



ON  
THE  
NEGRO  
QUESTION

BY :

DAVID GOOLIDGE

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## TOWARD POLITICAL WORK AMONG NEGROES

(The following article is intended to be a basis for a discussion of the political approach to the problems which the Negro people face in the United States. It attempts to elucidate several important aspects of the "Negro Question" and prepare the way for the adoption of a definitive position by the organization at a subsequent convention. The opinions and analysis are those of the author and may or may not be shared by others. It is hoped that members will participate in the discussion by submitting articles for future bulletins.)

### I. The General Problem Stated.

1. The Negro people occupy a unique place in the social order in the United States. They are the only "racial" group which lives under discrimination. Proscription exists as a matter of national policy and practice. They are the only "racial" group in the United States which is socially, politically and economically segregated by state and municipal legislation.
2. This discrimination against the Negro occurs despite a federal constitution which "forbids" such discrimination. The Negro is denied the citizenship equality to which he is entitled as a citizen along with citizens of other "races."
3. This denial extends throughout the country. In no section does the Negro possess economic, political and social equality with other racial groups and citizens. Discrimination and exclusion manifests itself in any and all ramifications of daily life: political, economic, social and civic.
4. This applies to Negroes as a group and is nationwide. It is not a local or sectional phenomenon: in all fundamentals the North cannot be separated from the South. The fact that existence for the Negro in the North is more bearable than in the South does not change the fact that jim-crow is a national phenomenon.
5. This policy is applied to Negroes as a whole and is not confined to the poorest, the ignorant or the anti-social among Negroes. It is applied irrespective of cultural, social or economic status.

### II. The Negro As An Oppressed Race.

6. It is this group disability that makes of the Negro an "oppressed race." The suppression of civil liberties, the denial of democratic rights, the confinement of the Negro to the lowest brackets in the economic scale, and the withholding of cultural and educational advantages to the "race" as a group, is the correct sense to speak of the Negro as an "oppressed race."
7. It does not follow however that the Negro group is economically, politically and socially homogeneous. All Negroes are not oppressed to the same extent, nor are the reactions to the oppression the same among all Negroes. There are gradations among Negroes in economic level, cultural standing and intellectual.

attainment. These differences produce class distinctions and variegated reactions that can correctly be called class reactions. Negroes do not think alike or act alike. They do not march together nor strike together.

8. This situation is often puzzling and confusing to Negroes themselves. One hears the eternal cry: "Negroes must unite," "Negroes should get together," "Negroes fight too much among themselves." There is an old story repeated over and over by Negroes in which a white man is made to say that "if you will come with me I will show you a wonder." The person invited goes along and is shown a large group of Negroes pulling together on a rope tied about a large tree that is being slowly pulled from the earth. Booker Washington was responsible for the story that Negroes were like a barrell of crabs. He said that if you observed a barrel of crabs you would notice that as soon as one crab got to the top of the barrel and was about to escape to freedom, the other crabs would lay hold on him and pull him back into the barrel.

9. All of these stories and slogans are based on the assumption that the Negro "race" is or ought to be homogeneous. The assumption of course is false from every point of view. Due to conscious or unconscious ideological heterogeneity - despite his oppression- Negroes do not react and respond to these slogans as they are expected to. There is no "race" opinion, or a clearly delineated "race" community of interest. There are points at which greater cooperation and cohesion should appear in the struggle against jim-crow. But the intrusion of class differences and interests continuously enter to thwart such cooperation.

10. I am spending so much time on this point because it is important. Failure to comprehend this is the source of a great many incorrect judgments, much confusion and waste of time in doing "Negro work." We will develop the point further in another connection.

11. With the above reservations and restrictions we can now proceed to further examination of the meaning of the struggle of the Negro for liberation, for his democratic rights. This means to carry on a struggle against jim-crow, discrimination, disfranchisement and segregation. It is the struggle of an oppressed race (with the explanation cited above.) to bring itself up to the level of other groups and races. This is a struggle to escape the status of second class citizenship, to deliver oneself from a special and peculiar semi-slave category. It is a struggle to cast off all economic, social and political disabilities to which other racial groups, as such, are not subjected.

#### The Mass Struggle For Democratic Rights.

12. The Party must participate in the struggle with its full strength and resources. This means active participation in the work of all organizations genuinely engaged in this task and which have a following among the Negro masses. It would include such organizations as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP),

the Urban League, the March on Washington movement and local organizations and committees. The Party must support the NAACP in its fights for civil rights for Negroes, the Urban League in its efforts to improve the economic standing of Negroes and the incipient militancy of such a movement as the MOW.

13. It is necessary to emphasize the importance of the movements listed above. They have in their membership and among their supporters perhaps a million Negroes, proletarians, middle class Negroes and a few near-bourgeois Negroes. These movements also have in their membership the real Negro intellectuals. (Few Party members have ever seen or met any of the real Negro intellectuals.)

14. The struggle of the Negro for democratic rights must not be confused with the general struggle of the working class to preserve its democratic rights. At times there is a conjuncture of the two struggles and in a certain theoretical sense the Negro struggle cannot be separated from the general struggle. However as explained above the fight for democratic rights for the Negro can be correctly viewed as a unique struggle within its own "laws" so to speak and *raison d'être*. It must not therefore be subsumed under the democratic struggles of the white workers or dissolved in the revolutionary struggle.

15. Three serious mistakes have been made in this matter. There is the reformist error which makes the struggle for democratic rights in bourgeois democracy the only struggle, and the totality of one's aims. Secondly there is the other type of reformism, social reformism, which takes the position that no special forms of struggle are indicated in the case of the Negro, that the transformation from capitalism to socialism will solve the problem. This position ignores the painful fact that mens' "minds" are not changed overnight and that the struggle against race prejudice would not end instantly with the overthrow of capitalism. The third mistake is the assumption of, what for lack of a better name will be called, Negro Particularism or Negro Exceptionalism. (I do not use the expression "Negro Nationalism" to describe the phenomenon that I have in mind for the reason that I want to reserve Negro Nationalism to describe movements that are separatist, politically and geographically.) By Negro Particularism I mean the advocacy of separatist tendencies within the framework of bourgeois democracy in the United States. That is the advocacy of the Negro going it alone organizationally, socially and economically to whatever extent is possible. Secondly, by Particularism or Exceptionalism, I mean the doctrine that Negroes as Negroes are, or are likely to become the chief driving force of social change in the U.S. (Perhaps this should be called Negro Nationalism. I suspect that persons who hold this view also would propose "self-determination." They probably believe that the Negroes are a "nation.") I can think of no reason whatsoever for holding to this belief.

16. It is possible to join in the struggle for democratic rights for Negroes and avoid all three directions mentioned in "15". The Party can enter these organizations taking them for what they are and fully aware of their deficient programs, limited aims, mixed composition

and control by non-working class elements. These organizations have their programs and the Party has its program. The Party must express full sympathy with and full support of the struggle for democratic rights. We however must not stop here, as do the Negro organizations and the white liberal friends of the Negro. The Party must differentiate itself from such organizations, groups and individuals while we at the time work with them and in them.

17. It is particularly important that the Party fraction working in such organizations be careful not to come under the influence of their leaderships. On the contrary, it is the business of the fraction to organize its propaganda in such a way that the membership, especially the proletarians, come to understand the inadequacy of the program and the reformist character of the leadership. This requires a measure of skill and experience. The ranks must be convinced of our sincerity in joining with them in the fight for democratic rights while at the same time we attempt to teach them that their program and their leadership are inadequate.

18. We must constantly bear in mind that at this level, (the group struggle for democratic rights) we accept the general idea of the group struggle of the Negro against civil disability. We must not allow sectarian notions to becloud the issue and separate us from any genuine Negro mass movements. The ideas, plans and aims of the leadership is one thing; what the Negro masses have in mind is yet another. Furthermore, it must be stressed again that all of these movements have Negro proletarians in them. (It should be inserted here that these movements will inevitably contain large numbers of proletarians if they are of any size since the overwhelming majority of Negroes are wage-earners.)

19. The Party makes a united front with these movements temporarily and on specific issues; the fight for democratic rights. We enter these reformist or "race conscious" organizations because we are genuine supporters of their struggles and for the purpose of introducing our own theoretical conceptions and politics.

20. Not only should the Party work inside other Negro organizations but from time to time it is correct for the Party to inaugurate or form peripheral groups. The nature of such groups will have to be determined by the concrete circumstances, the needs of the locality, Party forces available and the goal we are seeking. It is imperative however that the Party be clear as to its aims, its goal and how to get there. (This has not always been the case in the past.) The Party may form a group completely controlled by the Party. Such a group would be a sort of diluted political aggregation in which the Party could be assured of its "line carrying". In my opinion such a group is somewhat of a calamity, a waste of time, for us, and "much ado about nothing." We could organize a sort of catch-all, an open forum sort of organization on the belief that we just must do some "Negro work." Such an organization usually ends as a nuisance and a headache. And then, it is possible to form a genuinely independent organization in the sense that it has its own program, based on the practical needs of the group and under its own leadership. The pro-

gram would go step by step with the Party program only part of the way. In such an organization the Party would have the task of continually winning the leadership. It would not have a numerical majority. In fact it might be numerically insignificant. If the Party conducts itself properly however it would have complete or at least adequate programmatic and tactical leadership. An organization of this type is the Buffalo Workingmens' Welfare Committee.

21. I have gone into some detail on the question of the struggle for democratic rights in order to emphasize its importance in the case of the Negro. There should be no misunderstanding on this. Also it is necessary to express an opinion on the importance of working in other organizations in relation to forming "our own" organizations. In my opinion we cannot have an eternal blue print on this question. As a rule it will be found possible and expedient to do both. The main orientation of the Party, in my opinion, should be toward the Negro organizations. Our major efforts should be directed toward the formation of groups under the direct influence of the Party. We can formulate the program for such a group and give it direct leadership. There is always a tendency when working in other groups to get a great deal of joy and pleasure measuring wits and maneuvering ability with the leadership. This may be highly satisfying to one's ego but seldom produces any other result than acquaintance with a few petty-bourgeois local Negro leaders. In whichever group we work however, only a small fraction is necessary. A branch has things to do aside from work in outside organizations. There is the general LA distribution, general neighborhood work for this type of branch, attempt at recruiting of LA readers and subscribers, public meetings in the name of the Party and other direct and independent Branch political activity. No activity in outside groups should interfere with this activity.

22. It is necessary to say something on the Negro nationalist organizations such as the Garvey Movement and other movements of similar nature. Of all the Negro organizations; these will undoubtedly prove the least fruitful for our activity. As a rule they are "anti-white." Quite often they are anti-mulatto. They have been known to defend the racial theories of the Nazis as a sound procedure for the Negro to follow. These movements are fundamentally reactionary. They attempt only to remove the Negro masses from the exploitation of the "whites" in order that they may be exploited in the same manner by a new Negro bourgeoisie.

23. There are the various groups of fanatics such as the Pacific Movement (Japanese), the native Mohamedans, etc., etc. All of these movements should be rejected completely. There should be no contact with them as a group and no association with individuals who belong to these groups or who have tendencies in this direction.

The Place of Slavery in Creating the "Negro Problem."

24. To understand the place of the Negro in American society it is necessary to study the question not only in its present connection but also the historical development of the "problem." The Party must be able to apply Marxist criteria as well as the current political and organizational line of the Party.

25. The first step in this direction is to define the meaning of Negro oppression within the framework of capitalist society in the United States. This approach will take into account the development of capitalism, especially its bifurcation into a slave economy of the South and the "free labor" economy of the North. The whole question of American slavery, coming as it did in the first quarter of the 17th Century, is an interesting and significant phase of the development of New World economy. By 1619, when slavery was introduced into the American colonies, not only had the slave mode of production been eliminated but "manufacture" (the forerunner machine production) was rapidly replacing the feudal mode of production. At one time during the 12th Century there was a recrudescence of "slavery" in Europe. It was the only phenomenon of this kind in Europe comparable to the establishment of slavery in the American colonies.

26. The establishment of slavery in the colonies in the 17th Century was a demonstration of the late development of capitalism in the colonies and was of course accounted for by the political status of the colonies in relation to the mother countries. Furthermore in that particular economy (tobacco, rice and cotton) slave labor was so cheap that the development of other methods of production were not indicated.

27. After a period of both black and white slavery (indenture) the white slaves were emancipated and the black slaves were given a new status; that is, slaves for life. It was at this point that for the first time a clear line of social, economic and political differentiation was established between whites and Negroes in the United States.

28. Present disabilities suffered by the Negro in the U.S. have their roots in his three centuries of slave status. These disabilities were not removed by emancipation. The most significant result of the Civil War was not so much taking the shackles off the Negro as the unshackling of Northern capitalist enterprise. The emancipated slaves were not prepared to take a place in industry. Furthermore the labor movement was, to say the least, not interested in admitting Negroes either to industry or the unions. Many of the unions were definitely anti-Negro and favored rigid exclusion. (See Spero and Harris: The Black Worker and DuBois: Black Reconstruction).

29. The freedmen therefore were not integrated into industry as were the white workers. Capitalism was rapidly expanding and what did happen was that Negroes acquired the status of a differentiated section of the labor reserve. They became, through no fault of their own, shock troops of industrial reaction. They were reserved as

strike breakers and as a reserve for the heaviest of common labor. There was no place for them in the existing labor organizations that were built on the skilled worker. This happened despite the fact that in the South, during slavery, it was the black slaves who had acquired skill and were virtually the only source of a skilled labor supply. This situation existed long after emancipation; the Negro did the work, even the skilled labor. The drive against the Negro worker began in the South with the penetration of that section by the AFL.

30. The inability of the Negro to become integrated into the economic life of the nation, except as such a special labor reserve, was due to the discovery by the bourgeoisie that it would be beneficial to have at hand special labor shock troops that would act as a threat to organized white labor, to retard the development of labor solidarity and as a cheap labor supply.

31. The presence of the Negro was really a boon to young capitalism. A planned and conscious scheme of dual exploitation was adopted. The Negro was first of all given an inferior national status as a group and then subjected to the most vicious exploitation as wage-earners. This was especially true in the South, where even the white worker was the victim of the intensest exploitation. It has been customary for Southern Chambers of Commerce to advertise for northern industry to come down because of a plentiful supply of "cheap white labor, free water power, free factory sites and low taxes." With the Negro it was far worse. He was to be retained as a low paid domestic or an impoverished field hand away from the enlightening experiences of factory work and the daily association with the "white slaves" in the factories. Thus was the Negro reenslaved by the bourgeoisie with bonds which remained unbroken to the present day.

32. After emancipation not only was the Negro tied to the lowest economic status but he became enmeshed politically in the net of the Republican Party. He was a political captive of this Party and remained so up to 1932.

### The Background of "Race Consciousness."

33. In self defense, under the blows of the bourgeoisie, the machinations of bourgeois politicians, the ruling class engendered hostility of white workers, the cupidity and misleadership of Negro leaders; the Negro masses developed the theory and practice of "race consciousness." The protagonists of this theory take the position that due to the situation in the United States it is imperative that the Negro orient toward economic and social self-sufficiency and independence. Politically this doctrine expresses itself in the demand that wherever Negroes are candidates for elective office, they must be supported by all Negroes automatically. Not only this but often the demand is made that Negro voters "plug" for the Negro candidate; that is vote for him alone and ignore white candidates running for other offices. (It is interesting to note here a demand for economic and social separation but not for complete political separation; only the demand that Negro candidates be supported to the exclusion of white candidates.)



34. Economic independence expresses itself in the demand that Negroes "go in business." The claim is made that Negroes must cease to be 100 per cent consumers and become producers. By producers is meant, merchants, manufacturers and bankers. Furthermore, all Negroes should patronize Negro business as a "race" duty. Insure only in Negro insurance companies, buy only from Negro stores, eat only in Negro restaurants.

35. A crucial point in the structure of the doctrine of "race consciousness" is the question of social contact with white people. Those Negroes who hold to this theory are convinced that Negroes will never be accepted socially by white people, that there is a great divide between the races that can never be bridged. This opinion expresses itself in very extreme ways at times. Negroes who mingle socially with white people have been known to be ostracized by Negroes just as white people who mixed socially with Negroes have been ostracized. The Negro is advised to live his social life entirely within the Negro group.

36. In a discussion at a meeting of the Buffalo Workingmen's Welfare Committee a new member objected to the statement in the Declaration of Purpose that Negroes should demand social, political and economic equality. This man said that he did not want social equality, that he was willing and preferred to confine his social life to "my own people." This is "race consciousness" as used and meant by Negroes.

37. This point of view may be summarized by saying that it is a doctrine devised to advance the interests of the Negro by separating the group - to the extent possible - ideologically and physically in order that it might develop a group life of its own; socially, economically and politically. It is not assumed that this separation will create new cultural, social, economic or political forms. It will really be a copy of the usual and prevalent life of the country.

#### Race Consciousness vs. Class Consciousness

38. This is what race consciousness means to Negroes. These are the procedures and opinions they are defending when they use the expression "race consciousness." They do not mean the adoption of attitudes which will serve as an opening wedge to the "white world." They are advocating that Negroes create a world of their own; economic, social, and to some degree political. Their attitude is in part engendered by despair and a feeling of defeat and disillusionment. It is skin to the moods which created the spirituals and the sorrow songs.

39. "Race consciousness" as enunciated by Negroes is not a gateway to united mass militancy and revolt. It is not a tactic of deception as the Stalinists, for instance, claimed for their Peoples Front line. As meant by Negroes and advocated by their leaders, great and small, the doctrine of "race consciousness" is totally devoid of revolutionary content or revolutionary potentiality. To attempt to give it such meaning or content is to depart completely from reality and soar in clouds of make believe. This is what the Stalinists "students" of

American history did when they "discovered" that the militant slaves were revolutionists.

40. Party defenders of this doctrine believe, I suppose, that the concept of "race consciousness" can be used to arouse Negroes and organize them for militant forms of struggle against jim-crow. This is a delusion. The "race consciousness" theory promotes acceptance of jim-crow. Members who in this manner attempt to say "what the Negro thinks" are only saying what they hope he thinks, or what they believe he ought to think.

41. There are a few members I suspect who accept this doctrine out of inertia; that inertia which prompts them to agree with what some Negroes say or advocate because they have acquired the habit of reacting in this manner. This condescension is a little sickening. There are a few others who fear to "antagonize" Negroes and who are ready to swallow any piece of hokum that comes from the lips of a Negro "contact."

42. It is interesting that one doesn't hear this doctrine advocated in the case of other suppressed minorities in the United States. There are persons in these minorities who advocate such a theory (Ludwig Lewisohn for the Jews.) but such advocates are usually considered reactionary. The real meaning of such a theory reveals itself at once in the case of Jews, Italians or Poles for example but in the case of Negroes it is alleged to be progressive. Of course the fact of the greater disability of the Negro helps obscure and confuse the question.

43. The doctrine of "race consciousness" is a theory which promotes the acceptance of capitalism and of bourgeois democracy. The logic of its unfolding leads to defense of black bourgeois democracy in place of white. It places the Negro masses in the contradiction of accepting in black face the thing which is the root cause of his misery in white face.

44. A second contradiction reveals itself here also. If "race consciousness" is a valid assumption, then "self-determination" follows as the only correct and final conclusion and must be demanded. Members who accept the theory of "race consciousness" must become protagonists and advocates of self-determination. They cannot say, "if the Negroes demand self-determination we will grant it."

45. Garvey's political logic was correct. He drew the correct conclusion from his basic assumption. His theoretical position was built on a theory of race consciousness. He was really black conscious. He and his followers had contempt for mulattos. He hired them, at times, in the same way that the Bolsheviks hired bourgeois technicians. Garvey attempted to carry out organizationally what was logically and politically inherent in his basic assumption. He purposed to establish a Negro republic. But while Negroes continued to talk about "race consciousness" they refused to follow Garvey. It is true that for a time he had an immense following but it was short-lived and today the Garvey movement is dead.

46. That fact that Garvey planned to set up his republic in a foreign land was not the decisive factor that made Negroes indifferent. Again and again the proposal has been made for the establishment of a 49th State in the United States by Negroes. The response has been almost zero. Negroes have not up to today become "race conscious" enough in practice to consent to isolation in a separate state. (I have only brought in self-determination here to show its connection with "race consciousness." I will discuss this in detail later.)

47. The attitude of Negroes toward their "racial" identity and their condition is understandable. But understanding does not imply agreement. It is my position that this doctrine flows from an incorrect analysis of the situation and of the place of the Negro in capitalist society in the United States. The Negro masses of course have made no analysis and do not understand the situation at all. They only grope for a way out of their misery and importunity. The Party will do the Negro masses no service if it continually gropes along in the dark with them, hoping that somewhere, somehow a ray of light will penetrate the gloom. This is what we have been doing.

48. The Negro is the victim of class oppression and class injustice along with the white worker. He is primarily, as is the white worker, the victim of class relationships. At emancipation the Negro was transformed from a thing, that is from being a commodity (property) to a wage-earner; a "free worker." (In all of capitalist society I suppose there has been no worker so "free" as the Negro.) Virtually all Negroes became wage earners, and today they are overwhelmingly proletarians.

49. The general class oppression to which Negroes are subjected is identical with the exploitation and oppression of the white worker. (Millions of Negroes are not aware of the meaning of this yet.) It is at this point that the interests of the Negro as a group and the interests of the white worker coalesce and become identical. To ignore this to the smallest extent will disorient and vitiate the struggle for Negro "rights." This is the fundamental approach in a class society and there can be no other. This is the PRIMARY DISABILITY OF THE NEGRO. Negroes do not understand this. There are some "Marxists" who seemingly do not understand it.

50. But the Negro has a SECONDARY DISABILITY: that is his oppression and exploitation as a Negro. It is this which justifies the special and unique struggle for democratic rights for the group as a whole. I do not underrate its importance. I underscore it. But it is secondary. It can have no solution separated from efforts to eliminate the PRIMARY DISABILITY, that is his economic exploitation and class oppression. This is a class struggle.

51. This SECONDARY EXPLOITATION of the Negro has as its main purpose to facilitate the economic exploitation of the Negro directly and of the white worker indirectly. It is made possible however only by the class relations of a class society. Therefore the struggle for the democratic rights of the Negro must always be linked with the struggle against capitalist economic exploitation.

52. The fact that the struggle for democratic rights is SECONDARY does not mean that at a certain time it may not assume primary importance. We are principled proponents of class struggle for the Negro as for all workers. This does mean however that we would say to Negroes: "we cannot support your march on Washington today because you exclude white people." We would support the march at a certain time and under certain conditions and yet remain principled opponents of "race" separation and of separation among workers. We would say: "while you are assimilating our principled position and the reasons for it we will fight with you in practice for your democratic rights."

53. Not only the Marxist party but the whole working class must be imbued with the idea of fighting for democratic rights for the Negro. It must be linked with the general struggle against capitalist economic exploitation and made also an integral part of the fight for working class solidarity. This sets forth the great significance of the entry of the Negro into the trade unions. Here the struggle can be posed, planned, organized and carried through as nowhere else.

54. The theory of "race consciousness" implies class homogeneity of the Negro groups. It thereby becomes a theory of class collaboration. This doctrine leads to the assumption, especially in practice, that there are no class distinctions within the Negro "race" that there is no basic difference between the president of a Negro insurance company and the Negro janitor of that company's building. This would mean that Mr. Spalding, president of the North Carolina life Insurance Co. with assets of \$8,000,000, and who is a member of the Chamber of Commerce of New York State, presents the identical problem as Sam Brown who works in a steel mill. They are both victims of jim-crow. There would be no difference between the Negro owner of a parachute factory and the Negro wage-earners in that factory. Both must ride in the jim-crow section of a Georgia street car. There would be no difference between a Negro college professor and a Pullman porter who had graduated from Columbia's School of Journalism. Neither could become editor of the New York Times.

55. It is very difficult for some people to grasp the fact that although both persons mentioned above are jim-crowed they are not equally oppressed. There is a vast difference between the oppressed Negro insurance president Spalding being presented to the leaders of business and finance at a dinner of the New York Chamber of Commerce and the oppressed Negro sharecropper in his shack dining on sow belly and black eye peas, after ten hours labor for \$2.50.

56. The Supreme Court decides that railroads must provide "equal accommodations" for white and Negro passengers and the Negro press hails the decision as a victory. But for whom is this decision a victory? For all Negroes you say. But this is really nonsense. In practice it is a victory for Negroes who have Pullman fare and substance sufficient to pay for a \$1.50 meal in the dining car which is equal to that of the "white" diner.

57. There are class distinctions within the Negro "race." The fact that the line is not so clear as that between the bourgeoisie and the

proletariat does not wipe out the class lines among Negroes. I said in another place that the Negro ruling class is a sort of comprador ruling class. This is true. It lives and moves and has its being by virtue of the aid received from white business leaders and politicians. It functions in their interest and subjects the Negro masses to the most vicious exploitation. The Negro masses therefore suffer a dual class oppression.

58. The theory of "race consciousness" obscures the class line existent in capitalist society. This along with the blurring of the intra-racial class line only deepens and broadens the exploitation of the Negro masses by a Negro "bourgeoisie." This blurring of class lines leads to the myth that the white bourgeoisie, especially businessmen and some government officials are friends of the Negro and that it is the white proletariat which is the real enemy. All through my youth I heard Negroes say "if I have to mix with white people I want it to be rich white folks." The argument is that "rich white people" will not be jealous of Negro progress and therefore will be willing to aid Negroes "do something for themselves."

59. The doctrine of "race consciousness" gives the struggle for Negro rights the appearance of a conflict between races. The struggle becomes primarily a conflict between "whites" and "blacks" rather than a struggle between bourgeois and proletarian. This again is a no class doctrine and is perhaps the most dangerous aspect of the "race consciousness" theory. The fact that a struggle may take on a "race" complexion is no reason for making the generalization that the difficulty is racial as such. It is the business of the Marxists to illuminate the situation and dispel this attitude, not feed it.

60. "Race consciousness" leads to the cult of Negro Nationalism. This is the belief that the Negro as a homogeneous oppressed group can or should attempt to take his place in the country as a self-contained and self-sufficient national entity. The logical development of this concept is the advocacy of the formation of the Negro state. The fact that Garvey planned to build his state in Africa is not important. The important point is the effort to separate the Negro as Negro, politically and socially. Furthermore Negro Nationalism also rejects the idea of class and the class organization of society. Negro nationalism is bourgeois in its ideology. It would only change the color of the exploiters.

61. It is necessary to record the opinion that the opposition of the "upper class" Negroes to nationalist movements is not motivated by solicitude for the Negro masses but by what they conceive to be best for the better placed Negroes. They do not object to the exploitation of the Negro masses but only to the exploitation taking place under conditions where they cannot benefit from it and control it. Also the experiment might fail and these Negroes fear to lose the concessions they now get from the white ruling class in the form of jobs and other economic assistance.

62. "Race consciousness" promotes a form of "chosen people" thinking. It also causes undue emphasis to be placed on the "achievements of

the Negro." It hides the fact that only a relatively few Negroes achieve "success." It operates as a means of impelling Negroes to forget their misery and revel in the honors that have been bestowed on a few. The idea of the "talented tenth" is accepted and rejoiced over despite the plain fact that there has been no alleviation of the social degradation of the Negro people. This theory plays into the hands of those who talk about the Negro's "special gifts." If he would only become "race conscious" and develop these gifts he could make a wonderful contribution to civilization. Of course Negroes are expected to go through this preparatory period and through this period of perfecting his peculiar genius within the framework of Jim-crow and segregation.

63. One particularly nauseating result of this type of thinking is the thousand and one little groups devoted to the study of Negro "life, art and literature." Here are gathered nice old ladies who contribute to the Negro orphanage, nice young ladies whose grandfathers marched through Georgia with Sherman, "radicals" who "see no difference between a Negro and a white man" and a few revolutionists who believe that the proper approach to the Negro is "social" and "personal".

64. In rejecting the theory of "race consciousness" I do not reject the necessity for developing slogans that will stir the Negro masses to independent and militant action as Negroes. For instance it is not necessary to believe in "race consciousness" to support enthusiastically a March on Washington Movement. It is not necessary to advocate this doctrine to get Negroes to participate in such a march. On the contrary, I can conceive of such a slogan obstructing such an action. Some Negroes might say: "why demand jobs in the white man's factory? Negroes should build factories of their own." Others might say, "we can't demand anything from white folks, we haven't got anything. We've got to get something first before we can demand things." There are a number of attitudes of this type prevalent among Negroes who are of the opinion that Negroes should think more in terms of social and economic isolation.

65. The Party, in my opinion must definitely reject the theory of "race consciousness" as I have defined it. It is a reactionary doctrine. It can only retard the day of the liberation of the Negro masses. It would subject the Negro masses to intra-racial class exploitation as a substitute for "white" exploitation. (White exploitation being bourgeois exploitation which today happens to be white.)

#### Self-Determination

66. I have already indicated that the question of Self-Determination arises in connection with the discussion of race consciousness. Self-Determination in connection with a "racial" group is the theory that such a group is a culturally and socially defined national entity. It is assumed to have cultural and social traditions peculiar to itself. It has an art and a literature that are racially indigenous and of distinctive form and content. This literature must be something more than a literature of protest. Such cultural distinctive-

ness is a characteristic for example, of certain African tribes or the black people of Haiti. The same way be said about the Gullah Negroes living on the sea island off the coast of South Carolina.

67. Assigning the Haitians a separate culture is not based on the fact that they have a state but primarily because of their history and the mode of development of these people over more than a century. Even language is not a determining factor. I would say that the Haitians have a different culture from "white" France even though both speak substantially the same language.

68. Also Self-Determination can only have real meaning where there is group aspiration of a nationalist character, which the group desires to concretize as an independent nation of whatever sort, or as an autonomous republic in a federation of republics.

69. This demand might arise in the United States in the course of the establishment of a socialist republic, or the workers state. It is theoretically conceivable that the Negroes would demand complete political independence. Therefore the Party must express its opinion on this question. Not because the question is present today but for the reason that it is connected with other questions about Negroes and the attitude of the Party toward them.

70. Wherever any racial minority living under such concrete conditions as the Negroes in the United States, demanded the right of separation it would have to be granted. That is any group which had for centuries suffered the disabilities and oppression that has been the lot of American Negroes would have to be granted the right to solve its problems and work out its future in its won state if it so desired.

71. The demand for separation would have to be clearly and incontestably the expression of the majority of the Negro masses. Most ridiculous and disastrous mistakes could be made in handling this question. The attitude of these masses could not be determined by the representations of a few articulate "leaders". Negro leaders have seldom been genuine exponents of the will of the Negro masses. They have usually represented their own interests; or the interests of white politicians or businessmen from which the Negro "leader" received a consideration.

72. Before I would vote favorably on such a request I would want to look into the matter very objectively. I should test out the sentiment of the Negro masses and examine the records of the spokesmen for self-determination. Lots of people have been fooled by Negro leaders who appeared representing Negroes and claiming to report what they wanted.

73. The above reservations do not of course apply to those who are for self-determination because the Negro in the United States is a nation. All who hold this position must be advocates of self-determination, even though there is no such demand made by Negroes. They must be for self-determination just as they are for a strike where

one is indicated even though there is no strike demand from the workers. They are obligated to educate Negroes for self-determination just as they would educate the workers for the strike. That is it would be incumbent upon them to take the initiative. One certainly cannot demand that a nation give up its nationhood or even entertain the thought in private.

74. It is necessary for persons who hold to the view that Negroes are a nation to elucidate their views before the Party in the course of this discussion, just as the defenders of the theory of "race consciousness" must do the same. It is reported that Comrade Trotsky held the view that the Negro in the United States is a nation, basing himself in part on his belief that the Negro here has a separate language. During the National Training School, in the lecture devoted to "The Negro and the Unions," I made reference to this position of comrade Trotsky. I said that his ignorance of the Negro in the United States was probably profound and complete. The next day a member of the class opened the question again and remarked that I was wrong in my position. He said that the correctness of the position of Comrade Trotsky had been demonstrated during the course of some activities which he had been carrying on among Negro agricultural workers. We were anxious to have some discussion on this point but time did not permit. I ardently hope that the very interesting and fascinating observations of this comrade will be explained in the course of this discussion.

#### Are The Negroes For Self-Determination?

75. It is my opinion that there is no basis whatsoever for the belief that Negroes have any interest whatsoever in self-determination. I mean by this that American Negroes have no desire now for a separate political existence. If this is true now then certainly there is no reason to believe that they will want separation after a victorious workers revolution in which they have participated. Such demand could only be based on dissatisfaction and skepticism which persisted even in the face of repeated demonstrations of the socialist intentions of the Party or of persistent misunderstanding of what socialism is.

76. There is nothing in the cultural development of the Negro in the United States to incline him to the idea of self-determination. The mores and culture of the Negro is the mores and culture of the white American and he has no other. There have been efforts to link the Negro culturally with Africa but this is both ethnologically and anthropologically nonsensical. The culture of the American Negro is as different from that of Africa as that of the white man. This is one of the strange phenomena of social development in the United States. Despite the oppression and the jim-crow the American Negro has been culturally assimilated. This assimilation continues and is accelerated from year to year. The number of Negro college graduates increases from year to year. More important is the fact that the number of graduates of "white" universities increases rapidly from year to year. The leading teachers in the Negro colleges get their graduate degrees from "white" schools. There is no Negro journalism but the Negro press is a copy of the white press. There has been some



talk about "Negro literature" but the only thing Negro about it is its content: that is, it is writing protesting against his oppression, but has not distinctive form. The fact is that Negroes have been so thoroughly consumed with the imitation of "white" culture that it is only in recent years that they have begun to pay attention to the history of the Negro in the United States. They have not cared particularly for things that might be called distinctively Negro.

77. Those who believe that there is such a thing as a Negro culture in the United States should ask themselves this question. If all the white people were removed and the Negro was left alone in the United States, what changes in industry, government, education, law and religion would take place? What new educational, legal, religious, philosophical or scientific concepts and practices would replace those prevalent today. There is no reason to believe that there would be anything essentially new. No doubt that in the course of time new things and ideas would emerge and eventually there might be a new culture or civilization but this new culture would not be evidence that the Negro has a separate culture today.

78. And what is this Negro culture that we hear about occasionally? Is it something progressive or is it reactionary? This point should be clarified by the proponents of the Negro culture. Do they mean that the Negro has a separate culture which is only that or do they mean that it is separate and "advanced?" What is in this Negro culture that should be adopted by the country at large?

79. Is it probable that Negroes will desire to separate from the new socialist state? I am convinced that they will not. I am also of the opinion that all who propagate this doctrine will be persons non grata with the mass of Negroes. They have heard for years and decades that the Negro should "be sent back to Africa;" where he can practice self-determination to his hearts content. Many speeches have been made in Congress on this theme.

80. American Negroes have heard of the black republic of Liberia with its jungles and slavery. They think it a fine thing to applaud a Negro minister to Liberia, or to contemplate the black president of that little republic but they seem to prefer the plantations of Mississippi to the freedom of Liberia. They are jubilant when they read of the black kingdom of Abyssinia despite its slavery and mud road capital city. But as for them they prefer to spend their lives in the red mud of Georgia.

81. All the Negro's struggle today is against separation and for inclusion in the bourgeois democratic set-up in the United States. What reason is there for believing that Negroes will want to be separated from a higher form of democracy than contemporary bourgeois democracy? To propose self-determination to the American Negro can appear as nothing more than a proposal for jim-crow couched in hifalutin political terminology and covered over with what will appear to him as just some more white duplicity.

82. Negroes who have any intelligence know that they could not maintain a separate state. It would undoubtedly be a bourgeois state of

some sort. If not then there would be no reason for separation from the new socialist state.

83. The whole question for the United States lacks political, social and psychological realism. It is academic in the bad sense of that word. The advocacy of self-determination should be completely rejected by the Party. Secondly while we must agree to self-determination if there is a demand from the Negro masses, we must take the position that it is the bounden duty of the Party to win the Negro over to the support of the Workers State and integrate him into the entire fabric of that state along with the white proletariat. The Party must make this clear always, day in and day out. There must be no mealy mouthed dual position or compromise with this self-determination crack-potism. (I call the advocacy of self-determination crack-potism) The Party has one positive duty to perform now: to win Negroes to the program of Marxism and to the ranks of the proletarian revolution. This means to recruit Negroes to the Party.

#### Why The Emphasis On Recruiting Negroes?

84. The Party seeks to win the Negro masses to its ranks because they are as a group proletarians. They are the group lowest in the social, economic and political scale. They are the worst exploited. Furthermore since the days of the slave revolts they have demonstrated their militancy and their susceptibility to progressive and revolutionary propaganda and agitation. Despite their social degradation in the United States they have in no period given up the fight and succumbed to moods of despair and demoralization. They have demonstrated that they make excellent trade union material and would they understand always take front rank among the most militant fighters in trade union struggles. Also in military affairs they have always been known as front rank fighters; not only in the commonplace infantry formations but today they take to mechanized warfare including aviation. There would be no difficulty in transferring this ability to other events, where they would undoubtedly exhibit a similar courage. Also the Negro proletarians have become inured to hardships, tough going and iron rations. They are not soft. These qualities are necessary in the time of the proletarian revolutionary struggles.

85. We want to recruit Negroes because they will test the revolutionary sincerity and integrity of the Party. Their presence will test our ability to assimilate the most exploited of the proletarians. They will test our ability to educate backward workers and hold them. Not only is the presence of Negroes the test of our ability to educate the white workers, draw them to the side of the Negroes and thus impel the proletariat to close ranks. And finally, it is the test of our ability to put ourselves in the place of the lowliest workers; to go down to them and at the same time lift them up; to be their equals spiritually while superior to them politically to go through their experiences with them as guide and never lose our balance.

86. These are the reasons why the Party should specialize in what is called "Negro work." We are revolutionary Marxists and realists; people who have a practical task before us and the Negro proletariat must be in our ranks to help us carry through that task in the United

States.

From "Race Consciousness" to Class Consciousness."

87. The Party must come down to solid earth in its approach to the problems of the Negro in the United States. This is no field for the exercise of mystical, romantic or a priori notions. The habit of attempting to say what the Negro wants or what he thinks after short and fleeting acquaintance with a few articulate and forward Negroes is to act in the manner of the "car window sociologists" who used to write books on the Negro after a two-weeks visit to the South. Far worse than this is the habit of being guided in the formulation of a program for Negroes after reading one of these books or studying under one of these "sociologists."

88. We have said in a general way what the "Negro problem" is. We say that the Negro suffers a dual disability: exploitation as wage-earner and complementary exploitation (oppression and jim-crow) because of race and color. The two are indissolubly connected and are inherent in the development and operation of bourgeois democracy and capitalist business enterprise in the United States. This indicates the method of attack and the direction in which the solution must be sought. The Negro is primarily a victim of class oppression and exploitation. The solution therefore must lie in the class struggle and the development of class consciousness.

89. It is only the Marxists who hold this position. Only Marxism can make such analyses and arrive at such conclusions. Our Party therefore must keep this central in its thinking and action. Negroes themselves do not accept the Marxian analysis of the "race problem" or the revolutionary solution proposed by Marxists. But neither do the white workers accept the Marxist analysis and the solution proposed by the revolutionaries. We attempt to teach them. In this sense we think for them. A white worker approaches us with a union problem today. We approach his questions objectively and politically. We fit his questions to the scheme of things and to our basic Marxist attitudes.

90. We do not proceed in this manner in the handling of the "Negro problem." There are many of us who would hesitate to express an opinion on a trade union problem of a white worker but who would have no hesitancy in posing as experts on the problems of Negroes. In one situation ignorance, we feel, may be fatal but in the other "ignorance is bliss" and "it is foolish to be wise." Also the Party seems to hold the opinion that all the equipment necessary for doing "Negro work" is a goodly supply of this blissful ignorance, interest, the right frame of mind and a dancing or drinking acquaintance with a couple of Negroes. Of course it is necessary to talk a great deal about "Negro work", dash off a thesis, a column or insist on getting into a Branch "doing Negro work."

91. I do not claim that the ranks are wholly responsible for this procedure. To do so would be nonsensical. But we must reorient the Party. Those who want to do "Negro work" must prove at least that

their interest extends far enough to read, study and practice to the end that they become theoretic-ally, politically and organizationally competent. This should apply to the Negro members the same as to the white members of the Party. There is nothing more nauseating than to see a Negro picked to do "Negro work" who doesn't know his head from a hole in the ground.

92. We should insist that all who want to do "Negro work" should acquaint themselves with the historical, social, economic and political aspects of the "Problem." This means first of all acquaintance with the development of and the complexion of capitalism in the United States. Next the history of the Negro fitted into capitalist development. It means the objective study of Negro social and economic progress. The story of the Negro in relation to the trade union movement looked at historically and analytically. Also the objective study of politics and political parties in relation to the Negro. Of course practice must accompany such study. The two go together and both are necessary.

93. The Party must consciously plan and organize its "Negro work" with the aim in view of indoctrinating the Negro with the fundamental idea of class struggle and class consciousness. The basic reasons and the technique are the same as with white workers. We approach the white worker through a discussion of his group problems, usually his problems as a worker and trade unionist. We lead from the discussion of the specific trade union problem or the specific worker problem to politics and political discussion. Our aim is political discussion; to make the correct political analysis of the problem presented to us, to lead the workers to the correct political understanding of the problems they face. We urge the worker to take an organizational step that is join the Party based on his understanding of our political analysis and his acceptance of the solution that we propose. It is in this sense that our approach to the problems of the workers is called a political approach.

94. With the Negro however we have a different approach: we are more "personal" and "social." It has been said again and again that "you cannot talk politics to Negroes right off the bat." Now, I must say that I don't know what this means. I have a private opinion that it means nothing in relation to the Negroes but something very significant in connection with the member who mouths such cryptic gibberish. We can't talk politics to any worker right off the bat if by politics we mean putting the concepts of of Marxism and the Party line in the technical language that we use in our resolutions, theses and discussions. We can't talk politics to anybody if we ignore the intellectual and experiential level of the person we are talking to. We never attempt to hang our hats on a bare wall, we usually look to see if there is a hook there.

95. We can talk politics to a Negro or white worker "right off the bat" if we know our politics, in theory and practice. I know of no group of people easier to approach politically than Negroes. In fact there is no other sensible and correct way to approach them. When approaching a Negro trade unionist, as trade unionist of course we

would not begin with a discussion of "Negro problems," but with a discussion of his union problems.

96. We talked Marxist theory and Workers Party politics to sharecroppers for hours on end. They understood what we were talking about. We didn't talk down to them in a patronizing way. We used their experience to hang our theory and our politics on. But we knew our theory and our politics and we knew their experience. Do I mean by this that they understand socialism? Of course not. Their understanding is very primitive. But they understand enough to do their work as revolutionaries and do it well. We will give them more of Marxist theory and WP politics from time to time and elevate their understanding.

97. The Party must apply its Marxist politics and theory to the objective discontent of the Negro masses and to their struggle for democratic rights. This is a platform from which to introduce our revolutionary program and propaganda. This means first of all to win the Negro to class struggle and class consciousness. They must be won away from their present reformist or reactionary Negro leadership and from the leadership of the white bourgeoisie. This is the practical task of the Party in every mass Negro organization. We do not go into Negro organizations to find a nesting place or to give aid and comfort to the leadership.

98. The Party must be deeply conscious of the need to split the Negro masses away from the present leadership. We must always differentiate between the Negro masses and the Negro "upper classes." Roughly the upper classes include the Negro politicians, preachers, doctors, lawyers, teachers, college students and businessmen. They are a class comparable to the upper classes in white society. This must be understood as a class distinction. The interests of this group are those of another class than the mass of the Negroes. They are not just "betrayers" of the Negro masses. Randolph and his friends call off the March on Washington not because they want to betray Negroes but because objectively they represent the interest of the "upper class Negroes." In this way Randolph's class interests clash with the class interests of the Negro masses.

#### Toward The Negro Proletarians

99. In its practical approach to the Negro the Party should orient exclusively toward the Negro proletarians. The only exception should be in the case of genuine Negro intellectuals who stand on the program of Marxism, who agree immediately to take their place at the side of the Negro and white proletarians, to participate in the proletarian struggle, to accept full Party discipline at once and to place their education and training completely at the call of the Party. If they cannot do this then we should flee from them as though they were the plague. (This is really what they would be in the Party.) I would like to pound this into the consciousness of the Party because there is some tendency to play around with this type of Negro.

100. We want the Negro proletarians in the factories and in the unions. This orientation can be carried out today as never before.

Now there are 500,000 Negroes in the organized labor movement. This is certainly enough Negroes for us to work for at the present. Our preference for Negro proletarians must be exhibited in practice. When a Negro "contact" is reported the first questions should be "is he or she a proletarian? Is he in the factory? Is he in the union? If not then the members reporting should be told to put the "contact" in 4F and draft a proletarian. This procedure should be rigid and persistent.

101. It would be quite an anomaly to have the Party concentrating on the white proletariat and at the same time, in its work with Negroes, to follow a different line and tactic. This would produce a mongrel organization of white proletarians and Negro petty-bourgeois. It is important to emphasize that Negro proletarians will have an entirely different effect on the Party than Negro petty-bourgeois. The proletarians would present the minimum of fakery, shysterism, pseudo-learning and artificiality. Of course these proletarians don't "talk like us." They probably could not appreciate our phonograph records or our opinions about Gauguin. (I don't mean this statement to be in any way an underhand jibe at members who have records of Beethoven or pictures of Gauguin or any other artist. I mean it only as a statement of fact. In the homes of Negro proletarians instead of Beethoven, Gauguin, Joyce and others, we are more likely to find the Bible, a picture of Christ clinging to a rock or on the cross, religious mottoes on the walls, a picture of Joe Louis, Haile Selassie, Booker Washington; records by Negro swing bands and for literature some pretty conservative or outmoded stuff. In some homes we will find another type of literature, art etc. But as a rule the cultural interests will be different from those of the Party.)

#### Down With Paternalism.

102. The Party must purge itself of all paternalism in its work with Negroes. I have already argued against this attitude in many places above without using the word. But it has to be emphasized over and over because there are members who persist in this attitude. They recommend Negroes for posts in the Party who have no capabilities at all for the post. I have known Negroes to be suggested for posts whose membership in the Party was in doubt. I have seen Negroes retained in the Party long after they had demonstrated they had no interest in remaining. I have seen members virtually make stooges out of Negro members presumably out of solicitude that the Negro member might not feel at home in the Party. I have seen members take over a meeting where there was a Negro chairman and run the meeting from the sidelines so to speak. I have seen members in the organization of Negroes, do all the work while the Negroes sat back in decorative contentment. I have seen Party members do editorial tasks that could just as well have been done by Negro members of the organization in question. Again and again I have witnessed the travail and anguish of members caused by their fears that if they did not constantly suckle a Negro group, it would famish, perish and dry up. Or if not this then it would at least make serious political errors.

103. This is paternalism, which in essence contains the elements of jim-crow and insult. Part of it of course springs from ignorance and

at times from an exaggerated sense of one's own importance and ability. Furthermore at times we feel that we are indispensable. Also I have the opinion that there is a little of the social worker in the attitude of some of us toward Negroes. And then we have the abolitionist attitude and the Christian missionary attitude. Now social workers, abolitionists and missionaries have certainly done some remarkable things for the welfare of Negroes in the past. But that's not what we are and that's not our task. Therefore we have to divest ourselves of the attitudes assumed by social workers, abolitionists and missionaries.

104. If members would pause a while and learn something about Negroes they would probably get rid of their paternalistic attitudes. In the first place they would learn that Negroes are not so dumb in devising efficient organizing techniques. Our members don't know that Negroes fresh out of slavery organized the great African Methodist Episcopal Church, a completely independent institution with no white connection or supervision. Negro workers have organized all manner of institutions which demonstrated real organizing ability. In fact most Negro institutions have been formed by very ordinary Negroes who had nothing more than an idea, energy, organizing genius and a couple of dollars. Negroes who could neither read nor write have been known to be active in promoting educational institutions and organizing financial campaigns for their support. I am not here discussing the ideology of any of these institutions but the organizing aspects only.

105. The deficiency of the ordinary Negro today is in not knowing what to organize. It isn't that Negro workers do not know how to organize and conduct organizations, it is rather their ignorance of what program to adopt. That's where we should come in if we want to aid Negroes where they can't help themselves.

106. Most of us certainly can't teach Negroes organizing techniques; as we're not so hot at that ourselves. We can learn some things from them. Negroes are not very punctual people. I have heard members complain about this. Negroes waste time in meetings and talk off the point. But who among us is going to be so presumptuous and brazen as hold himself up as a model in these matters?

107. Thinking over these things certainly should aid in purging the Party of some of the paternalism. We don't need to turn nineograph machines for Negro workers who have just come from operating lathes and screw machines. We don't need to operate nineographs for Negroes even though they have never seen a machine; they have learned to operate machines and institutions far more complex.

108. To me all these things are extremely simple and only need be carried out. The Negro proletarian which the Party wants will not desire any god-fathers or any undue personal attention. If they are worth anything either actually or potentially they will want to be treated like all other racial groups in the Party. In fact most Negro proletarians with intelligence will resent paternalistic attitudes. It is usually only the riff-raff, the pseudo-intellectuals and the bohemians who will remain in the Party to be patronized and

slobbered over. Our paternalistic attitudes will be accepted only by very poverty stricken and greatly harassed proletarians such the sharecroppers. Here such docility and longsuffering will be the result of long and extreme oppression. They will cling to any straw that might give them relief from their deep-seated misery. In the case of such workers however paternalism is especially to be condemned. Here paternalism fails to recognize their genuine and considerable abilities and resourcefulness. Furthermore it denies to them any opportunity for development and organizational and political progress.

#### Education of the Negro Member.

109. The Party must give its Negro members and "contacts" a POLITICAL EDUCATION. They must also be trained in correct Bolshevik organizational principles and in efficient administration. They must be encouraged and impelled to perform any and all functions given white members of the Party. They must not be given these functions however just because they are Negroes. There must be no coddling or pampering. Above all the Party must frown on any evidence of a sex approach to the Negro member. I have seen instances when this method was disgustingly in evidence. There must not be a standard for Negroes and another for "advanced workers." All of these failings and faults can be eliminated by the proper educational and pedagogical methods.

110. The Party is tested not only by the number of Negroes that we recruit but also by how well we succeed in preparing some of them for Party leadership. Not to prepare Negro members for PARTY LEADERSHIP is to act no differently from bourgeois organizations which have a few Negroes around as ornaments and to prove that "we are not prejudiced against Negroes."

111. It seems that the Party thinks only in terms of preparing its Negro members for activity among Negroes. But a Negro member who is not qualified and competent to be a PARTY LEADER cannot possibly be competent to be our leader among Negroes. Negroes that the Party assigns to do "Negro work" must be politically educated and organizationally efficient. If this is not done they will be only a menace or a nuisance. The work of the Party among Negroes will become increasingly effective as the Party is able to send politically trained Negro members into the ranks of the Negro masses. This to me is not to say that "white people cannot work among Negroes." This is utter nonsense and too puerile to discuss except to say that objectively this sentiment is a little tinged with unconscious jim-crow. It is a fact that a politically educated Negro will make more rapid headway than a politically educated white member. But over-emphasis on this indubitable fact and the belief that "Negroes are antagonistic to white people" can and has produced the attitude of mind that any Negro member is better for "Negro work" than any white member. Members forget or never knew that Negroes have been accepting the leadership of white people for over 300 years, in one way or another and in one organization or another. Questions of this sort require study and an examination of one's procedure not a priori judgments. Negroes are to some degree suspicious of white people but the masses of Negroes are also suspicious of their own leaders.



112. The problem of winning Negroes to the Party is at bottom identical with the problem of winning white workers. It is for this reason that white members who cannot do effective work among Negro workers will also be the same members who fail in producing fruitful results among white workers. Both Negro and white workers must be convinced that the Party can help him solve the particular problem with which he is confronted. Both must be convinced that the Party can do something for him and his kind. Both must come to accept that aspect of the Party program which relates to him and the program as a whole. No worker white or black will join the Party unless he believes that such a step will benefit him in some practical way. Very seldom will we come across a worker Negro or white who joins the Party because he has thought the program through.

113. I don't think that it should be necessary to go into any elaborate detail on this matter of education. The first thing to remember is to make a concrete approach to the problem of education. The education of the new member should have begun when he or she was a prospect. The educational and pedagogical approach to the prospect should be planned in as much detail and carefulness as the education of the new member. What I am more interested to stress is the absolute necessity for the concrete attack. Education, even theoretical education should revolve around the practical problems which the "contact" has to deal with. That is our general principles and current political line, when presented must enter logically and naturally in connection with some practical matter in which the "contact" is interested. Negroes today wonder why jim-crow persists simultaneously with protestations that the war is for democracy. They don't understand why if it is a war for democracy they are denied jobs, promotion and placement on production just as in the past. Why is there discrimination against Negroes in the unions? Why even does he come up against discrimination in the CIO? This is the type of practical problem that our theoretical position must illuminate. If our theory cannot illuminate this type of problem and if we are not competent and experienced enough to supply such illumination then our theory is useless and so are we. We can spur workers to action and draw them into the Party only if we can supply an explanation of their situation in correct but simple terms.

114. An important part of the education of new members is giving them responsibility and insisting on their carrying it. This rule is regularly violated in the case of Negro members and "contacts." Negro members cannot be educated and trained separated from the white members. There can be no separate education for Negro members. The problem of educating Negro members is part of the more general problem of educating all new members. In every city or unit there should be a new members group assembled occasionally for educational discussion on the political and organizational line of the WP. This can be done even with a single member. If we can only recruit members in units of one then we must give them education in units of one.

115. Negro members must not be given the impression that they are to be used as mere bait to catch other Negroes. Negro members should not be used as exhibits. Many Negroes are on to that trick. A Negro member should not be given a post or put up to speak because "we must have a Negro."

116. Negroes with any sense will not be impressed by the usual type of demonstrative social approach that the Party members indulge in at times. Taking a drink with a Negro in the Negro quarter is not new. White politicians do that in every election campaign. They also gush over the Negro babies and remark on how cute they are. Negro neighborhoods are infested every Monday morning with white insurance agents. They drop around for a social chat and the insurance premium. Such part time and exhibitionist socializing between Negroes and white people is no novelty. We didn't invent it. Remember also that the CP specialized in this.

117. Social intercourse between Negroes and white members should be as normal as that between the white members themselves. We should establish normal political and organizational relations. When a member and his or her companion call on a white family in the Party they do not always have some special purpose in mind. The visit may be a purely social one. But when the call is made to a Negro home almost invariably it is for propaganda purposes. Contact with Negroes is usually official. There is some drinking or dancing or both and the gathering is called a "social affair." This is fraudulent and a fake. I would like to challenge the Party membership to prove that any of them ever made a genuine social call on a Negro "contact" or member. We invade a Negro home in a group, discuss or argue "shop" and call it social intercourse.

118. White members go to Negroes' homes but quite often there is no reciprocal relation. This is no new experience for Negroes. For years and years white women have visited their laundresses, but the laundresses didn't visit them.

119. I am pointing these things out because there has been a great deal of talk in the Party about the social approach to Negroes. My contention is that our approach is neither social in the real sense, nor political. It is mechanical, stilted, prudish, gushing, emotional, naive or wholly sickening depending on the type of member making the approach.

### The Negro And Religion

120. What is sometimes called the Negro's "religious nature" and inclinations is often considered a stumbling block to the recruiting of Negroes. Members who think that religion is something unique among Negroes don't know very much about the United States. Baptist, Methodist and Catholic churches all over the country are filled with proletarians. They are in other churches but this is especially true of these three denominations of the masses, so to speak. Both the South and the West have been called the "Bible Belt." It is true of course that for the country as a whole the Negro centers more of his life in the church than other people. But the Negro church is more of a social center than is the white church. Furthermore Negro religion is a rubber stamp of white religion. (This is something for those to chew on who talk about a "Negro culture.") The majority of Negroes are Methodist and Baptist just as the majority of white people are Methodist and Baptist and for the same reasons.

121. If one approaches the question with petty-bourgeois liberal notions or the intellectualistic conceptions of the professional atheists then very little progress can be made. The conception and teaching of these people is that religion is the refuge of the ignorant or for the ignorant. I have heard one or two Party members express this opinion. Religion today, particularly with the Negro, is primarily a refuge of the oppressed and maltreated. I say "today" for the reason that if religion is considered historically then we have to consider other factors than oppression. Religion is the final attempt of an oppressed and poverty stricken class to get some kind of relief now or in the future from its class misery and oppression. This was the meaning of the "sorrow songs" of the Negro slaves. They had no shoes here but they would get them when they got to Heaven and "shout all over God's Heaven."

122. The approach to the problem of religion therefore must be by way of the class struggle not through the intellectualistic mumbo-jumbo of the "cultured classes." We eliminate the craving for the "consolations of religion" by prosecuting the class struggle through which the poor, exploited and oppressed are delivered from the grip of their oppressors. And not only from the grip of their economic oppressors but from the influence of the "men of God" who do the will of the ruling class.

123. The Party must not dodge the question of religion as does the Socialist Party by saying that "religion is a private affair." Religion is a private affair in relation to the capitalist state. We demand the right of religious freedom, that is we would oppose religious persecution by the state or any powerful group in the capitalist state. But the Party will consciously seek to win Negroes and all other workers away from religious thinking and practices, just as we seek to win them away from every other category of bourgeois ideology.

124. It is necessary to emphasize again and again that the Party must concentrate on the Negro proletarians in the factories and unions. Members in the unions must give special attention to the Negro worker. They should seek them out and not leave meeting them to chance. This is a complex task and cannot be considered merely a part of the day's work. Furthermore the correct course to pursue cannot be determined in advance but must be determined practically in relation to all the other factors involved in the multiplicity of trade union situations.

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This document is not intended as an exhaustive consideration of the questions that it deals with. Many, many more pages could be written and yet much that is important would be left out. Many of the opinions are sharply and dogmatically expressed. Members will disagree with much that has been said, some may disagree with all the major positions taken. Should this be the case it is the business of these members to participate in the discussion in writing so that the whole party can have the advantage of everyone's thinking and experience.

I want to say a word about my own personal attitude toward the Party and "Negro work." I believe that the Party should give special and

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planned attention to this matter. I do not believe however that there should be a National Negro Department. Not because the Party does not have the forces but for the same reason that I would oppose a Jewish Department or a Slavic Department. I am not in favor of a Negro column in Labor Action whether in the form of the weekly Negro article by Comrade Allen or the former Negro column by Comrade Johnson. In my opinion such procedure is forced and artificial. I favor treating this question in the paper in the news columns and editorially the same as any other "racial" publicity and propaganda.

The "Negro Question" and "Negro Work" have been kicked around in our Party for several years now. The political and organization results are virtually zero. In my opinion the chief reason for this was not the small forces of the Party or a lack of interest by the Party. It was rather the failure of the leading committee to take a position, by formal resolution or thesis on the most important aspects of the question. While the absence of such a guide would not stop the Party from carrying on activity; the absence of a "line" on the major questions especially those over which there was controversy, would tend to retard activity and promote time-wasting and often petty controversy.

These disputed questions must be resolved. There are those in the Party who are for the advocacy of self-determination and those against. There are those who believe that "race consciousness" has a revolutionary content and those who disagree. I charged a member with black chauvinism and he replied that I was a white chauvinist. These questions are either matters of principle or extremely important tactical questions. They must be debated out in the open and the debate must be followed by a decision and a position. This discussion must be brought before the whole Party in an organized manner where all who have ideas and opinions are forced to express those ideas and opinions in the hearing of the whole Party so that we know definitely where everybody stands. The protagonists of whatever notions must take responsibility for their positions and defend them so that the Party can know what is being proposed. The Party should demand to know what are the theoretical assumptions upon which "Negro work" is being based. It is my intention in this document to bring the discussion of controverted points formally before the Party in an organized way and to take it out of the corridors and ante-rooms. We must eliminate the petty gossip that has often characterized our efforts to carry on this work.

#### Bibliography

- |              |                                    |
|--------------|------------------------------------|
| *1. Beard    | Rise of American Civilization      |
| *2. Jennings | History of Economic Progress in US |

These two books or their equivalent are essential for an understanding of the background of Negro history in the US

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|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| *Carter Woodson | The Negro In Our History         |
| *Schluetter     | Lincoln, Labor and Slavery       |
| Phillips        | American Negro Slavery           |
| *J. C. Carroll  | Slave Insurrections in the US    |
| *Dollard        | Caste & Class in A Southern Town |

*B. W. Doyle	The Etiquette of Race Relations in the South
-*DuBois	Black Reconstruction
"	Souls of Black Folk
"	Darkwater
-*Booker Washington	Up From Slavery
-Jessie Fausett	There is Confusion
-Walter White	Rope and Faggot
Gosnell	Negro Politicians
-Frazier	Negro Family in U.S.
"	Negro Family in Chicago
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-*Spero and Harris	The Black Worker
*Paul Lewinson	Race, Class and Party
-Brawley	A Short History of the Negro People
H. R. Helper	The Impending Crisis
-A. L. Locke	The New Negro
Olmstead	Journey in the Back Country
"	Seaboard Slave States
-C. H. Wesley	Negro Labor in the U. S.
-*James	History of Negro Revolt
-Julian Lewis	The Biology of the Negro
*Herskovits	The Myth of the Negro Past.

Just a few books are included and I do not intend to give the impression that there are no other books just as important as those I set down. With just a few exceptions I have omitted books written mainly as propaganda to prove something for or against the Negro. Most of the books of this type are worthless whether written by Negroes or white people. Unfortunately most of the literature on the subject is worthless and a waste of time to read.

All of the books in the list should be read. The only books that are really difficult to read are Lewis: The Biology of the Negro and Herskovits: The Myth of the Negro Past. These are both technical studies one mainly in pathology and the other in anthropology.

The starred books might be read first as they are in my opinion the more important. But all of the books in the list should be read. Darkwater, There is Confusion and Hope & Faggot are novels. Books with a dash are by Negroes except in the Spero Harris book only Harris is Negro.

Members who absorb the starred books at least in this list while they are actively engaged in "Negro Work" will be in a position to contribute something more to this work than mere ignorance and good intentions.

David Coolidge

I. While I was in Buffalo last year the Branch began a new experiment in work with Negroes. The result was the establishment of the Buffalo Workingmens Welfare Committee. The programmatic foundation of the Committee was based on a few simple propositions. 1. Since the Negro is largely a proletarian group, a basic step in the struggle for political, social and economic equality for Negroes, is the activation of the organized labor movement, particularly the CIO, in this direction is urgent and necessary. 2. The first step in this direction is to get Negro workers into the unions, to orient them into union activity and consistent support of the unions and their program. 3. All questions involving the relations of Negro workers to the employer or the union were to be raised in the union by the Negro members themselves. 4. A well organized and persistent educational campaign to indoctrinate Negro workers with the proper trade union concepts and principles. An especial point to be made of clarifying Negro workers on the difference between the anti-Negro attitudes of the employer and the discriminatory practices of the unions. 5. The Committee would emphasize that it was part of the labor movement, that it was in no sense a "dual" movement and that it would not under any conditions serve as a center for, or a supporter of "Negro" unions. 6. The Committee would be opposed to every form of Jim-Crow. The Committee therefore would not confine its membership to Negro workers. The Committee agreed however that since its especial task was with Negro workers as outlined above, it would be necessary at the beginning to confine its membership and activities to Negro workers. Furthermore the Committee took into consideration the fact that the Negro worker faced special problems in the matter of employment and housing that required special handling. Furthermore, it was the opinion of the Committee that the programmatic and tactical education of a nucleus of Negro workers could be consummated best if a few of them were isolated temporarily for such intensive education. This was a purely practical expedient for a short term only. It worked very well in Buffalo and did not in any way militate against the entrance of "whites" at a later date.

II. The Committee conceived of its task as an extremely practical one. While its work proceeded from a clearly defined principled and programmatic foundation, (See Declaration of Purpose and By-Laws) it was taught right from the start that it was a working committee and that at least 75% of its time must be spent in concrete tasks.

III. The Committee was organized around certain concrete tasks and not around the Declaration of Purpose. While no worker is admitted to the Committee who has any reservations on the Declaration of Purpose, the appeal to the worker was always a request to join with others to attain a goal in which the prospect was presumably interested, which had significance for him and which would benefit him.

IV. The practical tasks which the Committee set for itself were: (a) Agitation and propaganda for JOBS FOR NEGROES, especially in the mass industries. (b) Opportunities for Negroes to acquire mechanical training in government vocational schools and in schools established

by industry. (c) Agitation and propaganda against the exclusion of Negro workers from semi-skilled and skilled jobs. (d) Agitation and propaganda against discriminatory practices in plants such as separate Negro shops or shifts, separate toilets, washrooms and cafeterias. (e) A demand for adequate and non-jim-crow federal housing projects.

V. The procedure was and must be to initiate and carry on the struggle for the elimination of these discriminatory practices inside the union with the intent of making this an actual and practical part of the union program. The CIO is committed to this and the various resolutions along this line were used as the springboard for demanding action by the various locals.

The purposes, aims and procedure of the Committee determined and indicated its composition. Its membership had to be confined almost exclusively to factory workers who were members of trade unions. Furthermore, we wanted to bar all politicians, preachers, welfare workers, students, and other non-proletarian elements. The Committee was to be a trade union proletarian group developed along very narrow class lines.

VI. The first general task therefore was to get Negroes in a certain plant into the union. Next get them active in the union. Following this some Negro with a good record and of demonstrated leadership ability was conditioned for running for office. As a rule we wanted them to become stewarts. Then on the Executive Board or Grievance Committee.

VII. The "Negro Question" in general or discrimination in general was never raised in the union or elsewhere. There were members who were inclined to procede in this traditional manner but they were reoriented, given a sound organizational and tactical approach.

The Committee-union member always presented a concrete case to the union. For instance: there are no Negroes working in this plant or in this department. Negroes must get production jobs, all of us are porters now. Two Negroes applied for employment on Monday last week and were refused. We have their names and addresses. The plant cafeteria discriminates against Negroes. Negro girls in plant A are segregated on the night shift. There is a toilet set apart for Negroes. Negroes in the plant are discriminated against in the matter of classification and wages. Every attack or presentation was concrete and based on investigation which had established the facts irrefutably.

At each Committee meeting grievances which actually existed in plants where the members worked were taken up and discussed. Members working in those plants and in those locals were instructed by the Committee how to proceed. Speeches were outlined and gone over meticulously. Every man in the Committee fraction in the local knew his place and his role. If a resolution was necessary for the local meeting on the subject it was prepared by the Committee and the proper man selected to present it.

The demand always was for action by the local. There was no collaboration with outside Negro organization or individuals.

VIII. On the matter of discrimination in and by the union, the formal procedure was the same. The Committee-union member always proceeded from the concrete. No general speeches and attacks about "discrimination". The local is not carrying out certain specific and named directives of the GEB and our convention. Certain white brothers combined against a Negro brother and said they would not vote for him because he is a Negro. Brother X has been circulating a petition in his department against Negroes being transferred to that department. Three white brothers walked out when our Negro brother Y was given a certain job. The bargaining committee has not taken up this matter with management as it was instructed by this local union.

It is extremely important that the Committee members and Negro workers understand the difference in approach to the problem of discrimination where practiced by the union and by the employer. The boss must stand out as the main enemy, not the union. It is not the workers plant but it is and remains their union. They seek to educate the prejudiced union membership but they ask the union to put pressure on the boss.

To be lukewarm on this matter is fatal for the work of the Committee and the welfare of Negro workers.

IX. The existence of the Committee is not made known to the union. It is not a secret organization but at least in the beginning it is best that the Committee proceeds unpublicised. Committee members act under the discipline of the Committee but in the plant and union they are simply enlightened and alert union militants. That is the work of the Committee is done inside the union and in the name of the union and not in the name of the Committee. At a later date the Committee breaks out of its anonymous role and appears as the published of a bulletin. (Abolish)

Party connection with the Committee is not known except to Committee members. It is important that the Party "leader" in the Committee do all his work in and with the Committee. He must be a person with "a passion for anonymity." He makes the bullets for the Committee members to fire but he must never be mentioned in the outside.

X. The technique of forming the Committee in Buffalo was rather "unorthodox." We inquired around for Negroes who were employed in plants. We went into Negro neighborhoods and talked to men we saw on the streets. We approached Negroes coming from plants and entered into conversations with them on conditions in the plant. A good way to begin is with people who have received the paper.

The approach must be concrete and on practical matters. Don't worry about the attitude of the prospect toward the war, the March



on Washington movement, Roosevelt, religion or the other questions that have importance but which are not necessary to deal with at this early stage. But--have nothing to do with any person who is connected with or supports any of the various pro-Japanese Negro organizations. Don't take in outspoken Negro nationalists, the black Mohammedan nationalists, Garveyites, or Negroes from any of the numerous lunatic fringe groups. The Committee must be composed of "normal" workers who are willing to support the union and fight inside for redress of their grievances. This has to be emphasized because it is easy to be misled by the "militant" talk of some of these people. Keep away from them.

Approach workers for membership on the Committee by talking to them about JOBS for NEGROES in specific plants. Talk about SKILLED JOBS for NEGROES, DISCRIMINATION in a certain plant, BETTER HOUSES, etc. In this Committee we are not directly concerned with all the problems of the Negro people.

The first Negro workers who agree to join an organization for the carrying out of the program become the nucleus for the Committee. They get to work to bring others in. This is the simple procedure.

Also remember that you are not recruiting to the Party but forming what is virtually a trade union educational league of a limited sort. Don't seek only people who are articulate, people "who can understand us", or whom we find it easy to talk to. Intelligence, understanding and loyalty are not necessarily accompanied by verbosity and loquaciousness.

XI. A meeting is called as soon as there are two or three "members". You have the Declaration of Purpose and the By-Laws. These you have received from a friend in the Buffalo Workingmens' Welfare Committee. As soon as there are 8 or 10 members set up the formal committee.

Remember the Committee is not a "mass organization" and it is not intended that the Committee develop into a mass organization. The Buffalo Committee is considering procedures in connection with a larger organization but the Committee will retain its present organizational form.

The Committee, however, is an "independent" organization. It is not a Party front or a Party stooge outfit. It has its own program, organization and discipline. The Party guides it and at the proper level of development the Buffalo Committee was told of the Party's role in the organization of the Committee.

XIII. The Party leader must seek at all times to develop initiative, resourcefulness and leadership among the Negroes in the Committee. This must be done at all costs. The Negro members must not be insulted by being denied the opportunity to develop programmatic and organizational leadership in the Committee. The Party leader in the committee must be willing to risk even failure of a project rather than establish a precedent of the Party doing the job while the

Negro members sit around as "guests". If the Party makes a mistake at this point, the Committee will be composed of Negroes who will never rise to the requirements of the Committee program and its tasks. Negroes who have even the potential ability will not remain members of a Committee where they are not doing the work themselves. The Party leader in the Committee must lead from the background. If he selects the right kind of people at the beginning he will have little difficulty except those that he creates himself by his paternalism or overzealousness for perfection or a "pure line".

The Bulletin of the Buffalo Committee is the work of the Committee and not of the Party Branch. Committee members write the articles and do the technical work. Of course they get assistance from the Party but what must be emphasized is that the bulk of the work falls on the members of the Committee. This can be for the reason that the Bulletin is not a political organ in the narrow sense but a bulletin dealing with the practical problems with which the members of the Committee have some familiarity. It may be necessary for the Party member to edit local publicity at the beginning but under no conditions should he continue to hold such a post. It should be turned over to a non-Party member of the Committee even though he makes mistakes and puts in some material that does not sound so good. This can be taken care of by educational discussions in the Committee and by the advices of the Party member in the Committee.

It is especially important that the Committee members be encouraged and taught to perform the technical work of the Committee. If they don't do it, then it should remain undone. I have seen the white chairman of one of our Negro groups spend a whole evening turning the mimeograph machine putting out the organization's bulletin. This is astounding!! Of course, subjectively this "leader" thought that he was winning over the Negro members but objectively this procedure means that the Negro members are idiots not capable of turning a crank; even a crank whose path is predetermined by the mechanical construction of the machine. Psychologists have discovered that rats can get out of a complicated maze and that apes can learn to use a stick in procuring food.

XIII. The Committee is a medium through which and in which Negro trade unionists can be given intensive trade union and political education. Educational discussions were a regular and constant feature of the Buffalo Committee. Education was not injected into the Committee. Every discussion originated normally and naturally from a concrete situation that the Committee faced or from a situation faced by a member of the Committee in his plant or union. For instance we discussed the meaning of Stalinism when a member of the Committee was framed by the Stalinists and lost his job. We discussed various aspects of race relations and trade unionism when a group of Negroes decided not to join the union but to form an outside committee in the plant and present their "grievances" to the union. We discussed the Party frankly and openly in the Committee when the workers from one plant decided that DC should have a cash present for his services to them. We discussed the meaning and relevance of the slogan of Political, Economic and Social Equality for Negroes when a member of the Committee said that he did not want social equality.

The Committee never discussed such an abstraction as democratic rights for Negroes. We discussed and demanded democratic rights for the Negroes in X plant or union; always delineating concretely what rights were being violated. Even when discussing the war we insisted on being concrete: no tiresome and meaningless sing-song. "this is an imperialist war, this is an imperialist war." We approached the imperialist character of the war through shop grievances, plant bond and Red Cross drives, income taxes, high cost of living, etc. etc. in time the real nature of the war was revealed and we did not have to go through the usual incantations.

XIV. We attempted to keep constantly before us the simple proposition that Negroes, like other workers will only join an organization which they have been convinced will do something for them; something practical. We proceeded on the sound assumption that Negroes are no more interested in generalities than are white workers. Therefore we paid the strictest attention to getting something done. We paid attention to the simplest needs and requirements of these workers. Where to apply for a job and how. How to apply for transfer to production from the porter staff. How to get in training schools. How to get a photostatic copy of a vocational training certificate made. That is we rendered assistance always at the point where it was desired and needed, no matter how prosaic the task.

XV. Not only did we maintain organizational, educational and political contact with these Negro workers but also social contact. Not the phony social contact of "going for coffee" (or beer) after an equally phony and mechanized meeting in which the "contacts" are talked at. We visited in their homes and they in the homes of members of the branch. The social life was not founded on whiskey and beer parties. The Buffalo Committee was in existence for five or six months before it had a single social affair. Only once in five months were refreshments served at the Committee meeting. At this meeting in a member's home he served two quart bottles of beer and some pretzels for nine persons. This occurred after the Committee had been in existence for three months. It is our experience that there is great danger of getting people who come around for "social" purposes only if early stress is laid on the social and goodfellowship side of this work. Furthermore the Committee wished to emphasize the necessity for the Committee to be composed of sober and serious workers who could forego pleasure if the work of the Committee demanded this.

XVI. Women are taken into the Committee and on the same terms as men. They were treated as the equals of the men. We had to do some educational work on some of the men who had been accustomed to being the "head of the house". Also we had to be careful that the work was not disrupted by rivalries between some of the men for the approval of some of the women. Difficulty may also arise when some married man in the Committee arouses the suspicions of his non-member wife who gets jealous of his association in the Committee with other women.

XVII. We want to emphasize again that the Committee is formed for practical work. It is not a discussion group, or class. It is not a forum for Party speakers to display their political knowledge or

lack of political knowledge. The principles of the organization as set forth in the Declaration of Purpose and the By-Laws must be followed, both in letter and spirit. There must be no violation of this directive. The Party members who initiate this work must explain this in a sound pedagogical manner and with the degree of agitational skill necessary. They must guide the Committee with intelligence, ability, understanding and loyalty.

No claim is made here that this is the only worth while type of Negro work. We hold no such narrow and bigoted point of view. It is one type however, a distinct type with a foundation and procedure of its own. All that we insist on is that Branches that enter this work adhere strictly to this program and this procedure.

XVIII. One or two Party members should be assigned this work. Two are enough. This should be their major Party activity. One of the two should be a Negro Party member. Only these two from the Party should be members of the Committee. The Branch must increase the Party membership in the Committee by recruitment from the Committee's non-Party membership.

XIX. Both Party members assigned to work in and with the Committee should be MEN. A lot of headaches will be eliminated if this is followed.

XX. At a certain stage in the development of the Committee's activities Party members will make contact with the Committee or with chosen members. They may be assigned to follow up LA distribution. They may meet Committee members at socials. No Party member however should butt into the Committee without definite assignment from the branch and with the advice of the Party members, in the Committee.

XXI. Weekly report should be made to the Branch on the Committee.

XXII. The Buffalo Committee is now in the process of preparing for the extension of their work to other cities. The expanded organization will probably bear some such title as Federated Workingmen's Welfare Committees." I will be in Buffalo in February to go over this matter.

Each local Committee will be the local section of a federated group. Please remember this: the local Committee is not the periphery of the local Branch but a section of a group of federated Committees. Local Committees will be under the direction of the Federation. The Buffalo Committee will serve as an organizing center for the present.

This means that local Committees will keep in touch with me as the appointed field representative of the Buffalo Committee. Also that local Committees will correspond with the Buffalo Committee direct.

XXIII. Another circular will be prepared as soon as a number of Branches have replied to this and stated what steps they have taken in connection with instituting this activity.

Fraternally  
David Coolidge.

proletariat does not wipe out the class lines among Negroes. I said in another place that the Negro ruling class is a sort of comprador ruling class. This is true. It lives and moves and has its being by virtue of the aid received from white business leaders and politicians. It functions in their interest and subjects the Negro masses to the most vicious exploitation. The Negro masses therefore suffer a dual class oppression.

58. The theory of "race consciousness" obscures the class line existent in capitalist society. This along with the blurring of the intra-racial class line only deepens and broadens the exploitation of the Negro masses by a Negro "bourgeoisie." This blurring of class lines leads to the myth that the white bourgeoisie, especially businessmen and some government officials are friends of the Negro and that it is the white proletariat which is the real enemy. All through my youth I heard Negroes say "if I have to mix with white people I want it to be rich white folks." The argument is that "rich white people" will not be jealous of Negro progress and therefore will be willing to aid Negroes "do something for themselves."

59. The doctrine of "race consciousness" gives the struggle for Negro rights the appearance of a conflict between races. The struggle becomes primarily a conflict between "whites" and "blacks" rather than a struggle between bourgeois and proletarian. This again is a no class doctrine and is perhaps the most dangerous aspect of the "race consciousness" theory. The fact that a struggle may take on a "race" complexion is no reason for making the generalization that the difficulty is racial as such. It is the business of the Marxists to illuminate the situation and dispel this attitude, not feed it.

60. "Race consciousness" leads to the cult of Negro Nationalism. This is the belief that the Negro as a homogeneous oppressed group can or should attempt to take his place in the country as a self-contained and self-sufficient national entity. The logical development of this concept is the advocacy of the formation of the Negro state. The fact that Garvey planned to build his state in Africa is not important. The important point is the effort to separate the Negro as Negro, politically and socially. Furthermore Negro Nationalism also rejects the idea of class and the class organization of society. Negro nationalism is bourgeois in its ideology. It would only change the color of the exploiters.

61. It is necessary to record the opinion that the opposition of the "upper class" Negroes to nationalist movements is not motivated by solicitude for the Negro masses but by what they conceive to be best for the better placed Negroes. They do not object to the exploitation of the Negro masses but only to the exploitation taking place under conditions where they cannot benefit from it and control it. Also the experiment might fail and these Negroes fear to lose the concessions they now get from the white ruling class in the form of jobs and other economic assistance.

62. "Race consciousness" promotes a form of "chosen people" thinking. It also causes undue emphasis to be placed on the "achievements of

the Negro." It hides the fact that only a relatively few Negroes achieve "success." It operates as a means of impelling Negroes to forget their misery and revel in the honors that have been bestowed on a few. The idea of the "talented tenth" is accepted and rejoiced over despite the plain fact that there has been no alleviation of the social degradation of the Negro people. This theory plays into the hands of those who talk about the Negro's "special gifts." If he would only become "race conscious" and develop these gifts he could make a wonderful contribution to civilization. Of course Negroes are expected to go through this preparatory period and through this period of perfecting his peculiar genius within the framework of Jim-crow and segregation.

63. One particularly nauseating result of this type of thinking is the thousand and one little groups devoted to the study of Negro "life, art and literature." Here are gathered nice old ladies who contribute to the Negro orphanage, nice young ladies whose grandfathers marched through Georgia with Sherman, "radicals" who "see no difference between a Negro and a white man" and a few revolutionists who believe that the proper approach to the Negro is "social" and "personal".

64. In rejecting the theory of "race consciousness" I do not reject the necessity for developing slogans that will stir the Negro masses to independent and militant action as Negroes. For instance it is not necessary to believe in "race consciousness" to support enthusiastically a March on Washington Movement. It is not necessary to advocate this doctrine to get Negroes to participate in such a march. On the contrary, I can conceive of such a slogan obstructing such an action. Some Negroes might say: "why demand jobs in the white man's factory? Negroes should build factories of their own." Others might say, "we can't demand anything from white folks, we haven't got anything. We've got to get something first before we can demand things." There are a number of attitudes of this type prevalent among Negroes who are of the opinion that Negroes should think more in terms of social and economic isolation.

65. The Party, in my opinion must definitely reject the theory of "race consciousness" as I have defined it. It is a reactionary doctrine. It can only retard the day of the liberation of the Negro masses. It would subject the Negro masses to intra-racial class exploitation as a substitute for "white" exploitation. (White exploitation being bourgeois exploitation which today happens to be white.)

#### Self-Determination

66. I have already indicated that the question of Self-Determination arises in connection with the discussion of race consciousness. Self-Determination in connection with a "racial" group is the theory that such a group is a culturally and socially defined national entity. It is assumed to have cultural and social traditions peculiar to itself. It has an art and a literature that are racially indigenous and of distinctive form and content. This literature must be something more than a literature of protest. Such cultural distinctive-

ness is a characteristic for example, of certain African tribes or the black people of Haiti. The same way be said about the Gullah Negroes living on the sea island off the coast of South Carolina.

67. Assigning the Haitians a separate culture is not based on the fact that they have a state but primarily because of their history and the mode of development of these people over more than a century. Even language is not a determining factor. I would say that the Haitians have a different culture from "white" France even though both speak substantially the same language.

68. Also Self-Determination can only have real meaning where there is group aspiration of a nationalist character, which the group desires to concretize as an independent nation of whatever sort, or as an autonomous republic in a federation of republics.

69. This demand might arise in the United States in the course of the establishment of a socialist republic, or the workers state. It is theoretically conceivable that the Negroes would demand complete political independence. Therefore the Party must express its opinion on this question. Not because the question is present today but for the reason that it is connected with other questions about Negroes and the attitude of the Party toward them.

70. Wherever any racial minority living under such concrete conditions as the Negroes in the United States, demanded the right of separation it would have to be granted. That is any group which had for centuries suffered the disabilities and oppression that has been the lot of American Negroes would have to be granted the right to solve its problems and work out its future in its won state if it so desired.

71. The demand for separation would have to be clearly and incontestably the expression of the majority of the Negro masses. Most ridiculous and disastrous mistakes could be made in handling this question. The attitude of these masses could not be determined by the representations of a few articulate "leaders". Negro leaders have seldom been genuine exponents of the will of the Negro masses. They have usually represented their own interests; or the interests of white politicians or businessmen from which the Negro "leader" received a consideration.

72. Before I would vote favorably on such a request I would want to look into the matter very objectively. I should test out the sentiment of the Negro masses and examine the records of the spokesmen for self-determination. Lots of people have been fooled by Negro leaders who appeared representing Negroes and claiming to report what they wanted.

73. The above reservations do not of course apply to those who are for self-determination because the Negro in the United States is a nation. All who hold this position must be advocates of self-determination, even though there is no such demand made by Negroes. They must be for self-determination just as they are for a strike where

one is indicated even though there is no strike demand from the workers. They are obligated to educate Negroes for self-determination just as they would educate the workers for the strike. That is it would be incumbent upon them to take the initiative. One certainly cannot demand that a nation give up its nationhood or even entertain the thought in private.

74. It is necessary for persons who hold to the view that Negroes are a nation to elucidate their views before the Party in the course of this discussion, just as the defenders of the theory of "race consciousness" must do the same. It is reported that Comrade Trotsky held the view that the Negro in the United States is a nation, basing himself in part on his belief that the Negro here has a separate language. During the National Training School, in the lecture devoted to "The Negro and the Unions," I made reference to this position of comrade Trotsky. I said that his ignorance of the Negro in the United States was probably profound and complete. The next day a member of the class opened the question again and remarked that I was wrong in my position. He said that the correctness of the position of Comrade Trotsky had been demonstrated during the course of some activities which he had been carrying on among Negro agricultural workers. We were anxious to have some discussion on this point but time did not permit. I ardently hope that the very interesting and fascinating observations of this comrade will be explained in the course of this discussion.

#### Are The Negroes For Self-Determination?

75. It is my opinion that there is no basis whatsoever for the belief that Negroes have any interest whatsoever in self-determination. I mean by this that American Negroes have no desire now for a separate political existence. If this is true now then certainly there is no reason to believe that they will want separation after a victorious workers revolution in which they have participated. Such demand could only be based on dissatisfaction and skepticism which persisted even in the face of repeated demonstrations of the socialist intentions of the Party or of persistent misunderstanding of what socialism is.

76. There is nothing in the cultural development of the Negro in the United States to incline him to the idea of self-determination. The mores and culture of the Negro is the mores and culture of the white American and he has no other. There have been efforts to link the Negro culturally with Africa but this is both ethnologically and anthropologically nonsensical. The culture of the American Negro is as different from that of Africa as that of the white man. This is one of the strange phenomena of social development in the United States. Despite the oppression and the jim-crow the American Negro has been culturally assimilated. This assimilation continues and is accelerated from year to year. The number of Negro college graduates increases from year to year. More important is the fact that the number of graduates of "white" universities increases rapidly from year to year. The leading teachers in the Negro colleges get their graduate degrees from "white" schools. There is no Negro journalism but the Negro press is a copy of the white press. There has been some



talk about "Negro literature" but the only thing Negro about it is its content: that is, it is writing protesting against his oppression, but has not distinctive form. The fact is that Negroes have been so thoroughly consumed with the imitation of "white" culture that it is only in recent years that they have begun to pay attention to the history of the Negro in the United States. They have not cared particularly for things that might be called distinctively Negro.

77. Those who believe that there is such a thing as a Negro culture in the United States should ask themselves this question. If all the white people were removed and the Negro was left alone in the United States, what changes in industry, government, education, law and religion would take place? What new educational, legal, religious, philosophical or scientific concepts and practices would replace those prevalent today. There is no reason to believe that there would be anything essentially new. No doubt that in the course of time new things and ideas would emerge and eventually there might be a new culture or civilization but this new culture would not be evidence that the Negro has a separate culture today.

78. And what is this Negro culture that we hear about occasionally? Is it something progressive or is it reactionary? This point should be clarified by the proponents of the Negro culture. Do they mean that the Negro has a separate culture which is only that or do they mean that it is separate and "advanced?" What is in this Negro culture that should be adopted by the country at large?

79. Is it probable that Negroes will desire to separate from the new socialist state? I am convinced that they will not. I am also of the opinion that all who propagate this doctrine will be persons non grata with the mass of Negroes. They have heard for years and decades that the Negro should "be sent back to Africa;" where he can practice self-determination to his hearts content. Many speeches have been made in Congress on this theme.

80. American Negroes have heard of the black republic of Liberia with its jungles and slavery. They think it a fine thing to applaud a Negro minister to Liberia, or to contemplate the black president of that little republic but they seem to prefer the plantations of Mississippi to the freedom of Liberia. They are jubilant when they read of the black kingdom of Abyssinia despite its slavery and mud road capital city. But as for them they prefer to spend their lives in the red mud of Georgia.

81. All the Negro's struggle today is against separation and for inclusion in the bourgeois democratic set-up in the United States. What reason is there for believing that Negroes will want to be separated from a higher form of democracy than contemporary bourgeois democracy? To propose self-determination to the American Negro can appear as nothing more than a proposal for jim-crow couched in hifalutin political terminology and covered over with what will appear to him as just some more white duplicity.

82. Negroes who have any intelligence know that they could not maintain a separate state. It would undoubtedly be a bourgeois state of

some sort. If not then there would be no reason for separation from the new socialist state.

83. The whole question for the United States lacks political, social and psychological realism. It is academic in the bad sense of that word. The advocacy of self-determination should be completely rejected by the Party. Secondly while we must agree to self-determination if there is a demand from the Negro masses, we must take the position that it is the bounden duty of the Party to win the Negro over to the support of the Workers State and integrate him into the entire fabric of that state along with the white proletariat. The Party must make this clear always, day in and day out. There must be no mealy mouthed dual position or compromise with this self-determination crack-potism. (I call the advocacy of self-determination crack-potism) The Party has one positive duty to perform now: to win Negroes to the program of Marxism and to the ranks of the proletarian revolution. This means to recruit Negroes to the Party.

#### Why The Emphasis On Recruiting Negroes?

84. The Party seeks to win the Negro masses to its ranks because they are as a group proletarians. They are the group lowest in the social, economic and political scale. They are the worst exploited. Furthermore since the days of the slave revolts they have demonstrated their militancy and their susceptibility to progressive and revolutionary propaganda and agitation. Despite their social degradation in the United States they have in no period given up the fight and succumbed to moods of despair and demoralization. They have demonstrated that they make excellent trade union material and would they understand always take front rank among the most militant fighters in trade union struggles. Also in military affairs they have always been known as front rank fighters; not only in the commonplace infantry formations but today they take to mechanized warfare including aviation. There would be no difficulty in transferring this ability to other events, where they would undoubtedly exhibit a similar courage. Also the Negro proletarians have become inured to hardships, tough going and iron rations. They are not soft. These qualities are necessary in the time of the proletarian revolutionary struggles.

85. We want to recruit Negroes because they will test the revolutionary sincerity and integrity of the Party. Their presence will test our ability to assimilate the most exploited of the proletarians. They will test our ability to educate backward workers and hold them. Not only is the presence of Negroes the test of our ability to educate the white workers, draw them to the side of the Negroes and thus impel the proletariat to close ranks. And finally, it is the test of our ability to put ourselves in the place of the lowliest workers; to go down to them and at the same time lift them up; to be their equals spiritually while superior to them politically to go through their experiences with them as guide and never lose our balance.

86. These are the reasons why the Party should specialize in what is called "Negro work." We are revolutionary Marxists and realists; people who have a practical task before us and the Negro proletariat must be in our ranks to help us carry through that task in the United

States.

From "Race Consciousness" to Class Consciousness."

87. The Party must come down to solid earth in its approach to the problems of the Negro in the United States. This is no field for the exercise of mystical, romantic or a priori notions. The habit of attempting to say what the Negro wants or what he thinks after short and fleeting acquaintance with a few articulate and forward Negroes is to act in the manner of the "car window sociologists" who used to write books on the Negro after a two-weeks visit to the South. Far worse than this is the habit of being guided in the formulation of a program for Negroes after reading one of these books or studying under one of these "sociologists."

88. We have said in a general way what the "Negro problem" is. We say that the Negro suffers a dual disability: exploitation as wage-earner and complementary exploitation (oppression and jim-crow) because of race and color. The two are indissolubly connected and are inherent in the development and operation of bourgeois democracy and capitalist business enterprise in the United States. This indicates the method of attack and the direction in which the solution must be sought. The Negro is primarily a victim of class oppression and exploitation. The solution therefore must lie in the class struggle and the development of class consciousness.

89. It is only the Marxists who hold this position. Only Marxism can make such analyses and arrive at such conclusions. Our Party therefore must keep this central in its thinking and action. Negroes themselves do not accept the Marxian analysis of the "race problem" or the revolutionary solution proposed by Marxists. But neither do the white workers accept the Marxist analysis and the solution proposed by the revolutionaries. We attempt to teach them. In this sense we think for them. A white worker approaches us with a union problem today. We approach his questions objectively and politically. We fit his questions to the scheme of things and to our basic Marxist attitudes.

90. We do not proceed in this manner in the handling of the "Negro problem." There are many of us who would hesitate to express an opinion on a trade union problem of a white worker but who would have no hesitancy in posing as experts on the problems of Negroes. In one situation ignorance, we feel, may be fatal but in the other "ignorance is bliss" and "it is foolish to be wise." Also the Party seems to hold the opinion that all the equipment necessary for doing "Negro work" is a goodly supply of this blissful ignorance, interest, the right frame of mind and a dancing or drinking acquaintance with a couple of Negroes. Of course it is necessary to talk a great deal about "Negro work", dash off a thesis, a column or insist on getting into a Branch "doing Negro work."

91. I do not claim that the ranks are wholly responsible for this procedure. To do so would be nonsensical. But we must reorient the Party. Those who want to do "Negro work" must prove at least that

their interest extends far enough to read, study and practice to the end that they become theoretic-ally, politically and organizationally competent. This should apply to the Negro members the same as to the white members of the Party. There is nothing more nauseating than to see a Negro picked to do "Negro work" who doesn't know his head from a hole in the ground.

92. We should insist that all who want to do "Negro work" should acquaint themselves with the historical, social, economic and political aspects of the "Problem." This means first of all acquaintance with the development of and the complexion of capitalism in the United States. Next the history of the Negro fitted into capitalist development. It means the objective study of Negro social and economic progress. The story of the Negro in relation to the trade union movement looked at historically and analytically. Also the objective study of politics and political parties in relation to the Negro. Of course practice must accompany such study. The two go together and both are necessary.

93. The Party must consciously plan and organize its "Negro work" with the aim in view of indoctrinating the Negro with the fundamental idea of class struggle and class consciousness. The basic reasons and the technique are the same as with white workers. We approach the white worker through a discussion of his group problems, usually his problems as a worker and trade unionist. We lead from the discussion of the specific trade union problem or the specific worker problem to politics and political discussion. Our aim is political discussion; to make the correct political analysis of the problem presented to us, to lead the workers to the correct political understanding of the problems they face. We urge the worker to take an organizational step that is join the Party based on his understanding of our political analysis and his acceptance of the solution that we propose. It is in this sense that our approach to the problems of the workers is called a political approach.

94. With the Negro however we have a different approach: we are more "personal" and "social." It has been said again and again that "you cannot talk politics to Negroes right off the bat." Now, I must say that I don't know what this means. I have a private opinion that it means nothing in relation to the Negroes but something very significant in connection with the member who mouths such cryptic gibberish. We can't talk politics to any worker right off the bat if by politics we mean putting the concepts of of Marxism and the Party line in the technical language that we use in our resolutions, theses and discussions. We can't talk politics to anybody if we ignore the intellectual and experiential level of the person we are talking to. We never attempt to hang our hats on a bare wall, we usually look to see if there is a hook there.

95. We can talk politics to a Negro or white worker "right off the bat if we know our politics, in theory and practice. I know of no group of people easier to approach politically than Negroes. In fact there is no other sensible and correct way to approach them. When approaching a Negro trade unionist, as trade unionist of course we

would not begin with a discussion of "Negro problems," but with a discussion of his union problems.

96. We talked Marxist theory and Workers Party politics to sharecroppers for hours on end. They understood what we were talking about. We didn't talk down to them in a patronizing way. We used their experience to hang our theory and our politics on. But we knew our theory and our politics and we knew their experience. Do I mean by this that they understand socialism? Of course not. Their understanding is very primitive. But they understand enough to do their work as revolutionaries and do it well. We will give them more of Marxist theory and WP politics from time to time and elevate their understanding.

97. The Party must apply its Marxist politics and theory to the objective discontent of the Negro masses and to their struggle for democratic rights. This is a platform from which to introduce our revolutionary program and propaganda. This means first of all to win the Negro to class struggle and class consciousness. They must be won away from their present reformist or reactionary Negro leadership and from the leadership of the white bourgeoisie. This is the practical task of the Party in every mass Negro organization. We do not go into Negro organizations to find a nesting place or to give aid and comfort to the leadership.

98. The Party must be deeply conscious of the need to split the Negro masses away from the present leadership. We must always differentiate between the Negro masses and the Negro "upper classes." Roughly the upper classes include the Negro politicians, preachers, doctors, lawyers, teachers, college students and businessmen. They are a class comparable to the upper classes in white society. This must be understood as a class distinction. The interests of this group are those of another class than the mass of the Negroes. They are not just "betrayers" of the Negro masses. Randolph and his friends call off the March on Washington not because they want to betray Negroes but because objectively they represent the interest of the "upper class Negroes." In this way Randolph's class interests clash with the class interests of the Negro masses.

#### Toward The Negro Proletarians

99. In its practical approach to the Negro the Party should orient exclusively toward the Negro proletarians. The only exception should be in the case of genuine Negro intellectuals who stand on the program of Marxism, who agree immediately to take their place at the side of the Negro and white proletarians, to participate in the proletarian struggle, to accept full Party discipline at once and to place their education and training completely at the call of the Party. If they cannot do this then we should flee from them as though they were the plague. (This is really what they would be in the Party.) I would like to pound this into the consciousness of the Party because there is some tendency to play around with this type of Negro.

100. We want the Negro proletarians in the factories and in the unions. This orientation can be carried out today as never before.

Now there are 500,000 Negroes in the organized labor movement. This is certainly enough Negroes for us to work for at the present. Our preference for Negro proletarians must be exhibited in practice. When a Negro "contact" is reported the first questions should be "is he or she a proletarian? Is he in the factory? Is he in the union? If not then the members reporting should be told to put the "contact" in 4F and draft a proletarian. This procedure should be rigid and persistent.

101. It would be quite an anomaly to have the Party concentrating on the white proletariat and at the same time, in its work with Negroes, to follow a different line and tactic. This would produce a mongrel organization of white proletarians and Negro petty-bourgeois. It is important to emphasize that Negro proletarians will have an entirely different effect on the Party than Negro petty-bourgeois. The proletarians would present the minimum of fakery, shysterism, pseudo-learning and artificiality. Of course these proletarians don't "talk like us." They probably could not appreciate our phonograph records or our opinions about Gauguin. (I don't mean this statement to be in any way an underhand jibe at members who have records of Beethoven or pictures of Gauguin or any other artist. I mean it only as a statement of fact. In the homes of Negro proletarians instead of Beethoven, Gauguin, Joyce and others, we are more likely to find the Bible, a picture of Christ clinging to a rock or on the cross, religious mottoes on the walls, a picture of Joe Louis, Haile Selassie, Booker Washington; records by Negro swing bands and for literature some pretty conservative or outmoded stuff. In some homes we will find another type of literature, art etc. But as a rule the cultural interests will be different from those of the Party.)

#### Down With Paternalism.

102. The Party must purge itself of all paternalism in its work with Negroes. I have already argued against this attitude in many places above without using the word. But it has to be emphasized over and over because there are members who persist in this attitude. They recommend Negroes for posts in the Party who have no capabilities at all for the post. I have known Negroes to be suggested for posts whose membership in the Party was in doubt. I have seen Negroes retained in the Party long after they had demonstrated they had no interest in remaining. I have seen members virtually make stooges out of Negro members presumably out of solicitude that the Negro member might not feel at home in the Party. I have seen members take over a meeting where there was a Negro chairman and run the meeting from the sidelines so to speak. I have seen members in the organization of Negroes, do all the work while the Negroes sat back in decorative contentment. I have seen Party members do editorial tasks that could just as well have been done by Negro members of the organization in question. Again and again I have witnessed the travail and anguish of members caused by their fears that if they did not constantly suckle a Negro group, it would famish, perish and dry up. Or if not this then it would at least make serious political errors.

103. This is paternalism, which in essence contains the elements of jim-crow and insult. Part of it of course springs from ignorance and

at times from an exaggerated sense of one's own importance and ability. Furthermore at times we feel that we are indispensable. Also I have the opinion that there is a little of the social worker in the attitude of some of us toward Negroes. And then we have the abolitionist attitude and the Christian missionary attitude. Now social workers, abolitionists and missionaries have certainly done some remarkable things for the welfare of Negroes in the past. But that's not what we are and that's not our task. Therefore we have to divest ourselves of the attitudes assumed by social workers, abolitionists and missionaries.

104. If members would pause a while and learn something about Negroes they would probably get rid of their paternalistic attitudes. In the first place they would learn that Negroes are not so dumb in devising efficient organizing techniques. Our members don't know that Negroes fresh out of slavery organized the great African Methodist Episcopal Church, a completely independent institution with no white connection or supervision. Negro workers have organized all manner of institutions which demonstrated real organizing ability. In fact most Negro institutions have been formed by very ordinary Negroes who had nothing more than an idea, energy, organizing genius and a couple of dollars. Negroes who could neither read nor write have been known to be active in promoting educational institutions and organizing financial campaigns for their support. I am not here discussing the ideology of any of these institutions but the organizing aspects only.

105. The deficiency of the ordinary Negro today is in not knowing what to organize. It isn't that Negro workers do not know how to organize and conduct organizations, it is rather their ignorance of what program to adopt. That's where we should come in if we want to aid Negroes where they can't help themselves.

106. Most of us certainly can't teach Negroes organizing techniques; as we're not so hot at that ourselves. We can learn some things from them. Negroes are not very punctual people. I have heard members complain about this. Negroes waste time in meetings and talk off the point. But who among us is going to be so presumptuous and brazen as hold himself up as a model in these matters?

107. Thinking over these things certainly should aid in purging the Party of some of the paternalism. We don't need to turn nineograph machines for Negro workers who have just come from operating lathes and screw machines. We don't need to operate nineographs for Negroes even though they have never seen a machine; they have learned to operate machines and institutions far more complex.

108. To me all these things are extremely simple and only need be carried out. The Negro proletarian which the Party wants will not desire any god-fathers or any undue personal attention. If they are worth anything either actually or potentially they will want to be treated like all other racial groups in the Party. In fact most Negro proletarians with intelligence will resent paternalistic attitudes. It is usually only the riff-raff, the pseudo-intellectuals and the bohemians who will remain in the Party to be patronized and

slobbered over. Our paternalistic attitudes will be accepted only by very poverty stricken and greatly harassed proletarians such the sharecroppers. Here such docility and longsuffering will be the result of long and extreme oppression. They will cling to any straw that might give them relief from their deep-seated misery. In the case of such workers however paternalism is especially to be condemned. Here paternalism fails to recognize their genuine and considerable abilities and resourcefulness. Furthermore it denies to them any opportunity for development and organizational and political progress.

#### Education of the Negro Member.

109. The Party must give its Negro members and "contacts" a POLITICAL EDUCATION. They must also be trained in correct Bolshevik organizational principles and in efficient administration. They must be encouraged and impelled to perform any and all functions given white members of the Party. They must not be given these functions however just because they are Negroes. There must be no coddling or pampering. Above all the Party must frown on any evidence of a sex approach to the Negro member. I have seen instances when this method was disgustingly in evidence. There must not be a standard for Negroes and another for "advanced workers." All of these failings and faults can be eliminated by the proper educational and pedagogical methods.

110. The Party is tested not only by the number of Negroes that we recruit but also by how well we succeed in preparing some of them for Party leadership. Not to prepare Negro members for PARTY LEADERSHIP is to act no differently from bourgeois organizations which have a few Negroes around as ornaments and to prove that "we are not prejudiced against Negroes."

111. It seems that the Party thinks only in terms of preparing its Negro members for activity among Negroes. But a Negro member who is not qualified and competent to be a PARTY LEADER cannot possibly be competent to be our leader among Negroes. Negroes that the Party assigns to do "Negro work" must be politically educated and organizationally efficient. If this is not done they will be only a menace or a nuisance. The work of the Party among Negroes will become increasingly effective as the Party is able to send politically trained Negro members into the ranks of the Negro masses. This to me is not to say that "white people cannot work among Negroes." This is utter nonsense and too puerile to discuss except to say that objectively this sentiment is a little tinged with unconscious jim-crow. It is a fact that a politically educated Negro will make more rapid headway than a politically educated white member. But over-emphasis on this indubitable fact and the belief that "Negroes are antagonistic to white people" can and has produced the attitude of mind that any Negro member is better for "Negro work" than any white member. Members forget or never knew that Negroes have been accepting the leadership of white people for over 300 years, in one way or another and in one organization or another. Questions of this sort require study and an examination of one's procedure not a priori judgments. Negroes are to some degree suspicious of white people but the masses of Negroes are also suspicious of their own leaders.



112. The problem of winning Negroes to the Party is at bottom identical with the problem of winning white workers. It is for this reason that white members who cannot do effective work among Negro workers will also be the same members who fail in producing fruitful results among white workers. Both Negro and white workers must be convinced that the Party can help him solve the particular problem with which he is confronted. Both must be convinced that the Party can do something for him and his kind. Both must come to accept that aspect of the Party program which relates to him and the program as a whole. No worker white or black will join the Party unless he believes that such a step will benefit him in some practical way. Very seldom will we come across a worker Negro or white who joins the Party because he has thought the program through.

113. I don't think that it should be necessary to go into any elaborate detail on this matter of education. The first thing to remember is to make a concrete approach to the problem of education. The education of the new member should have begun when he or she was a prospect. The educational and pedagogical approach to the prospect should be planned in as much detail and carefulness as the education of the new member. What I am more interested to stress is the absolute necessity for the concrete attack. Education, even theoretical education should revolve around the practical problems which the "contact" has to deal with. That is our general principles and current political line, when presented must enter logically and naturally in connection with some practical matter in which the "contact" is interested. Negroes today wonder why jim-crow persists simultaneously with protestations that the war is for democracy. They don't understand why if it is a war for democracy they are denied jobs, promotion and placement on production just as in the past. Why is there discrimination against Negroes in the unions? Why even does he come up against discrimination in the CIO? This is the type of practical problem that our theoretical position must illuminate. If our theory cannot illuminate this type of problem and if we are not competent and experienced enough to supply such illumination then our theory is useless and so are we. We can spur workers to action and draw them into the Party only if we can supply an explanation of their situation in correct but simple terms.

114. An important part of the education of new members is giving them responsibility and insisting on their carrying it. This rule is regularly violated in the case of Negro members and "contacts." Negro members cannot be educated and trained separated from the white members. There can be no separate education for Negro members. The problem of educating Negro members is part of the more general problem of educating all new members. In every city or unit there should be a new members group assembled occasionally for educational discussion on the political and organizational line of the WP. This can be done even with a single member. If we can only recruit members in units of one then we must give them education in units of one.

115. Negro members must not be given the impression that they are to be used as mere bait to catch other Negroes. Negro members should not be used as exhibits. Many Negroes are on to that trick. A Negro member should not be given a post or put up to speak because "we must have a Negro."

116. Negroes with any sense will not be impressed by the usual type of demonstrative social approach that the Party members indulge in at times. Taking a drink with a Negro in the Negro quarter is not new. White politicians do that in every election campaign. They also gush over the Negro babies and remark on how cute they are. Negro neighborhoods are infested every Monday morning with white insurance agents. They drop around for a social chat and the insurance premium. Such part time and exhibitionist socializing between Negroes and white people is no novelty. We didn't invent it. Remember also that the CP specialized in this.

117. Social intercourse between Negroes and white members should be as normal as that between the white members themselves. We should establish normal political and organizational relations. When a member and his or her companion call on a white family in the Party they do not always have some special purpose in mind. The visit may be a purely social one. But when the call is made to a Negro home almost invariably it is for propaganda purposes. Contact with Negroes is usually official. There is some drinking or dancing or both and the gathering is called a "social affair." This is fraudulent and a fake. I would like to challenge the Party membership to prove that any of them ever made a genuine social call on a Negro "contact" or member. We invade a Negro home in a group, discuss or argue "shop" and call it social intercourse.

118. White members go to Negroes' homes but quite often there is no reciprocal relation. This is no new experience for Negroes. For years and years white women have visited their laundresses, but the laundresses didn't visit them.

119. I am pointing these things out because there has been a great deal of talk in the Party about the social approach to Negroes. My contention is that our approach is neither social in the real sense, nor political. It is mechanical, stilted, prudish, gushing, emotional, naive or wholly sickening depending on the type of member making the approach.

### The Negro And Religion

120. What is sometimes called the Negro's "religious nature" and inclinations is often considered a stumbling block to the recruiting of Negroes. Members who think that religion is something unique among Negroes don't know very much about the United States. Baptist, Methodist and Catholic churches all over the country are filled with proletarians. They are in other churches but this is especially true of these three denominations of the masses, so to speak. Both the South and the West have been called the "Bible Belt." It is true of course that for the country as a whole the Negro centers more of his life in the church than other people. But the Negro church is more of a social center than is the white church. Furthermore Negro religion is a rubber stamp of white religion. (This is something for those to chew on who talk about a "Negro culture.") The majority of Negroes are Methodist and Baptist just as the majority of white people are Methodist and Baptist and for the same reasons.

121. If one approaches the question with petty-bourgeois liberal notions or the intellectualistic conceptions of the professional atheists then very little progress can be made. The conception and teaching of these people is that religion is the refuge of the ignorant or for the ignorant. I have heard one or two Party members express this opinion. Religion today, particularly with the Negro, is primarily a refuge of the oppressed and maltreated. I say "today" for the reason that if religion is considered historically then we have to consider other factors than oppression. Religion is the final attempt of an oppressed and poverty stricken class to get some kind of relief now or in the future from its class misery and oppression. This was the meaning of the "sorrow songs" of the Negro slaves. They had no shoes here but they would get them when they got to Heaven and "shout all over God's Heaven."

122. The approach to the problem of religion therefore must be by way of the class struggle not through the intellectualistic mumbo-jumbo of the "cultured classes." We eliminate the craving for the "consolations of religion" by prosecuting the class struggle through which the poor, exploited and oppressed are delivered from the grip of their oppressors. And not only from the grip of their economic oppressors but from the influence of the "men of God" who do the will of the ruling class.

123. The Party must not dodge the question of religion as does the Socialist Party by saying that "religion is a private affair." Religion is a private affair in relation to the capitalist state. We demand the right of religious freedom, that is we would oppose religious persecution by the state or any powerful group in the capitalist state. But the Party will consciously seek to win Negroes and all other workers away from religious thinking and practices, just as we seek to win them away from every other category of bourgeois ideology.

124. It is necessary to emphasize again and again that the Party must concentrate on the Negro proletarians in the factories and unions. Members in the unions must give special attention to the Negro worker. They should seek them out and not leave meeting them to chance. This is a complex task and cannot be considered merely a part of the day's work. Furthermore the correct course to pursue cannot be determined in advance but must be determined practically in relation to all the other factors involved in the multiplicity of trade union situations.

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This document is not intended as an exhaustive consideration of the questions that it deals with. Many, many more pages could be written and yet much that is important would be left out. Many of the opinions are sharply and dogmatically expressed. Members will disagree with much that has been said, some may disagree with all the major positions taken. Should this be the case it is the business of these members to participate in the discussion in writing so that the whole party can have the advantage of everyone's thinking and experience.

I want to say a word about my own personal attitude toward the Party and "Negro work." I believe that the Party should give special and

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planned attention to this matter. I do not believe however that there should be a National Negro Department. Not because the Party does not have the forces but for the same reason that I would oppose a Jewish Department or a Slavic Department. I am not in favor of a Negro column in Labor Action whether in the form of the weekly Negro article by Comrade Allen or the former Negro column by Comrade Johnson. In my opinion such procedure is forced and artificial. I favor treating this question in the paper in the news columns and editorially the same as any other "racial" publicity and propaganda.

The "Negro Question" and "Negro Work" have been kicked around in our Party for several years now. The political and organization results are virtually zero. In my opinion the chief reason for this was not the small forces of the Party or a lack of interest by the Party. It was rather the failure of the leading committee to take a position, by formal resolution or thesis on the most important aspects of the question. While the absence of such a guide would not stop the Party from carrying on activity; the absence of a "line" on the major questions especially those over which there was controversy, would tend to retard activity and promote time-wasting and often petty controversy.

These disputed questions must be resolved. There are those in the Party who are for the advocacy of self-determination and those against. There are those who believe that "race consciousness" has a revolutionary content and those who disagree. I charged a member with black chauvinism and he replied that I was a white chauvinist. These questions are either matters of principle or extremely important tactical questions. They must be debated out in the open and the debate must be followed by a decision and a position. This discussion must be brought before the whole Party in an organized manner where all who have ideas and opinions are forced to express those ideas and opinions in the hearing of the whole Party so that we know definitely where everybody stands. The protagonists of whatever notions must take responsibility for their positions and defend them so that the Party can know what is being proposed. The Party should demand to know what are the theoretical assumptions upon which "Negro work" is being based. It is my intention in this document to bring the discussion of controverted points formally before the Party in an organized way and to take it out of the corridors and ante-rooms. We must eliminate the petty gossip that has often characterized our efforts to carry on this work.

#### Bibliography

- |              |                                    |
|--------------|------------------------------------|
| *1. Beard    | Rise of American Civilization      |
| *2. Jennings | History of Economic Progress in US |

These two books or their equivalent are essential for an understanding of the background of Negro history in the US

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|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| *Carter Woodson | The Negro In Our History         |
| *Schluetter     | Lincoln, Labor and Slavery       |
| Phillips        | American Negro Slavery           |
| *J. C. Carroll  | Slave Insurrections in the US    |
| *Dollard        | Caste & Class in A Southern Town |

*B. W. Doyle	The Etiquette of Race Relations in the South
-*DuBois	Black Reconstruction
"	Souls of Black Folk
"	Darkwater
-*Booker Washington	Up From Slavery
-Jessie Fausett	There is Confusion
-Walter White	Rope and Faggot
Gosnell	Negro Politicians
-Frazier	Negro Family in U.S.
"	Negro Family in Chicago
Woofter	Black Yeomanry
-*Spero and Harris	The Black Worker
*Paul Lewinson	Race, Class and Party
-Brawley	A Short History of the Negro People
H. R. Helper	The Impending Crisis
-A. L. Locke	The New Negro
Olmstead	Journey in the Back Country
"	Seaboard Slave States
-C. H. Wesley	Negro Labor in the U. S.
-*James	History of Negro Revolt
-Julian Lewis	The Biology of the Negro
*Herskovits	The Myth of the Negro Past.

Just a few books are included and I do not intend to give the impression that there are no other books just as important as those I set down. With just a few exceptions I have omitted books written mainly as propaganda to prove something for or against the Negro. Most of the books of this type are worthless whether written by Negroes or white people. Unfortunately most of the literature on the subject is worthless and a waste of time to read.

All of the books in the list should be read. The only books that are really difficult to read are Lewis: The Biology of the Negro and Herskovits: The Myth of the Negro Past. These are both technical studies one mainly in pathology and the other in anthropology.

The starred books might be read first as they are in my opinion the more important. But all of the books in the list should be read. Darkwater, There is Confusion and Hope & Faggot are novels. Books with a dash are by Negroes except in the Spero Harris book only Harris is Negro.

Members who absorb the starred books at least in this list while they are actively engaged in "Negro Work" will be in a position to contribute something more to this work than mere ignorance and good intentions.

David Coolidge

I. While I was in Buffalo last year the Branch began a new experiment in work with Negroes. The result was the establishment of the Buffalo Workingmens Welfare Committee. The programmatic foundation of the Committee was based on a few simple propositions. 1. Since the Negro is largely a proletarian group, a basic step in the struggle for political, social and economic equality for Negroes, is the activization of the organized labor movement, particularly the CIO, in this direction is urgent and necessary. 2. The first step in this direction is to get Negro workers into the unions, to orient them into union activity and consistent support of the unions and their program. 3. All questions involving the relations of Negro workers to the employer or the union were to be raised in the union by the Negro members themselves. 4. A well organized and persistent educational campaign to indoctrinate Negro workers with the proper trade union concepts and principles. An especial point to be made of clarifying Negro workers on the difference between the anti-Negro attitudes of the employer and the discriminatory practices of the unions. 5. The Committee would emphasize that it was part of the labor movement, that it was in no sense a "dual" movement and that it would not under any conditions serve as a center for, or a supporter of "Negro" unions. 6. The Committee would be opposed to every form of Jim-Crow. The Committee therefore would not confine its membership to Negro workers. The Committee agreed however that since its especial task was with Negro workers as outlined above, it would be necessary at the beginning to confine its membership and activities to Negro workers. Furthermore the Committee took into consideration the fact that the Negro worker faced special problems in the matter of employment and housing that required special handling. Furthermore, it was the opinion of the Committee that the programmatic and tactical education of a nucleus of Negro workers could be consummated best if a few of them were isolated temporarily for such intensive education. This was a purely practical expedient for a short term only. It worked very well in Buffalo and did not in any way militate against the entrance of "whites" at a later date.

II. The Committee conceived of its task as an extremely practical one. While its work proceeded from a clearly defined principled and programmatic foundation, (See Declaration of Purpose and By-Laws) it was taught right from the start that it was a working committee and that at least 75% of its time must be spent in concrete tasks.

III. The Committee was organized around certain concrete tasks and not around the Declaration of Purpose. While no worker is admitted to the Committee who has any reservations on the Declaration of Purpose, the appeal to the worker was always a request to join with others to attain a goal in which the prospect was presumably interested, which had significance for him and which would benefit him.

IV. The practical tasks which the Committee set for itself were: (a) Agitation and propaganda for JOBS FOR NEGROES, especially in the mass industries. (b) Opportunities for Negroes to acquire mechanical training in government vocational schools and in schools established

by industry. (c) Agitation and propaganda against the exclusion of Negro workers from semi-skilled and skilled jobs. (d) Agitation and propaganda against discriminatory practices in plants such as separate Negro shops or shifts, separate toilets, washrooms and cafeterias. (e) A demand for adequate and non-jim-crow federal housing projects.

V. The procedure was and must be to initiate and carry on the struggle for the elimination of these discriminatory practices inside the union with the intent of making this an actual and practical part of the union program. The CIO is committed to this and the various resolutions along this line were used as the springboard for demanding action by the various locals.

The purposes, aims and procedure of the Committee determined and indicated its composition. Its membership had to be confined almost exclusively to factory workers who were members of trade unions. Furthermore, we wanted to bar all politicians, preachers, welfare workers, students, and other non-proletarian elements. The Committee was to be a trade union proletarian group developed along very narrow class lines.

VI. The first general task therefore was to get Negroes in a certain plant into the union. Next get them active in the union. Following this some Negro with a good record and of demonstrated leadership ability was conditioned for running for office. As a rule we wanted them to become stewarts. Then on the Executive Board or Grievance Committee.

VII. The "Negro Question" in general or discrimination in general was never raised in the union or elsewhere. There were members who were inclined to procede in this traditional manner but they were reoriented, given a sound organizational and tactical approach.

The Committee-union member always presented a concrete case to the union. For instance: there are no Negroes working in this plant or in this department. Negroes must get production jobs, all of us are porters now. Two Negroes applied for employment on Monday last week and were refused. We have their names and addresses. The plant cafeteria discriminates against Negroes. Negro girls in plant A are segregated on the night shift. There is a toilet set apart for Negroes. Negroes in the plant are discriminated against in the matter of classification and wages. Every attack or presentation was concrete and based on investigation which had established the facts irrefutably.

At each Committee meeting grievances which actually existed in plants where the members worked were taken up and discussed. Members working in those plants and in those locals were instructed by the Committee how to proceed. Speeches were outlined and gone over meticulously. Every man in the Committee fraction in the local knew his place and his role. If a resolution was necessary for the local meeting on the subject it was prepared by the Committee and the proper man selected to present it.

The demand always was for action by the local. There was no collaboration with outside Negro organization or individuals.

VIII. On the matter of discrimination in and by the union, the formal procedure was the same. The Committee-union member always proceeded from the concrete. No general speeches and attacks about "discrimination". The local is not carrying out certain specific and named directives of the GEB and our convention. Certain white brothers combined against a Negro brother and said they would not vote for him because he is a Negro. Brother X has been circulating a petition in his department against Negroes being transferred to that department. Three white brothers walked out when our Negro brother Y was given a certain job. The bargaining committee has not taken up this matter with management as it was instructed by this local union.

It is extremely important that the Committee members and Negro workers understand the difference in approach to the problem of discrimination where practiced by the union and by the employer. The boss must stand out as the main enemy, not the union. It is not the workers plant but it is and remains their union. They seek to educate the prejudiced union membership but they ask the union to put pressure on the boss.

To be lukewarm on this matter is fatal for the work of the Committee and the welfare of Negro workers.

IX. The existence of the Committee is not made known to the union. It is not a secret organization but at least in the beginning it is best that the Committee proceeds unpublicised. Committee members act under the discipline of the Committee but in the plant and union they are simply enlightened and alert union militants. That is the work of the Committee is done inside the union and in the name of the union and not in the name of the Committee. At a later date the Committee breaks out of its anonymous role and appears as the published of a bulletin. (Abolish)

Party connection with the Committee is not known except to Committee members. It is important that the Party "leader" in the Committee do all his work in and with the Committee. He must be a person with "a passion for anonymity." He makes the bullets for the Committee members to fire but he must never be mentioned in the outside.

X. The technique of forming the Committee in Buffalo was rather "unorthodox." We inquired around for Negroes who were employed in plants. We went into Negro neighborhoods and talked to men we saw on the streets. We approached Negroes coming from plants and entered into conversations with them on conditions in the plant. A good way to begin is with people who have received the paper.

The approach must be concrete and on practical matters. Don't worry about the attitude of the prospect toward the war, the March



on Washington movement, Roosevelt, religion or the other questions that have importance but which are not necessary to deal with at this early stage. But--have nothing to do with any person who is connected with or supports any of the various pro-Japanese Negro organizations. Don't take in outspoken Negro nationalists, the black Mohammedan nationalists, Garveyites, or Negroes from any of the numerous lunatic fringe groups. The Committee must be composed of "normal" workers who are willing to support the union and fight inside for redress of their grievances. This has to be emphasized because it is easy to be misled by the "militant" talk of some of these people. Keep away from them.

Approach workers for membership on the Committee by talking to them about JOBS for NEGROES in specific plants. Talk about SKILLED JOBS for NEGROES, DISCRIMINATION in a certain plant, BETTER HOUSES, etc. In this Committee we are not directly concerned with all the problems of the Negro people.

The first Negro workers who agree to join an organization for the carrying out of the program become the nucleus for the Committee. They get to work to bring others in. This is the simple procedure.

Also remember that you are not recruiting to the Party but forming what is virtually a trade union educational league of a limited sort. Don't seek only people who are articulate, people "who can understand us", or whom we find it easy to talk to. Intelligence, understanding and loyalty are not necessarily accompanied by verbosity and loquaciousness.

XI. A meeting is called as soon as there are two or three "members". You have the Declaration of Purpose and the By-Laws. These you have received from a friend in the Buffalo Workingmens' Welfare Committee. As soon as there are 8 or 10 members set up the formal committee.

Remember the Committee is not a "mass organization" and it is not intended that the Committee develop into a mass organization. The Buffalo Committee is considering procedures in connection with a larger organization but the Committee will retain its present organizational form.

The Committee, however, is an "independent" organization. It is not a Party front or a Party stooge outfit. It has its own program, organization and discipline. The Party guides it and at the proper level of development the Buffalo Committee was told of the Party's role in the organization of the Committee.

XIII. The Party leader must seek at all times to develop initiative, resourcefulness and leadership among the Negroes in the Committee. This must be done at all costs. The Negro members must not be insulted by being denied the opportunity to develop programmatic and organizational leadership in the Committee. The Party leader in the committee must be willing to risk even failure of a project rather than establish a precedent of the Party doing the job while the

Negro members sit around as "guests". If the Party makes a mistake at this point, the Committee will be composed of Negroes who will never rise to the requirements of the Committee program and its tasks. Negroes who have even the potential ability will not remain members of a Committee where they are not doing the work themselves. The Party leader in the Committee must lead from the background. If he selects the right kind of people at the beginning he will have little difficulty except those that he creates himself by his paternalism or overzealousness for perfection or a "pure line".

The Bulletin of the Buffalo Committee is the work of the Committee and not of the Party Branch. Committee members write the articles and do the technical work. Of course they get assistance from the Party but what must be emphasized is that the bulk of the work falls on the members of the Committee. This can be for the reason that the Bulletin is not a political organ in the narrow sense but a bulletin dealing with the practical problems with which the members of the Committee have some familiarity. It may be necessary for the Party member to edit local publicity at the beginning but under no conditions should he continue to hold such a post. It should be turned over to a non-Party member of the Committee even though he makes mistakes and puts in some material that does not sound so good. This can be taken care of by educational discussions in the Committee and by the advices of the Party member in the Committee.

It is especially important that the Committee members be encouraged and taught to perform the technical work of the Committee. If they don't do it, then it should remain undone. I have seen the white chairman of one of our Negro groups spend a whole evening turning the mimeograph machine putting out the organization's bulletin. This is astounding!! Of course, subjectively this "leader" thought that he was winning over the Negro members but objectively this procedure means that the Negro members are idiots not capable of turning a crank; even a crank whose path is predetermined by the mechanical construction of the machine. Psychologists have discovered that rats can get out of a complicated maze and that apes can learn to use a stick in procuring food.

XIII. The Committee is a medium through which and in which Negro trade unionists can be given intensive trade union and political education. Educational discussions were a regular and constant feature of the Buffalo Committee. Education was not injected into the Committee. Every discussion originated normally and naturally from a concrete situation that the Committee faced or from a situation faced by a member of the Committee in his plant or union. For instance we discussed the meaning of Stalinism when a member of the Committee was framed by the Stalinists and lost his job. We discussed various aspects of race relations and trade unionism when a group of Negroes decided not to join the union but to form an outside committee in the plant and present their "grievances" to the union. We discussed the Party frankly and openly in the Committee when the workers from one plant decided that DC should have a cash present for his services to them. We discussed the meaning and relevance of the slogan of Political, Economic and Social Equality for Negroes when a member of the Committee said that he did not want social equality.

The Committee never discussed such an abstraction as democratic rights for Negroes. We discussed and demanded democratic rights for the Negroes in X plant or union; always delineating concretely what rights were being violated. Even when discussing the war we insisted on being concrete: no tiresome and meaningless sing-song. "this is an imperialist war, this is an imperialist war." We approached the imperialist character of the war through shop grievances, plant bond and Red Cross drives, income taxes, high cost of living, etc. etc. in time the real nature of the war was revealed and we did not have to go through the usual incantations.

XIV. We attempted to keep constantly before us the simple proposition that Negroes, like other workers will only join an organization which they have been convinced will do something for them; something practical. We proceeded on the sound assumption that Negroes are no more interested in generalities than are white workers. Therefore we paid the strictest attention to getting something done. We paid attention to the simplest needs and requirements of these workers. Where to apply for a job and how. How to apply for transfer to production from the porter staff. How to get in training schools. How to get a photostatic copy of a vocational training certificate made. That is we rendered assistance always at the point where it was desired and needed, no matter how prosaic the task.

XV. Not only did we maintain organizational, educational and political contact with these Negro workers but also social contact. Not the phony social contact of "going for coffee" (or beer) after an equally phony and mechanized meeting in which the "contacts" are talked at. We visited in their homes and they in the homes of members of the branch. The social life was not founded on whiskey and beer parties. The Buffalo Committee was in existence for five or six months before it had a single social affair. Only once in five months were refreshments served at the Committee meeting. At this meeting in a member's home he served two quart bottles of beer and some pretzels for nine persons. This occurred after the Committee had been in existence for three months. It is our experience that there is great danger of getting people who come around for "social" purposes only if early stress is laid on the social and goodfellowship side of this work. Furthermore the Committee wished to emphasize the necessity for the Committee to be composed of sober and serious workers who could forego pleasure if the work of the Committee demanded this.

XVI. Women are taken into the Committee and on the same terms as men. They were treated as the equals of the men. We had to do some educational work on some of the men who had been accustomed to being the "head of the house". Also we had to be careful that the work was not disrupted by rivalries between some of the men for the approval of some of the women. Difficulty may also arise when some married man in the Committee arouses the suspicions of his non-member wife who gets jealous of his association in the Committee with other women.

XVII. We want to emphasize again that the Committee is formed for practical work. It is not a discussion group, or class. It is not a forum for Party speakers to display their political knowledge or

lack of political knowledge. The principles of the organization as set forth in the Declaration of Purpose and the By-Laws must be followed, both in letter and spirit. There must be no violation of this directive. The Party members who initiate this work must explain this in a sound pedagogical manner and with the degree of agitational skill necessary. They must guide the Committee with intelligence, ability, understanding and loyalty.

No claim is made here that this is the only worth while type of Negro work. We hold no such narrow and bigoted point of view. It is one type however, a distinct type with a foundation and procedure of its own. All that we insist on is that Branches that enter this work adhere strictly to this program and this procedure.

XVIII. One or two Party members should be assigned this work. Two are enough. This should be their major Party activity. One of the two should be a Negro Party member. Only these two from the Party should be members of the Committee. The Branch must increase the Party membership in the Committee by recruitment from the Committee's non-Party membership.

XIX. Both Party members assigned to work in and with the Committee should be MEN. A lot of headaches will be eliminated if this is followed.

XX. At a certain stage in the development of the Committee's activities Party members will make contact with the Committee or with chosen members. They may be assigned to follow up LA distribution. They may meet Committee members at socials. No Party member however should butt into the Committee without definite assignment from the branch and with the advice of the Party members, in the Committee.

XXI. Weekly report should be made to the Branch on the Committee.

XXII. The Buffalo Committee is now in the process of preparing for the extension of their work to other cities. The expanded organization will probably bear some such title as Federated Workingmen's Welfare Committees." I will be in Buffalo in February to go over this matter.

Each local Committee will be the local section of a federated group. Please remember this: the local Committee is not the periphery of the local Branch but a section of a group of federated Committees. Local Committees will be under the direction of the Federation. The Buffalo Committee will serve as an organizing center for the present.

This means that local Committees will keep in touch with me as the appointed field representative of the Buffalo Committee. Also that local Committees will correspond with the Buffalo Committee direct.

XXIII. Another circular will be prepared as soon as a number of Branches have replied to this and stated what steps they have taken in connection with instituting this activity.

Fraternally  
David Coolidge.