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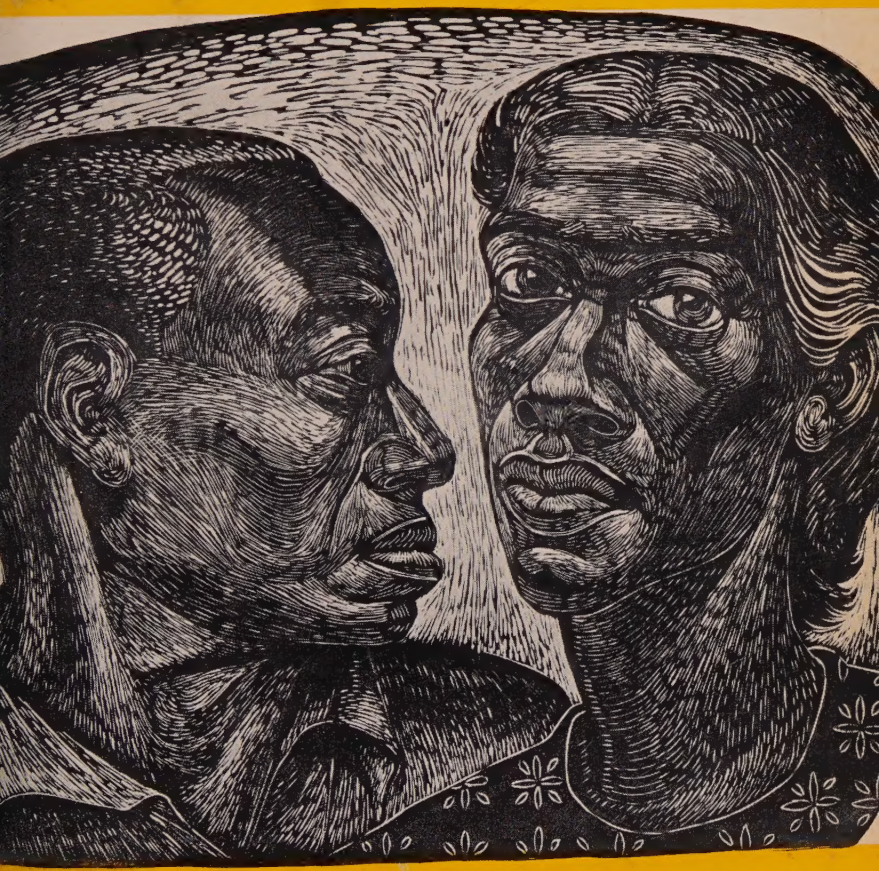
lasses & MAINSTREAM



this Issue:

NEGRO HISTORY WEEK 1951

A Special Number

Letter from Peking

7 Pei Ho Yen
Ti An Men Nei,
Peking, China
November 23, 1950

Dear Mr. Sillen:

I have never written a fan letter before in my life, but it's never too late to start. Besides, it is all your fault. Why do you publish such an excellent magazine as *Masses & Mainstream*?

I heard this name on October 1, 1949, when our Government was established. One of our Returned Students called on me and asked me had I seen *Masses & Mainstream.* I told him "no." So he promised to send me the two copies he had brought with him from America. It was not long after that that he brought them to me. But I couldn't keep them long in my hands. A friend from the Lao Tung Ta Hsueh (Labor University) saw them and borrowed them at once. And I had to beg on my knees, almost, to have him return them to me. For, after all, they were also not mine.

Then an American friend knew how desperately I was looking for material for my students, and she sent me a few copies of your magazine which a friend in Hongkong had sent to her. Now I had already a waiting list of readers waiting for the magazine. But when the need is so great, there is also somewhere an answer. A friend in Hankow suddenly sent me some copies of *Masses & Mainstream,* old ones, of course, which a relative in America had sent her. So now I am reading and studying your material. I take notes and I make my students at the university copy some helpful passages. Most of them do not know that in America there are brave men who for the sake of humanity are now suffering imprisonment. This is a new world to them. Your brave men and women are a shining example. . . .

Truly yours,
Olga Lee

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masses & MAINSTREAM

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A NOTE TO OUR READERS:

We want to thank the many readers who, through their generous response to our fund appeal, made it possible to issue this special Negro History Week number without cutting the size of the magazine. We shall continue our efforts to keep the present form intact.

THE EDITORS

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COVER: A drawing by the well-known Negro artist, Charles White, whose exhibition of paintings and prints dedicated to the Negro women of America will be presented at the A.C.A. Gallery in New York from February 12 to March 5.

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OUR TIME by Samuel Sillen

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Ibsen Today

Negro History Week

A GOOD text for our 1951 Negro History Week number is the essay which Maxim Gorky wrote in 1931 on "Capitalist Terror in America Against Negro Workers." This flaming indictment at the time of the Scottsboro case drives to the heart of the matter today. For Gorky saw that the struggle of the Negro people for liberation and the struggle of all working people for peace go hand in hand. And conversely, that the imperialists plotting an anti-Soviet war must try to smash the aroused Negro people's movement and sever the link between the Negro and white masses.

In 1931 the jailing and Jim-Crowing, the starving and lynching of Negroes produced "not a single crease in the wooden faces of the American millionaires." In 1951, with F.E.P.C. scuttled for U.M.T., President Truman reports to the 82nd Congress that "I am glad to say that our country is in a healthy condition." This cheerful diagnosis, so immaculately uncreased by humanity, will not restore to his family the Negro army veteran John Derrick, murdered by Harlem cops, nor will it reassure the Martinsville Seven, Lieutenant Gilbert, Mrs. Ingram, Willie McGee, and countless other victims of Jim-Crow justice.

What is the purpose of this endlessly multiplied crime against the Negro people by the ruling class of this country? Gorky answered:

> "It is being committed because the Negro masses are being drawn more and more into the revolutionary movement and are taking their place side by side with the masses of white workers. They are beginning to take an active part in the struggle against American imperialism. Scared by the spread of the rebel spirit among the

millions of Negroes—workers and farmers—the bourgeoisie are doing their utmost to crush the growing fighting strength of the Negro masses. And the weapon they use is—white terror."

The growth of this terror is a sure sign of the ever-growing strength of the Negro people as a political force in the United States—a reliable force for peace and social progress. In the twenty years since Gorky wrote, much has happened. We can no longer speak of a "beginning" in the active struggle against imperialism. The past two decades have seen an incomparably rapid maturing of consciousness and militancy. The success of any progressive movement in any sector of American life is simply inconceivable without the full and front-line participation of the Negro masses. The very life of the working class, the survival of democratic culture, the victory of peace—all hinge on an alliance with the Negro liberation movement.

It is high time that all white workers and all progressive white intellectuals understood this and understood it deeply.

In his essay of two decades ago, Gorky wrote:

"The capitalists and their obedient servants—the Social-Democrats and fascists, the Churchills and Kautskys, the old men driven half-crazy by fear of a social catastrophe and the astute young men who aspire to be big parasites, the 'pen gangsters and press pirates,' all the biped human scum bred by the capitalist system, all the vermin in human shape without which capitalism cannot exist—accuse the 'Bolsheviks' of the Soviet Union of wanting to 'destroy culture.' The bourgeois press has been issued the slogan by its masters: 'The fight against the Bolsheviks, the fight against Communism, is a fight for culture.'"

Today the same press bleats that the fight against Communism is a fight for freedom. It is the freedom of capitalism to practice barbaric "white supremacy" against the Communist tyranny that outlaws racism; the freedom to deny jobs, schools, laboratories, theatres to Negroes against the tyranny that fosters the national dignity and culture of all peoples; the freedom to gag a genius of the Negro people against the tyranny that builds monuments in his honor.

Just as the tremendous liberation fight of the Chinese, Korean, Indonesian and other colored peoples has aroused the impotent frenzy

f the imperialists, so the struggles of the Negro people have evoked eir wrath. It takes the form of police sluggings. It also takes the rm of attempted bribes and new strategems of deceit. But nothing an turn back the sweep of the Negro liberation movement. It is resistible.

"Nat Turner" and "Simple"

THE celebration of Negro History Week must take note of two current "Off-Broadway" productions—*Nat Turner* and *Just A Little Simple.* Staged with reat imagination, these are exciting works. They register significant dvance in the independent theatre movement which, after too many ears of inactivity, again came to life in the past season or two. The roductions are totally different in form—the one being a historical rama, the other a dramatic musical review—but they complement ch other impressively in their dynamic, realistic approach to Negro aterials, and they release the creative talent of Negro artists in a ay that has always been utterly impossible in the slick, Jim Crow mmercial theatre.

Nat Turner, Paul Peters' play about one of the most stirring slave volts in American history, is presented by People's Drama, which reviously did John Wexley's *They Shall Not Die* and Theodore Vard's *John Brown.* I believe this is the best work the group has one so far mainly because of the outstanding quality of the acting nd direction. The production creates a more convincing image of life nder slavery than any I have seen—not only its unspeakable physical nd moral cruelty, but the heroic fight for freedom. The stage is alive. he action hits at the audience, and we become deeply involved in enes that have the essential simplicity of everyday life and tragic randeur at the same time. The dramatist has seen his characters as al people with clearly defined personalities rather than as mere mbols of the slave system; and it is in this respect that the direction f Gene Frankel and the brilliant cast headed by Frank Silvera as Vat Turner achieves real stature.

It is unfortunate that Paul Peters chose to begin the play with a nciful meeting between Nat Turner and a Northern white Aboli-onist who spurs the Negro with the idea of revolt. This is not only ntrue to history, and therefore a gratuitous suggestion that the Negro

slaves needed the initiative and leadership of whites for their revolts, but it also impairs the play dramatically by robbing Nat Turner of some of his true force. This error is compounded in the last moments of the play when the Northerner reappears—again in a rather symbolic way which is out of key with the play's realism. Nat then, for no good reason, gives himself up to his pursuers—again in a violation of historic fact and dramatic necessity. The play is essentially true; it would be a much richer play were it more consistently true.

But it is powerful and moving. The poignant relation between Nat Turner and his wife Stasia (beautifully played by Milroy Ingram), the excellent characterization of a slaveowner by Howard Wierum, the performance by Ruth Attaway, the nobility and passionate force of Frank Silvera's Turner, and indeed the work of the entire cast, a large one—these add up to magnificent and meaningful theatre.

In a different, but equally rich vein, the Committee for the Negro in the Arts is presenting a revue based on Langston Hughes' book *Simple Speaks His Mind.* With Kenneth Manigault playing the homespun and deliciously witty Jesse B. Semple as master of ceremonies, this informal revue ranges through all the dramatic arts. In song and dance and drama, *Just A Little Simple* comments on bigotry, benightedness, and just plain baloney. The book for the revue is by Alice Childress and it is humanly of many moods.

Mrs. Childress has also contributed one of the two one-act plays in the production, *Florence,* which *Masses & Mainstream* was privileged to publish last October. This portrait of a Negro mother clashing with a "liberal" white woman in a Southern railroad station was highly effective in the script, and its subtlety is heightened on the stage. One hopes that this fine play will be put on by groups throughout the country. The other one-acter, Les Pine's *Grocery Store,* is a compelling study of conflict in the South.

One shortcoming in the production, I feel, is that the song lyrics fail to carry through the social theme of the revue; they are in a rather conventional mold of Broadway musicals. But this is not at all to ask that every line of such a revue be profoundly significant. After all, even Jesse B. Semple might become something of a bore if he swore off beer. There is in *Just A Little Simple* a sense of the sweep of life, its joys and its agonies, and above all one feels the steady pulsebeat of the striving for freedom.

So both productions are cause for celebration. They should not only be cheered but actively supported by large audiences. I hope they will be.

Ibsen Today

HENRIK IBSEN wrote *An Enemy of the People* in 1882, but it is by no means a museum-piece. In a current adaptation by Arthur Miller, the play gives audiences the impression that it is dealing with questions of immediate importance in the United States today. This is due in part to the contemporary accent of the production—the idiomatic speech, the nervous pace, the indefinable echoes of the Great American Witch-Hunt. More basically, this sense of timeliness is due to Ibsen's concern (closely followed by Miller) with this living question: How shall the man who values integrity and truth behave in the face of a social order based on individual profit, lies and corruption?

The play deals with an honest man of the middle classes, Dr. Stockmann, who discovers that the famed health springs, on which the prosperity of his Norwegian town is based, are polluted. The man of science naively thinks that the investors will advertise this condition and spend money to correct it. But Dr. Stockmann finds that his brother, who is the town's mayor, and the other owners denounce him as crackpot and traitor; the pages of the "liberal" press are closed to him; the meeting of townspeople that he calls to plead his case attacks him as an "enemy of the people"; his house is stoned, his schoolteacher daughter fired, his young boys beaten up.

It is a harrowing experience, and from it Dr. Stockmann learns that it is not only the spring waters but the sources of the town's moral life that are polluted. He also learns two other "lessons," and these he preaches with great heat. The first is that the masses of people, the "majorities," are inherently the stupid enemies of truth and must forever be fought by a tiny band of spiritual aristocrats. The second discovery, as he puts it in his famous closing speech, is that the strongest man in the world is he who stands alone.

Thus the play faces two ways. It is built on a deep inner contradiction. On the one hand it protests the rottenness of a society that deliberately sells poison for profit and tries to hang its critics as "enemies of the people." And on the other hand it preaches the ideas of the

exploiting minority through its expressed contempt for the masses, its apparently noble go-it-alone concept of independence, and its implicit denial that there is a class in society which represents truth and the future.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the play evokes all sorts of contradictory responses. While some progressives see in it a defiant answer to the Un-American Committee, a reactionary critic like Brooks Atkinson of the New York *Times* hails it for "crossing all party lines." In Ibsen's time too he was heralded by some as the exponent of Nietzsche's Superman, while others, like the Danish critic Georg Brandes, saw in him a "hidden Socialist."

This does not testify to Ibsen's universality, but rather to the confusions of his petty-bourgeois outlook in the specific conditions of his time and country. These confusions in *An Enemy of the People* have not diminished but deepened in relation to the world of today. As a text for our time, which the Miller adaptation suggests, it becomes a banner that, for all its appearances of progressivism, can only lead an army marching backward.

Marxist critics, starting with Engels, have always warned against a mechanical, one-sided approach to Ibsen. Engels said that "whatever the weaknesses of Ibsen's dramas" they reflected the world of the Norwegian petty and middle bourgeoisie which in the 1880's was very different, for example, from the corresponding classes in Germany; it was a world "where men are still possessed of character and initiative and the capacity for independent action." With this concrete historical approach Franz Mehring, in his essay on "Ibsen's Greatness and Limitations," pointed out the difference between the pessimism of Schopenhauer and of Ibsen, the former suffering with head bowed, the latter rebelling, fighting. But Ibsen always foredooms the struggle. He shuts the gates to the "new epoch" which he proclaims in abstract, idealistic terms.

Similarly, George V. Plekhanov, in a profound essay written nearly half a century ago, admired Ibsen's merciless portrait of the opportunistic newspaper editor and his images of capitalist hypocrisy and corruption. But Ibsen, with all his talent, keen insight and passion for truth, falls victim to the viewpoint of the very masters he indicts. He arrives at reactionary, absurd conclusions. He begins to speak in the language of a real enemy of the people.

Inevitably, Ibsen's contradictions led to a dead end. He became enmeshed in mysticism. He deteriorated as a dramatist.

But for him, as Plekhanov said, there was this mitigating circumstance: "The petty bourgeois 'compact majority' whom Ibsen's hero addressed were Philistines incarnate. In modern capitalist society, with its sharply defined class distinctions, the majority, consisting of the proletariat, represents the only class capable of being inspired with zeal for everything noble and progressive." Ibsen's ideas stem from an earlier period of Norwegian life when a working class in this sense had not clearly emerged.

What about Dr. Stockmann's banner in 1951—his attack on *all* political parties, on *all* classes, in the name of truth and integrity? This petty-bourgeois individualism is capable of arousing only a narcotic illusion of independence. It has a profound appeal to those who want to be noble and safe at the same time. It is the intellectual superman idea which Lenin so well described as the pretense of aloofness combined with the reality of joining the rulers in their attack on the people. And this illusion the greedy minority would like to spread. For they know there is no strength in the man who "stands alone," however brave his phrases. They welcome the hero who destroys faith in the masses, no matter how much much he may needle the rulers. A Dr. Stockmann would not have terrified them at Peekskill; a Paul Robeson with his message of peace and liberation, united with the thousands who came to hear and defend him, shook the classes that prosper on corruption.

The honest man of the middle classes, whom this play presents as hero, can today find no strength, integrity, or truth by going it alone in a world where hundreds of millions have joined together successfully to achieve a better life.

The March issue of M & M *will feature material celebrating the seventieth birthday of William Z. Foster and the publication of his new book,* Outline Political History of the Americas.

What about INTEGRATION?

by JOHN PITTMAN

DECEMBER, 1950, will undoubtedly remain a memorable month in the life of the New York *Times*. This Mr. Big of the millionaire press, which refuses to hire Negroes on its editorial staff, appeared three times in that month with editorials commending Negroes. December 8 it lauded Jackie Robinson as "an outstanding American" who not only "played good baseball," but also "appeared before the House Committee on Un-American Activities." There Robinson denounced Paul Robeson and vowed his love for the United States way of life. December 25 the *Times* hailed Sugar Ray Robinson for saying in Paris, where he won a boxing match, that "I'll do everything I can to answer those pro-Communist American Negroes who say that all we Negroes are discriminated against in America." Sugar Ray Robinson, said the *Times*, did "an ambassadorial job of the first water." December 29 the newspaper eulogized the Rev. W. A. Johnson, Memphis pastor, whose funeral was conducted in a white church. The *Times* said, "One wishes stories like this could be broadcast throughout the world. They tell of an America that is just as real as the America that struggles with prejudice and intolerance—more real, indeed."

The *Times* editorials reflect a growing tendency of the media of mass communication—which, of course, express the views of the big money—to single out for praise Negroes who voice satisfaction with the United States status quo and who join the anti-Soviet and anti-Communist chorus. This tendency receives additional momentum from government spokesmen and bureaus—on national, state and municipal levels. Last May the National Citizenship Conference sponsored by the Department of Justice and the National Education Association noted "big civic advances" by Negroes. A leading speaker assured the

world that "the group which can produce Ralph Bunche, a Joe Louis and a Marian Anderson does not have to worry about its future in America." The State Department's Voice of America portrays the Negro people as sharing fully in all the opportunities accorded all other citizens of the United States. The theme is not only that Negroes are advancing swiftly toward full integration but are happy and contented with their progress.

This is true even in the South, the world is told. It was James A. Farley, Democratic Party bigwig and Coca Cola executive, who last November 21 called on President Truman to drop even his pretense of favoring federal civil rights legislation. "When we review the history of the past year," said Farley, "we see clearly that most of the problems raised by the so-called civil rights program are gradually and peacefully being solved right here in the South." And there was the speech of Tennessee's Governor Browning to an audience of 9,000 Negroes in a Memphis religious ceremony December 3. The Governor told the Negroes that life is not for material things, but spiritual, and that burdens should be borne without complaint. He said that when Christ fell with the cross, it was Simon of Cyrene who was told to help him. And, said Governor Browning, "this colored boy picked up the cross, and the Bible has no mention of him complaining."

Indeed, it is the "complaining" which Wall Street and Washington cannot abide. Therefore a Paul Robeson must be silenced. For Wall Street cosmopolitanism overseas cannot tolerate proletarian internationalism at home. A chorus of Attlees, Chiangs, Schumans, Adenauers and Rhees, singing the renunciation of their nations' sovereignty, must have harmonious voices here singing of the Negro people's accommodation to the U.S. way of life—else the "free world" refrain will register discord. So the scores for the Atlantic Alliance, the Western Union, the "defense of Western Civilization against the Asiatic hordes," must contain variations on the theme of "racial integration" in the United States. And if a Spaak or Lie or Romulo are the best spokesmen of cosmopolitanism abroad, because of their ability to betray the interests of their respective nations while seeming to defend them, so in the United States it is individual Negroes who can best be used to deny the universal conviction that Wall Street imperialism is no crusading champion of freedom, but the world's biggest and worst oppressor of nations, enemy of peace and democracy.

"WE ARE now in transition from a segregated to an integrat society," said Judge William H. Hastie in an address Lincoln University last June. And in her December 2 column in t Chicago *Defender,* Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune wrote of the fifteen annual convention of the National Council of Negro Women, "It w uplifting to see Secretary of State Acheson, standing there so cou ageous and so understanding; to see Edith Sampson of the Unite Nations standing there, not as a representative of the Nation Council of Negro Women, but as a representative of all the people o the United States. . . . Thank God, the Tide of Integration sweeping in."

Implicit in this notion of a "tide of integration sweeping in" is th idea that changes in the Negro people's position result either fro some mystical force for good, or from the growth of good will towar Negroes among the high and mighty rulers of the United States. Thus George S. Schuyler, associate editor of the Pittsburgh *Courier* an Negro spokesman for the Taft Republicans, told a State Departmen "cultural conference" held in Berlin's Amerika Haus last summer tha "the unprecedented economic, social, and educational progress o the Negroes of the United States" could be attributed to the "growin racial liberalism" inherent in capitalism. "Progressively the color ba has been lowered here and there," said Schuyler, "either voluntaril by general agreement in the localities or through legal action in the courts. . . . The cumulative effect of these broad, continued and statesmanlike efforts has been improvement of racial relations in geometrical progression."

At this point it is pertinent to inquire if there actually is a "tide of integration" sweeping in—leading peacefully and uninterruptedly to the complete liberation of the Negro people and their attainment of full citizenship rights in the United States. What are the facts about the integration of the Negro people in the political, economic and social life of the U.S. nation?

The answer is being given daily in the records of the meetings and actions of organizations of the Negro liberation movement. It was given statistically by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, in its historic appeal for redress to the United Nations, October 23, 1947. It is worth recalling some of the indictments contained in that document (which was pigeonholed by the United States delegation, principally by Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt

in her capacity as Chairman of the Human Rights Commission).

> "The basic law [states this document] never authorizes differences based on race; in fact, it generally forbids such discrimination. But the political institutions, the courts, the legislatures and the executive arm fall far short of achieving that end. As a result, Negroes are denied the right to work, prevented from securing education, their basic civil rights to protection of life and property are ignored, and they are excluded from participation in their government, all in violation of the plain requirements of the organic law. . . . There are four principal methods used in depriving an American Negro citizen of the rights guaranteed him by the literal language of the organic law of the land, the American Constitution. First, there are the statutory enactments that nullify constitutional guarantees. . . . Second, there are the acts and conspiracies of private individuals which contravene legal rights of American Negro citizens. Third, actual mob violence. Finally, there are the decisions of the state courts and of the Supreme Court of the United States which have restricted the rights of American Negroes under the state and federal constitutions."

All this, however, is not to say that there have not been considerable changes in the status of the Negro people in the past several decades, or that there have not been advances. On the contrary, as the N.A.A.C.P. appeal expressed it, ". . . this continuous hammering upon the gates of opportunity in the United States has had effect, and that because of this, and with the help of his white fellow-citizens, the American Negro has emerged from slavery and attained emancipation from chattel slavery, considerable economic independence, social security and advance in culture. But manifestly this is not enough. . . ."

On the surface of things, the casual reader of newspapers might receive the impression that these gains amount to some sort of revolution. There are many reports of Negroes being the "first Negro" to receive this honor, the "first Negro" to hold this post, the "first Negro" in this or that. But it is one thing to see these "firsts" as positions won and concessions wrung from a grudging white supremacist bourgeoisie, and quite another thing to view them as the magic of some benevolent spirit in the system of monopoly capitalism, or the gifts of white rulers grown suddenly liberal. Indeed, the appointments to high office of a Bunche, a Hastie or a Mrs. Sampson mark concessions wrung from

the billionaires and their Washington politicians. They represent the perception by the ruling class that the Negro people's struggle for liberation has now merged with the liberation struggles of colonial peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin America, with the peace struggles of the peoples of Europe and the United States.

Likewise in respect to the alleged "higher living standards" of Negro workers, the increase in per capita income of the average Negro family results primarily from the participation of the Negro workers in the trade unions, in the struggles of the Negro-labor alliance against the monopolists' wage-cutting policies. Here, rather than in the communities, government agencies, and civic and religious bodies, has been the biggest advance toward integration. But how far from achievement of integration is the Negro's position in the trade unions and industry can be judged from the resolutions of the National Trade Union Conference for Negro Rights in Chicago last June 11. Said that conference's "Statement of Principles":

> "A new and grave situation confronts us as well as the whole labor movement. . . . With unemployment rapidly becoming a mass problem among us (sixty-nine percent in Chicago, fifty percent in Toledo, of those receiving relief are Negroes); with widespread failure to upgrade Negroes in higher skilled jobs; with no special measures of adequate scope being taken to safeguard our job rights or to open apprenticeship, skilled training and jobs to our expanding numbers of young graduates, employers see new opportunities to pit white labor against black labor. . . . No amount of pious talk and cheap lip-service can hide stark facts of life—the growth of poverty, unemployment, sickness, sub-standard housing, increased attacks on our civil rights, on the very life and limb of 15,000,000 American Negroes.

According to Philip M. Houser, acting director of the Bureau of the Census, the average earnings of Negro families came to $1,786 in 1948. Twenty-five percent of all Negro families were earning an income of over $2,500 annually in 1948; three-tenths of one percent earned $10,000 or more. These figures, if correlated with increases in the cost of living on the basis of a 59-cent dollar, show that for the first time in the history of U.S. capitalism, about one-fourth of the Negro families have at long last attained a minimum subsistence standard of living. This, indeed, registers a gain; but what must be said about the other three-fourths? Is one to call that "integration"?

The most important change in the position of the Negro people is the development of well-defined classes, both marking and accelerating their maturing nationhood. The existence and expansion of an industrial working class and its organization into trade unions is the prime decisive change of the half-century. This was indeed the consequence of capitalist development in the United States, but the gains won by the Negro working class in the South and the Negro members of the U.S. working class outside the South were the consequence of struggle against the capitalist class. Indeed, it was the existence and development of this class which formed the basis for the rise and growth of a Negro bourgeoisie in the South, and for Negro members of the U.S. bourgeoisie outside of the South, principally in the ghettos of the industrial North and West.

If we go beneath the surface of the so-called "tide of integration," therefore, it will be seen that the struggle of the Negro people has wrung from the white supremacist billionaires and their politicians limited and qualified rights for a few Negroes, including bourgeois status for a number of individual Negroes; but at the same time, the ruling circles of the United States utilize these very concessions as tactical maneuvers with which to freeze and even push back the status of the Negro masses. Recent cases in point are the U.S. Supreme Court decisions in relation to the Negro peoples' struggles against Jim Crow in education and housing and against the discriminatory enforcement of the law.

On last October 9, the Supreme Court rejected an appeal by Atlanta school teachers seeking to establish a basis for their demand for salary equalization. Since teachers form the bulk of the urban Negro middle class, this decision condemned the Negro middle class to a lower standard of living than the white middle class. It froze the present status of Negro school teachers. A second decision refused to review Senator Glen Taylor's appeal from a conviction of "disorderly conduct" for insisting on entering a door in Birmingham marked "Negro Entrance." This decision froze the segregation status of Negroes. A third decision rejected an appeal by Oklahoma City Negroes who had bought homes from white property owners who had covenanted with other white property owners not to sell to Negroes. Oklahoma courts cancelled the sales. Although the Supreme Court had ruled in 1949 that courts could not enforce restrictive covenants, in the Oklahoma case it reversed itself, restored the legality of one of the main devices

for perpetuating the ghetto, and buttressed its 1949 decision approving Metropolitan Life Insurance Company's Jim-Crow policy at New York's big Stuyvesant Town housing development.

Twice, the Supreme Court rejected the appeal of the seven Martinsville, Virginia, frameup victims, condemned to death on the old lynching pretext of an alleged rape of a white woman. In its latest decision on January 2, 1951, it ignored the issues of the guilt of the accused, their trial and conviction by a lily-white jury and the fact that the State of Virginia in all its history had never executed a white man for rape, reserving the death penalty solely for Negroes. This decision froze the practice of lynch-justice throughout the country. However, although side-stepping the separate-but-equal issue, the Supreme Court did hold in favor of Negro petitioners for the right to attend colleges and universities in states which do not provide equal facilities for Negroes only. This has resulted in about 200 Negro students being admitted to professional schools and colleges throughout the South.

If, therefore, the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in favor of Negroes seeking professional or higher education—a number permanently limited by economic factors—be set against the court's bulwarking of the Jim-Crow system in housing, economic opportunity and places of public accommodation, and its blessings for the system of lynch-justice, the balance will clearly reflect the policy of yielding paltry concessions to the middle and upper class, while perpetuating the status of the masses.

THIS Wall Street ruling class policy was eloquently described by Benjamin J. Davis, former New York City Councilman, at the Fifteenth Convention of the Communist Party of the United States. Said Davis:

> "Judge Hastie has a $15,000 job, but Negro workers cannot get jobs from the milk trusts to drive milk wagons. Dr. Ralph Bunche has a $20,000 job, but the airplane factories in Long Island will not hire Negroes. Channing Tobias is the first Negro director of a Wall Street bank, but the brewery corporations and other giant monopolies will not employ Negroes. Edith Sampson is a U.S. delegate to the U.N., but Negro women are virtually driven out of industry. There is a $28,000 Negro general sessions judge in New York, but the Negro Black Belt sharecroppers do not make enough to live on, and never get out of debt."

Possibly George Schuyler, Jackie Robinson, Sugar Ray Robinson, and the other Negro spokesmen for the way of life Wall Street white supremacist imperialism imposes on the Negro people will call this "integration"! Schuyler, of course, is a case by himself, as his presence under State Department auspices at international conferences organized by U.S. imperialism well attests. But Jackie Robinson's position, while unquestionably deserved, was the product also of the struggle of the Negro people and their white allies, and not, as some people would have us believe, an act of courage and justice by Branch Rickey! In the case of Sugar Ray Robinson, there is reason to believe his statements in Paris come not from the heart, but from a mind somewhat influenced by the fact that its owner is a prosperous business man and property owner in Harlem. For, as the New York *Post* sports writer Jimmy Cannon said in his January 3 column, the boxer says a different piece to his intimates. "It was the people of Europe who appealed to him," wrote Cannon in his interview with Robinson. " 'Man, them people,' he said as he ate breakfast in his cabin, 'they treat other people as human beings. If these people don't have a 13th Amendment in their constitution they sure live up to it anyway.' " Which would hardly have merited a comment from Robinson if he actually felt the "pro-Communist American Negroes" are wrong "who say that all we Negroes are discriminated against in America." Incidentally, it should be noted here that the two Robinsons and the other spokesmen of Wall Street cosmopolitanism among the Negro people enjoy incomes received by only three-tenths of one percent of the Negro population.

FROM this it seems clear that the song of "integration" as of now is a lullaby to silence and mislead the Negro people's struggle for liberation. It is no coincidence that this lullaby attains a crescendo at a time when Wall Street's drive to war collides head-on with the Negro liberation movement, at a time when the white supremacist rulers and their state apparatuses have unleashed unprecedented violence against Negroes as well as against other colored oppressed nations. The song of "tides of integration sweeping in" rises from the Negro misleaders, but it cannot drown out the Jim-Crow court martial of Lieutenant Gilbert and other Negro G.I.'s in the Jim-Crow units of MacArthur's imperialist invading armies. It cannot drown out the anguished cries of a Rosa Lee Ingram, sobbing for her children; or

the cries of the mothers and wives and sisters and other loved kin of Willie McGee, the Trenton Six, the Martinsville Seven, Edward Honeycutt, the Groveland Two, the Daniels cousins of North Carolina, Paul Washington, Robert Wesley Wells, Ocie Jugger, John Derrick and all the other framed-up victims of lynch-justice of today and yesterday, who have known what it means to be a Negro in the United States of 1951.

It is precisely because of its intensified terror and violence against the Negro people that Wall Street imperialism has appropriated the national liberation slogan of "full integration," and turned it into a weapon against the Negro national liberation movement. It is time now to restore that slogan to the Negro masses, to clarify its meaning and understand its implications. What, precisely, do the Negro people mean by the slogan, "full integration"? What is implicit in the realization of this slogan? Is it realizable? And if so, under what conditions?

In practice, "full integration" of the Negro people in the political, economic and social life of the United States amounts to amalgamation of the Negro nation and the nation of the United States. What else can "total integration" mean to the Negro masses if not their full acceptance into each and every aspect of life in the United States on a basis of equality? But is such a state of affairs conceivable short of the abolition of all inequalities, all discriminations—indeed, all racist prejudices? And when this condition is attained, is it not reasonable to expect the physical, social and cultural amalgamation of the two peoples?

But the merging and amalgamation of the Negro nation and the U.S. nation—the total integration of the Negro people in the life of the United States—requires as its indispensable pre-condition another historic epoch than the present one. The most authoritative theoretician on the national question, Joseph Stalin, whose theories have been tested and proved in the flowering of the greatest confederation of nations in history, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, has recently discussed the Marxist-Leninist position on this question. In the course of a discussion on linguistics and the future of languages, Stalin wrote:

> "National mistrust, national isolation, national enmity, national collisions are stimulated and kept going, to be sure, not by some 'innate' feeling of national rancor, but by the striving of imperialism to enslave foreign nations and by fear on the part of these nations

in the face of the threat of national enslavement. Certainly, as long as world imperialism exists, so long will this striving and this fear exist; consequently there will continue to exist in the great majority of countries also national mistrust, national isolation, national enmities, national collisions."

Only the victory of socialism on a world scale can create the precondition for the amalgamation of nations. For this victory, Stalin writes, "liquidates imperialism in all countries, abolishes both the striving to subjugate foreign peoples and the fear of the threat of national enslavement, radically undermines national mistrust and national enmity, unites the nations in a single system of world socialist economy and creates in this way the real conditions necessary for gradual fusion of all nations into one whole."

But even the initial periods of the world victory of socialism will not see the process of amalgamation completed. The first period of this victory will be characterized by "the rise and flowering of formerly suppressed nations and national languages, the stage of the assertion of the equal rights of nations, the stage of the liquidation of mutual distrust between nations, the stage of the training and strengthening of international ties between nations."

Indeed, the process of amalgamation and fusion of nations will not occur before the third period of the world socialist victory, "when the world socialist system of economy grows strong enough and socialism enters into the life of the peoples."

This perspective of the future of nations as outlined by Stalin has its special application to the Negro people's demand for total integration in the nation of the United States. Obviously, I feel, such a perspective is unrealizable in the present epoch. To represent this goal as attainable now, while Wall Street imperialism not only continues to exist, but has become top dog in the imperialist world and plots to impose its dominion over the entire world, is to sow criminal illusions and to disarm the Negro liberation movement in the face of its implacable foe. This is the really great crime of the white supremacist demagogues who prate of extraordinary advances in civil rights, of the Schuylers and other Negro misleaders who would have us believe "the tide of integration is sweeping in," of Browder revisionism, which postulated the proposition in 1944 that the Negro people were already exercising their right of self-determination and had chosen the path

of integration. "It is this choice," wrote Browder, "which gives the possibility in this period of integrating the Negro people into the general democracy of our country, on the basis of complete and unconditional equality, of solving this question now, and of no longer postponing it." Was Marxism ever more criminally caricatured?

INDEED, the path to total integration of the Negro people in the United States nation is well charted. It lies through the exercise by the Negro nation imprisoned in the Black Belt of the United States of its sovereign right to self-determination. Lenin discussed this question in his article. "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination," written in 1916. He wrote:

> "Just as mankind can achieve the abolition of classes only by passing through the transition period of the dictatorship of the oppressed class, so mankind can achieve the inevitable merging of nations only by passing through the transition period of complete liberation of all the oppressed nations, *i.e.,* their freedom to secede."

As Stalin pointed out, the freedom to secede imposes no obligations to secede and establish a separate, independent, national existence. It means that whereas the oppressed nation must have the right and power to do this, the main obligation to guarantee this right and power lies upon the oppressor nation. In the United States, this means that, even before the establishment of working-class power, if the working class leads the rest of the U.S. nation in such an effective and sweeping struggle as would create and guarantee the conditions in which the Negro nation could exercise its right to self-determination, it seems altogether probable that the Negro nation would exercise this right in the direction of federation, rather than separation. Nevertheless, the right and power—the *freedom*—to establish independent, separate existence is the pre-condition for the Negro people's achievement of total integration. This is the meaning of the time-honored Negro slogan, "For equal rights!" For this slogan, as Lenin emphasized, means ". . . equality in everything including state construction, experience in constructing 'their own state.'" And because the status of the Negro nation in the Black Belt is decisive for the entire Negro people of the United States, this right and power for the Negro nation in the Black Belt is the pre-condition for the attainment of genuine "equal rights" by the Negro national minority residing in the urban ghettos outside the Southern Black Belt.

In relation to the immediate perspective of the Negro liberation movement, this Leninist thesis has great strategic and tactical significance. Lenin's thesis is a dialectical concept: it states that the processes leading eventually to fusion and amalgamation begin in separation, in "freedom to secede." It is only on the basis of their equality in separateness that nations can proceed to merge on a basis of complete freedom and friendship. Yet, this dialectical motion of national liberation movements also varies in accordance with the state of world capitalism. Lenin notes two periods of capitalism, "which differ radically from each other as far as the national movement is concerned." The first is the period of early capitalism, "when the national movements for the first time become mass movements and in one way or another draw all classes into politics. . . ." The second period is marked by "the absence of mass bourgeois-democratic movements; the fact that developed capitalism, while bringing the nations that have already been drawn into commercial intercourse closer together and causing them to intermingle in an increasing degree, pushes into the forefront the antagonism between internationally united capital and the international labor movement."

The special relevance of these Leninist theses to the Negro nation in the United States today deserves profound consideration. For the national movement among the Negro people, the movement which consciously and unconsciously proceeds toward the goal of separate national independent existence—this movement is led not by the Negro bourgeoisie, but finds its motive power in the aspirations and strivings of the Negro masses, the most articulate section of whom are the proletariat of the Negro nation and the Negro members of the U.S. proletariat. The bourgeoisie of the Negro nation and the Negro members of the U.S. bourgeoisie outside the Negro nation possess in common a striving not for separateness, but for assimilation. Nor is this a striving for physical assimilation through intermarriage, as white chauvinists claim, but rather an effort to assimilate the values and standards of the culture and ideology of the white ruling class, to be like "the rich white folks" in manners, tastes, and of course, political, economic and social theory and practice. It is a striving on behalf of themselves, rather than for the Negro masses, to be accepted into the favored circles of the white ruling class, to be accounted respectable, loyal, law-abiding citizens, pillars of society. This striving is characteristic not only of the Negro bourgeois intelli-

gentsia, but also of Negro bourgeois leaders with vested interests in the segregated ghetto communities, such as the owners of insurance, banking, real estate, publishing and undertaking enterprises.

This assimilationist tendency of the Negro bourgeois leaders reflects itself in a number of ways. It denies the national character of the Negro question, parroting the racist mythology of the white supremacist big bourgeoisie, considering the Negro people as a "colored minority," or a "racial minority." Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois, in his *Dusk of Dawn,* noted that "the upper class Negro has almost never been nationalistic. He had never planned or thought of a Negro state or a Negro church or a Negro school. This solution has always been a thought upsurging from the mass, because of pressure which they could not withstand and which compelled a racial institution or chaos." And Harry Haywood, in his *Negro Liberation,* speaking of the stunted growth and marginal character of the Negro bourgeois circles, notes their "peculiar vacillating and compromising trend in their leadership of the Negro movement."

The Wall Street imperialist aggression against Korea, another colored oppressed people, brought to the surface the position of the Negro bourgeoisie in respect to "the antagonism between internationally united capital and the international labor movement." With certain notable exceptions, the most articulate spokesmen of the wealthiest Negro circles supported MacArthur's aggression. This was true of the big Negro publishers, who gave a scroll of honor to MacArthur; of Dr. Ralph Bunche and Mrs. Edith Sampson; of the national officers of the N.A.A.C.P., the National Council of Negro Women and a number of other prominent Negro spokesmen. The publisher and editor of the Chicago *Defender,* John Sengstacke, wrote rave editorials supporting the aggression and hailing MacArthur and Truman.

On the other hand, it was the Negro masses, and first of all, the Negro workers, who saw their community of interests with the Korean people and whose indignation and anger subsequently became a powerful force in the rising U.S. peace movement. For with true proletarian internationalist feelings and sympathy for the struggles of the colored colonial peoples, the Negro working masses saw MacArthur's brutal sacrifice of Negro troops and vicious reprisals against those who balked as another part of the same coin which dropped jellied gasoline and super block-busters on Korean villages.

From this, it can be seen that the true national aims of the Negro

liberation movement, which objectively constitutes a powerful force for peace in the present period, are carried by the Negro workers. This circumstance is highly favorable for the realization of the socialist perspective of the working class of the United States. It means that once the Negro workers have achieved hegemony over the national liberation movement of the Negro people, this movement will proceed along the lines of proletarian internationalism.

This fact should refute those who, attempting mechanistically to apply the slogan of "Negro-white unity" as a dogmatic formula, equate separatist and independent tendencies on the part of Negro workers and organizations with bourgeois nationalist assimilationist trends on the one hand, or with white supremacist Jim-Crow practices on the other. It is, of course, true that the Negro liberation movement, an all-class movement including elements of the Negro nationalist bourgeoisie (as distinct from the Negro comprador bourgeoisie), can be consistent and run its full course in the struggle for total integration only to the extent that Negro workers maintain leadership in it. Yet, the objective tendency of the Negro masses toward true proletarian internationalism can develop only dialectically through the realization on terms of complete equality of the separateness and distinctiveness of the Negro people's political, economic, social and cultural aspirations. This, I believe, is what is meant by the Marxist emphasis on understanding the "special character" of the Negro people's struggle as the road to true Negro-white unity.

From which it follows that the first immediate tactical objective on the path which leads through self-determination and the separateness of the Negro nation to the ultimate goal of total integration—this first objective is the hegemony of the Negro working class in the Negro nation and the hegemony of the working class of the United States, which includes Negro members outside of the Negro nation, in the forces in the U.S. nation struggling for peace, freedom and security. It is this development, spelled out concretely in the growth of the alliance between the U.S. labor movement and the Negro people, in the establishment and expansion of Negro trade-union organization, in the organization of the Southern working class and the Negro workers of the Negro nation, which alone can bring about the true integration of the Negro people in all aspects of the political, economic, social and cultural life of the people of the United States.

Letters from Negro Women: 1827-1950

"MORE THAN PUDDING-MAKING . . ."

New York, 1827

To the Editors of *Freedom's Journal*:

Will you allow a female to offer a few remarks upon a subject that you must allow to be all important? I don't know that in any of your papers, you have said sufficient upon the education of females. I hope you are not to be classed with those who think that our mathematical knowledge should be limited to "fathoming the dish-kettle," and that we have acquired enough of history if we know that our grandfather's father lived and died.

'Tis true the time has been, when to darn a stocking, and cook a pudding well, was considered the end and aim of a woman's being. But those were days when ignorance blinded men's eyes. The diffusion of knowledge has destroyed those degraded opinions, and men of the present age allow that we have minds that are capable and deserving of culture. There are difficulties, and great difficulties in the way of our advancement; but that should only stir us to greater efforts. . . .

There is a great responsibility resting somewhere, and it is time for us to be up and doing. I would address myself to all mothers, and say to them, that while it is necessary to possess a knowledge of cookery, and the various mysteries of pudding-making, something more is requisite. It is their bounden duty to store their daughters' minds with useful learning. They should be made to devote their leisure

NOTE: Several of these letters are drawn from the forthcoming *Documentary History of the American Negro People,* edited by Herbert Aptheker and published by Citadel Press.

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time to reading books, whence they would derive valuable information, which could never be taken from them. I will no longer trespass on your time and patience. I merely throw out these hints, in order that some more able pen will take up the subject.

MATILDA

"WHAT MONEY CANNOT BUY"

Pennsylvania, 1859

To the Editor of *The Anglo-African*:

When we have a race of men whom this blood-stained government cannot tempt or flatter, who would sternly refuse every office in the nation's gift, from a president down to a tide-waiter, until she shook her hands from complicity in the guilt of cradle plundering and man stealing, then for us the foundations of an historic character will have been laid. We need men and women whose hearts are the homes of a high and lofty enthusiasm, and a noble devotion to the cause of emancipation, who are ready and willing to lay time, talent and money on the altar of universal freedom. We have money among us, but how much of it is spent to bring deliverance to our captive brethren? Are our wealthiest men the most liberal sustainers of the anti-slavery enterprise? Or does the bare fact of their having money really help mold public opinion and reverse its sentiments?

We need what money cannot buy and what affluence is too beggarly to purchase. Earnest, self-sacrificing souls that will stamp themselves not only on the present but the future. Let us not then defer all our noble opportunities till we get rich. And here I am, not aiming to enlist a fanatical crusade against the desire for riches, but I do protest against chaining down the soul, with its Heaven-endowed faculties and God-given attributes to the one idea of getting money as stepping into power or even gaining our rights in common with others. The respect that is only bought by gold is not worth much. It is no honor to shake hands politically with men who whip women and steal babies. If the government has no call for our services, no aim for our children,

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we have the greater need for them to build up a true manhood and womanhood for ourselves. The important lesson we should learn and be able to teach, is how to make every gift, whether gold or talent, fortune or genius, subserve the cause of crushed humanity and carry out the greatest idea of the present age, the glorious idea of human brotherhood.

FRANCES ELLEN WATKINS

"YOUR GLORIOUS ACT . . ."

New York, 1859

Dear John Brown:

We, in behalf of the colored women of Brooklyn, would fain offer you our sincere and heartfelt sympathies in the cause you have so nobly espoused, and that you so firmly adhere to. We truly appreciate your most noble and humane effort, and recognize in you a Saviour commissioned to redeem us, the American people, from the great National Sin of Slavery; and though you have apparently failed in the object of your desires, yet the influence that we believe it will eventually exert, will accomplish all your intentions.

We consider you a model of true patriotism, and one whom our common country will yet regard as the greatest it has produced, because you have sacrificed all for its sake. . . . We have always entertained a love for the country which gave us birth, despite the wrongs inflicted upon us, and have always been hopeful that the future would augur better things. We feel now that your glorious act for the cause of humanity has afforded us an unexpected realization of some of our seemingly vain hopes. . . .

[Letter sent by mass meeting of Negro women.]

"TODAY WE ARE EXILES . . ."

Ohio, 1860

To the Editor of *The Principia*:

In consequence of a law passed by the Legislature of Arkansas, compelling the Free Colored People either to leave the State or to be enslaved, we, a number of exiles, driven out by this inhuman statute, who reached Ohio on the 3rd of January, 1860, feeling a deep sense of the wrong done us, make this Appeal to the Christian World. . . .

Today we are exiles, driven from the homes of our childhood, the scenes of our youth and the burial places of our friends. We are exiles; not that our hands have been stained with guilt, or our lives accused of crime. Our fault, in a land of Bibles and churches, of baptisms and prayers, is, that in our veins flows the blood of an outcast race; a race oppressed by power, and proscribed by prejudice; a race cradled in wrong, and nurtured in oppression.

In the very depth of winter, we have left a genial climate of sunny skies, to be homeless strangers in the regions of the icy North. Some of the exiles have left children, who are very dear; but, to stay with them, was to involve ourselves in a lifetime of slavery. Some left dear companions; they were enslaved, and we had no other alternative than slavery or exile. We were weak, our oppressors strong. We were feeble, scattered, peeled; they being powerful, placed before us slavery or banishment. We chose the latter. Poverty, trials, and all the cares incident to a life of freedom, are better, far better, than slavery.

From this terrible injustice we appeal to the moral sentiment of the world. We turn to the free North; but even here oppression tracks our steps. Indiana shut her doors upon us. Illinois denies us admission to her prairie homes. Oregon refuses us an abiding place for the soles of our weary feet. . . .

Editors of newspapers, formers of public opinion, conductors of intelligence and thought: we entreat you to insert this appeal in your papers; and unite your voices against this outrage which disgraces our land, and holds it up to shame before the nations of the earth. We entreat you to move a wave of influence which will widen and spread through all the earth, and roll back and wash away this stain. . . .

ELIZA ANN WEST, RACHEL LOVE, POLLY TAYLOR,
CAROLINE PARKER, JANE THOMSON, NELLY GRINTON

"THE SAME RIGHT TO VOTE . . ."

Washington, 1872

Dear Frederick Douglass:

I have been for a long time wondering why you do not insist on the trying out of the provisions of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States, as regards the right of colored citizens to vote. Do you say that colored citizens vote? I answer, yes. A part of them vote. But did it ever occur to you that colored women citizens have the same right to vote that colored men citizens have? That the same amendments that gave citizenship, with all rights, privileges and immunities to the colored man, gave also the same citizenship with its rights, privileges and immunities to the colored woman. . . .

Now, what I want to urge upon the colored class of our citizens is, that as the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution give the colored women the unmistakable right to vote, that they see to it that their mothers, wives, sisters and daughters are as fully protected in the exercise of that right as they themselves are. It is a gross injustice that the colored women have so long been defrauded of their right to vote. Somebody must take the lead in this matter, and I see no better way to bring the subject before the people than for your *New National Era,* the paper above all others devoted to the elevation of the colored race, to take the question up, and insist on the full enforcement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution of the United States.

MARY OLNEY BROWN

"NOWHERE IN THE CIVILIZED WORLD . . ."

Illinois, 1898

To President McKinley:

The colored citizens of this country in general, and Chicago in particular, desire to respectfully urge that some action be taken by you as chief magistrate of this great nation, first for the apprehension and punishment of the lynchers of Postmaster Baker, of Lake City,

S.C.; second, we ask indemnity for the widow and children, both for the murder of the husband and father, and for injuries sustained by themselves; third, we most earnestly desire that national legislation be enacted for the suppression of the national crime of lynching.

For nearly twenty years lynching crimes, which stand side by side with Armenian and Cuban outrages, have been committed and permitted by this Christian nation. Nowhere in the civilized world save the United States of America do men, possessing all civil and political power, go out in bands of 50 to 5,000 to hunt down, shoot, hang or burn to death a single individual, unarmed and absolutely defenseless. Statistics show that nearly 10,000 American citizens have been lynched in the past twenty years.

To our appeals for justice the stereotyped reply has been that the government could not interfere in a state matter. Postmaster Baker's case was a federal matter, pure and simple. He died at his post of duty in defense of his country's honor, as truly as did ever a soldier on the field of battle. We refuse to believe this country, so powerful to defend its citizens abroad, is unable to protect its citizens at home.

MRS. IDA B. WELLS-BARNETT

"WHY THEY SHOULD UNITE . . ."

Alabama, 1934

To the International Labor Defense:

I received your loving letter and also the ten dollars. I was more than glad to get it because we are in a suffering condition. I hate to tell you all just how it is with us down here. But I will tell you a part of our troubles.

The bosses won't help us one bit. My boys and other boys of the political prisoners [organizers of a sharecroppers' union] signed up to work on the C.C.C. but they turn them down. . . . The government says that it is doing everything it can to help the poor people, but the landlords get all the profits for they rent the land at top prices and then draw the government money. And the storekeepers sell their stuff at a double price and at that rate the government wouldn't

have to help us long because we all will be perished and froze to death.

The bosses let who they want to work. There was a Negro man working on that C.W.A. job and his wife was washing for a boss and his family and his wife got to where she wanted to pay the Negro woman in milk and meat skins. And the Negro woman quit washing for them . . . she wouldn't wash for milk and meat skins and they laid him off the job. The bosses say put the white on the road and put the Negro in the fields at from 7 to 10 dollars a month.

Dear friends, I can't write all the hard struggles at once but I am glad to know that we have greater and greater numbers of class conscious workers and sympathizers. It gives me more courage to work on since there is so many more white and Negro workers are beginning to understand why they should unite together and fight against hunger. . . .

My tongue cannot express the love and thanks I have in my heart for you all. . . . If it wasn't for you all I don't know what we would do for they punch us every way they can down here.

May the Lord bless the I.L.D. workers all over this world. This is from the depths of my heart.

VIOLA COBB

"OUR FIGHT FOR PEACE . . ."

Texas, 1950

Editor, *Daily Worker*:

Peace in Texas is *a main issue,* as it is all over the world.

The Negro women in Texas are conscious of this fact. We see that clearly when we ask them to sign the Stockholm Peace Petition. An expression of horror comes over their faces when they hear of the Atom and Hydrogen bombs. We see the expression of relief when we tell them the why's of this war drive and they find they can help prevent or quell the fascist-minded fiends. I try to point out how much it affects us in Texas. Our state puts out 56 percent of our nation's oil, leads in cotton. I tell them how vulnerable it is for atomic warfare.

I am a domestic worker. I have to get up at 5 in the morning so

that I am at work to prepare and serve breakfast (in bed) at 7:30—and at 4 P.M. I begin winding up my day. For this I receive $4.25 (25 cents is for carfare) and I have to walk a mile after I get off the bus to my home.

I have two children to keep clean and to prepare food for and send to school. So at this writing my feet are swollen and the hand that holds the pencil is cramping. I only turn the palm to look at the corns and get ready for tomorrow. Many women work as I do from 7 to 5:30 for $16 to $18 a week. Others work six to eight hours daily for $12 and $15 a week. And have to walk as much as three miles to their homes as the result of no bus transportation even though we now have to pay city taxes.

The white communities have shuttle busses.

We are beginning a large mobilization this Sunday of Negro women to get the peace petition signed. We plan it to make history here. We will work untiringly for peace here. Our mothers of the abolitionist movement had less, and look where we are today. We will not stand for making any backward tracks. It would mean war and fascism and the complete end of the Negro liberation movement.

We send our best regards to Comrade Gene Dennis. Tell him for us, our fight for peace does not exclude him.

We can realize no rest until he is free.

Fraternally,

MRS. WILLIE MAE PHILLIPS

William L. Patterson:

MILITANT LEADER

by MICHAEL GOLD

SOME months ago there arose another bad publicity stink from the Washington miasma, this time caused by lobbyists. They are as numerous as toads in the capital swamp. Every hackie, newspaperman, congressman can name them, has been liquored by hundreds of the breed. They spread their greenbacks and corruption everywhere, but this time, because of somebody's slip, Congress had to appoint another of its famous committees to "probe" the lobbyists.

On August 3, 1950, the committee finally held a hearing. Did they call the fascist Franco lobby before them, or the bloody Chiang lobby, or the infamous armaments, gambling, meat, or other big-business lobbies? No, the committee had subpoenaed a fighter against our creeping American fascism. It had called in William L. Patterson, head of the Civil Rights Congress. Mr. Patterson explained in detail that his organization could not be compared to profiteering lobbies of big business. The Civil Rights Congress was a crusade for human rights, not a business racket. It defended the Bill of Rights and victims of legal oppression.

"At the time I was subpoenaed," said Patterson, "I was fighting for the life of a Negro in Georgia, against a legal lynching there. . . ."

"That is absolutely false!" roared a member of the committee, the Honorable Henderson Lovelace Lanham of Georgia. "The State of Georgia has never tried to lynch any Negro!" he boomed.

The witness said firmly, "Georgia's lynchings are known not only in this country, but all over the world."

Congressman Lanham lifted his arms and roared, "You lie! If there is any state in the Union where a Negro gets a fair trial, it is the State of Georgia!"

Patterson began to say, "Georgia is a state where the black man has no rights that can be compared with. . . ."

But the Congressman again interrupted him and roared, "That is another lie!"

Thus baited and battered, the witness answered, "And that statement is also a lie!"

Whereupon the Honorable Mr. Lanham rushed upon the witness, as if to strike him, and bellowed insanely, "You black son-of-a-bitch!" His right foot seemed poised as if to kick the witness. An armed guard pulled his gun anxiously and loomed over the witness.

In looking through the *Congressional Record,* I have discovered that the Congressman's gutter-cry has been deleted from the verbatim report, doubtless by the Congressman himself. Perhaps the State Department pointed out to him that his lapse might injure all the expensive broadcasts put out by the Voice of America, in which our country is pictured daily as the one untarnished democracy, a land where Negroes have full rights and are never, never called dirty names by anyone. Despite such deletion, Lanham's words were sufficiently reported around the world. They doubtless had their effect upon the whole vast colored majority of the human race.

Not long after, on August 30, Congress voted, not to expel the dirty-mouthed Representative, but to cite William L. Patterson for contempt. He had refused to name the contributors to his organization. It might expose them to the usual witch-hunt, he said. Contempt! A year in prison!

LET me try to give a little sketch of this man whom the racist swine want to put in jail.

His friends call him "Pat," and by this friendly nickname I shall call him hereafter. He was born in 1891, in San Francisco, and the story of his life is like a tale by some American Gorky. His grandmother was born a slave on the Gault plantation near Norfolk, Virginia. Her white slaveowner was also a "rapist" husband to her, and she bore him several children, one of whom was Pat's own mother, born into slavery. (A Miss Gault married President Woodrow Wilson.)

Pat's white grandfather, the slaveowner, must have had some good in him. In 1851 he freed his slave-wife and children, staked her and her Negro husband to a trip to the California gold rush. They made the long voyage by sailing ship, then the overland trip through jungles and fever-swamps of the Isthmus. At first the family prospered

in the West. Black Grandfather Gault opened a barbershop in Sacramento. During the Civil War he organized a company of Zouaves. Pat's mother grew up and married an African from the West Indian Island of St. Lucius. Pat's father was strong, clever and eccentric. At first he was anxious about making money. He was the first Negro steward on the Pacific Mail Steamship line of clippers. He invested in real estate. Then he suddenly changed into an intense religionist, joined the Seventh Day Adventists, sold his real estate and gave the money to the church, not his family.

One day he deserted the family, sailed for Tahiti, where he toiled as a Seventh Day missionary for the next seven years. At home his poor wife worked in restaurants, slaved as a domestic worker, to support the religionist's three children. The father came back and though past forty took a quick course in dentistry and worked at that. Finally he left for good and went off to Panama.

"His religious mania broke up our family," Pat remembers. "It made us doubt religion. It made us fear the white man's church. My brother and sister escaped from home as soon as they were able. I stuck it out, because I loved my poor mother. She wanted to make something of me. She fought to have me educated. I owe her much."

Pat worked in dining cars on the Southern Pacific, in the kitchens. In 1911 he had saved enough money to be able to enter the University of California. Alternating work in railroad yards, factories and mills, and the dining cars, with years of school, Pat finally graduated from the Hastings Law School of the University.

It was the time of the socialism of Gene Debs, Jack London and Upton Sinclair. Pat could not have missed the socialist currents that swept the campus. It was also the time of the First World War. He was an intense Negro nationalist, and he opposed the war. He encountered Irish and Hindu nationalists who were then fighting their British imperialist masters. About this time Pat met Anita Whitney, and she brought him into the N.A.A.C.P.

One day Pat made a speech at a Negro picnic in Oakland. The young nationalist denounced the war as a "white man's war." A Navy man reported him to the police. Pat was arrested and spent five days in jail.

Pat had been clerking in the law office of McCaul Stewart, whose father was then serving as fiscal agent for the Liberian Republic in

London. One day Pat threw up his job and grabbed a boat for London. The first person he went to visit was old Judge Stewart. Pat wanted to go to Liberia to work for his own people. He believed Liberia could be made the spearhead of a great movement to drive the white invader out of Africa. Judge Stewart advised the young patriot to return to America. That was his birthplace, and the place where he could best serve.

PAT returned to New York. Restless, without plan, he took the first job that offered. It was longshoring along the Chelsea docks. For several years his sister urged him to return to law. Finally he did so and spent three years as a clerk in the offices of a big Negro law firm, Billup and Macdougal. Then with two young partners, Pat formed the new firm of Dyatt, Hall and Patterson. Very quickly, it became one of the most successful Negro law firms in the city. It was the first such to represent a white bank, the Chelsea National. It represented the first Negro life insurance company. Pat was making over $8,000 a year, a top figure for any young Negro professional. With no special convictions, he'd joined the Democratic Party, had many influential friends in Tammany and one time they even offered him an appointment as City Magistrate. Pat's brogans were well planted on the road of American "success."

"But I was really a lost soul," Pat reminisces. "Every day I'd come across some example of injustice done to Negroes. It always hurt me. Negro lawyers, too, had to fight for their lives to function in these white courts. Once I was almost disbarred by a racist judge, who thought I wasn't acting humble enough. I wrote an occasional article on the Negro question for the Chicago *Defender*. But this wasn't enough to still my gnawing conscience, the voice of my people.

"I was travelling with a fast set, a clique of young, successful Negroes. There was a constant round of drinking, helling, gambling, big parties and flashy women. It was all so brilliant, this life of the hollow men, of the Negro imitators of white hollowness and bourgeois emptiness. It was a drug they took, I imagine, to hide from themselves their status. But nothing helped my troubled mind. I was living in a kind of private hell, but do you know what pulled me out?

"First, a Negro Communist friend used to drop into my office and sell me Marxist books. He was working on me for years. He'd argue

and peddle, he'd fight me and wake me and try to beat down my pessimism. He had one great lesson he wanted to teach me—that the Negro could not hope to free himself, was outnumbered, and must find allies in the white world. The source of injustice wasn't a mental aberration in the white brain, but a very solid material giant named monopoly capitalism. The victims of capitalism were many. They were the natural allies of the Negro. Together we could set humanity free. We needed the white working class, and they needed us. Such were the lessons my friend kept hammering at me in my well-insulated law office.

"Felix Frankfurter's study of the Sacco-Vanzetti frame-up came out about then. It made a deep impression on me. As a lawyer I could understand how these white workers were victims of a legal lynching, just as thousands of Negroes had always been. It was the same pattern of injustice; it was the capitalist pattern.

"I followed the Sacco-Vanzetti case with all my soul. When a call came for people to go to Boston the last week before the execution date, I volunteered to go. It was there I met you, Mike, remember, and Mother Bloor, John Howard Lawson, Dorothy Parker, Clarina Michelson, and the others. We picketed the State House every day. Boston had been inflamed into a state of hysteria. The newspapers and officialdom created a lynch atmosphere. None of us knew when the mob might fall on us. It was a tense and dangerous week. Years of emotion and thought were crowded into it.

"Do you know what followed for me? I returned to New York and resigned from my law business. I joined the Communist Party and went down to the International Labor Defense and offered them my life."

Yes, I remembered how Pat had been the one Negro on our daily picket lines and demonstrations. I remember the scene on Boston Common, when a crazed cop on a horse was chasing Pat around a tree, with loaded club at the ready. Pat was arrested three times during the week. As a Negro the press and police concentrated on him, naturally. A Negro needs twice the courage of a white in any such struggle. Pat had it, then and always. I remember the authorities threatened to have him put in an asylum.

"Do you remember that first night at headquarters?" Pat asked. "We were all tired as hell, confused and worried. You came up to me,

a stranger and a Negro, and asked if I had a place to sleep that night. I hadn't and you took me to the home of the comrade where you were staying."

It made a deep impression on Pat, he says, but I don't know why such an ordinary act of comradeship should have moved him. He had not yet got over his suspicion of whites, probably not even of white radicals. But maybe such a simple act helped him first understand that true friendship was possible between blacks and whites, if the rottenness of capitalism could be removed.

His brilliance and courage soon made Pat an outstanding figure in the I.L.D. When its secretary, J. Louis Engdahl, died, literally of exhaustion, Pat took over the tremendous job. The Scottsboro Case was his first experience in his new life. Pat has never been a desk-general, and it was characteristic that his first move was to go to Alabama, to familiarize himself with the background of the case.

A Southern organizer, Nat Ross, was telling me how Pat arrived to spend several days around the freight-yard at Paint Rock, where the alleged rape was said to have occurred. Nat warned him how dangerous it was to prowl and talk there. He could only just persuade Pat to change his New York homburg for a proletarian cap, so as to avoid undue attention. Pat wanted to see the boys in the Kilby prison death house, but the authorities refused him a permit. So he went there under another lawyer's name, with Mrs. Ada Wright, mother of one of the young victims. The visit made a powerful impression on him.

A stoolpigeon detected Patterson. Two gunmen grabbed him and he was run out of Birmingham. But in the death house, the Scottsboro boys had made up some verses and sang them often in their lonesome nights and days:

"I looked over yonder and what did I see
Comin' for to carry me home?
Mr. William Patterson and the I.L.D.
Comin' for to carry me home."

Their faith was finally justified. The I.L.D. and William Patterson succeeded in rousing the people, in exposing the frame-up, and in getting the best legal help possible. Such is the strategy employed in

the defense work, says Pat. One uses all the arms, but public opinion is the main weapon.

It is characteristic of Pat that despite all the backwardness and terror he has seen in the South, he has unshakable faith in the Southern whites. "They remind me of what the peasants must have been in czarist Russia," says Pat. "But we know now what untapped depths of devotion and humanity were there, as today in the South. I can never forget Ruby Bates." She was one of the two girls in the freight-train whom the Scottsboro boys were accused of raping. Born in the degradation of sharecropper poverty, Ruby became a Southern prostitute at thirteen. The authorities forced her to testify against the boys, as in many such "rape" cases.

"The night before she left New York to return to the Alabama court to repudiate her testimony I warned Ruby that her life would be in danger. 'You know, Ruby,' I said, 'they'll lynch a white woman down there, too.' She answered me quietly: 'I'm going back to tell the truth. Even if I have to lose my life doing it.'"

It shows the latent strength in the poor Southern whites, says Pat. They will awake, they will be our allies. Let us trust in their humanity, and never despair of reaching it.

The Angelo Herndon case, in which Benjamin Davis, just out of Harvard, first appeared as a public figure, engaged the thought and activity of the I.L.D. Labor cases, anti-Negro cases, were always plentiful, then as now. In 1934 Pat went to Cuba for the I.L.D. There was dictatorship and terror on Uncle Sam's sugar-island. Trade unions and Communist and Socialist Parties were underground. Pat spent fourteen days there, helping the Cuban workers organize their legal defense apparatus. He took his clothes off only twice in those two weeks, met the Cuban leaders in secret hideouts, dodged police and gangster-squads of the dictator. Pat got his organizing job accomplished. But after his return to New York, in his sister's apartment one day, Pat fainted dead away. One lung had collapsed. He'd been working too hard for years.

Harry Haywood and other friends insisted that Pat go to the Soviet Union for treatment. It was the only place they knew where a Negro without money could get the finest medical care. Pat spent a year on his back in a Black Sea sanitarium. Then two more years studying the life of the former oppressed nationalities who were the Negroes

and Jews under czarist racism, and now are free. "In the Soviet Union, says Pat, "I saw the dream of national liberation come true."

WHEN he returned to New York, Pat plunged again into battle. He was the Communist Party organizer in Harlem for a time. Then he worked in Chicago, as director of the Abraham Lincoln School, a notable experiment in higher education for workers. He was also an editor of the *Midwest Record,* the Party daily. When he returned to New York, Pat was named secretary of the newly-formed Civil Rights Congress, successor to the I.L.D. This is the organization which has fought for the lives of so many framed-up Americans in these latter years of Truman-MacArthur democracy—the Willie McGee case, the Martinsville Seven, the Trenton Six, Mrs. Rosa Lee Ingram, Fletcher Mills, Paul Washington.

You sit in the basement office with Pat and watch him at work. It is endless, the phone rings, people press in and out, every second marks an emergency in some life-or-death case. He grabs a sandwich and container of hot coffee, and asks the coffee-pot messenger, "How did you spend your New Year's?" "Fine, Pat" the man replies, "it was fine, even if I had to pay with a hangover." And they laugh together. The office girls call him Pat, also. He is a genial and comradely employer.

Pat has had to raise funds endlessly for the campaigns, lead delegations into hostile cities, crash into the offices of governors. His mind is filled with the thousand technical and legal details of each of the numerous cases. He always seems unhurried. Pat is a great letter-writer; he conducts a vast correspondence with all sorts of people. He is the kind of man that people turn to spontaneously for advice and understanding. Kindliness is his main characteristic, intimate friends tell you. Fearlessness is his chief talent, others will say.

"Yes, one of the high moments I can never forget," he said, "was the visit I paid Euel Lee, fifteen minutes before his execution. It was in that Dantesque region, the eastern shore of Maryland. This illiterate Negro farmhand was dying in one of the usual frame-ups. He had a noble fortitude, would have been a Chapayev under other conditions, the leader of a slave revolt. He said to me, 'I'm not afraid to die, Mr. Patterson. Don't worry about me none, but keep right on defending our poor people.' Euel Lee had a great love for his people. He was a

very religious man, and told me he believed the I.L.D. had been sent him by God."

Pat led a delegation to Governor Ritchie on this case, and accused the suave governor of being a legal lyncher. "Timid and conservative members of our delegation were shocked by my manner," said Pat. "But sometimes it is necessary to present the issue sharply. The silence about these things is a help to the lynchers. In all these cases there are timid souls who like to pretend that each injustice is an accident. But we must always point out that these lynchings are a constant product of the society in which we now live. A cotton crisis in the South is always followed by a wave of lynching and terrorization of the Negro workers. And the present war crisis of the capitalist state has increased the crimes against human rights in America. No, it does not come from below, from mobs of poor whites, as Hollywood and others allege. It comes from the ruling circles; it comes from Wall Street and Washington, D.C."

Pat was married in 1940 to an outstanding fighter for freedom, Louise Thompson, a former teacher at Hampton with whom he grew up in California. They have an eight-year-old daughter, Mary Lou, a little charmer. Pat used to be a good amateur boxer at college and listens to all the fights. He is also a baseball fan, and will spend a Sunday at home preparing some tough legal brief while listening to the radio reporting of a baseball game. Nearly sixty years old, he is in rugged health. He exercises for half an hour every morning, even though he usually works through a sixteen-hour day.

Mel Fiske of the *Daily Worker* told me how Pat and Mrs. McGee and a few friends conducted an all-night vigil before the White House as a last minute demonstration for Willie McGee. "Pat had worked all that day," said Mel. "We spent the night talking about many of the defense cases. Mrs. McGee started to cry at one moment. She felt like giving up, she said. Pat consoled her with all his wonderful kindness. In the morning we snatched a cup of coffee. Then he was off to make the rounds of Congress, and officialdom, still fighting for a reprieve for Willie McGee. He never seemed hectic about it, either, just calm, and determined, and ready to drop in his tracks or live on green corn for justice."

Pat has a great patience with people. In Chicago, his wife Louise told me, everyone used to come to his office with their personal prob-

lems. New York is less personal, but Pat always had a string of young proteges. He gets jobs for them, encourages them in their development at school, work, social struggle.

"We were at home one day," said Louise Thompson Patterson, "and the news came over the radio that Pat had been indicted for contempt. Will Daddy have to go to jail? asked our little girl. Not if we can help it, I told her. But if he does, it will be for the people."

Yes, for them, and not their oppressors. Capitalism, as Ralph Fox pointed out, no longer is capable of producing a genuine hero. In this time of the transition from capitalism to communism, this century of vast social struggles, heroes arise only from the people.

William Patterson is of the great family of Nazim Hikmet, Paul Robeson, Julius Fuchik, Tom Mooney, Joe Hill, the housewife who defied the cops in the Union Square peace demonstration, the Spanish farmers who fought at Jarama, Bill Foster, the people's guard at Peekskill.

"What does America's future look like to you?" I asked at leaving.

"The future is very bright," said this warm-hearted, brave, young, sixty-year fighter. "Our people have never been licked, not since the time of the Alien and Sedition Laws. The slaveowners ran the nation for almost forty years, but look what happened to them. The people have begun to fight the McCarran Law. They went to Jackson, Mississippi, to save Willie McGee. They are supporting the Martinsville Seven.

"I believe the savagery of reaction is due not only to their need for war, but to their increasing weakness. They are desperate at the slow but sure awakening of the American people. We shall see great things, Mike. This is no Hitler nation. We can be very dumb, but we are no goose-steppers. The future doesn't belong to Senator McCarthy and the armaments trust. It belongs to the people. The sky is red everywhere. What can it mean but dawn for the whole world—including these states?"

I AM SENTENCED TO DIE

by WESLEY ROBERT WELLS

From Death Row in San Quentin penitentiary comes this powerful human document of Negro oppression and resistance in the United States today. In Governor Warren's "model" California we see a stark image of imperialist "justice and democracy."

The case of Wesley Robert Wells is now before the United States Supreme Court to obtain a review of the State court's death sentence. Meanwhile, we urge our readers to write to Governor Earl Warren, Sacramento, California, asking him to free Mr. Wells.—The Editors.

ALTHOUGH I may be dead when you read this . . . I am no longer prepared to die.

My name is Wesley Robert Wells. I am a Negro, American citizen, my prison number is 24155. I am forty-two years of age, six foot, 170 pounds, dark brown color, strong of body. I have been in prison since I was nineteen with only a few months in the "free world outside" in 1941.

Here is my story.

I don't ever remember my aunt, who raised me, buying me any shoes or clothes. I don't say she didn't. I just don't recall any incident like that. I sold papers on the corner and when I didn't get enough money there, I'd steal a little for shoes for me and my younger sister. We were three kids, my older sister Alzada, myself and little Charlene. We were born in Fort Worth, Texas and my mother, Ada Pearl, left my father right after Charlene was born. My mother died of a sickness. I don't remember my father at all because we were shipped to an uncle in Denver, Colorado, name of Thomas Henderson, a Baptist preacher. Then we were shipped to an aunt in Los Angeles, a tiny

100-pound woman, Henrietta Henderson. She had three kids of her own and no husband with her—so we three kids piled in and made it six kids in two rooms. Many mornings on my way to school, not having had breakfast, or enough breakfast, I would eat my noon lunch. At suppertime, often when I wasn't earning enough from the papers, my aunt would raise cain if I ate what she considered too much. I have seen my little sis, many times, leave the table with a look of hunger on her face, for fear that my aunt would get on her if she ate any more. She, my little sis, was very shy and timid as a child.

My aunt had a little place near Temple and Virgil in Los Angeles, right near a swamp. Sometimes the green stuff oozed into the room we all slept in. It was my job to stake out the cow in the mornings, bring her in at night. Sometimes it took more time in the morning. My cousin would help me but we would get one whack from the schoolteacher for each minute we were late for school. So, when the cow was ornery, we would cut school.

The first time I ever stole anything was on the way to school with my cousin. We saw some keys sticking in a door—"let's get those keys," he said. What we wanted them for, I don't know—but we took them. Somebody saw us and got the word to my aunt. We got whipped.

We had to cut wood in the mornings too. If this made us late for school—we'd get swat on the behind. One time we were half an hour late for school. We saw two bikes and stole them, rode over to the aviation field to watch the airplanes. We were foolish enough to bring the bikes home that evening and hide them in the barn. We got another whipping for that, but my aunt was a little bittie lady—she couldn't hurt us kids. The louder we hollered, the sooner she quit. Then we'd laugh like the devil.

My aunt sometimes when she didn't have time to feed us, managed to give my cousin and me two-bits to go to the show. Five cents carfare each way, ten cents for the show, a nickel for a hot dog. This particular time we had not eaten and we were hungry. We bought two hot dogs and didn't have carfare to come home. My cousin and me snitched a Ford car. We got pinched for it.

We started to snitch cars for something to do—"for the fun of it," the gang used to say. We never thought about it much. Then when I was twelve I got sent to reform school for two years. When I was there, I heard my older sister got killed when some fellow she was

going with accidently shot her in the belly. His name was John Hall and I vowed to get him when I got out. He got put in prison and I did meet him later in San Quentin. But he told me and convinced me it was an accident. He died of ptomaine poisoning at Quentin.

When I got out, I was sent to live with an uncle. He had a forty-year-old tongue-tied cousin everybody was afraid of but me. Still I stayed away from the house because I didn't want to scrap with him. At fifteen I went to work for a cement contractor and then for a cleaning place. I had to leave school to earn money. My uncle was chauffeur for the factory boss at Wagner and Woodruff Fixture Company. He got me on there. I was washing windows and sweeping the floor. Some guy comes over and corrects me on washing. I said, "I'm doing my job right."

He said, "Don't you talk to me like that."

I said, "Why not?"

He said, "You say 'sir' when you talk to me, because you're black and I'm white."

I got mad and hit him. Then I got fired. That was my first run-in with race prejudice.

I got a scattering of odd jobs, but mostly four of us guys would snitch a car, snitch a box of potatoes, half for food and half for selling. A friend wanted me to box but I would start to the gym and never get there.

I got one to five years at Quentin for having stolen clothing in my room. I had stolen two dresses that time. I was scared when I got to Quentin in 1928. I'd heard how bad those convicts were. I wanted to "make it"—to get back out of prison. I figured the way to do it was to act like the next guy—talk as tough, be as tough. I entered prison believing that if one could, one should fight fair—not to take unfair advantage of your opponent. If I was around and saw two or more men jump on one, I would take the side of the one man, regardless of the cause of the trouble.

I was on the handball court one afternoon just after I got to Quentin. "Hey you," some guy called me.

"What do you want?" I said.

"Come on, black boy, get off the court and let me play."

"Don't talk to me that way," I answered.

"Why you n——r, you ain't gonna' do anything."

We got into a fight and I was brought to Captain Carpenter. I told him the man used that name. Carpenter said, "So what—that's what you are."

I got put into the hole—they call it "wrassling with the bear"—a dark, windowless place with no bed or toilet, just two buckets, a loaf of bread a day. I did a lot of thinking about how bad I wanted out. I swore I'd never get back anymore. I almost went crazy that ten days. I'd been used to plenty of sports and activity. The boredom sitting there alone, talking to no person—my mind going back and forth from one wall to the other—nothing to do, nothing to see, nothing to listen to, one hot meal every three days.

I was thankful when I got out, blinking in the sun. But I had a lot to learn. Today, sitting in my cell and writing this, I can't say if I'd have acted different. I know this—I don't and never did want more than the next man—I just don't want to be pushed around. I never took it.

There was a lot of Jim Crow stuff in Quentin in those days—just like there is now. Then you were continuously addressed as "n——r," you got the worst jobs, and if you objected, you were a marked number. I'm not trying to apologize or justify those three years from 1928 to 1931. But I was young and held my head up. I didn't take no stuff from prisoner, stoolie, or guard. As a result, I got it bad. I got the strap, the rubber hose, the club, the curses. In three years, I spent 335 days in solitary or the black dungeon, sometimes months at a stretch.

I WAS transferred to Folsom Prison. Folsom is the maximum security prison and the worst criminals are sent there. When I came in the fall of 1931, I was brought before Warden Larkin, the most vicious man I've ever met in my life. He said to me, "I see by your record that you're a tough n——r. Well, I'll have you eating out of my hand."

I said, "I address you civil, Warden, please do the same to me."

He said, "You black skunk. I'll talk to you like I please."

I said, "My name is Wells, please call me that."

He said, "You black n——r." Then he picked up a cane and smacked my shins. The assistant captain, Bill Ryan, grabbed a softball bat, which I claim he still has to this day, and walked to me, "I'll hit a home run," is what he said.

I just sat down and cried like a baby. I only had ten more months to go, but I knew I'd never make it.

I remember what a judge told me once in court. He said a prison is a world unto itself. The men have their schemes, plots, and counterplots. There are all kinds of things committed there, and all kinds of schemes. I say this not for apology, but because it is true. Prison is full of little cliques, and a man has to belong to one clique or another. Everything in prison is run by a clique, the gambling, the pools on baseball, the prison politics. Well, I got into a fight between two cliques, Negro and white. A fellow inmate, a Negro by name of Emory Hudson, came to me for help to get some money owed him by New York Red, a white prisoner in another clique. The upshot of it was a big "free for all." Headlight, me, Buck, New York Red, and Hudson. Poor Hudson, who had asked me in the beginning to help him, got knifed. I sat in solitary for three days, praying that Hudson wouldn't die. He did—and when the guard told me, something passed out of my brain. I was the man of all of us who got prosecuted. I was given ten more years for manslaughter.

Up to that time I had not written a letter to anyone, but after getting the ten-year jolt, I decided to straighten up. I wrote to my aunt, appealed to her to write to me regularly. But at that time, John Hall died from ptomaine in prison. My aunt was sure I had killed him. She wrote and told me this. She also said I would never get out of prison alive. I never wrote her again.

I tried to assume a more wholesome outlook on life. I tried to settle down in Folsom, and get an education. I no longer wanted to be "tough" because that attitude just did not pay. I made every effort to live down my reputation, but it seemed the die was cast. If I'd cowered my head and kissed feet, I might have gotten along. Nobody thought of rehabilitation in those days, and I couldn't hold myself in when I got the dirty end of the stick.

I was in the hole one February night in 1933, with another inmate. We were caught tapping on the wall, our only way of talking to inmates in next hole. The guard came in and took away our clothes and the one mattress, leaving us there naked. For twenty-four hours, we had no clothes, blankets, bread, or water. We decided to call the guard and start a fight—so that we'd go to the hospital and at least get warm. We shouted for the guard and he finally came. To our sur-

prise, he opened the steel door and threw some clothes in. Then he said to me, "Come on out here and get your mattress."

I dressed and stepped out. Then I saw the gun guard and the Captain watching. "What's wrong?" I asked.

"Nothing," the guard told me, "we're going to take you down to twelve posts and have you rest awhile."

"Is that necessary?" I said.

"Well—it'll do you some good," the guard said. He was six-foot-six and weighed 240 pounds. He put handcuffs on me and slid my belt through my waist and hands, so I couldn't hold my hands up. Then the Warden came out and suddenly whipped his hand across my face. I lost my balance and went down.

"You think you're as good as a white man, don't you!" the Warden yelled at me. He started to curse and whip himself into a frenzy. I got to my feet and by this time he booted me down the steps. I lost my slipper and my balance and tumbled down the steps. They followed me, kicking and pushing at me with their canes until I got to twelve posts, which is a stone cell under a guard post. It was also called "whipping post."

Inside the cell with Larkin on one side of me, the lieutenant on the other, the gun guard in front with a machine gun trained at me—they let go. Larkin used a softball bat and laid it down on me. He and the lieutenant beat me soft, across the shoulders, the legs, the belly, the head. Larkin beat me until he got tired. "Why don't you say something, you black skunk," he yelled. Finally, I cried, "For crissakes, man! What's wrong with you." Then Larkin stopped, "See—you ain't so tough," he said, "now I'm going to leave you, but I don't want you to say another word to anyone comes around here."

For four days, I lay on the cold stone, bleeding, sore. I got a cup of water and a loaf of bread stuck through the iron door, once a day. On the fourth day, I heard a voice whispering at the slot. "Hey man —you want a cigarette—answer up!" I recognized Larkin's voice. I said nothing. He tried to imitate a Negro accent again, but I was quiet. Then he came in the cell, stood over me and said, "Why don't you get bad—you ain't so tough. Go ahead, start something, black boy."

I looked at him for a long time and started to laugh.

"What's so funny?" says he.

I said, "Here's a man with a big pistol standing over me—me sore and half starved to death after four days in this hole—you ask me why I don't get tough! That's a laugh."

Warden Larkin left me there for four months.

MY HEART was full of defiance and fatalism as the months and years passed. I took to remembering my aunt's words as a kind of curse. "You'll never get out of prison alive."

It was a habit for the guards to shoot at inmates as a warning, or for fun. They shot close to our bodies, from the walls and towers. I was standing in the yard when a bullet whistled past my ear and struck the ground in front of me. From a window, a guard shouted at me, "Get back into that line." I stepped back in the line but not before the head guard, Bill Ryan, saw what happened. He came over with two others, Tommy Thompson and John Salberg. Thompson grabbed my arm and twisted it. I cursed him. Pushing me in front of him, Thompson moved me off to the "back alley," a row of unused stone buildings at the prison. They kept goosing me and pushing me with their canes. Arm twisted off or not—I swung around at Thompson and hit him.

The three guards came at me—they backed me against a sand pile. Ryan grabbed a shovel and came for me. I shoved my head out—"Go ahead and hit it," I cried, "hit it and kill me!" But Ryan laughed and just told Thompson to lock me up in the hole. Later that night, the warden came by on inspection. He was a new man, C. J. Plummer. "What are you in there for?" he asked me.

"Not a thing," I said.

"That's a lie," Bill Ryan said.

Plummer let Ryan and me argue it out. I insisted the guard, who fired the bullet at me, be called. Plummer called him to the hole and kept asking him why he shot at me. All the guard, name of Strong, could say was, "I got a tough time in the bullring taking care of so many men. That's the easiest thing to do."

Warden Plummer had me released. I know if he had not come to Folsom, I would never have left there alive. One day he told me, "You've been tough enough to buck them all these years. You ought to be tough enough to straighten up and get out." But it was hard. Folsom was divided into two groups, those with Plummer and those

with Bill Ryan. Because Plummer took an interest in me—I got worse and worse treatment from the guards and inmates on Ryan's side of the fence.

Thanks to Warden Plummer, some of my good time was restored to me, and on January 28, 1941, I was freed on parole. The Warden talked to me man to man. "Old Bob," he said, "you're going out to Los Angeles. Don't go on that avenue and think you're bad—we got some tough n——rs down there."

I squirmed, "You know I don't like that word," I said.

Plummer laughed at me, wished me good luck.

FREEDOM! After thirteen years, freedom! I stood on the corner and waited for a bus. I saw bobby soxers and bare legs. I saw another lady with shoes with open toes. I thought the poor lady was barefoot because of the depression, which I had heard about. That evening, on the bus from Sacramento to Los Angeles, I looked up at the stars. Each time the bus stopped, I stepped down, took a deep breath and looked up at the sky. The stars were very bright.

I got out in Pasedena and hurried towards the apartment my sis, Charlene, had taken when I finally wrote her I was coming out. She had come from Denver to be closer for the great day. The neon signs made my eyes blink and my head twist. I had never seen them before and I was afraid I would be hit by an auto as I crossed the main streets like a country boy. The stores and traffic lights and cars were so different I felt I was in a new world. I jumped up the steps of the little white house and knocked at the door. A girl opened the screen door and I threw my arms about her. She laughed, but pulled away. "I'm not Charlene," she said, "I'm her friend. Charlene is working, but she sent me over to cook a meal for you and make you comfy."

I thanked her, laughed, and refused the food. I wanted to wait for my sis. And Charlene came later. I didn't know her. She was thirteen when I left her. Now she was twenty-six. Still shy, but so happy, she cried, "Wesley, Wesley, Wesley," on my shoulder. We were the only folks left to each other.

Freedom! For a whole week I just lay around, forgetting the lineup, the bells, the standing on the back of the chow line for colored, the smell of prison. Then Charlene took me to some parties. It was a new world. I didn't know how to crease my hat, or the current way to fix

my tie. I didn't know what to talk about or how to talk to outside people.

I had no money so I looked for a job. Prisoners had no social security, so I had trouble there. At employment agencies I could give no trade for I had no training. I had no money to join the unions. I couldn't seem to interest an employer. I swore I'd do anything but shine shoes, wash dishes, or sweep floors. Months went by and I got panicky, because it appeared I didn't know how to get a job. I was self-conscious and maybe I didn't look like I could handle a job—I don't know. My sis and I talked it over, but got nowhere. My sis lost two jobs when she asked her employers to help me. She got a part-time maid's job, but one day said to me, "Brother, we're going to be short $10.00 come Saturday rent time. Do you think you can help?"

All that week I looked and found nothing. Come Friday after Charlene went to work, I just walked around the streets. I went into the stores, asking for errand-boy jobs, anything. Then I decided I'd snitch an old car and sell some parts. I saw an old Chevvy, got into it, drove it off. I froze up. I pulled the car to the curb, got out, and ran away. I came home. I cooked for Charlene. We had supper. She didn't say much. I kept thinking—she's down because she's spending on me—I'm the cause. After dishes, I said I was going to bed. I went inside and slept a couple hours. I woke with the worry of the money across my eyes. I'll take the battery, I figured. That'll get me $10.00. I got up, dressed, went out to the street, where the Chevvy was. I swear I stood on that corner fifteen minutes before I could move myself to the car. I opened the door—and two cops grabbed me. They had been staked out, waiting.

Down at the Los Angeles jail, it seemed they knew about me from Folsom. They "took me to Siberia," a back cell, and chained me to a bedpost. They kept me there for three days before they took me to court. Next night the deputies took me back. I refused to go. Three of them beat me unconscious with their clubs—chained me again. I woke up at midnight—and pleaded for water. A guard came and unlocked me. I cried not to be left there. By the sweet Jesus—if six of those cursing fools didn't come at me. I was mad and I took them on. I'm not bragging when I say I laid the six of them out—even though I went black from the pain.

Next day, chained to a wheelchair, I was taken to Judge Scott's

court. I was called "a wild animal," but I told the Judge what happened and I asked him for work on a road camp, where I could do a job and be treated decent. The prosecuting attorney said I "was an anti-social criminal at heart" and "thought the world owed me a living." I told the Judge this wasn't true, that if I had an opportunity to fit in somewhere—I could make good. The Judge was favorable to me—matter of fact, he told me to stay in touch with him by letters—but he had no choice. I got one to five years, was shipped to Quentin and although I pleaded with Warden Duffy for a road camp job—the next day I was sent back to dread Folsom.

Reader, I stop here to look at my prison picture, taken that March 13, 1942. Sick and sad—that's what the picture looks like. Warden Plummer said to me, "Why didn't you make good out there?"

I thought. And then I said to the Warden, "Just let me learn a trade up here, please, Warden! Any trade—and I swear you'll never see me again."

The Warden agreed. The war had broken out and he had war contracts to get out. I asked for the welding shop. He called, and I was right there in the office—he called Shappell, the man in charge. "Will you take Wells down there?" I heard him ask. He listened, hung up, and said to me quietly, "Shappell thinks it'll disrupt work to bring a Negro down there. They're all white workers."

I asked, "How about the Trade department?"

The Warden called Glenn Henry. He got the same answer—no colored wanted there.

"Warden," I said, "ain't we all supposed to be in this war?"

The Warden said he'd try to work something out. Weeks passed and I waited. Finally I got my assignment, "making little ones out of big ones"—the rockpile. I refused to go. I said, "If I'm going to work, it's going to benefit me or my country—but I'm not going to bust rocks up like an ignorant fool!"

They didn't assign me anywhere. I just hung around the yard, moving from one clique to another, wanting desperately to do something that would have some meaning, rather than just hang around. The word went out again that I was bucking the whole prison—the dangerous "wild animal" who wouldn't obey the rules.

One afternoon, about an hour after lunch, one of the inmates swarmed on top of me. I beat him off, while a guard watched eight

feet away. I got nine knife wounds, in my shoulders, arms, and groin. I almost died—that guard did nothing but grin. The man who attacked me was promoted to Quentin and soon after got his parole. With a surgical clamp in my belly, I was thrown into solitary. It was me, me, me, they were after. From August 26, 1942, I stayed in solitary until March 3, 1943.

They were short of manpower to get planting and harvesting done outside the prison. I pleaded with the Warden to give me a crack at it. He did. For a whole year I stayed out of trouble. I had a job and was doing something that counted. I got to playing the trumpet too—and when the harvest was done, I was good enough to make the prison orchestra, not the white one—the Jim Crow band. My good record, I was told, might get me a parole soon, in two months.

I was playing handball one day with an inmate named Brown. He said the game was over at 11 points, I said 21. We argued. He blew his top and cussed at me. I walked away. I heard through the grapevine he was gunning for me, so I avoided him.

On August 15, 1944, coming into the messhall, I was told Brown had gotten a butcher knife and was waiting for me inside. A friend slipped me a knife that I put in my trumpet case. Inside, Brown had gotten two buckets of scalding hot water and was waiting for me. I backed away from him, telling him we were headed for trouble and I was up for parole and didn't want to mix. I stalled him for ten minutes, trying to talk him out of it. But he kept coming and moved at me with his knife. I used my coat like a bullring cloth to head him off. I cut him once—believe me, I could have cut him twenty times. The guard came over after I had kicked Brown's knife from his hand. The guard asked me for my knife, but remembering what had happened to me last time I was defenseless—I said, "You get his knife out of the way and bring us to the Captain. I'll give him my knife." And that's what I did.

At my trial, I pleaded not guilty—possession of a knife only in self-defense. I was found guilty of possessing a knife.

All right—so I was guilty. But of what? Of outwitting my opponent? But when a man comes at you with a butcher knife—do you think merely of getting a butcher's knife the exact size as his—or do you think of getting that knife away from him by any and as many means possible?

I was my own lawyer in that trial and took this great chance because I believed it was just and right. I lost. It was small consolation to me that the Judge realized I was not a "depraved, dangerous animal." Anyway, for the record, this is what he said to me in court (page 213):

> THE COURT: . . . There was some justification, in a way, if you can say there could ever be justification [for my act] . . . if this defendant had exercised the same amount of skill and intelligence and ingenuity, and thought, that he exercised during this trial, and even when he committed this crime, he would probably be quite an influential man on the outside. He could have acquired almost any position that he desired. . . ."

The automatic sentence by law is "not less than five years and not more than life," but the Judge advised leniency. Just a month more for parole, and here I got it again. Now, reader, I want to say this: a man is supposed to be treated like another man—equal treatment is the law of the land, isn't it? I got into a fight, okay. A man comes at me—I am going to defend myself. But they prosecuted me. Did Brown get tried? Did he get sentenced for having a knife? He was freed from Folsom on parole, a few months later.

I filed an appeal of my sentence, but the day the trial was over, and I got brought back to Folsom, into solitary I went, indefinitely. Bread and water, by myself, no work, no mail, nothing.

I sat down and wrote a letter to the Adult Authority, which is a group of men in charge of fixing the sentences and kind of running things. I wrote, "The trouble that I had in August is perhaps known to you. I have been unjustly prosecuted and am being unjustly treated in being confined in solitary. I feel I was absolutely justified in what I did. However, I shall do my best to survive, if only given the chance. Gentlemen, I humbly beseech of you that chance. I would highly appreciate it, if the Authority would assist me to rehabilitate myself. I feel that there is good in me, that I can, and will make good, if I can interest someone in my welfare. I still have confidence in myself, prison has not caused me to be bitter towards society; all that I ask is a chance to earn an honest living when I am free. I do not believe that I was meant to be an utter failure. I ask of you, Gentlemen, to grant me a transfer to San Quentin, where I can do my time with

a job, for Warden Duffy promised me that. I will be free of the mental strain that I've labored under in this prison. Due to my past record at Folsom, and to the prevalent sentiment, it is inconceivable that I can live a normal prison life, with no serious trouble here."

They kept me in solitary. The months passed. I thought I'd go out of my brain. I got no answer from the Adult Authority. Unable to work on my court appeal, it was turned down. I was allowed no mail in—I felt cut off from all living people, from the world.

The rules said I had to shave every day. For what? What should I shave for? Who was looking at me but me? I got tossed into the dungeon, into that blackness, onto that cold stone—no food, no cigarettes. If you got caught tapping on the wall to an inmate on the other side—they turned the hose up and blasted you wet and dripping and you froze. I yelled one time for the guard. I thought my lungs would burst raw. "Lemme out! Lemme out a here!" I yelled. The guard came up, took his club and laid my eye open. But at least I got to the hospital, and saw some human life moving.

Then I heard about the letter. Mundt, who used to be with the old Adult Authority, now a state district attorney, wrote to the board that my sentence not be fixed, so that I'd be doing LIFE!—he said there was a law that if a life-termer committed an assault in prison, he could be put to death! Mundt said for sure I would commit an assault someday in the future and then they would have me! I didn't believe it, but the grapevine came back that the letter was in the Adult Authority files. Now I knew why the Adult Authority hadn't fixed my sentence yet! They were stalling—waiting for me to get into trouble! I tried to get to the head of the Authority and get the lowdown and protest. But each time my case came up—the board refused to set my sentence.

So here I was—in for LIFE! I haven't been sentenced for life by Judge or the jury. There is a lot of difference between the term "five years to life" and "life"!

TWO years went by, two years of Hell. I couldn't raise my hands without knowing—this is what they want—this is what they're waiting for—this is how they'll kill you. And I wanted to be out of prison so bad I didn't know what to do. I couldn't take the dungeon any more. Part of me had gone away, slipped away. The needling, the

gigging, the cursing, the swaggering of the guards over me—I couldn't hold it in. They had even kept me from playing in the colored band.

Brown, the guard, comes by checkup time. He flashes his light in my face. I wake up. He's not supposed to do that. Rules say he flashes the light on my feet. I scream at him for it. I shout at the Captain this guard is breaking the rules. Brown puts charges in against me and here I have to go to the warden's place to have the same people, who are punishing me—judge me. Brown breaks the rules, but I get the charge to be placed into the dungeon!

Dr. Day, the prison doctor, comes by with another doctor. They examine me and tell the guards to get me out of solitary—that I'm sick and need treatment—that I'm abnormal from fear and tension. Nothing happens. Two days later I go down to that prison kangaroo court from solitary. I get in the room and Guard Brown starts twisting what happened. I want to talk and I'm told to wait my turn. But he's lying about it. They put me outside and it looks like the dungeon again. These three burly, beefy guards standing there and Brown coming by grinning at me.

I don't know whether they hit me or I grabbed the cuspidor first—but everything flew, arms, clubs, blood. Everything hit and I threw that cuspidor. I went out, down, clubbed unconscious.

The Court appointed me two lawyers, Philip C. Wilkins, and C. K. Curtwright. The first time I saw them, Warden Heinze had me locked on one side of a hallway, them on the other. He told Wilkins I was "a mad dog." Once again it was Mundt trying my case, this time as the prosecuting attorney. He had to prove that I, with malice aforethought —figuring it out before—had assaulted the guard Brown, and, as he had written in his letter, the law made that a crime punishable by death for a life termer. He proved it. The strategy planned in 1944 came to pass.

In defense, my attorneys told the Judge and jury I had not thought this out before, that I was under mental strain and tension, that Brown was not hurt badly. The Judge would not let Dr. Day take the stand to prove my condition at the time I lost control of myself.

On August 29, 1947, I was sentenced to die in the gas chamber at San Quentin. I was sent to Death Row. I wrote this letter then: "Dear Mr. Wilkins; You will please forgive me for writing to you like this, but I felt a strong desire to write to someone, and after thinking over

my few acquaintances, I decided to write to you. You will probably not be able to understand it, but I am glad to be here. After what I went through 'down below' [Folsom] I assure you, it is quite a treat to be here, even though this is 'condemned row.' I am supposed to be a 'hardened criminal,' but I feel such sorrow for some men here. They are so young and when they walk past, and one knows it is their last walk, and one can't do anything for them—man, what I feel inside. . . . It is my intention to broaden my mind, to read, and think on a more constructive plane. I have been trying to come to Quentin for five years. I can at least 'be myself' here, that is something that I haven't been able to do for quite some time."

I did what I told Mr. Wilkins I would do. I practiced my handwriting, never having had an education; I read Alexander Dumas and Sir Walter Scott, and more and more; I borrowed law books and studied the law, especially appellate laws, habeas corpus, and the Constitution.

My two lawyers stayed with the case, even though they got no money. From the law books, I copied cases aimed at showing the laws putting me to death were unjust and unconstitutional. My lawyers appealed my case to the California Supreme Court, and after months of waiting, the court announced an amazing statement. Four to three they okayed the lower court. But all seven justices said the doctors should have been allowed to present evidence of my condition. However, the majority judges went on to say the evidence wasn't important enough to have changed the jury's mind. But that evidence had been my only defense. The lawyers had gotten two affidavits from members of the jury, saying, if they had heard the doctors—they would not have found me guilty at all. Mr. Curtwright wrote me, "Mr. Wilkins and I are at a complete loss to understand the actions of the majority judges. First they said the lower judge was wrong and they refused to reverse the decision. We will keep fighting."

I decided to write my own brief. A fellow inmate helped me. I worked hard at it, especially at the legal language.

On April 15, my attorney, Mr. Curtwright, wrote to me, "I have at last examined your Habeas Corpus application to the Supreme Court. I do not want to puff you up particularly, but I do want to say that I have read many briefs filed by attorneys of long standing and experience, which do not compare with yours either in the logic of the argument

or the appositeness of the authorities cited. I note in your brief something, which apparently escaped my attention. . . ."

In March, I wrote to Mr. Curtwright, "I had not been informed that my brief was denied, but the information is of no surprise to me. They were judging my character from the lies and misrepresentations of the case that I was dangerous and it would be expedient to 'get me out of circulation.' I have read the Court's rulings in two previous cases, *Hughes vs. The Superior Court* and *Perez vs. Sharp.* The court majority cares little for the rights of a Negro—indeed they quote Georgia judges to say Negroes are inferior to whites."

MY EXECUTION was set for May 16, 1949, at ten in the morning. Mrs. Charlotta Bass of the California *Eagle* newspaper had answered a last-ditch letter I had sent her. Her advice was to contact Reverend Haynes in San Francisco, which I did. Rev. Haynes listened to me, examined the records, and then told me his organization, the Ministerial Alliance, would advance the funds to send my case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

I wrote to Mr. Curtwright, who answered me, "Despite the fact that we have spent thousands of dollars in time from our own pocket, we will do everything to assist you. Mr. Wilkins and I will start to work immediately with Rev. Haynes." Rev. Haynes got another lawyer, Charles Garry, of San Francisco, to come into the case. My execution was postponed by the U.S. Supreme Court when they took a memorandum under advisement.

May 30th, I wrote to Mr. Curtwright, "My heartfelt gratitude for the work you have done in saving my life. Words cannot thank you—more I feel but cannot express. I am sure now the Supreme Court will reverse the decision."

October 20th, Mr. Curtwright wrote me, "the Clerk of the United States Supreme Court informs me our application for the Court to hear your case, is denied. It is, of course, useless for me to tell you how disappointed I am . . . this decision disposes of anything further we can do. We have shot our bow. The only thing now available is an appeal for clemency to Governor Warren."

Governor Warren refused to change the sentence. He pointed to my record. I was "an incorrigible, dangerous man."

My execution was set for January 27, 1950.

I wrote to Mr. Garry: he had mentioned appealing to the Federal Courts, an unusual move. I said I was sure the state was taking my life in defiance of the 14th Amendment. I urged him to file in the Federal Court—maybe they would see the state was doing wrong.

A few hours before my execution, Judge Goodman of the Federal District Court, issued a stay of my sentence.

The Civil Rights Congress took up my case, and their Mr. Aubrey Grossman came to visit me, telling me that thousands of people were hearing my story and writing letters of protest to Governor Warren.

Friday, March 31, Judge Goodman ruled:

> "This court must conclude that in the true and historic sense the petitioner [Wells] was not accorded due process under the 14th Amendment, when the death penalty was adjudged against him. By deliberate and designed inactivity the administrative body, known as the Adult Authority of California kept the petitioner in an indefinite status for the purpose of making it possible to impose the death penalty upon him . . . the Adult Authority may be called overzealous in an attempt to reach through the criminal process and indeed to destroy those whom they regard as undesirable citizens. The life sentence he [Wells] was undergoing, in any true or traditional sense, was not a life sentence. No court or Judicial officer adjudged that he be imprisoned for life . . . whether a man is lawfully to be deprived of life, is not to be determined by his general character—that is too reminiscent of past dictatorship—but rather impartial judgment must be used. It must be concluded that this is not the kind of process that comports with the deepest notions of what is fair and right and just. The case is sent back to the State Courts to consider this due process argument."

As I write this, I look through the barred window to see the night stars. . . . In a few weeks it will be my forty-third birthday and that will mark 1,250 days in Death Row for me.

For a Negro Theatre

by ALICE CHILDRESS

SEVERAL months ago Theodore Ward and I had a heated though friendly discussion concerning a Negro Theatre. He claimed that there was a definite need for such a theatre while I held to the idea that a Negro theatre sounded as though it might be a Jim Crow institution. Since that day I have given much thought to everything he said on that occasion and I believe that now I have an understanding of what he meant.

The word theatre is derived from the Greek, meaning to see or view. One obvious function of a Negro people's theatre is to give us the opportunity of seeing and viewing the Negro people.

Today in America the Negro actor attends drama schools which, like the public schools, take little interest in the cultural or historical background of the Negro people. The Negro actors, scenic designers, playwrights, directors, are taught only the techniques developed by the white artist. We certainly need and feel an appreciation for this technique. But certainly too there should be additional instruction which would advance the white as well as the Negro actor and playwright in his knowledge of the Negro people's culture. What Negro director or actor today is capable of portraying an African on the stage? Most of us can only "suggest" an African because we have been divorced through education from much of our cultural heritage.

In the drama class the Negro student usually does white roles taken from popular plays. He occasionally does a Negro part also taken from a popular Broadway play, while the white actors, for the most part, never do a Negro role.

The Negro artist has to turn within himself for guidance when he portrays his own people. But even this is of little help in the

face of the director who is also searching for his concept of the Negro character.

Where is truth? Where are the schools that will teach us Negro art forms? We must create them and devote time, study and research toward the understanding and projection of Negro culture.

We must not only examine African art, but turn our eyes toward our neighbors, the community, the domestic workers, porters, laborers, white-collar workers, churches, lodges and institutions. We must look closely and search for the understanding which will enable us to depict the Negro people.

I have learned that I must watch my people in railroad stations, in restaurants, in the fields and tenements, at the factory wheels, in the stores, on the subway. I have watched and found that there is none so blind as he who will not see.

My people walk in beauty, their feet singing along the pavement; my people walk as if their feet hurt, in hand-me-down shoes; some of my people walk in shoes with bunion pockets, shoes with slits cut for the relief of corns; and the children walk on feet that are growing out of their shoes; and my people walk without shoes.

My people move so gently and jostle rudely; they step gingerly, they walk hard; they move along with abandon and show defiance and there are some who move timidly.

I love them all but I love most those who walk as they would walk, caring nothing for impressions or fears or suppressions . . . those who walk with a confident walk. These things we must learn to duplicate.

My people stand weary with fatigue, half asleep, in the subway, my people have been scrubbing floors and washing walls and emptying, carrying, fetching, lifting, cooking, sweeping, shining, and polishing and ironing, washing, ironing, washing. But they fight drowsiness. No one must say they are lazy or sleepy or slow. What could be a more fruitful study in the craft of acting than to reproduce one of these weary people?

My people smile and think of death, frown and think of life, laugh and think of nothing. My people show a face calm and smooth and think of great plans, they pass by quietly and take great action. They pass each other and without speaking, say: I know, I understand.

My people eat scraps that we their children may grow strong in

the face of adversity. We eat pig's tails, and feet and ears: we will not die. My people drink champagne and eat caviar and enjoy these things with a special enjoyment because we know there are those who do not wish us to have them and would keep everything for themselves. My people wear furs and diamonds and cast-offs and old tattered jackets.

My people hope, build, love, hate, cater, plan and struggle. We watch the newspapers to see if some foreign power is worrying the rulers of the United States into giving a few of our people a "break" in order to offset the "propaganda."

These things and countless others must be a part of our training that we may develop and grow into real people's artists. We must be sure that through our interpretation the world and our next-door neighbor may see and view the Negro people.

YES, we need a Negro people's theatre but it must not be a little theatre. Its work is too heavy, its task is too large to be anything other than a great movement. It must be powerful enough to inspire, lift, and eventually create a complete desire for the liberation of all oppressed peoples.

The Negro people's theatre must not condemn what it does not understand. We must seek out every artistic expression and if it does not conform to our present mode of production, we must examine it closely to see if it is a new form or some vague whispering from the past. We must be the guide and light the way to all that we may glean the precious stuff from that which is useless. We must be patient and, above all, ever-searching. We should, in this second half of the century, plan to turn out the largest crop of Negro artists in the entire history of America. Our voices must be heard around the world. The Negro people's theatre must study and teach not only what has been taught before but found and establish a new approach to study of the Negro in the theatre, dance and arts. We shall take advantage of the rich culture of the Chinese, Japanese, Russian and all theatres. We shall study oppressed groups which have no formal theatre as we know it, but we must discover theatre as they know it.

Last but not least, there should be courses in the cultural background of the minority groups in this country. We must never be guilty of understanding only ourselves.

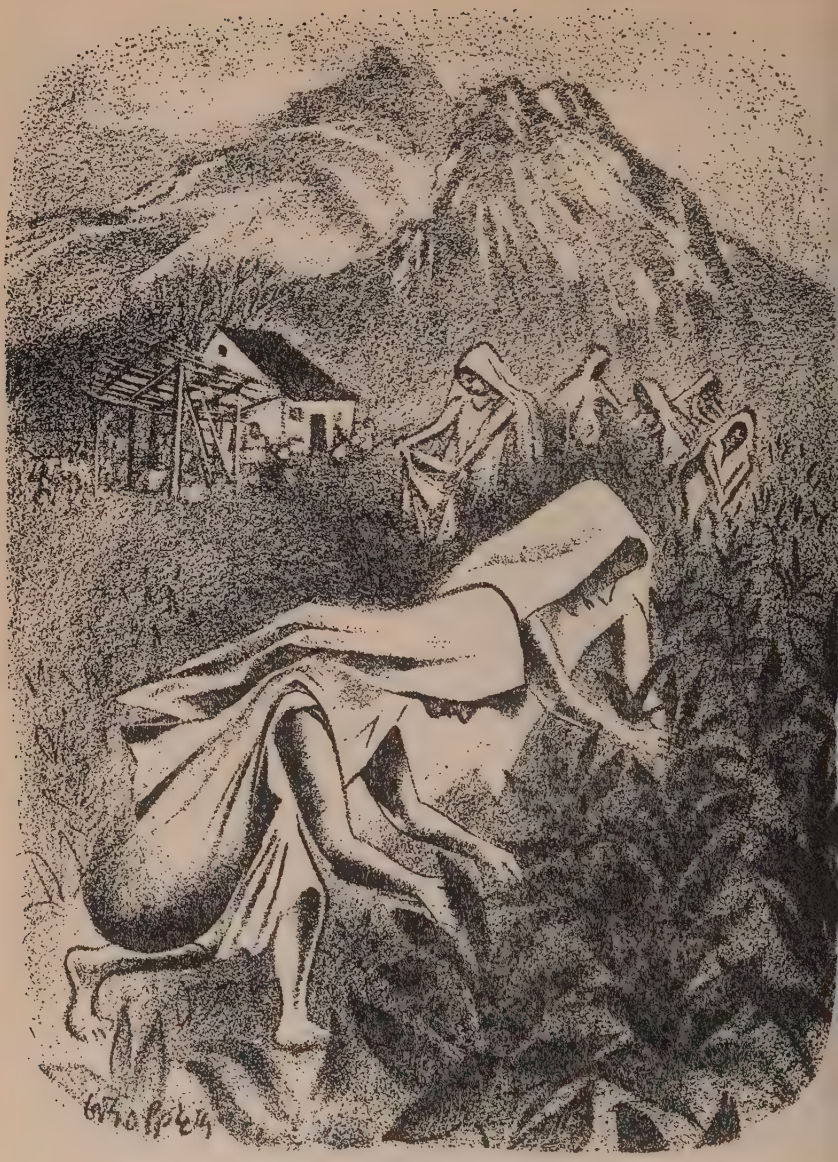
So I say to Ted Ward: I have been thinking of the many things that were said that evening months ago. It is 1951 now and I hope you blaze the way in helping to build such a theatre. We'll all be watching, cheering and contributing. Remember People's Drama and *Nat Turner,* Committee for the Negro in the Arts and *Just A Little Simple,* the New Playwrights and *Longitude, The Hammer,* and the coming production of *Candy Store.* Think of Harlem's Unity Theatre and all the other groups that are striving for the development of all artists. But above all, remember there will be no progress in art without peace, a lasting peace throughout the world.

BULGARIAN COUNTRYSIDE

Four drawings by

WILLIAM GROPPER

STUDENT



TOBACCO PICKERS

VILLAGE PRIEST

SHEPHERD

A FIRST-HAND REPORT

Upsurge in Puerto Rico

by ABNER BERRY

BETWEEN drinks of Scotch and soda the two men who sat just in front of me in the plane that left LaGuardia Field for San Juan on the night of November 3, discussed the Nationalist uprising that had flared in Puerto Rican cities on October 30. One of the men was a Puerto Rican going home from a New York business trip. The other was a reporter for a Canadian newspaper. The businessman spent most of the time needlessly convincing his companion that the Nationalists were really desperadoes, totally unrepresentative of his peaceful people. The North American, who later explained to me that he "understood tropical peoples," accepted the "briefing" without protest and noted well all references to officials, hotels and government news sources.

As we parted in the San Juan airport, after claiming our bags, the businessman gave his fellow passenger this bit of advice, "Don't get excited over the slums. . . . Remember, that Puerto Rico is more than slums and poverty. . . . Look up some of the men whose names I gave you and you will get the real story and the background. . . ."

The reporter replied that slums didn't mean much to him. He'd seen plenty of them all over the world. And, anyway, there had been so many exposés of slums that American readers were weary of them. With that, the man from Toronto boarded a taxi for the Caribe-Hilton Hotel, that fabulous pile of glass and stone which dominates the San Juan skyline.

The drive—by bus or taxi—from the Caribe-Hilton along the Atlantic Ocean to the Governor's Mansion and the Capitol Building is said to be one of the most beautiful in the Western Hemisphere. But on November 4 the view was slightly marred by the military patrols at bridges, post offices, telephone exchanges and government buildings. It was quite a display of arms to be occasioned by the wild acts of a few "unrepresentative desperadoes."

The soldiers, wearing United States combat dress and speaking Spanish, were deployed like fire fighters. There had been a spontaneous combustion in an establishment strewn with inflammable materials. Their official orders were to prevent the spread of the fire. They smothered the original flames with a blanket of police spread throughout the country. But they could not remove the inflammable materials, the certain source of new flames.

Poverty has never been erased with guns and jails and courts. And poverty was the source of the Nationalist outbreak on October 30.

There was the belly kind of poverty which dooms the Puerto Rican building trades and construction workers—the country's highest paid—to an annual average wage of $500. There was the political poverty of a people whose sons were fighting an imperialist war in Korea because they had to obey a draft law passed by United States Congressmen for whom they cannot vote. There was galling cultural poverty: forty-eight of each hundred children had no schools; U.S. rule had forced the English language, gangster movies, juke boxes and Jim Crow upon a people with their own mature and rich culture.

The poverty of Puerto Rico results from one fact—the colonial policy of United States imperialism. For Puerto Rico is a colony. And in this epoch of world colonial revolutions against imperialism only the politically blind can expect Puerto Rico to be content and quiet.

The government of the Yankee rulers has taken official note of political restlessness in its Caribbean colony. Federal Law 600, granting Puerto Ricans the right to adopt a "constitution," was rushed through Congress early in 1950. This "constitution" was limited to the present colonial framework and would merely grant powers to the governor to appoint Puerto Rican Court justices, an Attorney General and an Auditor. In other words, Puerto Ricans would be empowered to appoint law enforcement officers to administer laws either passed by or agreeable to the absentee rulers. The President of the United States would retain his veto power, as at present, over acts of the Puerto Rican legislature. Federal laws, passed by the United States Congress, in which there would be still no Puerto Rican representative, would apply to Puerto Rico.

Governor Munoz Marin, in face of worsening economic conditions, adopted the "constitution" as his most important project. And the campaign for its ratification next June was held by the fighters for Puerto Rican independence to be a provocation.

Munoz's campaign for the "constitution" was accompanied by a hounding of the Nationalist Party and its leader, Albizu Campos. Albizu's San Juan home was "guarded" day and night by relays of detectives. He was shadowed everywhere he went and his speeches were ostentatiously recorded. A year before, the Nationalist Party had been placed on the "subversive" list by the United States Attorney General. But with all of this the colony of Puerto Rico could not be walled off from the world anti-imperialist movement.

ON JULY 3, one week after the Korean "police action" began, the Puerto Rican Nationalist leader, Pedro Albizu Campos, warned his people that their North American ruler "now wants to mobilize us to kill in Korea." The United States, Albizu declared, "has no right to impose obligatory military service here." And he expressed the fear of his country being turned into "a mass of ashes as the result of Yankee tyranny"—a direct reference to the establishment of U.S. atom-bomb bases in Puerto Rico.

These were hardly the words of a "desperado." Nor were they "unrepresentative." For two months after the Nationalist uprising, the quisling governor, Luis Munoz Marin, had to grant an audience to Puerto Rican mothers, wives and sisters who demanded that their men be returned from Korea. Munoz promised to pass the women's petition to his Washington bosses.

But on the morning of November 4, 1950, Albizu Campos was in jail; more than 3,000 Puerto Rican soldiers were with MacArthur killing Koreans—and being killed; an equal number of Puerto Ricans of various political parties were "detained" by the police for agreeing, in part, with Albizu's independence ideas.

The Puerto Rican representatives of Yankee imperialism insisted upon lumping the Nationalists and Communists together as being responsible for the uprising. With great fanfare and terrorist flourish the soldiers and police raided the homes of Communist leaders whom the Governor termed "infamous associates" in the "criminal precepts and tactics of the Nationalist Party." Cesar Andreu Iglesias, president of the Puerto Rican Communist Party, Juan Santo Riviera, the Party's general secretary, and Juan Saez Corales, a member of the national committee, were among the Communists jailed. Along with the Independence Party, the Communists had disavowed the terroristic tactics of the Nationalists, but refused to side with the government in its

suppression of the Nationalists because they had been provoked and forced into using the weapon of armed struggle.

Government agents announced that there was a letter in their possession written by Andreu to an arrested Nationalist leader, Senorita Blanca Canales. But they were afraid to carry through the attempt at crude frame-up.

"They wanted to isolate our Party from the Puerto Rican people," Andreu told me on his release from jail November 6, "but in jailing us on the issue of Puerto Rican independence they completely exploded their 'foreign agent' propaganda. In fact, by filling the jails with Communists, independistas and nationalistas the government has laid the basis for a united national liberation front."

The three parties, until Munoz united them in prison, had worked for independence in three separate centers. In jail, the leaders had four or five days to exchange viewpoints and discuss the basis for subsequent united action. Later Andreu said that if the heroism of the youthful nationalistas was directed into mass anti-imperialist political struggle, the fight for independence would be immeasurably strengthened. The government still fears this development.

Even on November 7 after the *"sucesos de 30 del Octobre"* no longer made conversation; after the attempted assault on Blair House had numbed and shocked the Puerto Ricans with the fear of U.S. armed intervention a la Korea; after the bus and street talk had turned discreetly from uprising to baseball; after the soldiers were gone and the jail population had been reduced by more than a thousand—even after this seeming return to normalcy, Munoz continued to fight against the uprising. He, as a most adept representative of his mainland masters, wanted to erase it from the people's memory.

Once before, in 1868, in the centrally located city of Lares, Puerto Rican peasants had stormed the local government buildings and proclaimed the Republic of Puerto Rico. The echoes of that limited rebellion still resound. The Spaniards who then ruled "la Isla" suppressed the uprising, but thirty years later, under pressure of an independence movement, had to grant Puerto Rico a Charter of Autonomy.

Luis Munoz Riviera, father of the present governor, led the struggle against Spanish rule. His victory, however, was negated by the defeat of Spain by the United States in its first stage of imperialist territorial expansion, commonly called the Spanish-American War. The Treaty

of Paris, ending that war, turned Puerto Ricans into United States subjects, but it did not end the Puerto Rican dream of sovereignty. The "Cry of Lares" was heard again in many Puerto Rican towns on October 30, 1950.

In the early morning hours of that day groups of Nationalist youth stormed government buildings in Jayuya, not far from Lares, hoisted the Puerto Rican flag and proclaimed the Republic. Groups in other cities operating on a smaller scale made similar assaults. Later in the day, four youths attempted an armed attack on the Governor's Palace, a dramatic but suicidal gesture at taking power. Only one of the four lived to be arrested.

In Santurce, adjacent to San Juan, a humble barber rose to the position of a folk symbol by holding his street, and then his shop, against a formidable group of national guardsmen and police for more than four hours. Vidal Santiago Diaz, "El Barbero de Barrio Obrero," completely exposed the weakness of Yankee rule and revealed the potential strength of the people.

There was expressed and unexpressed pride in the fact that Puerto Ricans had shown they would fight for their freedom, even if it had to be demonstrated in the hopeless and suicidal fashion of the Nationalists who rejected the weapon of mass political struggle.

Munoz had the task of deflating this pride, of turning the uprising into acts of shame, "crimes" against the people and their "elected" government. Albizu was pictured as a "criminal assassin" and his followers were branded outlaws, ruffians, arsonists, murderers and just plain fools. In Munoz's newspaper, *El Diario de Puerto Rico,* Vidal Santiago Diaz was the subject of a patronizing essay on the historical tendency of barbers to idolize their famous customers. The essayist covered the subject of barbers as represented in every branch of literature. Barbers, he pointed out, often become the dupes of their political patrons who talk of grand schemes while their barber works on them. It was due to this historical tendency, the Munoz writer claimed, that Santiago, the humble barber, was drawn into the "criminal plot."

It was easier to place the blame for the uprising on the historical tendency of barbers than on the crimes of Munoz's North American masters against the people of Puerto Rico—and against the Nationalist Party, in particular.

Yankee monopolists, in fifty-two years, have wrecked the Puerto Rican economy. Morgan and Rockefeller sugar interests have pushed tobacco, coffee, coconuts and beverages more than half way out of production. Coffee, one of the main products in 1898, has been reduced from forty-four million pounds in 1920 to twenty-two million in 1949. Tobacco has also been reduced by half during roughly the same period. As late as 1943 some ten million gallons of liquors were produced, but by 1948 this had dropped to two million.

Sugar is king in Puerto Rico. Its displacement of other industries has thrown 100,000 Puerto Ricans into the permanent army of the unemployed. In the sugar industry, except for a small force of workers in the fabricating plants or *sugar centrals,* 125,000 workers are unemployed each year from June to January. So for six months out of the year Puerto Rico suffers from a depression to be compared with what an army of fifteen million unemployed would mean to the economy of this country.

In a country that is more beautiful than vulgar travel posters can picture, conditions imposed by imperialism make life so hopeless for many that the suicide rate in Puerto Rico is the highest in the entire world. This is all the more unusual because Puerto Rico is a Catholic country, and to Catholics suicide is an unpardonable sin. And when one asks a Puerto Rican in New York how he could leave so beautiful a country with its friendly, year-round, eighty-degree climate, where the soft daily shower is called "liquid sunshine," he will only look questioningly and pat his stomach. The meaning is clear.

One out of every seven Puerto Ricans migrates to the mainland to escape the enforced starvation in their homeland. In New York, the principal magnet for the fleeing refugees, there are now some 400,000 Puerto Ricans. Forced into ghettos throughout the city, the center of the New York Puerto Rican remains in East Harlem, the district which was represented by Vito Marcantonio. Marc, as he is affectionately known in both Harlem and Puerto Rico, has fought in and out of Congress, against the job, housing and other forms of discrimination practiced against his constituents. The only genuine independence bill in Congress was introduced by Marc. He has, in fact, been the voice of Puerto Rico in Congress, and Puerto Ricans, here and at home, view his gang-up defeat as a stab at their rights as well as at world peace. For peace cannot be separated from Puerto Rican freedom.

Seventy percent of Puerto Rico's people live on the land, but the population density is slightly more than one person to the acre—just twelve times that of the United States. The consequent land shortage is being intensified by the present military policy of the United States. Eleven thousand persons were thrown off their land in 1949, when the U.S. military commandeered the entire island of Vieques, just off the east coast of Puerto Rico.

With annual wages ranging from $188 for workers in the coffee fields to the top of $500 for construction workers, the Puerto Ricans must pay the same—and sometimes higher—prices for consumer goods. Since U.S. trusts own Brazilian coffee plantations, Puerto Rico has to import about one-half of the coffee it uses. In the little farming villages in the Central Mountain Range, farmers have to buy canned tomatoes from Maryland, pineapple from Hawaii, meat from Chicago. The chewing gum is by Wrigley, the candy by Curtis and the tobacco by courtesy—and competitive force—of Liggett and Myers, American Tobacco Company and R. J. Reynolds.

Barefoot "Jimbarros," the Puerto Rican term for hillbilly, of all ages stand around the village stores in much the same fashion as our southern backwoodsmen stand around railroad stations. The difference, though, is that when the southern farmer goes to market he more often than not buys an *American* product. He has a chance of being employed by the manufacturer—that is if he is not a Negro faced by a plant restricted to "whites only." The Puerto Rican consumer can only enrich a foreign oppressor when he buys a necessity.

JOBS, beer, bread, pineapple, cigarettes, coffee, schools, land, wages, hospitals, language, meat, peace and sovereignty—and more—are all a part of the mosaic that is the Puerto Rican independence movement. Guns, jails and courts cannot answer the insistent demand for these.

The Nationalist Party, a group with a middle class, elite leadership principle, is only a part of that movement. Dr. Gilberto Concepcion de Gracias' Independentista Party (P.I.P.) disagrees thoroughly with the Nationalists' method, but not one independentista leader has denounced Albizu Campos, a fact that worries the Munoz government. Concepcion's movement is not a movement of "credulous barbers," but is composed of middle class intellectuals with whom Munoz and his followers were once associated.

The Communist Party is fully aware of the weakness in the present relationship of forces, in which the independence movement is led almost exclusively by the middle class. "Our country," Andreu told a meeting of leaders following the uprising, "cannot achieve its independence until the working class becomes the leader of the movement." He pointed out that the labor movement is divided into three centers: The Munoz leadership of the General Confederation of Workers, C.G.T.-C.I.O.; the General Workers Union, with Left-wing leadership, on record for independence, as is the third group, the C.G.T.—autentico, a middle-of-the-road split-off from the government-controlled center.

Andreu declared "The historic role of our Party is to unite and rally the working class to fulfill its responsibilities in the national liberation front." To this end the Party has adopted a program of concentration upon the workers in all union centers to end the separation of the economic struggles from that for national independence.

Since the independence movement, if successful, would upset imperialist war plans for its principal Carribbean and South Atlantic military base, the Munoz colonial puppets have orders to intimidate into silence every Puerto Rican who stands for independence.

They began by practically outlawing the Puerto Rican flag before the national guard was demobilized. Flags were confiscated and owners were arrested. They tried in their interrogations of arrested independentistas to force from them condemnations of Albizu Campos.

A typical "interrogation" was that of fifty-seven-year old Dr. Jose Lanauza Rolon, the well-known physician of Ponce. Two policemen apologetically arrested Dr. Lanauza on the night of November 3. He was taken to the local police headquarters where the chief of police and his three assistants, equally apologetically, informed him that they had orders to "detain" him for questioning in San Juan. After a two days' wait in the San Juan jail, Dr. Lanauza was questioned for a "deposition." He related his experiences to me in high spirits on the porch of his Ponce home a few days after his release.

I came at a time when there was a line of patients waiting in the doctor's anteroom. He had to leave all of us for a while to hold a conference with an independentista leader. On his return, upon learning I had "come all the way from New York" to see him, he treated those patients who had been waiting the longest, then excused himself to grant me the interview I had requested.

We stepped across the street to the porch of his home and between drinks of lemonade he related almost without pause the story of his arrest and "investigation."

Doctor Lanauza, it should be said, could only happen in Puerto Rico, the oldest European settlement in the Western Hemisphere (1509) and the only Latin American country ruled directly by a foreign power. In the United States he would be termed a Negro. In fact, he obtained his medical degree at Howard University, a Negro school, before doing postgraduate work in the Universities of Paris and Berlin. He is well-to-do and lives comfortably with his wife and two children, Carlos, sixteen, and Alma, nine. Another son, Hector, twenty-four, is an engineer and lives away from home.

As a young man, just beginning his practice, Dr. Lanauza became a Socialist, but in 1934 he wrote a pamphlet giving his interpretation of Leninism. In the same year he joined in founding the Puerto Rican Communist Party. Remaining in the Party until 1942, he resigned and joined the Popular Democratic Party of Munoz Marin, the party which then was stirring the popular masses with its New Deal and independence slogans. But he has remained a defender of the rights of Communists.

He had answered the government attorneys who questioned him by offering a forceful definition of imperialism as "the invasion of finance capital" and ending with, "You, all of you, Mr. Prosecutor, are instruments of American imperialism!"

At one point in the interrogation Dr. Lanauza was asked to explain the difference between the Nationalists, the Communists and the Independentistas. The answer was that all of them are fighting for independence, but that their tactics differed.

"We independentistas hope," he quoted himself as saying to the Prosecutor, "we can achieve independence peacefully. However, if some day we realize we can't, then we will fight."

The Prosecutor turned to another set of questions. Did the Doctor think the Nationalists were brigands and criminals? Does he not condemn the attempted assassinations of Truman and Munoz?

Of course the Doctor thought that the attempt on Truman was purely a terroristic affair, but the Prosecutor should realize that things have reached a revolutionary stage and there were causes for the uprising.

When the Prosecutor insisted that Albizu be condemned and exe-

cuted, the Doctor protested the fishing for an opinion. "But, of course, you know that you have no right to be inquiring into my personal opinions?"

The Prosecutor flared and pounded the table.

"Don't get excited, Mr. Prosecutor. You want me to match your thoughts on the Nationalists. You may keep me here a year—or longer —but I will not answer that question the way *you* want it answered. *That is de-fi-nite.*"

This interrogation was repeated in hundreds of places. Public statements of independentistas have reiterated Dr. Lanauza's sentiments. There is present among those who are fighting for Puerto Rican independence a stubbornness in not giving up the right to revolt against foreign-imposed tyranny.

The quisling government of the Yankee masters must have been frightened upon reviewing what its "interrogators" had drawn from the "detainees." And it must shiver at the thought of what will happen when the Puerto Rican workers connect their struggle against two-dollar-a-day wages, high prices, slums and imperialist war with the issue of independence.

Dr. Lanauza, a sort of composite of the present stage of the independence movement, is also a bellwether of future development to come from the impact of October 30. He confessed that before October 30 his mood was dreary and pessimistic. On November 9, he was bubbling, militant, determined. Korea, October 30, and the slogan *"Puerto Rico Libre!"* cannot for all time be sealed away from the workers.

Even now the government is trying with "anti-subversive" laws and "Un-Puerto Rican Activities Committees" to scare the people away from independence. They are planning to answer the real questions with police and jails. But Saez Corales of the Communist Party's national committee has asked the question that presently haunts Munoz and his masters: "How can Puerto Rican boys be sent to Korea to fight for the independence of Korea while their relatives and countrymen are jailed for fighting for independence right here?"

There is no sleight-of-hand which can prevent Puerto Rico from joining the world movement against colonialism. October 30, 1950, was a flash heralding the storm to come.

HIS HONOR

by EVE MERRIAM

CLEAN out the bosses!
So the brand new broom, with mayor in hand, sweepingly
Poses for the press.

Let not thy other hand know
What the one performs.—Off with their heads but save their necks.
Our pockets shall not meet

Except to greet, pass checks, and skip along together
To the pistachio nut concession, chewing gum machines
And God Bless Americola.

For my term in office I promise
To raise the bus fare and the rate of TB in Harlem.
Lower the boom.

Everything allotted, and marvelous,
All done independently, without a single representative
From the people.

The Negro Scientist and Inventor

by HERBERT APTHEKER

NO AREA of life better demonstrates the militant, creative and productive role of the American Negro people than that of science. For in science the Negroes' contributions have been numerous and significant despite every obstacle placed in their way by the ruling class.

In part, these obstacles appear as the inevitable result of the special oppression of the Negro people. In addition, however, the ruling class deliberately and consciously creates such obstacles because the appearance of Negro men and women of science threatens in a very decisive way the whole pattern of chauvinist stereotypes. Again the mastery of science by Negroes adds to the prowess of the Negro people, supplies them with ammunition in their struggles for liberation. And science is tied to social reality so that the point of view brought to the problems of science by an exploited class or by an oppressed people cannot help but be challenging to the traditional ruling class approach to these problems.

Of the obstacles, a few words must be said. For two hundred and fifty years ninety percent of the American Negro people were slaves legally forbidden to achieve literacy and, also by law, forbidden to patent inventions. This does not mean, of course, that some Negro slaves did not, nevertheless, learn to read and write and that many did not achieve a very high level of technical and mechanical proficiency. Nor does it mean that among the "free" Negroes (of whom there were about 500,000 in 1860) there were not developed distinguished scientists and inventors. But it does mean that the few who broke through—despite the slave society—attest above all to the mighty potential so terribly curbed by enslavement.

With the destruction of chattel slavery and the enhanced produc-

tive capabilities of the social order in general and of the Negro people in particular, one witnesses a renaissance in science and invention. But its full potentialities were crippled by the exploiting nature of that social order and especially, by its characteristic abomination of Jim Crow. Some slight concept of what this meant as an immediate obstacle to the fullest contributions of the Negro people to science may be gained when one realizes that in 1870 over eighty percent of all Negroes were unable to read or write and that as late as 1910 about one-third of the Negro population over ten years of age had never been to a school of any kind.

Before briefly examining the highlights in the scientific contributions of the American Negro people delimitation is in order. We do not have in mind social science in which the Negro people have produced such internationally renowned savants as Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois or the late Dr. Carter G. Woodson, nor do we have in mind scientists of social change such as the two giants of the last and the present centuries—Frederick Douglass and Paul Robeson.

No, we refer only to natural scientists and inventors—to the creators or discoverers of means whereby to enhance man's mastery over nature for the benefit of man. The accomplishments of the Negro people in this regard have been outstanding, and running through the whole treasure is a vein of irony. After all, nothing is more ironical than the fervor with which the rulers of the United States of America protest their love for democracy and the way, in fact, they behave as concerns the Negro people.

Similarly, our subject is saturated with irony from the time the first outstanding American Negro scientist, Benjamin Banneker, helped plan and survey the capital of a country enslaving his brethren—to the time Dr. George Washington Carver coaxed colossal wealth out of the South's soil—a soil made sweet by the toil of his people, but not owned by them, and a South in which it was true of the Negro as the Jews said of Egypt, "those who wasted us, required of us mirth."

THUS, consider the career of the late Charles Richard Drew, accidentally killed in his forty-fifth year last April. Drew, a Doctor of Medicine from McGill University and Doctor of Medical Science from Columbia University, was an outstanding surgeon and scientist. In the late thirties his studies on the human blood and its preservation—con-

ducted, of course, in collaboration with others, including particularly Doctors John Scudder and D. R. Corcoran—began to attract international attention.* In 1940 appeared his pioneering and definitive work, *Banked Blood: A Study in Blood Preservation,* and the next year he was appointed director of the American Red Cross Blood Bank, and then director of blood procurement for the National Research Council servicing the United States Army and Navy.

This man, with such a background and in such a position, suffered the indignity of the idiotic segregation-of-blood policy—not, we may be sure, in silence. Then, after setting up the entire system and training a considerable staff, Dr. Drew was "allowed" to return to Howard University. He had never been incorporated into the armed services; he had never been commissioned (as were thousands who did infinitely less); after setting the vast project on its feet, he was simply "let go."

One of the most promising surgeons in the history of American medicine, now all but forgotten, was a Negro, Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, associated for many years with Provident Hospital in Chicago where he died twenty years ago. Prior to World War I, Dr. Williams made medical history by operating successfully, for the first time, upon the living human heart, but his own heart was broken by Jim Crow, its indignities and its restrictions. A close friend, and himself a leading Negro physician, the late Dr. Carl G. Roberts, wrote of Dr. Williams' "retirement into self-exile" in the face of the "Big White Fog."

Another who has at times favored exile is Dr. Percy L. Julian, one of the greatest living organic chemists. This man, born in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1899, has spent many years abroad, and obtained his doctorate in 1931 at the University of Vienna. His achievements already include the successful synthesis of the drug physostigmine, basic work on the carbon atom and a mastery of the chemistry of the soya bean which has led to preparations of widely differentiated substances like male hormones and weatherproofing for ships. Most recently, Dr. Julian has announced significant results in experiments on so-called Substance E, which shows high promise in the treatment of

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* This was particularly true in the Soviet Union where work on preserving human blood was well advanced. Dr. Drew wrote of this himself in an article entitled, "The Role of Soviet Investigators in the Development of the Blood Bank," *American Review of Soviet Medicine,* April, 1944. Late in 1945, Dr. Drew accepted the Vice-Presidency of the American-Soviet Medical Society.

arthritis. Dr. Julian has faced, meanwhile, direct interruptions which plague few other scientists. He has defied chauvinist savages who have several times attacked and stoned his Chicago home—for which attacks, by the way, no one has yet been apprehended.

One of America's most distinguished biologists, Dr. Ernest Everett Just, also spent long years in Europe not only for purposes of research, but also for the refreshment that comes from breathing air untainted by Jim Crow. His great teacher and colleague, Dr. Lillie, has referred to the deep and permanent wounds white chauvinism left upon this man, and one of his own Negro students, Dr. Nabrit, speaks of Just as being "frustrated and embittered." Dr. Du Bois, a personal friend, adds that what was most intolerable for Just, besides the limitations placed upon his research facilities in this country, were the particular abominations to which his wife, as a Negro woman, was subjected.

Dr. Just was born in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1883 and died in Washington in 1941. With much sacrifice he studied at Dartmouth and earned a doctorate at the University of Chicago. He served for a generation as professor of zoology at Howard University and as professor of physiology at the Howard Medical College, and was a frequent contributor to journals in his area of specialization. He was associate editor of the *Biological Bulletin,* the *Journal of Morphology* and *Physiological Zoology,* and was vice-president of the American Society of Zoologists. Dr. Just was the first winner of the Spingarn Medal awarded by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People each year since 1915 to the American Negro making an outstanding contribution to American life.

The last book published by Dr. Just—*The Biology of the Cell Surface* (Philadelphia, 1939)—representing the results of a lifetime of research, is a work fittingly climaxing a remarkable career. It is an attack upon traditional Weismann-Morgan biology and specifically the gene theory. It is strikingly similar to, though developed independently of, the work of the Soviet scientists, Michurin and Lysenko.

Dr. Just insisted, and his research demonstrated, that the concept of the absolute independence of the germ cells from the rest of the body was false. He insisted upon the interdependence and interaction of the cytoplasm and nuclear constituents of the cell, and emphasized the significance of environment. He insisted upon the dialectical essence of life. In his words:

"Self-regulation and self-differentiation are fundamental expressions of the organization of living matter . . . whether we study atoms or stars or that form of matter known as living we must always reckon with inter-relation. . . . However much in our separate domains we abstract from the unity of Nature, this unity remains."

Certain critics of Dr. Just did not fail to assert that his opposition to the gene theory, his insistence upon the significance of environment and his dialectical approach arose from his "bias" against racism —*i.e.* the fact that he was a Negro! So do worshippers of the status quo confuse their idol for truth and so do peddlers of bourgeois "objectivity" fail to understand that real objectivity comes only through partisanship for justice, through identification with the oppressed! In this sense, it is no doubt true that Dr. Just, being a Negro, was immediately and most happily and most properly suspicious of that biology which stemmed from and satisfied the bourgeoisie—the class that creates, fosters and sustains racism.

IRONY stems from the fact, too, that the propaganda organs of the bourgeoisie, normally so keenly aware of color, suddenly become mute and color-blind when presented with the achievements of many Negro scientists. Let the reader, for example, ask himself whether he had ever heard of the deeds of the following:

Dr. Thomas Wyatt Turner, head of the Department of Biology at Hampton Institute, Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, pioneer in studying the effect of mineral nutrients upon seed plants, and experiments in cotton breeding.

Dr. Charles Stewart Parker, head of the Department of Botany at Howard University, discoverer of thirty-nine new species of plants.

Dr. Leonidas H. Berry, outstanding authority on gastric analysis and biochemistry of the stomach.

Dr. William A. Hinton, authority in bacteriology and immunology, for thirty-five years on the faculty of Harvard, creator of the most sensitive test yet devised for syphilis—the Hinton test.

Harry J. Greene, Jr., pioneer in plastics, and head of the Research Department of Plastics for the Stromberg-Carlson Radio Corporation.

Dr. Edward L. Harris, leading authority in rocket and jet fuels and head of the Jet and Rocket Laboratory at Wright Patterson Air Field.

Dr. Charles H. Turner, pioneer in the systematic observation of the life habits and organization of animals and insects, especially bees and ants.

It is, however, to American industry and commerce—Jim-Crow industry and commerce—that Negro scientists and inventors have made their greatest contributions. This is true from items of luxury, like the golf tee invented by George F. Grant to the player piano, patented by J. H. Dickinson, to items of homely necessity like the mop-holder, invented by Thomas F. Stewart. It is true, too, in terms of basic inventions that have had profound effects upon major industries and the entire economy of the United States.

Prior to the Civil War free Negroes developed at least four highly significant inventions. The earliest came from James Forten, a leading Abolitionist of Philadelphia, who patented a device very widely employed in the nineteenth century which improved the handling of sails. In the 1830's Henry Blair of Maryland patented early models of corn harvesters, many of whose features were used for generations.

During the next decade a Negro metal-worker of New Bedford, Massachusetts, Lewis Temple, invented an improved harpoon—the toggle harpoon—which revolutionized the whaling industry. This industry, one of the most sweated in the world and of great significance in the early accumulation of capital, was then third in importance of all New England industries. Though millions of dollars were pocketed because of the Temple harpoon, the inventor himself made nothing from it. Indeed when Lewis Temple died in 1854 his property was sold to pay his debts, and his wife and children were left in destitution.*

Of even greater importance than any of the preceding inventions was that which was patented by Norbert Rillieux, a Louisiana Negro, in 1846. Rillieux was born in New Orleans in 1806 and, as was not too uncommon for fairly well-to-do Negroes of that city, obtained an engineering education in Paris. In the forties he returned to Louisiana and put his mind to the task of hastening the process of sugar refining. He devised a multiple-effect, evaporating device which solved the

* I am indebted to Mr. Sidney Kaplan, of the University of Massachusetts, for permitting me to see material on Lewis Temple which he has gathered.

problem and not only forms the basis of the modern sugar-refining industry, but also the process for making glue, gelatine, soap and condensed milk.

Life in slave-ridden Louisiana became increasingly unendurable for Rillieux and in the 1850's he returned to France where he died.* Within our own day in the Louisiana State Museum in Jim-Crow New Orleans a plaque was placed, honoring Rillieux. Its inscription reads:

> To honor and commemorate
> Norbert Rillieux
> born at New Orleans, La., March 18, 1806
> and died at Paris, France, October 9, 1894.
> Inventor of Multiple Evaporation and its Application
> into the Sugar Industry. This tablet was
> dedicated in 1934 by Corporations
> representing the Sugar Industry all over the World.

There was no room on this plaque to mention Rillieux's exile, nor its explanation.

FEW are the industries in post-Civil War America whose growth was not stimulated by the scientific and inventive genius of the Negro people. Thus, the meat and perishable-food preserving industries owe a great deal to Dr. Lloyd A. Hall, holder of some eighty patents and assistant chief inspector of explosives for the United States Army a generation ago. Lately Dr. Hall has concentrated in the field of food flavoring and, particularly, curing salts for meat. The salt he has developed is the most satisfactory now in existence and is used throughout the industry. Again, the chemist, William G. Holly, has developed a superior paint, the so-called titanium gloss paint, which today is widely used in the commercial painting industry.

In metallurgy, the work of the engineer, James A. Parsons, and of the physicist, Elmer S. Imes, has been outstanding. Mr. Parsons has developed a very useful type of aluminum-bronze and has also per-

* Such exodus recurs today. A notable example is that of Robert Robinson, an American Negro living in the Soviet Union. He has twenty inventions to his credit, especially in the field of ball-bearing machinery, and has been honored by the Soviet government.

formed significant researches on metal corrosion, while Dr. Imes' studies in infra-red absorption bands have had noteworthy application in ascertaining flaws in alloys.

Another industry in which a Negro's invention was as revolutionary as in whaling and sugar-refining, was that of shoe manufacturing. Here reference is had to the work of Jan E. Matzeliger.

Matzeliger was a cobbler in Philadelphia and Lynn, Massachusetts. He died in 1889, at the age of thirty-seven, poor as he had lived. In 1883 this Negro working-class genius patented a complex shoe-lasting machine, the first appliance ever made capable of holding a shoe on its last, gripping and pulling the leather down around the heel, guiding and driving the nails into place and then discharging the completed shoe.

The patent was bought for a pittance by the president of the United Shoe Machinery Corporation. It immensely speeded-up the process of shoe-making, cut production costs in half, and helped make United Shoe one of the leading multi-million dollar industrial corporations in the world and one of the few existing 100 percent monopolies.

As indicated, Jan E. Matzeliger died a poor man six years after the invention. All he got was knowledge of the fact that his machine had transformed a basic industry, and his only "memorial" is the fact that today throughout the American shoe industry his machine is known by an obscene chauvinist term.

Negroes made important discoveries in the electrical and communications industries. Many of the basic inventions in these areas, patented by Thomas A. Edison, were the collective results of the work of the Edison Associates, one of whose original members was the Negro, Lewis H. Latimer. Several of the fundamental features of the telephone owed much to the work of one of the greatest names in American inventiveness, that of Granville T. Woods. Woods was also responsible for patenting the device making possible the transmission of telegraphic messages between moving trains; he made advances basic to the development of the "third rail" for electrically driven railroads and helped direct the installation of the primary electric light systems in New York, Philadelphia, and London.

As indicated, several of the inventions of Granville Woods had direct application to the railroad industry. It is a fact that of all industry,

that one, perhaps the most viciously Jim Crow of all, as pertains both to customers and employees, upon which scores of thousands of Negroes have labored,* has been the industry which has particularly benefited from the scientific work of Negroes.

Thus, it was Woods who patented the automatic air-brake, universally used by railroads. And Elijah McCoy—son of escaped slaves, educated as an engineer in Scotland, denied professional work in the United States, fireman for years on the Michigan Central Railroad—patented, in 1872, the first automatic lubricating device for moving machinery, which was used on railroads—and ships—throughout the world.

Andrew J. Beard, of Alabama, patented in 1897 the automatic car-coupling device, while in the same year another Negro, Elbert C. Robinson of Chicago, invented a very much improved method of casting railroad car wheels (appropriated, without compensation, by the American Car and Foundry Company), and, somewhat later, the overhead trolley device for streetcars.

William Hunter Dammond, also of Chicago, developed the system of automatic block signals—the so-called Dammond Circuit—basic to signal safety devise as used, for example, in the New York subway systems.** Important work in box-car refrigeration has been done by Frederick M. Jones, while the Negro chemist, William G. Haynes, developed the liquid used today to preserve railroad ties.

OVER eighty years ago Negro physicians, forced by the Jim-Crow policy of the Medical Society of the District of Columbia, formed in Washington the National Medical Society. In doing so, these Negro doctors pointed out that, "Science knows no race, color, or condition," and they publicly "protested against such a relic of barbarism."

The barbarism persists and plagues Negro medical, dental, technical and scientific workers. All American white scientists, professionals and technicians, in the first place, should raise such a storm of protest against this and should so persistently and vigorously agitate against

* Woods himself worked, in the seventies, as a fireman on railroads in Missouri. He studied electrical engineering in the East, and gained employment, for a time, as an engineer abroad a *British* ship.

** As late as 1949, Mr. Dammond was still fighting for just compensation for his work. He was quoted by the *Chicago Defender* on June 25, 1949, as remarking, "The railroads refuse to pay the black inventor for his information."

it in their societies, institutions, hospitals, associations and schools and among the public generally, as to force at once its eradication.

What kind of scientists are they who will see science stunted, talents wasted, mankind impoverished, human beings insulted because of that which, eighty years ago, was properly labeled "barbarism"?

Some indication of the constructive, decisive and challenging nature of the Negroes' contributions to science has been given in this article. Just conceive of the impulse to their work, to the work of other scientists, to the employment of science for happiness and for peaceful ends that would come from removing the shackles from the scientific genius of the Negro people—from welcoming with pride and dignity Negro colleagues into all research laboratories, all universities, all hospitals and clinics, all technical and scientific and professional societies!

The imperialists pervert science into a technique for conquest and death. Only the working class and its allies—in the United States, particularly the sixteen million Negro people—treasure, want and need science, true science, the instrument for liberation and life. In fighting, then, for assuring the fullest expression of the scientific creativeness of the Negro people, one fights for justice, for freedom, for peace—and for true science.

right face

PIGS . . .

"An American took me riding one night in a jeep. He would drive up to a girl, grab her, kiss her, and then say, 'Pig!' and shove her away. He said they were all pigs."—*The playwright, Tennessee Williams, tells the columnist, Earl Wilson about his visit to the U.S. Zone in Vienna.*

ANOTHER DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENT . . .

President Syngman Rhee said today the South Korean government has no intention of leaving Seoul. . . . The National Assembly decided yesterday to move to Pusan. . . . Asked for an explanation, one official said the decisions did not conflict since the government as such is staying and 'the legislature does not count in Rhee's thinking.'"—A United Press dispatch from Seoul, December 26, 1950.

ATOMIC SAFETY . . .

Q.—We are going to purchase a house. Which place in your opinion is the safest in regards to the atomic bomb, Farmingdale, Huntington, or Babylon? A. R., Patchogue

A—This is a question which demands concentrated thought and a long look at the map. . . . The safest place is the place furthest away from any possible targets . . . actually there is really no place to hide. So why worry about finding one?—*"Professor Do-It" answers a question in the* Long Island Newsday.

COULD BE . . .

"My policy of building up American sea and airpower to a point capable of dominating all possible areas of the world is not isolationism. If anything I might be accused of imperialism."—Senator Robert A. Taft to the National Press Club.

WE INVITE READERS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS DEPARTMENT. ORIGINAL CLIPPINGS ARE REQUESTED WITH EACH ITEM.

books in review

Jews in the U.S.

A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN THE UNITED STATES: 1654-1875. Edited by Morris U. Schappes. *Citadel.* $5.00.

MORRIS SCHAPPES, in his introduction, provides the test by which one must evaluate his work. He tells us that he hopes the *Documentary History of the Jews* "will add something of clarity and heart to those who work for the complete and permanent achievement" of "liberty and equality" for the Jewish people.

The book passes this test well and by so doing establishes itself not only as a pioneering work in its own particular area but as an indispensable one for all interested in the history of the United States. James Madison said in 1820 that, "The history of the Jews must forever be interesting. The modern part of it is at the same time so little generally known, that every ray of light on the subject has its value." Schappes has provided a shaft of light and has shown, as he set out to do, "how the Jews themselves spoke and lived and thought of themselves for two centuries in our country, and how their contemporary non-Jews thought and wrote of them."

Schappes' work shows, in the living and dramatic language of contemporaries, the fact that anti-Semitism and reaction ever go hand in hand, with the rich directly stimulating the former in order to encourage the latter. This, indeed, is a theme that runs through the entire volume, from the rabid anti-Semitism of the notorious New York Tory publisher, James Rivington, to the Bourbon newspaper which greeted news of a massacre of Jews in 1870 by remarking: "We only wish this killing had taken place in Georgia, instead of Turkey."

Another central theme of the work is to demonstrate the fact that the Jewish people—and non-Jewish progressive people—have fought hard against this anti-Semitism and that to the degree that militance and unity were brought to the struggle, successes were achieved.

Indicative of the material illuminating this aspect of Jewish history are such documents as those dealing with official state or Federal encouragements of anti-Semitism, and those recording private efforts to curtail the full

and untrammeled participation by Jews in all aspects of American life. In this group is the speech by Jacob Henry, member of the North Carolina State legislature, opposing an attempt, in 1809, to oust him because he was Jewish. Here, among many lines of argument that have vivid contemporary meaning, occurs the memorable passage beginning: "Nothing is more easily demonstrated than that the conduct alone is the subject of human laws, and that man ought to suffer civil disqualification for what he does and not for what he thinks."

But particularly outstanding is the remarkable letter of Benjamin Nones, who proudly asserts himself to be a Jew, a poor man, a Revolutionary War veteran and a staunch Jeffersonian. He does this in 1800 while replying to the anti-Semitic jibes printed in a Federalist rag (which that paper, in accord with good "free enterprise" standards, refused to print), and his letter forms one of the most eloquent documents in the entire history of American polemical writing.

Also recurrent in Mr. Schappes' book is the theme of the constant relationship between the Jewish and Negro peoples. The role of outstanding Jewish Abolitionists, like Isidor Bush, Ernestine L. Rose and the Baltimore Rabbi, the Rev. Dr. David Einhorn, is presented fully. Again, the relationship between the reactionary interests of the slaveholders and the appearance among them of active anti-Semitism is traced in several documents, while the contrary—the blows against anti-Semitism delivered in the course of defending the Union and fighting for radical reconstruction—also appears.

Finally, the editor by no means confines himself to a presentation of the positive contributions of the Jews in the United States. Their class divisions have followed those of the mass of the American population and among the Jewish bourgeoisie and the Jewish slaveholders appeared vehement support for the most reactionary causes, and their words and arguments are quoted—over-quoted, I felt—by Mr. Schappes.

A book of the scope and accomplishment of this one deserves the most careful critical appraisal. In light of this I wish to indicate some points of disagreement with Mr. Schappes' approach and to offer some suggestions which may possibly have value in terms of a second edition of this book and in the current preparation of a subsequent volume.

I found Mr. Schappes to have been somewhat eclectic in his editing. In his introduction he remarks that "nothing done by Jews is irrelevant," and while he adds that not "all facts are of equal import" to him, the truth remains that sufficient discrimination is not shown. This appears,

for example, in the inclusion of document No. 18, telling of a Jew executed for theft, but offering no particular *historical*—as contrasted with antiquarian—interest, or the very long, completely demagogic, nativistic harangue of Lewis Levin (document No. 94), or the equally long, strictly military account of the Mexican War (No. 95).

The work suffers, too, from a rather pedantic quality. The reference section, for example, contains 170 pages of fine type and while much of it is of transcendent value and all of it represents herculean labor, much of its detail is quite excessive and burdensome. The main section suffers from this fault too and future editing could easily correct this. For example, is it necessary in telling the reader that an individual died accidentally to add that he had "blown off an arm that was never recovered?" Or, in presenting the documents themselves, extraneous matter should be eliminated with greater care. For example, Document No. 12 is concerned with the early appearance of business partnership between Jew and non-Jew, but reprinted with this is an irrelevant paragraph about chimney-sweeps.

Further, this reviewer found the editor's introductions generally admirable, but the summaries (including quotations) of the immediately following document were too long, tending to give the volume a tone of repetitiousness.

It must be pointed out that in his general introduction, Schappes falls into a chauvinistic use of the terms "black and white," and this should be altered. I wondered, too, at the fact that the only representation of the nativist or "Know-nothing" movement was that of a Jewish adherent. Actually, the movement was deeply anti-Semitic (some of its organs, like the Mississippi *Item* and the Alabama *Republican* were known by contemporaries as "anti-Jewish" papers) and quite powerful; but it is missing here.

These are, of course, very few slips in a work spanning over 200 years of history and doing it in a manner and with a scrupulousness that mark the editor as an historical pioneer of great stature. Mr. Schappes' devoted labors have resurrected a whole sector of American life and history, and for this all friends of humanity remain his most appreciative debtors.

HERBERT APTHEKER

Soviet Journey

ALL QUIET IN THE KREMLIN, by George Marion. *Fairplay Publishers.* $3.00.

COMPETENT reporting requires much more than accurate observation and honest and skilful

recording of what one sees; both the observing and the recording must proceed from a fundamental grasp of the nature of reality. The truly competent reporter must *understand* what he sees, in its manifold interrelations; he must have clear insight into the past and the future of what he observes developing in the present.

George Marion is a skilful journalist who is equipped with Marxist theoretical insight. He understands that mere "factual accuracy is not truth"; that "average" and "typical" are not synonymous terms; and that "you can tell the truth about Russia only by describing the process." Thus, on the basis of six very busy months in the Soviet Union last year, he seeks in *All Quiet in the Kremlin* to interpret "what is typical of the Russia now in process of becoming." In so doing, he has given us one of the most illuminating and interesting accounts available of the tremendous enterprise now moving forward in the socialist sixth of the world—the job of planning and constructing a new kind of society and a new kind of man.

In style and structure, *All Quiet in the Kremlin* gives the initial appearance of a light, breezy, "journalistic" account of an interesting man's travels. It is a chatty book, written in the first person, with the author talking directly to his reader in a familiar, seemingly face-to-face manner. Its predominating approach is anecdotal, with many interesting little narratives about the personal experiences of Marion and the people he met. Moreover, its division and chapter headings are popularly phrased—"So I Asked Mr. Vishinsky," "The Reluctant Russians," "How Miracles Are Made," "If You Were Stalin," "The Ruble and I," etc.—suggesting most anything but a serious, fundamental *analysis* of Soviet life.

After reading the first few pages I became annoyed, wishing the author would cut out the small-talk and let me have the story "straight." But I was profoundly in error. Long before I reached the end it became clear that both style and structure are admirably suited to the purpose of this book. The familiar, chatty style "grows on you" and leads to confidence and conviction; the personalized anecdotes afford concrete illustrations of fundamental and significant aspects of Soviet life; and the popularized, non-committal chapter headings designate sound and basic analyses which a more prosaic writer would have labeled "Post-War Reconstruction," "Socialist Planning," "The Public School System," and the like.

The chapter entitled "And A Schoolboy from Stalingrad," for example, turns out to be the exciting and illuminating story of a fourteen-year-old lad who wanted to become a lathe-operator, who got his chance. ("A boy has a

right to make such a decision in the Soviet Union and can choose his course not just in theory but in practice.") This lad developed speeds which the cutting edge of his tools could not stand, thus creating the need for an alloy hard enough for the job. "So he created such an alloy"—and his discoveries and techniques were "generalized" so as to enable other workers to operate their lathes at airplane speeds.

The apparent rationale of the chapter-heading "Book Wanted" is the author's quest for "something sensational" to write about; but in the course of exposing the American newspaper hoax about the alleged "purge" of economist Eugene Varga, he comes to the realization that the truly "big story" for his book is the tremendous job of reconstruction with which everybody is preoccupied:

". . . the Russians have no time for anything sensational in our sense . . . they absolutely refuse to be diverted from their completely unnewsworthy daily dedication to the humdrum little tasks that make up the biggest job the world has ever seen. A quiet story, yes, but there are times when quietness can be positively sensational!"

"Show Business" begins with the apparently trivial story of some adolescent Russian boys who stole into an open-air theatre through a hole in the fence; but its significance lies in the fact that what they were so eager to see was what American small-fry "would contemptuously describe as 'toe-dancing'"—the classical ballet, *Swan Lake*. The chapter then proceeds to describe the amazingly rich and varied cultural experiences of the Soviet peoples, on the countryside as well as in the cities: ". . . there is more theatre in Russia than in the other five-sixths of the world put together."

In similar anecdotal, popular fashion, other chapters describe concretely the remarkable rebuilding of Stalingrad, life in Moscow, the great "discussions" on genetics and linguistics, unparalleled provisions for the health and care and education of children—indeed, of the whole population; the transformation of rural life on the collective farm, and the spread of Michurinism and the creation of "scientific farmers on a mass scale"; the gigantic fifteen-year afforestation program to reclaim the barren steppes for agricultural production; the spirit as well as the techniques that produce a "Hero of Socialist Labor"; and the inspiring grandeur of Soviet planning—"planning on a scale and of a kind new to history."

One gathers that Marion set out to write a "united-front" book about the Soviet Union, convincing to the honest skeptic. This he has done with great effectiveness.

In certain respects, however, the author leaned over backward too far in his quest for the "popular."

His unfortunate choice of title, his prevailing use of "Russia" instead of "Soviet Union," and his frequent reference to "what Stalin did," etc.—all are unwarranted and unnecessary concessions to current misconceptions about the Soviet state. True, there are "explanations" which ask the reader to qualify the latter two usages; but their effect is lost in the constant repetition of the inaccurate and harmful terminology.

The united-front character of this book and its usefulness in the present period are emphasized by its frequent reiteration, in different contexts, of the profound truth that the Soviet people want peace. For example: "None [of the foreign correspondents stationed in the Soviet Union] had ever heard of even a private Soviet citizen making war talk. It simply isn't in the air!" Or: ". . . Soviet leaders are completely absorbed in this peaceful work and . . . all the talk we hear about Russian determination to achieve world domination is just talk." And again: "I think there is no country on earth where government and people alike so uniformly *require* peace for the fulfilment of their tasks and would therefore welcome it as much as the Russians would . . . we are pursuing an aggressive, dangerous, wholly unjustified policy of hostility toward the Soviet Union. . . . Victory for their way of life does not require the conquest of one nation by another any more than it requires the exploitation of man by man." Coupled as it always is with concrete descriptions of what Soviet officials and other citizens actually are saying and doing, the frequent assertion of this important truth "gets across" with effectiveness and conviction.

All Quiet in the Kremlin can be very helpful in building and strengthening the developing peace movement in our country. We should guarantee that it is widely read and discussed.

DOXEY A. WILKERSON

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