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NEGRO  
PEOPLE  
ON THE  
MARCH

REPORT TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE  
OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, U.S.A.

By Benjamin J. Davis

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

THIS PAMPHLET contains the text of the report delivered by Benjamin J. Davis, former New York City Councilman and Chairman of the Negro Commission of the Communist Party, at a meeting of the Party's National Committee, held in New York on June 23-24, 1956.

Mr. Davis' address, taken together with the reports of Eugene Dennis, Max Weiss and Claude Lightfoot to the enlarged meeting of the National Committee, held on April 28-May 1, 1956, constitutes the position presented by the Party on major issues of the day for discussion by its membership.

In setting forth this point of view, the National Committee of the Communist Party solicits comment, suggestions and criticism from the general public as well as members of the Party. All such communications should be addressed to: Discussion Committee, P. O. Box 87, Cooper Station, New York 3, N. Y.

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# The Negro People on the March

By BENJAMIN J. DAVIS

## I. The Significance of the Negro Question Today

During the hottest part of the "cold war" of the last six years, the walls of Jim Crow have taken such a battering as never before in the modern history of our country. This, in itself, is one of the biggest features of the present new historical period. It is the desire and destiny of the American Communist Party to enter more fully into this historical process, without reservation, to help all these walls come tumbling down. And now!

The struggle for the full social, political and economic equality of the Negro people has today reached its highest point since the era of the Civil War and Reconstruction. It is marked by the unprecedented upsurge of the Negro people in the Deep South, the main area of the national, racial and class oppression of the Negro. The full impact of this new development upon American life is yet to be assessed—its significance is yet to be understood in all its vast consequences.

But it is already the most dramatic single issue on the home front and in the '56 elections. It is on the lips of every citizen. It is the subject of songs, poetry, culture, art, politics, economics and science. Capitalist newspapers, magazines, political leaders, statisticians are all participating in the great debate concerning the rights of the Negro people. One of the most positive aspects of the struggle for Negro liberation is that the discussion is no longer confined to the zealots on one hand—of which our Party has been a proud section—or to the lynch class on the other. It is now the property of the whole American people, which is one of the first pre-requisites for its success and democratic solution.

In the last six years alone, particularly during the period of the Korean war, 126 books have been published by major houses on the Negro question, not to mention scores published by small and less well-known firms. Hundreds of studies, surveys, handbooks, civil

rights volumes by the government and private organizations have been printed. The total volume of these books would run into hundreds of thousands. This reflects the growing concern in the country over the question of Negro and general minority rights in the United States. Although many of these volumes, from bourgeois sources, have their own axe to grind, they reflect the mounting interest of the nation and they are of great importance and value to any objective search for facts and trends.

The 16 million Negroes themselves—particularly in the Deep South—are the primary movers in this historic upsurge. But it extends far beyond their ranks—both in its participation and in its effects. On the national scene, one of the first encounters that helped turn the tide against McCarthy, at the height of his seemingly invincible career, was his cruel bullying and persecution of Mrs. Annie Lee Moss, a Negro woman. This provoked a wave of revulsion among the American people—even among many prejudiced whites—which helped to bring this would-be Hitler to heel.

On the international front, the deeds of brutal oppression against the Negro people at home were so loud that neither the colonial people of Asia and Africa, nor the European peoples could hear what Mr. Dulles was saying when he boasted of American democracy. The bombing of Mr. and Mrs. Harry T. Moore, the blood-thirsty lynching of young Emmett Till, the brutality against Autherine Lucy did far more to write American foreign policy than the pronouncements of the State Department or the high-sounding communiques of Eisenhower and Eden. The status of the American Negro has become an international question of more far-reaching effects than at any time since the rise of American imperialism to a world power. This has done at least two major things: first, it has compelled even the world's most powerful capitalism to take heed and pull in its horns; and secondly, it has brought to the Negro people and their labor-democratic supporters at home, trans-oceanic allies which have profoundly helped the struggle for Negro rights. The whole of democratic humanity in the U.S. and abroad are on the side of the Negro people, and are increasingly exercising their weight.

Another new feature of the present period is the important gains won by the Negro people during the past six years. The

assessment of these gains is a matter of serious and honest controversy within and without our ranks and I wish to say more about them later in this paper. But it can be said now that these gains in their character and extent took place—for the first time in American history—during a period when American imperialism was pursuing a reactionary “cold war” and prosecuting an unjust hot war against the Korean and Chinese people, brutally interfering in their internal affairs, seeking to maintain colonialism and to acquire new bases for atomic war against the Soviet Union, China, and the Asian colonial revolution. But because this war took place in the new historical period—when imperialism is on the decline and socialism and national independence are on the rise—American imperialism had to deal somewhat differently with the insistent demands of the Negro than when imperialism was the only world system, when colonialism was still entrenched, and when socialist currents were much weaker.

It is important that these gains be neither overestimated nor underestimated. Nevertheless they are of tremendous significance and affect nearly all aspects of Negro life—jobs, the armed forces, the legal arena, education, representation, the South, private recognition, trade unions, government and, somewhat, housing. It is important to note, too, that they did not happen just overnight, springing like Minerva out of the brow of Jove; but that they were prepared for over a long period of time, and most dramatically during the Roosevelt New Deal, the growth of the labor movement, and the subsequent victory over fascism in World War II. The long struggles of the Negro people and the pioneering contributions of our Party over the last 25 years were indispensable factors.

These gains are also uneven in various fields of American life. But one thing cannot be denied: They have qualitatively improved the conditions of struggle for Negro rights today in this period. A realistic perspective has opened up for a peaceful and democratic achievement of the full social, political and economic equality of the Negro people within the framework of our specific American system and tradition. We advocate and will work for such a solution to take place now and not on the morrow. The Negro people are today thinking in terms of a solution now and

not in terms of gradualism and endless litigation for the next 100; 50 or 25 years. This is the heart and soul of the unprecedented national all-class unity of the Negro people—which our Party has always looked forward to—a unity which amounts to a national front of the Negro people against segregation and discrimination and for integration, on the basis of equality and dignity, into all aspects of American life. In addition, there exists a national people's coalition of diverse forces against segregation, which ranges all the way from the merged labor movement of 16 million to middle class, liberal, professional, cultural and political forces of all races, creeds, persuasions and stations in society. Never before in the modern history of the U.S. has the struggle for the full citizenship of the Negro people been so broad or its potentialities so great.

A period of big and sharp struggles on this front lies ahead. There is no room for complacency. The Till lynching, the brutality against Autherine Lucy, the bombings of Negro homes in the North, the arrests of the Montgomery Negro leaders, the continuing jim crow and national oppression against the Negro people indicate that there are powerful white supremacy forces that wish to arrest the forward movement of the Negro people and their allies. In the first place they are the Eastlands, Byrnes, Talmadges and Shivers in the South, who are based upon the remaining feudalistic plantation system and who have ties with the most reactionary sections of monopoly capital on Wall Street. There is the Dixiecrat-Republican alliance in Washington on the political and legislative front. There are the brutal, undemocratic, bourbon regimes in the South, many of which are in open merger with the anti-Negro, anti-labor White Citizens Councils in the Black Belt counties and cities. There is the deliberate failure and apathy of the Eisenhower Administration to enforce the law of the land, to raise the umbrella of protection over the heroic Negroes and progressive whites, which the Constitution affords. These reactionary well-heeled lynch forces—most of whom are in high places—propose to stop at nothing in nullifying the Supreme Court decisions, and in arresting the forward march of democracy in the South. These forces must be checked, isolated and routed.

The resistance of reaction to Negro liberation has caused a

national crisis in American society. The basic contradiction is between the democratic ideal of America and the jim crow oppression of the Negro people. It manifests itself in the Democratic Party between the Dixiecrat Eastland wing and the Northern industrial liberal wing. It extends to the Republican Party, involving the Nixon-McCarthy states rights forces on one hand and the so-called Eisenhower-Javits moderate wing on the other. It is the contradiction between the Negro people upholding law and order in the South and the lawlessness and terror of the lynch regimes in the South. Even on the economic front it manifests itself in part in the aggressive penetration of industrial capital in the South against the remnants of the backward plantation economy. These contradictions arising out of the struggle for Negro rights are affecting the whole American scene, and will affect the entire course of American history. More immediately, this crisis will profoundly affect the 1956 elections, with both parties feverishly bidding for the ever more powerful Negro vote. It will continue to affect American foreign policy and prestige in the world. It buttresses the cause of peace by helping to isolate those war-minded busybodies who demand free elections in Germany while none can be held in Mississippi. This crisis must be resolved not by fascist or betrayal method but by democratic means and measures. With a realistic appreciation of the serious and historical obstacles, our Party should seek to inspire confidence that this crisis can be resolved in a democratic and peaceful manner.

The extent to which the liberation of the Negro people in the South carries the banner of the further social progress of the nation as a whole is in sharper focus today. In Congress, for example, the obstacle to the enactment of progressive social legislation in that body is the Dixiecrats in the first place, but also their alliance with the more direct Republican agents of the most reactionary anti-labor, anti-civil rights sections of Wall Street monopoly capital. Dixiecrats, Southern Bourbons and Southern reactionary Senators and Congressmen dominate or head nearly all the Committees in the House and Senate. Typical is the fact that Eastland heads the strategic Judiciary Committee, which holds the power of life and death over all legislation in the U.S. Senate. Shame on America! No civil rights measures have been passed by Congress in 69 years.

But this reactionary alliance succeeded in passing Taft-Hartley, the Walter-McCarran Law, Communist Control Act, Smith Act and scores of others designed to hogtie and cripple the labor and Negro liberation movements, to nullify the Bill of Rights, and to destroy constitutional democracy.

Congress can become an instrument of national social progress when the power of the Eastland Dixiecrats is destroyed and when the Dixiecrat-Republican alliance is broken. This necessitates a change in the whole relationship of forces in the Deep South, with the Negro people exercising their vote potential, and the white workers and masses finding their self-interest with the Negro to send to Congress men and women who uphold their vital interests. Winning the battle for democracy in the South is a fundamental necessity for the social advance of the entire nation.

The Negro upsurge in the South is taking place within the context of a growing democratic resistance to the destruction of the Bill of Rights and civil liberties. It is taking place within the framework of specific American conditions and on the basis, not of conditions of 20 years ago, but on conditions of today, an entirely new historical period.

These general observations of the total scene are by no means exhaustive. However, they do sketch a few of the new features on the broad canvas upon which the upsurge of the Negro is taking place. Let us now examine some of the specific developments of this struggle.

## II. The South

The main development to be noted in the struggle for Negro rights in the present period is that its center of gravity is shifting from the North to the South. The Negro people in the North, together with their labor and progressive allies, still play a potent role in the struggle. But the new factor to be noted, seized upon and developed is the change in the geographical center of this struggle.

This factor is all to the good, must be developed and given the utmost support. The Black Belt counties and urban centers constitute the area of the most frightful and bestial oppression of

the Negro. It is the sac from which the poison of white supremacy seeps through the whole of American life. Once it is tackled and dammed up there, not only will the whole South benefit thereby, but so will the Negro people in the North, the labor movement and the whole nation. Every American Negro, wherever he may be, bears upon his back the "false mark of inferiority" branded upon him by the lynch oppressors of the Negro in the South. Removal of this brand in the South is a basic step toward the removal of the stench of the slave market from the whole of American life.

The vanguard of the Negro people's upsurge in the South is the bus boycott in Montgomery, Ala. At the same time various phases of this upsurge are to be noted in Mississippi, South Carolina, Florida, Georgia and other states.

The bus boycott in Montgomery is a unique phenomenon in modern U.S. history. It began on December 5, 1955, and is still going strong 9 months later. It has already spread to Tallahassee, Fla., there initiated largely by Negro students. Students, both Negro and white, in the South play a unique role.

Montgomery was the capital of the Confederacy. Its monuments and landmarks still stand as courtly inspiration to the heirs of the slaveowners who would perpetuate in the modern South the feudal relics of the past. But Montgomery is an important industrial center and a fresh breeze is blowing through the magnolia trees in Montgomery, not alone from the Negro people, but from a growing section of the whites. In this setting, the Negro people are demonstrating magnificent heroism and courage, fully in keeping with the finest traditions of the Negro, of labor and the American people.

More than 42,000 Negroes refuse to ride the city busses every day. Some of them walk as much as 14 miles a day, through rain, mud and at severe risks to their health and safety. Over 99 of their leaders and rank and filers have been indicted and arrested. Their homes have been bombed; intimidation and terror have been used against them. But they stand firm and walk hard.

This historic mass struggle began spontaneously from below with the Negro workers, domestic servants, and Negro women playing a major role. It was precipitated by the arrest and conviction

and manhandling of Mrs. Rosa Parks, a Negro seamstress, who refused to move to the rear of a bus. Explained Mrs. Parks on why she refused to move: "It was a matter of dignity. I could not have faced myself and my people if I had moved."

In this struggle the Negro masses chose their own leaders—among them the Rev. Martin Luther King, 27 years old, Rev. Ralph Abernathy, E. D. Nixon, 57, a pullman porter and a member of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters for more than 30 years. The Montgomery Improvement Association, organized to conduct the boycott, is headed by Rev. King, its President, and Mr. Nixon, its treasurer. Here is a splendid blending of the old and the new, the combination of the seasoned trade union experience with the zeal and idealism of youth. Here, too, is an example of the highly central role played by the Negro church.

The three most important original demands of the struggle were: First come, first served from rear to front; an end to brutalities against Negro passengers; and the hiring of Negro bus drivers, covering Negro communities. These modest demands were refused even though they did not challenge the basic evil of segregation. Their elementary, non-political character undoubtedly reflected the problems of keeping united the whole Negro community in struggle, a skillful tactic born of trade union experience.

But in the course of the struggle it has been transformed to a higher level. Its unity has grown and it has received strength nationally and internationally. The Alabama District Federal Court recently declared bus segregation illegal, basing itself upon the Supreme Court school decision. Now the boycotters have declared they will never return to segregated busses. The Alabama State officials have filed an appeal against the decision, and the maximum public pressure on a nation-wide scale should come to the support of the Alabama District Court decision.

The most outstanding new tactic of the boycott is its non-violent resistance—a variation of the Gandhian non-violent passive resistance. This is a fully militant device. It is practical, since the Negro people are not only outnumbered, but are without weapons to wage a shooting battle, even if they wished to. This form of struggle shows that they do not wish to. Further, the tactic exposes the true advocates and practitioners of force and violence, namely the

state and local regimes, the White Citizens Councils and the Klan lynchers. It emphasizes the peaceful democratic character of the struggle, placing the responsibility for lawlessness and disorder on the white supremacists. It draws to the Negro people of Montgomery the tremendous moral power and force of American public and religious opinion. Moreover, the eyes of the world are sympathetically on this non-violent struggle. The non-violent form of the struggle reflected the fact that it is based heavily on the church, drawing deeply upon the fighting, as well as peace loving, traditions of the Negro church and the Negro ministry.

The all-class unity of the struggle was again demonstrated in the application of a group of Negro community figures to charter their own bus line. This too was refused by the city fathers. Although the struggle here and in other parts of the South is led by middle class and petit-bourgeois leaders and intellectuals, in Montgomery it is the Negro workers, men and women, who are the solid backbone of the boycott. The boycott is both a protest and an aggressive struggle, under the leadership of middle class and reformist personnel, but heavily reflecting working class policies. The use of mass economic power to achieve democratic and peaceful objectives is characteristic of labor. Here the Negro people of Montgomery are using economic power to secure their constitutional rights, to uphold law and order, to seek enforcement of the law of the land against the lawlessness of segregation, injustice and indignity.

A new and significant factor in the upsurge of the Southern Negro is that his leadership is coming out of and is native to the South itself. This is true not only of the boycott struggle in Montgomery; but it is equally true of Mississippi, with its state council of Negro leaders; of South Carolina with its counter-economic squeeze organization; of Florida, with its civic league conducting the Tallahassee bus boycott; of Georgia and other Southern states. Up until a few short years ago the Negro movement in the South was receiving its leadership almost entirely from the North—from the Negro proletariat in the Northern and Western urban centers. While the Negro and allies in the North play a big role in the Southern struggles, an ever-increasing shift is being made toward the centering of this leadership in the South. World War I marked

a new Negro in the North; World War II has brought forward a new Negro in the South. This, it is hoped, will encourage no underestimation of the profound role to be played in this struggle by the Negro proletariat and its allies in the Northern, mid-Western and Far West cities.

The South has never been solid. It has given the appearance of being so, because of the peace of the graveyard, imposed by force and violence, upon the Negro people. Today, the biggest testimonial to the fact that the South is not solid is the historic upsurge of the Negro people, who are in the first place native Southerners. At the same time, the large percentage of white Southerners who are on record for school desegregation, who have elected Negroes to public office, as in Atlanta in 1953, indicate a further unfreezing of the Solid South, and the fertile potentialities for fruitful mass work among the Southern white workers and citizenry.

An important aspect of the non-violent character of the Montgomery bus boycott is its positive influence upon the white masses. There has been a small but growing support among religious, liberal and other sections of the white population for the struggle, due in no small part to the limited unionization in the South, but also to other factors. Undoubtedly, peaceful, non-resistant methods have influenced the strong stand taken by the white Protestant and Catholic churches in the South. The bulk of the white masses are neither aggressively hostile, nor active supporters. Insufficient data is available on this aspect of the situation. But the very fact that such a sharp struggle can develop in the former capital of the Confederacy, without receiving active white mass hostility, indicates changes in the thinking of the white masses. Even the mass lynch rally addressed by Eastland in Montgomery this year, under the auspices of the White Citizens Council, did not result in the so-called "race riot" and violence deliberately incited by this white supremacist. World-wide democratic currents affect Southern whites as well as Southern Negroes.

Though the Southern white masses are still saturated with chauvinist prejudices, the huge festival lynchings, participated in by large gatherings, and organized by the Klan, no longer feature the Southern scene. Lynchings are now carried out by bombings, assassinations, and individual terrorists at the beck of the White

Citizens Council and its state governmental allies and members. Accompanying these murderous tactics, is the new weapon—the economic squeeze, used to keep the Negro people in subjection and to choke off the forward march of integration and Southern democracy. Only men of financial and political power can wage this type of war against whole Negro communities.

In the Negro people's upsurge in the South, there is a diversity in the framework of the Negro people's unity. Based upon uneven conditions in various states, the Negro in different states develops different weapons. But the unity common to the entire Southern area is the fight for the right to vote, the fight to end jim crow and extend democracy as the guarantee of their dignity and full citizenship.

The organizational center of this movement is the NAACP. The majority of the NAACP membership is today in the South. The NAACP with its associate movements, churches and organizations in the South has become the principal rallying center of the Negro people's movement today. It contains in and around it nearly all diverse trends among the Negro people within the framework of the national unity of the Negro people for full citizenship and integration. It has been profoundly affected by the influence of labor, and the Negro workers. Its methods of struggle are no longer confined exclusively to the legal arena, although that is increasingly important; it has associated itself with mass activity, tactics and pressure. In the South, its flexibility is shown by the fact that just as it is outlawed, other organizations are established to continue the struggle within the extremely limited framework of legality.

The big obstacle to this militant and united upsurge of the Negro people in the South is the bitter and murderous resistance put up by the white supremacist Bourbon ruling class and its rotten, unrepresentative state and local regimes. Spearheading this resistance are the Eastlands, Byrnes, Talmadges and Shivers gangs. The White Citizens Councils are the principal terror organization of the South. It has been described as the new Klan. It is utilizing murder, reviving lynching, assassination, economic squeezes and other fascist-like methods designed to starve the Negroes, and their white liberal supporters, into submission. It is, with its reactionary Wall Street masters, seriously imperilling the gains of the Negro people.

Its champion, Eastland, should become as universally despised as the late Sen. Bilbo.

The Councils are new and somewhat different from the Klan. They are composed not of a few motley racketeers and demagogues, but of the so-called "best people." Plantation owners, processors, landlords, bankers, industrialists and state officials comprise its board of directors. Fearing for its privileged position on the backs of the white workers and farmers, as well as on the backs of the Negroes, they have taken the white-supremacy banners in their own hands. They don't fully trust the white masses to carry the ball. The Councils, with their tremendous political and economic power, are having the NAACP outlawed in one state after another, simultaneously entrenching their own members and reviving the Klan to do its dirty work. It's not so easy in 1956 as it was in 1926 to incite the white workers to mass lynchings, so the bosses have taken over themselves.

The Councils have fanned out their attacks to the trade union movement. Basing themselves upon the old primitive prejudices of Southern white workers, they have had certain serious successes, and represent a first-class menace to the labor movement, particularly to the AFL-CIO Southern organizing drive. But the new thing is that for the first time an increasing number of Southern white workers are rising to do battle against them. This was an outstanding feature of the recent Textile Workers Union convention. The common resistance of the Southern white unionists and the Negro against the White Citizens Councils can become a pressure for the growth of Negro-white unity and for strengthening the Negro-labor alliance in the South.

Another danger to the hard-earned reforms won by the Negro people is the attempt at nullification of and interposition against the Supreme Court desegregation decision. Southern Bourbons hope to tie up the decision and delay enforcement by years of futile litigation. In the effort to pump some life into the discredited states rights doctrine, Eastland and McCarthy have joined hands to curb the Supreme Court's power to implement the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments. Dangerous legislation to this end hangs fire in Washington now. Under the guise of states rights, the infamous right-to-work laws exist in many states. More and more,

the fight for civil liberties, against the union-busting right to work laws, and civil rights are merging into a common powerful stream.

An economic crisis, war or fascism could seriously endanger the gains in the South and set back the positive developments taking place.

The failure of the Federal government, under Eisenhower, during this period of the most grievous attacks against the Constitution and the Negro people of the South presents—once more in the 20th Century, as in the 19th—the danger of another Republican betrayal which would leave the Negro to the tender mercies of the Southern Bourbon class. G.O.P. ambitions in the '56 elections accentuate that danger. There are ample powers and laws on the books to permit the Attorney General to outlaw the White Citizens Councils, to prosecute and jail its leaders for their brazen lynchings and other crimes.

The national coalition for Negro rights should direct its main attack against the Eastlands, Byrnes and Talmadges and the White Citizens Councils which are organized perpetrators of racist crimes.

And the broadest front for upholding the Supreme Court decision as the law of the land should be organized in the Deep South in accordance with the specific political level of that region. All those to the left of the Eastlands, who believe in law and order, are potential members of this front.

The maximum public opinion should be mobilized to compel the Eisenhower Administration to take whatever measures necessary to enforce the Constitution, the Supreme Court decisions and all other protections and guarantees of full citizenship for Negro Americans in the Deep South. If American boys—Negro and white—can be shipped 5000 miles abroad to meddle into other nations' affairs, certainly they can be sent into the South—as the Constitution requires—to uphold the law of the land, to guarantee that Negro citizens, as well as white, exercise the ballot and other citizenship rights.

### III. Some General Conclusions About the South

1. The Negro people in the South, as well as throughout the

country, have a growing consciousness of their strength, and of the power of unity and organization. They are determined to use this strength, in concert with their allies, to achieve their full economic, social and political equality now and not on the basis of "gradualism and moderation" in some vague and distant future.

2. The Negro people are conscious of the necessity to struggle. Historically aware of the gap between the law and the actual exercise of their full citizenship rights, they are relying more than ever on their own struggles to help transform their legal rights into reality. Even after the federal court in Montgomery outlawed segregation the bus boycott is continuing, and spreading to other states.

3. The bus boycott is a successful variation of non-violent resistance when used under given conditions, such as those existing in Montgomery and other urban centers of the South.

a. It reflects the fact that 1/2 of the 10 million Negroes in the South have migrated to the Southern urban centers, and are now able to use their mass economic power as a weapon. The national question in the South can no longer be considered as a purely peasant question.

b. Within the framework of the North-South and Negro-wage differentials, the Negro workers in urban communities have benefited in a limited manner from the expansion and militarization of the economy and are now able to wage stronger battles for their rights. Negroes in Montgomery are contributing some \$300 a day for a car pool, with middle class professionals sharing the expense, lending cars, money, etc.

4. Exercise of the right to vote is the central common demand among the Negroes against the jim crow system. In urban centers, in particular, Negro workers are paying the poll tax and financing huge registration and vote campaigns. Before certain limited economic improvements took place, they couldn't pay the poll tax. The right of the Negro people to vote would change the whole relationship of forces in the South and in the nation.

5. Negroes in the South consider their movement for liberation a part of the world-wide struggle of the colonial people for independence, dignity and self-government. But the form of their struggle under American conditions is integration.

6. Up to Bandung and Geneva, sections of the ruling class sought to modify certain excesses of jim crow oppression of Negroes, in view of the socialist and democratic world currents and in order to win allies for its proposed atomic war against the Soviet Union, China and the colonial movements. With the recession of the war danger, the reactionary and repressive national unity has weakened and sharp class and national contradictions have erupted.

Finally, the situation in the South requires that our Party marshal its full strength to assist the Negro people's movement and to speed democratization of the South. This is our most glaring example of right opportunist passivity. We must base ourselves on the unique American features of this movement, and on the realistic course the Negro people have chosen for themselves. This is true even though we must avoid an orientation that this question is beyond the science of Marxism-Leninism, common to all countries, but must search for the adaptation of that science to specific American conditions, and to the actual level of Southern life.

Giving every support to and participation in the national fronts of the Negro people and in the general mainstream for Negro rights is our principal task. But the Party should develop its own vanguard people's program and should work for the leadership of the Negro workers within the context of the all-class unity of the Negro movement.

Such a program, in view of the latest developments of the last year or so, should involve at least:

1. End of all forms of segregation, jim crow and discrimination in all aspects of Southern life.

2. Enforcement of the Supreme Court decision on desegregation. People's and labor committees should be organized to achieve immediate compliance.

3. Reject gradualism and develop a realistic people's program to achieve desegregation and full integration now and to block years of endless litigation and stalling.

4. Center on the guarantee of the right to vote calling on the federal government for federal protection and guarantees in the exercise of this right. Abolish poll tax and the new intelligence tests.

5. Support and encourage legal and mass assaults upon segregation in restaurants, hotels, parks and other public places in the South.

6. Develop a concrete program of land reform for sharecroppers and tenant farmers and agricultural workers whose level of living among Negroes is still less than \$742 a year, and whose conditions have become often worse as a result of industrialization, mechanization and diversification of crops. Full support to "In Friendship," the financial aid apparatus of the United State of the Race Committee of the Negro leaders.

7. Outlaw the White Citizens Councils and Klans, jailing its leaders, and prosecuting them for murder and lynching. Removal of Eastland from the Senate. Federal disaster aid for all victims of the economic squeeze. Passage of anti-lynch legislation.

8. Decisive is the Southern organizing drive of the AFL-CIO. Passage of FEP legislation. This drive is the key to basic change in the South, to Negro-white unity upon which the whole edifice of advancing democracy must be built. This drive will not take place automatically since it foundered once before. It must be fought for.

This program is not intended to replace the contributions already made on this front by the Southern people's common program, published by the Southern Regional Committee of the Communist Party in March 1953. That program was a positive contribution to the tasks which are even sharper today.

Our work and attitude toward the South over the last decade has been heavily marked by left-sectarianism and other mistakes and by a shocking failure to keep up with developments in that region. We have lagged badly in applying our Marxist-Leninist science to changes in the South. But as to the status of our organization in the South, let us not forget the almost terrifying conditions under which our members have had to work there, and the brutal conditions of illegality which the Southern Bourbon class has imposed upon the Party over a number of years. Undoubtedly, it is on the agenda that new forms of organization be considered for the South. We should approach this question in as creative a manner as the outlawed sections of the NAACP which are flexibly adopting new forms of organization as a result of the outlawing

of their organization in Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia and other states. The NAACP and other Negro and labor organizations are getting a taste of the bitter persecution which our Party has suffered in the South for more than 25 years.

But the beginning point for our Party is to radically overcome its gross and entrenched neglect of the South, with respect to attention, above all, forces, and policy. This is the prerequisite to our contributions to the new and historical opportunities and relationships for progressive development in the South.

Certainly, we should not idealize the bus boycott nor the other struggles in the South. These movements face serious problems and dangers, to be solved and avoided. There are questions of perspectives, winning the white workers and masses, raising the demands of the sharecroppers and poor farmers, tactical and basic economic questions. The contributions of Marxists are badly needed, and occasionally in demand. But first we have to be present in the flesh.

We must commend such militant young leaders in the South as Hunter O'Dell, who virtually bearded Eastland in Louisiana, and all our Negro and white Southern comrades who have worked heroically in the most trying circumstances. Many of these are now in the North, where our political relations with them are vital. This is not to mention the contributions of Jackson, Scales, Strong and others, and especially those who are still on the firing line in the South today.

Our Party has to eliminate all approaches of routinism on the South and recapture for the new conditions of this period its famous crusading spirit.

#### **IV. The Negro People's Movement and the North**

The national all-class unity of the Negro people for full integration finds them more united than ever before in modern history. This movement is under the leadership of Negro reformists, the middle class and Social Democratic labor leaders, who have acquired tremendous prestige as a result of the limited concessions recently made on Negro rights. This reflects too the growth in the Negro middle class. Although we must not idealize them, nor fail to see the decisive role of the Negro workers and masses in the recent

gains, these leaders are moving in a positive direction, and deserve fullest support. The main obstacle to the correct efforts of the Party leadership in New York and elsewhere over the last three years to obtain such a positive evaluation has been a certain sectarian resistance to the all-class nature of the Negro people's unity.

The recently organized state-of-the-race coordinating committee is of tremendous significance. It indicates a conscious striving on the part of the Negro people and their leaders to coordinate all trends and bodies in Negro life. They all seek a fundamental change in the status of the Negro people, a common agreement on issues for the maximum impact, and a conscious desire to subordinate all schisms. But we should not underestimate the strains here. Thus we find a Congressman Powell, a Wilkins, a Dr. Howard, a Randolph and others—all with diverse approaches—but acting in concert on the central issues. Such an approach for unity reflects the growing influence of the greatly increased Negro proletariat, whose influence should be enhanced within the framework of the present national Negro all-class unity. Here we should avoid all narrow and sectarian ways of achieving this objective.

Towards this movement in its inception we were hampered by sectarianism. We have had a tendency to impose upon the Negroes our concept of what the most important issues are, rather than the issues they choose as a necessity for their further development in our society. We need to pay more attention to the program of the Negro people's organizations. We have too frequently relied upon headlines for our policy, seizing upon that which is most dramatic, which accounts for strong tendencies toward spontaneity in our work in this field. While this is exceedingly important, we must give more attention to the vital aspirations of the Negroes as they express them in relation to specific American conditions. Our severe isolation in the last period has hampered the extensive mass ties which alone can keep us in close touch with the thinking of the Negroes in the shops, farms, communities and in the Deep South.

The Negro is vitally aware of the growth of automation, Southern industrialization and diversification. He knows the United States is entering an atomic and chemical age, superimposed upon an already highly-developed production economy. He does not

want to be left behind at a time when certain limited opportunities, war-made though they are, are opening up. He wishes to overcome the 300 year scars of poverty, technical handicaps, disease imposed upon him by capitalist oppression. Education therefore fulfills one of his vital needs and enforcement of the school desegregation decision is in the first place an expansion of the Negroes' educational facilities. Under any and all circumstances, Negroes wish to improve the conditions of their life. It fulfills a vital internal need of the Negro people. The Negro seeks to measure in human equipment with all other Americans and is fighting to secure health and educational technical skills to blot out the disease which has preyed upon him, the enforced lag in education and skill which centuries of violent oppression have left him. The effort to secure a simple health clinic for a Negro community could mushroom into a burning popular issue. We must base ourselves upon first hand knowledge of the changed conditions in the Negro communities.

Housing, education, and health are among the most vital demands of the Negro people, especially in the North. In some areas, these are more acute than jobs, although obviously in Detroit and other urban centers of unemployment, jobs are most urgent. The main demands of the Northern Negro communities are for integration in housing, education and jobs. Because of the large Negro migration to the North, the school issue is one of the biggest and most popular in the North. Our slogan in New York, and in other urban Northern centers, should be: Make New York a model town of Democratic Integration! Negroes are themselves demanding integration in public projects in Harlem, for example. But note must be taken of the explosive tenseness in Detroit and other northern urban centers as a result of unemployment, bombings of Negro homes and such situations as Trumbull Park in Chicago. Another alphabetical name must become as hated among the people as the White Citizens Councils—namely, NAREB—the National Association of Real Estate Boards, a powerful and vicious lobby aimed at maintaining the ghetto. It is in the field of housing in the North that some of the most violent lynch practices are taking place against the Negro. The possibility of winning victories against jim crow in the North are better than the South, especially

because of the higher development of the Negro-labor alliance above the Mason-Dixon line, and the freer opportunities of struggle. It should be noted, however, that the White Citizens Councils are now appearing in the North, for example in the Detroit area, where it represents a twin danger to labor, to the Negro and to the Negro-labor alliance.

Just as the center of gravity of the Negro liberation movement is shifting to the South, so the main source of the national all-class unity of the Negroes stems from the Negro struggles in the South. Negroes in the North are today mainly playing a supporting role to the bus boycott, right-to-vote, and anti-lynch upsurge of the Southern Negroes. This role of the Negroes in the North is not to be underestimated. But it's a serious weakness in this united Negro movement that it hasn't sufficiently merged the economic and civil rights issues of the Negroes in the North with those of the Negroes in the South. Communists have a vital role to play in helping to join these issues in one mainstream, and in helping to give the whole a conscious anti-monopoly outlook and a socialist perspective.

Taking advantage of the fact that the limited reforms of the jim crow system were made during the cold and Korean wars, the monopolists and the government exert heavy pressures on Negro leaders to force them to be aggressive troubadours of the State Department's reactionary foreign policy. There are diverse approaches among these leaders. But this attempt has met with only partial success. The best guarantee against this danger is the influence of the Negro workers and masses and the popular influence of our Party. At the same time, our attitude toward the Negro people's movement can never again be that foreign policy is the decisive test, but rather the conditions and needs of the Negro people themselves. Our past practices in this respect, notably in our negative attitude toward the *Pittsburgh Courier's* double-V campaign during World War II, did our Party considerable damage, just now fully coming home to roost. This has been a serious ideological handicap to our Party in general, and to our able Negro cadre in particular. It fed the slander that we seek to use the Negro people.

Our Party's recently past role in the Negro people's movement

has been weak in terms of slogans, program and practical activity. We are today playing an entirely supporting role, too often a side line role, behind the often vague and fragmentary slogans of bourgeois leaders—Negro and white. But we do not seek to capture or dominate any organizations or sectors of the Negro people's movement. An example of the magnificent initiative taken by our Party was its work in the Chicago South Side in reacting to the Till lynching. Around this issue, the Party in several states made important contributions.

We have a modest but vital role to play in helping to widen and unite this movement, also in strengthening it with the legitimate participation of the most advanced forces among the Negro people. One of the weaknesses of this movement is that it does not have the integration of such staunch forces as Robeson, DuBois and numerous outstanding Negro trade unionists. We must never give up the struggle for the special right of the Negro to hold any political view he wishes without reprisal, private or official. This must be done in new ways of broadening unity.

We must find the ways and means under new conditions of bringing forward our Party's face and independent position. We must put an end to tailism, manifested not only in our practical struggles and initiative, but also in our slogans, demands and perspectives.

Characteristic of the Negro people's movement today is that it is demanding more and more. While every small gain encourages the Negro people, it only whets their appetites and demands for more, for their full unconditional equality and human dignity now. This is not only correct, but our Party should welcome and encourage it, for it has contributed to these growing aspirations of the Negro. The great virtue of this movement is that the Negroes are moving as a people from top to bottom, despite the many currents within it. Communists and other left forces should work in the Negro people's movement, not through claiming any superiority of ideology, but modestly by the performance of the most simple concrete tasks in a most principled, efficient and loyal manner. Our Party in many states has begun in recent months to make important contributions to the mass struggle for Negro rights, strengthening its ties with broader labor and people's organizations.

## V. Recent Gains of the Negro People

Over the last six years the Negro people and their white supporters have won a number of important and significant gains in their battle against jim crow. These gains are an extension of those begun during the Roosevelt New Deal and World War II periods. A precise and detailed examination of these gains is still to be made, but their pattern is somewhat apparent. They touch virtually every field of American life; they are uneven, and too often merely token.

Among the most dramatic are the integration of the armed forces; the federal court decisions against school segregation and bus transportation; the elections and appointment of Negroes to previous lily-white offices, etc. They extend to jobs, health and nursing facilities, to sports and culture, trade unions, increase of Negroes in state and federal government agencies and branches, and to the South. A 27-year-old young American Negro is today one of the greatest tennis players in the world, if not the greatest. Lynchings have decreased and the lynch class has been compelled to change its tactics. There are only five states in the Deep South with the poll tax—Alabama, Arkansas, Virginia, Mississippi and Texas. Important victories, have been won against the white primaries in the South, increasing the Negroes' voting strength.

The least gains, in my opinion, have been made in the field of housing, where the ghettos of the Northern urban centers still exist, and have even become more stiflingly dense, reflecting the mass migration of the Negroes to the North. Nearly every effort on the part of the Negro people is met by bomb-violence, inspired by the realty lords. Although restrictive covenants cannot be enforced in the courts, they have not been outlawed. Today they are enforced by force and violence.

Breaking into new industries and upgrading for Negro workers is very spotty. Negroes have made little or no progress in the skilled trades. They are still predominantly in the heaviest, dirtiest and most dangerous jobs with the lowest wages. There has been an absolute improvement in the Negro family's economic position, and this is extremely important even though within the framework of job jim crow. But relative to the white workers there's

been little narrowing the gap and in some areas it has gotten wider. This is especially true in the Deep South. There, the Negro sharecroppers, farmers and agricultural workers live on a sub-human wage which must be improved while they're on the farms. An estimated 5 million Negroes are still in the rural farm areas and they are the most forgotten men of the boasted American high living standards. The advancement of Negro women from domestic service is three times less than white women.

The civil rights gains have amounted largely to a relaxation of only the rawest forms of racist persecution of the Negro people. But they are of important significance. While the economic ones are important they have been made within the framework of the basic jim crow system still existing against the Negro people. The Negroes of the U.S. are still an oppressed people, and the area of their most brutal oppression is still the Southern Black Belt. The Till murder, the Autherine Lucy case, the legal whitewash of the lynchers shows how unbearable that oppression is—and so does the bus boycott which was provoked by the unendurable brutality toward Negro passengers.

These gains were the result of the struggles of the Negro people themselves, supported by their white labor and progressive allies on a nation-wide scale. They were powerfully influenced by world socialist and other democratic pressures, led by the Soviet Union, China and the colonial struggles in Asia and Africa. They were assisted by the influence of the neutralist countries led by India. They were helped by the early pioneering, the present existence and self-sacrificing contributions of our Party.

Other American pressures had effect. In the first place the existence of a 15 billion dollar market among the Negro people—a market larger than that of Canada and Latin America combined. The Wall Street monopolists are compelled to utilize and enhance this market, faced as they are by the shrinkage in their world markets and by competition from the Soviet Union and the world socialist system. Secondly, the monopolists need to exploit more fully the Negro potential, driving it into certain utilizable contradictions with the backward plantation economy in the South. A study financed by several Wall Street corporations advocates that Negroes and whites live and mingle together from childhood. Cer-

tain Northern-owned and new industries in the Deep South like the Montgomery bus company have offered to end segregation on the bus in order to guarantee its operational profits. In certain Northern-owned plants, where unions exist, there has been integration in the heart of the South. Such coincidences of interests between the Negro people and specific industrial interests can and should be utilized, no matter how temporary.

The reforms in the armed forces during the Korean war showed a combination of at least four factors. Under fire from the Asian colonial and socialist-led peoples, the government could not appear as a defender of democracy with a jim crow army as its ambassador in the Far East. Secondly, integration increased the efficiency and fighting potential of the army, which we always advocated. Thirdly, the Negro people pointedly struggled against jim crow in the armed forces, conscious of the gap between actual democracy and U.S. imperialist pretensions in the war. Fourthly, the numerous brutalities and injustices against Negro soldiers in the Far East, resulting in brutal court-martials, death sentences and filling the federal prisons. Our Party was among the first to raise sharply the jim-crow injustices against Negro troops in the Korean war. The positive effects of integrating Negroes and whites together in the armed forces will ultimately be far-reaching and especially in the South. This was a blow against the white supremacist neurosis against social equality.

The handed-down character of these concessions, beginning with the bourbon-led armed forces, revealed at once its design to allay international pressure—one of the most powerful allies of Negro liberation. But we should not underestimate the specific American pressures for these reforms, nor fail to use all internal contradictions of American society and policy to maintain and extend them.

The very fact that these gains were extended through the executive and judicial branches of the federal government and not through the legislative is of particular significance. The U.S. monopolists were speedily trying to mobilize allies for a projected atomic war on the Socialist countries; this had to be done quickly and with the least basic uprooting of the national oppression of the Negro. To have utilized the Congress would have required defeating the Dixiecrats, breaking up the Dixiecrat-Republican

alliance and enfranchising 10 million Negroes and whites in the South. But this makes the Congressional elections and the pending civil rights legislation in Congress a thousand times more important. Nor should the contradictions between the various branches of the federal government escape exploitation.

The basic significance of these gains is that they relieve in some small way some of the most humiliating and spectacular practices of jim crow brutality against the Negro people. Moreover, they have unleashed a flood of democratic currents designed to undermine the whole jim crow system. Secondly, they radically improve the conditions and atmosphere for the Negro people and their white allies to pursue with all vigor the struggle for full Negro liberation. They help to multiply the allies of the Negro people among millions of even prejudiced whites. The Supreme Court decision in the school cases outlawed in principle the whole legal basis of segregation, undermined the whole myth of white supremacy even though it set the stage for another big betrayal by its dillydallying with enforcement and implementation of the decision. In enforcing the decree, it's the old story of leaving the cat to watch the milk.

We must associate ourselves with the realistic Negro people who hail every minor relief from the degrading jim crow system and recognize too they are not satisfied. Even during these gains, it was the mass revulsion of the Negro workers and communities which repudiated the State Department's Negro apologists who travelled abroad exaggerating the happy conditions of Negroes in America. Even the militant Congressman Powell felt the power of Negro people's criticism after his Bandung trip and has vowed publicly that he'll never do that one again. One talented Negro writer, Saunders Redding, was so embarrassed by the questions asked him in India that he wrote a book saying in effect, "What did I get into?"

Yet it would be utopian to assume that these gains under the conditions in which they were won will not strengthen the illusions of the Negro people and their allies in the nature and aims of American capitalism.

These gains today face imminent perils. Forces of reaction seek to reverse them. Cong. Powell has already exposed the fact that

there are hard cores of segregation still in the armed forces, and that the Poll Tax Gen. Mark Clark is moving might and main to reinstall segregation in the armed forces. The revival of lynching in the South and the emergence of an open alliance between McCarthy and Eastland against Negroes' labor and civil liberties threaten the march toward progress. The fascist-minded monopolies still have a stranglehold on the American system, strengthened during the Eisenhower regime. Crisis factors, the farm situation—all whet fears of an economic downturn. The Federal government still refuses to enforce the rights of the Negro people in the South, with Eisenhower playing footsie with Negro rights. A replica of the betrayal of 1877 has to be prevented in the modern America of 1956.

Persecution of the most militant spokesmen of the Negro people, Marxists and non-Marxists, continues in cold war fashion, with many of our ablest leaders, Hall, Green, Winston, Thompson, Flynn and others, still in prison.

These gains must be maintained and extended. The whole rotten system of jim crow segregation, and white chauvinist persecution must be destroyed. Nothing less will satisfy the Negro's vital interests nor the needs of American democracy. These gains can be expanded to new heights, and new frontiers against jim crow crossed. In this regard, our Party must approach its responsibilities with a sense of urgency, prepared to play its role in the titanic struggles ahead. At the present time, it does not have that sense of urgency.

The attitude of underestimating these gains, that they amount to nothing can only deepen the isolation of our Party. While all attempts to overestimate them, including that the solution of the Negro question is all over, results in passivity in the struggle for Negro rights. We must take stock of these gains soberly and see what they contribute to strengthening the struggle to smash the entire jim crow system.

## VI. On Party Problems

In adjusting ourselves to the new and radical changes which must be made in our Party's work, under no circumstances should

the pioneering and unique contributions of our Party to Negro rights be sold short, belittled or apologized for. Our Party was the first in modern America to arouse the conscience of the nation and of the world to the bestial oppression of the Negro people and to their valiant contributions to American democracy. Over the past 25 years, it has steadfastly continued these contributions, despite mistakes and weaknesses. The improvements and corrections which need to be made in our work in this field must be based upon a due regard for the positive role and contributions of our Party in the past for Negro rights. The corrections we must now make are to enable us to substantially improve our contributions.

We should avoid also, it seems to me, a tendency to underestimate the consequences of the hard blows imposed upon our Party by government harassment, persecution, Smith Act trials, including the imprisonment of many of the most experienced cadres. These considerably weakened our Party's activities in the Negro field, as in other fields, during the last years. Nor should we fail to recognize the extremely difficult conditions under which our Party had to work for the last 5 or 6 years, conditions which are far from ended.

Heroic work under the most trying conditions was performed by the members and leaders of our Party during the period of the Korean war, at the apex of the McCarthyite pro-fascist hysteria, in the struggle against jim crow. Our Party played a very important role against army jim crow. Even in the very recent period, the beginning of improvement in our Party's work in this field can be noted in several states in respect to immediate issues. In the dramatic reaction of the Negro people to the savage Till lynching, the Autherine Lucy case, and in the recent Civil Rights Assembly in Washington, etc., our Party participated, with many broader forces, in the successful national actions around these events.

However, these are but the barest beginnings. Any idea that we can rest on our past laurels—no matter how glorious—must be forthrightly dismissed. Much self-criticism and basic reevaluation is necessary if we are to assess the degree to which we ourselves have contributed to our present isolation from the main struggles for Negro rights. Without underestimating the positive, I'd like

to concentrate mainly on some of our shortcomings.

The relatively extreme isolation of our Party in the struggle for Negro rights must be viewed with alarm, and should be met by careful examination and bold correction.

The Dennis report to the National Committee made a contribution in placing left sectarianism as the principal overall danger for the Party. This applies with special validity to our activities for Negro rights. He was, in my judgment, correct also in signalling the right opportunist passivity that infects our work in this field. This, however, was a disputed question in the discussion of the National Committee on this report. (In order to throw further light on this question it was unanimously agreed that a survey of our white membership's activities in white communities, organizations and shops should be undertaken and that a report would be made to our Party on all levels concerning these findings.)

The weaknesses and mistakes of our Party in this field have been, in my judgment, primarily left sectarian, though right mistakes were made also. This is understandable in view of the complex, many-sided nature of the Negro question.

But the words "left sectarianism" should not be applied as a cliché to avoid serious examination of other basically important problems and weaknesses in our Party's work in the Negro field—such problems as white chauvinism, bureaucracy, male supremacy, etc. To ignore these problems, or to fail to correctly solve them hampers our Party's correction of our mistakes in this field and weakens our efforts to achieve all other tasks.

There is no doubt that the desperate attempts of the American ruling class to distort the self-critical aspects of the 20th Congress of the CPSU and the self-critical review now going on in our Party are for the purpose of aborting the broad new relationships and possibilities for unity which are inherent between Communists and non-Communists in the USA and all over the world. Such possibilities are greater among the Negro people than, perhaps, among any other section of the American people.

The principal sectarian errors of our Party in the struggle for Negro rights over the last decade flowed from the faulty overall estimates of the Party in respect to the tempo of fascist developments, the imminence of an economic crisis, etc. They had their

particular expression in the area of Negro rights, for which I bear considerable personal responsibility. Let us examine three aspects of our Negro work: trade union, civil rights and our basic theory.

Banking on the onset of an immediate major economic crisis, we helped with other forces to organize the National Negro Labor Council, a left center. Although we emphasized in words the main duty of working in the existing labor organizations, in practice we made this center the principal base of left and progressive operation. The result was the isolation of many Negro trade union cadres from the main body of the Negro and white workers. This cadre, many of them experienced and revered, became almost powerless to affect the mainstream of organized labor, moving in the direction of the merged AFL-CIO, and toward improved positions for Negro workers. The consequences that flowed from this sectarian mistake disoriented our work in the Negro field, frustrated our cadre and curtailed our contributions to the Negro-labor alliance. In the same vein was our long existing negative attitude toward Randolph, Townsend, Weaver and others—based exclusively upon their wrong attitude toward the Soviet Union and foreign policy. It was correct to be critical but we should have maintained a positive attitude toward Randolph's role, his long and important fight against jim crow in the AFL, a fight weakened by the passivity of our Party and white left trade unionists. We are still paying a heavy price for these errors. Randolph is today not alone vice president of 16 million trade unionists but one of the most highly respected leaders of the Negro people—and justly so.

In the field of civil rights, a dramatic expression of our sectarianism was the mis-orientation of our Party on the Report of Pres. Truman's Committee on Civil Rights back in 1948. This report was something new in the life of U.S. capitalism and its chief spokesman in the White House. The Negro people, and a coalition of forces of which our Party was a part, compelled the government to frankly acknowledge the jim crow oppression of the Negro people before the nation and the world and to propose remedies limited as they were. We could approve virtually everything in the report except a brief anti-Communist section, which we proceeded to elevate as the heart of the document. While the Negro people hailed the document as a platform of struggle, we

subordinated its main positive import, took a negative attitude toward it and based ourselves on the anti-Communist section. Wrongly, we pilloried Negro members of the Committee and allowed our position to be distorted by the expediencies of the narrow Progressive Party venture. We have not recovered from our mistake on this question—a mistake made at the very inception of today's broad struggle for civil rights. This was one of the first contributions to our present isolation from the mainstream of civil rights. Failing to listen to the overwhelming majority of the Negro people and their reformist spokesmen, arbitrarily we made the main test of struggle for Negro rights for everyone, opposition to the Truman-Wall Street "containment of Communism" program and the Marshall Plan. As life shows, the Negro people, or their allies, didn't accept our self-imposed test (Comrade Winston and others opposed this sectarian view.) Capitalist demagoguery is fought by mobilizing the workers and masses for the realization of its promises.

Our National Committee has properly directed a special subcommittee to initiate a draft document for Party discussion after a thorough re-examination of our theoretical position on the Negro question. This is long overdue, and I will not attempt to usurp the findings of the Committee or decisions of our Party. But it would seem that the slogan of self-determination should be abandoned and our position otherwise modified and brought up to date, expanding our creative application of Marxist-Leninist science in the light of the special American features of this question. We did not do this sufficiently in the past. We must reexamine all wrong and sectarian concepts on this question, which have long given the wide impression that we were seeking to import a foreign formula and apply it dogmatically as the solution. Utilizing Stalin's contributions on the national and colonial question, our Party has derived tremendous and unique strength from viewing the Negro question as a national and special question, and that in my judgment is still sound. But we should review the rigid and mechanical application of these principles to our country, especially to the Negro people in the Deep South. This has led to confusion and misconceptions to the effect that the Negro people must necessarily establish a separate nation-state to secure their full

citizenship. Our theoretical position has always had certain sectarian implications which today stand out more sharply. Stalin's well-known contributions on the national question gave the "cult of infallibility" special prerogatives in our theoretical work on the Negro question. That this has adversely affected our current work and perspectives is beyond question. Today, the Negro people in the South are fighting for integration and are moving in the direction of democratic representative government, not towards a separate state. We should have a due regard for the complexity of the theoretical aspects of the Negro question and a healthy respect for its positive features. We must not "throw out the baby with the bath water." Nor, it seems to me, should we attempt to say the last word about the future, as was our tendency in the past.

It would be fruitful to leave a collective and more exhaustive reexamination of our theoretical position to the draft document for pre-convention discussion. Throughout our Party are many interesting and constructive ideas on this question, which must be taken into account if we are to strengthen, not weaken, the theoretical basis of our Party's special contributions to the struggle for Negro rights.

My report to the 15th National Convention of our Party recognized certain left sectarian dangers and polemized against some of the most disorienting excesses of those dangers. But in other respects, it still contained sectarian weaknesses, particularly in respect to a certain narrow approach to the positive role of the Negro middle class and petit bourgeois in all-class unity of the Negro people, and also in the way in which the struggle against white chauvinism was placed.

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Dogmatic, mechanical, or intolerant methods of fighting for the main tactical line of our Party, or the incitement of atmospheres in which comrades recoil from the expression of differences are self-defeating. That is particularly true in respect to the Negro question which has a myriad of unique facets which should not be oversimplified.

Above all, we fight for the main line of our Party with correct methods, scrupulously avoiding tendencies toward "commandism"

and bureaucracy imposed upon our Party by the difficult working conditions of the last years.

Irrespective of the overall tactical line of the Party, one of the biggest factors in the Party's struggle for Negro rights is the question of white chauvinism. Our Party hasn't kept pace with developments in life on this question, and its position is now wrapped in controversy. Such a state of affairs impedes and distorts the struggle for the main tactical line of the Party, and slows down the necessary corrective measures which the Party must make in this field.

Among the main reasons for this unclear situation is the special campaign against white chauvinism launched by the Party in 1949 and ended around 1952. While this campaign had positive effects, it fell into errors and left excesses which did serious damage to the Party—to Negro as well as white members, to the mass struggle of the Party for Negro rights. In my judgment, some of the main reasons for these excesses were: first, a divorcement of the campaign from the mass struggle for Negro rights, and its pre-occupation almost exclusively with internal Party struggle; the substitution of internal administrative and disciplinary measures for an ideological and educational campaign; the fact that the internal struggle too often intensified tensions between Negro and white cadres instead of easing them; and finally that this campaign, like all other phases of our work during this period, was heavily influenced by the overall left sectarian weaknesses of the Party.

Serious errors in the campaign against chauvinism are no excuse for abandoning the necessary struggle against white chauvinism either internally or externally, nor for permitting an ideological vacuum to obtain around the question. Our Party's previous sharp clarity on this question should be restored forthwith, but without returning to excesses of any character whatsoever. Our aim should be to examine the situation and to place the question correctly.

Tensions between Negro and white cadres and members are of the most urgent concern to all members of the Party, Negro and white. The unity of the Party is a principled question and should be fought for by all members—Negro and white—under any and all circumstances. Congressman Adam Powell, ten years ago, in his book *Marching Blacks*, said that "there is more racial brotherhood in the Communist Party than in any Christian Church in

America." We seek ever to be worthy of that compliment. We preserve Negro-white unity as the apple of our eye—as the foundation of all struggles for the peace, progress and equality in our country. In this spirit, we seek to place this question on a sound footing, mindful of the fact that our responsibility is to be judged by changed conditions, marked by the unprecedented modern upsurge of the Negro.

First to be noted is that the period of left excesses in the struggle against white chauvinism in our Party is over—and we hope for all time. In its place is not to be substituted false theses, such as that no struggle against white chauvinist ideology in our Party should take place at all, or that bourgeois Negro nationalism is now the so-called "main danger" in our Party. In my opinion, either of these wrong concepts would have the most dangerous effects upon our Party and its struggles for Negro rights; and both are to be found in various sections of our Party.

It is my opinion that the struggle against white chauvinism and bourgeois nationalism must be placed in a different way in our Party. We should no longer place it as the "main danger" and the "lesser danger." First, the danger concept distorts the character and contributions of our Party. Secondly, this placement of the questions in terms of "dangers" was perhaps always incorrect in our Party, since it created an apparent basic contradiction between the inherent role of our Party, and the fact that individual members of the Party occasionally reflect white chauvinist ideology. In my opinion, the placing of the question in terms of "dangers" is misleading. It facilitated the wrong concept that our Party, based upon the struggle for Negro liberation, could become a "danger" to that liberation. In the past placing of this question we started from theory, instead of from the fact of the white chauvinist oppression of the Negro people and who opposes it.

If we start with the facts of life, we find that white chauvinism is the main ideological weapon of American imperialism in the oppression of the Negro people. It is the principal ideology to be overcome in the struggle for the full citizenship of the Negro people. It is the weapon of the ruling class. The other fundamental factor in this question is the fact that the principal opponents of the white chauvinist oppression are the Negro people and their

allies and supporters. The most advanced supporter and ally of the Negro people in the fight for full citizenship is the Communist Party. The Communist Party is in the camp of the opponents of the white chauvinist oppression of the Negro people and, of all the fighters against this oppression, has the most outstanding record of contributions of any political party or organization, save the Negro people themselves. Its Marxist-Leninist science so equips it.

The question before our Party is not whether it is in the camp of the white chauvinist oppressors, or in that of the fighters against this oppression. That question is settled by the nature of our Party as a Marxist-Leninist organization, as the Party of the working class and the Negro people, as the Party of socialism. It is settled for Negro and white members when they join our Party. The only question before our Party is how well it is performing its function in the mass struggle against the white chauvinist oppression of the Negro people.

Therefore, the struggle of our Party against white chauvinist and bourgeois nationalist ideologies are tasks of our Party in the fight for Negro rights, in welding Negro-white unity in the mass struggle. They are not to be confused with the main tactical line of our Party, which guides the direction and emphasis in achieving these tasks.

Our Party, while making contributions in the struggle for Negro rights, is not today setting the example which the needs and urgencies of the moment require. It must boldly take the most demonstrative steps to this end. Internally, the slackening in the struggle against white chauvinist ideology is manifested by the reduced sensitivity of our Party on the Negro question; by the desire of some comrades to sweep the whole question under the rug, etc.; by the relatively low level of understanding on the ideological and tactical aspects of the question; and by the hesitancy of too many white members to take the initiative in all situations where white chauvinist ideology is involved. There are various expressions of chauvinist ideology—of a laxity in the educational campaign against this ideology—that can appear among the staunchest opponents of the chauvinist oppression of the Negro people.

The main expression of our Party's fight against the ideology

of white chauvinism should be in the mass struggle for Negro rights, in the mass fight against the white chauvinist oppression and oppressors of the Negro people. It is the struggle for integration and full, unconditional Negro liberation. Lagging, tailism or passivity in the mass struggle for Negro rights is the central way in which any diminution of the struggle against white chauvinist ideology shows up. If our Party is to fulfill its role in the mass struggle for Negro rights, it should at all times wage an unremitting campaign against the ideology of white chauvinism. This is a principled question.

It is my opinion that the present situation of our Party is characterized not by left excesses in the fight against white chauvinist ideology but by a serious slackening and decrease in the correct struggle against this ideology.

This slackening manifests itself not only in the lag in the mass struggle for Negro rights, but also internally in our Party. While white as well as Negro members join our Party to fight for Negro rights, they join also for socialism, peace, trade union unity, etc., and must have constant education on the ideological, political, and tactical aspects of these questions and their relation to united mass struggle. Such education should be a daily, operational feature of our Party and not just in special campaigns. This education should be by deed and teachings. It should take into account the whole new period in which we work—a period requiring new methods, new approaches to questions.

Perhaps the most important way in which the slackening of this ideological struggle manifests itself within our Party is in the situation of many of our leading Negro cadres. Too many of these cadres are under unnecessary political clouds. At a time when the bourgeoisie is integrating Negroes into the highest positions, our Party, which first projected the fight for the integration of Negroes into all levels of American life, cannot lag in striking blows against notions of racial superiority by its own further unilateral elevation and recognition of its valuable Negro personnel. The number of Negroes in leading positions of our Party has declined, not increased, and at a time when tens of thousands of Marxist trained Negro personnel are needed for all phases of struggle of labor and the people.

Our Party must seek to set the best example of all the organizations in the United States in its special recognition of the tremendous capabilities and increased contributions of Negroes to American democracy. This is particularly true in the promotion and recognition of Negro women, who are today playing an exceptional role in the Negro liberation movement. Far from regarding our numerous Negro cadres as "problems," many of them are able and experienced trade unionists and intellectuals; we must boldly and aggressively promote them, ending the lag of our Party behind many liberal and trade union organizations in this respect. When N. Y. Governor Harriman, a Wall Street multi-millionaire, boasts publicly that he is a "zealot" for Negro rights, it is time for us to take note. Negro cadre is the concern of the whole Party and not just the Negro comrades.

The level of white chauvinism among the white workers and masses has declined during the last years—a fact of no small significance. But the conclusion from this is not that our Party has less to do in the struggle against the ideology of white chauvinism. Quite the contrary. This indicates that the non-Party white workers and masses are more ready than ever to join in the struggle against every manifestation of white chauvinist oppression of the Negro people. Any complacency on this question, as expressed in some sections of our Party, is a serious peril to the fulfillment of its role. The participation of the Party in the mass struggle for Negro rights continues under any and all conditions, without zigs and zags until the Negro people are unconditionally free. The over-all tactical line of the Party guides the direction of the struggle but does not determine the existence of the struggle. That struggle began before our Party was in existence; it will continue with or without our Party. Only by redoubling its efforts against the ideology of white chauvinism can our Party meet the urgent demands of the mass struggle for the full citizenship of the Negro people.

Tensions in some areas of our Party between Negro and white cadre cannot be wished out of existence by failing to deal with them. They must be faced up to, their causes ascertained and overcome by both our Negro and white members. They are an independent problem which must be examined on the merits. In my

opinion, their main source is political and they spring from laxity in our Party on the mass struggle for Negro rights and on the internal unclarity on the question of white chauvinist ideology; on incorrectly attributing the harm of the last campaign to the struggle against white chauvinism instead of to the serious left excesses; and lastly, to the overestimation of the gains made by the Negro people leading to the adoption of ideas of liberalism and equalitarianism in the treatment of Negro Party members. At the same time, these tensions have been aggravated by tendencies toward bourgeois nationalist ideology on the part of many of our Negro cadres.

In adjusting our Party fully to American conditions, we should never forget that one of the proudest traditions of the American people—even of the most prejudiced whites—is their participation in the struggle for Negro citizens, beginning with the abolition of chattel slavery. That white Communists should lead against all types of chauvinist oppression of the Negro people is not an empty formula, but is based upon the sound precept that white labor cannot be free while black labor is branded—and more immediately upon the fact that it is among white communities, shops and organizations that new extensions of frontiers against jim crow must be won. It is still true that we must win the great majority of the white masses to a conscious and more active struggle against the white chauvinist oppression of the Negro people. The history of our country shows that this can be done.

Another important task in the Party's struggle for Negro rights is to combat the ideology of bourgeois Negro nationalism.

Undoubtedly, the left excesses in the struggle against white chauvinism in our Party were intensified by bourgeois nationalism among many Negro comrades. This was manifested in our Party by tendencies among many of our Negro comrades to overestimate the willingness of the Negro people to struggle under the leadership of left centers, their reluctance to center their work in the main Negro people's organizations, their treatment of the limited but important gains of the Negro people as changing nothing at all, and a failure to unite the struggles of the Negro people with the Puerto Rican, Jewish, labor and other sections of the population. Our Party has a particular ideological responsibility of

acquainting the Negro people with the great strength they derive in their struggle from the growth and influence of the socialist countries led by the Soviet Union, from People's China and the European democracies, from the Asian colonial revolutions and from the neutralist camp led by India. The upsurge of the Negroes in the South is a part of all oppressed mankind's battle for freedom and dignity.

Our Negro comrades have the prime duty of combating all bourgeois separatist ideology among the Negro people. With the dominant trend among Negroes for integration, including their welcoming of white allies on every level of life, the conditions are more favorable than ever for defeating it. An example of this is that the NAACP has already raised as a popular issue the necessity of tackling those 29 states that ban interracial marriage. Our Negro comrades should try in every way to show the indivisible connection between the struggle of the Negroes for civil rights and the developing struggle of all sections of the American people for civil liberties, for restoration of the Bill of Rights, for the unity and strength of the labor movement.

One must mention, too, right opportunist tendencies among some of our Negro comrades, who tend to idealize and adopt an uncritical attitude toward Negro bourgeois and reformist leaders, underestimating the tremendous growth and potential of the Negro proletariat. They tend to negate the independent role of the Party altogether. The biggest danger in the controversy in this field which raged in our Party more than a year ago, especially in New York, was sectarianism, a resistance to fighting for the all-class unity of the Negro people. Our state Party in New York made positive contributions in this fight. This too involved a serious manifestation of the sectarian danger in our Negro work.

Within the framework of the national front of the Negro people, our Party must base itself on the Negro workers and masses, while strengthening its ties and relations with all sections and classes of the Negro people. One important path to the mainstream of struggle is through our self-sacrificing struggle for the needs of the Negro people in the ghettos. But we must be ever more innovating in finding new forms and relations with all sections of the Negro communities.

The special militancy of our Negro comrades, however, should not be confused with bourgeois nationalism. The ardor and aspirations of the Negro people for freedom have been whetted. Our Negro comrades, like the Negro people, are demanding more and quicker. They have less and less patience with neglect and insensitivity to their opinions, their right to share with equality in determining all questions. Their aspirations are for the Party to win its rightful place among the Negro people as well as among the workers generally.

They are inspired by Bandung and the successful colonial liberation movements in Asia and Africa, to which our Party hasn't given sufficient attention. But we have to guard against the view that the course of development of the colonial movements abroad will be duplicated for the Negro people in the South.

The Negro comrades naturally feel an exceptional pride in the struggles of the Negro in the South; nor does every outburst of their special militancy mean bourgeois nationalism. We must carefully differentiate between the two.

Our Negro comrades no less must help to create the atmosphere for our white comrades to assume their full initiative in the struggle against white chauvinism. They should combat all "lone wolf" tendencies to substitute individual methods for the collective. Our Party has an especially important ideological role to play among the Negro people on the perspective for socialism, on the tremendous achievements of the socialist lands and on a host of questions in the Negro's mind. A Marxist publication of some kind is still necessary in this field.

Within the framework of a new and more flexible concept of Party unity, our Party in the Negro communities should be an independent force, the most self-sacrificing, modest worker for all-class unity, seeking to infuse into it consciousness as a part of an anti-monopoly coalition for democracy and peace.

These are some of the important and complex factors which should be taken into consideration in applying the sound main line of our Party to the field of Negro work, in guaranteeing the Party's heightened role in the mass struggle for Negro rights, and in the crucial '56 elections. A true Marxist-Leninist approach em-

braces all these factors; it encompasses the many-sided richness of life and struggle.

It seems to me that our Party, despite difficulties, blows, and mistakes, has a relatively better regard from the Negro people, than from among any other section of the population. This warm attitude toward our Party has been earned over the last quarter century. Even so, it does not start from scratch. And we are on the eve of the broadest and strongest relations with the Negro people than ever before in American history.

Our Party today, Negro and white members, and especially our leaders must raise the level and quality of our work in this field in accordance with the new and rich challenge of today. This, it is my abiding conviction, it will do—and with flying colors. To the extent that we do, that much stronger and more successful will be the whole struggle for the full, unconditional equality of the sixteen million American Negroes now.

## VII. Negro Rights and the Elections

The 1956 elections offer an extraordinary opportunity for advancing the cause of Negro rights, for implementation of the Supreme Court desegregation decisions and for lifting the whole level of the struggle for civil rights and civil liberties in general. That is because the whole American people—the majority of whom wish to cleanse the country of the foul lynch system—have an opportunity to participate concretely in the struggle, particularly for the emancipation of the Negro in the South. It is desirable that the issue of civil rights be so sharpened with respect to both parties, that no matter which wins, a clear mandate will exist for throttling the Dixiecrat-White Citizens Councils and for compelling the Federal government to enforce immediately the citizenship rights of both the Negro and white people in the South. Effective political action by the whole American people can strike a blow against the jim-crow political tyranny in the South, which menacingly retards the peaceful pursuits and social progress of the entire nation.

One of the outstanding features of the campaign thus far is that the Negro people, plus their labor and other allies, have intervened constructively in the election campaign forcing the civil

rights issue to the fore and compelling certain candidates to change their tune. Far more needs to be done along this line in terms of platform and deeds. And, for the moment, the time and medium through which to do it is at the platform hearings of both the Republican and Democratic Parties. The Michigan State Democratic Party convention, presided over by Representative Charles Diggs, was a good example of the adoption of a relatively strong civil rights plank. Undoubtedly, this was achievable in no small part by the influence of the powerful UAW and by the strength of the Negro-labor alliance in that area.

Another feature of this election year is the tremendous importance of the Negro vote. Statistics show that there are now five million Negroes in the Northern, mid-Western, and Western industrial centers, increasing the decisive character of the Negro vote, particularly in the Northern and border states. It is conceded that in 61 Congressional districts throughout the land, the Negro vote is decisive; in addition, the Negro vote holds the potential balance of power in the presidential race in thirteen states. Undoubtedly, the important but limited gains made by the Negro people in the last six years, were a result in part of the pressure of the increasing Negro vote. This is true to some extent even in the South—as relatively sparse as the Negro vote is there.

The Republicans have opened one of the most intense propaganda campaigns in the last fifty years to recapture the Negro vote, lost since 1932 to the Roosevelt New Deal, Truman, and the Democratic Party. This campaign seeks to re-establish an alliance between the Negro and Big Capital. It would be wrong to underestimate this campaign; for the Eisenhower Administration is already associating the recent gains of the Negro with the GOP, including their unprincipled use of the fact that Chief Justice Warren is a Republican, in connection with the desegregation decision. Coupled with this, is the performance of the Eastland-Byrnes, etc., Dixiecrat wing of the Democratic Party, which not a single leading Democratic Presidential aspirant has repudiated. Even more dramatic is the elevation of the Dixiecrat Eastland to chairmanship of the Senate Judiciary Committee, with the power of life and death over all social and civil rights legislation! The GOP is demagogically taking advantage of all these Democratic Party

blunders, including the failure of the Democrats to drive the Eastland Dixiecrats out of the Party.

The GOP intends to win the Negro vote. Lacking this, it hopes to split it, rendering the Negro people impotent in the Presidential and Congressional elections.

The principal basis upon which to combat this is on the non-partisan character of the civil rights issue. A strong lead in this direction has been given by the NAACP national convention in San Francisco, by the State-of-the-Race Committee, comprising a representative group of virtually every point of view among the national leaders of the Negro people. The overwhelming consensus of opinion is that the Negro people will consider candidates on the merits of their civil rights record. This is sound. It tallies with the statement of Reuther and Meany of the AFL-CIO that the Democratic Party cannot have the "Eastlands and us" too.

Hence, conditions are present in this campaign for the closest alliance of the Negro people with labor, with the farmers, with urban small business and middle-class forces, in behalf of civil rights and toward the establishment of a broad coalition against the monopolies which have grown to a dangerous super-power during the Eisenhower-GOP Administration. One of the first objectives is that this coalition should register its combined unity in this election, fighting off splits, and seeking to tear asunder the Republican-Dixiecrat coalition. These Congressional elections are of the utmost importance, involving the question of the passage of civil rights and other progressive legislation.

Negro representation is another major issue of the campaign. The situation of only three Negro Congressmen out of 435 is a disgrace to America, and the absence of a single Negro U.S. Senator reflects the basic oppression of the American Negro. Nor are the Republicans asleep at the switch. Already, the N.Y. State Republican leaders are discussing the possibility of a Negro for the place of Senator Lehman, whose term expires this year. Meanwhile, the Democratic Party in various states is lagging and even ignoring the legitimate demands of the Negro people for representation in all levels of the government, federal and state. Every opportunity to increase Negro representation should be supported. This is a non-partisan issue. Likewise, the specifics of each given situation

should be carefully examined with a view to preventing the attempts of reactionaries in either Party to split the Negro vote, to divide the Negro-labor alliance under the guise of advancing Negro representation. The first guarantee of increasing such representation is the collaboration of the Negro people and labor, with the latter acquiring a more urgent understanding of the demands of the Negro people in this regard and how they coincide with the vital interests of the trade unions. This will help to ease the strains in the Negro-labor alliance resulting from the exceedingly advanced Negro liberation movement.

The South is special. The upsurge of the Negro there is the main source of the national unity of the Negro people. And the fundamental question there for the elections is the guarantee of the right of the Negro to vote, not only in the urban areas but also in the rural backwoods South. It should be universally demanded of the Eisenhower Administration that it stop winking at the Eastland conspirators in the South, and that it use the full power of the government to enable the Negro people, and their democratic supporters in the South, to vote in the presidential and Congressional elections, that the Negro people exercise their constitutional right to elect Congressmen, U.S. Senators, and State and county officials! The Negro vote in the South, though small, and though exercised under the most extreme lynch terror—is of tremendous importance. It is reported that the Negro vote kept five Southern states for Stevenson in 1952. Then the vote was some 1,200,000. This year a drive is being made to double the Negro vote in the South. Not only should the Federal government be called upon to protect the right of Negroes to vote, but all assistance, financial and otherwise, should be given to the Negro people's right-to-vote organizations in the South for every practical purpose.

The Negro people north of the Mason-Dixon line, and their labor-progressive allies, have in the 1956 elections their biggest opportunity to assist the heroic struggles of the Negro in the South. This they can do with their ballots! With their relatively more liberal voting conditions, they can do what millions of Negroes in the Deep South are still barred from doing—cleaning out the reactionaries in Congress.

If the biggest registration campaign in history is necessary for labor and all other voters in this crucial election, it is a thousand times more important for the Negro on a nation-wide scale, particularly for Negro voters in the North and West.

For the Communist Party, this election should be regarded as a major milestone in plunging into mass activity, and in seeking to influence the course of events in a manner that will fulfill the realization of immediate full citizenship of the Negro people and that will register the will of the American people for peace, freedom, and prosperity. We can take our first big steps toward breaking with sectarianism in the past. Like all other Americans, Communists will exercise their right to influence both major parties, their candidates and platforms, in behalf of the full instantaneous emancipation of the Negro in the South, and for the unconditional free citizenship of the Negro all over the land. Neither party should be allowed to blunt or smother this issue under vague phrases of "moderation" and "avoiding extremes"—phrases designed to suppress the most important issue in the election campaign. Given a firm stand by the Eisenhower Administration and by the national leaders of the Democratic Party in favor of upholding the court's desegregation decree, and in protecting the Negro's franchise, a long step would be taken toward ending the White Citizens Council's violence against Negroes, labor, and progressives in the South. While the fence-straddling position of the Eisenhower government is taken in the name of avoiding violence in the South, it is a green light to the lynching, violence, and assassination presently imposed upon the Negro in the South.

Upholding the law is the best answer to anti-Negro violence and not the capitulation of the Eisenhower Administration to the Eastlands, Byrnes, Shivers, and Talmadges for the unprincipled purpose of courting Dixiecrat votes in November. The Federal government has the power and the duty to use troops and whatever other constitutional means are available to enforce the law of the land. It hasn't hesitated to use the force of jail and seizures in trying to destroy the Communists and other foes of jim crow; it should not hesitate to use whatever force—troops if necessary—to put down violent defiance of the law of the land, and murderous terror against peaceful citizens seeking to exercise their constitutional rights.

In establishing the closest ties with the masses, our Party should seek to build the broadest support for concrete measures to expose the defiance of the law in the South, and urge action on these measures at the present Congress. Congressman Charles Diggs' proposal for invoking the Fourteenth Amendment to reduce representation of states that discriminate in the exercise of the ballot; a change in the seniority system in Congress to prevent such outrages as Eastland heading the Senate Judiciary Committee; the outlawry of the poll-tax in federal elections; support of the Powell anti-segregation amendment to the school bill; a demand that the Supreme Court set a specific immediate date for compliance with the desegregation decision; outlawry of the Citizens Councils—these are among the decisive issues upon which all candidates and parties, Congressional and Presidential, should be pressed to declare themselves.

The heightened participation and influence of the Communist Party in the elections, and in all other avenues of struggle for Negro liberation, is not an empty academic or formal question. It is vital to the strengthening of the whole cause of Negro freedom and civil rights. The coals of fiery persecution heaped upon the Communists by the government, by the pro-fascist reactionaries and warmongers, are but a tribute to the contributions of our Party over the years. They are evidence of reaction's fear that the unique and self-sacrificing role of our Party will assist this historic upsurge of the Negro and his allies in reaching even higher and more effective levels. More than a quarter of a century ago, when our Party was fighting virtually alone beside the Negro people for their emancipation from the white supremacy system, it was scorned as mere "agitators," as "foreign agents," as "trouble-makers," etc. But our Party, surviving as it has and will, the monstrous persecution of a jim crow ruling class, can now view with a certain pride the present period in which its demands for Negro liberation are now being raised by all sections of the population as an accepted, legitimate fact of life. In all but the deepest South, the struggle for the Negro emancipation has become a popular issue—indeed, the most burning issue in the 1956 elections.

The legality and strengthening of our Party today is a matter of popular concern to all who believe in expanding Negro rights

and American democracy. It is of special interest to all Communists that our Party and that the *Daily* and *Sunday Worker* be built in the election campaign. The Negro liberation movement needs a big, powerful and influential Communist Party and press.

Our Party—with its unwavering socialist goals—has not only the vital, immediate interests of the Negro rights struggle at heart. It, and it alone, seeks at all times to keep before the Negro people, their labor, farmer, and progressive allies, the next big step toward social uplift in our land, the building of a mighty united anti-monopoly coalition for peace, equality, and freedom.