

A Practical Program to **KILL JIM CROW**



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by **Charles Jackson**

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A PRACTICAL PROGRAM TO KILL JIM CROW

Nobody has to inform the Negro of present-day America that he is condemned to second-class citizenship and oppressive inequality. We have learned first-hand that our day-to-day activity and job opportunities are seriously impeded simply because our skin is the "wrong color." In every move we make in "democratic" America we are reminded that Jim Crow is boss of the barnyard.

Some have felt the sting in one way, some in another. It depends on the part of the country and on the special circumstances which we have run into. Some have paid a higher price; some have paid in different coin. But every Negro is paying in one way or another for a condition based on the doctrine of white supremacy and on the lie of racial inferiority.

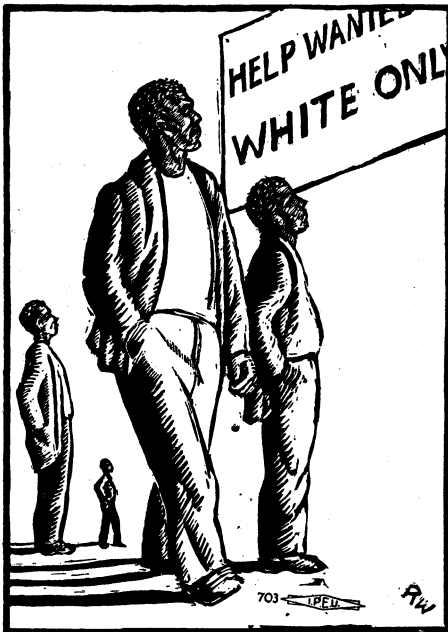
In the backward South ten million Negroes and poor whites are denied the ballot in defiance of the so-called sacred inviolability of the Constitution. Even in Georgia, where they recently repealed the poll-tax, they first made sure that measures were taken to prevent the Negro from voting. To tell the truth, in most Southern states, the poll-tax and white primaries run poor seconds to outright legalized intimidation in denying the Negro political equality.



In the military branches of the country in this war the anti-Negro policies strike a sharper note in the same old key. The draft boards induct the Negro on a racial basis into separate, Jim Crow regiments, to fight in what they would have us believe is a war for "Four Freedoms"—to fight not as soldiers in the regular U. S. Army but as members of the colored auxiliary section. This is an open violation of Section 4a of the Selective Service Act of 1940 which was supposed to outlaw racial discrimination.

The relegation of the vast majority of Negro soldiers and sailors to labor battalions, regardless of their ability, is common knowledge. Furthermore, at the slightest display of resentment against this reactionary policy, the brass hats crack down with blazing fury upon the objectors. To the brass hats, those who demand equal rights are the ones at fault, never the undemocratic policy of Army Jim Crow.

Witness the savage penalties imposed by brass hat court-



martials on colored servicemen and women for daring to protest discrimination in the armed forces. The 50 sailors at Port Chicago, California, sentenced to from 8 to 15 years at hard labor for "mutiny" because they objected to being segregated in a Navy Jim Crow ammunition loading gang, after 300 of their comrades had been blown to bits. The 4 colored Wacs, sentenced to a year at hard labor for refusing to do the dirty work which was not required of the white Wacs. The hunger

strike of 1000 Seabees, veterans of the South Pacific, in protest against the rotten policy of discriminatory upgrading by their prejudiced Southern commander. A mere listing of such incidents would be enough to fill this pamphlet.

This is not a democracy—it is mockery of democracy!

In the economic field, hundreds of plants from one end of the country to the other, refuse to hire or refuse to upgrade qualified Negro workers. In cartridge plants, lum-

ber mills, shipbuilding, trucking, communication and in other fields which are admittedly vital to Wall Street's war, black workers are given the thumbs-down sign.

Negro men, qualified tool and die makers, are forced to accept work sweeping floors. Negro women, who can type as high as 119 words a minute, are forced to accept work cleaning toilet bowls.

In spite of these well-known facts, the Chief Executive and his so-called liberal Congressmen used the myth of a "labor shortage," in an attempt to push through a slave-labor bill which thumbs its nose at the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing involuntary servitude. Already, Negro workers in Northern war plants have been forced by the Federal government to return to Southern plantations where they are compelled to work for as little as six dollars a week.

In America today there is no shortage of labor—but there is a shortage of racial equality!

The price that society as a whole is paying to keep one-tenth of the nation in political and economic subjugation is immeas-



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urable. The tragic pay-off for social inequality in terms of human misery will never be fully known. Richard Wright in his autobiography, *Black Boy*, vividly describes the social results of this "sense of not belonging." What Negro cannot think of some early experience with Jim Crow that affected his entire life?



Racial discrimination is a symptom of a deadly social disease. It is not a cause, it is an effect. Jim Crow is comparable to a sore on the skin that results from some internal disorder which exists within the body of American society itself.

The indignities that the Negro meets from day to day re-

main only because the blood of our society is constantly pumped full of the poison of racial prejudice.

Now what does a doctor do when he is called to see a sick man? He must first locate the cause of the complaint before he can prescribe the right medicine.

What is the nature of prejudice? It is a prejudgment. It is deciding on the merits of someone before you give him a chance to prove himself.

A prejudiced Southerner seeing a man with a black face or kinky hair automatically concludes that he is that man's superior. This particular Southerner may be mentally or physically inferior to the Negro but judgment is already passed before the facts are known.

Was this Southerner born that way? Science has proved that he was not. We know that children, be they black, brown, yellow or white, will play together in a fashion that knows no color intolerance. Furthermore, how could white supremacy be inherited when it is by no means universal? In many countries where Negro workers are few there is no segregation or discrimination whatsoever.

If our Southern cracker was not born prejudiced, then how did he get that way? He had the doctrine of "white supremacy" drummed into him from the time he was old enough to understand. Officially, every law-enforcement agency showed him. He saw that neither the local, country, state nor federal government gave the Negro an even break. And he was led to believe that the government could do no wrong.



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His church, his family and his friends also influenced him. Movies, radio, newspapers, and books invariably portrayed the Negro as a shiftless clown. Like clay in the hands of the potter, his previously unformed mind was shaped to despise the Negro.

Even small town white boys who have never seen a colored man have learned to say when going swimming, "*Last one in's a Nigger.*" Young white girls who mean no one any harm have been taught to say: "*Mary's mad and I am glad, but I know what will please her. A bottle of ink to make her stink and a little Nigger to squeeze her.*"

Prejudice, then, is an artificial poison that is constantly replenished by some inner force in society. What is that inner force? The Negro worker must determine the answer to this question. We know that before a premeditated crime is committed there must be a motive. Who has a motive for this crime? Who stands to gain from the purveyance of anti-Negroism? That is the \$64 question we must correctly answer.

Is it our white fellow worker? It is not. This we can check and double-check. Let's look at the facts from a basic, economic point of view. In the backward South, where prejudice is most extreme, the annual income of the white workers is the lowest in the country. On the other hand, in the industrial cities of the North where Negroes have a greater measure of equality,

the average wage of the white workers is the highest.

The white people who work for a living, then, filled full of prejudice though they may be, have actually nothing to gain. Although many of them fall for this vicious hate propaganda, yet, if the truth be told, they themselves actually lose when they indulge in Jim Crow practices.



Without a doubt, it is only those who hire and exploit wage labor who stand to gain by pitting white against black and black against white: the wealthy planters, the big industrialists, the monopoly capitalists, the Wall Street financiers. Those who produce nothing themselves but who, like leeches, live by exacting a hidden toll from their employees.

Since these exploiters are the only ones who really gain in dollars and cents by driving this wedge between the white and Negro workers; and since it is only under the capitalist system that such exploiters are officially protected by the government, therefore it is easy for every worker to see that the capitalist system itself is the real cause of inter-racial prejudice. Here, then, is the basic enemy against whom we must battle.

Capitalist exploitation hangs like a tapeworm from the entrails of human society. It lives off the nourishment which is created by the labor power of both white and black workers. In its parasitic existence it gives off increasing doses of poisonous prejudice. In America the poison of racial prejudice, which capitalism produces, circulates throughout society and is the direct cause of the external festers of segregation, discrimination, lynching and race riots.

The ruling class hopes that these outside irritations will divert the attention of both black and white workers away from their common enemy. By keeping the white at the throats of the black and the black at the throats of the white, the capitalists hope to keep the struggle on a strictly racial basis for they know that this will make easier the further oppression of the entire working class.



They also realize that when the workers, black and white, learn to unite on a *class basis* it will be the exploiting ruling class for whom the bell will toll.

This policy of *divide and rule* is nothing new in the tactics of the ruling class. It has been used time and again throughout the history of the exploitation of man by man. Nor is the color division in America the only variant of this ruthless procedure.

For the British imperialist leeches in India it is the Hindu against the Moslem—*divide and rule*. For the Yugoslav land-owners against the peasantry it was the Croat against the Serb—*divide and rule*. For Hitler, the demagogic pawn of the German capitalists, it was the Aryan against the Jew—*divide and rule*.

Even in the shops we see the same thing on a smaller scale. Competition, sharpened in the face of impending unemployment, allows management to pit men workers against women, skilled against unskilled, white against black and vice versa. Who can fail to see the present conspiracy to pit the returning veterans against the civilian workers?

It stands to reason, then, that the Negro will never achieve equality as long as this system, which makes race prejudice profitable, is allowed to exist.

The lack of racial equality is supposed to bother our pie-in-the-sky preachers, our slick political fakers and our cringing Uncle Toms. While they say they favor more Negro rights, they defend in practice the capitalist system which breeds prejudice and inequality. They view with alarm what they call a "radical" solution. "*It is bad enough,*" they say, "*to be Black, let alone Red.*"

These Negro misleaders would have us believe that we can successfully fight Jim Crow while still supporting the present economic system. Let us ask ourselves: Is the healer who treats the sores on the outside while protecting the worm on the inside—is such a healer doing us good or is he doing us harm? *Can he make us well or will he let us die?* A Negro big-shot who "fights" Jim Crow while supporting the system that breeds it—is he friend or is he foe?

We say: Fight Jim Crow but also fight the system that makes it profitable!

Furthermore, the Negro people must ever be on the alert to detect any sign of compromise in any political party that claims to be their friend. Witness the odious spectacle of the supporters of Stalin who are still able to fool some workers by fraudulently calling themselves "communists." These Stalinists support the no-strike pledge which ties the hands of labor, both black and white. They support Roosevelt's slave labor proposals which would place 10 million Negroes at the disposal of Southern cracker draft boards.

They tell the Negro that he should be patriotic to this capitalist government although we know all the time that this very government officially designates the dark-skinned Americans as second-class citizens.

Like a dead mackerel in the moonlight, they stink and they shine and they shine and they stink.

Only a Workers' Government as was established by the Bolsheviks in October 1917 in Russia will successfully abolish racial discrimination. Why should it do that, you may ask?

In the first place such a government would have nothing to gain from keeping Jim Crow alive. We have seen that it is only the capitalist class and never the working class that actually profits by keeping the Negro down. We know that to keep people prejudiced calls for a continuous, organized



campaign, similar to what is carried on today. The Workers' Government, devoid of capitalists, would have no motive for the premeditated crime of spreading the lie that dark-skinned workers are always inferior. Thus Jim Crow would die a natural

death for lack of supplementary transfusions of poison prejudice.

Furthermore, in the workers' struggle to gain and to maintain power, their earliest councils, i.e., representative bodies, would be forced to outlaw discrimination and enforced segregation in order to survive. The strength of the working class, you see, lies only in its numbers and organization. Therefore, a Workers' Government must unite all minorities to overcome the last rabid attacks of the desperate capitalist exploiters.

It would also revise the entire educational system in order to show that individuals have a right to be recognized as superior—not because of any external, skin-deep characteristics—but because they have demonstrated their ability and willingness to contribute to the advancement of human society.

* * *

The black men needn't be told that without full employment there cannot be Negro employment. The fantastic promise of Roosevelt and Wallace to provide 60 million jobs under capitalism in postwar America is nothing but a bed-time story. It is calculated to lull us into the land of dreams so that the Wall



Street thugs can further rob us of our toil. Only a Workers' Government could bring America full employment under a system of planned economy, because only that kind of a government would produce for use instead of for profit.

We recognize our task but that is not enough. How can it be accomplished? Only by solidarity, regardless of race, within the working class and only by relentless struggle by that class against the present capitalist system.

Down with wars and depressions — for peace and job security! Down with the exploiters' government — for the Workers' and Farmers' Government! Down with capitalism — for Socialism!

The Negro struggle is an integral part of the class struggle. It cannot, therefore, be ignored or submerged. The Negro organizations must put up a militant fight for full economic, political and social equality. However, the aid of the white workers, through the progressive trade unions like the CIO, must be sought and must be obtained if we would be victorious. They will come to our assistance in greater numbers when they learn through common struggle the lesson that Karl Marx taught: "*Labor with a white skin cannot emancipate itself where labor with a black skin is branded.*"

Not the church, then, nor the political fakers; not the civic do-gooders but the labor movement can successfully carry forward our fight for complete equality. Therefore it is to our advantage to aid the labor movement to drive ahead as swiftly as possible.

That means that labor must put up a fight, not only on the economic field but also on the political field. Just as we need an independent trade union to fight for our rights in the economic field, we also need an independent labor party based on the trade unions to achieve our political aims. The Republican and Democratic parties both represent Big Business which profits by keeping the Negro down. This being true, then how are we going to get anywhere by repeatedly shifting our political allegiance from Republican to Democrat or from "*bad*" capitalist to "*good*" capitalist?

No support for either of the capitalist parties who are nothing but Charlie McCarthys for our real enemy! For an Independent Labor Party based on the trade unions which will give political expression to the urgent needs of the exploited class. Only by uniting in struggle against the common enemy, on both the economic and political field, can the doubly oppressed Negro minority be liberated. Fight within your trade union today for the Independent Labor Party.

Since capitalism, the real enemy of Negro equality, is a world system, we must fight it on an international scale. Therefore,

we must support the oppressed workers of war-torn Europe and the colonial and semi-colonial toilers of India, Africa and the Pacific.

Active participation in this struggle is not only worthwhile, it is imperative. The decay of capitalism leads to increasing oppression of the working people and especially the Negro minority. If the workers fail to purge society of the parasitic capitalist ruling class, a new and more vicious Ku Klux Klan will arise and anti-Negro riots will be incited.

The labor movement must be prepared to answer this reactionary assault on the unity of the working class by the formation of *Workers' Defense Guards* to protect ALL persecuted minorities from these vigilante attacks.

If Fascism is allowed to triumph in this country then every Negro, be he worker or not, will be the first and worst sufferer. Even deportation or extermination are not far fetched possibilities if the capitalist dragon finds it necessary and possible to strike with all his fury.

Those backward white workers who still think that the black will rub off if they shake a Negro's hand must be shown in class action that their own fate is bound up with the fate of the Negro minority. The Negro can be the Achilles heel of capitalism if he merges the race struggle with the class struggle. On the other hand, he could be the Achilles heel of the entire working class if we let the class struggle be diverted into a fratricidal racial battle.

We believe that the truth is the most powerful of all weapons. The program of the Socialist Workers Party and the Fourth International is based on the truth. That is why we are confident of final victory.

Our main task is to expose the deceit, fraud and hypocrisy of: white supremacy—based on the myth of racial inferiority; the fake two-party political monopoly where it's heads they win, tails we lose; chauvinistic hatreds disguised under the mask of patriotism and purposely fostered between the workers of different countries so that they might be led into the fruitless slaughter of imperialist war!

All such manifestations of capitalist reaction have been and are being exposed by the followers of Marx, Lenin and Trotsky.

It is on the basis of their scientific and proven program that we fight today for equality and security.

Negro workers, let us fight now against the second-class citizenship unjustly imposed upon us by this capitalist "democracy!"

Let us fight now against the lying white supremacists and the crawling Uncle Toms!

What is more, let us fight on the winning side. Not as Negro against white—where we are outnumbered by 10 to 1; but as working class against boss class—where we are in the majority of 100 to 1.

The Socialist Workers Party seeks to unite all those sections of the population, exploited and oppressed by capitalism, around a program providing a fundamental solution to their problems. Our party is, therefore, in the vanguard of the struggle to eliminate the root cause of racial discrimination as well as every manifestation of this social plague.

Join the Socialist Workers Party today. Together we will send Jim Crow to its well-earned grave!



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