

# NEGRO BULLETIN NO. 1

## CONTENTS

1. Editorial..... Page 1
2. Suggestions on the Negro work of the Party during the coming period..... Page 2
3. How to hold the interest of new recruits..... Page 5
4. Jobs for Negroes - the lessons of the Harlem Bus Boycott..... Page 6
5. The War in Africa - What is at stake? Page 7
6. Editor's note..... Page 8
7. The great African War for "democracy". Page 9

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## EDITORIAL

At the last plenum the National Committee decided

1. That there should be a functioning Negro department with a National Negro Director.
2. That preparations should be made for a theoretical discussion of Negro problems in relation to the national situation and the work of the party, leading up to a special session at the coming convention or a convention on Negro Work.

This work is necessary for the development of the party as a whole. It is absolutely impossible without the cooperation of the branches. Although Negro work has been actively pursued in many areas and to some degree in all communication with the centre has been irregular, and with many branches non-existent. The Negro Committee therefore request from all branches in as short a space of time as possible a report on Negro problems and Negro work in their locality. The Negro Bulletin will serve as a means of communication, of experience between the branches and for the circulation of general information, will contain matter not only of immediate but permanent interest. On the basis of the information sent in and the preliminary interchange of views we shall make a decision based on collective experience on the most urgent theoretical problems before the party and inaugurate the discussion.

## SUGGESTIONS ON THE NEGRO WORK OF THE PARTY DURING THE COMING PERIOD

1. Theoretical Work: All Branches should conduct at least one discussion a month on the Negro question. This must be done whether there are Negro members in the Branch or not. Education on the Negro question is an indispensable part of the theoretical preparation for the American revolution and is necessary for all members and sympathizers without exception.

At the same time, a well-prepared discussion on the regular Party schedule of work, is one of the surest ways of integrating Negro members into the Party. What must not be done is to treat these discussions as the special business of the Negroes and of those interested in, or concerned with Negro work.

### SUGGESTED SUBJECTS

- a) Position of Negro in American Society today.
- b) The Negro in the Civil War
- c) European Imperialism and Africa
- d) The Position of the Negro in the local industries, particularly the war industries
- e) The Negro in the U.S. armed forces.
- f)

It is easy to get material for discussion on (a) and (b). An article on (c) will appear in the June issue of The New International. (d) the Branch should assign to two or three of its members to make a thorough investigation of the situation in important local plants (especially those fulfilling government orders for war purposes), local transport, the situation in important local unions, etc., and on the basis of material issued, have first a Branch discussion or discussions, and from there plan practical work. The local situation should also be linked to the National situation. Negro workers in particular will appreciate concretely the dual function of a revolutionary Party if the Branch discussions deal with general theoretical subjects such as (b) or (c) and also with the immediate problems.

2. Practical Work: (a) It is still unfortunately necessary for the Branches in most areas to concentrate on the elementary task of getting the Party widely known to Negroes in the community. This is for the most part slow and patient work.

The Branch members individually and collectively must seek contact with the Negroes in their organizations, in all their organizations. In the NAACP the Y's, the Church forums and all groups or associations in which the Negroes meet to discuss their problems and plan activity. Attendance at such meetings must be regular and systematic. The point of view of the Party must be put forward with firmness and yet with discretion. Thus during the recent bus boycott in New York, the Harlem Branch members did not raise the question of the imperialist war, nor the question of socialism!, but worked with the Negro Committee for the purpose in hand; in the Pamphlet, Jim Crow on the Run, socialism is merely referred to, and not by name. But in any forum or general discussion on the war, then the Party position must be put forward without equivocation. Our Party literature, all of it, not only literature dealing with the Negro question, must be sold or distributed to likely contacts at these

meetings.

(B) Branches must seek to get local or national speakers on the speakers lists of local Negro organizations. It would be better if as a rule these party speakers were Negroes, but it is not in the least necessary that they should be so.

(c) Party speakers should raise the Negro question before organizations of white workers. This is not always easy and should be done only after careful consideration of the specific situation, but members should be on the lookout for such opportunities.

(d) Members must study the national and local Negro press, send articles on local topics to the editors, and write letters, coming officially from the Party, on all questions of interest to or affecting their Negro community. Not to do this constantly is criminal neglect.

(e) Party Branches must seek out Negro members or ex-members of the C.P. who have been disillusioned. Every attempt should be made to make them see the CP betrayal of the Negro question as an inevitable consequence of the political line of the CP and not as one more betrayal of blacks by whites. This type of Negro should be given our literature on special as well as general questions report of the Dewey Commission, etc. If he shows himself sympathetic to our line but still not anxious to join the party, he should be encouraged to organize a group of Negroes for discussion, or some specific local activity.

(f) Regular sales of the LA and of our literature should be organized in Negro areas. Some special district should be carefully chosen and a house to house campaign undertaken, in which short discussions can be initiated about Negro questions, on the basis of articles in LA and branch leaflets on topics affecting the area.

(g) Branches are not limited to the outline above, but will take such opportunities as present themselves of participating in the struggles of the Negroes. If the work is systematically organized opportunities will present themselves.

(h) Experiences must be reported to the National Negro Department and will be circulated through the Bulletin.

It is necessary above all, however, for the party member to realize that his first business is to get more and more thoroughly acquainted with the daily life and past history of the Negroes in his locality, nationally and internationally. Members must themselves seek every opportunity of meeting Negroes, of going to their homes, of discussion with them on the Negro's problems as experienced by Negroes, as written about in Negro books and in the Negro press. The Party appeal must be on the basis of the Negro's problems in particular, not on the problems of the working-class in general. The method of approach can only be learnt by constant contact with and penetration into all aspects of Negro life. Undoubtedly the Party has progressed a long way from the almost absolute divorce between the membership and the life

of Negroes which existed two years ago. But from what we have been able to gather there are still too many members who do not know or meet Negroes in their organizations (or personally). This is the only foundation on which a good technique of Negro work can be built by the party.

The National Negro Committee

HOW TO HOLD THE INTEREST OF NEW RECRUITS

In Bulletin #7 of the Workers Party, we dealt with the approach or technique in Negro contact work. In this bulletin we wish to report on observations made at several cities in different states.

In many cases gaining recruits is relatively easy but holding them long enough to develop them politically is another problem. Due to our heritage the opposition feels that it must polemicize to the extreme. These regular theoretical discussions are over the heads of recruits, especially Negro recruits. The discussions are quite monotonous to them and they feel isolated. Classes in elementary Marxism should be arranged for two or more recruits together with their non-member friends, so they can more fully appreciate the theoretical application to the day-to-day issues of the class struggle. Efforts should be made to see them socially; that is, more often than at regular meetings. If members visit the homes of recruits the visits should be of a reciprocal nature, in order to allay any suspicion of a few political members, in a proletarian neighborhood. We cannot reside upon the heights of Olympus and expect to convince the workers that we are one of them.

The season for open air meetings is here and there are plenty of militant workers in the streets just waiting for directives. In order to reach them we must speak their language and mingle with them and attempt to help them solve their concrete problems. Many comrades complain that they lack subject matter for conversation when they approach Negro contacts. The non-integration of Negroes in War industries, National sports events (especially baseball and tennis) Jim Crowism in the armed forces and places of amusement, the Harlem bus boycott in New York City and many other are subjects that we will find if we would only read the Negro press.

When we lose a recruit we should investigate and see if we were not derelict in our duty to integrate the worker into the organization.

H. Pelham  
4/17/41

- 6 -

## JOBS FOR NEGROES

### The Lessons of the Harlem Bus Boycott

It is worth the while of every branch to study the attached list of articles in Labor Action, and the pamphlet "Jim Crow on the Run". By making contact early, by working with the Negroes in committee meetings and on the picket line, our Harlem comrades were able to contribute to the successful boycott, which has meant so much to the raising of the desire to struggle in Harlem. At the same time our party has become known to thousands of Harlem people, our Harlem units have made new members and important contacts, and have gained a valuable experience. Such opportunities do not come often, but in every Negro community, similar fights, on a smaller scale are constantly being waged, and will increasingly develop. But it is only by being always among the Negroes, in their organizations, in their neighborhood, in their homes, making friendships with them, that the party can be aware of what is taking place, take part, stimulate action as far as possible, and build itself, so to speak, into the consciousness and activity of the Negro community. The trade union work is a special work that needs trained and careful handling, but wherever Negroes are protesting against discrimination in war industries, against Jim Crow in the army, against Jim Crow in the local transport system, against discrimination in Federal jobs, against Jim Crow in sports, against the thousand manifestations of American race prejudice, there the party members must be. Half-a-dozen comrades who are active and interested will, as a rule find, in the coming period, ample opportunity for making their contributions to the struggle, and getting the aim and the attitude of the party known. The work should be done patiently and steadily, and then, in a sudden eruption such as the Harlem Boycott, our comrades will find themselves wielding an influence of stimulation, and enjoying a recognition, out of all proportion to the size of the organization. Which is precisely the function of a revolutionary nucleus.

For the next period, however, "Jobs for Negroes" should be the practical axis around which our efforts should resolve. The Harlem Boycott has shown the tremendous response which this slogan, in a concrete situation, can evoke. The party at present has, for the most part, (in action) to follow the mass movement. We can scarcely pretend to any force in initiating such movements, but the party, if it has the right contacts, (let us repeat that,) if it has made the right contacts, can suggest or propose to a Negro organization that it initiate a city-wide local struggle against some particularly offensive discrimination which is attracting public attention. This ~~is~~ a branch can do and it would not be revolutionary if it couldn't. A collection of cuttings from the Negro press, a selection from our own articles, on the Harlem Boycott, a copy of our pamphlet, can form the basis of an approach to a Negro organization, proposing not that we but that they should start a mass campaign, and that we would be willing to help. It can be taken as certain that if any possibilities should develop in this direction, not only the National Negro Committee but the Nat. off. will give every assistance. Work up a speech or a good letter and find some influential person or organization in your locality and discuss with them the possibilities, leaving copies of the materials.

## THE WAR IN AFRICA

### WHAT IS AT STAKE

For many months now we read about the war for "democracy" in Africa. It is time that we brought home concretely to the Negroes in particular, what exactly is at stake in the African war for "democracy". We print below the statistics of European colonial possessions in Africa. That is what the war is about, not "democracy".

We shall publish in the June issue of the New International an analytical article on European Imperialism and Africa. After that the National Negro Department has in mind a 1¢ pamphlet treating the subject in popular style. It is the business of the revolutionary party to educate and to educate all. We face a world crisis, and the more the great masses understand the interconnection of all aspects of modern life and the necessity for the world Socialist Revolution, the better for all concerned. The 1¢ pamphlet however, is merely a tentative proposal. We would like to know what the branches think of it. After they have had a discussion with the branch members and sympathisers and friends on the African situation. The American Negro of course, like every other worker bases his main opposition to war on the crimes of American "democracy" against him, but that is not the only opposition, nor is it wise to concentrate only on the fact that he is discriminated against. We have neglected an enormous agitational opportunity (and not only among Negroes) which has been presented to us, by the importance of the war in Africa. We must get down to it.

The N.I. article also will deal with the economic prospects of a victorious Fascism in Africa, and link up the whole problem of a vast colonial area with the future prospects of capitalism. It is thus hoped to initiate a consideration of the whole world problem today in terms of special and general interest to Negroes, and to the problem of capitalism and socialism as a whole.



Note:

The following article is designed to be used as propaganda among our Negro contacts. It may be considered as a special small "pamphlet" for circulation, not in general, but among those special Negro contacts on whom it may have a valuable effect.

Extra copies of this article, therefore, have been run off and may be secured free in limited quantities by those branches requesting it.

Editor

THE GREAT AFRICAN WAR FOR "DEMOCRACY"

What is this "democracy" that they are fighting for in Africa? This is how it stood in 1939 when the war began. Those who had most of Africa were for "democracy".

<u>British African Colonies</u>	<u>Square Miles</u>	<u>Total Population</u>
Union of South Africa	472,550	9,979,000
South West Africa	317,725	261,724
British South Africa	731,703	3,729,196
British East Africa	716,315	13,864,074
Zanzibar Protectorate	1,020	235,428
Somaliland Protectorate	68,000	344,700
British West Africa	494,720	27,314,785
Anglo-Egypt Soudan	969,600	5,728,551
Ascension Island	34	188
St. Helena	47	4,415
Tristan de Cunha	3	165
Seychelles Islands	1566	30,940
Mauritius Island	7200	413,350
Dependencies	89	9,659
	<u>3,772,682</u>	<u>61,916,284</u>

This is Britain's share of the "democracy".

French Colonies

African Morocco (pro- tectorate)	162,120	6,242,706	
Algeria	847,500	7,234,684	
Tunisia	48,313	2,608,313	
French West Africa	1,815,768	14,954,190	26,614
Togoland (mandate)	21,893	780,497	
Cameroon (mandate)	166,489	2,516,623	
Fr. Equatorial Africa	959,256	3,418,066	
Reunion	970	208,858	
Madaga scar & Camaros	241,094	4,797,936	
Somililand	8,492	44,240	
	<u>4,271,895</u>	<u>42,806,113</u>	

The above is France's piece of African "democracy". Weygand is in Africa prepared to die for that.

Belgian Congo

Congo	902,082	10,240,499
Ruanda & Urindi	20,535	3,369,304
	<u>922,617</u>	<u>13,609,803</u>

Little Belgium had all that "democracy". And big Germany had none. No wonder Adolf hates "democracy" and wants to save Africa for Fascism. This is what Churchill calls a war for our way of life, for liberty, etc., etc.. But those poor fellows, Hitler and Mussolini, didn't have much.

German Colonies

zero

<u>Italian Colonies:</u>	<u>Square Miles</u>	<u>Total Population</u>
Ethiopic	350,000	10,000,000 (estimated)
Eritrea	15,754	600,573
Italian Somaliland	194,000	1,300,000
Libya	679,358	850,250
	<u>1,239,112</u>	<u>11,750,823</u>

Mussolini thinks that he should have much more. Too much of his colonies are desert.

Spanish Colonies

Guinea	10,036	140,000
Morocco	18,350	750,000
Rio De Oro & Adrar	109,200	---
Ifni	965	20,000
Fernando Po, Etc.	795	23,816
	<u>139,346</u>	<u>913,846</u>

Franco is against "democracy" in Africa. He wants some of what France has.

Quaking with fear is little Portugal:

Portugese Colonies

Portugee Guinea	13,944	415,220
Moxambique	297,654	4,895,750
Angola	481,226	3,490,200
	<u>792,824</u>	<u>8,801,170</u>

So this is the great African war for "democracy". The raw materials, and the investments and the African labor. Bundles for Britain, says Roosevelt. Negroes buy War bonds, says Roosevelt. To save Britain and keep Africa enslaved.

The Workers Party says to both of them, get out. No bundles for Hitler, but no bundles for Britain either, and we say to the Italian Negro soldiers, the French and British, "Why fight against each other? Join arms, lead your people, and throw all out, Hitler, Churchill and Weygand". And we say to the white soldiers in Africa, "Join your African brothers, show them you want to fight for freedom everywhere, not only in your own country. Break the power of the imperialists in the colonies and then all of you drive against the imperialists in Europe; Hitler, Churchill, and all". Difficult? Yes, difficult. But the only way out. Ten million died last time, trying to do things their way. It settled nothing. Why not try the revolutionary way this time? You will have to sooner or later, so the sooner the better, and if you can't do it immediately, at least think about it, and prepare for it."

Britain and France have nearly all, and Germany has none. That is the African war for "democracy". What does Hitler want colonies for? What does Britain get out of them? What does the native African get out of it? Read the June Issue of THE NEW INTERNATIONAL.