

B U L L E T I N

C O N T E N T S

A Resolution On the Negro Question

by

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1. The rise of capitalism brought in its wake the liberation of oppressed nationalities and races. The French Revolution abolished the ghettos and the American Civil War, slavery. As a rule, there was an inverse relationship between the degree of industrialization and national oppression. Anti-semitism, for instance, remained in force primarily in semi-feudal Eastern Europe (Russia, Poland etc.). In the colonies, less developed than Eastern Europe, even more national and racial oppression prevailed.

2. In a period of declining capitalism, as explained by the Permanent Revolution, none of the semi-feudal, backward countries, were able to solve any of the tasks of the bourgeois revolution, including the national question.

3. Under Fascism even the industrialized countries have reverted to the most extreme chauvinism, "racism", etc. Anti-semitism, Jim Crowism, persecution of all minority nationalities have then been practiced on a grandiose and hideous scale. Ghettos have been restored. Mass pogroms and forced labor have been instituted, the like of which did not exist even under feudalism.

4. In America the same basic development has taken place. The Civil War -- America's bourgeois revolution -- abolished slavery, enfranchised the Negro in the North, eliminated many Jim Crow practices, etc. The South -- a colony of the North in many respects and relatively unindustrialized -- remained, as per theory of the Permanent Revolution, the center of Jim Crowism, "white supremacy", and lynchings.

5. The abolition of Anti-semitism, Jim Crowism, all national oppressions, social and economic discrimination against women etc. -- all the tasks of the bourgeois revolution -- will take place with the withering away of the state after the socialist revolution.

6. The slogan of self-determination for the Negroes in America, advanced by third period Stalinism, does not correspond to the needs and wishes of the Negro people. The mass of American Negroes wish to be treated as full fledged Americans. However if the improbable should come to pass and the Negroes under capitalism or the dictatorship of the proletariat should want their own territory, we will advocate self-determination.

7. It would be the greatest of all fallacies and sectarianism to follow the party of Debs, the present SLP and the faction of Luxemburg, Bukharin and Piatakov in waiting for socialism to solve the racial and national question. Marxists must ever more become known as the most consistent democrats. Only by struggling together with the masses for the achievement of democratic rights can socialism be attained.

8. The pent-up emotions, economic difficulties and the general dislocation of life, brought on by the present war have concomitantly engendered anti-semitism and Jim Crowism. Post-war America, with its 15 million unemployed and brazen, bellicose ex-servicemen, will inevitably produce ever more chauvinism, pogroms against Negroes and Jews etc.

9. The stupendous urbanization and proletarianization of Negro life in the twenties and the unionization of 500,000 in the CIO impose upon us the task of urging the trade unions and the Labor Party we hope will be formed to be in the forefront of every democratic demand of the Negroes.

10. However, despite the complete validity of the above, especially as a long term perspective, it would be Utopian and reactionary to wait for the trade unions to solve the immediate problem of all problems confronting the Negroes, namely their protection from future pogroms. One must never forget that:--

- a. About 50% of the Negroes in America are not urbanized
- b. There is a large lumpenproletarian element among the Negroes (illiteracy, low cultural level, crime element etc.)
- c. The overwhelming majority of the Negroes who have been in factories are in unskilled labor (meat packing, porters, etc.)
- d. Judging from the experience of the first World War, the vast majority of the 500,000 in the CIO will lose their jobs as soon as the war ends.
- e. The Negroes will continue to be used as scabs and as a reservoir of cheap labor for dirty work. This will mean even more anti-Negro feeling and riots on the part of white workers.
- f. A substantial part of the American working class will, in the near future, remain anti-Negro.

11. Therefore, the main agitation of the Workers Party should be to urge the Negroes (a) to form independent organizations of self-defense against future pogroms, (b) demand that the MOW, the NAACP and the Urban League accent as its main function, regardless of their other worthwhile activities, the protection of the Negroes against future pogroms and (c) picket Jim Crow factories, etc.

12. The Harlem demonstration (an expression of revenge for the Detroit pogroms), the tumultuous applause and enthusiasm with which militant speeches were greeted at a recent MOW meeting, the militant content of the Metro press and many other signs indicate that the Negroes will not docilely accept their lot without a fight. These organizations are of the utmost importance in channelizing the latent militancy of the Negroes into socially progressive actions for their self-defense. A white pogromist will think twice before attempting any violence against a prepared and well-organized Negro group. The overwhelming mass of proletarian Negroes and substantial parts of the petty bourgeois intellectuals will support such organizations. They will not heed the cowardly and conservative voices raised by their fakers and philanthropic "benefactors" among the whites.

13. The Workers Party urges the Negroes to build, helps build and critically supports all such organizations regardless of whether they are led, at present, by petty bourgeois intellectuals or not. These organizations are progressive -- steps forward -- despite their leadership because they are basically organs for the preservation and extension of democratic rights among Negroes.

14. The Workers Party must immediately begin to educate its ranks about every phase of Negro life: its history, its organizations, its newspapers, etc. Our party must acquaint its members with all scientific ex-

periments which prove the inherent equality of all races.

15. The Workers Party must imbue its members with a "Jesuitical" attitude toward the Negro and Jewish problems. Every member must learn to give these problems the serious attention they deserve. Any manifestation in the party of feelings of superiority toward Negroes or ridicule of Jews must be immediately and energetically countered.

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