scabs, while hired thugs and police repressed the strike organization. But in the Sit-Downs the workers simply seized and occupied the plants, not only stopping production but threatening the bosses

with physical destruction of their factories if they tried any repression. After so much abuse and powerlessness, militant young workers discovered great pleasure in temporarily taking over. In some strikes unlucky bands of foremen and company officials trapped in plant offices would become union prisoners for a few hours or days.

While 1935 and 1936 saw Sit-Down strikes in the rubber plants in Akron, Ohio, in auto plants in Detroit, Cleveland and Atlanta, it was the Dec. 1936 Flint, Michigan Sit-Down strike against GM that became the pivotal labor battle of the 1930s. Flint was the central fortress of GM production, their special company town where GM carefully kept both Afrikans and foreign-born immigrants to a minimum. Wages in the many Flint GM plants were relatively high for the times.

Still many enthusiastic Flint auto workers organized themselves around the new C.I.O. United Auto Workers union, and seized both Fisher Body No. 1 and Chevy No. 4 plants. Thousands of CIO militants from all over Michigan demonstrated in the streets as the Sit-Downers, armed with crowbars and bats, barricaded themselves into the plants. Since the first plant was the only source of Buick, Olds and Pontiac bodies, and the second plant was the only source of Chevrolet engines, the CIO Sit-Down strangled all GM car production. (11)

After 90 days of intense struggle around the seized plants, General Motors gave in. They recognized the UAW as the union representation in seventeen plants. This was the key victory of the entire Euro-American labor upsurge of the 1930s. It was obvious that if General Motors, the



*Ford workers at 1935 New Jersey CIO Convention, masked to avoid recognition by company spies.*

strongest corporation in the world, was unable to defeat the new industrial unions, then a new day had come. Practical advances by workers in auto, steel, rubber, electronics, maritime, meat-packing, trucking and so on, proved that this was so.

The new union upsurge, which had begun in 1933, continued into the World War II period and the immediate post-war years. The number of strikes in the U.S. jumped from 840 in 1932 to 1700 in 1933, 2200 in 1936, and 4740 in 1937. By 1944 over 50% of auto workers took part in one or more strikes during the year. As many settler workers were taking part in strikes in 1944 as in 1937, at the height of the Sit-Downs. (12)

The defiant mood in the strongest union centers was very tangible. On March 14, 1944, some 5,000 Ford workers at River Rouge staged an "unauthorized" wildcat strike in which they blockaded the roads around the plant and broke into offices, "liberating" files on union militants. (13) It was common in "negotiations" for crowds of auto workers to surround the company officials or beat up company guards.

The substantial increases in wages and improvements in hours and working conditions were, for many, secondary to this new-found power in industrial

life. In the great 1937 Jones & Laughlin steel strike in Aliquippa, Pa. — a company town ruled over by a near-fascistic company dictatorship — one striker commented on his union dues after the victory: *"It's worth \$12 a year to be able to walk down the main street of Aliquippa, talk to anyone you want about anything you like, and feel that you are a citizen."* (14)

White Amerika reorganized then into the form we now know. The great '30s labor revolt was far more than just a series of factory disputes over wages. It was a historic social movement for democratic rights for the settler proletariat. Typically, these workers ended industrial serfdom. They won the right to maintain class organizations, to expect steady improvements in life, to express their work grievances, to accumulate some small property and to have a small voice in the local politics of their Empire.

In the industrial North the CIO movement reformed local school boards, sought to monitor draft exemptions for the privileged classes, ended company spy systems, replaced anti-union police officials, and in myriad ways worked to reorganize the U.S. Empire so that the Euro-Amerikan proletariat would have the life they expected as settlers. That is, a freer and more prosperous life than any proletariat in history has ever had.

### 3. New Deal & Class Struggle

The major class contradictions which had been developing since industrialization were finally resolved. The European immigrant proletariat wanted to fully become settlers, but at the same time was determined to unleash class struggle against the employers. Settler workers as a whole, with the Depression as a final push, were determined to overturn the past. This growing militancy made a major force of the settler workers. While they were increasingly united — "native-born" Euro-Amerikan and immigrant alike — the capitalists were increasingly disunited. Most were trying to block the way to needed reform of the U.S. Empire.

The New Deal administration of President Franklin Roosevelt reunited all settlers old and new. It gave the European "ethnic" national minorities real integration as Americans by sharply raising their privileges. New Deal officials and legislation promoted economic struggle and class organization by the industrial proletariat — but only in the settler way, in government-regulated unions loyal to U.S. Imperialism. President Roosevelt himself became the political leader of the settler proletariat, and used the directed power of their aroused millions to force through his reforms of the Empire.

Most fundamentally, it was only with this shake-up, these modernizing reforms, and the homogenized unity of the settler masses that U.S. Imperialism could gamble everything on solving its problems through world domination. This was the desperate preparation for World War. The global economic crisis after 1929 was to be resolved in

another imperialist war, and the U.S. Empire intended to be the victor.

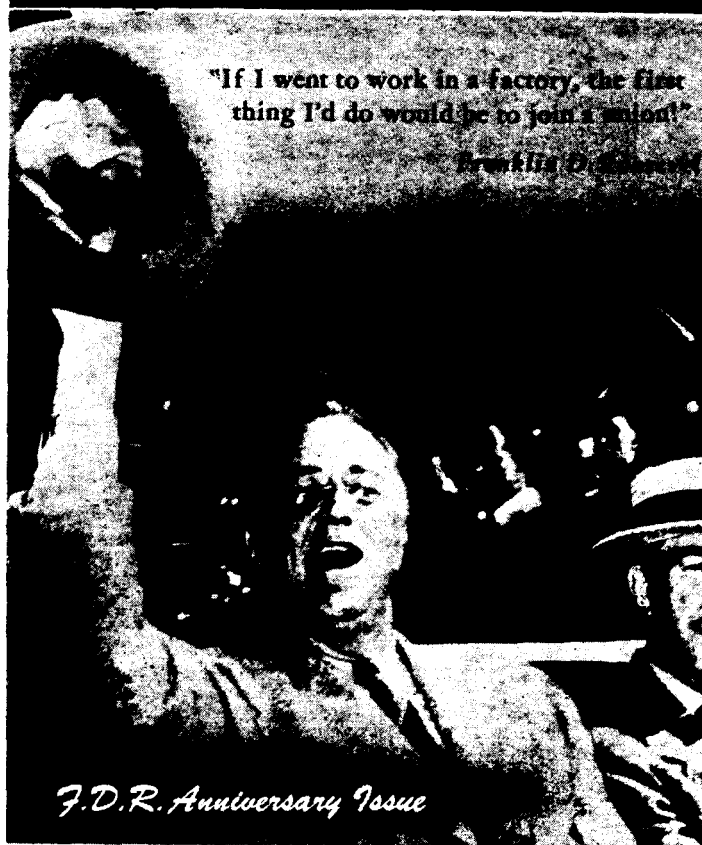
This social reunification could be seen in President Roosevelt's unprecedented third-term victory in the 1940 elections. Pollster Samuel Lubell analyzed the landslide election results for the *Saturday Evening Post*:

"Roosevelt won by the vote of Labor, unorganized as well as organized, plus that of the foreign born and their first and second generation descendants. And the Negro.

"It was a class-conscious vote for the first time in American history, and the implications are portentous. The New Deal appears to have accomplished what the Socialists, the I.W.W. and the Communists never could approach..." (15)

Lubell's investigation showed how, in a typical situation, the New Deal Democrats won 4 to 1 in Boston's "Charlestown" neighborhood; that was a working class and small petit-bourgeois "ethnic" Irish community. Of the 30,000 in the ward, almost every family had directly and personally benefited from their New Deal. Perhaps most importantly, the Democrats had very publicly "become the champion of the Irish climb up the American ladder." While Irish had been kept off the Boston U.S. Federal bench, Roosevelt promptly appointed two Irish lawyers as Federal judges. Other Irish from that neighborhood got patronage as postmasters, U.S. mar-

# THE ROOSEVELT SPIRIT



shals, collector of customs, and over 400 other Federal positions.

Irish workers in the neighborhood got raises from the new Federal minimum wage and hours law. Unemployment benefits went to those who were still jobless. 300-500 Irish youth earned small wages in the National Youth Administration, while thousands of adult jobless were given temporary Works Progress Administration (WPA) jobs. Forty per cent of the older Irish were on U.S. old-age assistance. 600 families got ADC. Many received food stamps. Federal funds built new housing and paid for park and beach improvements. The same process was taking place with Polish, Italian, Jewish and other European national minority communities throughout the North.

It was not just a crude bribery. The Depression was a shattering crisis to settlers, upsetting far beyond the turmoil of the 1960s and 1970s. It is hard for us to fully grasp how upside-down the settler world temporarily became. In the first week of his Administration, for example, President Roosevelt hosted a delegation of coal mine operators in the White House. They had come to beg the President to nationalize the coal industry and buy them all out. They argued that "free enterprise" had no hope of ever reviving the coal industry or the Appalachian communities dependent upon it.

Millions of settlers believed that only an end to traditional capitalism could make things run again. The new answer was to raise up the U.S. Government as the coordinator and regulator of all major industries. To restabilize the banking system, Roosevelt now insured consumer deposits and also sharply restricted many former, speculative bank policies. In interstate trucking, in labor relations, in communications, in every area of economic life new Federal agencies and bureaus tried to rationalize the daily workings of capitalism by limiting competition and stabilizing prices. The New Deal consciously tried to imitate the sweeping, corporate state economic dictatorship of the Mussolini regime in Italy.

The most advanced sections of the bourgeoisie — such as Thomas Watson of IBM and David Sarnoff of RCA — backed the controversial New Deal reforms. But for most the reaction was heated. The McCormick family's *Chicago Tribune* editorially called for Roosevelt's assassination. Those capitalists who most stubbornly resisted the changes were publicly denounced by the New Dealers, who had set themselves up as the leaders of the anti-capitalist mass sentiment.

The contradictions within the bourgeoisie became so great that a fascist coup d'etat was attempted against the New Deal. A group of major capitalists, headed by Irene DuPont (of DuPont Chemicals) and the J.P. Morgan banking interests, set the conspiracy in motion in 1934. The DuPont family put up \$3 million to finance a fascist stormtrooper movement, with the Remington Firearms Co. to arm as many as 1 million fascists. Gen. Douglas MacArthur was recruited to ensure the passive support of the U.S. Army. The plan was to seize state power, with a captive President Roosevelt forced to officially turn over the reins of government to a hand-picked fascist "strong-man."

As their would-be Amerikan Fuhrer the capitalists selected Gen. Smedley Butler, twice winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor and retired Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps. But after being approached by J.P. Morgan representatives, Gen. Butler went to Congress and exposed the cabal. An ensuing Congressional investigation confirmed Gen. Butler's story. With the conspiracy shot down and keeping in mind the high position of the inept conspirators, the Roosevelt Administration let the matter just fade out of the headlines.

During the 1936 election campaign one observer recorded the New Deal's open class appeal at a Democratic Party rally in Pittsburgh's Forbes Field. The packed crowd was whipped up by lesser politicians as they expectantly awaited the Presidential motorcade. State Senator Warren Roberts recited the names of famous millionaires, pausing as the crowds thundered boos after each name. He orated: "*The President has decreed that your children shall enjoy equal opportunity with the sons of the rich.*" Then Pennsylvania Gov. Earle took the microphone to punch at the Republican capitalists even more:

*"There are the Mellons, who have grown fabulously wealthy from the toil of the men of iron and steel, the men whose brain and brawn have made this great city; Grundy, whose sweatshop operators have been the shame and disgrace of Pennsylvania for a generation; Pew, who strives to build a political and economic empire with*

*himself as dictator; the DuPonts, whose dollars were earned with the blood of American soldiers; Morgan, financier of war."*

Thousands of boos followed each name. Then, with the crowds worked up against their hated exploiters, the Presidential motorcade drove into the stadium to frenzied cheering. The observer wrote of Roosevelt's entry: *"He entered in an open car. It might have been the chariot of a Roman Emperor."* (17)

So it was not just the social concessions that the government made; the deep allegiance of the Euro-American workers to this new Leader and his New Deal movement was born in the feeling that he truly spoke for their class interests. This was no accident. Nations and classes in the long run get the leadership they deserve.



In order to end the company-town feudalism of their communities, the CIO unionists took their new-found strength into the bourgeois political arena. The massed voting base of the new unions was the bedrock of the New Deal in the industrial states. The union activists themselves merged into and became part of the imperialist New Deal. Bob Travis, the Communist Party militant who was the organizer of the Flint Sit-Down, proudly told the 1937 UAW Convention:

*"We have also not remained blind to utilizing the city's political situation to the union's advantage, whenever possible. In this way, for five months after the strike, we were able to consolidate a 5-4 pro-labor majority bloc in the city commission, get a pro-labor city manager appointed, and bring about the dismissal of a vicious police chief, notorious as a strike-breaker."*

By 1958, Robert Carter, the UAW Regional Director for Flint-Lansing, could resign to become Flint City Manager. Things had come full circle. Once outsiders challenging the local establishment, then angry reformers, the union was now part of the local bourgeois political structure.

This was the universal pattern in the industrial areas. In Anderson, Indiana, the auto workers at GM Guide Lamp took over the plant in a 1937 Sit-Down. By 1942, strike leader Riley Etchison was a member of the local draft board. Another Sit-Downer was the new sheriff. John Mullen, the Steelworkers union leader at U.S. Steel's Clairton, Pa. works, went on to become the Mayor, as did Steelworkers local leader Elmer Maloy in Duquesne, Pa. Everywhere the young CIO activists integrated into the local Democratic Party as a force for patriotic reform.

Nor was this limited to Euro-Americans. Coleman Young (Mayor of Detroit), John Conyers (U.S. Congressman), and many other Afrikan politicians got their start as young CIO staff members. In Hawaii, the Japanese workers in the CIO International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union became the active base of the Democratic Party's takeover of Hawaiian bourgeois politics after the war. The CIO unions became an essential gear in the liberal reform machine of the Democratic Party. (18).

A significant factor in the success of the 1930s union organizing drives was the U.S. Government's refusal to use armed repression against it. *No U.S. armed repression against Euro-American workers took place from January, 1933 (when Roosevelt took office) until the June, 1941 North American Aviation strike in California.* The U.S. Government understood that the masses of Euro-American industrial workers were still loyal settlers, committed to U.S. Imperialism. To overreact to their economic struggles would only further radicalize them. Besides, why should President Roosevelt have ordered out the FBI or U.S. Army to break up the admiring supporters of his own Democratic Party?

Attempts by the reactionary wing of the bourgeoisie to return to the non-union past by wholesale repression were opposed by the New Deal. In the 1934 West Coast longshore strike (which in San Francisco became a general strike after the police killed two strikers), President Roosevelt refused to militarily intervene, despite the fact that the governors of Oregon and Washington requested that he do so.

In speaking for the shipping companies and business interests on the Coast, Oregon Gov. Meier telegraphed Roosevelt that troops were needed because: *"We are now in a state of armed hostilities. The situation is complicated by communistic interference. It is now beyond the reach of State authorities...insurrection which if not checked will develop into civil war."* Roosevelt publicly scorned this demand. It is telling that at the most violent period of the strike a picture of President Roosevelt hung in the longshoremen's union office in San Francisco.





President Roosevelt privately said in 1934 that there was a conspiracy by "the old conservative crowd" to provoke general strikes as a pretext for wholesale repression. The President's confidential secretary wrote at the time that both he and U.S. Labor Secretary Francis Perkins believed that: "...the shipowners deliberately planned to force a general strike throughout the country and in this way they hoped they could crush the labor movement. I have no proof but I think the shipowners were selected to replace the steel people who originally started out to do this job." (19)

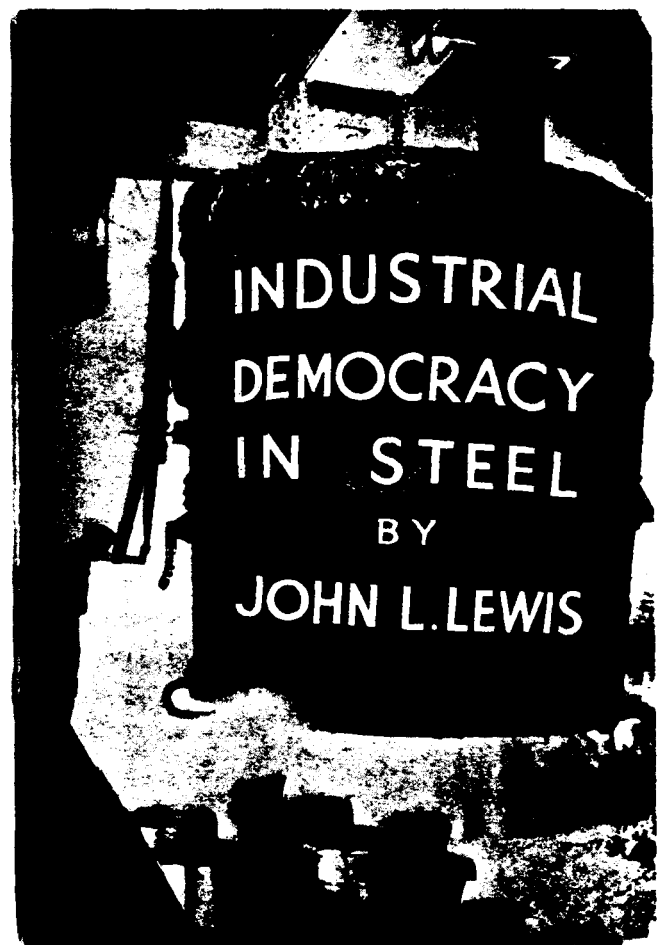
The reactionary wing of the bourgeoisie were no doubt enraged at the New Deal's refusal to try and return the outmoded past at bayonet point. Almost three years later, in the pivotal labor battle of the 1930s, the New Deal forced General Motors to reach a deal with their striking Flint, Michigan employees. GM had attempted to end the Flint Sit-Down with force, using both a battalion of hired thugs and the local Flint police. Lengthy street battles with the police over union food deliveries to the Sit-Downers resulted in many strikers shot and beaten (14 were shot in one day), but also in union control over the streets. In the famous "Battle of Bull's Run" the auto workers, fighting in clouds of tear gas, forced the cops to run for their lives. The local repressive forces available to GM were unequal to the task.

From the second week of the strike, GM had officially asked the government to send in the troops. But both the State and Federal governments were in the hands of the New Deal. After five weeks of stalling, Michigan Gov. Frank Murphy finally sent in 1,200 National Guardsmen to calm the street battles but not to move against either the union or the seized plants. Murphy used the leverage of the troops to pressure both sides to reach a compromise settlement. The Governor reassured the CIO: "*The military will never be used against you.*" The National Guard was ordered to use force, if necessary, to protect the Sit-Down from the local sheriff and any right-wing vigilantes.

The Administration had both the President's Secretary and the Secretary of Commerce call GM officials, urging settlement with the union. Roosevelt even had the head of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. call his friend, the Chairman of GM, to push for labor peace. The end of GM's crush-the-union strategy came on Feb. 11, 1937, after President Roosevelt had made it clear he would not approve repression, and told GM to settle with the union. GM realized that the fight was over. (20)

The important effect of the pro-CIO national strategy can be seen if we compare the '30s to earlier periods. Whenever popular struggles against business grew too strong to be put down by local police, then the government would send in the National Guard or U.S. Army. Armed repression was the drastic but brutally decisive weapon used by the bourgeoisie.

And the iron fist of the U.S. Government not only inspired terror but also promoted patriotism to split the settler ranks. The U.S. Army broke the great 1877 and 1894 national railway strikes. The coast-to-coast repressive wave, led by the U.S. Dept. of Justice, against the I.W.W. during 1917-1924 effectively destroyed that "Un-American" movement — even without Army troops. Yet,



no such attempt was made during the even more turbulent 1930s. President Roosevelt himself turned to CIO leaders, in the words of the *N. Y. Times*, "for advice on labor problems rather than to any old-line A.F.L. leader." (21)

There was a heavy split in the capitalist class, with many major corporations viewing the CIO as the Red Menace in their backyards, and desperately using lock-outs, company unions and police violence to stop them. Not all, however. Years before the CIO came into being, Gerald Swope of General Electric had told A.F.L. President William Green that the company would rather deal with one industrial union rather than fifteen different craft unions. And when the Communist Party-led United Electrical Workers-CIO organized at GE, they found that the company was glad to make a deal.

While some corporations, such as Republic Steel, tolerated unionization only after bloody years of conflict, others wised up very quickly. U.S. Steel tried to control its employees by promoting company unions. But in plant after plant the company unions were taken over by CIO activists. (23) It was no secret that the New Deal was pushing industrial unionization. In Aliquippa, Pa., Jones & Laughlin Steel Co. had simply made union militants "disappear" — one Steelworkers organizer was later found after having been secretly committed to a state mental hospital. New Deal Gov. Pinchot changed all that, even assigning State Police bodyguards to protect CIO organizers.

In Homestead, where no public labor meeting had been held since 1919, 2,000 steelworkers and miners



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## Committee for Industrial Organization

45 Rust Building

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gathered in 1936 in a memorial to the pioneering 1892 Homestead Strike against U.S. Steel. The memorial rally was protected by State Police, and Lt. Gov. Kennedy was one of the speakers. *He told the workers that the State Police would help them if they went on strike against U.S. Steel.* (24)

With all that, it is understandable that U.S. Steel decided to reach a settlement with the CIO. Two weeks after the Flint Sit-Down defeated GM, U.S. Steel suddenly proposed a contract to the CIO. On March 2, 1937, the Steelworkers Union became the officially accepted bargaining agent at U.S. Steel plants. The Corporation not only bowed to the inevitable, but by installing the CIO it staved off even more militant possibilities. The CIO bureaucracy was unpopular in the mills. Only 7% of the U.S. Steel employees had signed union membership cards. In fact, Lee Pressman, the Communist Party lawyer for the Steelworkers Union, said afterwards that they just didn't have the support of the majority:

"There is no question that we could not have filed a petition through the National Labor Relations Board or any other kind of machinery asking for an election. We could not have won an election..." (25)

At the U.S. Steel stockholders meeting the following year, Chairman Myron Taylor explained to his investors why the New Deal's pro-CIO approach worked:

"The union has scrupulously followed the terms of its agreement and, in so far as I know, has made no unfair effort to bring other employees into its ranks, while

the corporation subsidiaries, during a very difficult period, have been entirely free of labor disturbance of any kind." (26)

By holding back the iron fist of repression, by encouraging the CIO, the New Deal reform government cut down "labor disturbance" among the Euro-American proletariat.

It should be kept in mind that the New Deal was ready to use the most direct repression when it was felt necessary. All during the 1930s, for example, they directed an ever-increasing offensive against the Nationalist Party of Puerto Rico. Unlike the settler workers, the liberation struggle of Puerto Rico was not seeking the reform of the U.S. Empire but its ouster from their nation. The speed with which the nationalist fervor was spreading through the Puerto Rican masses alarmed U.S. Imperialism.

So the most liberal, most reform-minded U.S. Government in history repressed the Nationalists in the most naked and brutal way. By 1936 the tide of pro-Independence sentiment was running high, and Don Albizu Campos, President of the Nationalist Party, was without doubt the most respected political figure among both the intellectuals and the masses. School children were starting to tear the U.S. flag down from the school flagpoles and substitute the Puerto Rican flag. In the city of Ponce the school principal defied a police order to take the Puerto Rican banner down. The New Deal response was to directly move to violently break up the Nationalist center.

In July, 1936 eight Nationalist leaders were successfully tried for conspiracy by the U.S. Government. Since their first trial had ended in a dead-locked jury, the government decided to totally rig the next judge and jury (most of the jurors were Euro-Americans, for example). That done, the Nationalist leaders were sentenced to four to ten years in federal prison. Meanwhile, general repression came down. U.S. Governor Winship followed a policy of denying all rights of free speech or assembly to the pro-Independence forces. Machine guns were placed in the streets of San Juan.

On Palm Sunday, 1937 — one month after President Roosevelt refused to use force against the Flint Sit-Down Strike — the Ponce Massacre took place. A Nationalist parade, with a proper city permit, was met with U.S. police gunfire. The parade of 92 youth from the Cadets and Daughters of the Republic (Nationalist youth groups) was watched by 150 U.S. police with rifles and machine guns. As soon as the unarmed teen-agers started marching the police began firing and kept firing. Nineteen Puerto Rican citizens were killed and over 100 wounded. Afterwards, President Roosevelt rejected all protests and said that Governor Winship had his approval. The goal of paralyzing the pro-Independence forces through terrorism was obvious. (27)

Similar pressures, although different in form, were used by the New Deal against Mexican workers in the West and Midwest. There, mass round-ups in the Mexican communities and the forced deportation of 500,000 Mexicanos (many of whom had U.S. residency or citizenship) were used to save relief funds for settlers and, most

importantly, to break up the rising Mexicano labor and national agitation. In a celebrated case in 1936, miner Jesús Pallares was arrested and deported for the "crime" of leading the 8,000-member La Liga Obrera De Habla Espanola in New Mexico. (28)

The U.S. Government used violent terror against the Puerto Rican people and mass repression against the Mexicano people during the 1930s. But it did nothing like that to stop Euro-American workers because it didn't have to. The settler working class wasn't going anywhere.

In the larger sense, they had little class politics of their own any more. President Roosevelt easily became their guide and Patron Saint, just as Andrew Jackson had for the settler workmen of almost exactly one century earlier. The class consciousness of the European immigrant proletarians had gone bad, infected with the settler sickness. Instead of the defiantly syndicalist I.W.W. they now had the capitalistic CIO.

This reflected the desires of the vast majority of Euro-American workers. They wanted settler unionism, with a privileged relationship to the government and "their" New Deal. Settler workers accepted each new labor law passed by the imperialist government to stabilize labor relations. But unions regulated, supervised and reorganized by the imperialists are hardly the free working class organizations called by that name in the earlier periods of world capitalism.

One reason that this CIO settler unionism was so valuable to the imperialists was that in a time of labor upheaval it cut down on uncontrolled militancy and even helped calm the production lines. Even the "Left" union militants were forced into this role. Bob Travis, the Com-

munist Party leader of the 1937 Flint Sit-Down, reported only months after besting General Motors:

"Despite this terrifically rapid growth in membership we have been able to conduct an intensive educational campaign against unauthorized strikes and for observation of our contract and in the total elimination of wild-cat actions during the past 3 months." (29)

*Fortune*, the prestigious business magazine, said in 1941:

"...properly directed, the UAW can hold men together in an emergency; it can be made a great force for morale. It has regularized many phases of production; its shop stewards, who take up grievances on the factory floor, can smooth things as no company union could ever succeed in smoothing them." (30)

The Euro-American proletariat during the '30s had broken out of industrial confinement, reaching for freedoms and a material style of life no modern proletariat had ever achieved. The immense battles that followed obscured the nature of the victory. The victory they gained was the firm positioning of the Euro-American working class in the settler ranks, reestablishing the rights of all Europeans here to share the privileges of the oppressor nation. This was the essence of the equality that they won. This bold move was in the settler tradition, sharing the American pie with more European reinforcements so that the Empire could be strengthened. This formula had partially broken down during the transition from the Amerika of the Frontier to the Industrial Amerika. It was the brilliant accomplishment of the New Deal to mend this break.

CAREY McWILLIAMS  
WATCHES A MASS DEPORTATION

*I watched the first shipment of "repatriated" Mexicans leave Los Angeles in February, 1931. The loading process began at six o'clock in the morning. Repatriados arrived by the truckload — men, women, and children — with dogs, cats, and goats, half-open suitcases, rolls of bedding, and lunchbaskets. It cost the County of Los Angeles \$77,249.29 to repatriate one trainload, but the savings in relief amounted to \$347,468.41 for this one shipment. In 1932 alone over eleven thousand Mexicans were repatriated from Los Angeles. . . .*

*The strikes in California in the thirties, moreover, were duplicated wherever Mexicans were employed in agriculture. Mexican field-workers struck in Arizona; in Idaho and Washington; in Colorado; in Michigan; and in the Lower Rio Grand Valley in Texas. When Mexican sheep-shearers went on strike in west Texas in 1934, one of the shepherds made a speech in which he said: "We are a pretty poor bunch of white men if we are going to sit here and let a bunch of Mexicans tell us what to do." . . .*

*With scarcely an exception, every strike in which Mexicans participated in the borderlands in the thirties was broken by the use of violence and was followed by deportations. In most of these strikes, Mexican workers stood alone; that is, they were not supported by organized labor, for their organizations, for the most part, were affiliated neither with the CIO nor the AFL.*

Carey McWilliams,  
North from Mexico

## 4. The CIO's Integration & Imperialist Labor Policy

The CIO played an important role for U.S. imperialism in disorganizing and placing under supervision the nationally oppressed. For the first time masses of Third World workers were allowed and even conscripted into the settler trade unions. This was the result of a historic arrangement between the U.S. Empire and nationally oppressed workers in the industrial North.

On one side, this limited "unity" ensured that Third World workers didn't oppose the new, settler industrial unions, and were safely absorbed as "minorities" under tight settler control. On the other side, hungry Third World proletarians gained significant income advances and hopes of job security and advancement. It was an arrangement struck out of need on both sides, but one in which the Euro-Amerikan labor aristocracy made only tactical concessions while strengthening their hegemony over the Empire's labor market.

So while the old A.F.L. craft unions had controlled Third World labor by driving us out of the labor market, by excluding us from the craft unions or by confining us to small, "seg" locals, the new CIO could only control us by absorbing us into their settler unions. The imperialists had decided that they needed colonial labor in certain industries. Euro-Amerikan labor could not, therefore, drive the nationally oppressed away in the old manner. The colonial proletarians could only be controlled by disorganizing them — separating their economic struggles from the national struggles of their peoples, separating them from other Third World proletarians around the world, absorbing them as "brothers" of settler unionism, and placing them under the leadership of the Euro-Amerikan labor aristocracy. The new integration was the old segregation on a higher level, the unity of opposites in everyday life.

We can see how this all worked by reviewing the CIO's relationship to Afrikan workers. Large Afrikan refugee communities had formed in the major Northern industrial centers. Well over one million refugees had fled Northwards in just the time between 1910-1924, and new thousands came every month. They were an irritating presence to the settler North; each refugee community was a foreign body in a white metropolis. Like a grain of sand in an oyster. And just as the oyster eases its irritation by encasing the foreign element in a hard, smooth coating of pearl, settler Amerika encapsulated Afrikan workers in the hard, white layer of the CIO.

Despite the "race riots" and the hostility of Euro-Amerikans the Afrikan refugees streamed to the North in the early years of the century. After all, even the troubles of the North seemed like lesser evils to those fleeing the terroristic conditions of the occupied National Territory. Many had little choice, escaping the revived Ku Klux Klan. Increasingly forced off the land, barred from the new factories in the South, Afrikans were held down by the terroristic control of their daily lives.

Each night found the Illinois Central railroad winding its way Northward through Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee, following the Mississippi River up to the "Promised Land" of Gary or Chicago. Instead of sharecropping or seasonal farm labor for "Mr. John," Afrikan men during World War I might get hired for the "elite" Chicago jobs as laborers at Argo Corn Starch or International Harvester. Each week the *Chicago Defender*, in the '20s the most widely-read "race" newspaper even in the South, urged its readers to forsake hellish Mississippi and come Northward to "freedom." One man remembers the long, Mississippi nights tossing and turning in bed, dreaming about the fabled North: "You could not rest in your bed at night for Chicago."

The refugee communities were really small New Afrikan cities, where the taut rope of settler domination had been partially loosened. Spear's *Black Chicago* says: "In the rural South, Negroes were dependent upon white landowners in an almost feudal sense. Personal supervision and personal responsibility permeated almost every aspect of life...In the factories and yards (of the North) on the other hand, the relationship with the 'boss' was formal and impersonal, and supervision limited to working hours." (31)

While there was less individual restriction, Afrikan refugees were under tight control as a national group. The free bourgeois labor market of Euro-Amerikans didn't really exist for Afrikans. Their employment was not individual, not private. They got work only when a company consciously decided to use Afrikan labor as a group. So that Afrikan labor in the industrial North still existed under colonial conditions, driven into specific workplaces and specific jobs.

Afrikans were understood by the companies as dynamite — extremely useful and potentially very dangerous. Their use in Northern industry was the start, though little understood at the time, of gradually bringing the new European immigrants up from proletarians to real settlers. Imperialism was gradually releasing the "Hunky" and "Dago" from laboring at the very bottom of the factories. Now even more Euro-Amerikans were being pushed upward into the ranks of skilled workers and supervisors. And if the Afrikan workers were paid more than their usual colonial wages in the South, they still earned less than "white man's wages." Even the newest European immigrant on the all-white production lines could look at the Afrikan laborers and know his new-found privileges as a settler.

The capitalists also knew that too many Afrikans might turn a useful and super-profitable tool into a dangerous force. Afrikan labor was used only in a controlled way, with heavy restrictions placed upon it. One Indiana steel mill superintendent in the 1920s said: "When we got (up to 10% Black) employees, I said, 'No more colored without discussion.' I got the colored pastors to send

colored men whom they could guarantee would not organize and were not bolsheviks." This was at a time when the Garvey Movement, the all-Afrikan labor unions, and the growth of Pan-Afrikanist and revolutionary forces were taking place within the Afrikan nation.

The Northern factories placed strict quotas on the number of Afrikan workers. Not because they weren't profitable enough. Not because the employers were "prejudiced" — as the liberals would have it — but because the imperialists believed that Afrikan labor could most safely be used when it was surrounded by a greater mass of settler labor. In 1937 an official of the U.S. Steel Gary Works admitted that for the previous 14 years corporate policy had set the percentage of Afrikan workers at the mill to 15%. (32)

The Ford Motor Co. had perhaps the most extensive system of using Afrikan labor under plantation-like control, with Henry Ford acting as the planter. A special department of Ford management was concerned with dominating not only the on-the-job life of Afrikan workers, but the refugee community as well. Ford hired only through the Afrikan churches, with each church being given money if its members stayed obedient to Ford. The company also subsidized Afrikan bourgeois organizations. His Afrikan employees and their families constituted about one-fourth of the entire Detroit Afrikan community. Both the NAACP and the Urban League were singing Ford's praises, and warning Afrikan auto workers not to have anything to do with unions. One report on the Ford system in the 1930s said:

*"There is hardly a Negro church, fraternal body, or other organization in which Ford workers are not represented. Scarcely a Negro professional or business man is completely independent of income derived from Ford employees. When those seeking Ford jobs are added to this group, it is readily seen that the Ford entourage was able to exercise a dominating influence in the community."* (33)

The Afrikan refugee communities, extensions of an oppressed nation, became themselves miniature colonies, with an Afrikan bourgeois element acting as the local agents of the foreign imperialists. Ford's system was unusual only in that one capitalist very conspicuously took as his role that which is usually done more quietly by a committee of capitalists through business, foundations and their imperialist government.

**This colonial existence in the midst of industrial Amerika gave rise to contradiction, to the segregation of the oppressed creating its opposite in the increasingly important role of Afrikan labor in industrial production. Having been forced to concentrate in certain cities and certain industries and even certain plants, Afrikan labor at the end of the 1920's was discovered to have a strategic role in Northern industry far out of proportion to its still small numbers. In Cleveland Afrikans comprised 50% of the metal working industry; in Chicago they were 40-50% of the meat packing plants; in Detroit the Afrikan auto workers made up 12% of the workforce at Ford, 10% at Briggs, 30% at Midland Steel Frame. (34)**



just arrived in Chicago from the South

**Overall, Afrikan workers employed in the industrial economy were concentrated in just five industries: automotive, steel, meat-packing, coal, railroads. The first four were where settler labor and settler capitalists were about to fight out their differences in the 1930s and early 1940s. And Afrikan labor was right in the middle.**

In a number of industrial centers, then, the CIO unions could not be secure without controlling Afrikan labor. And on their side, Afrikan workers urgently needed improvement in their economic condition. A 1929 study of the automobile industry comments:

*"As one Ford employment official has stated, 'Many of the Negroes are employed in the foundry and do work that nobody else would do.' The writer noticed in one Chevrolet plant that Negroes were engaged on the dirtiest, roughest and most disagreeable work, for example, in the painting of axles. At the Chrysler plant they are used exclusively on paint jobs, and at the Chandler-Cleveland plant certain dangerous emery wheel grinding jobs were given only to Negroes."* (35)

In virtually all auto plants Afrikans were not allowed to work on the production lines, and were segregated in foundry work, painting, as janitors, drivers and other "service" jobs. They earned 35-38 cents per hour, which was one-half of the pay of the Euro-American production line workers. This was true at Packard, at GM, and many other companies. (36)

The CIO's policy, then, became to promote integration under settler leadership where Afrikan labor was numerous and strong (such as the foundries, the meat-packing plants, etc.), and to maintain segregation and Jim Crow in situations where Afrikan labor was numerically lesser and weak. Integration and segregation were but two aspects of the same settler hegemony.

Three other imperatives shaped CIO policy: 1. To maintain settler privilege in the form of reserving the skillful crafts, more desirable production jobs, and the operation of the unions themselves to Euro-Amerikans. 2. Any tactical concessions to Afrikan labor had to conform to the CIO's need to maintain the unity of Euro-Amerikans. 3. *The CIO's policy on Afrikan labor had to be consistent with the overall colonial labor policy of the U.S. Empire.* We should underline the fact that rather than challenge U.S. imperialism's rules on the status and role of colonial labor, the CIO as settler unions loyally followed those rules.

To use the automobile industry as a case, there was considerable integration within the liberal United Auto Workers (UAW-CIO). That is, there was considerable recruiting of Afrikan labor to help Euro-Amerikan workers advance their particular class interests. The first Detroit Sit-Down was at Midland Steel Frame in 1936. The UAW not only recruited Afrikan workers to play an active role in the strike, but organized their families into the CIO support campaign. Midland Frame, which made car frames for Chrysler and Ford, was 30% Afrikan. There the UAW had no reasonable chance of victory without commanding Afrikan forces as well as its own.

But at the many plants that were overwhelmingly settler, the CIO obviously treated Afrikan labor differently. In those majority of the situations the new union supported segregation. In Flint, Michigan the General Motors plants were Jim Crow. Afrikans were employed only in the foundry or as janitors, at sub-standard wages (many, of course, did other work although still officially segregated and underpaid as "janitors"). Not only skilled jobs, but even semi-skilled production line assembly work was reserved for settlers.

While the UAW fought GM on wages, hours, civil liberties for settler workers, and so forth, it followed the general relationship to colonial labor that GM had laid down. So that the contradiction between settler labor and settler capitalists was limited, so to say, to their oppressor nation, and didn't change their common front towards the oppressed nations and their proletariats.

At the time of the Flint Sit-Down victory in February, 1937, the NAACP issued a statement raising the question of more jobs: "Everywhere in Michigan colored people are asking whether the new CIO union is going to permit Negroes to work up into some of the good jobs or whether it is just going to protect them in the small jobs they already have in General Motors." (37)

That was an enlightening question. Many UAW radicals had already answered "yes." Wyndham Mortimer, the Communist Party USA trade union leader who was 1st Vice-President of the new UAW-CIO, left behind a series of autobiographical sketches of his union career when he died. Beacon Press, the publishing house of the liberal Unitarian-Universalist Church, has printed this autobiography under the stirring title *Organize!* In his own words Mortimer left us an inside view of his secret negotiations with Afrikan auto workers in Flint.

Mortimer had made an initial organizing trip to Flint in June, 1936, to start setting up the new union. Anx-

ious to get support from Afrikan workers for the coming big strike, Mortimer arranged for a secret meeting:

"A short time later, I found a note under my hotel room door. It was hard to read because so many grimy hands had handled it. It said, "Tonight at midnight," followed by a number on Industrial Avenue. It was signed, "Henry." Promptly at midnight, I was at the number he had given. It was a small church and was totally dark. I rapped on the door and waited. Soon the door was opened and I went inside. The place was lighted by a small candle, carefully shaded to prevent light showing. Inside there were eighteen men, all of them Negroes and all of them from the Buick foundry. I told them why I was in Flint, what I hoped to do in the way of improving conditions and raising their living standards. A question period followed. The questions were interesting in that they dealt with the union's attitude toward discrimination and with what the union's policy was toward bettering the very bad conditions of the Negro people. One of them said, "You see, we have all the problems and worries of the white folks, and then we have one more: we are Negroes."

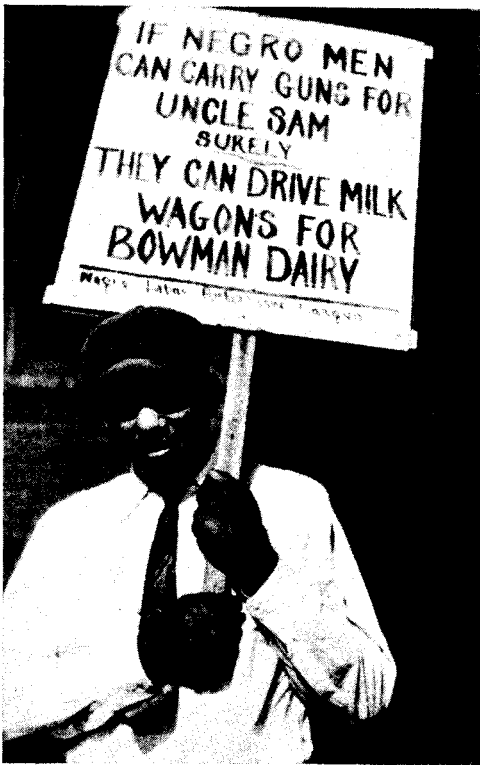
"I pointed out that the old AFL leadership was gone. The CIO had a new program with a new leadership that realized that none of us was free unless we were all free. Part of our program was to fight Jim Crow. Our program would have a much better chance of success if the Negro worker joined with us and added his voice and presence on the union floor. Another man arose and asked, "Will we have a local union of our own?" I replied, "We are not a Jim Crow union, nor do we have any second-class citizens in our membership!"

"The meeting ended with eighteen application cards signed and eighteen dollars in initiation fees collected. I cautioned them not to stick their necks out, but quietly to get their fellow workers to sign application cards and arrange other meetings..." (38)

Mortimer's recollections are referred to over and over in Euro-Amerikan "Left" articles on the CIO as supposed fact. In actual fact there was little Afrikan support for the Flint Sit-Down. Only five Afrikans took part in the Flint Sit-Down Strike. Nor was that an exception. In the 1937 Sit-Down at Chrysler's Dodge Main in Detroit only three Afrikan auto workers stayed with the strike. During the critical, organizing years of the UAW, Afrikan auto workers were primarily sitting *out* the fight between settler labor and settler corporations. (39) It was not their nation, not their union, and not their fight. And the results of the UAW-CIO victory proved their point of view.

The Flint Sit-Down was viewed by Euro-Amerikan workers there as their victory, and they absolutely intended to eat the dinner themselves. So at Flint's Chevrolet No. 4 factory the first UAW & GM contract after the Sit-Down contained a clause on "noninterchangibility" reaffirming settler privilege. The new union now told the Afrikan workers that the contract made it *illegal* for them to move up beyond being janitors or foundry workers. That was the fruit of the great Flint Sit-Down — a Jim Crow labor contract. (40) The same story was true at Buick, exposing how empty were the earlier promises to Afrikan workers.

This was not limited to one plant or one city. A



history of the UAW notes: *"As the UAW official later conceded...in most cases the earliest contracts froze the existing pattern of segregation and even discrimination".*

(41) At the Atlanta GM plant, whose 1936 Sit-Down strike is still pointed to by the settler "Left" as an example of militant "Southern labor history," only total white-supremacy was good enough for the CIO workers. The victorious settler auto workers not only used their new-found union power to restrict Afrikan workers to being janitors, but did away altogether with even the pretense of having them as union members. For the next ten years the Atlanta UAW was all-white. (42)

So in answer to the question raised in 1937 by the NAACP, the true answer was "no" — the new CIO auto workers union was not going to get Afrikans more jobs, better jobs, an equal share of jobs, or any jobs. This was not a "sell-out" by some bureaucrat, but the nature of the CIO. Was there a big struggle by union militants on this issue? No. Did at least the Euro-Amerikan "Left" — there being many members in Flint, for example, of the Communist Party USA, the Socialist Party, and the various Trotskyists — back up their Afrikan "union brothers" in a principled way? No.

It is interesting that in his 1937 UAW Convention report on the Flint Victory, Communist Party USA militant Bob Travis covered up the white-supremacist nature of the Flint CIO. In his report (which covers even such topics as union baseball leagues) there was not one word about the Afrikan GM workers and the heavy situation they faced. And if that was the practice of the most advanced settler radicals, we can well estimate the political level of the ordinary Euro-Amerikan worker.

Neither integration nor segregation was basic — oppressor nation domination was basic. If the UAW-CIO

practiced segregation on a broad scale, it was equally prepared to use integration. When it turned after cracking GM and Chrysler to confront Ford, the most strongly anti-union of the Big Three auto companies, the UAW had to make a convincing appeal to the 12,000 Afrikan workers there. So special literature was issued, Afrikan church and civil rights leaders negotiated with, and — most importantly — Afrikan organizers were hired by the CIO to directly win over their brothers at Ford.

The colonial labor policy for the U.S. Empire was, as we previously discussed, fundamentally reformed in the 1830s. The growing danger of slave revolts and the swelling Afrikan majority in many key cities led to special restrictions on the use of Afrikan labor. Once the mainstay of manufacture and mining, Afrikans were increasingly moved out of the urban economy. When the new factories spread in the 1860s, Afrikans were kept out in most cases. The general colonial labor policy of the U.S. Empire has been to strike a balance between the need to exploit colonial labor and the safeguard of keeping the keys to modern industry and technology out of colonial hands.

On an immediate level Afrikan labor — as colonial subjects — were moved into or out of specific industries as the U.S. Empire's needs evolved. The contradiction between the decision to stabilize the Empire by giving more privilege to settler workers (ultimately by deproletarianizing them) and the need to limit the role of Afrikan labor was just emerging in the early 20th century.

So the CIO did not move to oppose open, rigid segregation in the Northern factories until the U.S. Government told them to during World War II. Until that time the CIO supported existing segregation, while accepting those Afrikans as union members who were already in the plants. This was only to strengthen settler unionism's power on the shop floor. During its initial 1935-1941 organizing period the CIO maintained the existing oppressor nation/oppressed nations job distribution: settler workers monopolized the skilled crafts and the mass of semi-skilled preproduction line jobs, while colonial workers had the fewer unskilled labor and broom-pushing positions.

For its first seven years the CIO not only refused to help Afrikan workers fight Jim Crow, but even refused to intervene when they were being driven out of the factories. Even as the U.S. edged into World War II many corporations were intensifying the already tight restrictions on Afrikan labor. Now that employment was picking up with the war boom, it was felt not only that Euro-Amerikans should have the new jobs but that Afrikans were not yet to be trusted at the heart of the imperialist war industry.

Robert C. Weaver of the Roosevelt Administration admitted: *"When the defense program got under way, the Negro was only on the sidelines of American industry, he seemed to be losing ground daily."* Chrysler had decreed that only Euro-Amerikans could work at the new Chrysler Tank Arsenal in Detroit. Ford Motor Co. was starting many new, all-settler departments — while rejecting 99 out of 100 Afrikan men referred to Ford by the U.S. Employment Service. And up in Flint, the 240



Afrikan janitors at Chevrolet No. 4 plant learned that GM was going to lay them off indefinitely. During 1940 and early 1941, while settler workers were being rehired for war production in great numbers, Afrikan labor found itself under attack. (43)

Those Afrikan workers employed in industry could not defend their immediate class interests through the CIO, but had to step out of the framework of settler unionism just to defend their existing jobs. In the Summer of 1941 there were three Afrikan strikes at Dodge Main and Dodge Truck in Detroit. The Afrikan workers at Flint Chevrolet No.4 staged protest rallies and eventually won their jobs. *As late as April 1943 some 3,000 Afrikan workers at Ford went out on strike for three days to protest Ford's hiring policies.* The point is that the CIO opposed Afrikan interests because it followed imperialist colonial labor policy — and when Afrikan workers needed to defend their class interests they had to do so on their own, organizing themselves on the basis of nationality.

It was not until mid-1942 that the CIO and the corporations, maneuvering together under imperialist coordination, started tapping Afrikan labor for the production lines. As much as settlers disliked letting masses of Afrikans into industry, there was little choice. The winning of the entire world was at stake, in a “rule or ruin” war. As the U.S. Empire strained to put forth great armies, navies and air fleets to war on other continents, the supply of Euro-American labor had reached the bottom of the barrel. To U.S. Imperialism, if the one-and-half million Afrikan workers in war industry helped the Empire conquer Asia and Europe it would well be worth the price.

The U.S. War Production Board said: “We cannot afford the luxury of thinking in terms of white men’s work.” So the numbers of Afrikan workers on the production lines tripled to 8.3% of all manufacturing production workers. Now the CIO unions, however unhappily, joined the corporations in promoting Afrikans into new jobs — even as hundreds of thousands of settler workers were protesting in “hate strikes.” The reality was that settler workers had government-led, imperialist unions, while colonial workers had no unions of their own at all. (44)

During World War II the CIO completed integrating itself by picking up many hundreds of thousands of colonial workers. Many of these new members, we should point out, were involuntary members. Historically, the overwhelming majority of Afrikans who have belonged to the CIO industrial unions in the past 40 years never joined voluntarily. Starting with the first Ford contract in 1941, the CIO rapidly shifted to “union shop” contracts. In these contracts all new employees were required to join the union as a condition of employment. The modern imperialist factory in most industries quickly became highly unionized — whether any of us liked it or not.

The U.S. Government, depending on the CIO as a key element in labor discipline, encouraged the “union shop.” The U.S. War Labor Board urged corporations to thus force their employees to join the CIO: “Too often members of unions do not maintain their membership because they resent discipline of responsible leadership.” (45) While this applied to all industrial workers, it applied most heavily to colonial labor.

The government and the labor aristocracy were impatient to get colonial workers safely tied up. If they were to be let into industry in large numbers they had to be split up and neutralized by the settler unions — voluntarily or involuntarily. In the Flint Buick plant, where 588 of the 600 Afrikan workers had been segregated in the foundry despite earlier CIO promises, the union and GM expected to win them over by finally letting them work on the production lines. To their surprise, as late as mid-1942 the majority of the Afrikan workers still refused to join the CIO. (46) The Afrikan Civil Rights organizations, the labor aristocracy, and the liberal New Deal all had to “educate” resisting workers like those to get in line with the settler unions.

The integration of the CIO, therefore, had nothing to do with increasing job opportunities for Afrikans or building “working class unity.” It was a new instrument of oppressor nation control over the oppressed nation proletarians.





# VIII. IMPERIALIST WAR & THE NEW AMERIKAN ORDER

## 1. G.I. Joe Defends His Supermarket



**FULL COOPERATION** of organized labor in efforts to win World War II was enlisted by President Roosevelt. Roosevelt insisted that labor be represented on the War Labor Board as equals with business to help maintain both production and labor standards and to settle disputes. Labor's drive to sell revenue-raising war bonds was symbolized in this poster presentation to Roosevelt at the White House by then AFL President William Green and Sec.-Treas. George Meany.

*"The Saturday Evening Post ran a series by G.I.s on 'What I Am Fighting For.' One characteristic article began: 'I am fighting for that Big House with the bright green roof and the big front lawn.'" (1)*

World War II was the answer to every settler's prayer — renewed conquest and renewed prosperity. The New Deal's domestic reforms alone could not get capitalism going again. And even though the CIO had won large wage increases in basic industry, the peace-time economy was incapable of providing enough jobs and profits. As late as early 1940, the unemployment rate for Euro-American workers was still almost 18%. (2) Expansion of the Empire was the necessary basis of new prosperity.

Although wars are made of mass tragedy and sacrifice, this most successful of all Amerikan wars was a happy time for most settlers. That's why they look back on it with so much nostalgia and fondness (even with a pathological TV comedy about "fun" in a Nazi P.O.W. camp). We could say that this was their last big frontier. Historian James Stokesbury notes in his summation of the war:

"One of the great ironies of the American war effort was the way it was born disproportionately by a relatively few people. In spite of the huge numbers of men in service, second only to Russia among the Allies, only a limited number of them saw combat...For the vast majori-

ty of Americans it was a good war, if there can be such a thing. People were more mobile and prosperous than ever before. The demands of the war brought the United States out of a deep depression, created new cities, new industries, new fortunes, a new way of life." (3)

Isolated in its Western Hemispheric Empire far from the main theatres of fighting, U.S. imperialism suffered relatively little. As the Great Powers were inevitably pulled into a global war of desperation, each driven to solve its economic crisis by new conquests, Amerika hung back. It hoped, just as in World War I, to wait out much of the war and slip in near the end to take the lion's share of the kill.

The millions of civilians who died from bombing raids, disease and famine in war-torn Europe, Asia, North Afrika and the Middle East have never been fully counted. The full death toll is often put at an unimaginable 60 million lives. Amerika was spared all this, and emerged triumphant at the war's end with citizenry, colonies and industry completely intact. Even U.S. military forces suffered relatively lightly compared to the rest of the world. Military deaths for the major combatants are revealing: Germany-7 million; Russia-6 million; Japan-2 million; China-2 million; Great Britain-250,000; U.S.A.-400,000. *More Russian soldiers died in the Battle of Stalingrad alone than total U.S. military casualties for the whole war.* (4)

The war boom kicked Depression out. Factories were roaring around the clock. The 16 million soldiers and sailors in the armed forces had left places everywhere for the unemployed to fill. The general prosperity that

characterized Amerikan society all the way up to the 1970s began right there, in the war economy of WWII. The war years were such a prosperous upturn from the Depression that the necessary propaganda about "sacrificing for the war effort" had a farcical air to it. Lucky Strike, the biggest selling cigarette, caught the settler mood perfectly when it changed its package color from green to white — and then announced nonsensically in big ads: "Lucky Strike green is going off to war!"

Average family income went up by 50% compared to the Depression years. In New York City, average family income rose from \$2,760 to \$4,044 between 1938-1942. Nor was this just a paper gain. A historian of the wartime culture writes: *"Production for civilian use, while diminishing, remained so high that Americans knew no serious deprivations...At the peak of the war effort in 1944, the total of all goods and services available to civilians was actually larger than it had been in 1940."* (5)

The number of supermarkets more than tripled between 1939 and 1944. Publishers reported book sales up 40% by 1943. The parimutuel gambling take at the race tracks skyrocketed 250% from 1940 to 1944. Just between 1941 and 1942 jewelry sales were up 20-100% by areas. By 1944 the cash and bank accounts held by the U.S. population reached a record \$140 Billion. That same year Macys department store in New York City had a sale on Pearl Harbor Day — which produced their most profitable business day ever! (6) Once again, the exceptional life of settler Amerika was renewed by war and conquest. This is the mechanism within each Amerikan cycle of internal conflict and reform. The New Deal was Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well. Consumeristic Amerika was erected on top of the 60 million deaths of World War II.

## 2. The Political Character of the War

*"In the U.S., World War II was the principal cause of the total breakdown of the working-class movement and its revolutionary consciousness...Resistance to the war would have seemed like simple common sense. If Stalin gave the order to support the U.S. war effort he was a fool. In any case, the old vanguard's support should have been for the people's struggle inside the U.S."*

**George Jackson**

In its March 29, 1939 issue the *Pittsburgh Courier*, one of the major Afrikan newspapers, ran an editorial on the coming world war that summed up what most colonial peoples in the world thought about it:

"The 'democracies' and the 'dictatorships' are preparing to do BATTLE in the near future.

"The referee is IMPERIALISM, who stands ready to award the decision to the victor.

"The stake is the right to EXPLOIT the darker peoples of the world.

"The audience consists of the vast MAJORITY of those who happen to be NON-WHITES.

"They have NO FAVORITE, because it makes NO DIFFERENCE to them which party WINS the fight.

"They are ONLY interested in the bout taking place AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

"The audience knows that the destruction of white civilization means the EMANCIPATION of colored people, and that explains why they eagerly await the opening gong.

"The democracies which now CONTROL the dark world have never extended DEMOCRACY to the dark world.

"THEIR meaning of democracy is for WHITE PEOPLE only, and just a FEW of them.

"The dictatorships FRANKLY DECLARE that if they win THEY will do as the democracies HAVE DONE in the past.

"The democracies as frankly declare that IF they win they will CONTINUE to do as they HAVE BEEN doing." (7)

This remarkable editorial was accurate (however unscientific its way of putting it) as to the real world situation. The "War to Save Democracy" was an obvious lie to those who had none, whose nations were enslaved by U.S. imperialism. While there was no real support for either German or Japanese imperialism, there was considerable satisfaction among the oppressed at seeing the arrogant Europeans being frightened out of their wits by their supposed "racial" inferiors. One South African Boer historian recalls:

"It seemed possible that the Japanese might capture Madagascar and that South Africa itself might be attacked. The Cape Colored people were not at all alarmed at the prospect. Indeed, they viewed the Japanese victories with almost open jubilation. Their sympathies and hopes were with the little yellow skinned men who had proved too smart for the British and Americans." (8)

Nor was this feeling just in Afrika. In colonial India the sight of the British "master" suddenly begging his subjects to help save him from the Japanese armies, revealed to many that their oppressor was a "paper tiger." The British generals soon learned that their Indian colonial troops were more and more unwilling to fight for the British Empire. The Communist Party USA was so alarmed at African disinterest in fighting Asians that it issued a special pamphlet for them recounting the crimes of the Japanese Empire against Ethiopia, urging Africans to honor *"the alliance of the Negro people with the progressive sections of the white population,"*

The sociologist St. Clair Drake relates how even among U.S. Empire forces in the Pacific, African G.I.s would loudly root for the Japanese "zero" fighters overhead in the aerial dogfights against U.S. settler aviators. Robert F. Williams says that as a youth he heard many African veterans returning from the Pacific express sympathy for the Japanese soldiers, and even say that the Japanese tried not to fire at Africans. And studying the U.S. propaganda posters of dark-skinned Japanese trying to rape blond Euro-American women, Williams saw a connection to settler propaganda against Africans. (9) None of this was any approval for Japanese imperialism, but an expression of disassociation from the Euro-American oppressor. To the oppressed masses of the U.S., British, Dutch, French, German, and other Western empires, this war was not their war.

It is important to deal with the nature of the U.S. involvement in the war. Outside of the shallow and obviously untrue "War for Democracy" propaganda, the two main arguments for the war were: 1. It was a war for European freedom, to defeat the Nazis and save the Soviet Union. 2. It was a just war of self-defense after the U.S. military was attacked by the Japanese Empire at Pearl Harbor (the main U.S. naval base in its Hawaiian colony). Both lines were often used together, particularly by the settler radicals.

Perhaps the U.S. Empire could have led a "crusade in Europe" to defeat Nazism, but it didn't. In strict fact, German fascism was defeated by the Russian people. U.S. global strategy clearly called for stalling as long as possible in fighting Hitler, in hopes that Germany and Soviet Russia would ruin and exhaust each other. As

late as April 1943, Soviet forces were fighting 185 Nazi divisions while the U.S. and British Empires were together fighting 6. The heart and muscle of the German Army, almost 250 divisions, got destroyed on the Eastern front against the Russian people. That's why the Russian military lost 6 million troops fighting Germany, while the U.S. lost 160,000.

The Soviet Union's burden in the alliance against German imperialism was so visibly disproportionate that some Western imperialists were concerned. South African Gen. Jan Christian Smuts warned in 1943: *"To the ordinary man it must appear that it is Russia who is winning the war. If this impression continues, what will be our post-war position compared to that of Russia?"*

Finally, in the last six months of the war, the Allies landed 2 million soldiers in France in order to get in on the German surrender and control as much of Europe as possible. Those U.S. and British divisions faced a vastly inferior German opposition (only 40% as large as the Allied force), because the bulk of Hitler's forces were tied up with the main war front against Russia.

During the war the Allies kept paratroop divisions in England, ready to be air-dropped into Berlin if Russia finished off the Nazis before Allied armies could even get into Germany. (10) U.S. imperialism's main concern was not to "liberate" anyone, but to dominate as much of Europe as it could once the Russian people had, at such terrible cost, defeated Hitler.

American war plans included being careful not to interfere with the Nazi's genocidal sterilization of Europe. Indeed, Washington and London appreciated how convenient it was to let Hitler do their dirty work for them — getting rid of millions of undesirable Jews, Communists, socialists, trade-unionists and dissenters. This cleaned up Europe from the imperialist point of view. And Hitler took the weight.

The Allies were notorious in blocking Jewish evacuation from the path of the oncoming Nazi conquest. Roosevelt refused to lift restrictions on Jewish immigration. As the war approached, on April 23, 1939, the U.S. State Dept. announced that quotas were so "filled" that Jewish immigration was to be halted except for special cases. Desperate German Jews were told that they had a minimum six year wait, until 1945. The New Deal's vicious attitude was displayed in their mocking statement that Jewish "applicants of Polish origin, even those who spent most of their life in Germany, will have to wait at least 50 years" to obtain entry visas to the U.S.! The same day the Roosevelt Administration announced that no tourist visas to America would be issued to German Jews — only those Germans with "Aryan" passports could greet the Statue of Liberty.

During the war the U.S. rejected pleas from the Jewish underground that they use bombers to knock out the rail lines to the death camps (and even knock out the ovens themselves). Yet, on Sept. 13, 1944 the U.S. 15th Air Force bombed the I.G. Farben industrial complex right next to Auschwitz death camp (a few bombs fell in Auschwitz itself, killing 15 S.S. men and 40 other fascists). Although this proved the U.S. military's ability to strike at



the Nazi death camps, U.S. imperialism still refused to interfere with the genocide. And this was when the Nazis were feverishly slaughtering as many as possible — at Auschwitz as many as 24,000 per day!

U.S. imperialism posed as being anti-fascist, but it was U.S. imperialism which had helped put Nazism in power. Henry Ford was an important early backer of Hitler, and by 1924 had started pouring money into the tiny Nazi party. Ford's portrait hung on the wall in Hitler's Party office. Every birthday until World War II Ford had sent Hitler his personal greetings (and a gift of money). Even during the War the Ford Motor Company delivered vital parts to the German Army through neutral Switzerland. On October 20, 1942 the U.S. Embassy in London complained to Washington that Ford was using his plants in Switzerland to repair 2,000 German Army trucks.

Ford was just one example out of many. GM President William Knudson told a press conference on October 6, 1933, that Nazism was "the miracle of the 20th century." GM in Germany contributed 1/2 of 1% out of all its employees' wages as a weekly mass donation to the Nazi Party.

While the Allied Powers wanted to defeat Germany, it had nothing to do with being anti-fascist. Both President Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill favored Mussolini and his Fascist regime in Italy. Even after the European war broke out in 1939, Roosevelt privately urged Mussolini to be neutral and try to mediate a British-German detente. Churchill, for his part, wanted to preserve the Mussolini Fascist regime since "the alternative to his rule might well have been a communist Italy." Churchill saw Fascist Italy as a possible ally. He later wrote regretfully about Mussolini:

*"He might well have maintained Italy in a balancing position, courted and rewarded by both sides and deriving an unusual wealth and prosperity from the struggles of other countries. Even when the issue of the war*

*became certain, Mussolini would have been welcomed by the Allies..."*

In Italy, Greece and other nations the "liberating" U.S.-British forces put the local fascists back into power while savagely repressing the anti-fascist guerrillas who had fought them. In Greece the British had a problem since the German Army had pulled out in September 1944, harassed by guerrillas who had installed a new, democratic Greek government. The Allies invaded already-liberated Greece in order to crush the independent government; Greece was "liberated" from democracy and returned to being a fascist neo-colony of Britain and the U.S. The mercenary collaborators and the fascist "Security Battalions" organized by the German occupation were preserved by the British Army, which used them to conduct a campaign of terrorism against the Greek people. By 1945 the British were holding some 50,000 anti-fascist activists in prisons. The Allies killed more Greek workers and peasants than the Germans had. (11)

The main focus of Amerika's military interest had nothing to do with democratic or humanitarian concerns, but with expanding the Empire at the expense of its German and Japanese rivals. Not only was a stronger position over Europe aimed at, but in the Pacific a show-down was sought with Japanese imperialism. In the 1930's both U.S. and Japanese imperialism sought to become the dominant power over Asia. Japan's 1937 invasion of China (Korea was already a Japanese colony) had upset the Pacific status quo; giant China had long been an imperialist semi-colony, shared uneasily by all the imperialist powers. Japan broke up the club by invading to take all of China for itself. The Roosevelt Administration, the main backer of Chiang Kai-Shek's corrupt and semi-colonial Kuomintang regime, was committed to a decisive war with Japan from that point on.

Both the U.S. Empire and the Japanese Empire demanded in secret negotiations the partial disarmament of the other and a free hand in exploiting China. The Roosevelt Administration and the British had secretly agreed in mid-1941 for a joint military offensive against Japan, the centerpiece of which was to be a new U.S. strategic bomber force to dominate the Pacific. We know that President Roosevelt's position was that all-out war in the Pacific was desirable for U.S. interests; his only problem was: "...the question was how we should maneuver them into the position of firing the first shot..." (12) Political necessities demanded that Roosevelt be able to picture the war as innocent "self defense."

The New Deal started embargoing strategic war materials — notably scrap iron and petroleum — going to Japan. There was a coordinated Western campaign to deny Japanese imperialism the vital oil, rubber and iron its war machine needed. With 21 divisions bogged down trying to catch up with the Red Army in China, Japanese imperialism had to either capture these necessary resources in new wars or face collapse. The move was obvious.

To make sure that this shove would work, Roosevelt asked U.S. Admiral Stark to prepare an intelligence assessment of the probable Japanese response. In his memo of July 22, 1941 (over four months before Pearl Harbor), Admiral Stark reassured Roosevelt that

Japan would be forced into a "fairly early attack" to seize British Malayan rubber and Dutch Indonesian oil, and that an attack on the U.S. Philippine colony was "certain." (13)

The New Deal wanted and expected not only an all-out war for the Pacific, but a "surprise" Japanese attack as well. Their only disappointment on Dec. 7, 1941 was that instead of concentrating on the Philippines, the Japanese military struck first at Hawaii. There was no question of "self-defense" there. The Pacific war was the mutual child of imperialist competition and imperialist appetites.

To President Roosevelt the prize was worth the risks. China was his first goal, just as it was for Japanese imperialism. A friend of the President recalls: "*At the White House, the making of FDR's China policy was almost as great a secret as the atom bomb.*" Roosevelt saw that the sun had set on the old European colonial rule in Asia, and that the dynamic expansion of the small Japanese Empire proved how weak and rotten European power was. In his mind, he saw that if China were nominally free but under U.S. hegemony (via the Kuomintang regime), it could be the center for Amerikan takeover of all Asia.\*

British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, after meeting with Roosevelt and his staff, wrote a British general in some alarm: "*I must enlighten you about the American view. China bulks as large in the minds of many of them as Great Britain.*" (14)

Some confusion about the nature of the Second Imperialist World War has arisen among comrades here

because the war was also a patriotic war of national defense in some nations. Both China and the U.S.S.R., invaded and partially occupied by Axis Powers, made alliance with competing imperialists of the Allied Powers. There is nothing surprising or incorrect about that. Taking advantage of this the revisionists claimed that democratic-minded people in all nations should therefore support the Allied Powers. But why should the anti-colonial movement in an oppressed nation that was invaded and occupied by the U.S. (or France or Great Britain) support its own oppressor? One might just as well argue that the Chinese people should have supported the Japanese occupation during WWII because Mexico was oppressed by U.S. imperialism (in fact, the Japanese Empire advanced such lines of propaganda). Contrary to the revisionists, World War II was not a war of "democracy vs. fascism," but a complex struggle between imperialist powers, and between capitalism and socialism.

The New Deal was prepared to do whatever necessary to modernize and stabilize U.S. imperialism's home base, because it was playing for the biggest stakes in the world. In the *Pittsburgh Courier's* words: "*The stake is the right to EXPLOIT the darker peoples of the world.*"

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\*FDR was always appreciative of China's potential value because of his family's direct connection. Roosevelt often mentioned his family's long "friendship" with China — on his mother's side, the Delano family fortune was made through a leading role in the opium trade in 19th century China.

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### 3. The War On The "Home Front"

As Euro-Amerikan settlers gathered themselves to conquer Asia, Europe, Afrika, and hold onto Latin Amerika, they started their war effort by attacking the oppressed closest at hand — those already within the U.S. Empire. In Puerto Rico, the colonial occupation tightened its already deadly hold on the masses, so that their very lives could be squeezed out to help pay for the U.S. war effort. It is to the eternal honor of the Nationalist Party, already terribly wounded by repression, that it resisted this imperialist mobilization as best it could.

The Nationalist Party denounced the military conscription of Puerto Rican youth, who were to be cannon fodder for the same U.S. Army that was oppressing their own nation. On the eve of Selective Service registration in 1940, the Nationalist Party declared: "*If Puerto Ricans are the first line of defense of democracy in America, we claim the right to fight in the front line and for that reason we demand that democracy be a reality in Puerto Rico, recogniz-*

*ing our national sovereignty.*" (15) The newspapers on the Island were afraid to print Nationalist statements for fear of U.S. prosecution — a fear that the U.S. Government said was well founded. (16)

Some members of the Nationalist Party began openly refusing to register for the draft. Juan Estrada Garcia told the jury when he was tried that his concern was for "the masses who live dying of malaria, hookworm and tuberculosis for lack of food." (17) This was a just concern. Puerto Ricans had the highest death rate in the Western Hemisphere, thanks to the "Yanki" occupation that robbed them of everything needed for life. Every year 3,000 died from tuberculosis alone out of a population of 2 million. Over half were totally destitute, on relief. (18) 80% of the population had hookworm, and the life expectancy was only 46 years. Small wonder, when even those lucky ones who had jobs didn't earn enough to ensure survival — in 1941, the jibaros (the sugar cane workers)



**Puerto Rico's strategic location in the Caribbean made it a key island in the region's defense, but to Puerto Ricans the U.S. soldiers stationed there were an occupying force—loud, exploitative, violent, granted privileges denied most Puerto Ricans.**

UPI

labored for an average of only 14 cents per hour. (19)

The war effort only intensified the misery. The relative prosperity that delighted Euro-Americans with the war was reversed in Puerto Rico. Starvation grew much worse. The New Deal W.P.A. jobs program closed down in 1942. Unemployment more than doubled. With food shipments deliberately restricted, prices soared 53% in less than one year. A Presbyterian woman missionary wrote Eleanor Roosevelt, the U.S. President's wife, in despair from Mayagüez: *"The children in this region are slowly starving."* (20)

U.S. Governor Winship made it clear that the New Deal's policy was not only to help subsidize the war effort out of the misery of the Puerto Rican people, but to use starvation to beat them into political submission. In his 1939 report, Winship proudly announced that the colonial administration was already extracting millions of dollars from starving Puerto Rico for the coming war.

Ten million dollars worth of valuable land had been given by the puppet colonial legislature free to the U.S. Navy for a naval base. Puerto Ricans had paid for dredging out San Juan Harbor so that it was deep enough for U.S. battleships. New U.S. Navy repair docks in San

Juan were also paid for involuntarily by the Puerto Rican people. Further, local taxes had also paid for the construction of new U.S. military airstrips on Culebra, Isla Grande, Mona Island and elsewhere.

**In desperately poor Puerto Rico the local taxes collected by the imperialist occupation forces were used for their own military needs rather than clinics or food. This policy was actually quite common for WWII: for example, both the Nazi and Japanese armies also forced the local inhabitants in conquered areas to support military construction for them. (21) The U.S. imperialists were in good company.**

While it may have seemed like bad propaganda to so obviously increase misery among the Puerto Rican people, the New Deal believed otherwise. It was economic terrorism. U.S. military officials said that the Nationalist resistance to the draft had been broken. They admitted that the reason hungry Puerto Ricans were submitting to the draft was that even army rations were *"pay and food exceeding prevailing Island wages."* It appeared to the military, however, that only one-third of the eligible men could be used due to the widespread physical debilitation from disease and malnutrition. (22) Still, Amerika's "War to Save Democracy" was off to a good start.

The war further accelerated the trend towards set-

tlar reunification. The stormy conflicts between settlers in the 30s had a healing effect, like draining a swollen wound. The war completed the process. Fascist and "communist," liberal and conservative alike all joined hands to follow their bourgeoisie into battle. In one small California town the press discovered that the first man in line to register for the draft was James Remochiaretta, a veteran of Mussolini's fascist Black Shirts, who proudly told everyone that he was now "100% American."

The impact of Amerika's entry into the war snapped the Italian and German communities right into line. The Italian-American petit-bourgeoisie had been both loyally pro-U.S. imperialism and pro-fascist Italy. Up to Pearl Harbor 80% of the Italian community newspapers had been pro fascist, with almost every Italian store in New York having a prominent picture of the Italian dictator Mussolini. Only the radical political exiles, most of them trade-unionists who fled Italy just ahead of the Black Shirts, were openly anti-fascist.

But once the U.S. Empire declared war on the Axis, every Italian community newspaper became "anti-fascist" overnight. Every Italian was now "100% American." In recognition, Italian citizens in the U.S. were removed from the "enemy alien" category by President Roosevelt on Columbus Day, 1942. (24)

This growing, settleristic unity promoted by the war sharply increased attacks on the nationally oppressed. This was one of the major social trends of the war period. While the tightened oppression of the Puerto Rican masses was a policy of the imperialists, these attacks came from all classes and sectors of settler society — from top to bottom.

On the West Coast the settler petit-bourgeoisie, primarily farming interests and small merchants, used settler chauvinism and the identification of Japanese as members of a rival imperialist Power, to plunder and completely remove the Japanese population. Just as the Chinese had been robbed and driven out of mining, agriculture and industry in the 19th century West, so now Japanese would be driven out. As everyone knows, some 110,000 of us were forcibly "relocated" into concentration camps by the U.S. Government in 1942.

Settler rule had restricted and hemmed in Japanese labor into the national minority economy of specialized agriculture, wholesale and retail food distribution, and domestic labor (in 1940 these three categories accounted

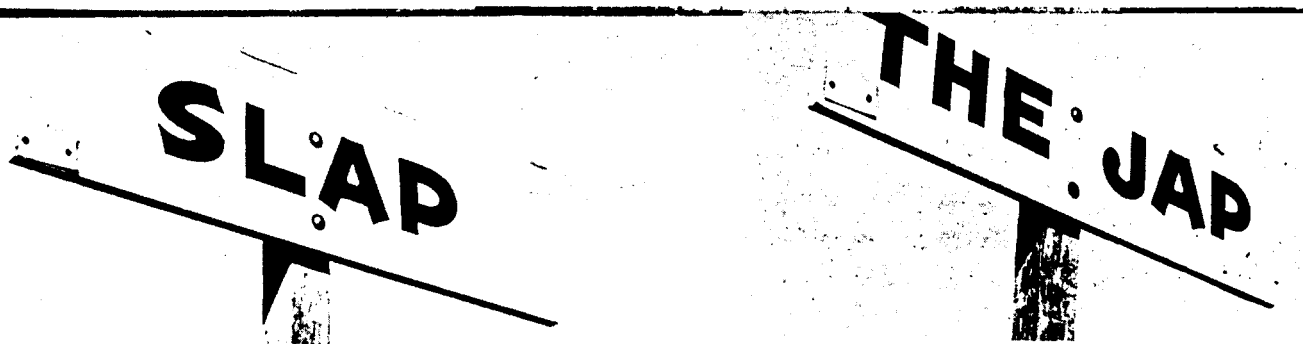
for 84% of all Japanese employment). (25) But even this little was too much for the settler petit-bourgeoisie on the West Coast.

The Euro-Amerikans not only wanted the Japanese removed as competitors, but they wanted to take over and "annex" the agricultural business so painstakingly built up by the Japanese farmers. The typical Japanese farm of the period was very small, averaging only 42 acres each (less than one-fifth the average size of Euro-American farms in California). But these intensively developed lands, which comprised only 3.9% of California's farmland, produced fully 42% of the State's fresh fruits and vegetables. (26) The settler farm lobby wanted our business, which was too valuable to be left to "Japs."

Austin E. Anson, representative of the Shipper-Grower Association of Salinas, told the public: "We're charged with wanting to get rid of the Japs for selfish reasons. We might as well be honest. We do." Through their political influence, these interests got U.S. Sen. Hiram Johnson to pull together the West Coast congressional delegation as a bloc and push through the concentration camp program. (27)

By military order, enforced by the U.S. Army, the whole Japanese population was forced to leave or sell at give-away prices all we had — houses, land, businesses, cars, refrigerators, tools, furniture, etc. The Federal Reserve Bank loosely estimated the direct property loss alone at \$400 million 1942 dollars. (28) The real loss was in the many billions — and in lives. But it was no loss to settlers, who ended up with much of it. West Coast settlers had a festive time, celebrating the start of their war by greedily dividing up that \$400 million in "Jap" property. *It was a gigantic garage sale held at gunpoint. This was just an early installment in settler prosperity from world war.*

For Hawaii, a U.S. colony right in the middle of Asia, no such simple solution was possible. Early government discussions on removing and incarcerating the Japanese population quickly floundered. Over one-third of the working population there was Japanese, and without their labor the Islands' economy might break down. The U.S. Army said that: "...the labor shortage make it a matter of military necessity to keep the people of Japanese blood on the islands." Army and Navy officers proposed that the Japanese be kept at work there for the U.S. Empire, but treated "as citizens of an occupied



Above and right, Burmashave sign read "Slap the Jap with Scrapiron, Burmashave." (National Archives)



foreign country.” (29)

The patriotic Amerikan war spirit congealed itself into the usual racist forms. Chinese were encouraged to wear self-protective placards or buttons reading “I’m No Jap” to avoid being lynched. The Kuomintang-dominated Chinese communities were lauded by the settlers as now “good” Asians. *Life* ran an article on “How To Tell Your Friends From The Japs”: “...the Chinese expression is likely to be more placid, kindly, open; the Japanese more positive, dogmatic, arrogant...Japanese walk stiffly erect...Chinese more relaxed, *sometimes shuffle...*” (30)

Of course, these imaginary differences only expressed the settler code wherein hostile or just victimized Asians were “bad,” where as those they thought more submissive (who “shuffle”) were temporarily “good.” Every effort was made to whip up settler chauvinism and hatred (an easy task). The famous war indoctrination film “My Japan,” produced by the Defense Department, opens to an actor portraying a Japanese soldier bayoneting a baby — with the commentary that all Japanese “like” to kill babies. German fascist propaganda about the “racial crimes” of the Jews was no more bizzarre than Amerikan propaganda for its own war effort.

The Euro-Amerikan working class, now reinforced by unions and the New Deal, brought the war “home” themselves in their massive wave of “hate strikes.” These were strikes whose only demand was the blocking of Afrikan employment or promotion. They were a major feature of militant industrial life in the the war period; a reaction to increased wartime employment of Afrikans by U.S. imperialism.

In the auto industry (which were the heart of war production) the “hate strikes” started in October, 1941. There were twelve major such strikes in auto plants just in the first six months of 1943. Dodge, Hudson, Packard, Curtis-Wright, Timken Axle and many other plants witnessed these settler working class offensives. The UAW-CIO and the Detroit NAACP held a “brotherhood” rally in Detroit’s Cadillac Square to counteract the openly segregationist movement. That rally drew 10,000 people. But shortly thereafter 25,000 Packard workers went out on “hate strike” for five days. An even bigger strike staged by UAW Local 190 brought out 39,000 settler auto workers to stop the threatened promotion of four Afrikans. (31).

These “hate strikes” took place coast-to-coast, in a wave that hit all industries. In Baltimore, Bethlehem Steel’s Sparrows Point plant went out in July, 1943. In that same area a major Western Electric plant was so solidly closed down by its December, 1943 “hate strike” that the U.S. Army finally had to take it over. The same thing happened when Philadelphia municipal transit workers closed down the city for six days in August, 1944, to block the hiring of eight Afrikan motormen. 5,000 U.S. Army troops were needed to get transit going again. The U.S. Government calculated that just in the three Spring months of 1943 alone, some 2.5 million man hours of industrial production were lost in “hate strikes.” (32)

Mob violence against the oppressed was another war phenomenon, particularly by Euro-Amerikan ser-



vicemen. They now constituted an important temporary stratum in settler life, drawn together by the millions and organized into large units and bases. Attacks by settler sailors, marines and soldiers on Chicano-Mexicanos,

*Afrikan*s and *Asians* on the West Coast grew larger and larger in 1943. The climax came in the "Zoot Suit Riots" in East Los Angeles on the nights of June 2-7th. They were so named because Euro-Amerikans were infuriated that the "hip" clothing styles of Chicano-Mexicano youth expressed disrespect for "American" culture. Groups of settler servicemen would beat up and cut the clothing off Chicano-Mexicano men.

The June 7th climax involved thousands of settler G.I.s, who with the protection of the Los Angeles police and their military commanders invaded the barrio, destroying restaurants and taking movie theater-goers captive. Street cars were seized, and one Afrikan who was pulled off had both eyes cut out. Finally, the social chaos — and the intensely angry wave of anti-U.S. feeling in Mexico — grew so large that the U.S. military ordered their troops to stop. (33)

Similar incidents took place throughout the U.S. Sailors from the Naval Armory near Detroit's Belle Isle park joined thousands of other settlers in attacking Afrikans, resulting in the city-wide fighting of the 1943 "Detroit Race Riot." 25 Afrikans and 9 settlers were killed, and many hundreds seriously wounded. The growing Afrikan resistance and community self-defense there was also seen in the August 1, 1943 great "Harlem Race Riot." Oppressed communities in the major urban areas had now grown so large that ordinary settler mob attacks were less and less successful. The New Deal didn't need the Northern industrial cities burning with insurrection, and so moved to "cool" things.

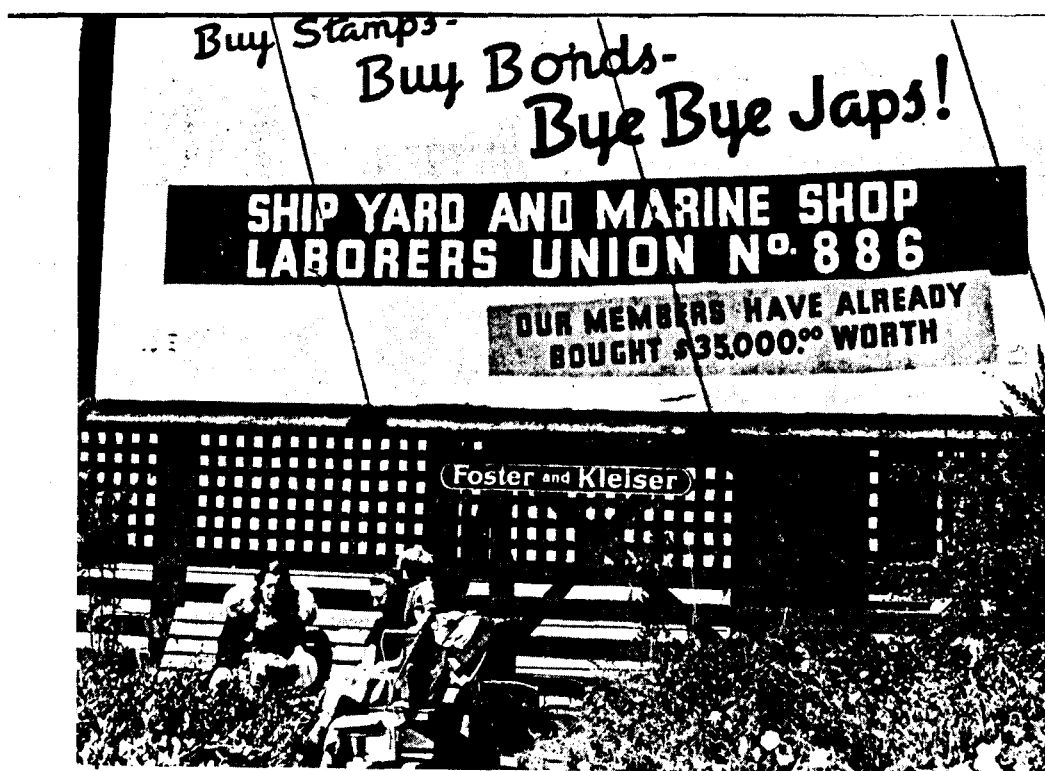
Bourgeois historians in writing about the various multi-class settler offensives on the "home front," invariably relate them to the "tension" and "uncertainty" of the war. But these government-sponsored attacks and repressions were not random explosions of "tension."

They had a clear direction.

It is easy to see this by contrasting the above events to the treatment of the thousands of German P.O.W.s brought to the U.S. after their defeat in North Afrika. These enemy soldiers met no mob violence or other attacks from "tense" Euro-Amerikans. In fact, the German Army prisoners were widely treated with hospitality and respect by Euro-Amerikans, and fed and housed like settlers. Many were let out on "work release" to join the civilian U.S. economy, with some even going off on their own to live on small, Midwestern family farms.

While overseas they were enemies, here in Amerika they became honorary settlers, since they were fellow citizens of European imperialist Powers (in contrast to the colonial subjects). Literally, captured Nazi officers were freer than Albizu Campos or the Hon. Elijah Muhammad. One Afrikan in the U.S. Army wrote about how his unit was sent in 1942 to open Smoky Hill Army Air Field in Salinas, Kansas. They discovered to no surprise that they were barred from the town's best movie theater, the hotels, restaurants and grills, and so on. Their only real surprise came when they saw a restaurant serving ten German prisoners with *"the distinctive high-peaked caps of Rommel's Afrika Korps. No guard was with them."* The owner of the restaurant rushed over to remind them that no Afrikans were allowed inside. Nazi soldiers ranked far above Afrikan G.I.s as far as settlers were concerned. (34)

The "race riots" were the war, just on the "home front." This was not the only development in the relationship between the U.S. Empire and the nationally oppressed. Underneath the violent surface, not separated from the violence but drawing power from it, there grew a trend of neo-colonialism within the U.S. Empire.



# IX. NEO-COLONIAL PACIFICATION IN THE U.S.

## 1. Forcing “Democracy” on Native Amerikans

We don't have to look across the world to confront neo-colonialism, since some of the most sophisticated examples are right here. The New Deal reforms on the Native Amerikan reservations during the 1930s are a classic case of neo-colonial strategy. The U.S. Empire has always had a special problem with the Indian nations, in that their varied ways of life were often communistic. As the U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs said in 1838: “Common property and civilization cannot co-exist.” (1) The U.S. Government enacted a genocidal campaign to erase Indian culture — including prison schools for Indian children, suppression of Indian institutions, economy and religion. And still the Indian nations and peoples survived,, resisted, endured. An A.I.M. comrade has pointed out:

“The Founding Fathers of the United States equated capitalism with civilization. They had to, given their mentality; to them civilization meant *their* society, which was a capitalist society. Therefore, from the earliest times the wars against Indians were not *only* to take over the land but also to squash the threatening example of Indian communism. Jefferson was not the only man of his time to advocate imposing a capitalistic and possessive society on Indians as a way to civilize them. The ‘bad example’ was a real threat; the reason the Eastern Indian Nations from Florida to New York State and from the Atlantic to Ohio and Louisiana are today so racially mixed is because indentured servants, landless poor whites, escaped black slaves, *chose* our societies over the white society that oppressed them.

“Beginning in the 1890s we have been ‘red-baited’ and branded as ‘commies’ in Congress (see the Congressional Record) and in the executive boards of churches. That was a very strong weapon in the 1920’s and 1930’s, and in the Oklahoma area any Indian ‘traditional’ who was an organizer was called a communist or even a ‘Wobly’.

“So we have *always* defined our struggle not only as a struggle for land but also a struggle to retain our cultural values. Those values are communistic values. Our societies were and are communistic societies. The U.S. Government has always understood that very well. It has not branded us all these years as communists because we try to form labor unions or because we hung out with the IWW or the Communist Party, but because the U.S. Government correctly identified our political system. It did not make that a public issue because that would have been dangerous, and because it has been far more efficient to say that we are savages and primitive.” (2)

Not only did the Indian nations resist, but this resistance included the determined refusal of many Indians to give up their collective land. This rejection of capitalism was a hindrance for the oil corporations, the mineral interests, and the ranchers. Characteristically, the New Deal decided, in the words of the U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, that: “...*the Indian if given the right opportunities could do what the government had failed to do: He could arrange a place for himself and his customs in this modern America.*” (3)

The New Deal pacification program for the reservations was to give Indians capitalistic “democracy” and “self-government.” Under the direction of the U.S. Government, bourgeois democratic (i.e. undemocratic) “tribal governments” were set up, with settleristic “tribal constitutions,” paid elected officials and new layers of Indian civil servants. In other words, Indians would be given their own capitalistic reservation governments to do from within what the settler conquests had been unable to completely succeed at from the outside.

This neo-colonial strategy was led by a young, liberal anthropologist, John Collier, who had been appointed U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1933 to reform the reservation system. Unlike the openly hostile and repressive pronouncements of his predecessors, Collier spoke sweetly of how much he respected Indian culture and how much Indians should be “freed” to change themselves. Honeyed words, indeed, covering up for a new assault:

*“In the past, the government tried to encourage economic independence and initiative by the allotment system, giving each Indian a portion of land and the right to dispose of it. As a result, of the 138,000 acres which Indians possessed in 1887 they have lost all but 47,000 acres, and the lost area includes the land that was most valuable. Further, the government sought to give the Indian the schooling of whites, teaching him to despise his old customs and habits as barbaric...”*

*“We have proposed in opposition to such a policy to recognize and respect the Indian as he is. We think he must be so accepted before he can be assisted to become something else...”* (4)

There is the smooth talk of the welfare administrator and the colonial official in those words. Notice that the old law gave Indians only one “right” — the right to sell their land to the settlers. Having worked that

strategy to its limits, the U.S. Empire now needed to switch strategies in order to keep exploiting the rest of the reservation lands. Now Washington would pose as the protector of Indian culture in order to change Indians into "something else." Officially, Indian culture would become another respected "ethnic" remnant, like St. Patrick's Day parades, that would add "color" to settler society. But instead of Indian sovereignty, culture, economy and national development, "tribal government" was local government according to the rules of capitalist culture. It was a partial reorganization of reservation life to capitalism.

The 1934 Wheeler-Howard Act repealed the 1887 Allotment Act, authorized elections to pass new "tribal constitutions" to set up the new neo-colonial reservation governments, established a \$10 million loan fund to support the new governments, and officially gave Indians preference for employment with the U.S. Indian Service.

The campaign to twist Indian arms to accept this new arrangement was very heavy. U.S. Commissioner Collier himself admitted that while the government had the power to force the reservations to accept these bourgeois governments, for the strategy to work at least some number of Indians had to be persuaded to voluntarily take it in. Large numbers of Indians were hired to work in the Indian Service — their numbers reaching 40% of the total employees by 1935. 19,000 Indians were hired to work in various Federal programs, while an additional 14,000 worked in the Civilian Conservation Corps relief camps. *Close to 20% of all adult Indians were temporarily employed by the Federal Government.*

The distrust and resistance were considerable. The *N.Y. Times* commented: "This difficulty has been recognized by the creation by the Indian Office of an organizational unit of field agents and special men who will cooperate with tribal councils, business committees and special tribal commissions in framing the constitutions now permitted." Still, some 54 reservations, with 85,000 Indians, voted against the new "tribal governments."

History has proved that the main economic function of the neo-colonial reservation governments has been to lease away (usually at bargain prices) the mineral, grazing and water rights to the settlers. Great amounts of natural resources are involved. A very conservative Euro-American estimate said:

"Indian lands are estimated to contain up to 13 per cent of the nation's coal reserves, 3 per cent of its oil and gas, and significant amounts of other minerals including uranium and phosphate."

Instead of the old practice of individual sale of small plots of land — which could be blocked by an Indian's refusal to sell — the new, capitalistic "tribal governments" signed wholesale mineral rights leases with major corporations. The Navaho "tribal government," led by the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, signed leases as late as the 1960s that gave away Navaho coal for a mere 2% of its market value. So the impact of the 1930s "self-government" reforms was to step up the economic exploitation of Indian nations.

to end their subsistence farming and move off their land and into government-built housing projects — and then lease their "useless" land to the settler businessmen. Those Euro-American ranchers pay an average of \$3 per acre each year to possess Indian land (far cheaper than buying it). While the Sioux who insist on staying on their land are deliberately denied water, electricity, seed and livestock, so as to pressure them into leaving their land (the Euro-American ranchers who use Indian land receive constant government aid and subsidies). Control of the land and its resources still remains a steady preoccupation to the settler Empire.

Even most of the food production of the Indian Nations is taken by settlers. In 1968 the Bureau of Indian Affairs said that the reservations produced then \$170 million annually in agriculture, hunting and fishing. Of this total the B.I.A. estimated that Indians only consumed \$20 million worth, while receiving another \$16 million in rent. 75% of the total reservation food production was owned by settlers. (5)

U.S. imperialism literally created bourgeois Indian governments on the reservations to give it what it wanted and to disrupt from within the national culture. These are governments led by the Dick Wilsons and Peter MacDonalds, of elements whose capitalistic ideology and income was tied to collaboration with the larger capitalist world. It is also telling that those professional Indians whose well-being is dependent upon foundation grants and government programs (such as Vine Deloria, Jr., author of the best-selling book, *Custer Died For Your Sins*) praise the Collier reorganization of the '30s as the best thing that even happened to them.

When Native Americans overcome the neo-colonial rule and assert their sovereignty against U.S. imperialism (as A.I.M. has) then the fixed ballot box is reinforced by assassination, frame-ups and even massive military repression. The U.S. military moved in 1972 to prop up the neo-colonial Dick Wilson regime at Pine Ridge, just as in Zaire the neo-colonial Mobutu regime had to be rescued in both 1977 and 1978 by airborne French Foreign Legionnaires and Belgian paratroopers.



## 2. The Rise of the Afrikan Nation

*"The white boss man said we was making a war on them and was going to take the government, but we was organizing for bread."*

**One of the Camp Hill, Alabama  
sharecropper defendants, 1931.**

The New Afrikan national struggle moved decisively into the modern period during the 1920s and 1930s. It was a key indication of this development that thousands of Afrikan communists took up the liberation struggle in those years — years in which many Afrikan workers and intellectuals dedicated themselves to the goal of an independent and socialist Afrikan Nation. The masses themselves intensified their political activities and grew increasingly nationalistic. *In this period nationalism started visibly shouldering aside all other political tendencies in the struggle for the allegiance of the oppressed Afrikan masses.* Armed self-defense activity spread among the masses. This was a critical time in the rise of the Afrikan Nation. And a critical time, therefore, for U.S. imperialism.

There is an incorrect tendency to confine the discussion of Afrikan nationalism in the 1920s and 1930s to the well-known Garvey movement, as though it was the sole manifestation of nationalist consciousness. The Garvey movement (whose specific impact we shall cover at a later point) was but the point of the emerging politics of the Afrikan Nation. In labor, in national culture, in struggles for the land, in raising the goal of socialism, in all areas of political life a great explosion of previously pent-up national consciousness took place among Afrikans in the 1920s and 1930s. It was a time of major political offensives, and of embryonic nation-building.

This outbreak of militant Afrikan anti-colonialism did not go unnoticed by the U.S. Empire. Even outside the National Territory itself, U.S. imperialism was increasingly concerned about this activity. One 1930s report on *"Radicalism Among New York Negroes"* noted:

"The place of the Negro as a decisive minority in the political life in America received increasing attention during the early post-war years. The Department of Justice issued a twenty-seven page report on 'Radicalism and Sedition Among Negroes as Reflected in Their Publications' and the New York State Lusk Committee for the Investigation of Seditious Activities published a complete chapter in its report entitled, 'Radicalism Among Negroes.' The general anti-labor, anti-radical offensive of government and employers...was also levelled at the trade union and radical activities of the Negro people. For a time censorship of Negro periodicals became so complete that even the mildly liberal magazine 'Crisis,' (of the NAACP — ed.) edited by W.E. Burghardt DuBois, was held up in the mails during May 1919. In August 1918, the editors of 'The Messenger' (the Afrikan trade-union magazine of A. Philip Randolph — ed.) were jailed for three days and second-class mailing privileges were denied the magazine." (8)



Marcus Mosiah Garvey, black nationalist leader of the twenties, is led to prison

The revisionists in general and the Euro-Amerikan "Left" in particular have falsely portrayed the Afrikan people within the U.S. Empire as having no independent revolutionary struggle at that time, but only a "civil rights" struggle. Falsely they picture Afrikan labor and Afrikan socialism as only existing as "minority" parts of the Euro-Amerikan labor and social-democratic movements. While the history of Afrikan politics lies far beyond the scope of this paper, it is necessary to briefly show why U.S. imperialism was threatened by Afrikan anti-colonialism in the 1920s and 1930s. What is central is to grasp the revolutionary nationalist character of Afrikan political trends.

In 1921 the African Blood Brotherhood (ABB), the first modern Afrikan communist organization in the U.S. Empire, was formed in New York City. Defining itself as a "revolutionary secret order," the ABB raised the goal of liberating and bringing socialism to the Afrikan Nation in the Black Belt South. The Brotherhood soon claimed 2,500 members in fifty-six "posts" throughout the Empire. Most of these members were proletarians (as were most of the Garvey movement activists) — miners in Virginia, railroad workers in Chicago, garment workers in New York, etc. These Afrikan communists focused heavily on education work and on "immediate protection purposes," organizing armed self-defense units against the KKK revival that was sweeping the Empire. Soon the police and press spotlighted the Brotherhood as the supposed secret organizers of Afrikan armed activity during the Tulsa, Oklahoma "riots." (9)

The birth of modern Afrikan communism within the U.S. Empire was the most clear-cut and irrefutable evidence that the Afrikan Nation was starting to rise. It was significant that this new organization of Afrikan communists without hesitation proclaimed the goal of socialism through national liberation and independence. The existence of a socialist-minded vanguard naturally implied that at the base of that peak the masses of Afrikans were pushing upwards, awakening politically, creating new possibilities.

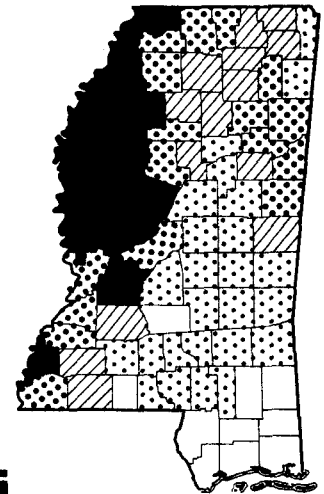
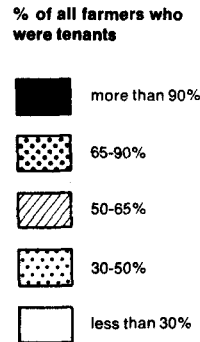
Much of the present written accounts of Afrikan politics in this period centers around events in the refugee communities of the North — the "Harlem Renaissance," tenants' organizations fighting evictions in the Chicago ghetto, Afrikan participation in union drives in Cleveland and Detroit, and so on. All these struggles and events were indeed important parts of the developing political awareness. But they were not the whole of what was happening. The intensity and full scope of the Afrikan struggle can only be accurately seen when we also see the southern region of the U.S. Empire, and particularly the National Territory itself. There, under the terroristic armed rule of the settler occupation, the Afrikan Revolution started to develop despite the most bitterly difficult conditions.

While Euro-American trade-unionism has always tried to restrict Afrikan labor's political role, no propaganda could change the basic fact that in the South, Afrikan labor was the primary factor in labor struggles. Notice that we say that Afrikan labor was the "primary factor" — not "minority" partners, not passive "students" awaiting the lead of Euro-American trade-unionism, and certainly not just "supporters" of white trade-unionism. In the South, Afrikan labor was the leading force for class struggle. But that class struggle was part of the New Afrikan liberation struggle.

Starting in the early 1920s Afrikan labor in the South struck out in a remarkable series of union organizing struggles. This was part of the same explosion of Afrikan consciousness that also produced the Garvey movement, the great breakthroughs in Afrikan culture and the Afrikan communist movement. These things were not completely separate, but linked expressions of the same historic political upheaval of the whole oppressed Afrikan Nation.

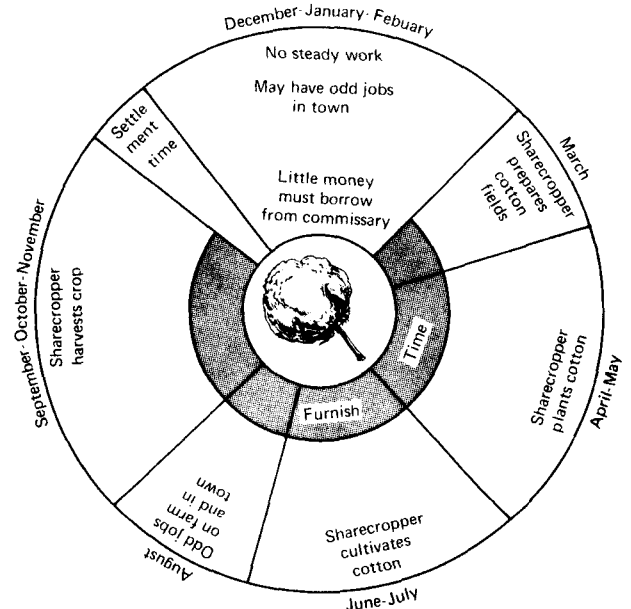
When we think about the early organizing strug-

Tenants, 1925



## Mississippi

Cycle of Debt



## Sharecropping Causes Dependence

gles of the United Mine Workers Union in the Southern Appalachian coal fields, we are led to picture in our minds "poor white" hillbilly miners walking picket lines with rifles in hands. This is just more settleristic propaganda. The fact is that modern unionism in the Southern Appalachian coal fields came from a "Black thing" — manned, launched and led by Afrikan workers in their 1920s political explosion. In both the initial 1908 strike and the great 1920-1921 strikes in the Alabama coal fields the majority of strikers were Afrikan. In fact, in the main 1920-1921 strikes fully 76% of the striking miners were Afrikan. Those were Afrikan strikes. Much of the severe anti-unionism and violent repression of strikes in the 1920s South was linked by the imperialists to the need to stop the rising of Afrikans. (10)



Even outside of Alabama the coal miners' union often depended upon Afrikan struggle. One Afrikan miner who worked in the mines of Mercer County, West Virginia for forty-three years recalls: "*The white man was scared to join the union at first around here. The Black man took the organizing jobs and set it up. We went into the bushes and met in secret; and we had all the key offices. A few of the white miners would slip around and come to our meetings. After they found out that the company wasn't going to run them away, why they began to appear more often. And quite naturally, when they became the majority, they elected who they wanted for their presidents, vice presidents, and treasurers. They left a few jobs as secretaries for the Negroes. But at the beginning, most all of the main offices in the locals were held by Negroes.*" (11)

The offensive was not merely about job issues, but was a political outbreak spread among Afrikan workers in general. In 1919 thousands of Afrikan workers in the South formed the National Brotherhood Workers, a common Afrikan workers union centered among the dock, shipyard and railroad workers in Norfolk and Newport News, Virginia. In 1923 Afrikan postal workers in Washington, D.C. formed their own union, the National Alliance of Postal Employees. This offensive of Afrikan labor advanced throughout the 1920s and 1930s. (12)

In the mines, in the Birmingham steel mills, on the docks, the power in the South of Afrikan labor was being unchained. So much information about these struggles, so much of this story, has been obscured and put aside. The role of Afrikan labor in shaking the Empire in those years was much larger than most believe. This is no accident, for the main sources for U.S. labor history have been the various works of the Euro-American "Left." These works all have in common an oppressor nation chauvinism. In this regard such supposedly conflicting "left" writings as the CPUSA's *Labor's Untold Story* (by Boyer and Marais), the Weather Underground Organizations *Prairie Fire*, the syndicalist labor history book *Strike!* (by J. Brecher) or the *Red Papers* of the Revolutionary Union (now RCP) all commit the same distortions.

The revisionists take apart, in their mis-history, what was one great tidal wave of anti-colonial rising by oppressed Afrikans. The pieces of history are then scattered so as to leave no visible sign of the giant stature of that Afrikan development. Some pieces are "bleached" (stripped of their national character) and "annexed" by the Euro-American radicals as part of their own history. The history of Afrikan industrial workers in the North suffered this fate. Some pieces, such as the militant sharecropper struggle and the leading role of Afrikan coal miners in the Appalachian South, have been buried.

Matters as a whole are distorted to shrink the Afrikan story. To take one example: the struggle around the Scottsboro Boys (the Afrikan teenagers framed for allegedly raping two settler girls) is always brought up, while the wide-spread excitement and unity in the 1930s over the defense cases of armed Afrikans who fought their settler oppressors is never mentioned. This is just part of the general distortion of de-emphasizing the intense rising in the Afrikan South itself. And its nationalist character. Indeed, many of the most widely used Black Studies texts — such as the Bracey, Meier & Rudwick *Black Na-*

*tionalism in America* or the Huggins, Kilson & Fox *Key Issues in the Afro-American Experience* — assure us that by 1930 Afrikans in the U.S. had lost interest in nationalism. Nationalism, they tell us, was just a passing phase back then.

On the contrary, we must underline the fact that the struggles of Afrikan labor were and are part of the political history of the entire Afrikan nation, and can only be correctly understood in that context. Those Afrikan labor struggles were far more important than we have been told. In the major 1936-1937 U.S. seamen's strike, for example, Afrikan sailors played the decisive role in reaching victory. That was the strike that finally won union rights on all East Coast U.S. shipping. Led by Ferdinand Smith, the Jamaican socialist who was vice-president of the National Maritime Union (NMU-CIO), the 20,000 Afrikan seamen who were the majority of the workers in the shipping industry of the Southern and Gulf Coast ports, shut down those ports completely until the employers gave in. (13) Afrikan labor was gathering a mighty force in the South, on its own National Territory.

The colonial contradictions became most intensified when these peoples' struggles caught fire in the cotton fields, among the great oppressed mass of Afrikan tenants and sharecroppers. There the rawest nerve of the Euro-American settler occupation was touched, since the struggle was fundamentally over the land. Revisionism has tried in its mis-history to picture these sharecropper struggles as minor conflicts in a backward sector of agriculture, allegedly marginal to the main arena of struggle in auto, steel and the rest of Northern heavy industry. The sharecropper and tenant struggles were central, however, because they involved the main laboring force of the Afrikan Nation and because they were fought over the land. That's why these struggles were fought out at gunpoint.

The Afrikan sharecroppers and tenant farmers struggles did not — and could not — take the public mass dimensions of Northern union organization. Smoldering under the heavy-handed lynch rule of the settler occupation, the Afrikan plantation struggles would suddenly break the surface in an intense confrontation. While the issues were couched in the forms of pay, rest hours, tenants' rights, etc., the underlying issue of contention was the imperialist slavery of colonial oppression. Unlike the industrial struggles in the coal mines or steel mills, the Afrikan struggle on the land immediately and directly threatened the very fabric of Euro-American society in the South. For that reason they were met by unrestrained settler violence — backed up by the imperialist state.

In July 1931 the U.S. Empire was electrified by the news that a secret organization of Afrikan sharecroppers had been uncovered in Camp Hills, Alabama. Even worse (from the settler viewpoint) was the fact that these sharecroppers had engaged in a shoot-out with the local sheriff and his planter deputies. At a time when an Afrikan man in the South would take his life in his hands just in raising his voice to a local settler, this outbreak created settler panic throughout the colony. Especially when it became known that the sharecroppers had brought in Afrikan communist organizers.

The Alabama Sharecroppers Union had begun

secretly organizing in Tallapoosa County in May of 1931. Within a month they had gathered over 700 members. Under settler-colonial rule, this effort was, of course, conspiratorial; members were not only pledged to secrecy, but sworn to execute any Afrikan who betrayed the struggle to the settlers. Nevertheless it was felt necessary to risk security in order to rally sentiment behind the planned strike. Weekly mass meetings were begun, as secretly as possible, at nights in a local church. But these stirrings had alerted the police forces. At the sharecroppers' second mass meeting on July 15, 1931, the gathering was discovered and attacked by armed settlers. Tallapoosa County Sheriff Young and a force of planter deputies broke into the meeting right at the beginning, beating and cursing. Only the drawn gun held by the chairman of the meeting allowed people to escape.

The next night, after a feverish day of gathering settler reinforcements, Sheriff and an enlarged group of 200 armed settlers went "night-riding" to prevent a planned Afrikan meeting and to assassinate the leaders.

The settlers first targeted Ralph Gray, one of the most militant sharecroppers and one of the main organizers. Gray, who had been out on guard that night, was shot down without parley by the settlers as soon as he was identified. Badly wounded, he told his compatriots that he had emptied his shotgun at the enemy, but had become too weak to reload and continue fighting. The settler mob left, satisfied that Gray had been finished off. Hours later, hearing that the wounded sharecropper had been brought home by car still alive, the settlers regathered and attacked his house. Gray was killed and his wife's head was fractured by a beating. But a defense guard of

Afrikans hidden in the nearby field sniped at the invading settlers; Sheriff Young was "critically wounded" and a deputy was also shot. (14)

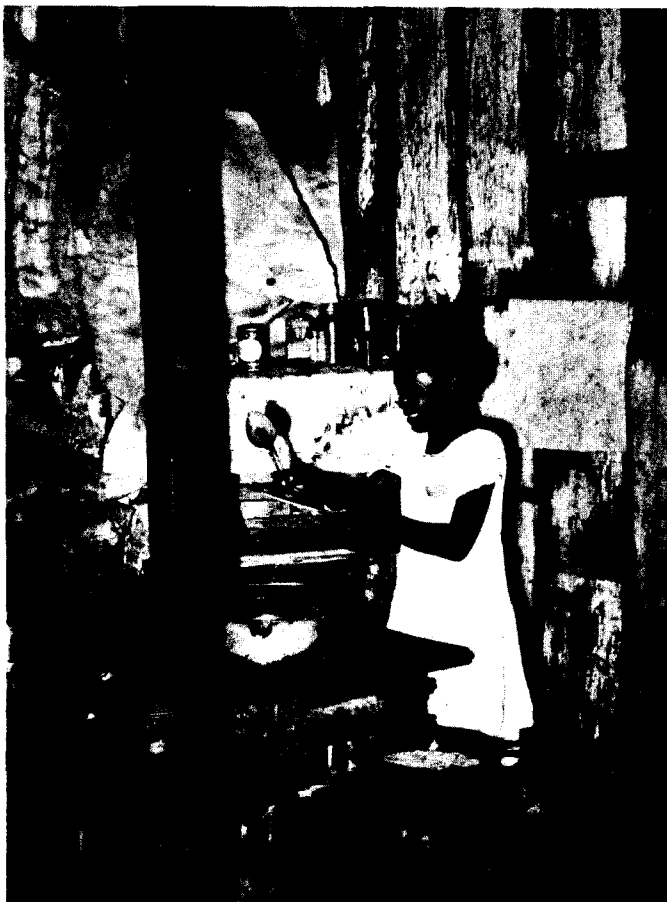
This unexpected organized resistance by Afrikans pushed the settlers into a frenzy of counter-insurgency. Taft Holmes, one of the arrested sharecroppers, said after his release: *"They blew up the car Gray was brought home in. They arrested people wherever they found them, at home, in the store, on the road, anywhere. All the white bosses was a sheriff that day and whenever they seen a colored man they arrested him or beat him up. I was put in jail Friday evening. The boys who were put in Friday morning was beat up bad to make them tell — but none of them told."* Even those mass arrests, general terrorism and killings failed to break the Afrikan struggle on the land. (15)

We can understand why when we look at Ralph Gray himself. His role in the struggle grew out of his own oppression, of his own rejection of the all-embracing colonial occupation suffocating him. Gray had called on his brothers and sisters to refuse to do plantation labor for the then-prevailing wages in Tallapoosa County — 50 cents per day for Afrikan men, 40 cents per day for Afrikan women. He and his wife would work over the state line in Georgia, where plantation wages were slightly higher, leaving the oldest son home to care for their chickens and pigs.

In effect Gray had started a strike of Afrikan plantation labor, urging everyone to withhold their labor until the settlers raised wages. So Sheriff Young singled Gray out; he told Gray that he and his family had to come out and chop cotton on the Sheriff's farm. Obviously if Gray submitted then the attempted strike would be undercut. Gray refused. (16) Then Gray had a fistfight with his landlord; while the Grays owned their own shack, they had to rent farmland from the local mail carrier, Mr. Langly. Incidentally, this was very common. Not only the planters and middle classes, but even the "working class" settlers in the Afrikan colony were "bosses" over the Afrikan colonial subjects. Many landless settlers themselves rented farmland from the banks and the planters, which they then had worked by Afrikan sharecroppers or day laborers.

While Afrikan sharecroppers were in theory eligible for New Deal farm loans for seed and fertilizer, the common practice in the South was for the settler landlords to just take the money. When Ralph Gray's check arrived his landlord (who was also the postman) had him sign it under the pretext that he'd deliver it to the bank for Gray. Of course, the settler just kept the money himself. Gray finally waited for Langly at the mailbox and they got into a fistfight. Gray was a marked man because he was standing up. The colonial oppression was so suffocating that despite any dangers the Ralph Grays of the Afrikan Nation were moving towards revolution. (17) That's why the embattled sharecroppers secretly wrote away to the communists and asked their help.

Afrikans were picking up the gun. That should tell us something about their political direction. Even defense trials of individual Afrikan sharecroppers who had resorted to arms continued to draw attention throughout this period. The Odell Waller case in 1942 created newspaper headlines and demonstrations throughout the U.S. Empire. The *Richmond Times-Dispatch* said: "The



most celebrated case in Virginia criminal annals...Odell Waller's case is being watched with interest by groups of whites and Negroes in every State of the Union." (18) Waller shot and killed his settler landlord, who had seized the Waller family's entire wheat crop for himself. It's interesting that the landlord, Oscar Davis, was not a landowner, but a poor white who had Afrikan sharecroppers work part of his rented land for him.

In the Waller case the *New York Times* editorially called for commuting his execution on tactical grounds: "*The faith of colored people in their country is deeply involved in what happens to Odell Waller...Our enemies would like to break down this faith. If Governor Darden grants the desired commutation he will be helping his country's reputation among all the dark-skinned and yellow-skinned peoples.*" (19) Waller was executed.

In these defense cases the connection to the larger anti-colonial issues was readily apparent. In the Tee Davis defense case in Edmondson, Arkansas (right across the river from Memphis, Tenn.) in 1943, the Afrikan tenant farmer was sentenced to ten years in prison for defending his family's house against settlers breaking in. Allegedly searching for stolen goods, the freshly deputized settlers were harassing Afrikan families. When Davis refused to open his door to unidentified white men, a settler "deputy" started breaking it down. When the "deputy" kicked in the bottom of the door, Tee Davis started shooting through the door to scare them off.(20)

That harassment was not just spontaneous "racism," but a campaign to drive Afrikans there off the land. That area in Crittenden County had been an Afrikan stronghold after the Civil War. Crittenden was the last county in Arkansas in the 19th century to have Afrikan sheriffs and county officials. Edmondson itself was established as an all-Afrikan town in that period with the entire population, stores, real estate and farmland being Afrikan. Finally, the planters managed to organize a major armed attack on the town. Many of its people were driven out and the Afrikan leaders were deported from the State. Most of the Afrikan land and homes were stolen by the planters. Desiring only a limited number of Afrikans to work the occupied land as laborers, the local capitalists used terror to keep the population down and to stop any Afrikans who tried to own land.

It should be evident that behind these Afrikan sharecropper and tenant struggles loomed the larger issue and the larger rising. Despite the savage counterattacks by the settler garrison the Afrikan struggle refused to quiet down. In Alabama the 1931 mass arrests, terror and assassinations failed to exterminate the Sharecroppers Union. The next year another shoot-out took place in Tallapoosa County. On December 19, 1932 the planter deputies killed four Afrikans in an attack on their organization. The brief battle was so intense that the settler attackers were forced to withdraw after they ran low on ammunition. (Four deputies were slightly wounded by Afrikan return fire.) Five Afrikans were sentenced to 12 to 15 years in the state penitentiary for the shoot-out.(21) As late as 1935 the Alabama Sharecroppers Union was leading almost 3,000 cotton sharecroppers on a strike that had begun in bloody Lowndes County on August 19, 1935.(22) Armed confrontations on a small scale were taking place throughout the South.

There were, of course, many Euro-Amerikan sharecroppers and tenants as well in the South. Most of them were extremely poor, a poverty whose roots lay in the original defeat of their abortive Confederate nation. For them the possible path of class conscious struggle was visible.

A unique union, the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, was formed in Tyronza, Arkansas in 1934 to follow this path. The STFU was started by two Southern Euro-Amerikan Social-Democrats — H.L. Mitchell (who owned a dry cleaners) and Henry East (a gas station operator). Their union involved many thousands of sharecroppers, tried several major strikes, and was notable in the upper rural South of that time for being heavily "integrated." Briefly, the STFU was even a part of the national CIO (before splits between settler radicals led to its ouster), and had the same prominent role in official 1930s U.S. unionism that the farmworkers (UFW) does in today's AFL-CIO.

The STFU failed politically because it could not resolve the relationship between oppressor and oppressed nations, could find no other basis for workers' unity other than reformism under oppressor nation domination. How wide the gulf really was on the land can be seen from an incident in Oklahoma. STFU leader H.L. Mitchell had gone to Durant, Okla. on an organizing drive. Addressing a group of Choctaw Indian farm workers, Mitchell called on them to "get organized" by joining the STFU. The Choctaw leader simply ended the discussion by saying: "Indian already organized. When white man and Black man get ready to take back the land, we join them."(23)

The STFU's integrationism was just an effort to harness and use the militancy of the Afrikan masses to fight battles the poor whites could not sustain themselves. The Afrikan tenants and sharecroppers were the hard-core strength of the STFU, their steadfastness alone permitting enough organizations to hold together so that the poor whites had something to cling to. H.L. Mitchell (who always insisted on settler control of the union) himself had to admit that: "Intimidation moves were generally more successful against the whites than the Negroes. The latter have more sense of organization and the value of organization, a greater sense of solidarity." (24)

Even this social-democratic union could not successfully absorb and tame the nationalist energy of its Afrikan members. The primary organizer for the STFU in its formative years was its Afrikan vice-president, the Rev. E.B. McKinney. McKinney related to the STFU and its radical Euro-Amerikans only to the exact degree that he felt Afrikans thereby gained in self-organization and political strength. This rural preacher turned out to be both much better educated than most of the settler union activists and an Afrikan nationalist. One historian remarks: "*Though willing to work with whites, he was race-conscious, having been influenced by Marcus Garvey's Negro nationalism, and 'his people' remained primarily the Negro union members.*" (25)

Badly wounded by U.S. imperialism's terroristic counter-blows, the Afrikan sharecropper struggle in the late 1930s continued to search for new directions. As late as 1939 there was considerable agitation. That year Rev. McKinney quit the STFU in protest, saying that; "*The*

*Negro is the goat of the STFU.*" All thirteen Afrikan tenant farmer union locals in Arkansas quit the STFU and joined the rival CIO union as a group. These Afrikan sharecroppers were trying to take advantage of Euro-Amerikan labor factional in-fighting, playing those factions off against each other attempting to find a situation with the most resources and leverage for themselves.

In January 1939 thousands of dispossessed, landless Afrikan sharecroppers in Southeastern Missouri took to the highways in a major demonstration. To dramatize their demand for bread and land, the sharecroppers set up a "tent city" lining the roadsides of a national highway. This protest, which lasted for months, caught empire-wide attention and was an early fore-runner to the 1960s "freedom marches" and other such actions. It was a very visible sign of the struggle of Afrikans to resist leaving their lands, to resist imperialist dispossession. (26)

Practice showed that the Afrikan sharecropper and tenant labor struggles not only had a class character but were part of a larger national struggle. They were anti-colonial struggles having the goal of removing the bootheel of settler occupation off of Afrikan life and land. In this stirring the Afrikan masses — rural as well as urban, sharecroppers as well as steelworkers — were creating new forms of organization, trying mass struggles of varied kinds, and taking steps toward revolution. Again, it is important to recognize the meaning of the reality that Afrikans were picking up the gun. And raising the need for socialist liberation.

This gradually developing struggle was against U.S. imperialism and had a revolutionary direction. In the 'Thirties Afrikan communism grew, taking root not only in the refugee ghettos of the North but in the South as well. Primarily this political activity took form within the Communist Party U.S.A. (which the ABB had joined). While we can recognize the CPUSA finally as a settleristic party of revisionism, it is important to see that in the Deep South at that time the CPUSA was predominantly an underground organization of Afrikan revolutionaries. The CPUSA was accepted not only because of its labor and legal defense activities, but because in that period the CPUSA was opening espousing independence for the oppressed Afrikan Nation.

Hosea Hudson, an Afrikan steelworker who played a major role in the CPUSA in Alabama in the 1930s, points out that the party of his personal experience was in reality an Afrikan organization: "Up in the top years, in '33, '34, '35, the Party in Birmingham and Alabama was dominated by Negroes. At one time we had estimated around Birmingham about six or seven hundred members. And in the whole state of Alabama it was considered about 1,000 members. We had only a few whites, and I mean a few whites."

So that in the Afrikan Nation not just a small intellectual vanguard, not just a handful, but a significant number of Afrikans were illegally organizing for socialist revolution and national liberation. Hudson makes it plain that Afrikan communists then had very explicit ideas about their eventually leading a freed and sovereign Afrikan Nation in the South.

"Our struggle was around many outstanding issues in our party program in the whole South: 1) Full

# SHARE-CROPPER BARES STORY OF OPPRESSION

NEW YORK, April 27—(CNA)—The conditions of murderous oppression and economic robbery imposed by the white landlords on the starving Negro share-croppers of Alabama are graphically depicted in the following simple letter from a Tallapoosa, Ala., share-cropper:

"Dadeville, Ala.—I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know how we are getting along down here. We are just here by the mercies of the Lord, among our enemies, with not a living chance. We are naked and barefooted and haven't anything to get clothes and shoes with, and haven't had for three winters. We are share-croppers, and because we are in debt, the landlord holds all our cotton every year, and we don't get one penny to get shoes and clothes to work in. We have to make a crop in rags and barefooted and part of the time hungry. He pretends he is going to furnish us the year, but lets us have only five dollars a month for about three or four months. There are two families of us here on the place which consists of eleven people in all. He didn't let us have one penny from last August until this year in January, when he came down here and brought even 10 dollars for two families. This amount would not get shoes for one family.

## Trodden Under Foot

"So you see just about how we have to live and are treated. I pray the day will come when we Negroes can have our equal rights to make a living for ourselves. All our lives we have been trodden under foot and could not speak for our rights or else we would be knocked down, beaten, shot or lynched.

## The Dadeville Trial

"So, I guess you have already heard how the Negroes were driven out of Dadeville, Ala., on January 12th of this year, with the trial of the five Negro share-croppers was to be heard. They were not allowed to go in the courthouse and were driven out of town like brutes, just as though they weren't human. That is the way of treating the Negroes down here in the South.

## "Like Unto a Rabbit"

"The Negroes living down here in the South (where we were bred and born) is like unto a rabbit in the forest among a crowd of hunters with deadly weapons everyone shouting, catch him, kill him and every time one gets a chance he will shoot at him or wound him. So you see that is the way we are in here, everybody shouting, kill him, beat him, burn him, and not one voice raised to defend him.

## For Bread, Land, and Freedom

"But I am so thankful that the tide is turning and I thank God and all the friends of the Negro race that are working for the defense and rights of the Negroes. I pray that we may succeed in our struggle for bread, land and freedom.

## "Your Comrade"

economic, political and social equality to the Negro people and the right of self-determination of the Negro people in the Black Belt...When we got together, we discussed and we read the *Liberator*. The Party put out this newspaper, the *Liberator*...It was always carrying something about the liberation of Black people, something about Africa, something about the South, Scottsboro, etc., etc.

We'd compare, we'd talk about the right of self-determination. We discussed the whole question of if we established a government, what role we comrades would play, the about the relationship of the white, of the poor white, of the farmers, etc. in this area.

DADEVILLE, Ala., May 5. — Sentences of from five to six to 12 to 15 years were imposed on five Race share-croppers framed because they defended themselves when deputies and gangsters attacked them last Dec. 19, killing four other croppers.

At a meeting of special press, Herndon held his lawyer, secretary, Tom Herndon, of Atlanta, and a large number of Atlanta businessmen, who attended the meeting, including several pressmen, including J. W. Smith, of special press, brought to the same meeting, Schuchman, Herndon, Herndon, and the Tennessee state attorney, and the Georgia state attorney, J. B. Herndon, and the secretary of the Herndon, and the commission, will all be heard Judge Herndon on the 10th, and he has charge to the jury.

**Herndon Attorneys in Case**

Herndon Schuchman, Herndon, Herndon, Herndon, and the Tennessee state attorney, and the Georgia state attorney, J. B. Herndon, and the secretary of the Herndon, and the commission, will all be heard Judge Herndon on the 10th, and he has charge to the jury.

[illegible]

The political horizons for Afrikaners had opened wide in those years. It is especially important to understand that masses of Afrikaners viewed themselves as part of a world struggle, that their aims and concerns encompass-

The defense of Afrikan nationhood was primary in everyone's mind. Dr. L.K. Williams, President of the National Baptist Convention, told a mass rally: "We do not want to see the last black empire in Afrika lose its independence and culture..." The Fraternal Council of Negro Churches, representing the major Afrikan denominations, issued an official resolution saying: "Americans of African descent are deeply stirred in their attitudes and sympathies for Ethiopia, a Negroid people, who represent almost the only remaining example of independent government by the black race on the continent of Africa..." So the concern was broadly shared by the Afrikan Nation as a whole — not just by some strata or some political sectors.

The support movement took many forms. Clearly the leading group in the mass mobilization was the Garvey Movement's United Negro Improvement Association (U.N.I.A.). This was, we should recall, the same nationalist organization that prominent academic historians now assure us was abandoned and unimportant at that time.

Captain A.L. King, head of the U.N.I.A. in New York, was the chairman of the united Afrikan support committee. J.A. Rogers, the leading intellectual of the Garvey movement in the U.S., was the main propagandist and educator for the support movement. The Afrikan united front committee involved not only the UNIA and other nationalist organizations, but the CPUSA, church leaders, Afrikan college groupings, and so on. Within several months after the invasion the Friends of Ethiopia had 106 local branches both North and South. There were mass church meetings, rallies, marches of thousands and picket lines outside Italian government offices.

The national character of the movement was underlined by the fact that virtually to the last person Afrikans boycotted the well-funded and Euro-American-run international relief efforts. The American Red Cross admitted that Afrikans refused to join its Ethiopian aid campaign; Afrikans insisted on their own all-Afrikan campaign that was highly political. The political counterattack by U.S. imperialism struck at this point. Somehow the rumor kept spreading that the Ethiopians thought of themselves as "Caucasian" and that they allegedly viewed Afrikans (most especially in the U.S. Empire) with contempt. There was a demoralizing confusion from this rumor.

To expose this lie representatives of the Ethiopian Government came to the U.S. At a packed Harlem meeting of 3,000 people at Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.'s Abyssinian Baptist Church, Ethiopian envoy Tasfaye Zaphior invoked the solidarity of oppressed Afrikan peoples: *"It is said that we despise Negroes. In the first place, you are not Negroes. Who told you that you were Negroes? You are the sons and daughters of Africa, your motherland, which calls you now to aid her last surviving free black people."*

The "Volunteer Movement" arose spontaneously throughout the Nation. Thousands upon thousands of Afrikans volunteered to go fight in Ethiopia. The Black Legion established a military training camp in rural New York, and its leaders urged Afrikans to prepare to renounce U.S. citizenship. While the "Volunteer Movement" was blocked by U.S. imperialism, its popular nature shows how powerful were the potential forces being expressed through the Ethiopian support issue. The two Afrikans from the U.S. Empire who did fight in Ethiopia (both fighter pilots) were heroes back home, whose adventures were widely followed by the Afrikan press.

The conflict was fought out in miniature on the streets of Jersey City, Brooklyn and Harlem between Afrikans and pro-fascist Italian immigrants. The night of August 11, 1935 over a thousand Afrikans and Italians fought with baseball bats and rocks on the streets of Jersey City. On October 4, 1935 (the day after the main invasion began) thousands of Afrikans attacked Italian shops in Harlem and Brooklyn. On the streets the masses of ordinary Afrikans viewed their fight and the fight in Ethiopia as very close.

It's indicative that in 1936 a late-night street corner rally of the African Patriotic League, called to protest Italian mass executions of Ethiopian patriots, rapidly turned into an attack on the police. Smashing Italian store windows, the crowd of 400 Afrikans marched down Lenox Ave. in Harlem looking for a particular policeman who made a point of arresting nationalists.) In the mass fighting with police that followed, the New York police started shooting after the determined crowd charged them to successfully free one of their number who had been arrested. (29) Ethiopia was close to home.

The great outpouring of nationalist sentiment that accompanied the Ethiopian War was, we must emphasize, widespread throughout the U.S. Empire. One New Orleans resident wrote to the *Courier* that the Ethiopian crisis proved that *"...the time is here for the Negro to begin to look for the higher things in life — a flag of his own, a government of his own and complete liberty."* This was the developing consciousness that so threatened U.S. imperialism.

## To the People of Harlem

### Don't Buy From Italians

The WHITE World is trying to carry out its policy of White supremacy. by trying to destroy Ethiopia the last remaining empire in Africa. There must be one answer from the black peoples of the world to this attack—we must unite and stand ready to defend Ethiopia, regardless of what England, France, Italy and other white nations have to say. The masses of color

108-11 must combine their forces



# 3. To Disrupt the Nation: Population Regroupment

It was only against the rise of the Afrikan Nation that we could see, in brilliant detail, how the U.S. Empire wove together the net of counter-insurgency. We know that a period that began around World War I and which continued through the 1930s, a period in which Afrikan nationalism militantly took hold of the masses, ended in the 1940s with the triumph of pro-imperialist integrationism as the dominant political philosophy in the Afrikan communities. U.S. counter-insurgency was the hidden factor in this paradoxical outcome.

In the Philippine War of 1898-1901 the U.S. Empire openly spoke of its counter-insurgency strategy. The same was true in Vietnam in the 1960s. But in the Afrikan colony of the 1930's U.S. counter-insurgency was concealed. It was none the less real, none the less genocidal for having been done without public announcements. It is when we view what happened in this light, as components of a strategy of counter-insurgency, that the political events suddenly come into full focus.

Usually counter-insurgency involves three principal components: 1. Violent suppression or extermination of the revolutionary cadre and organizations; 2. Paralyzing the mass struggle itself through genocidal population regroupment; 3. Substituting pro-imperialist bourgeois leadership and institutions for patriotic leadership and institutions within the colonial society. The terroristic suppression of Afrikan militants in the South has been discussed, and in any case should be well understood. What has been less discussed are the other two parts.

## POPULATION REGROUPMENT

In Mao Zedong's famous analogy, the guerrillas in People's War are "fish" while the masses are the "sea" that both sustains and conceals them. Population regroupment (in the C.I.A.'s terminology) strategy seeks to dry up that "sea" by literally uprooting the masses and disrupting the whole social fabric of the oppressed nation. In Vietnam the strategy resulted in the widespread chemical poisoning of crops and forest land, the depopulation of key areas, and the involuntary movement of one-third of the total South Vietnamese population off their lands to "protected hamlets" and "refugee centers" (i.e. the C.I.A.'s reservations for Vietnamese). These blows only show how great an effort, what magnitude of resources, is expended on imperialist counter-insurgency.

In response to growing political unrest, the U.S. Empire moved inexorably to drive Afrikans off the land, out of industry, and force them into exile. The New Deal of President Franklin Roosevelt, the major banks and corporations, and the main Euro-Amerikan political and social organizations (unions, political parties, etc.) worked

together to destroy the economic base of the Afrikan Nation, to separate Afrikans from their lands, and to thus destabilize and gradually depopulate the Afrikan communities in and adjacent to the National Territory. One history of U.S. welfare programs notes:

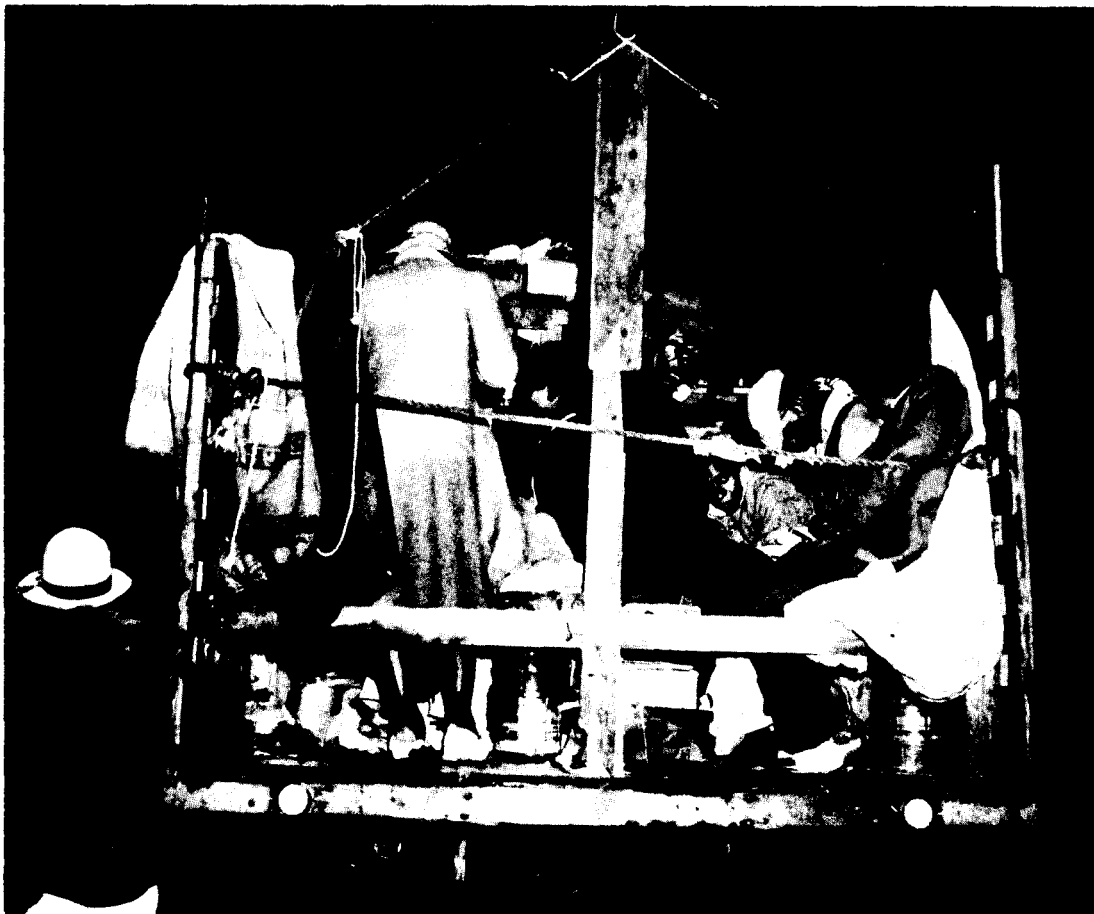
"...many New Deal programs ran roughshod over the most destitute. Federal agricultural policy, for example, was designed to raise farm prices by taking land out of cultivation, an action that also took many tenant farmers and sharecroppers out of the economy. The National Recovery Administration, seeking to placate organized employers and organized labor, permitted racial differentials in wages to be maintained. The Tennessee Valley Authority deferred to local prejudice by not hiring Blacks. All this was done not unknowingly, but rather out of concern for building a broad base for the new programs. It was left to FERA (Federal Emergency Relief Act) to succor the casualties of the New Deal's pragmatic policies. Since Blacks got little from (or were actually harmed by) most programs, 30 per cent of the Black population ended up on the direct relief rolls by January 1935." (30)

Just as the 30% of the South Vietnamese people were forcibly made dependent upon direct U.S. handouts in the 1960s in order just to eat, so 30% of the Afrikan people in the U.S. were similarly reduced by 1935. But not for long. That was only the first stage. In the second, relief was turned over to the local planter governments, who proceeded to force Afrikans off the relief rolls to drive them out of the region. That history of U.S. welfare continues:

"Under pressure from Southern congressmen, any wording that might have been interpreted as constraining the states from racial discrimination in welfare was deleted from the Social Security Act of 1935. The Southern states then proceeded to use the free hand they had been given to keep Blacks off the rolls." (31)

It is important to see that Afrikans were *not* just the victims of discrimination and blind economic circumstances ("last hired, first fired," etc.). *Africans were the targets of imperialist New Deal policy.* We must remember that the archaic, parasitic Euro-Amerikan planter capitalists were on the verge of final bankruptcy and literal dissolution in the early years of the Depression. Further, despite the 1929 Depression there was in fact relatively little agricultural unemployment among Afrikans in the rich Mississippi River cotton land of the Delta (the Kush) until the winter of 1933-34. (32) Then these two facts were suddenly reversed.

The New Deal's 1934 Agricultural Adjustment Act 109 rescued the ruined planter capitalists, giving them cash



*These agricultural workers paid \$8.00 apiece to be driven by truck to a work camp at Bridgeton, New Jersey, in 1942.*

subsidies so that they could hold on to the land and continue serving as U.S. imperialism's overseers in the Afrikan South.\* But those U.S. imperialist subsidies literally gave the planters cash for each sharecropper and tenant farmer they forced off the plantation. The primary effect, then, was to forcibly de-stabilize and eventually depopulate the rural Afrikan communities. One 1935 evaluation of the A.A.A. program by the lawyer for the Southern Tenant Farmers Union pointed out.

*"Before its passage most of the plantations of the south were heavily mortgaged. It was freely prophesied that the plantation system was breaking down under its own weight and that the great plantations would soon be broken up into small farms, owned by the people who cultivate them...but by federal aid the plantation system of the South is more strongly entrenched than it had been for years.*

*"However, this is not the most significant effect of the federal aid. By it cotton acreage was reduced about 40 per cent, and something like 40 per cent of the tenants were displaced..." (33)*

This displacement was also taking place in the factories and even the coal field, where (as we noted in the previous section) Afrikan workers had played a leading role in militant unionization. As the coal mines of the South gradually became unionized during the 1930s, 110

Afrikan miners and their families were driven out by the tens of thousands. The large coal companies and the United Mine Workers Union (UMW-CIO), while they had class differences, had oppressor nation unity. The imperialists had decided to drive rebellious Afrikan labor out of the Southern coal fields, and the pro-imperialist CIO unions eagerly cooperated. *Between 1930 and 1940 the percentage of Afrikan miners in the five Southern Appalachian states (Alabama, Virginia, Tennessee, West Virginia and Kentucky) was deliberately cut from 23% to 16%. (34)* And it would keep on being cut year after year, regardless of economic boom or bust.

The drive by capital to strike down Afrikan labor, to force the colonial masses out of the main economy, intensified throughout the 1930s. Between 1930-36 some 50% of all Afrikan skilled workers were pushed out of their jobs. (35) Careful observers at that time made the point that this was *not* caused by the Depression alone, but clearly reflected a strategy used by imperialism against the Afrikan Nation as a whole. W.E.B. DuBois said in the main address of the 1933 Fisk University commencement ceremony:

**"We do not know that American Negroes will survive. There are sinister signs about us, antecedent to and unconnected with the Great Depression. The organized might of industry North and South is relegating the Negro to the edge of survival and using him as a labor reservoir**

on starvation wage..." (36)

In the fields tens of thousands of Afrikan farm families during the 1930s were driven not only off the land, but out of the South altogether. As we have seen, this was clearly not the result of "blind economic circumstances," but was the genocidal result of imperialist policy (as enacted by the most liberal settler administration in U.S. history). The social disruption and de-population were no less significant for Afrikans than for other dispersed colonial peoples, such as the Palestinians.

The militant struggle on the land and the turn of Afrikan workers toward revolution was not only blunted by violent repression; increasingly the Afrikan masses were

involuntarily dispersed, scattered into the refugee camps of the Northern ghettos, removed from established positions in industries and trades that were an irreplaceable part of the modern Nation. It was not just a matter of dollars, important as income is to the oppressed; what was happening ravaged the national culture. The "sea" of Afrikan society was stricken at its material base.

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\*Interestingly enough, the 1934 AAA and the entire program was administered by FDR's Secretary of Agriculture, Henry Wallace. This man was later to become the darling of the CPUSA, and the 1948 Presidential candidate of the CPUSA-led "Progressive Party."

## 4. Neo-Colonialism & Leadership

The U.S. Empire has had a long and successful history of applying neo-colonialism to hold down the oppressed. In Latin America and in New Afrika during the mid-1800s the U.S. Empire utilized neo-colonialism prior even to the advent of world imperialism. But in the 1920s and early 1930s U.S. imperialism's neo-colonial instruments lost control over the Afrikan masses. In order to re-establish pro-imperialist leadership over Afrikan politics, U.S. imperialism had to forge new neo-colonial instruments. These neo-colonial instruments were not only traditional but also radical and even socialistic in outward form, and had the special task of controlling the modern forces of Afrikan trade-unionism and Afrikan socialism that had arisen so widely.

We should remember that the essence of neo-colonialism is an outward form of national self-determination and popular democracy concealing a submissive relationship with imperialism on the part of the new bourgeois forces. As Amilcar Cabral pointed out almost twenty years ago concerning neo-colonialism:

*"The objective of the imperialist countries was to prevent the enlargement of the socialist camp, to liberate the reactionary forces in our countries which were being stifled by colonialism and to enable these forces to ally themselves with the international bourgeoisie. The fundamental idea was to create a bourgeoisie where one did not exist, in order specifically to strengthen the imperialist and the capitalist camp." (37)*

The U.S. Empire had literally done exactly that in the 1870s. The neo-colonial stage known as Black Reconstruction had qualitatively changed and enlarged the New Afrikan petit-bourgeoisie. This class, even in defeat by the Euro-American planter capitalists, were to a degree held up by and patronized by U.S. imperialism — and they retained like a religion their loyalty and dependence upon the Federal government. Washington, D.C. was their Mecca or Rome. Indeed, the Federal Government was for

many years the prime employer of the Afrikan petit-bourgeoisie.

Many Afrikan politicians of the 19th Century were consoled by Federal patronage jobs for the lost glories of Reconstruction. U.S. Senator Blanche Bruce from Mississippi was the last Afrikan in the Senate. When his term ended in 1881, Mississippi politics were back under planter control and he was replaced. For his loyal example the Empire awarded him the position in Washington of U.S. Register of the Treasury (for the next thirty-two years that post would be reserved for loyal Afrikan leaders). Even Frederick Douglass was not immune to the ideological bent of his class. He was appointed U.S. Marshall for the District of Columbia, and later in his life was U.S. Consul to Haiti. Small wonder that the former radical abolitionist spent years preaching how Afrikans should always remain loyal to the Republican Party, Northern capital and the Federal Government.

By 1892 the Federal offices in Washington employed some 1,500 Afrikans. While most of these jobs were as cleaning women and the lowliest of clerks, a trickle of professional and official positions were reserved for hand-picked Afrikan petit-bourgeois leaders. Washington, D.C. was then the "capitol" in exile of Afrikans, the center of "Negro society." Some eight bureaucratic positions with status eventually were reserved for them: D.C. Municipal Judge, Register of the Treasury, Deputy Register, Assistant District Attorney for D.C., Auditor of the Navy Department, Chief Surgeon at D.C. Freedman's Hospital, Collector of Customs at Georgetown and U.S. Assistant Attorney-General.

In 1913 a journalist light-heartedly labelled these eight "the Black Cabinet." But what began in jest was eagerly taken up by petit-bourgeois Afrikans in seriousness. The custom began of regarding the "Black Cabinet" as the representatives to the U.S. Government of

the whole Afrikan population within the U.S. So a petit-bourgeois Afrikan national leadership had been created which was, in fact, both employed by and solely picked by the imperialist government.(38)

At this time the most prominent Afrikan in these circles, standing in reality even above the "Black Cabinet," was Booker T. Washington of Tuskegee Institute. Washington was viewed by the imperialists as their chief Afrikan advisor, and served them as a leading propagandist and apologist for white supremacy and colonialism. In return, any Afrikan who sought position or funds from the imperialists had to be approved by him. During the Theodore Roosevelt and Taft Administrations even the "Black Cabinet" appointments were cleared first with him. Washington had great fame and, acting for the Empire, some influence over Afrikan education, newspapers, community institutions, and so on. But, of course, neither he nor the other imperialist-selected Afrikan leaders represented the will of the masses.

At the end of World War I an anti-colonial movement of incredible vigor burst forth — seemingly almost overnight — that rejected both the U.S. Empire and the

bourgeois leadership that it had installed for Afrikans. This was the historic movement touched off and led by the Jamaican Marcus Garvey. Even its enemies conceded that the Afrikan masses were expressing their deep desires through this rebellious movement of Afrikan nationalism.

The Garvey movement at its peak in the early 1920s was the greatest outbreak of Afrikan political activity since the Civil War. It said that Afrikans could find their liberation in building a new, modern Afrikan Nation of their own back on the soil of the Afrikan continent. The proposed Nation would eventually unite and protect Afrikans everywhere — in the U.S. Empire and the West Indies as well as on the Afrikan continent itself.

This new nation would expand to liberate all Afrika from colonialism and unite it into one continental Afrikan Power. There Afrikans would shape their own destiny in great industries, universities, agricultural cooperatives and cultural institutions of their own. As a beginning toward the day, Garveyism organized national institutions here in all spheres of life. However modest, these medical, religious, military, economic and other organizations were designed to develop Afrikan self-



*Booker T. Washington  
in his office at Tuskegee  
Institute (1906).*

reliance and national independence. If Garveyism suffered from practical short-comings, nevertheless its imposing sweep of vision expressed the burning national aspirations of the suppressed Afrikan peoples (and not only within the U.S., but worldwide).

Garveyism's great contribution consisted of the fact that it raised high for all to see a vision of Afrikan life that was completely self-reliant, built around their own national economy and culture, that waited on no European to "accept" them or "emancipate" them, that was dependent solely on Afrikan energies and will. In this Garveyism was expressing the strongest desires of the Afrikan masses. It is no accident that Garveyism and its successor, the Nation of Islam, were the two largest outbreaks of Afrikan activity and organization-building within the continental Empire of our century. Even such a self-admitted "skeptical" as Richard Wright was profoundly moved by Garveyism in his youth:

*"The one group I met during those exploring days whose lives enthralled me was the Garveyites, an organization of black men and women who were forlornly seeking to return to Africa. Theirs was a passionate rejection of America, for they sensed with that directness of which only the simple are capable that they had no chance to live a full human life in America. Their lives were not cluttered with ideas in which they could only half believe; they could not create illusions which made them think they were living when they were not; their daily lives were too nakedly harsh to permit of camouflage. I understood their emotions, for I partly shared them.*

*"The Garveyites had embraced a totally racialistic outlook which endowed them with a dignity that I had never seen before in Negroes. On the walls of their dingy flats were maps of Africa and India and Japan, pictures of Japanese generals and admirals, portraits of Marcus Garvey in gaudy regalia, the faces of colored men and women from all parts of the world. I gave no credence to the ideology of Garveyism; it was, rather, the emotional dynamics of its adherents that evoked my admiration. Those Garveyites I knew could never understand why I liked them but would never follow them, and I pitied them too much to tell them that they could never achieve their goal...*

*"It was when the Garveyites spoke fervently of building their own country, of someday living within the boundaries of a culture of their own making, that I sensed the passionate hunger of their lives, that I caught a glimpse of the potential strength of the American Negro."*

The Garvey Movement's ambitious economic ventures — in particular the ill-fated Black Star ship line — became centers of controversy. There is no doubt, however, that at the time they were often considered as very difficult but necessary steps for Afrikan progress. Even W.E.B. DuBois of the N.A.A.C.P., who was one of Garvey's favorite targets for scorn as "a white man's nigger," initially spoke out in favor of Garvey's program (but not his personal leadership):

"...the main lines of the Garvey plan are perfectly feasible. What he is trying to say and do is this: American Negroes can, by accumulating and ministering their own

capital, organize industry, join the black centers of the South Atlantic by commercial enterprise and in this way ultimately redeem Africa as a fit and free home for black men. This is true. It is *feasible*... The plan is not original with Garvey but he had popularized it, made it a living, vocal ideal and swept thousands with him with intense belief in the possible accomplishment of the ideal."(39)

To the extent that Garveyism was naive about capitalism (which it obviously was) this was a stage of development widely shared by its critics as well. Garveyism's weakness was that it saw in capitalism — the form of social organization of the colonizer — the instruments that Afrikans could use to free themselves. So that the essence of nation-building was expressed in forms precisely paralleling those of European society — businesses, churches, Black Cross, etc., etc. Garveyism's predilection for Western titles of nobility ("Duke of Nigeria") and full-dress European court uniforms was but a symptom of this. While this made the concept of independent Afrikan nationhood instantly understandable, it also was a contradiction and a blind alley.

Millions of Afrikans responded to the call of Garvey's United Negro Improvement Association (U.N.I.A.), read its newspaper *The Negro World*, bought stock in its Afrikan business ventures, came out to its meetings and rallies. In 1920 some 50,000 Afrikans marched in a mass U.N.I.A. rally in Harlem. Garvey claimed 4.5 million members for the U.N.I.A. His critics charged that an examination of the U.N.I.A.'s public financial reports revealed that the Garvey Movement had "only" 90,000 members of whom "only" 20,000 were paid up at that time in dues. The U.N.I.A. was so overwhelming that its critics could try to belittle it by saying that it had "only" 90,000 members. (40).

The U.N.I.A.'s international effect was very profound. Claude McKay reminds us that: "In the interior of West Africa new legends arose of an African who had been lost in America, but would return to save his people." (41) On the Nigerian coast Afrikans would light great bonfires, sleeping on the beaches, waiting to guide in the ships of "Moses Garvey." Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and Ho Chi Minh of Vietnam both said that Garvey had been an important "inspiration" for them.

Clements Kadalie, whose 250,000 member Industrial & Commercial Workers Union (ICU) was the first Afrikan working class political organization in Azania, said that he had been much influenced by the U.N.I.A. In British Kenya the separatist KiKuyu Christians brought in U.N.I.A. ministers from the U.S. to train and ordain their own first ministers — and it was from these congregations that much of the Kenya Land & Freedom Army (called "Mau-Mau" by the British) would come a generation later. The Garvey Movement, in Nkrumah's words, "raised the banner of African liberation" on three continents. (42)

In Haiti U.S. Marines violently put down the U.N.I.A. In Costa Rica and Cuba the United Fruit Company used police power to repress it. George Padmore, a bitter opponent of Garvey, recounts that:

"In certain places the punishment for being seen

with a *Negro World* was five years at hard labor, and in French Dahomey it was life imprisonment. It was suppressed in such places as Trinidad, British Guiana, Barbados, etc., in the West Indies and all French, Portuguese, Belgian, and some of the British colonies of Africa."

In the continental U.S. the Garvey Movement was met with varying degrees of repression (Malcolm X's father, we should recall, was assassinated by the KKK because he was an organizer for the U.N.I.A.) But overall U.S. imperialism moved against this surprising upsurge with some care. After several of Garvey's former lieutenants were suborned by the U.S. Government, the imperialists had Garvey arrested for alleged mail fraud.

This tactic of posing Garvey as a common criminal was conceived by none other than J. Edgar Hoover, who at that time was a rising F.B.I. official. In an Oct. 11, 1919 memorandum Hoover noted that Garvey was: *"Agitating the negro movement. Unfortunately, however, he has not as yet violated any federal law. It occurs to me, however, from the attached clipping that there might be some proceeding against him for fraud in connection with his Black Star Line..."*(43) Eventually Garvey was convicted, imprisoned in Atlanta Federal Prison and later deported in 1927. The door, however, had been opened.

**What was most apparent was that the old, conservative, imperialist-sponsored Afrikan leadership had been shoved aside and left behind by this outbreak. They could no longer even pretend to lead or control the Afrikan people. It is significant that even the liberal, Civil Rights integrationists had been overshadowed by the new militant nationalism.**

This was a time of rich ideological struggle and transformation in the Afrikan Nation. That, however, is not the precise focus of our investigation. What we are looking at is the neo-colonial relationship between the forming petit-bourgeois Civil Rights leadership and U.S. imperialism. We are analyzing how in a time of mass unrest and the beginnings of rebellion among Afrikans, U.S. imperialism helped promote a neo-colonial Afrikan leadership that in outward form was integrationist, protest-oriented, radical and even "socialist."

The political attack against the Garvey Movement within the Afrikan Nation was most aggressively spearheaded by a young Afrikan "socialist" and labor organizer, Asa Philip Randolph (who used only his first initial "A."). Since those years of the early 1920s Randolph, even then one of the leading Afrikan radical intellectuals, would grow in stature and influence. A. Philip Randolph became the organizer, and then the President, of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. He would become for decades the most important Afrikan union leader, eventually rising to be the only Afrikan member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council. As the leader of the historic 1941 March On Washington Movement, he was credited with forcing the Federal Government to desegregate industry.

To most today Randolph is at best a dim name somehow associated with dusty events in the past. In 1969 he had an 80th birthday dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York, where he was personally congratulated

not only by Coretta King and other Afrikan notables, but by Gov. Nelson Rockefeller and AFL-CIO President George Meany. It's hard for activists today to view him as anything but another of the faceless Uncle Toms.

This greatly underestimates his historic role. To grasp how useful he was to the U.S. Empire we have to see that the young A. Philip Randolph was a radical star in the Afrikan community. He was an angry, provocative troublemaker with an image as bold as a James Forman or a Cesar Chavez. Randolph published the first socialist Afrikan journal aimed at workers, promoting Afrikan unionism. The *Messenger* carried the motto "The Only Radical Negro Magazine In America," and had 45,000 readers. He was arrested and briefly held by Federal authorities for speaking out against World War I. The New York State Legislature's investigative committee called him *"the most dangerous Negro in America."* Randolph did his work *inside* the Afrikan struggle, as a radical mass leader (not as a conservative-talking conciliator sitting in a fancy office somewhere).

His long tenure as the lone recognized Afrikan leader on a "national level" in the AFL-CIO was so striking that it led the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. to query in an article why:

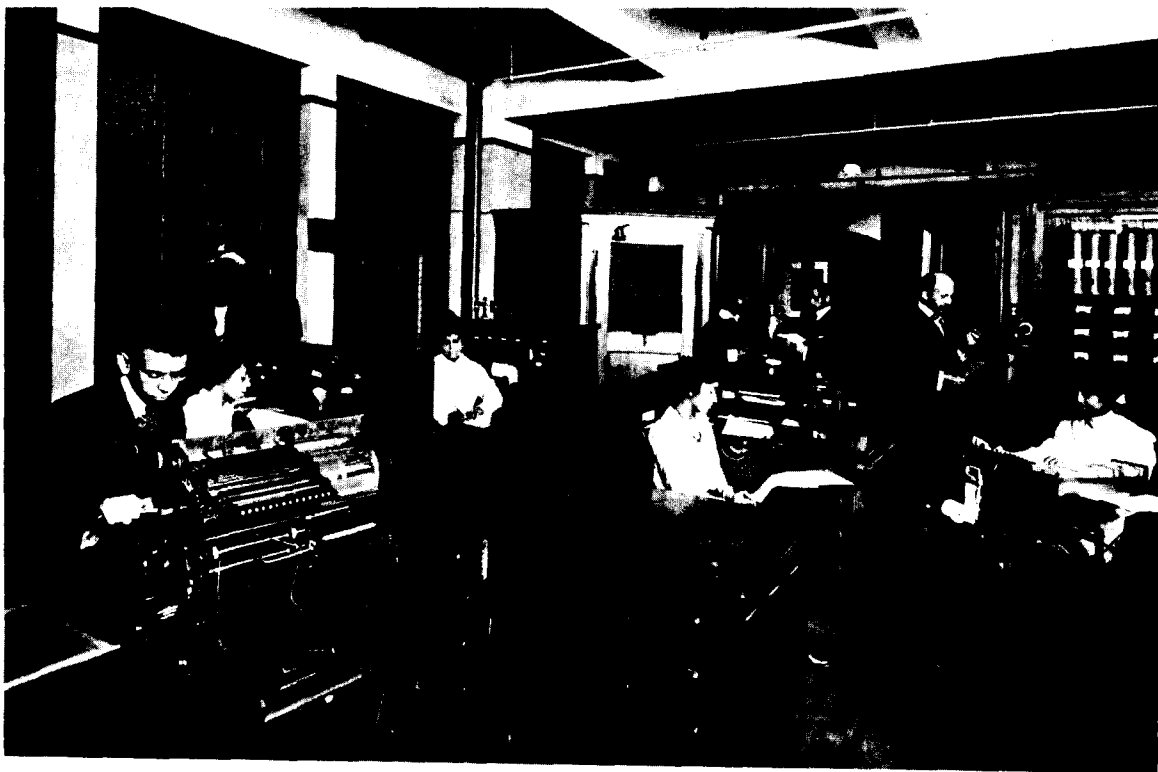
*"The absence of Negro trade-union leadership. 85% of Negroes are working people. Some 2,000,000 are in trade unions, but in 50 years we have produced only one national leader — A. Philip Randolph."* (44) This is a question whose answer will become apparent to us.

At the beginning of Randolph's political career, this ambitious young intellectual was taken in and helped by the U.N.I.A. Garvey appointed him as head of the U.N.I.A. delegation to the League of Nations conference at the end of World War I (Randolph was denied a U.S. passport and was unable to go). When Randolph and his close associate Chandler Owen needed assistance for the



A. Philip Randolph (1889-), president and general organizer of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Photo of early 1930s; original in Chicago Historical Society.





Above is the editorial office of *Crisis*, the magazine of the NAACP

*Messenger*, the U.N.I.A. provided them with offices in the Harlem building that it owned. (45) The U.N.I.A. attempted to be broadly encouraging to Afrikan ventures, even those of a socialist nature, so long as they were Afrikan-run and oriented.

Randolph's integrationism and ambition led him to break with the U.N.I.A. *It was not, we should emphasize, only a political struggle within Afrikan ranks alone.* The U.S. oppressor nation was also involved in the dispute. While Randolph and his fellow integrationists, totally impressed with the might of the U.S. Empire, never believed that national liberation could succeed, they feared that the growing mass agitation would antagonize settlers. To these neo-colonialists, settler "good-will" and patronage was more important than almost anything. Further, Randolph's immediate career as a would-be labor leader was threatened by Garveyism's hold on the Afrikan masses.

Randolph and his associates were fanatically determined to destroy Garvey and the U.N.I.A. at any cost. They pursued this end using any and every means. In their magazine, the *Messenger*, Garvey was sneeringly referred to as "monumental monkey" and "supreme Negro Jamaican jackass." Randolph's near-racist rhetoric reflected his assertion that Garvey was an "alien" West Indian and not a true "American Negro." National speaking tours with the NAACP for a "Garvey Must Go" campaign failed. (46)

In a telling move, Randolph — the supposed "socialist" — and his integrationist allies turned to the U.S. Empire for help. They openly encouraged the repression of the U.N.I.A. In early January 1923 this grouping became alarmed when the chief Government witness

against Garvey in his coming mail fraud trial was killed. This traitor, Rev. J.W. Easton of New Orleans, had formerly been a leader in the U.N.I.A., but had been ousted for embezzlement. The dying Easton had allegedly identified his assailants as two workers, a longshoreman and a painter, who were U.N.I.A. security cadre.

The anti-Garvey grouping was seized with fear that they themselves would be corrected for their treasonous collaboration with the State. On January 15, 1923, constituting themselves as a "Committee of Eight," they wrote to U.S. Attorney General Daugherty begging him to strike down the Afrikan nationalists without any delay. This historic letter is informative:

"Dear Sir;

(1) As the chief law enforcement officer of the nation, we wish to call your attention to a heretofore unconsidered menace to a harmonious race relations. There are in our midst certain Negro criminals and potential murderers, both foreign and American born, who are moved and actuated by intense hatred of the white race. These undesirables continually proclaim that all white people are enemies to the Negro. They have become so fanatical that they have threatened and attempted the death of their opponents...

"(2) The movement known as the Universal Negro Improvement Association has done much to stimulate the violent temper of this dangerous movement. Its President and moving spirit is one Marcus Garvey, an unscrupulous demagogue, who has ceaselessly and assiduously sought to spread among Negroes distrust and hatred of all white people.

\*\*\*\*\*

"(5) The U.N.I.A. is chiefly composed of the most primitive and ignorant element of West Indian and American Negroes...

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"(25) For the above reasons we advocate that the Attorney General use his full influence completely to disband and extirpate this vicious movement, and that he vigorously and speedily push the government's case against Marcus Garvey for using the mails to defraud...its future meetings should be carefully watched by officers of the law and infractions promptly and severely punished." (47)

The eight who signed this slavish appeal (Randolph dishonestly professed to know nothing about it) were:

Chandler Owen — Co-editor of the *Messenger* and Randolph's closest political associate  
William Pickens — Field Secretary of the NAACP  
Robert Bagnall — NAACP Director of Branches  
Robert Abbott — Publisher of the *Chicago Defender*  
Julia Coleman — "Hair-Vim" cosmetics company  
John Nail — Real estate broker  
George W. Harris — N.Y. City Councilman, editor of the newspaper *New York News*  
Harry Pace — Pace Phonograph Company

It is useful to examine this move. In practice it turned out that Randolph's grouping of moderate "socialists" — supposedly dedicated to overthrowing capitalism — were blocked with the liberal, pro-capitalist petit-bourgeois elements of the NAACP, and with the marginal Afrikan business interests who fed off the degradation of colonial oppression. *And that in practice all these elements looked upon the U.S. Empire as their ultimate protector — against their own people.*

While it was obviously true that Randolph was an agent of U.S. imperialism, it wasn't true that he was a simple tool just following orders, such as a police informer might be. To understand neo-colonialism we have to see that Randolph represented a certain class viewpoint — the viewpoint of a Munoz Marin in Puerto Rico or the young Mike Masaoka in the Japanese-American national minority. This is a viewpoint of the section of the petit-bourgeois that sees advancement and progress not from leaving the struggle, but from coopting it and using it as a bargaining tool in winning concessions from the Empire in return for loyal submission. It is only a seeming paradox that these activist petit-bourgeois elements encouraged — and needed — both democratic struggles and violent repression. They are the leaders that U.S. imperialism promotes to ensure that even Third-World protest and organization is ultimately loyal to it.

A. Philip Randolph's career makes us recall Cabral's warning that: *"imperialism is quite prepared to change both its men and its tactics in order to perpetuate itself...it will kill its own puppets when they no longer serve its purposes. If need be, it will even create a kind of socialism, which people may soon start calling 'neo-socialism.'"* (48)

Randolph became a leading advocate of all-Afrikan unionism and political organizations. He publicly

argued against integrated Civil Rights organizations, such as the NAACP, on the grounds that only Afrikans should decide how their struggle was conducted. But his goal was only to weld Afrikans together as a bloc so that he and his fellow pro-imperialist leaders could demand a price from the U.S. Empire in return for Afrikan submission. Randolph's integrationistic "socialism" was used to fill a void, to ideologically portray a far-off, glittering social vision to Afrikan workers that didn't relate to national liberation or breaking away from the U.S. Empire.

Randolph had been indoctrinated in Euro-American social-democracy and settler unionism. That is, he shared the Euro-American reformist view on how social betterment for Afrikans should take place. Randolph argued that Afrikans could be protected by unionism and Civil Rights if they carefully convinced settlers of their nonviolent submissiveness and their desire to be ruled by Euro-Americans. While the *Messenger* abused both communism and nationalism in print in the most vulgar and crude ways, towards A.F.L. President Samuel Gompers — who was a segregationist, an open advocate of white supremacy and a public spokesman of the doctrine of the "racial" inferiority of Afrikans — Randolph was never less than humble and praising. In 1924, when Gompers died, the *Messenger* excused him as a "diplomatically silent" friend. Randolph feared and hated the Garvey Movement, not because of its faults, but because of its virtues.

All this is made abundantly clear by Randolph's relationship to Gomer's successor, A.F.L. President

# STRIKE NOTICE

*To All Pullman Porters and Maids*

On account of the refusal of the Pullman Company to settle the dispute on Recognition of Wages and Rules governing Working Conditions with the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, a strike has been declared and shall be enforced on all Pullman Cars effective

**FRIDAY, JUNE 8th**  
12 O'clock Noon

For further information call Glendale 6373. You are requested to attend the meetings to be held each evening from 4 until 6 o'clock at 2382 18th street.

**BENNIE SMITH**  
Field Organizer

By Order of Strike Committee

BSCP strike notice, Detroit, June 7, 1928. Original in Chicago Historical Society.



William Green. Morehouse College Professor Brailsford Brazeal admitted in his laudatory 1946 book on the Porter's Union: "Randolph, although a socialist, had by this time convinced Green that pullman porters were anxious to demonstrate that the Negro would help to further the program of American workers through conventional channels. Randolph had condemned the Communists and their tactics in the *Messenger*...All this must have reaffirmed Green's convictions that here were the man and the organization that could serve as an instrument for rallying Negro workers under the hegemony of the Federation." (49)

Bayard Rustin, Randolph's leading disciple, has said of him: "...he realized that separatism, whether espoused by Marcus Garvey or latter day nationalists, is grounded in fantasy and myth despite its emotional appeal to an oppressed people...Black people, he realized, could never advanced without the good feelings and assistance of many whites." (50)

And now we can see the answer to the question that Dr. King raised.

There was only one A. Philip Randolph because U.S. imperialism only wanted one. Randolph was pushed forward and made a big leader by his Euro-American mentors. When we look at his magazine, the *Messenger*, during the years when it was fighting Garveyism, we see in issue after issue large "solidarity" advertisements paid for by the Euro-American radicals who ran the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers Union. Social-democratic settler labor was indirectly subsidizing Randolph to attack nationalism from within the Afrikan Nation — to be their agent and do what they from the outside could not. His whole career was similarly aided and arranged. Imperialism needed its own militant-sounding Afrikan leaders.

A. Philip Randolph's actual record as President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters is instructive. He



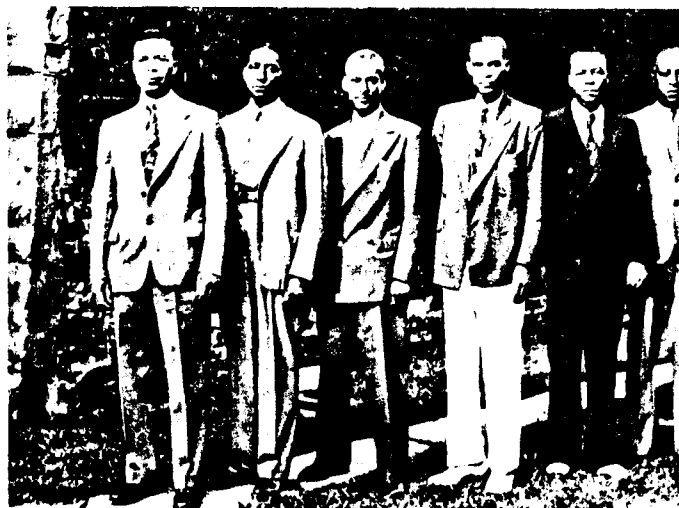
BSCP cartoon, *Messenger* (Oct.-Nov., 1925), 351.

and Chandler Owen were approached by a committee of porters, who were looking for an Afrikan intellectual who could help them to organize a union. The porters' previous attempts had been clumsy. Several efforts had been smashed by the company in a series of firings. Randolph took up the opportunity, and in 1925 the union was formed. The *Messenger* became the official journal of the Brotherhood.

In terms of leading labor struggles, Randolph was a peculiar "success." After years of difficult building, the new 7,000 member union had called for a coast-to-coast Pullman strike in 1928. A mood of tense anticipation was prevalent among the porters. Knowing that the settler train crews wouldn't honor their strike and would try to roll the trains anyway, large groups of Afrikan workers began ar-

ming themselves and preparing to take over the rail yards in Oakland and on the East Coast.

Randolph was upset, for he had never really intended to lead a strike. He had not prepared for one, and had told union associates that it was all a bluff. He felt certain that the Federal Mediation Board would step in and



arrange a negotiated settlement — just as they did for the Euro-Amerikan railroad Brotherhoods. As a precaution Randolph had even had a White House meeting with President Coolidge and told him of his secret hopes for a Government-sponsored settlement. But as the strike deadline neared, the Federal Government refused to intervene. The imperialists were unwilling to publicly admit that an Afrikan union could force a “national emergency.”

As a desperate hope, Randolph then went begging to A.F.L. President William Green. In a last-minute meeting he implored Green for A.F.L. support of the porters' strike, getting the settler railroads Brotherhoods to close down the trains. Green told him that: “The public isn't ready to accept a strike by Negroes.” He told Randolph to give up and call off the strike. Randolph sadly obeyed. On the eve of the first coast-to-coast strike of Afrikan railroad workers the word went out to go back to work, to offer no resistance to the companies.

Disillusioned and confused, the Afrikan porters left the union by the thousands. Two-thirds of the union's 7,000 members quit in the next few months. Randolph's only plan was for them to wait and wait until Euro-Amerikans decided to finally approve of them. Many porters were fired by the triumphant company, knowing that Randolph had left them defenseless. Dues slowed to a trickle, and even the *Messenger* stopped appearing. A. Philip Randolph had won acceptance from the A.F.L. leadership but the workers who had followed him paid the bill. And he had succeeded in defusing a potentially explosive struggle of Afrikan workers.

Randolph's vindication came with the New Deal, with the entry into State power of liberal Democratic Party politicians who understood him and why he was so useful. In 1937 the National Labor Relations Board ordered the Pullman Company to recognize the Brotherhood and give in to its main demands (during this same period, we should

note, Afrikan nationalists in the North who were trying to form unions independent from Euro-Amerikan unionism were subjected to both legal and police disruption.) Under the imperialist-ordered settlement porters' wages went up by 30%, while working hours were cut. Randolph was promoted as the very successful leader of an all-Afrikan union, who had gotten his members sizeable rewards in wages and working conditions.

His greatest hour of fame lay still ahead — the 1941 March On Washington Movement, when for one month Randolph was the most important Afrikan in the U.S. This was the event that ensured him a place as a national leader of Afrikans for the U.S. Empire. Instead of Booker T. Washington, an avowed “socialist” labor leader was now meeting and advising at the White House.

So a new, militant nationalism and a new, protest-oriented integrationism engaged in ideological struggle for leadership of the Afrikan masses. It was not, however, a symmetrical struggle or an equal one (struggle rarely is). The insurgent nationalism had the far greater share of popular support, particularly from the laboring masses. It was also true that Afrikan revolutionaries of that time had not yet developed successful strategies for liberation. The Civil Rights integrationists, however slim their own forces, had the powerful resources of the oppressor nation backing their play. The full range of forces, from the U.S. Department of Justice and the police to the foundations, the social-democrats and the settler trade unions, all worked in their various ways to promote the hegemony of a modernized, neo-colonial leadership allied to the U.S. Empire.

# STRIKE Postponed

*To All Pullman Porters and Maids*

**Strike - set for**  
**FRIDAY, JUNE 8th**  
12 O'clock Noon

**Has been Postponed this  
action taken upon advice of  
Wm. GREEN-PRESIDENT  
of the American Federation  
of Labor.**

**Who promises immediate  
Co-Operation.**

**BENNIE SMITH**  
*Field Organizer B. S. C. P.*

*By Order of Strike Committee*  
**A. PHILIP RANDOLPH and M. P. WEBSTER**

BSCP strike cancellation flyer, Detroit, June 8, 1928.  
Original in Chicago Historical Society.

## 5. World War II and “Americanization”

World War II marks a definite point at which national movements of the oppressed within the U.S. Empire were thrown back, and the growing hegemony of neo-colonial politics firmly established. At home this neo-colonialism took the well-prepared form of “Americanization” — of offering and forcing the colonially oppressed to assume supposed “citizenship” in the U.S. Empire in place of national liberation. Of course, while the “Americanization” of the European immigrants during the World War I period meant that they voluntarily became settlers and Euro-Americans, the “Americanization” of the colonially oppressed meant involuntary confinement as supposed “minorities” camped on the edges of settler society. This was the ultimate in Civil Rights.

The global war and the U.S. Empire’s expansion moved in a new stage in colonial relations. On the one hand, the liberal Roosevelt Administration had gone out of its way to try to convince Third-World peoples that the New Deal was their “friend” and protector. This was done in a manner by now very familiar to us.

New Deal Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes was an aggressive patron of Civil Rights. Ickes was, in fact, the former President of the Chicago NAACP chapter. He and Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, the President’s wife, arranged for Afrikan intellectuals and professionals to get Federal appointments. The practices of the “lynch-belt South” were sympathetically deplored. In the urban North welfare programs were opened up for Afrikans, and by 1934 some 52% — a majority — of the Afrikan refugee population in the North were on relief. (52) This act was smoothly performed. Pollster Samuel Lubell described how it looked to many petit-bourgeois Afrikans who supported the New Deal:

“To the younger Negroes the WPA and relief mean not only material aid but a guaranty that no longer must they work at any salary given them, that they are entitled — they emphasize the word — to a living wage. Through the WPA, Harlem’s Negroes have had opened to them white-collar opportunities which before had been shut, such as the music and art and writers’ projects. Negroes, too, remember that Mrs. Roosevelt visited Harlem personally, that President Roosevelt has appointed more Negroes to administrative positions...than any President before him. Each time Roosevelt makes such an appointment, the *Amsterdam News*, Harlem’s leading newspaper, headlines it in 72-point type. Every young Negro gets a vicarious thrill thinking, ‘There may be a chance up there for me.’ ” (53)

While the liberal Roosevelt Administration kept up a steady propaganda campaign throughout the 1930s and early 1940s, claiming to be “the best friend Negroes ever had,” the period was a time of savage attacks to destabilize the Afrikan Nation. There was a conspicuous de-industrialization of Afrikan employment, as they were pushed out of the main imperialist economy.

For awhile it appeared on the surface as though



*Two vigorous ladies acted as F.D.R.’s deputies in Negro affairs— Mary McLeod Bethune, a forthright educator who served in the “Black Cabinet,” and Eleanor Roosevelt*

Afrikans were simply victims of the Depression, suffering a heightened version of the commonly-shared joblessness. But by 1940 the voices of DuBois and others who pointed out a genocidal pattern were proven right. In 1940 and 1941 the Depression finally broke. The war in Europe in 1939 had brought new orders for steel, munitions, ships, trucks and other industrial products. Factories were adding shifts for the first time in years, and Euro-American unemployment was going down rapidly throughout the last half of 1940 and in 1941.

Afrikans were barred from the new production, however. Their industrial employment was going down as more and more new jobs opened up. Corporation after corporation issued public statements that their new plants would be 100% Euro-American. Led by Colt Firearms, Consolidated Aircraft, Chrysler Corporation, North American Aviation and similar industrial giants, Corporate Amerika openly was saying that patriotism required keeping Afrikans out. Imperialism itself well recognized the boundary between oppressor and oppressed nations. After the war began the Anaconda Company’s wire and steel division in New York ordered a bar on hiring laborers from enemy countries — “No Italians, Germans, or Negroes.” (54) Colonial Afrikans were untrustworthy from the viewpoint of imperialism.

The U.S. Government itself reflected this genocidal program once we go past the White House’s propaganda campaign. Between October 1940 and April 1941, the Afrikan percentage of those placed in factory jobs by the U.S. Employment Service dropped by over half, from a mere 5.4% down to only 2.5%. (55) The U.S. Navy instituted a new policy in its shipyards wherein all “Negro”

workers would have to wear an arm badge with a big letter "N." The Navy rejected an NAACP protest that the "N" badges were just like *"the labels used by the Nazis to designate Jews."* In May 1941 Chairman Arthur Altmeyer of the Social Security Board issued an official statement that the Board would continue to support white supremacy. (56)

The liberal, pro-imperialist Afrikan leadership were being pushed to the wall. They had urged Afrikans to remain loyal to the settler Empire and had increasingly little to show for it. While they had taken swift advantage of both repression and the internal contradictions of the nationalist movement to gain a political predominance over Afrikan communities, their top position was unsteady.

Many signs indicated that the nationalist political current was strong on the streets, at the grass-roots of the Nation. In 1933 the "Jobs For Negroes Movement" spread from Chicago to Harlem. Surprising as it may sound today, many of the community's jobs were held by Euro-Amerikans.\* In the retail stores (which were mostly Euro-Amerikan owned) all the sales clerks, cashiers, managers and secretaries were Euro-Amerikans. Even 75% of the bartenders in Harlem were settlers. Although all the customers were Afrikan and the stores were in the Afrikan community, even the most pathetic white-collar job was reserved for a Euro-Amerikan only. Particularly under the grim conditions of the Depression, many in the community had angrily pointed out this contradiction. (57)

A nationalist campaign sprung up around this issue in Harlem, led by a "street-corner agitator" named Sufi Abdul Hamd (sn Eugene Brown). The Sufi was a self-taught Pan-Afrikanist and a teacher of Eastern mystic philosophy. In retrospect it may appear unusual that such a lone political figure could play such an important role, but this only underscores the tremendous leadership vacuum that existed. Together with a core of unemployed college students the Sufi had recruited, he organized the picketing and illegal boycotts of Harlem stores. The campaign continued for five years, with merchant after merchant having to compromise and hire Afrikans.

During these years the "Jobs for Negroes Movement" was illegal, subjected to court injunctions and arrests, as well as the opposition of both the liberal Civil Rights leadership (NAACP, Urban League, Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., etc.) and the CIO and CPUSA. (58) For years only the small, grass-roots nationalist groups fought for more jobs in a jobless community. While both the CPUSA and the Harlem churches started "Jobs" committees, these carefully obeyed the law and did nothing except try to divert support from the nationalist struggle.

In March 1935 the smoldering anger over the genocidal pressures squeezing Afrikan life burst out in a spontaneous uprising. The early "Harlem Riot" saw tens of thousands of Afrikans taking over the streets for 3 days, attacking police and liberating the contents of stores. The liberal, pro-imperialist leadership were helpless and ignored by the people. Indeed, afterwards the Euro-

Amerikan capitalists and politicians bitterly castigated their Afrikan allies for having failed to control the masses. Everyone agreed that the popular response to the nationalists' "Jobs for Negroes" campaign was an important factor in the uprising.

The *New York Times*, in their obituary on Sufi Abdul Hamd, in 1938, gave hostile acknowledgement\*:

*"The death of the Sufi ended a career that had affected Harlem more deeply than that of any other cult leader...Sufi put his followers on the picket line with placards saying 'Buy Where You Can Work,' in front of stores whose proprietors he accused of refusing to hire Negro help. He reached the height of his power in the Winter of 1934-35 and his picket lines were a sore trial to Harlem merchants. The tension that resulted from this, combined with other causes of friction, resulted in the fatal Harlem race riots of March 1936."* (59)

Imperialism's response was to help their hand-picked Afrikan civil rights leaders take over the issue, with a big propaganda campaign picturing the liberal integrationists as the "militant leaders" who had supposedly won new jobs for jobless Afrikans. In 1938 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled the "Jobs" boycotts finally legal. At this a big-name, integrationist coalition took over the "Jobs for Negroes" struggle in Harlem. The YMCA, the Urban League, the major Protestant denominations, the CIO, the CPUSA all joined to support the new leadership of the Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. over the campaign. (60) Newspaper headlines and joyous victory celebrations greeted the wave of unprecedented agreements between Powell's coalition and business. It appeared as though pro-imperialist integrationism was the key to bringing economic improvement to Harlem.

What was absolutely true was that while concessions were gained, Afrikans were being fronted off. An example was the "historic" 1938 pact between Powell's coalition and the Uptown Chamber of Commerce, which was hailed in newspaper headlines. *"Harlem Compact Gives Negroes Third of Jobs in Stores There."* But in the fine print there were no specific number of jobs promised. In return for agreeing to end all protests and boycotts, the coalition got a promise that Afrikans would eventually be hired for only one-third of the clerical jobs only in the Harlem stores — and even there only as replacements whenever Euro-Amerikan employees quit.

In a joint statement, Rev. Powell and Col. Philipp of the Chamber of Commerce said. "The settlement reached today is historic. It is the first agreement of its kind...and will help quiet unrest in Harlem because it is

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\*It's interesting that virtually all histories that mention the "Jobs" Movement credit its leadership solely to Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., who for its first five years was a vocal opponent of its illegal boycotts. The nationalist role is never mentioned. This is even true of most historical accounts written by Afrikans (the contemporary account by Claude McKay is a notable exception). As late as 1941 the nationalists were still the cutting edge of the struggle.

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\*This was before desegregation, while Afrikans still did their shopping, dining out, etc. in their own community.



proof that white business leaders have a sympathetic interest in the economic problems of the colored race." Even more to the point the *N.Y. Times* said that the pact was reached because of "fear of racial uprisings." (61) So whatever jobs were gained were really won by the Afrikan masses in violent uprising — and by the grass-roots nationalism which alone spoke to their needs and interests.

The tamed and carefully-controlled "Jobs" campaign was used to picture Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. and other pro-imperialist leaders as "militants," as leaders who really fought the "white power structure" and won all kinds of things for Afrikans. In 1941 Powell won a seat on the N.Y. City Council. His campaign was supported by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, the Republican Party and the radical American Labor Party. (Powell was a prominent member of this radical settler party.) In 1944 he became a U.S. Congressman, where he achieved national fame for leading a fight to desegregate Congressional facilities. In the press he was named "Mr. Civil Rights."

There were small concessions and cosmetic victories, but there was still no change in the basic situation. Afrikans were still being driven off the land, out of the industrial economy. Their Nation was being de-stabilized. In 1938 the great, spontaneous movement over the Italo-Ethiopian War swept the dispersed Afrikan Nation. Nationalist politics again revived in the Afrikan mainstream. Walter White, head of the NAACP, wrote of 1941: "Discontent and bitterness were growing like wildfire among Negroes all over the Country." (62)

## The March On Washington Movement

In this situation, their backs against the wall, the integrationist leadership was forced to put pressure on their imperialist masters. The A. Philip Randolphs and the Roy Wilkins desperately needed some real concessions that they could take back to their community. They also saw that it was in a long-range sense in imperialism's own interest to make concessions, to ease up, to give Afrikan neo-colonial leadership a stronger hand against revolutionary sentiments. It was out of this crisis that the March On Washington Movement was born.

In early 1941 A. Philip Randolph, together with Walter White of the NAACP, called for a massive Afrikan demonstration in Washington, D.C. The goal was to force the New Deal to integrate the military, and to open up jobs in defense industry and federal agencies. Randolph said: "Black people will not get justice until the administration leaders in Washington see masses of Negroes — ten, twenty, fifty thousands — on the White House lawn." This was to be the first Afrikan mass march on the Empire's capitol. It was a confrontation between imperialism and its own Afrikan allies.

**The March On Washington Movement issued a "Call to Negro America to march on Washington for jobs and equal participation in a national defense on July 1, 1941":**

*"Dear fellow Negro Americans, be not dismayed in these terrible times. You possess power, great power. 121*

*Our problem is to hitch it up for action on the broadest, daring and most gigantic scale...shake up White America."*

President Roosevelt ignored the M.O.W. demands. By June of 1941 there were strong signs that masses of Afrikans were preparing to come. Churches were chartering fleets of buses. Worried, the President's wife and Mayor LaGuardia met with Randolph in New York City, urging him to cancel the March. Mrs. Roosevelt told Randolph that there might be repression if the March took place. Besides, she said, "Such a march is impractical. You say you will be able to get 25,000 or more Negroes to come to Washington. Where will they stay, where will they eat?" Washington of 1941 was a Southern city, rigidly Jim Crow, with virtually no public facilities for "colored."

Mrs. Roosevelt had laid down one threat; Randolph politely answered with another: "Why, they'll stay in the hotels and eat in the restaurants." Randolph was threatening a massive breaking of the Color Bar, crowds of Afrikans pushing into "white" areas all over the capital — and the resultant "race riots" as thousands of Afrikans and settler police clashed! The stakes were high, and the integrationist leaders were preparing to have an open confrontation. That alone should tell us how critical their situation was. The very next day the White House invited the M.O.W. leaders to come for negotiations on cancelling the March.

Randolph and Walter White met with President Roosevelt, who had brought in William Knudson, Chairman of General Motors, and Sidney Hillman of the CIO. The M.O.W. leaders rejected the offer of the usual study commission. Finally, on June 24, 1941, the White House offered to meet Randolph's demands on employment. The next day Roosevelt signed Executive Order No. 8802, which for the first time ordered: "...there shall be no discrimination in the employment of workers in defense industries or Government..." For the first time a Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) was set up to pretend to do something about job discrimination. Randolph called the March off in a network radio address.

The threat of touching off the Afrikan masses had produced a surprising turn-about in public imperialist policy. The breakthrough was credited to Randolph, who became Amerika's officially-endorsed protest leader. He was showered with awards. The *Amsterdam News* said: "A. Philip Randolph, courageous champion of the rights of his people, takes the helm as the nation's No. 1 Negro leader...already he is being ranked with the great Frederick Douglass." (64)

As we know from the 1960s, these official promises of themselves mean very little in the way of real change. The gathering pressure from the masses below, the still unorganized militant nationalist sentiment building among the grass-roots, had crowded, pushed on U.S. imperialism. A nodal point was being reached. Notice was taken that Afrikans were not willing to be passively starved. Further, U.S. imperialism understood the meaning of the startling fact that even their chosen Afrikan allies could not shrug off the pressure from the Afrikan people on the streets, but had to either lead them into struggle or be left behind. Imperialism's contradiction was that it had to both

strike down the Afrikan Nation — and also grant sufficient concessions to the Afrikan masses in order to stave off rebellion.

We must remember that there was a strong, rising tide of Afrikan struggle. The armed sharecropper outbreaks on the National Territory, the violent uprising that took over Harlem for three days, the mass anger that finally forced even imperialism's loyal Afrikan allies to make threats against it, all were convincing signs of even larger rebellion soon to come. Locked into a "rule-or-ruin" global war, could the U.S. Empire afford to also divert troops and energy to fight major colonial wars at home? This was the heat that finally bent even the iron rule of Empire.

## The Need for Colonial Labor

This contradiction was resolved through the specific form of "Americanization" imperialism enforced on Afrikans. The genocidal campaign to change the population balance and repressively disrupt the Afrikan South would continue without letup — but the pill would be sugar-coated. In Northern exile Afrikans could suddenly get not only "democracy" but "integration" into middle-wage jobs in industrial production.

The New Deal's willingness to "integrate" imperialist industry was a 180°-degree turn-about from previously existing policy, and was also a tardy recognition that the unprecedented demands of waging a global war required the recruitment of colonial labor on a vast scale.

These jobs were no "gift" from White Amerika, but a necessity forced upon it both by threat of revolt and by the urgent needs of world conquest.

The transformation was dramatic. Robert C. Weaver, one of Roosevelt's "Black Cabinet," wrote that the various rules that kept Afrikans out of industry were changed because: "...after Pearl Harbor they were too costly — too costly for a nation at war to afford." (65) He noted further:

"This occupational pattern was slowly changing by 1942. While the majority of new colored workers were entering unskilled and janitorial jobs, other Negroes were slowly finding jobs as welders, as riveters, and on other production operations...Negroes replaced white workers who formerly were employed as cooks, waiters, garage attendants...and who now entered defense work." (66)

Between 1942 and 1944 the percentage of industrial labor that was Afrikan tripled from 2.5% to 8%. By 1944 the numbers of Afrikan skilled craftsmen had suddenly doubled, as had the numbers of Afrikans in Federal civil service jobs. By 1945 the numbers of Afrikans in the AFL and CIO unions had gone up some 600%, to 1.25 million. As Afrikan families left sharecropping and day labor in the rural South and were forced up North, their incomes rose. Even the lowliest factory job in Detroit or Chicago paid better than the rural plantation. **The real average incomes of Afrikan workers rose by 73% during 1939-1947, the largest gain in Afrikan income since the end of slavery.** (67)

This was the material basis in mass life for neo-colonial "Americanization." This sudden windfall of

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## ROOSEVELT DEMANDS 'MORE CERTAIN JUSTICE' TO HALT 'COLLECTIVE MURDER' BY LYNCH LAW

### FIRST WITNESSES FOR BOYKIN, M'RAE TAKE STAND TODAY

Trial of Libel Suits Launched After Three Week Arguments Over Legal Questions.

ART YOUNG EXHIBITS EXCLUDED BY JUDGE

McRae's Denial Up-held; Deposition Dashed With Alleged Brother Taking Admitted.

### Liquor Licensing Law Is Voted for Augusta

Federal Government Moves on Force for Concerted Drive on Post-School Bootlegging.

City Council Passes Ordinance "Legalizing" Alcoholic Beverages in Face of State Law.

### BILLION OFFERED IN U. S. SECURITIES TO AID FINANCING

Mortgage Certificates of Indebtedness Will Be Accepted in Exchange for New Issues.

### Lindberghs Hailed at Natal, Brazil, After Hop Across Ocean From Africa

Chief Executive Tells Church Council Mob Brutality Never Can Be Condoned, But Urges Swift Legal Action.

### PRESIDENT SEES PERIOD OF GAIN FOR ALL CLASSES

Challenge Hurdled at "Pagan Ethic"


Period of Great Material Prosperity Is Predicted for All Instead of for Only Privileged Few.

### M'CUTCHEON WINS 2ND WARD POSITION

Former Councilman Re-elected Over Opponent by Vote of 1,091 to 1,214

### PRESIDENT CUTS AAA CODE POWER

Farm Negotiations Shifted to New Basis



This photo shows an aerial view of the Lindberghs, landed in the center.

“white man’s wages” was for some a convincing argument that loyalty to the U.S. Empire made sense. It allowed A. Philip Randolph and Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. to “prove” that their leadership paid off in cash — and that imperialist World War was “good” for Afrikans. *And, of course, this process once again reinforced the neo-colonial ideology in which Third-World people are told that they must look to the Federal Government in Washington as their ultimate “friend” and protector.* Roosevelt just replaced Lincoln on the altar. The process sugar-coated the forced exodus from the Afrikan South, and even allowed pro-imperialist propaganda to assert that the depopulation of the Afrikan Nation was a “benefit” to Afrikans.

This “integration” into the main industrial economy, however dramatic its effects, only directly reached a minority of the nationally oppressed. For the first time, however, some significant number of colonial workers could struggle for the “American” lifestyle, with houses, automobiles, appliances, consumer items, college education for the children, and so on. Again, this was a semi-European standard of living — a miniaturized version of that of Euro-Afrikans, but materially well above that of other colonial peoples in Latin Amerika, Asia and Afrika. Imperialism cared little that most of the nationally oppressed here did not have those middle-wage jobs or the new petit-bourgeois positions opened up by token integration. What was important to imperialism was that these inviting possibilities for some created ideological confusion, pro-imperialist tendencies, and social disunity. They also were a magnet to draw people to the Northern industrial centers and out of the National Territory.

## The Dislocation of Imperialist War

**Amerika’s colonies were forced to bear a heavy — and often disproportionate — share of the human cost of World War II. This was no accident. The Roosevelt Administration promoted this “Americanization” of the nationally oppressed, pushing and pulling as many Puerto Ricans, Indians, Asians, Chicano-Mexicanos, and Afrikans as possible to become involved in the U.S. war effort. Not only because we were needed as cannon fodder and war industry labor, but because mass participation in the war disrupted our communities and encouraged pro-imperialist loyalties.**

Close to a million Afrikans alone served in the U.S. military during the 1940s. When we think about what it would have meant to subtract a million soldiers, sailors, and airmen from the Empire’s global efforts we can see how important colonial troops were. In many Third-World communities the war burdens were very disproportionate. The Chinese community in New York, being so heavily unmarried men due to immigration laws, saw 40% of its total population drafted into the military.(68) In colonial Puerto Rico the imperialist draft drained the island; many did not return. One Puerto Rican writer recalls of his small town:

“I saw many bodies of young Puerto Ricans in coffins covered with the American flag. They were brought

in by military vehicles and placed in living rooms where they were mourned and viewed. The mournings never ceased in Salsipuedes! Almost every day I was awakened by the moans and wails of widows, parents, grandparents, and orphans whose loved one had died ‘defending their country.’ ” (69)

The same was true in the Chicano-Mexicano Southwest. Acuna notes that: “The percentage of Chicanos who served in the armed forces was disproportionate to the percentage of Chicanos in the general population.” He further notes: “*Chicanos, however, can readily remember how families proudly displayed banners with blue stars (each blue star representing a family member in the armed forces). Many families had as many as eight stars, with fathers, sons, and uncles all serving the U.S. war effort. Everyone recalls the absence of men between the ages of 17 through 30 in the barrios. As the war progressed, gold stars replaced the blue (gold representing men killed in action,), giving the barrios the appearance of a sea of death.*” (70)

Third-World people were told, in effect, that if they helped the U.S. Empire win its greatest war, then at long last they too would get a share of the “democracy” as a reward. In every oppressed nation and national minority, many elements mobilized to push this deal. We should note that those political forces most opposed to this ideological “Americanization” were driven under or rendered ineffective by severe repression.

Civil Rights leaders fell all over themselves in urging their people to go kill and die for the U.S. Empire. The rhetorical contortions were amazing. A. Philip Randolph, the supposed socialist, said that Afrikans should enlist in the admittedly unjust war in order to reform it! He admitted that: “This is not a war for freedom...It is a war between the imperialism of Fascism and Nazism and the imperialism of monopoly capitalistic democracy.” But, he told Afrikan workers, by getting an integrated war effort “the people can make it a peoples’ revolution.” (71) An avowed pacifist and advocate of total Afrikan nonviolence in the U.S., Randolph nevertheless said that it was right for Afrikans to fight in Asia and Europe.

Following the same “Two Front War” thesis, Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. enthusiastically agreed that the Japanese attack on “our” base at Pearl Harbor forced Afrikans to fight — so long as the Government was going to give them integration:

“On December 7, 1941, America for the first time in its history entered upon two wars simultaneously. One was a world war and the other a civil war. One was to be a bloody fight for the preservation and extension of democracy on a world basis — the other a bloodless revolution within these shores against a bastard democracy.

“The sneak attack of the Japanese upon our mid-Pacific base was no more vicious than the open attacks that had been waged consistently for four hundred years against the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.” (72)

Taking part in the imperialist war was praised as patriotic — not only to the U.S. but to “the race.” By

Asians or Chicano-Mexicanos or Afrikans serving in the U.S. military we were supposedly helping our peoples "earn" full citizenship rights by "proving" our loyalty to Amerika. So the war period saw strange contradictions.

Perhaps the sharpest irony of the "win your freedom" game was that of Japanese-Amerikans. We were drafted right out of the U.S. concentration camps and told that our willingness to fight for U.S. imperialism would show whether or not our people were "disloyal." The all-Japanese military unit, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, was used by the U.S. Army as disposable shock troops to be thrown into every bloody situation in Europe. The 442nd had over 9,000 Purple Hearts awarded for a 3,000-soldier unit.

Ordered to break through and rescue the "Lost Battalion" of Texas National Guard settlers cut off and surrounded by the German Army in France, the 442nd took more casualties than the number of settler G.I.s saved. One Nisei sergeant remembers how K Company of the 442nd *"went in with 187 men and when we got to the Texans, there were 17 of us left. I was in command, because all the officers were gone. But I Company was down to 8 men."*(73)

The political effects of the war were not simple. It definitely marked the end of one period and the start of another. The Depression had been replaced by the fruits of military victory — high employment fueled by new world markets and U.S. international supremacy. The massive dislocation of the war, coming after the harsh repression of the 1930's and the war period itself, and the jet-propelled rise of neo-colonial "citizenship" had definitely side-tracked many people. Acuna writes of the Chicano-Mexicano movement:

*"...much of the momentum of the movement of the 1930's was lost. Many Chicano leaders entered the armed forces; many were killed; others, when they returned, were frankly tired of crusades...Understandably, during the war and when they returned, many Chicano veterans were proud of their records. They believed that they were entitled to all the benefits and rights of U.S. citizenship. A sort of euphoria settled among many Chicanos, with only a few realizing that the community had to reorganize...Many Chicanos believed the propaganda emanating from World War II about brotherhood and democracy in the United States. They thought that they had won their rights as U.S. citizens. For a time, the G.I. Bill of Rights lulled many Chicanos into complacency, with many taking advantage of education and housing benefits...*

*"Many Chicanos, because of their involvement in the armed forces, realized that they would never return to Mexico.. Many also became superpatriots who did not want to be identified with the collective community. In the urban barrio, many parents, remembering their own tribulations, taught their children only English. Middle-class organizations and, for that matter, civic organizations became increasingly integrationist in the face of the Red-baiting of the 1950's."*(74)

The neo-colonial pacification that came out of the WWII years was not a calm, but the stillness that came after devastation. We must remember how, once again, in

the Deep South returning Afrikan G.I.s were singled out for assassination by the KKK. In the Chicano-Mexicano Southwest the Empire conducted a genocidal mass deportation drive of unequaled severity. Even the savage immigration raids and deportations of the New Deal were outdone by the new imperialist offensive after WWII.

Believing that the war-time labor shortage had permitted "too many" Chicano-Mexicanos to live inside the occupied territories, the Empire started a gigantic military campaign to partially depopulate and terrorize the Southwest. Under the cover of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Immigration and Nationality Act, a reign of armed terror descended upon the Chicano-Mexicano communities. This was CIA population regroupment strategy in textbook form.

Command of the campaign was held by INS Commissioner Lt. General Joseph Swing (an open racist and a veteran of Gen. Pershing's U.S. expedition into Mexico in 1916). Swing organized a series of barrio sweeps, with pedestrians stopped and homes broken into; often without hearing or any bourgeois legal formalities, the selected Mexicanos would be taken at gunpoint to trains and deported. Homes were broken up and communities terrorized. Some with valid residency papers and U.S. "citizenship" were deported. Others, suspected of being revolutionaries, were arrested for "immigration" offenses. Virtually all the militant Chicano-Mexicano labor activists were victims of this campaign.

The overall numbers are staggering. In 1953 Swing's para-military units deported 875,000 Mexicanos. In 1954 the number seized and deported was 1,035,282 — more than were deported throughout the 1930s. Even in 1955 and 1956, after the main job was done, 256,000 and 90,000 Mexicanos respectively were deported. How masive this was can be seen from the fact that in 1941 an estimated 2.7 million Chicano-Mexicanos lived in the U.S.-occupied territories, while the 1953-56 population regroupment drive uprooted and deported 2.2 million Chicano-Mexicanos. This was the fruit of "The War for Democracy."

The Chinese community, which had been largely spared during WWII, was the target of a new repressive campaign. The U.S. Empire had discovered that the imperialist contradictions of World War had helped communism and national liberation advance. Long sought-after China had stood up and brushed off the clutching hands of U.S. imperialism. In 1945 over 50,000 U.S. Marines landed in China to take over Peking, the Kailan coal mines and the North China railroad lines. By 1946 there were over 120,000 G.I.s in China, backing up the reactionary Kuomintang armies. The Red Army and the Chinese people swept these forces away.

During the war years the Empire had professed friendship towards the Chinese community, since China itself was an Allied nation in the war against Japan. Now the situation reversed itself: Japan was the new U.S. "junior partner" in Asia, while Communist China was hated and feared by imperialism. The FBI and INS moved against the Chinese community, breaking up patriotic and class organizations.



The main patriotic mass organization of the 1930s and 1940s, the Chinese Hand Laundry Association, was destroyed. The popular China Youth Club, which had fought gambling, drugs and sexism by introducing a modern community life, was forcibly dissolved as a "communist front." *China Daily News*, which had been the leading patriotic newspaper, lost most of its advertising and readers. In a frameup, the newspaper's manager was imprisoned under the Federal "Trading With the Enemy Act" because the newspaper had accepted an advertisement from the Bank of China. **The supposedly "silent" Chinese community had actually been a stronghold of activity for national liberation and socialism — and was silenced.** (75)

### Imperialist Civil Rights

It is also true that this genocidal campaign illustrated how well neo-colonial "Americanization" served

imperialism. Once, in the early years of the century, oppressed Mexican and Japanese workers shared the hardships of the fields, and naturally shared labor organizing drives. In the abortive 1915 Texas uprising to establish a Chicano-Mexicano Nation, Japanese were recognized as not only allies but as citizens of the to-be-liberated nation. But by the 1950's this had changed. Civil Rights had replaced the unity of the oppressed.

The Japanese-American national minority had been politically broken by the repression of World War II. Uprooted and recombined into scattered concentration camps, we had faced an intense physical and psychological terrorism. The resistance and defiance, even while in the hands of the enemy, was considerable. Many of the camp inmates refused to sign U.S. loyalty oaths. Demonstrations took place behind barbed wire. Some 10% were under even harsher incarceration at the Tule Lake Camp for dissidents

and resisters. But this popular current of resistance had no strategic direction to advance along.

The main dissenting political views had been crushed. Some Japanese rejected U.S. "citizenship" and the oppressor nation that had imprisoned them, but sought their identity by looking backwards towards the Japanese Empire. Clandestine pro-Imperial groups and propaganda flourished. Claims of U.S. military advances were denied and the day of Japanese Imperial victory eagerly looked forward to. The unconditional Japanese surrender in 1945, plus the news of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, made a vain hope out of this perspective.

The other major dissenting view was communism. A number of young Japanese college students and union activists had joined the CPUSA during the 1930's. Japanese-American communists had been very active in CIO organizing drives in the fish canneries, in opposing the Imperial invasion of China, and in rallying people to fight anti-Asian oppression. All this had been smashed on Dec. 7, 1941, when Pearl Harbor happened. In a panic to assure their fellow Euro-Americans that the CPUSA was loyally "American," this revisionist party came out in *full support of the government's concentration camp program for Japanese-Americans*. Even further, the CPUSA ordered its Japanese-American members to rally the community for its own imprisonment — *and then publicly expelled all its Japanese-American members to show White Amerika that even the "Communists" were against the "Japs."* Communism was completely discredited for an entire generation inside the Japanese-American community.

Leadership of the community was left completely in the hands of the pro-imperialist Japanese-American Citizens League (JACL), which for forty years has been the main civil rights organization. The JACL, in the name of those who suffered in the concentration camps, publicly called for and lobbied for the passage of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Immigration & Nationality Act. This was in the best tradition of "Americanization," and, for that matter, of Civil Rights.

In 1952 A. Philip Randolph was saying that civil rights meant that Afrikans should go to Korea and help U.S. imperialism kill Asians — provided that the Empire gave them equal wages. In the same way, in 1952 the JACL was saying that so long as Japanese-Americans got some benefits from it, white supremacist de-population of the Chicano-Mexicano communities was fine. This is the sewer philosophy of "I've Got Mine."

Having mutilated themselves to fit into Babylon, the JACL is even quite proud of what they did. U.S. Senator Pat McCarran (D-Nevada) was a white supremacist, and a known Mexican-hater. He devised his new immigration law to genocidally cut down Third-World population in general (and Chicano-Mexicanos in specific). He warned White Amerika that unless they restricted Third-World population "we will, in the course of a generation or so, change the ethnic and cultural composition of this nation." In his crusade for settler purity he joined forces with Congressman Francis Walter, the Chairman of the rabid House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). (76)

Congressman Walter was, of course, a fanatical anti-Communist. Led by Mike Masaoka, the JACL developed a close relationship to Congressman Walter. In any case, JACL leader Bill Hosokawa called Walter "*a strong friend of the JACL*". The JACL eventually gave Walter a special award. Walter and McCarran added clauses in their repressive legislation giving some concessions to Asians — primarily ending the 1924 Oriental Exclusion Act — which made it possible for non-citizen Japanese to become U.S. citizens. With this the JACL was glad to help sponsor this vicious legislation and give cover to the reactionary wing of U.S. imperialism. Hosokawa, who has been a senior editor for the *Denver Post*, writes that the final passage of this repressive law was "*a supreme triumph*" of the JACL. (77) Two million Mexicano men, women, and children, victims of "Migra" terror raids, saw very well whose "triumph" that was.

That's why the shallow rhetoric that says all Third-World people automatically "unite against racism" is dangerously untrue. Pro-imperialist Civil Rights is a pawn in the crimes of the Empire against the oppressed nations. The example of the JACL was just the opening wedge of a strategic process in which the Empire was promoting Asians as a "buffer" between settlers and the oppressed nations. We can see this in daily life, by the numbers of Asian professionals and small retailers entering the inner city. This process began, however, with Japanese-Americans in the years right after World War II.

## A Pause and a Beginning

It may have appeared to some in those years that the U.S. Empire had consolidated its Fortress Amerika, that it had won "a supreme triumph." But the streams of national consciousness ran deep within the colonial masses. If the Adam Clayton Powells and the Roy Wilkins' occupied the public mainstream of Afrikan politics, we can see that nationalism was only forced down out of sight. It still lived in the grass-roots and continued to develop. This pause was historically necessary, since anti-colonial struggles and leaders of the 1920s and 1930s had many strengths, but did not yet have programs for liberation that could successfully lead the masses. Now we can see that this was a stage in development, in opening up new doors. And so we can also see literally everywhere we choose to look, the "seeds beneath the snow."

An Afrikan G.I. named Robert Williams went home from Asia to Monroe, North Carolina, having learned something about self-defense and world politics. In Los Angeles in the early '40's Chicano teenagers formed the *Pachuco* youth sub-culture, flaunting "Zoot suits" and openly rejecting Euro-American culture. Chicano-Mexicano historians now see the defiant *Pachuco* movement as "the first large current within the Chicano movement towards separatism." An Afrikan ex-convict and draft resister was building the "Nation of the Lost-Found." The revolutionary explosions of the 1960s had their seeds, in countless ways, in the submerged but not lost gains and developments of the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s.