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Win Progress *for* *Harlem*



I. AMTER
*Communist Candidate to
City Council*



By JAMES W. FORD
*Secretary Harlem Division
Communist Party*

LWC

Price 5 cents

James W. Ford, Executive Secretary of the Harlem Division of the Communist Party, was the Vice-Presidential candidate of the Communist Party in the national elections of 1932 and 1936. He is author of a number of pamphlets including "Hunger and Terror in Harlem," published in 1935. He is also author of the book "The Negro and the Democratic Front," published by International Publishers in 1938.

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Win Progress for Harlem

By JAMES W. FORD

THE slashing of the W.P.A. by a reactionary bloc in the House of Representatives of the United States Congress came as a great shock to masses of people on relief and on W.P.A. jobs, as well as every individual who wants recovery. It exposed the whole future plans of the reactionaries. This is the hardest blow delivered to the unemployed. Although these reactionaries acted like wild men, a bunch of cut-throats and gangsters, their plans have been carefully calculated. It foretells what fascist barbarians contemplate. These are no ordinary times. No longer need there be any question as to the viciousness of reaction towards the people, when, with one stroke, 1,020,000 persons are threatened with being thrown on the scrap heap of unemployment. This is just one phase of the plans of the Tories, both the Republican and the conservative anti-New Deal Democrats. They unite on a common platform of the Rome-Berlin-Tokio Axis, and would strengthen the war danger and jeopardize the national security and interest of this country in the western hemisphere.

The Reactionary Woodrum-Garner-Hoover Group

Let us be as calm as we can. Let us coolly get our bearings, so that we can act with the greatest effect and determination. It would be easy to fall into panic. The proposed cut of W.P.A. will discharge 570,000 persons outright; another 450,000 will be placed on furlough. These people face starvation without relief or aid of any kind in the richest country in the world. It seems like a mad dream.

The Federal Theatre Project is wiped out. The construction of new W.P.A. projects is limited to \$40,000 per project, as a consequence 80 per cent of New York W.P.A. construc-

tion will have to be abandoned. Men, women and children are literally being driven to insanity and death. Let none of us forget that this latest action was touched off by the Woodrum-Garner-Hoover gang in the legislative councils of our country. It would bring Hooverism back to America.

The *Daily Worker*, in a timely and fighting editorial atop its mast-head, June 22nd, declared that the slogans of this gang were: "Wreck the W.P.A. Projects," "Close Down Construction Jobs," "Ring Down the Curtain on the Federal Theatres," "Tear Up the Plans for Bridges, Hospitals, Parks and Schools."

That is literally what they mean to do.

A huge skeleton sweeps across the country, swinging the scythe of death backward and forward, spreading hunger, disease and destruction to millions. For the people it is a struggle for life and security against this monster of death. About 385,000 Negro workers, or 14 per cent of the 2,724,240 workers on W.P.A., will be fired from their jobs. How appalling are these figures!

Miss Tallulah Bankhead, the noted actress, daughter of the Speaker of the House of Representatives and niece of Senator Bankhead of Alabama, led a delegation to Washington to protest against the abolition of the Federal Theatre Project. She wept on the shoulders of her father and uncle. "I began to think of the tough times troupers have," she said, "and all that actors give and how little comes back to them. I knew what no Senator could know about the luck of the theatre and the times between jobs. I was thinking," she went on to say, "of what the theatre project has meant to the colored performers. And I began to cry."

Here are the heart throbs and heartaches that will fill homes throughout the land. Such is the general picture.

Let us now look at what this presents for Harlem.

1. THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IN HARLEM

Let us refresh our memory of the consequences of the disastrous crisis which struck the country in 1929-30. For more than three years there was misery, starvation and death among

the people of Harlem. It came to a head on the memorable March 19, 1935. We learned how economic disturbances operate. We passed through the misery of unemployment, disease and death. We faced brutal police terror and built progressive organizations and movements.

Now we find ourselves in a new situation.

a) *Jobs and Employment.*

Last March there were 45,697 relief cases in Harlem; a relief load on which depended 112,908 persons. They were Negroes, Italians, Puerto Ricans, and also Irish, Jewish and other groups. Perhaps one-half were Negroes. For the city as a whole there were 179,950 relief cases, upon which depended 519,426 persons.

In this same month of March, 12,023 relief cases were closed in New York City, of which 3,066, or 25 per cent, were returned to private employment; whereas in Harlem, 1,411 cases were closed, of which 241, or only 17 per cent, were returned to private employment. Few Puerto Ricans are employed as leading personnel. With the abolition of the theatre project, little chance is left for Puerto Rican cultured people. Italians are employed on W.P.A. both as laborers and skilled workers. With the abolition of W.P.A. construction, both categories will be terribly affected. Discrimination in employment and jobs exist in big private concerns, against every category of our population—Negroes, West Indians, Italians, Puerto Ricans, Jews, etc.

On March 15, 26,394 Negroes were on W.P.A. rolls, or between 15 and 16 per cent of the total number of W.P.A. workers in New York. This, of course, does not show the real situation because unemployment among Negroes is much greater than among whites. We already see something new in the economic crisis in Harlem. The consequences of the reactionary attacks of the Woodrum-Garner-Hoover gang can be readily understood in its most vicious and vile significance. What is this something new?

It is, that despite the benefits of the New Deal after the depression of 1929-30, the capitalist crisis is still severe. Yet the reactionaries would destroy with one blow every gain that

has been made under the New Deal and recovery program, and thereby, through their hateful action, increase the severity of unemployment and misery. Another feature is that depressions and the attacks of the reactionaries always strike Harlem first and hardest. The spreading of confusion and disunity becomes more dangerous.

March 19, 1935

Following the March 19th outbreak in 1935, the Communist Party made a complete analysis of the economic and social conditions of Harlem. We made that analysis in the form of testimony to the Mayor's Committee which investigated conditions in Harlem. That report was entitled "Hunger and Terror in Harlem." Here are the figures that make possible a comparison between then and now. The section on Unemployment stated:

"It is estimated by various sources, Urban League, etc., that upward of 80 per cent of Harlem's population is unemployed. An analysis of the relief situation in Harlem will show that the majority of the population is without work and without adequate relief. It is fairly accurately estimated that in Harlem 40 per cent of all those who apply for relief are rejected. Over 75 per cent of these are rejected because of insufficient residential verification.

"The principal precincts in Harlem are 26, 28 and 32. Precinct 26 has on relief about 7,500 cases; precinct 28 about 6,000; and precinct 32 about 15,000. This is a total of about 28,500 cases on relief in Harlem, including Latin Americans and children.

"The average number of persons per case, according to the report of the Mayor's Committee, for the city, is 1.8. This would therefore make about 50,000 people getting relief in Harlem. . . . It is clear from these figures that very much less than 50 per cent of Harlem's unemployed is getting relief."

That was the situation in Harlem leading up to 1933-34. What were the dreadful consequences of unemployment at that time?

Let me again quote from our report to the Mayor's Commission:

"In 1932 Health Commissioner Shirley W. Wynne reported that 'Central Harlem has the highest infant mortality rate, 97 per 1,000 births as against 72 for the entire borough,' but that 'The high death rates among Negroes must not be regarded as a matter of higher susceptibility among Negroes as a race. . . .'

	<i>General Rate per 1000 pop.</i>	<i>Infant Rate per 1000 pop.</i>	<i>Tuberculosis per 100,000 pop.</i>
"Central Harlem	14.35	94	239
Entire City	10.15	52	53"

These conditions not only affect the Negro people, but disease started among one section of the population spreads into other sections. We have the example of the "Black Death" that swept Europe in ancient times. From the poorer sections of the population this scourge spread and wiped out whole sections of the entire population. Conditions in Harlem were aggravated by the operation of the agencies of reaction.

Tammany Reaction

In 1933-34 Tammany held the strings of political power. In their service to Wall Street and monopoly capital, Tammany-controlled police let loose a wave of terror against the masses. It sought to stifle any effort of resistance of the unemployed. The right to assemble and demonstrate was denied; the right to picket was prohibited; white and Negro citizens in many cases were not permitted to walk the streets together; the unemployed were beaten unmercifully in police stations; homes and private places were entered or raided by police without due authorization. Negroes were shot down at the least excuse by the police. Public opinion in New York City was astounded when these conditions were revealed at the hearings of the Mayor's Commission.

On this point our testimony to the Mayor's Commission stated: "The masses live on the brink of starvation. Disease and pestilence stalk the community. Police brutality drives the people to the point of desperation."

As a matter of fact it was generally agreed that in large measure Tammany police provoked the action of the masses on March 19th, to try to disunite them. But March 19th brought about a changed situation in Harlem. A powerful movement of the masses had already been started. The progressive movement rose rapidly on the wave of successes in beating back attacks and achieving civil and political rights in this community. The progressive movement grew throughout Harlem. The Harlem Legislative Conference was organized which unites the whole community. Job movements were started, the peace movement developed, the struggle against racial discrimination and anti-Semitism grew. Trade union organization has developed to wide proportions.

What further new situation do we face in 1939 as a result of this new threat of severe unemployment and the sharpest attacks of the reactionaries?

b) Health

Let me give you some figures on prevailing health conditions in Harlem areas, and compare these with the city as a whole.

General mortality (deaths per thousand):

<i>Central Harlem</i>	<i>East Harlem</i>	<i>New York City</i>
14.66	12.37	10.32

In other words, the people in the Central Harlem area, which includes the center of the Negro population, East and Lower Harlem, are dying almost one-third faster than the people in New York City as a whole.

Tuberculosis:

<i>Central Harlem</i>	<i>East Harlem</i>	<i>New York City</i>
247	121	66

Infant mortality:

<i>Central Harlem</i>	<i>East Harlem</i>	<i>New York City</i>
94	82	55

Let me break down the Central Harlem health area. Take District 17. It is bounded by 125 Street to 140th Street, Fifth Avenue to Lenox, and is about 96.7 per cent Negro populated.

It lies within the territory of the 19th Assembly District. What are the figures?

Problems in Certain Special Areas.

In District 17 (Central Harlem) (125th to 140th Streets, Fifth to Lenox Avenues) 96.7 per cent Negro: 19th A.D.

General Mortality 18.97	Tuberculosis .. 319	Infant Mortality 120
Central Harlem.. 14.66	Central Harlem 247	Central Harlem 94

In District 20 (East and Lower Harlem) (112th to 118th Streets, Third to Fifth Avenues) 50 per cent Puerto Rican. 17th A.D.

General Mortality 13.75	Tuberculosis .. 208	Infant Mortality 91
East Harlem 12.37	East Harlem ... 121	East Harlem ... 82

In District 30 (East Harlem) (99th to 104th Streets, First to Third Avenues) one-third Italian. 18th A.D.

General Mortality 14.45	Tuberculosis .. 220	Infant Mortality 93
East Harlem 12.37	East Harlem ... 131	East Harlem ... 82

These figures show that health problems are common to all the people of this area. They are related to the unemployment and economic conditions in the community. Four years ago our investigations were confined almost wholly to the dying out of the Negro population. We had not shown the full relationship of the common problems of Italians, Puerto Ricans, Finnish, Jewish and other groups. Today it has become more self-evident, and we seek to unite all groups into one common struggle.

c) Housing

Bad housing is the inevitable consequence of lack of jobs and employment. Poor housing provides a breeding ground for the mortal diseases which are wiping out the population. The following housing problems are urgently in need of solution in Harlem; proper water supplies, sanitary cellars, adequate toilet facilities, elimination of over-crowding, provision for proper ventilation and light, removing the dilapidation which causes accidents, proper screening of windows, rat-proofing, safety against fire hazards, enforcement of all housing regulations. Everybody in New York was appalled at the recent death and destruction from fire in Chinatown.

We protest against the rent hogs and all those who are responsible for violation of fire laws and tenement regulations and call for their prosecution. Who knows when such a calamity may befall any part of Harlem?

Let me give you some housing figures.

a) *Rentals*. About 80 per cent of families living in Harlem pay 40 to 50 per cent of their income on rent, as against 20 to 25 per cent paid generally among whites.

Fifty-six per cent of occupied dwellings in Harlem charge from \$7 to \$10 and over per room. East Side, the figure is 19.7 per cent of dwellings with this rent charge.

17 A.D. 53 per cent of families pay \$6 and over per room.

19 A.D. 67 per cent of families pay \$6 and over per room.

21 A.D. 86 per cent of families pay \$6 and over per room.

21 A.D. 75 per cent of families pay \$6 and over per room.

b) *Average monthly rentals (compiled by Dept. of Health)*:

Central Harlem health area \$52.00

Manhattan 44.00

City of New York 46.00

c) *Density of population*: 230 persons per acre, as against 133 in Manhattan.

d) *Size of households*: 36.4 per cent of households consist of five or more persons in Harlem.

Lower East Side: 24 per cent of households consist of five or more persons.

e) *Property Ownership*: (A study of seven blocks, Fifth-Seventh Avenues, and all properties on Lenox Avenue).

49 Banks	5.46%	} 47.16%
61 Estates	6.79	
10 Insurance Companies	1.14	
294 Realtors	33.77	
401 Independents	43.70	
82 Miscellaneous	9.14	
<hr/> 897	<hr/> 100%	

Unite Against Anti-Semitism

Most of the independent owned properties are actually

owned by the banks because of heavy mortgages held against these properties. The Real Estate Board of New York recently reported that real estate holdings are selling about 30 per cent below assessment value, indicating that property values have declined in recent years, and that the equities of independent owners in many cases have been wiped out, leaving the banks and big corporations as the real owners and enemies of the people. This refutes the falsehoods that the Jewish people are the exploiters of the Negro people. Reaction uses these lies to stimulate anti-Semitism and racial antagonism for the purpose of dividing the people.

f) *Age of Buildings:*

	17th A.D.	19th A.D.	21st A.D.
Less than 20 years old	2.5%	1.0%	4.0%
20 to 34 years old	9.5%	7.0%	25.0%
35 years old and over (Old Law).	88.0%	92.0%	71.0%

For combined Harlem, 85 per cent of the buildings are Old Law tenements.

Comrades and friends, these are our major problems in Harlem. These conditions are intensified by the W.P.A. cuts, the threats of greater unemployment and the reduction of living standards of ever wider sections of the entire population. The war danger which the threats of reaction bring makes more alarming the national security of the country. This situation demands greater unity and solidarity among the people for the protection and defense of progress.

2. GAINS IN HARLEM UNDER THE NEW DEAL AND MAYOR LA GUARDIA

Upon the election of F. H. LaGuardia as Mayor, a progressive city administration came to power in the city of New York. Mayor LaGuardia has cooperated with President Roosevelt in bringing the New Deal to Harlem. But every reactionary attacks him and President Roosevelt as they try to destroy the gains of the New Deal and progress.

July 27th, 1937, the New York *Times* stated:

"The Mayor is asking for \$3,167,000 to construct two new schools and to make additions to two existing

schools. One of the new schools is P.S. 62, East 128th Street, costing \$1,525,000. These were the first two schools constructed in the city-wide 1936 program; these were the first in ten years."

Again, on December 18th, 1937, the *New York Times* announced:

"Two new schools approved—cost \$3,305,000. Accommodation, 4,606 pupils: P.S. 194 (143rd St. between 7th and 8th Ave.), 1,576 pupils, and P.S. 121 (Junior High, 116th at Lenox and 5th), 3,030 pupils. And there is planned P.S. 57, 176 East 115th St. Under construction—P.S. 68 (127th St., Lenox and 7th Aves.), and P.S. 113 (113th St., 7th and 8th Aves.)."

The anti-Negro Schoenchen was removed from the school system in Harlem because of physical attacks and abuses of Negro pupils.

A new Health Center was opened by LaGuardia at 2238 Fifth Avenue. It is expected to handle 50,000 cases yearly.

Special work on tuberculosis is done in the clinic at the 111 West 116th Street. Preliminary X-ray examinations are made, instead of the old "waiting for the symptoms" method. It is operated jointly by the Health Department, W.P.A., and the New York Tuberculosis and Health Association, Dr. John B. West, Director. The capacity of Harlem Hospital has more than doubled. A Tuberculosis Center was established in Lower Harlem, and a new District Health Center next to the Harlem Hospital.

Two Negro nurses were appointed to Bellevue Hospital; these are the first Negro nurses appointed to any hospital other than Harlem and Lincoln.

Playgrounds, Health and Housing

A Negro was chosen to head the Harlem River Houses management by the New York City Housing Authority, after the dismissal of F. O. Nichols for inefficiency.

On November 28th, 1937, the city bought and later finished a playground plot at 150th Street and 7th Avenue.

The Tom Jefferson Park in East Harlem and the Colonial Park are completely reconditioned with new swimming pools, athletic fields, playgrounds. Mt. Morris Park, 124th Street to 120th St., Madison Ave., has been rebuilt with playgrounds packed with new equipment. The St. Nicholas Park playgrounds are improved. New playgrounds have been built at 134th Street, Lenox Avenue to 7th Avenue; 105th Street, 3rd to Lexington Avenue. Numerous small playgrounds have been constructed along the Triboro Bridge approaches on 125th Street and along the river north of 92nd Street. Playgrounds have been built at 150th Street and 7th Avenue; 130th and 5th; 116th and Lexington; 106th near Fifth; Lenox and 139th Street.

Three hundred jobs were obtained by the Uptown Chamber of Commerce in agreement with the Job Coordinating Committee August 28th, 1938, and was hailed by Mayor LaGuardia as "a tribute to common sense and justice."

Governor Lehman appointed Elmer A. Carter to the State Insurance Board. Maurice Moore, a Negro, obtained the post of chief drug and chemical buyer for New York. Negro librarians are to be appointed to *all* branch libraries, according to a new ruling of the City Library Department.

At the installation of the Harlem Branch Office of the Social Security Board with Mayor LaGuardia present, George E. Cochran, from Washington, hailed the establishment of the office with Harlem staff as a real achievement.

Mayor LaGuardia recommended pay rises for porters on the Independent Subway system, affecting 168 men and increasing wages from 90 cents per week up to \$3.84 per week.

Mayor LaGuardia appointed Rev. John H. Johnson to the E.R.B. Board.

The City World's Fair Commission selected Augusta Savage to make statues for the World's Fair.

Mayor LaGuardia backed the proposal for a \$95,000 cultural center in Harlem, located at 124th Street and Lenox Avenue.

Tenants [572 families] in Harlem River houses were drawn from sub-standard housing conditions and low income groups.

The New Deal in Harlem

Five dental clinics are now in operation in Harlem, employing sixteen colored dentists, and a number of hygienists and clerks. Up to the end of last year these clinics had registered over 2,000 patients. Their work embraces prophylaxis, instruction in care of the teeth, fillings, and replacements of lost teeth with full or partial dentures. Approximately 20,000 cavities in children's teeth have been filled and over 5,000 extractions made since these clinics opened.

Recently, in a nation-wide "health inventory" the W.P.A. undertook an attack on a number of other problems of public health by sponsoring a series of fact-finding surveys and analyses. The inventory called for four surveys: (1) a house-to-house canvass to ascertain the extent and nature of disability in the general population, with special reference to chronic diseases and physical impairment; (2) a survey of the incidence and fatality of thirteen communicable diseases, including measles, whooping cough, chicken pox, mumps and diphtheria; (3) an occupational morbidity and mortality survey including all cases of disabling illness; and (4) a health facilities survey and study. Data secured as a result of these surveys are now being coded and tabulated. The analyses is expected to be completed by June of this year.

In terms of human welfare, these examples of tackling health problems by the New Deal affecting the well-being of thousands of people, cannot be compared to anything ever undertaken, by any administration in the history of our country. When we speak of economic recovery, here is a step towards the recovery and rehabilitation of the human being. These gains must be defended and new ones won. Reaction must be stopped.

Harlem Solidly For New Deal

The New Deal and progress are under severe attack by the Woodrum-Garner-Hoover clique. The reactionaries aim to destroy the New Deal and set back progress in Harlem. The New Deal must be preserved at all costs. There is rising

rapidly a growing demand for President Roosevelt to succeed himself in order to save the New Deal. A majority of progressives throughout the West and in trade union and mass organizations of every description throughout the country are raising the demand for a third term for President Roosevelt as a means of guaranteeing the continuance of the New Deal. The people of Harlem who are overwhelmingly behind the New Deal also stand for this democratic right. We reserve the right to act in this manner to carry through the New Deal. The Communist Party of Harlem joins with the masses of Harlem to carry through this program. Harlem should be the first big community of people to come out wholeheartedly in support of the third term for President Roosevelt. The Communist Party of Harlem through its contacts with the masses and influential people of mass organizations of Harlem should see to it that a broad movement develops immediately to defeat the Woodrum-Garner-Hoover combination which would wreck W.P.A. and the New Deal.

New York—A City of Progress

It is against the background of these figures and the general picture which has been painted that we can see more fully this new attack on the people by the rejuvenated Republican reactionaries.

New York is the most progressive city in the entire United States. New York can justifiably boast of this achievement. It is a city of many national groups, having their origin in countries where they fought for freedom and came to this country to help create it. They have made New York the most progressive city in the country, the most progressive city in the entire capitalist world—a city of great industries, of fine institutions of learning and culture, great art centers and museums, large institutions for the prevention of disease, beautiful parks and recreational systems, laws of liberalism and democracy, a center of powerful trade union organizations and progressive leadership.

In this great city of New York lies Harlem. The Negro people have added to the industry and culture of New York

in the product of men and women of outstanding achievement and social vision. Harlem likewise consists of many varied nationalities and peoples who have contributed to the advancement of the city. But Harlem lies today in the wake of the offensive of reaction and her people are on the verge of complete destruction that can be saved only by stopping reaction.

Again, as in 1932-34, we face this terrible threat of reaction's offensive. Reaction would destroy the W.P.A. It red-baits and uses demagoguery. That is the characteristic feature of the present moment.

3. ISRAEL AMTER—COMMUNIST CANDIDATE

The people need to consolidate their forces and lead the attack.¹ The candidacy of Israel Amter, chairman of the New York State Committee of the Communist Party, for the City Council of New York, has been ratified. The Councilmanic elections in November will have important bearing on the 1940 elections as well as the economic conditions that face us right now. The people of Harlem have made many gains and won many victories by their progressive actions in New York City elections. We have a progressive city administration. But the City Council is stacked against progress. Tammany hacks together with Republican reactionaries, block legislation and measures that are beneficial to the people of this city.

The reactionaries in the City Council work together with the reactionaries in state politics, and in turn connive with the reactionary conservative democratic and Republican clique in national politics. We have seen this very concretely in the actions of Republican Councilman Surpless who fights to hamstring every progressive measure of Mayor LaGuardia. The Republican bloc in the State Legislature cut the school budget, affecting welfare of teachers and hundreds of thousands of school children of this city. All these groups work as a unity. As stated above the Woodrum-Garner-Hoover clique in the United States Congress acts like madmen but works on a definite plan and program of reaction all down the line.

We in Harlem therefore can render great service to the

cause of progress and the defense of our daily needs in the city as a whole by giving our serious attention to the Councilmanic elections in November. We must help elect a progressive-labor City Council. The Communist Party nominated Israel Amter as its candidate. A strong campaign for the election of Amter to the City Council will be one of the surest means of uniting the progressive-labor forces, because this campaign of the Communist Party in the first place will be conducted around a unity program. Secondly, Amter's campaign will be conducted around the basic issues of the people. Thirdly, the election of a Communist Councilman to the City Council from Manhattan will be one of the best guarantees that labor, the progressive forces and all the people will have a staunch champion of progress and democratic rights in the legislative halls of our city. Amter will fight for every progressive measure of the City Administration and will be the first himself to introduce into the Council measures of vital interest to all the people.

We have pledged 10,000 votes in the Harlem area for the election of Amter to the City Council. We have already begun to organize this campaign. We have had meetings of our Election District Group captains which comrade Amter has addressed. Likewise Comrade Amter has addressed membership meetings in Lower Harlem and Washington Heights. Membership meetings have been held in Upper and East Harlem addressed by outstanding leaders of our Party. All of these meetings were full of enthusiasm and confidence.

Amter For Jobs, Better Health and Housing

The Assembly Districts have been supplied with enrollment cards, canvassers' cards for follow-up of voters, pledge cards for support of a progressive Negro to the City Council, and Amter-Ford boys' and girls' clubs are being organized throughout Harlem. We will work out radio programs and other features.

The election campaign in Harlem for Amter will be spotlighted around the issues of *jobs, health, housing* and related needs, in other words, for recovery, democracy and peace.

Our Party was the first to raise the slogan and initiate a movement for the election of a progressive Negro to the City Council from Manhattan. This idea has taken like wild-fire, in Communist Party circles, throughout New York County. We received a telegram of greetings to our conference from Henry Forbes, Executive Secretary of the New York County Committee, pledging active support of the Communist Party of New York County for a progressive Negro to the City Council. As you know I have the honor of being chairman of the New York County Committee, and wherever I have spoken or attended meetings in New York County outside of Harlem my heart has been heartened by the enthusiastic response one finds to this slogan.

In Harlem itself a Non-Partisan Committee for support of a Negro to the City Council has been formed which not only includes Negro trade union leaders but also the following outstanding citizens of our community: Rev. John H. Johnson, Rev. John Robinson, Dr. Max Yergan, Rev. A. Clayton Powell, Jr., Mr. Hubert Delaney, Magistrate Myles Paige, Dr. Channing Tobias, Mr. Lester Granger, Mr. T. Arnold Hill, Miss Cecelia Saunders, Dr. P. M. H. Savory and many others. If Harlem can unite around a really progressive Negro candidate there is absolute certainty that the progressive electors outside of Harlem will rally to his election. Our Party will support such a candidate and do all it can to win the support of progressive and labor forces.

But our Party warns that it is necessary to have a *really progressive* candidate. That is the decisive qualification that will assure election. Anything short of that will militate against election. Because the reactionaries will do everything possible to split the Negro people. They will put up reactionaries or unknown figures behind a reactionary program. They will even try to confuse the situation with a "radical" candidate. We hope this does not happen.

The campaign of the Communists will be conducted on three phases, viz., for a progressive-labor City Council, for the election of Israel Amter and for energetic support for the election of a progressive Negro. In order that this program

become successful it is necessary to build the Communist Party. We must recruit new members into our Party, the most valiant fighters among the people.

4. ORGANIZE THE COMMUNIST PARTY FOR JOBS, BETTER HOUSING AND HEALTH

This is a conference of the territorial branches, the shop and industrial units of the Communist Party of Harlem, and our friends and visitors. The Communist Party wishes to accomplish the following from our deliberations: To find out the best ways and means to make the problems of all the people its own problems; how best to work and cooperate with the people and develop community enterprise for the solution of community problems as well as for the city as a whole.

The main issue before the people of our territory is unemployment and its consequences—bad health, lack of housing, etc., etc. Each branch, shop and industrial unit of our Party can best serve the community by tackling these problems, by organizing committees within each branch, such, for example, as unemployed committees, health committees, housing committees, etc.

Consolidate Election District Groups

These committees in turn, guided by one or more comrades, are to group around themselves people in their territory who are interested in these problems, and on the basis of analyzing problems to seek solutions to them.

For example, an unemployed committee of a Branch of the Communist Party in turn organizes a broader group around it to work out ways and means of solving problems of relief or unemployment. The best and most influential organization for this purpose is the Workers Alliance which is the bargaining agent of all the unemployed. Thousands of people should be brought into the locals of the Workers Alliance. That movement would thus be strengthened and therefore better able to fight.

Or a health committee of a local Branch of the Communist Party could seek, together with the people contacted in its

territory, to establish a clinic in the territory if one does not exist, or to take children to existing clinics, or to set up groups to see that health regulations of the territory are observed.

A housing committee can have similar tasks in that phase of work.

A Branch can get out a little neighborhood paper explaining to the people the many problems with which they are faced.

A legislative committee can undertake to build and strengthen the Harlem Legislative Conference, to make clear to the people the program and aim of the conference.

Valiant Fighters of the People

Individual Party members should establish the closest relationship with the people and leaders of organizations in their territory, including churches and church people, and members of other political groups; invite them to their meetings, discuss with them political questions that relate to the territory. We should not overlook the need and our responsibility to the advancement of the progressive movement and wherever possible influence the election of New Dealers in the Democratic Party. That is absolutely necessary if the New Deal is to be preserved and the reactionaries are to be defeated.

Let me give you a few simple hints as to how each Branch can become a real live political force in its territory: (1) be constantly on the alert to keep track of the voters, especially since so many people lack experience in politics and would appreciate aid and advice; (2) maintain face-to-face contact with the voters in your area with the *Daily Worker*. That is the only way you can destroy the influence of the reactionary press; (3) careful canvassing and the organization of political mass meetings which are entertaining, informative; (4) each Branch organizer and group captain must know and understand their constituency; (5) each branch organizer and group captain must have a diagram of the boundaries of his territory; (6) organize skeleton organizations in your territory such as the committees already referred to, or block organizations; (7) Branch organizers and group captains must get

acquainted with the people right in their homes, be friendly with them, know their problems, know their desires; (8) establish a card index system of the people and voters in your territory. Our Party must be the most valiant fighter for trade union unity between the C.I.O. and A. F. of L. This is a key question for the unity of all progressive forces for 1940.

5. PRIMARY AND LEADERSHIP FIGHTS

The Democratic Party.

Let us give our attention briefly to the inter-political situation in Harlem. Harlem has been struggling for a number of years now to make this community solidly progressive. This movement for progress has crossed party lines and involves groupings particularly in each party, those who are progressive and those who are reactionary.

In the 13th Assembly District, Sheldrick, the present Assemblyman, is opposing Keating, the district boss and the next door neighbor of Jimmie Hines. Sheldrick pays lip service to the New Deal but his record in the State Assembly is not so hot.

In the 17th Assembly District it appears that the regime of Solomon and Greenberg will continue unless a movement is organized by the progressives immediately. It would seem that the New Dealers would give this a great deal of consideration. There are undercurrents of a movement for Negro leadership in the West Side of this District.

In the 18th Assembly District a three-way fight is looming in the North part of the district against H. Warren Hubbard. The support of a large section of the democratic vote for Congressman Marcantonio in 1938 indicates an opportunity for victory of the progressives against the anti-New Deal Hubbard.

In the 19th Assembly District the fight continues and gains momentum for Negro leadership in this 96.7 per cent Negro district. Perry is on the defensive. The time is ripe if there could be real unity around a really progressive leader. The Communist Party has for a number of years sought to aid this movement. There will be no real victory for Negro leadership in the 19th A. D. until there is unity around a

progressive candidate, one who is progressive on issues which are vital to the welfare of the Negro people. No half-way measures, no behind the door smoothing-over is going to gain permanent victory for progress in the 19th A. D.

Opposition against Perry is developing in the Dahoga Club. But this movement will not bring genuine victory for progress unless the central and main slogans are for the New Deal nationally and locally. The Dahoga Club is flirting with disaster for the Negro people when it snipes at LaGuardia through certain of its leaders, and fails to see that in the city of New York Mayor LaGuardia is a Roosevelt New Dealer. That means sustaining the New Deal right here in New York. New opposition centers are already springing up in this whirling battle. This naturally does the campaign for unity to defeat Perry and assure genuine progressive Negro leadership in the district no good, unless it is concentrated. The problem is unity around the issues of the New Deal.

In the 20th Assembly District, Clarence Neal, incumbent and anti-Roosevelt, is being challenged by John E. Hand, veteran factional warrior who has something of a following. Despite New Deal protestations his real position on the New Deal is not clearly defined.

In the 21st Assembly District, Mr. Bruce, the only Negro district leader in the city, faces opposition from a Mr. Taylor, a former club member. The West Side usually runs a Negro-baiting opposition along the Coughlin lines. Taylor could be utilized to develop Negro-baiting, disastrous to unity, in the district. Bruce is for New Deal nationally but holds the dangerous Tammany Hall reservations to the New Deal program.

In the 22nd Assembly District things seem to be somewhat quiet on the Hudson. Kelly smokes peacefully in his wigwam on the Heights.

In the 23rd Assembly District things are more active. Torrens is being hustled a bit by Murphy and his clique. Murphy formerly was a lieutenant of McKee of the Recovery Party. Torrens keeps the lid down on the New Deal electorates despite the dangerous Coughlin activity against President Roosevelt and the New Deal. There is a new development however

in his associations with Congressman Gavagan in the Coordinating Committee against Race Persecution.

The election of progressive New Deal leaders in Democratic councils in 1939 and ousting of reactionaries will strengthen the position for election of New Deal delegates to the 1940 convention.

Republican Party

In the Republican Party, there is some stir. In the 17th Assembly District where Assemblyman Oscar Garcia Rivera was double-crossed by Levy, there is a movement on foot to oust Levy. But there are many crosscurrents that may tangle up what would be a good thing. In the 23rd A. D., reactionary Republicans are out to defeat Forstaenzer, leader of the middle section and a progressive, supporter of Mayor LaGuardia and Borough President Stanley Isaacs.

6. HISTORICAL BASIS OF STOOL PIGEONS IN THE NEGRO PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

New times and new conditions bring new methods of attack and struggle by the boss class and the reactionaries against unity and progress. A progressive movement has arisen in Harlem. It is achieving stability and solidarity. Reaction is forced to use different methods of disorganization. Under a progressive administration Wall Street monopoly capital cannot so readily use the police to terrorize and stifle the initiative of the masses as was done in the past. It has to resort to demagoguery, deceit, stool pigeons and spies to try to disrupt and disorganize. Among the most common types in our territory are the Lovestoneites and Trotskyites. Among the Negro people there is a special kind too, a kind that has had its prototype in the early struggles of the Negro people against slavery and oppression.

Herbert Aptheker, in his splendid book *Negro Slave Revolts in the United States*, states that "American slavery was a horrid form of tyrannical rule which often found it necessary to suppress the desperate expressions of discontent on the part of its outraged victims."

Yet violence was not enough to hold back the irrepressible Negro slaves. The slave owners had to resort to stool pigeons and traitors. Thus the slave revolt plan in Virginia in 1663 was betrayed by a favorite, or confidential slave of a John Smith of Gloucester County, Virginia. The North Carolina Plot of 1775 was betrayed by two unnamed slaves, owned by Dayner and Captain Respress of Beaufort County. The 1663 traitor was rewarded, as was usually the case, with freedom and 5,000 pounds of tobacco, a common form of currency at that time. Charlie White and Frankie Duty, who "testified" before the Woodrum Committee, would have been rewarded with several cartons of Lucky Strikes, since it is reported that their reward was ten dollars a day. Charlie White and Frankie Duty mouth the Trotskyite betrayals of the Negro people and of the democratic front. Here we have a modern picture of a combination of enemies of the people.

The year 1800 is the most important one in the history of American Negro slave struggle. For it is the birth year of John Brown and of Nat Turner, the year in which Denmark Vesey bought his freedom, and it is the year of the great Gabriel movement. The Gabriel movement was betrayed by Tom and Pharaoh, slaves of Mosby Sheppard of Henrico, Virginia. Both slaves were rewarded with *their* freedom." The New Orleans movement of 1812 was betrayed by Lewis Bolak, slave of W. Clarke. He was given his freedom in 1813. It was customary for the state legislatures to buy the slave from his master and free him for turning "states" evidence. In the case of Lewis Bolak, the price paid by the Virginia state legislature was \$300. It is reported from the petition of the time that he feared for his life and in his own words became "an unhappy wanderer."

A slave woman betrayed the Boxley movement in Virginia in 1816. Her name is unknown. A favorite, but unnamed slave, betrayed the South Carolina movement of 1816. His freedom was purchased for \$1,000 and he was provided with \$50 a year for life. Devany, a favorite slave of Colonel Prioleau, betrayed the Denmark Vesey plans in South Carolina in 1822; another slave, Charles Drayton, acted as a spy for

the police in uncovering its ramifications. An unnamed favorite slave was also important, as a spy, in uncovering the 1835 Mississippi movement. Again that year in Louisiana a confidential slave betrayed a plan. The traitor of a Louisiana slave movement in 1840 was the slave, Lew Cheney. George Write, a free Negro of New Orleans, betrayed a plan there in 1853. An unnamed slave woman betrayed a plan in Mississippi in 1860.

To this list of Benedict Arnolds may be added the name of John Russwurm, one of the first Negroes to graduate from a college in the United States. He served his people well for a time as editor of the first Negro newspaper, the *Freedman's Journal*. But he soon changed its policy from anti-slavery to pro-colonization. He was accused of selling out his people and bitterly denounced by Negro abolitionists.

So our modern traitors are nothing new. They are a breed that ever flourishes. We have to be on the alert against them. Comrade Browder said at the May Plenum:

"How are we to locate, identify, expose, defeat and drive out the spies and provocateurs? Certain specialized investigations are, of course, required. . . . But the basic measures are those which involve the entire Party, membership as well as committees and they are measures that are intimately linked up with the solution of all our problems of Party building. They are measures of political education, of raising the level of political life of the Party, and of improving our methods of selection, promotion and education of the Party's leading personnel."

7. THE GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY AND HARLEM

We in Harlem are vitally concerned in the world struggle between democracy and fascism. Those forces that are driving to destroy W.P.A. and the New Deal are the same reactionaries that would place our country on the side of war and fascism and which undermine the Good Neighbor Policy. The welfare of more than a score of countries in the Western hemisphere is at stake in this struggle. /Democracy must not perish in this hemisphere. The Good Neighbor Policy of President

Roosevelt must be defended and sustained. We need to be more familiar with developments in Latin America. Let us briefly deal with the situation in Puerto Rico. {

The removal of Major-General Blanton Winship as Governor of Puerto Rico is a victory for the Puerto Rican people. Long overdue, it opens up the possibility of a real change in policy, of an end to the brutal oppression, savage exploitation and frustration of educational and cultural opportunities which the Winship regime has enforced. But it is important for us in the United States to understand that not only the well being of the Puerto Rican people is at stake. A New Deal policy for Puerto Rico is a necessity not only in order to ameliorate the conditions of the inhabitants of that Pearl of the Caribbean, but also in order to safeguard the New Deal at home. This is true because of the strategic position which Puerto Rico occupies in several important respects.

Its proximity to the Panama Canal, Central America generally, and the northern part of South America, makes it a vital base of Western hemisphere defense, including the defense of North America. This is why both German and Italian fascism covet it so dearly, as the next stepping stone from Europe after the Azores.

It is likewise of great strategic importance politically. The only part of Latin America under direct United States government control, it is actually a testing ground of the Good Neighbor policy. Unless at least the minimum needs of the Puerto Rican people are satisfied, it will be extremely difficult for the United States to play its necessary leading role in the organization of Western hemisphere unity for defense against fascist aggression. Already the fascists and Trotskyites, under all kinds of disguises, attempt to use the plight of Puerto Rico to discredit the Good Neighbor policy among some sections of Latin American people. They must be rescued from that plight by active, positive measures, if the peoples of the Americas are to be made to realize that the laments of the fascists are crocodile tears.

Finally Puerto Rico is a test of the New Deal's policy with respect to monopolies. Here, the Wall Street reactionaries

have most freely carried on their boldest and most vicious practices. If they are permitted to continue to thrive and grow fat in Puerto Rico, it will be so much the harder to break their tenacious grip at home.

The strivings of the Puerto Rican people, and of such alert fighters for democracy as Representative Vito Marcantonio and Assemblyman Oscar Garcia Rivera, which have resulted in Winship's removal, have performed a signal service, therefore, to the entire hemisphere.

The People Struggle For a New Deal

The valiant people of Puerto Rico, with a background of the best of Spanish culture and the important contributions of the Negro people, have not been daunted. They have resisted with energy and growing effectiveness.

The struggles of the Puerto Rican people and the program which they have already worked out indicate the character of the main tasks that confront the New Deal in Puerto Rico.

The force of public opinion in Harlem must be aroused to insure that the New Deal will be brought to Puerto Rico. Nothing less than the successful development of the Good Neighbor policy is at stake. Thus far, the reactionaries of every kind, dividing their roles according to a classic pattern, have had things largely their own way in the Island. The Wall Street monopolists have squeezed out the very life-blood of the Puerto Rican people by a policy of brutal super-exploitation which takes out everything and returns nothing. The Winships, whom President Roosevelt should long since have cracked down upon, have, by a regime of murderous terror, sought to prevent any effective redress of grievances, and have plunged the country into misery, chaos, and confusion. And Trotskyites, Fifth Columnists, Spanish Falangists, have seized upon this confusion, and deepened it. They revel in this confusion, because it makes it much more difficult for the people to see through their demagogic contention, so valuable to fascism, that the people of Puerto Rico—of Latin America generally—have nothing to hope for from the Roosevelt administration, from the Good Neighbor policy. Under

the pressure of Wall Street and Winship, in the grip of a terrible crisis, even some sincere anti-imperialists have been influenced by the Trotskyites and fascists with their crocodile tears about Puerto Rico's future.

A grave danger for the democratic unity of the Puerto Rican people is the way the axis powers are exploiting the slogan of self-determination. As the most sincere and tested fighter for the national freedom of all peoples, the Communist Party opposes the misuse of this slogan by the enemies of the people for the purpose of converting Puerto Rico into an outpost for fascist subjugation of the peoples of the Americas. It is significant that at this very moment Franco, the stooge of Hitler and Mussolini, has come out for the "rebuilding of the Spanish empire." Significant, too, is the fact that the American sugar monopolists, by their economic sabotage, help the Spanish Phalanx and the Trotskyites in their work of undermining and treason rather than permit the New Deal really and seriously to solve the burning problems of the Puerto Rican people.

It is the task of labor and all progressive forces to put the whole weight of a democratic people behind the Good Neighbor Policy.

The Good Neighbor Policy has significance for the whole of Latin America, for the problems of the Caribbean, for the West Indies Islands, etc. A very important Latin American-West Indian-American Negro Conference was held in Harlem last week where a brilliant report was made by Dr. Efron on the problems of Latin America and the Good Neighbor policy. An outstanding contribution was the exposure of racism policies in Latin America and the Caribbean, and what the Chamberlain appeasement policies would mean in the turning of the West Indies to Hitler.

8. TASKS BEFORE THE PEOPLE OF HARLEM

A message from Israel Amter, Chairman of the New York State Committee of the Communist Party, candidate for the City Council:

June 22, 1939

HARLEM DIVISION CONFERENCE:

Dear Comrades: I wish to extend revolutionary greetings to this conference and do not doubt that its results will be such as to mobilize our whole Party and its broad circle of sympathizers for the election campaign—for a victory of the labor-progressive forces including the Communist Party in the 1939 Councilmanic elections and in preparation for the decisive 1940 elections.

Harlem is a test stone of the work of our Party. All the problems confronting our Party are to be found in miniature form in Harlem. The struggle for jobs and relief, against miserable housing and high rents, against Jim-Crowism and discrimination and anti-Semitism, against the anti-alien legislation, finds its expression in Harlem. We have many national groups in Harlem which have been brought together through the Harlem Legislative Conference and unite white and Negro, Italians, Puerto Ricans and other Latin-Americans, Jews, Finns, Irish, etc., to carry on work for a better world.

Our Communist Party, fighting for the broadest needs of the people, has formulated a program which is the only program to bring about recovery for the United States. The work that we have done in mobilizing the masses for jobs, WPA and relief, for housing, for a real health program, against discrimination, etc., places our Party in the very center of struggle. Our influence among the masses of Harlem is widespread.

Our job now is to direct the people into one definite progressive channel so that victory this November will be ensured.

Harlem has shown that it pays no attention to political labels. Since 1936, when Harlem overwhelmingly voted for Roosevelt and the New Deal, it has followed the course of supporting every progressive, no matter what political faith he might be. Thus in 1937 Harlem effectively aided the victory of Mayor LaGuardia. In 1938 it sent Marcantonio to Congress and Oscar Garcia Rivera to the Assembly. In 1939 this will be repeated. A labor-progressive victory in the Harlem territory and throughout Manhattan and the city will be a real victory not only for the people of our city, but throughout the nation. The whole country looks toward New York in its coming election. But for us in Manhattan and Harlem

it will not be a complete victory unless within the labor-progressives to be elected to the City Council a Communist and a progressive Negro are elected. This must be the orientation of the Communists that we must take to the people throughout Harlem, to gain the support of the progressives, white and Negro, throughout the borough.

The people of Harlem, as all over the country, are interested not only in their immediate needs but also the broader problems that face our entire nation. We have learned through struggle that we cannot solve the local problems unless we at the same time focus our attention upon state and national problems. Thus the struggle for W.P.A. and relief cannot be solved locally but only on a national scale. This applies equally to the National Labor Relations Act, housing and the health program.

America is not isolated in the world, as much as the reactionaries would like to isolate our country from playing a positive role in maintaining world peace. The temporary defeat of Spain and Czechoslovakia, the new provocations of Hitler and Mussolini in Europe and of Japanese fascism in China, the activities of the Franco, Hitler and Mussolini agents not only in our country but particularly in Latin America arouse the concern of every person in Harlem and throughout the country.

The role of the Soviet Union in world affairs and the need of uniting the United States with the Soviet Union and the other peace-minded countries of Europe against fascist aggression moves masses of people into action.

How can we capitalize upon the growing spirit of unity and the need for united action of the people? This can only be brought about by the energetic work of our Party. 1939 cannot be separated from 1938 and 1940. It is the result of the struggles which must be lifted to a higher level in 1939 and continued in 1940 for the victory of the progressives.

This you will have discussed. But I want to emphasize that victory will not be accomplished in this hall. It only will be realized through the work of our people in the Assembly Districts—yes, in the Election Districts. Therefore I want to underscore as the immediate tasks that face us before the election really begins the following:

1. The organization of the E. D. groups with captains at their head for the purpose of canvassing from house to house of the voters in the election districts.

2. This must be accomplished by the extension of the sale of the *Sunday* and *Daily Worker* and other literature of our Party.

3. Through this work, we must recruit thousands of Negroes, Latin Americans, Italians, Jews, Irish, etc., into the Party.

4. Carrying on all struggles on the immediate issues facing the people such as the W.P.A. fight, state aid and the cut in the state budget, the neutrality legislation.

5. Work in the fraternal organizations, churches, unions, etc., to acquaint the people with the program of the Communist Party of Harlem.

6. Creation of a sentiment and movement for the election of a really progressive Negro to the City Council.

If these tasks are performed in a systematic way for the next two months, then by the middle of August we will have created the machinery and will be able to draw in large numbers of progressives into a solid bloc throughout Manhattan for the ousting of Tammany control of the City Council and for the election of labor-progressives including a Communist and a progressive Negro.

Comrades, the enthusiasm at this conference must be transmitted to the membership of the branches and all mass organizations. This enthusiasm translated into work for the organization of the proper election machinery and for the building of our Party unquestionably will ensure victory this coming fall.

Camradely yours,

(Signed) I. AMTER, State Chairman

* * *

Let me conclude with a quotation from our pamphlet, "Hunger and Terror in Harlem":

"There is no remedy to the conditions in Harlem without the abolition of the Jim-Crow system throughout the city, without the removal of the death-breeding slum areas, without supplying the unemployed masses with adequate relief (and jobs), without adequate playgrounds and schools and nurseries for the children."

THE NEGRO AND THE DEMOCRATIC FRONT

By JAMES W. FORD

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