

**MASSES** & MAINSTREAM

**NEGRO  
HISTORY  
WEEK**

**A SPECIAL NUMBER**

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JOHN PITTMAN • HERBERT APTHEKER  
JOSEPH NORTH • LLOYD L. BROWN  
SAMUEL SILLEN • CHARLES WHITE  
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**FEBRUARY, 1952**

**35 cents**

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## Mainstream



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MASSES & MAINSTREAM is published monthly by Masses & Mainstream, Inc., 832 Broadway, New York 3, N. Y. Subscription rate \$4 a year; foreign and Canada, \$4.50 a year. Single copies 35c; outside the U.S.A., 50c. Reentered as second class matter February 25, 1948, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright 1952.

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# Our Time

By SAMUEL SILLEN

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## Negro History Week, 1952

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THIS issue of *Masses & Mainstream* is dedicated to the observance of the 27th annual Negro History Week. As we go to press, a great Negro leader of our time, William L. Patterson, is in Paris with a delegation to the United Nations, arguing that the ruling powers of this country are guilty of genocide. In Miami, Florida, this charge has just been grimly and urgently documented with the blood of Harry T. Moore and Harriet Moore. They were brutally murdered because they would not be silent in the face of the organized crime against their people. The U.S. government not only acknowledges but deepens this injury by seeking to silence Mr. Patterson in Paris.

The conspiracy to strangle the voices of the Negro people, as Paul Robeson showed in these pages last month, extends throughout the cultural media controlled by the trusts. A single major newspaper run by white capitalists has carried a re-

view of *We Charge Genocide*. Not one has noted the existence of that magnificent treasury of Negro writing, the *Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*, edited by Herbert Aptheker. None has reviewed Lloyd Brown's novel, *Iron City*.

Bourgeois scholarship is a partner in this plot. Ignorance alone cannot account for the distortion of the Negro's role in American history that is peddled in the schools and universities of our nation. The white supremacy ideas of the ruling class, necessary for its profits and wars, are supported criminally and wilfully by its official historians.

On this Negro History Week we re-dedicate ourselves to wage a fight, which is not of a week but unceasing, against the chauvinistic poison in the histories of American culture. And we should start with the most horrendous example of all—the treatment accorded the greatest Negro figure in our history, Frederick Douglass.

In a preface to his monumental work on *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*, Philip S. Foner has pointed to some classical examples of how the leading white bourgeois historians have all but ignored Douglass. Thus, James Ford Rhodes, in his seven-volume history of the period from 1850-1870, leaves the impression that Douglass was a distinctly minor figure among the many mentioned in his exhaustive work. John B. McMaster's ten-volume history refers to Douglass only once



briefly—and misspells his name, while Edward Channing barely mentions him.

I would add that Charles A. Beard and Mary Beard do not even mention Douglass in their *Rise of American Civilization*, which I studied as a bible of liberalism in college. The same is true of the widely circulated work by Allan Nevins and Henry Steele Commager ironically entitled *America: The Story of a Free People*.

But my special concern here is with the historians of American literature, who have followed the tradition of the general historians.

The standard work of an entire generation, *The Cambridge History of American Literature*, was edited at the time of the first world war by W. P. Trent, John Erskine, Stuart P. Sherman and Carl Van Doren. This lengthy work mentions Douglass once. And in this abominable way, which illustrates the editors' general level of enlightenment: "The negroes (sic!) themselves, by the way, can show an orator, two prose writers, and one poet of merited eminence. These are Frederick Douglass (1817-95); Booker T. Washington (c. 1859-1915); W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, and Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906)." And that, "by the way," is the entire story of Negro writing in the United States.

It appears in a chapter on "Dialect Writers," the major portion of which is devoted to Joel Chandler Harris. The chapter was written by the head of the English Department of the U.S. Naval Academy. And the work

has gone through many editions, its latest re-issue by the Macmillan Company appearing only a few years ago.

I think it is high time that it was vigorously protested, and in the first place by white progressives in the literary field.

In 1948 a three-volume *Literary History of the United States* (also published by Macmillan) was edited by Robert E. Spiller, Willard Thorpe, Thomas H. Johnson and Henry Seidel Canby. The editors open their preface this way: "Each generation should produce at least one literary history of the United States, for each generation must define the past in its own terms. A redefinition of our literary past was needed at the time of the First World War, when *The Cambridge History of American Literature* was produced by a group of scholars. It is now needed again; it will be needed still again."

How do the editors define the past for *this* generation? The earlier standard work, with all its stupidity, at least acknowledged the existence of Douglass. But the latest "redefinition," which includes scores of obscure and unreadable writers, counts his name altogether in 1,400 pages of text (though there is a brief reference in the 800-page bibliography). It should be noted that Phillis Wheatley is also ignored in the text but is referred to in the bibliography with chauvinistic contempt as "the Negro poetaster Phillis Wheatley." Dr. Du Bois is mentioned once in a sentence that names ten other writers!

The most recent voluminous compendium, *The Literature of the American People*, edited by Arthur Hobson Quinn (1951) claims that "throughout the book, the importance of the American point of view has been emphasized." But Douglass is not considered "American" enough to be included in the 1,100 pages, and the treatment of Negro literature in general is correspondingly "patriotic."

The fact is that the most advanced of the bourgeois historians of American letters, Vernon Louis Parrington, is no better in this respect. Though he is strongly anti-slavery and has a chapter on "Certain Militants" including long sections on Garrison, Whitman and Harriet Beecher Stowe, as well as chapters on Emerson, Thoreau, Theodore Parker and Wendell Phillips, Parrington ignores Douglass in his *Main Currents in American Thought*. Now the fact is that each of the writers just referred to spoke again and again with tremendous respect and enthusiasm for Douglass as statesman, orator and writer. So it cannot be claimed that Parrington was unaware of his literature.

There is the further fact that Parrington does not mention such outstanding Negro writers and thinkers as William Wells Brown, Martin Delany, Charles W. Chesnutt, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Carter G. Woodson, and W. E. B. Du Bois. In fact the three-volume work is just about lily-white. The "Main Currents in American Thought" are portrayed

without any representation of the thought of the Negro people!

And yet it must be said, in serious self-criticism, that workers in this field, and I would certainly include myself, have not alerted readers to this terrible flaw in a work which is in so many respects the best of its kind.

Similarly, Van Wyck Brooks' series of five volumes on American writing contains two references to Douglass—one a footnote to illustrate the popularity of Sir Walter Scott's *The Lady of the Lake*, from whose hero Douglass adopted his name; the other a one-sentence reference to Douglass' autobiography in a chapter entitled "The South: Lanier and Joel Chandler Harris."

The standard anthologies are no better. *The Oxford Anthology of American Literature* (1938), edited by William Rose Benet and Norman Holmes Pearson, is lily-white throughout its 1,700 pages. *The Oxford Book of American Verse* (1950) is also lily-white, as Walter Lowenfels recently pointed out in the *Daily Worker*, even though the late F. O. Matthiessen, who edited the volume, was progressive in many of his views.

Finally, it should be noted that a fresh batch of histories of ideas in America, typified by Henry Steele Commager's *The American Mind* (1950), ignore not only Douglass, but any Negro.

Ignorance? Unavailability of material? Lack of intellectual stature? Then why is it that the Negro editors of *The Negro Caravan* (1941),



for example, were able to tap such rich treasures? Was Douglass not a "literary" figure? Then why not exclude Jefferson, Paine, Thoreau, Lincoln, from the literary histories where they are—properly—included?

No, the answer is white chauvinism, the poison of white supremacist ideology which vitiates bourgeois scholarship in general and has strongly affected even a Parrington or a Matthiessen. The battle in this field, as in all others, needs to be waged with new vigilance and determination. We have to place the fight against white chauvinism in books as a fight, literally, for life. No author, no publisher guilty of chauvinism should be permitted to think he can get away with it.

### ***Russian Writers for Abolition***

IT IS appropriate to recall that the struggle to abolish slavery in the United States was closely followed and energetically supported by the advanced Russian thinkers of the period. Revolutionary-democratic writers like Herzen, Belinsky and Chernyshevsky grasped the intimate connection between events in far-off America and their own fight to get rid of serfdom. These writers, whose significance for today has been strongly emphasized by Lenin and Stalin, denounced racist theories of "white superiority" and pointed out that progress in the United States hinged on Negro liberation.

As early as 1790 we find the Russian poet and political writer Alex-

ander Radischev attacking chattel slavery. Radischev, an anti-monarchist and humanist, admired the young American republic which had just emerged from a revolutionary war. But in his classic work, *A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*, for which he was exiled by Catherine II, he indicted the "ferocious and murderous conquest through the purchase of slaves." Radischev, who was described by Pushkin as the "Enemy of Slavery," wrote: "These unfortunate victims from the burning banks of Niger and Senegal, torn from their homes and families, transferred to lands unknown to them . . . now till the prolific cornfields of America, which despises their toil."

Russians contributed to the Abolitionist press here. Nicholas Turgenev, a liberal publicist who spent a good part of his life in political exile, wrote for the *Liberty Bell*, the annual Abolitionist review edited by Maria Weston Chapman. "Why is it," he asked in 1852, "that a country which has produced such women as the author of this immortal book [Mrs. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*] and such men as Channing and many others should carry in its bosom not only the whippers of men and women who insult all that is sacred in Man but also ministers, so-called protestants, who hide the most horrible infamies behind the screen of their theological science which is as false as it is hypocritical."

In a second communication to the *Liberty Bell* dated 1865 Turgenev wrote: "I am thoroughly persuaded

at all success obtained in America the cause of the colored race will eminently serviceable to my poor countrymen in Russia. It is, then, first a man, and secondly as a Russian, at I hail the efforts of Mr. Garrison and his fellow laborers for the deliverance of their countrymen from the hideous plague-spot of slavery." The antics of a slaveholder-dominated Congress aroused the scorn of the Russian revolutionary-democrats. Alexander Herzen satirized "the Washington Senators who proved the benefits of slavery on each other with whips"—a reference to the caning of Charles Sumner by Preston Brooks on the Senate floor. And Jefferson Davis' organ of war for the "sacred cause" of slavery moved Herzen to denounce his cynicism, this insolence, this criminal simplicity, this shameless nakedness "on the part of 'the greatest political criminal of our time.'"

Of all the Russian writers of the period, the one who wrote at greatest length on the slavery question was Nicholas Chernyshevsky. He wrote in English, followed the British and American press regularly, and in the pages of the literary monthly *Contemporary* (*Sovremnik*) commented on American developments with extraordinary insight.

Thus, we find him refuting racist theories attempting to prove the "inferiority" of the Negro. He called these "planters' theories of race," and he showed that they served the cause of social oppression not only in the United States but in Tsarist Russia. When Louis Agassiz, the Swiss-born

American professor, defended these theories, Chernyshevsky took up the cudgels against him.

In 1858, the magazine *Contemporary*, under Chernyshevsky's direction, sent its subscribers a free supplement—*Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The following year the writer hailed John Brown as "the leader of the martyrs for the Negro cause in the United States." While the raid on Harper's Ferry had not succeeded in its objective, "there is no doubt at all that gradually the struggle will assume a new character" and the Abolitionists will "shortly be avenged," wrote Chernyshevsky in the *Contemporary* for November, 1859. The magazine reprinted in full John Brown's "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States." Chernyshevsky took note of the organized slave uprisings and "the most energetic resistance" which they reflected.

He saw the essential meaning of "manifest destiny" as an attempt to increase the area of slavery, and he berated the aggressive invasion of her "weak neighbors" by the United States. The brutal hand of the planter directed the American troops who seized and dismembered Mexico.\*

In an article of January, 1861, dis-

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\* David Hecht in *Russian Radicals Look to America* (Cambridge, 1947) says that "one may pardon" Chernyshevsky for this alleged error. Actually he was far in advance of the "new school" of American historiographers who find all sorts of idealistic explanations for U.S. expansionism.



curring "The Split in the American Union," Chernyshevsky expressed fear of a compromise on the slavery issue that would settle nothing. He considered the conflict between North and South a "class enmity," not in essence a sectional division but a clash of social systems. Stressing the economic superiority of industrial production over the plantation system, the Russian thinker added that "A compromise would be incomparably worse than civil war, worse even than a peaceful split-up of the Union." Elimination of slavery, he argued, was the supreme issue.\*

While Chernyshevsky hailed Lincoln's election victory, he was critical of the President's delay in issuing a proclamation of emancipation. In an article of November, 1861, he urged the U.S. government to help the Negro slaves revolt against the Confederate masters. Two months later he pled for the formation of free Negro detachments to fight the South. At the same time, Chernyshevsky, like Marx and Engels who were also critical of Lincoln's hesitations, took issue with those who claimed that the American President was insincere about freedom and only wanted to "conquer" the South. Even if such insincerity did exist, he

added, the course of emancipation could not be stopped.

AT THE end of the war, Chernyshevsky strongly condemned President Johnson for attempting to reverse the gains of emancipation through his pro-Bourbon Reconstruction policy. Chernyshevsky wrote:

"It is only the consequence of the unforgivable weakness and lack of political sense of Johnson that the situation of Negroes in the former slave-owning states is at this time by no means better, and perhaps even worse, than before the Civil War. Democratic newspapers have begun to dwell on the laziness of Negroes, their unpreparedness for freedom, etc., while the Negroes of North Carolina have filed a petition to the President protesting against the propaganda of the Democrats. . . ."

This observation, appearing in the *Contemporary* of June, 1865, parallels the analysis of Marx and Engels at the same time. On June 24 Marx described Johnson's position as "extremely vacillating and weak in substance," and on July 15 Engels wrote that Johnson's "hatred of Negroes comes out more and more violent, while as against the old lords of the South he lets all power go out of his hands. If things go on like this, in six months all the old villains in secession will be sitting in Congress at Washington."

Chernyshevsky's continuing interest in the Negro question is reflected in his famous novel, *What Is To Be Done?* In this work he introduced

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\* In *The American Impact on Russia* (New York, 1950), a Kerensky-supporter, the late Max M. Laserson noted that the radical wing of the Abolitionists, "especially Wendell Phillips, took a position close to that of Chernyshevsky," and then proceeded to rebuke both the Abolitionists and the Russian critic for their "peculiar" position.



merican character, Charles Beaufort, who expresses strong Abolitionist views.

The writings of Chernyshevsky and other advanced thinkers of his form a vital part of the Soviet heritage, which, as Zhdanov wrote, embodies "all the best traditions of Russian revolutionary democrats

of the nineteenth century." These traditions, as we have seen, include opposition to racism and devotion to world-wide struggles for freedom. And today these traditions, immeasurably enriched, have been brought to life in the fully liberated, multinational Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

## **Memo For Action**

STRUGGLE—that is the theme of Negro history. Hence, the meetings and programs to be held throughout the country in celebration of Negro History Week will focus upon the issues of today. These issues of struggle for Negro rights are many and varied, national and local in scope; some of the most important are dealt with at length on other pages.

Here we suggest a few urgent questions for discussion and action by all progressives and cultural workers:

1. Repeal the Smith Act and end the persecution of Benjamin J. Davis, Henry Winston, Pettis Perry, Claudia Jones, James Jackson, Benjamin Careathers and their colleagues in the various Smith Act cases. We honor the heroes of Negro history best by rallying to the defense of these Negro leaders now singled out for attack.

2. Lift every voice for Paul Robeson, world artist and peace leader—for his right to a passport; for his rightful place in the theater, on the concert platform, in the conference hall—here and abroad. Help build his newspaper, *Freedom*.

3. Demand immediate and drastic punishment for the killers of Mr. and Mrs. Harry T. Moore, and removal from Federal, state and county office of all who actively or passively shield the lynch-ers. Support and extend the boycott against Florida's citrus fruits. No vacations in Jim Crow Florida.

THE EDITORS

# BETWEEN BIRTHDAYS

## A Personal Narrative

By W. E. B. DU BOIS

*February marks the birthdays of Lincoln, Douglass, and our distinguished contributing editor, W. E. B. Du Bois. We are happy to present, on this occasion, an excerpt from a forthcoming book by Dr. Du Bois.*

I DO NOT seem to remember that during my boyhood and youth any particular attention was given to birthdays as such. Certainly there were no celebrations that compared in importance with the fire crackers of the 4th of July, the "Cattle Show" in the fall, and the presents and tree at Christmas. Indeed, it was not until my 25th birthday, when I was a student in Berlin, that I remember making an occasion of this anniversary. It was in the long, dark winter of northern Germany, and while I was comfortable, I felt a little lonesome and far-away from home and boyhood friends. I had candles in my room on Schoeneberger Ufer, and a dedication of my small library to the memory of my mother, and I wrote something rather sentimental about life in general.

It was 31 years later—in 1924—before there was a set birthday cele-

bration. The business manager of *Crisis*, Augustus Dill, a staunch friend, planned a dinner at one of the Savarin restaurants in mid-New York. The lieutenant-governor of the state, Lunn, Heywood Brown, Walter Hampton spoke; and Z. S. Gale and Eugene O'Neill sent messages. At Atlanta University I celebrated quite elaborately my 70th anniversary. There was a bronze bust by Portnoff which had been exhibited at Columbia University and in the Modern Galleries at Philadelphia. E. Spingarn and James Weldon Johnson spoke. Braithwaite sang:

"And we shall honor him today as  
Who gave the Cause a power born  
of grace,  
For he has proved that Beauty knows  
no Race.  
His soul, immersed in springs of  
con,  
Possessed the gifts to turn what  
been done  
By human ills and wrongs into the  
Of golden speech whose rhythmic  
sions trace  
The dim and distant goals where  
is won!" . . .

By that time I was rather fed up with this sort of celebration for



sons: First of all it became, to my liking, a kind of blackmail on my fortunate friends. The cost of the dinner and presents had to be considerable, and few people had courage enough to refuse co-operation. Then, secondly, these celebrations put almost unpleasant emphasis on the passing of Age in itself. It began to seem customary that whenever my name in work was mentioned it seemed necessary to add a note concerning my age, indicating subtly that I was not at the end of a rather too long career, and could hardly be expected to keep sane and busy much longer. Therefore, hurry, hurry, and give the man "a hand"!

This tendency to look upon age as abnormal and rather useless is peculiarly American. It is true in neither France nor England, nor in most parts of the Western world, and never in Asia or Africa. But with an emphasis on Youth in America, which has long lost its meaning, it is an old American custom to write off as a liability, if a total loss, the age of men in public work after they have passed 50, and to regard them as practically dead at 70.

I therefore made up my mind that I would stop these celebrations so as to relieve the financial pressure on my friends, and so as to have my work judged by its efficiency, and not by the number of its years. This good resolution was negated by the fact that I returned to New York and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1944, and therefore my 80th birthday be-

came a rather natural occasion for welcoming me back to an old stamping ground. It was at the Hotel Roosevelt: "Love and veneration" came from Alva and Gunnar Myrdal; and from Henry Wallace, "Warmest congratulations on your long years of service to the cause of humanity. May you go on giving courage to those who otherwise would fear to speak out." Somewhere this gift of courage failed.

I protested rather ineffectually at these celebrations for my 80th and 82nd birthdays. Then I took a firm stand; especially when this last occasion became the cause of an unpleasant argument as to who would preside. I stubbornly insisted that I alone should decide the presiding officer at my own birthday dinner. I did. Then I said: "No more birthday celebrations! Enough is too much!" But I was induced in 1951 to change this resolve, because of my interest in Africa.

**I** AM NOT sure just when I began to feel an interest in Africa. Some folks seem to assume that just as Irish Americans have a sentimental regard for Ireland, and German Americans and Americans of Scandinavian descent look back to their mother countries, either through their own experience or that of their parents, that in similar ways Negro Americans should regard Africa.

This was true in the 17th and early 18th centuries, when there actually were in the United States Negroes who either remembered Africa or inherited memories from their fathers

or grandfathers. In my mother's family, the Burghardts sang an African song that came down from great-grand parents; but that was rather unusual.

Among the Negroes of my generation there was not only no direct acquaintance or even consciously inherited knowledge of Africa, but even distaste and recoil because of what the white world taught them about the Dark Continent. There arose resentment that a group like ours, born and bred in the United States for centuries, should be regarded as Africans at all. They were, as they stoutly asserted, Americans. My father's father was particularly bitter about this. He would not accept an invitation to a "Negro" picnic. He would not segregate himself in any way.

Notwithstanding all this, I became interested in Africa by a sort of logical deduction. I was tired of finding in newspapers, textbooks, and history, fulsome lauding of white folk, and either no mention of dark peoples, or mention in disparaging and apologetic phrase. I made up in my mind that it must be true that Africa had a history and destiny, and that one of my jobs was to disinter this unknown past, and make certain a splendid future. Along this line I did, over a stretch of years, a great deal of reading, writing, research, and planning, of which I have written elsewhere.

When I returned to New York from Atlanta to become a Director of Special Research for the NAACP, it was particularly for the purpose of

concentrating on study of colonial peoples and people of Negro descent throughout the world. About this time Paul Robeson, Channing Tobias and others had formed a "Council on African Affairs." I would have been pleased to join it, and expected to be invited, but the secretary, Mary Yergan, did not seem to want my cooperation.

Nothing illustrates more clearly the hysteria of our time than the career of the Council on African Affairs. It had been the dream of idealists of earlier days that the stain of American slavery would eventually be wiped out by the service which descendants of African slaves would render Africa. American Negroes who gained their freedom in the 18th and early 19th centuries for the most part looked forward to a return to Africa as their logical end. They often named their clubs and churches, their child social institutions, "African." But the Cotton Kingdom and Colonial Imperialism gradually drove this dream entirely from their minds until the Negroes of the post-Civil War era regarded Africa as renewal of caste and slavery. They regarded colonization and "back to Africa" movements of Lincoln and Bishop Turner with lack-luster eye, and when later I tried to found an intellectual Pan-African movement, my American Negro following was small.

But the idea grew, slowly, as the role of Africa in the modern world became more evident; and one of its children was Paul Robeson's Council on African Affairs. With the

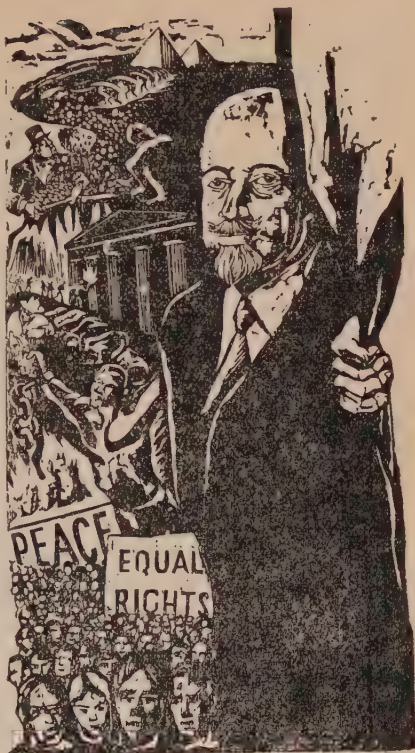


ation of Fred Field, a fine African library and a collection of African along with offices, were set up. Monthly fact sheet devoted to developments in new Africa was issued. Money was raised for starving natives in South Africa, and striking miners in West Africa. African visitors were welcomed, and lectures delivered. A membership organization was started.

WHEN came the witch-hunting scare, and the Council was put on the Attorney General's list of "subversive" organizations. Immediately, without consulting his board, Yergan issued a newspaper release, attacking Communists," although before, Yergan himself had often been regarded as a sympathizer with the Left. Robeson protested. His position was that the Council was not a Communist organization, and was doing a special and needed work; that the political or religious opinions of its members or officials were their own business, so long as the actions of the organization as such were legal.

A division arose within the ranks of the Council. At this time, on the invitation of Robeson, I was asked to join the Council, which I did. I stayed on account of my faith in the integrity of Paul Robeson, and my belief in the necessary function of the Council on African Affairs. Since Yergan now was at odds with the board, many of the members of the board resigned, and Yergan was dismissed from his office.

When I left the N.A.A.C.P. in 1948, the Council, through Mr. Robe-



DU BOIS: Woodcut by Alfred Kouzel,  
(Graphic Arts Workshop)

son, asked me to become Vice-Chairman, and I consented. The understanding was that I would serve without salary, but would be furnished an office and stenographic help. This was in accord with my plans for writing and lecturing. However, the ability of the Council to finance even this obligation was small, and by 1950 it seemed my duty to relieve them of this obligation, since it was proving an impossible burden.

However, the officers came to me and asked me earnestly not to do this,

and disclosed a plan which they had considered; and that was that I would consent to a celebration of my 83rd birthday in February, 1951, for the declared purpose of raising a publication fund; that this fund would go to maintaining the office and my connection with the Council on African Affairs, and also for republication of certain of my works long out of print, and new publication of certain unprinted manuscripts. They were sure that such a proposition would be welcomed by a large number of people, and would mean not only forwarding of my work, but the renewed activity of the Council on African Affairs, at a time when its services were greatly needed. Somewhat to my annoyance, then, I found myself facing another birthday celebration.

It was a particularly difficult situation, because the increased costs called for a high charge a plate, and other expenses meant a great outlay of money, yet I did not feel free to back out. I consented. A committee was organized, and the dinner set for February 23.

**B**EFORE we sit down to this 83rd birthday dinner, I must go back and explain how my early interest in the color problems in the United States and Africa, had evolved over the years from my habit of travel which followed my college training.

Since my first trip in 1892 I have made 13 trips to Europe, one of which circled the globe. I have been in most European countries, in Asia, Africa, and the West Indies.

In 1900, on the basis of work an exhibit done for the United States Government, I went to the Paris Exposition, and attended the Pan American Conference in London. Eleven years later, Felix Adler and myself were made secretaries of the American section of the World Races Congress in London, where I spoke twice in the Great Hall of the University of London.

In 1918, when President Wilson was planning to attend the Congress of Versailles, I wrote him a letter saying:

"The International Peace Congress is to decide whether or not peoples have the right to dispose of themselves. It will find in its midst delegates from a nation which champions the principle of the 'consent of the governed' and 'government by representation.' That nation is France, and includes in itself more than twelve million souls whose consent to be governed is never asked. They have no members in the legislatures of states where they are in the majority, and not a single representative in the national Congress."

In November, the same year, after the Armistice, I went to Paris in the "Creel" boat, and tried to get President Wilson and other Americans interested in a Pan-African Congress. I set forth the demands of African peoples. I talked to Col. House, and received courtesy, but no action. Then I turned to the French, and through Blaise Diagne, the Senegalese Deputy who had 100,000 black African votes, defend France, secured permission from Prime Minister Clemenceau to hold a Pan African Congress in France despite martial law. There were



ers from 15 countries, and we ended that the League of Nations the status of African natives its purview.

o years later I brought together ond and more representative ess, meeting successively in on, Paris, and Brussels. There 113 accredited delegates from ferent groups, including Africa, West Indies, Europe, and the d States. The Congress declared:

ely in the 20th century of the of Peace, in the millennium of a and Mahmoud, and in the might-ge of Human Reason, there can be in the civilized world enough of m, learning and benevolence to de-native institutions for the native's rather than continue to allow the ty of mankind to be brutalized and ed by ignorant and selfish agents of ercial institutions, whose one aim is and power for the few."

terward, in 1923 and later, other congresses were held, but they smaller and less effective because e growing opposition of the rial countries toward their meet- We said in London and Lisbon 1923:

e ask in all the world that black be treated as men. We can see no road to Peace and Progress. What paradoxical figure today fronts the than that of the official head of a South African state striving blindly ld peace and good will in Europe by ng on the necks and hearts of mil- of black Africans."

at same year, by a peculiar pol- l situation, I was made Minister potentuary to Liberia. Liberia made application too late for

the funds which the United States Congress gave various countries to help their post-war economy. Since I had gone to Africa to visit Liberia after the session of the Pan-African Congress in Portugal, it occurred to certain colored politicians that it might be a fine gesture and one not too costly, to give me diplomatic status and let me represent the President of the United States at the second inauguration of President King. Thus, to my surprise, in 1923 I became Dean of the whole diplomatic corps in Morovia, with the status of Special Plenipotentiary and Envoy Extraordinary.

**M**EANTIME, my attitude toward the problems of peace and progress had slowly become revolutionized. Formerly I had assumed with most folk that the path of human progress lay necessarily through war, and that if the colored peoples of the world and those of America ever secured their rights as human beings, it would be through organized violence against their white oppressors. But after the first world war I began to realize that under modern conditions such means to progress were self-defeating. With modern techniques in world war, there could be no victory. The victor was, in the end, as badly off as the vanquished. Reason, education, and scientific knowledge must replace war.

I am not certain just when this change in my thinking came; but I can remember meeting in London in 1911 a colored man who explained to

me his plan of leading a black army out of Africa and across the Pyrenees. I was thrilled at his earnestness! But gradually all that disappeared, and I began building a new picture of human progress.

This picture was made more real in 1926 when I took a trip to Russia. I visited Leningrad, Moscow, Nyzhni Novgorod and Kiev, and finally came home by way of Odessa and Constantinople. It was for me a never-to-be forgotten experience, and it strengthened my basic belief in Socialism as the one great road to progress.

Ten years later, impelled by puzzled curiosity at the changes that were taking place in Europe, I applied to the Oberlaender Trust, part of the Carl Schurz Foundation, for a fellowship. I proposed a study of the former German colonies in Africa, and investigation in Germany as to her present attitude toward colonies. This was refused, but later I was offered a fellowship to study industrial education in Germany. As a result, I spent 5 months in Germany in 1936, and then going to the Soviet Union, made the trip from Moscow to Manchuria, travelling 10 days along the Trans-Siberia Railroad.

Finally I spent two weeks in China and Japan, returning to the United States by way of Hawaii. I thus saw Asia for the first time, and began to get a new idea of the place of the colored races in the world. I lectured in Japan, met with Chinese

leaders in Shanghai, and discussed the future of the darker races, colonialism and world peace. The Osaka Superintendent of Education said, "You deserve the highest respect . . . not only from all colored peoples, but also from all the peoples of the world."

Returning to the United States, I continued teaching at Atlanta University until in 1944 I returned to the N.A.A.C.P. in New York as Director of Special Research with special attention to colonies and peace. I went as Consultant to the United Nations in San Francisco, and later edited the "Appeal to the World" which was presented to the Commission on Human Rights of the U.N. I said in that small volume:

"A discrimination practiced in the United States against her own laws, cannot be persisted in without infringing upon the rights of the peoples of the world and especially upon the ideals and the work of the United Nations.

"This question, then, which is without doubt primarily an internal and national question, becomes inevitably an international question and will in the future come more and more international as nations draw together. In this great attempt to find common ground and maintain peace, it is, therefore, fitting and proper that the thirteen million American citizens of Negro descent should appeal to the United Nations and ask that organization in the proper way to take cognizance of a situation which deprives a group of their rights as men and citizens and by so doing makes the functioning of the United Nations more difficult, if not in many cases impossible."



# FREDERICK DOUGLASS

## Titan of Our History

By **HERBERT APTHEKER**

ON FEBRUARY 17, 1888, some friends of Frederick Douglass surprised him with a party celebrating his seventy-first birthday. They expected him to give a speech; instead he epitomized his life in two straightforward sentences: "During the nearly fifty years of my public life, I have been unflinching and uncompromising advocate and defender of the oppressed. In whatever else I failed, in this I have not failed."

This is enough to earn for Douglass the hatred of the dominant bourgeois historians; but when it is added to this "unflinching and uncompromising" hero was a Negro, one is prepared for the fact that this hatred was displayed itself primarily by the omission of Frederick Douglass from their so-called histories.

At best, as a Negro contemporary, Richard T. Greener, remarked soon after his death, some might "speak of Mr. Douglass as a great Negro, and dismiss his race to oblivion by a courtesy accorded and only partial justice even to him." Greener was right, too, in declaring that Douglass "was

a great man judged by any standard, of any race at any time, in this world's history," that he was "among the five truly great men of this country."

In what lies his greatness? It is in this: Douglass himself said, in 1854, that "The relation subsisting between the white and black people of this country is the vital question of the age," and he was America's most superb thinker and organizer, tactician and strategist on the resolution of this question to be produced in the nineteenth century.

Why was this question "the vital question of the age"? Because it involved directly and immediately the fate of four million men, women and children held, literally in chains, in the most brutal system of thralldom ever practiced by man; because, on the basis of the ownership of these four millions, and of the land worked by them and of the crops that labor and land produced, the slaveholding class absolutely dominated the South and exercised a controlling influence over the life of the entire nation;

because the enslavement of the Negro vitiated the economic and moral well-being of the entire population and inhibited the development of the nation's productive capacities; because the maintenance of slavery required active and incessant assaults upon the limited liberties of the white masses; because the slave system was insatiably violent and aggressive, at home and abroad; and because the slave system besmirched culture, perverted science and spawned a fittingly foul anti-humanistic ideology.

So, Frederick Douglass, standing as he did in the very center of the struggle for the liberation of the American Negro people, was, as he himself put it, back in 1848, "standing upon the watch-tower of human freedom."

Whence his matchless clarity, selflessness and strength? Basically, from his people and from his and their oppression—and resistance to that oppression. Of course, with Douglass and his consummate artistry, his sense of timing, his marvelous *feeling* for the right path, the proper phrase, the precisely correct tactic, one enters the elusive realm of genius. But the direction and impact of genius may be understood, and that of Frederick Douglass came out of the anguish and the greatness of the Negro people.

**A**FTER Dante created his *Inferno*, the people of Florence would point him out and say, "There goes the man who has been in Hell!"

Douglass had been in Hell and he knew its proprietors and its victims. He knew it exactly because he was one of the victims. Douglass used to like to say that in order to understand one had to *stand under*. It is on the side of the oppressed that justice is and it is the oppressed who see truth.

He knew what it was to be a child without the love of a mother, to be hungry, to be cold and ill-clad, that, as he wrote in his autobiography, "My feet have been so cracked with the frost that the pen with which I am writing might be laid in the gashes." He knew what "thirteen lashes well laid-on" felt like and he knew the torture of interminable, exhausting labor to enrich another. And he saw a crippled Negro woman stripped and bound and flogged—"this lacerated woman tied up by her wrists to a bolt in the joist, three, four, and five hours at a time."

He saw that his people resisted. He knew he despised slavery and he knew his people did. He experienced the magnificent comradeship of the struggling downtrodden, and the exhilarating sense of the strength gained from collective resistance. As a youngster he flees a beating and is a slave and his free Negro wife who at great risk, give him success. And Douglass writes: "Although I was hated by my master I was loved by the Negro people."

He learns to read and brings the priceless gift of literacy to about four other slaves whom he teaches—cretely, of course—in the house of

ic free Negro. Thus, "An attach-  
 , deep and permanent, sprang up  
 een me and my persecuted pu-  
 He and two other slaves are dis-  
 ted plotting to flee and as his  
 ades are beaten, Douglass feels  
 "I could have died with and  
 them." Dragged fifteen miles be-  
 horses and thrown into jail, wait-  
 for torture, sale, or whatever  
 ed the masters, Douglass finds,  
 were a band of brothers, and  
 t dearer to each other than now."  
 es, Douglass *knew* his fellow-  
 s "were neither indifferent, dull  
 napt." On the contrary, he knew  
 "they were every one of them as  
 as steel, and no band of brothers  
 l be more loving." Moreover, the  
 non foe and the common aspira-  
 and the common suffering de-  
 ed the sense of a collective, so  
 "We never undertook anything  
 y importance which was likely  
 fect each other, without mutual  
 ultation. We were generally a  
 and moved together."

Douglass remembered, too, how the  
 Negroes of Baltimore permitted  
 a slave—again at risk to them-  
 s—to join their "Mental Im-  
 ment Society," and how he par-  
 ted in their debates. "I owe  
 ," he wrote, "to the society of  
 young men." Finally, the suc-  
 ul flight, in 1838, required joint  
 and faith in other people. A  
 o seaman entrusted Douglass  
 his precious "protection papers"  
 a free Negro woman of Balti-  
 —soon to be his wife—was in-  
 ble in helping him get away.

And in slavery Douglass saw clearly  
 the class divisions amongst the whites  
 and the suffering of the majority of  
 them who were poor. He never for-  
 got the two Irish seamen who told  
 him, in Baltimore, that slavery was  
 disgraceful and that he ought to be  
 free, nor would he forget the German-  
 born worker who recognized him in  
 his flight and—Douglass believed—  
 knew he was fleeing, but kept mum.

Douglass saw that "The slave-  
 holders, with a craftiness peculiar to  
 themselves, by encouraging the en-  
 mity of the poor laboring white man  
 against the blacks, succeeded in mak-  
 ing the said white man almost as  
 much a slave as the black man him-  
 self." To the end of his days Douglass  
 fought for Negro-white unity, for  
 he knew the division was created and  
 needed by the masters, and hence  
 that unity was vital for their victims'  
 joint emancipation.

**T**HIS was the preparation of the  
 man who, three years out of slav-  
 ery and all of twenty-four years old,  
 flung himself into the central ques-  
 tion of his time—the question of  
 Negro slavery. And in this central  
 struggle, Frederick Douglass was the  
 central figure.

He flung aside Garrisonian sec-  
 tarianism and anarchism. He insisted  
 on the broadest possible assault  
 against slavery and its Jim Crow re-  
 flections in the North. He pioneered  
 in politicalizing the Abolitionist  
 movement, and in striking telling  
 blows against the ideological base of  
 the slave system—the alleged inferi-





FREDERICK DOUGLASS: *by Charles White*

ty of the Negro people. He hammered home the indivisibility of human freedom, the direct and personal interest of white people in the emancipation of the Negro slaves. He saw at the struggle against slavery involved, and was nurtured by, all struggles for freedom everywhere.

In 1848, writing on "The Rights of Women" he insisted "there can be no reason in the world for denying to woman the exercise of the elective franchise. Our doctrine is that 'right is of no sex.' We therefore bid the women engaged in this movement our humble God speed." Half a century later, Elizabeth Stanton said: "He was the only man I ever knew who understood the gradation of disfranchisement for men."

The struggles of the European peasants and workers thrilled him. Typically, the French uprising of 1848, he wrote: "The despots of Europe—theories of England, and the slaveholders of America, are astonished, confused, and terrified; while the humble poor, the toil-worn laborer, the oppressed and plundered, the world around, have heard with exultation the glorious peal."

He brought the struggle against Negro slavery to Europe, and some accused him of anti-Americanism, of irritating the American people rather than doing them good. "They deserve to be irritated," said Douglass. "The conscience of the American people needs this irritation. And I would blister it all over, from center to circumference, until it gives signs

of a purer and a better life. . . ."

The persecution of the Abolitionists brought to the fore the whole question of civil rights and Douglass was an outstanding fighter on this front. Having personally insisted on freedom of speech to the point of nearly losing an eye and suffering several broken bones, he could say with full conviction: "To suppress free speech is a double wrong. It violates the rights of the hearer as well as those of the speaker. . . . There must be no concessions to the enemy. When a man is allowed to speak because he is rich and powerful, it aggravates the crime of denying the right to the poor and humble."

THERE was a consciously expressed dialectical quality to Douglass' thinking and work. He was devoid of subjectivity, and operated on the basis of a comprehension of the dynamic interpenetration in society. He insisted on the reality of laws of social science as of physical science and the possibility of discovering what was true and what was just. He saw the secret of history in man's own activity not, "in the clouds, in the stars, nor anywhere else outside of humanity itself." But he knew the activity was not self-propelled and did not spend itself in a vacuum. No—and here he practically echoed Marx, though there is no evidence that he had read him—"A man is worked upon by what he works on. He may carve out his circumstances, but his circumstances will carve him out as well."

Interpenetration permeated his work. "A wrong to one is a wrong to all," he asserted. And: "One end of the slave's chain must be fastened to a padlock in the lips of Northern freemen, else the slave will himself become free."

Tactically, this moved him to get things *done*. "To such a cause as ours," he once said, "a little *done* is worth more than ages of clamor about what *ought to be done*." And he constantly reiterated the unity of theory and action—as he put it in a recurrent phrase—"action as well as thought is required."

He had a fierce practicality. Nothing mattered but enhancing freedom and this intense and objective partisanship plus his genius for contact with the mass led him, time after time, to put his finger on the crucial need of the hour. And he was at his best in most trying times as in his grasp of the fact, during the Civil War, that the salvation of the Union required the liberation of the slaves, and the slaves' liberation required the union's salvation.

Similarly, during Reconstruction, he said that those who till the soil must own it, or the fruits of the Civil War would spoil, and he demanded, as a further guarantor of real freedom "the ballot-box, the jury-box, and the cartridge-box" for the Negro people.

The genius of the man may be further indicated by abstracting from one of the greatest political speeches ever made in the United States, his address at the 1883 National Con-

vention of Colored Men. "Who would be free," he said, "themselves must strike the blow. . . . The man outraged is the man to make the outcry." He declared the cause of the Southern Negro masses was "one with the laboring classes all over the world," and urged that "the labor unions of the country should not throw away this colored element of strength . . . we expect to have and ought to have the sympathy and support of laboring men everywhere."

He denounced the plantation system and saw the truth concerning it—peonage for the Negro millions—as the heart of the Negro question. He demanded an end to Jim Crow, full equality in education, jobs and politics, and excoriated in words of fire the disfranchisement of the Negro people, living, as a result, under the "control of a foul, haggard and damning conspiracy." And especially he called for a campaign to develop Negro representation, because "our persistent exclusion from office as a class is a great wrong, fraught with injury."

Or consider his analysis of lynching, published three years before his death:

"Now where rests the responsibility for the lynch law prevalent in the South? It is evident that it is not entirely with the ignorant mob. . . . These are not the men who make public sentiment. They are simply the hangmen. They simply obey the public sentiment of the South—the sentiment created by wealth and respectability. . . . Nor is the South alone responsible for this burning shame and menace to our free institutions. Wherever contempt of race prevails, whether against



frican, Indian or Mongolian, countenance and support are given to the present peculiar treatment of the Negro in the South. The finger of scorn at the North is unrelated to the dagger of the assassin in the South."

EVEN where, with the hindsight provided us by eighty years, we see certain failings in the activities of Douglass during his later years, these are not really central in terms of his dedication to the Negro liberation struggle. Though he saw, in his day, no effective political alternative, for instance, to the Republican Party, and remained within it, he was a veritable flaying machine in its ranks, constantly and as sharply as possible seeking to force it to put into practice its bowing promises.

Even, too, when he asserted that with slavery eliminated, he no longer proposed the expansion of the United States, Douglass thought of this expansion not in colonial, exploitive terms (which was the reality) but in terms of partnership. And one who follows his part in the diplomatic maneuverings connected with expansionism finds that his honesty and decency made him, objectively, an obstacle to such efforts and resulted in his resignation from such posts.

Douglass despised war. In his day he excoriated the government of the United States for its rape of Mexico and he affirmed "*Ever our banner the banner of Peace.*" He saw that "all human governments" in his time, had been failures" for "war, slavery, injustice and oppression and the idea that might makes right have been

uppermost in all such governments," which "have been and still are but armed camps."

Frederick Douglass died, as he had lived, fighting against injustice and for freedom. Two evenings before he passed away, on February 20, 1895, he had addressed a meeting seeking to restore the suffrage to the inhabitants of the District of Columbia. And on the morning and afternoon of the day he died he had participated in a convention of the National Women's Council, encouraging the battle to end women's disfranchisement.

THE masters of our social order have nothing but hatred for a giant like Frederick Douglass. Glorifiers of John C. Calhoun—accurately labeled by Douglass, "the great champion of human bondage"—win Pulitzer Prizes, and Pulitzer Prize poets write biographies of butchers like Metternich. The Federal government prepares "A National Program for the Publication of the Papers of American Leaders," and includes 122 names—from John Adams to Henry Ford—but the name of Frederick Douglass nowhere appears.

In striking contrast, Negro biographers—Charles W. Chesnutt, Booker T. Washington, Benjamin Quarles—together with historians like Carter G. Woodson and W. E. B. Du Bois, have always brought forward the great stature and significance of Douglass.

And it is noteworthy that a historian dismissed from his teaching

post for his progressive politics, Dr. Philip S. Foner, devotes years to the production of an epoch-making *Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*,\* a work to be read and read again. And it is published by International Publishers whose president, Alexander Trachtenberg, faces prison as one of the Communist leaders in-

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\* Four volumes are projected. Two have already appeared. The third, covering the Civil War years, is scheduled to appear this month.

dicted under the thought-control Smith Act.

For having prepared and published this work on Douglass both Philip Foner and Alexander Trachtenberg had they done nothing else, have earned, not such harassment and persecution, but enormous appreciation from all decent humanity.

Abraham Lincoln declared that Frederick Douglass was "the most meritorious man in the United States." He was that—and more. Douglass is a titan of our history.

### **From Our Magazine's Tradition**

*"Frederick Douglass, the escaped Negro slave laborer, was the greatest leader, black or white, of the abolition movement. . . Though the white man's history can see none but the white Lincoln, it was this 'Black Lincoln,' Douglass, who later urged the more timorous white president in effect that the Civil War of '61 was a revolution, and that it could be won only by bringing the black slave masses themselves into military combat against the feudal oligarchy."*

**ROBERT MINOR**, in the October, 1924,  
*Liberator*, forerunner of *Masses & Mainstream*

## **“Concerning Your Magazine . . .”**

DEAR Editor, Associate Editors, and Contributing Editors  
of *Masses & Mainstream*:

Having been a victim of having my father lynched in Mississippi at the age of two, I am grateful for the articles in your magazine concerning the issue of Negroes, and the terror inflicted upon them in Southern states, perhaps I should say our free America. It isn't only in the Southern states that you feel white supremacy but it is felt in California as well. It's like the *sting* of the *queen bee*.

I've read two issues of your magazine, November and December. Tears came to my eyes when I read your articles on "Mrs. Ingram's Kinfolk," and Mr. Pettis Perry. I admire these people. In your story I could in my imagination vividly see my father and mother struggle for survival in the South—Mississippi, the worst of the forty-eight. Would like to write Mrs. Ingram and Mr. Perry. Perhaps I could give them an incentive, especially the Ingram family, perhaps in need of food, clothing, and books to read.

Will purchase an issue every month, and will pass the word on to my friends concerning your magazine. It is the best I've ever read. My mother is still in Mississippi. However, I will send her an issue of your magazine if the Postmaster General doesn't read it first. If he does it will be my good deed done for Mississippi, which isn't my intention.

Some of the Petitioners of "We Charge Genocide!" I see are both editors, and associate editors, also contributing editors of *Masses & Mainstream*. Best wishes for a successful million years of your magazine.

E. M.

Balboa, Calif.

*Thank you, Miss E.M. And thank you, our many friends who have so far responded to our appeal for funds to carry on the magazine. We need \$7,500 for 1952, as we said in our last issue. At this writing we have received \$1,500. A good beginning, but only a beginning! If you haven't already done so, won't you send us your contribution now? Every day counts, and so does every dollar. Please let us hear from you at once.—THE EDITORS*



# *Negro Representation*

## *THIS Year!*

By **PETTIS PERRY**

**T**HE question of Negro representation in the year 1952 is of decisive importance for the realization of a broad electoral coalition of the peace and anti-fascist forces of our country. It is a central question in the whole struggle for Negro liberation.

For the last three decades the Negro people have been pushing forward at a very rapid pace, struggling on all fronts to overcome inequality and second-class citizenship. And this is especially true in the political life of our country.

Representation is not a routine question, but a fundamental and urgent question. For the Negro people know full well that one of the ways to advance their whole citizenship status in the country is to be in a position to help make the laws of the land on all levels of government—in the legislative halls of state and federal government, and in the judicial setup of the country, from the lowest to the highest courts.

They know full well that they should not only be subject to the laws that are made (many of them

detrimental to the Negro people) but they know also that they must be in a position to administer laws. The Negro people realize that they must not only be tax payers like everybody else, but that they must, on the municipal, county, state and federal level, be part of the tax collecting structure of this country.

In the past period, especially since the middle '30's, the Negro people have made some progress in this respect, mainly, of course, in appointing positions. But these hard-won crumbs must be seen against the background of that period in American history when the Negro people suffered their gravest and most serious defeat—the economic, social and political levels. I refer to the betrayal of Reconstruction by the Northern capitalists and their Southern Bourgeois allies.

During the brief period of the existence of the Reconstruction governments, the Negro people participated in all the legislative and administrative bodies in all of the Southern States. It was during this period that they were elected to

uses of Congress from the South. It was the only time that Negroes were elected as state treasurers, as in the case in a number of Southern states, and as secretaries of state, lieutenant governors, etc.

All of this has been lost to the Negro people for almost a century. The strivings of the Negro people today, with whatever degree of success they may have made, take place against this background, and the new surge of the Negro liberation movement aims to regain and surpass this ground that was lost at the downfall of Reconstruction.

The hour now cries out for a new level of struggle to obtain these objectives. It is the duty and responsibility of the white labor and progressive forces of this country to carry through the most resolute fight for full realization of these goals.

Some will say that this is nothing new: we have always fought for Negro representation in government. Others will argue that this struggle will only place in office a number of middle-class Negroes who will be "Uncle Toms." Still others will insist that the only possibility for Negroes to obtain this objective is when groups like the Progressive Party, American Labor Party, and Communist Party have a sufficient mass base. Is there anything new in bringing forward and fighting unyieldingly for the swiftest realization of Negro representation on all levels of government? There are many new questions. Yet, there never was a time when our country stood so close to the

brink of fascism and war as it does today. Hence, a mass fight against one of the most potent weapons of the fascist and profascist forces in this country, namely Jim Crow oppression, is of the greatest importance.

Further, there never was a time in the history of our country when genocidal warfare was more intense against the Negro people than it is today—witness the brutal bombing of the Moores in Florida. The fight through to a full realization of Negro representation from one end of the country to the other on all levels of government, would be an immediate and telling blow against the advance of fascism.

**T**HERE never was a time in our history when the ruling class carried out such an intense demagogic campaign abroad about American democracy while advancing rapidly towards fascism. Note the billions that are being spent for the so-called "Voice of America" that is heard everywhere except in the deep South and the United States generally. Similarly, the so-called "Crusade for Freedom," led by Southern Bourbons in the person of General Lucius Clay of Georgia, is directed at the peoples of Europe and Asia, while the demagogues proceed with fascist attacks against the Negro people and the working class here at home.

An additional new fact is that the 1952 elections are the most crucial that our country has ever witnessed—even more crucial than the election

of 1860 that brought Abraham Lincoln to the Presidency. The 1952 elections will determine in no small measure to what extent America will march back towards barbarism or march forward to democracy.

The Republican and Democratic parties, which demagogically proclaimed in the 1948 campaign that they would repeal the Taft-Hartley law and insure a Civil Rights program for the Negro people, betrayed their platform promises. This pattern will be repeated to a much greater extent in the 1952 elections, and without a successful fight on the part of a people's democratic coalition to smash through this demagogy, the results of such a bi-partisan coalition would be far more tragic for our country and the world.

These are some of the major new features in the fight for Negro representation. It is in this light that the Left and Progressive forces need to view the tremendous importance of this slogan. A true understanding of this question will lead all white progressives in the country to make the most courageous and determined fight to break through the political walls of demagogy and advance the cause of Negro representation. In every state the broadest coalition of labor, the white progressive intellectuals and others of the middle class, in alliance with the Negro people is needed to realize this objective.

As to the effects of this kind of fight and its value: such a fight would advance the whole cause of democracy in our country as never before,

and this would have a most important impact upon the fight not only against Jim Crow, but against anti-Semitism against the attacks on the labor movement, the foreign born, the Mexican and Puerto Rican people, etc. It would have the most powerful effect upon the whole development of the peace movement in this country. It would improve as never before the relationship between the progressive forces of this country and the colonial liberation movements of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. It would greatly strengthen the world peace coalition.

As to the argument that the fight to advance Negro representation would result in putting "Uncle Tom" into office, the answer is as follows: It is a slander upon the Negro people to say that the Negro middle class and the Negro bourgeoisie are "Uncle Toms." To confuse the role of Dawson, Wilkins, Granger, Tobias Sampson, etc., with the aims and aspirations of the Negro middle class is to mistake every bump in the road for the main highway. This argument not only impugns the integrity of the Negro people themselves, but underestimates the intelligence of the Negro masses and their ability to differentiate and eliminate "Uncle Tom" elements from their ranks.

Further, it fails to take into account that a mass upsurge of the Negro people, in alliance with labor and progressive forces among the white people, would be a compelling force among the many sections of the Negro middle class, causing them to gain the



confidence in such a coalition, to fight militantly for the realization of this objective. This upsurge would, moreover, create the condition in which the Negro workers and poor farmers could move forward to exert powerful influence and leadership in such a coalition.

Finally, the argument under discussion overlooks the fact that the enemies of the Negro people are the white ruling class—monopoly capital, the Bourbon plantation owners and their spokesmen in and out of Congress, the K.K.K., etc. While a handful of Negro misleaders are treacherous, the Negro masses in the midst of the struggle will take care of these enemies within their own ranks. But it is up to the white progressives, Communists and non-Communists, to carry through in a serious manner the fight against the main enemies of the Negro people and the progressive movement, namely the white supremacists, the lynchers, and the monopoly reaction.

HEREFORE I believe that all white progressives in every community have a number of responsibilities:

To watch in every state for the expiration of terms in judicial offices, particularly those of higher rank, and to demand in all cases of vacancy that only judges be appointed. Such demands should be made in all Federal Districts, with regard to all state courts, and the U.S. Supreme Court itself.

In all cases where election re-

districting, based on the 1950 census, takes place, to see to it that the districts be reapportioned in such a manner as to guarantee Negro representation. Unless this is done now the progressive forces will have to wait until the census of 1960 before this particular demand can be won.

3. To help develop the broadest type of coalition in all of the major industrial states throughout the country, and in all Southern states. To put up a real fight for Negro congressional, Senatorial, Assembly and other candidates for political office, and not limited to districts that have an overwhelmingly Negro constituency. Serious effort to win the white population to the absolute necessity of supporting such candidates is urgent.

4. To encourage immediately a nationwide movement — East, West, North and South—for Negro representation. And to promote this movement especially among the white population.

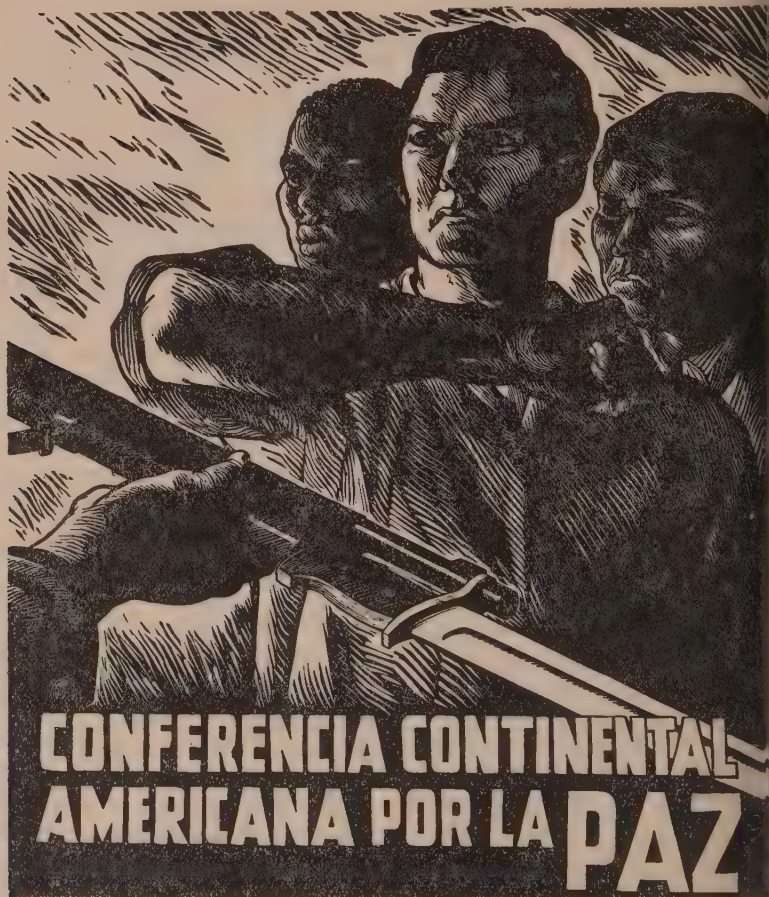
5. To develop a nationwide movement on the broadest possible basis for the passage in this session of Congress of an anti-poll tax law, and for legislation outlawing all restrictions on voting. This would include outlawing the K.K.K. and all other legal and extra-legal methods of disfranchisement of the Negro masses and poor whites of the South.

Unless the fight for Negro representation embraces large sections of the Negro masses in the South, it will miss its mark. There are millions of whites, especially white workers, intellectuals, professionals, and small

business people who, if appealed to, would support this demand. And there can be no doubt that such an all-out fight would, as never before, set into motion the 15 million Negro people in this country.

Let us celebrate this Negro History

week of 1952 by making the most serious preparations for writing new pages in the history of the Negro people — bringing into the foreground, in the fullest possible sense, the campaign for Negro representatives on all levels of government.



Poster for the Intercontinental Peace Conference to be held in Rio de Janeiro, March 11 to 16. Woodcut by Taller de Grafica Popular, Mexico City.

# *Florida:* **PARADISE FOR KILLERS**

**By JOSEPH NORTH**

CHRISTMAS came to Florida this year in a glory of azure skies that gleamed on the orange groves laden with a golden bumper crop. Heading north I had left Miami's palmy avenues and its pasteboard replicas of the Three Wise Men bearing gifts to the Christ child. Above them were great placards bearing the Son of Man's words: "Peace on Earth and Good Will to Men." I drove to Mims, halfway up the state in Brevard County to attend the funeral of Harry Moore, the Negro martyr who had been bombed in his little home while bells chimed and the choirs sang on Christmas night. For the Klan, which had celebrated the holy season in its immemorial way, had been celebrating for months. Shadowy charges of dynamite or TNT eighteen times since 1944 in the Negro neighborhoods of Miami, in the Jewish synagogues, in the Catholic church and now, on the Christian day of peace they had murdered a Negro hero, and his wife who died a few days later. Mims lies half-hidden by great

orange groves: a small backwoods Florida town—a few big garages, Coca Cola signs, a great central store, a movie house advertising a Western, several streets of fine gleaming white houses where the rich planters live and then, down in the hollow, after a sharp right turn off U.S. Highway 1, you are among the shabby, unpainted clapboard bungalows of the Negroes.

As I approached the little white-washed church in the green fields hidden from the main thoroughfare, I saw 300 cars on the dusty roadway and some thousand Negro men standing outside surrounding the building. Inevitably I thought of Peekskill where they had tried to murder Paul Robeson and where a cross, too, had been burned. I noticed that no white townspeople were here this day, not one. There was good reason to stay away. The Negro men outside St. James Missionary Baptist Church were young and lean and they had a certain look on their faces. The terrorists knew that look and they remained in their garages, pool rooms and in the



big white houses near U.S. Highway 1.

I edged my way into the little church jammed with humanity and I saw that most of the people inside were women, many with their babies in their arms: the menfolk were outside, alert, scanning all strangers, all faces.

There lay the martyr: a man in his strong prime, 46, bold, brown features, a high forehead, his eyes sealed in death. Great wreaths of roses and lilies lay beside the remains of Harry T. Moore, a man who had taught all his life, whose wife and daughters were teachers. But Mr. Moore had taught one lesson too many and for that he died. Here, amid the orange groves in full fruit, men in hoods had decreed his death for teaching that justice was a mockery in the Groveland case. As state head of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People he had gone up and down Florida teaching that the Negro defendants were innocent men, that they had had no just trial and that Sheriff McCall who had murdered one must be brought to book and punished.

So an explosive tore his body to pieces as he lay in bed with his wife Christmas night. Mrs. Harriet Moore, mortally wounded, insisted upon leaving her hospital bed to attend her husband's funeral and when she returned to her cot she died.

And Bill Hendrix, of Tallahassee, the avowed head of Florida's klansmen, told the newspapers the day after the explosion that the Klan was

"innocent" and that "this fellow Moore wanted for the good of his race but he just learned that he went about it the wrong way."

Inside St. James Church the Negroes mourned but they had no tears. Nobody wept, neither men, nor women nor children. I listened to the preacher, a small, gray-haired man with great tragic eyes and a low clear voice as he told the story of Harry T. Moore. He told it facing Hubert E. Griggs, a red-faced, plump politician, the county assistant prosecutor, who came to inform the mourners that Mr. Moore was a fine upstanding citizen and that he, Mr. Griggs, could not for the life of his soul understand or believe that any citizen of our great county could have committed this dastardly crime.

When he sat down the faces before him were stone and there was not a rustle of movement among the mourners. For anybody knowing Florida politics knows that the county attorney is in his chair by grace of the Ku Klux Klan and he knew that these Negroes knew it. So he sat there, in the front row, in his double-breasted suit, mopping his brow as the preacher spoke.

**N**OW it is no easy matter to challenge the Klan with murder, in Klan territory and before a Klan-elected official, possibly a Klansman himself. And the Negro preacher spoke the way his forefathers did in the land of Jefferson Davis. There was Daniel in the lion's den and the Lord had delivered Daniel, hadn't he? And

the Hebrew children from the furnace and there was a man named Moses who led them out of slavery in Egypt to the land of Canaan. And the Good Book was testament to it and the Good Lord had made a pledge. The Bible, a big thick volume, worn but heavy with authority lay before him and the preacher bent from time to time to turn a page and cite the prophets as witnesses. His words were punctuated by murmurs, and sometimes cries of amen from the mourners, and it's the truth, the gospel truth, and one tall, spare man behind me shouted "Love me, O man," shouting it before the dead body of Harry T. Moore like a law.

It was different with the younger people. A slim Negro woman, twenty-two or so, tall, straight as a pine, lepped forward in her neat, white dress trimmed in black and movingly recited a long poem about a white man named John Brown. Then another young woman who was introduced as a friend of the Moore family told of the Negro martyrs of our land and the Negro heroes and heroines and she named them by name . . . Frederick Douglass . . . Sojourner Truth . . . Harriet Tubman . . . and he added that now in his glory our brother Harry T. Moore is among them.

The district attorney sat wiping his red brow and from the little platform crowded by the somber choir dressed in cap and gown I could look down and see the solemn, dry eyes of the mourners and the martyr's dead strong body lying before them.

One after another the Negroes pledged their life's blood to redeem the work of their neighbor and they would never end their labors until their people in America walked the land the equal of other men. That was what they said in this little church with its whitewashed wooden walls, the little black pot-bellied stove and crooked stovepipe in the center, and the hard, beautiful faces of Florida's Negroes all about.

When they finished they bore the body of the martyr down the little sandy roadway under a sky turning gold and lay the body to rest in a small cemetery with low, flat headstones. The preacher ended the day as dusk fell with the words: "You can kill the prophet but you cannot kill his message." Amen, they said and went back slowly up the road.

No, you cannot kill the message. That was clear from the speaker's words who had said, holding a sheaf of letters and telegrams: "We have messages here from all over America and from all over the world, from the other side of the ocean. The world knows why Mr. Moore died. The world honors Mr. Moore and the world honors his message." The world was very much in Mims that day.

For more came than mail. Sixteen white and Negro men and women from the North had flown to stand among the mourners. They came into the Klan heartland to speak for hundreds of thousands, millions, these delegates from the Civil Rights Congress, from progressive trade-unions like the furriers, the electrical work-

ers, the distributive workers. They came from the arts, sciences and professions, from the farm co-operatives of New York and from the Philadelphia Negro churches. And the Negroes of Florida honored their Northern brethren and sisters when they invited the Pennsylvania Negro minister to the platform to speak.

Outside, the representatives of the Civil Rights Congress distributed copies of their devastating indictment "*We Charge Genocide!*" which will be heard before the United Nations Assembly across the ocean at Paris.

And the Negroes here, in backwood Mims, and in cosmopolitan Miami, knew it. This was the most heartening fact of my journey, perhaps of all my journeys South on writing assignments: the Negroes of Florida knew they were not alone. They know the court of world opinion is sitting in judgment. The thrust of the world was felt in the distant groves of Florida. Never before did I feel it so strongly as I did now. This was something new, enormously inspiring and this was in the midst of a terror which is new even for Florida.

**I** RETURNED to Miami late that night, driving hard all the way after I had telephoned my story to New York from some isolated booth outside Mims. I arrived in the Eden of vacationists where the dynamite goes off every few days in synagogues, churches and in the dwellings where Negroes live.

But the Miami Chamber of Com-

merce is undaunted. The face of Miami they offer to the tourists is serene, heavily rouged and now it had been made up for the great doings of New Year's Eve. And while people were mourning Mr. Moore in Mims the merchants of Miami had set up the grandstand seats on the boulevard fronting Biscayne Bay for the great festive procession led by lissom drum majorettes, bathing beauties and vast orange floats. Among them I saw the replica of a jet and a tank to honor the U.S. Marines and it was made of myriads of roses. A little placard in the lower corner modestly said: "By courtesy of Coca Cola."

I went behind the gaudy facade and I found a different city. I cannot use names because the people of the great gay wintering spot do not know where the terrorists will strike next and what I was told came from men and women who pledged me to keep their names a secret.

The first bomb exploded in a Negro community called Carver Village named for the great Negro scientist. Little white bungalows stand in neat rows and little green lawns surround them. These are not the gray, clapboard shacks that lean against one another in the older Negro neighborhoods. They are part of a greater housing project built for whites but the realtors, finding difficulty renting all the houses, marked off a section for Negroes. Black men in houses similar to those of whites? That violated the sensibilities of the Klan and last June the first bomb went off in the courtyard of the house I visited.



A Negro woman of thirty came to the door and talked to me through the screen. She was reticent, at first, but I persuaded her that I came from the North and was writing for a newspaper that opposed these atrocities. She relented and talked for a while. The first bomb, she said, had come in this very door from its hinges. "God was merciful and nobody was killed. 'Nobody here has been killed yet,' she said, 'but somebody will be soon.' Nobody had been killed until that explosion up there in Mims where that good, fine man, Moore had been killed, God bless his soul.

"It is strange, she said, to come all the way from Birmingham where she was born to Miami where she was married and to find the same old thing. Three crosses had been burned in her father's yard in Alabama; three explosions had roared in her own courtyard in Florida. The Klan must be changing its ways: in Alabama they advertise, they come in great parades of cars, she had counted on there, but in Florida they commit their crimes by the light of the moon. I asked what she intended to do, to leave away, remain? Her husband emerged from the kitchen to stand next to her side, a short, stocky man with a furrowed face, and he told me. "We are not moving," the man said. "This is our home and here we will stay."

Her husband interrupted, evidently apprehensive that his wife had said too much. "The Klan says it had nothing to do with this," he said.

She turned to her husband: "Do you think the Klan didn't do it because it says it didn't do it?"

He shrugged: "I'm saying what the papers said." The housewife then mentioned, casually, that the police ride by every few minutes in their prowling car looking for strange faces. I thanked her and we said goodby.

Her husband was right, I discovered. Not one Florida newspaper had pointed the finger at the Klan. They contented themselves with quoting a denial by the chief Kleagle and that was all. But they published, on the morning of the funeral, a photograph of a Klan meeting, in full regalia, hoods and all, up in the orange grove country, listening to a Kleagle "who denied any complicity in the Moore death." The newspapers also said that Communists could be responsible. Later they told of a man "with a foreign accent who telephoned authorities that he still had plenty of dynamite." The press, editorially and otherwise, and the radio, surmised that every sort of culprit could be guilty, but never mentioned the Klan. It could be college boys on pranks, it could be cranks, or "certain residents" who "resent the Negro invasion of Carver Village"—it could be everything but that which everybody knows it is.

NEXT I went to the heart of the Negro community in downtown Miami where the great white and pink buildings disappear and suddenly there is a wilderness of grim, unpainted wooden houses, narrow,

littered streets, all the lineaments of the Southern ghetto. I went to the office of a leading Negro citizen and introduced myself. He listened gravely and then dragged two chairs to the front of his open door facing the pavement where we sat and I felt that he placed the chairs in public view deliberately. After all I was white, a white stranger, and Mr. Moore had just been murdered. . . .

"I cannot understand," I said after a few moments, "why the Klan has not been mentioned by a single newspaper."

He was silent.

"The *Miami Herald* says the murder of Mr. Moore at Mims had nothing to do with the bombings of Miami. That's certainly strange, especially since no report has been announced, as yet, by either the F.B.I., the State authorities or the local police."

Silence again. And I understand the silence for after all, the enemies of the Negro people are numerous and variegated. But I persisted: "Any American who ever read a word about the Klan knows its traditional program has been violence against Negroes in the first place, Jews and Catholics. Here in Miami, Carver Village inhabited by Negroes was bombed first; then synagogues of the Jews; then the Catholic church. Two and two make four."

A police car passed and the hawk-eyed cops peered this way and that. "Can it be," I continued, "that the reason lies in the fact that the press, the state authority, and the police are

either Klan or Klan-allied?"

He looked at me and, glancing away, replied, "Maybe you got something there." Then evidently persuaded that I was genuine, no enemy and that I would do as I said, kept his identity inviolate, the dam of silence broke and he spoke his mind (This is what he said and I repeat it because I found it, to one degree or another, common to many Negroes, here in Miami and in Mims.)

*Can you imagine what the Indians feel when we say we are the bulwark of freedom? The Iranians? The Egyptians? Our country has become laughing stock throughout the world with its pretensions to democracy. And now that Mr. Patterson has introduced that charge of genocide at the United Nations. [He referred to a column by Mrs. Roosevelt in the morning's press which deplored Mr. Moore's murder for a number of reasons but chiefly, it seemed, because it would now be more difficult to disprove Mr. Patterson's charges of genocide at the U.N.] Mrs. Roosevelt denies genocide. Can her denial be believed when this is happening in Florida? And do you think that Mr. Vishinsky will be quiet about this? And do you believe the colored people will believe him or believe those who do nothing about murder in Florida? The U.S. isn't the only country in the world that has cut its teeth.*

That's about what he said.

**T**HEN I went to the synagogue called Tifereth Israel that had been



THE MOORES' HOME: *Drawn on the scene by Rockwell Kent*

bombed twice. I was shown the poster the terrorists left. A swastika adorned each corner of the poster and on top read "Achtung! K.K.K." In rough printed letters it said, "Nieder Mit die verdammte Juden und die Schmutzige Neger. Heil Hitler. Signed, K.K.K."

The circle was complete.

I spoke with some of the Jews. I learned this: on December 9 the American Jewish Congress had, in partnership with the Miami N.A.A.-P., sponsored a protest at the Mt. Zion Baptist Church in the Negro community. Twelve hundred whites and Negroes came to declare their horror at the shooting of the two Negro defendants in the Groveland case. They demanded the punishment of the sheriff. The meeting was a record event in this Jim Crow state.

As the synagogues continued to be bombed, Jewish war veterans volunteered to patrol the synagogues and churches. A Protestant minister offered his congregation's services. An interfaith and interracial committee sprang up to stop the bombings. An unprecedented surge toward unity was in motion.

Then big mysterious pressures began to operate: somebody turned the screws. The newspapers clamored, in issue after issue, to leave it to the cops and the F.B.I. The Miami *Herald* pleaded patience. Chief of Police H. U. Warner, of Hialeah where the big race track is, warned against hysteria. The Anti-Defamation League published a long report by its investigators which the *Herald* praised as a model of forbearance. Walter White praised the F.B.I. Governor



Warren praised the state investigators and posted rewards. Certain of the Jewish leaders opposed the volunteer service of the Jewish veterans and said, "It's up to the police to protect us." Thus every official nerve was strained to prevent the maturing unity down below from flowering.

Then came the murder of Mr. Moore. Again the newspapers harangued, in editorial, news story, column, that the killing in Brevard County had no relation to the bombings in Miami. The pattern of obfuscation, confusion, was as clear as a palm tree on the Biscayne.

But the people in their little homes, the Negroes in the clapboard shacks, the Negroes and whites who marched through Miami's streets in a silent procession Sunday, January 6, to demonstrate their protest, know better. The Jews in their synagogues are chafing, especially those of the younger generation. All have seen no progress in the inquiry, no arrests, nothing but consoling statements.

And up in Mims the F.B.I. announced that it had completed sifting the silt around the wreckage of Mr. Moore's house and would soon be able to announce whether it was TNT or dynamite that killed the Negro leader. But Stephen Turnbull, *Herald* correspondent from Miami, let the cat out of the bag when he wrote: "If any suspect has even been questioned that fact is unknown in this little

community—where secrets are hard to keep."

**J**UST below the official surface of Miami, of Florida, masses of people strain to stand shoulder to shoulder, to face the Klan terror and to conquer it. Not only Negroes, they include Jews, Protestants, Catholics. The Negro people know that they are not alone.

I found that in Florida, I met it on the train coming North. The streamliner was crowded with returning tourists, but the Negro waiter, a broad-shouldered, gray-headed man of grave dignity, found time to talk with me as he filled the orders of his customers. He passed word down the train among his Negro co-workers that I had been to Mims. "And what was it like?" he asked, his eyes narrowed. I described it. When I told how the C.R.C. had left copies of *We Charge Genocide!* he asked if I had a copy by any chance. I had and he borrowed it to read that night after work, concealing it beneath a pile of white napkins.

At dawn, as the train pulled into the capital, he returned the book. "I read it and a couple of my friends read it with me." One passed at that moment, bearing a heavy load of luggage and he said softly, "Radio said she just died. The wife."

"Two dead," the waiter said. "Two more dead."

# THE LONG STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

By JOHN PITTMAN

IN THE current off-Broadway production of *A Medal for Willie*, the play's heroine is a Southern Negro mother. She states the play's theme as she rejects a medal which the United States Government has awarded posthumously to her son Willie for valor in a war overseas. "Willie was brave," she says, "and I'm proud. But maybe he should have had that machine gun right here at home, where it might have done some good."

To express such ideas is no little thing in these times of thought-control, imposed by a war-bent administration serving profit-greedy billionaires. The political police, who have never brought a lyncher to justice, scrutinize in alarm every manifestation of Negro protest. But the Negro mother's words ring with defiance of the war-makers and pro-fascists. They breathe a militancy no less inspiring than the fact of the play itself. Negro-written and Negro-produced, this play has been shown only in Harlem, and it is the only anti-war play to appear in New York since Truman, MacArthur,

Dulles and Rhee set off the Korean conflict.

Are the ideas expressed by the Negro mother to be heard only in the theater? There are people who would like to think this. They want the American people to believe that all Negroes share the enthusiasm of a Ralph Bunche and a Channing Tobias for lily-white Washington's war against the Koreans and Chinese.

Such people are out of touch with reality. To understand how far removed are the pro-war Negro spokesmen from the sentiments of the Negro masses, it is only necessary to note the Negro people's position as a leading force of the American peace movement. Indeed, no kind of effective peace activity in the United States today is conceivable without the active participation and leadership of Negroes.

The idea expressed by the Negro mother in the play is common talk in every Negro ghetto. Recall the statements of Negro spokesmen following the fascist outbreaks in Florida that murdered Harry T. Moore, the state co-ordinator of the National

Association for the Advancement of Colored People and his wife. One such statement from a Negro pulpit was reported in the *New York Times* (Dec. 31, 1951): "The Rev. Dr. Samuel H. Sweeney, pastor of St. Mark's Methodist Church, 49 Edgecomb Avenue, said in his sermon yesterday that in view of the Florida bomb killing, American Negroes should not be asked to give their lives in Korea."

Such is the evidence of life as to the Negro people's position in the fight for peace today. Yet, such evidence is not enough. The facts need a background and a context. It is necessary to know *why* the Negro people stand among the vanguard of any opposition to a predatory, unjust war waged by the imperialist rulers of our country.

**N**EGRO history teaches the truth about the Negro people's attitude to war and peace. But what kind of history? The question is important. Most American historical research and writings propagate a ruling class and white supremacist bias. If they treat the matter at all, they treat it condescendingly. They minimize the Negro's role both in war and in peace. To such "historians," the Negro is a coward in war and a problem during peacetime.

Such racist rot has been demolished by Negro scholars and writers who have dug up the records of Negro heroism in the wars waged by the United States. However, since Ne-

groes fought in every war involving this country, such an approach has given the erroneous impression that the majority of Negroes supported every war.

The question at issue goes deeper than that of a people's courage on the field of battle. As important as is the pioneering work of Dr. Carter G. Woodson and scores of Negro and white scholars who labored under his leadership, bringing to light the raw material of Negro history, this work was unable to illumine the causes for the uniqueness of the Negro people's attitudes to wars waged by the United States. Questions of attitude to war and peace can be understood clearly only by a historical method embracing a working class outlook and a scientific approach to nations. Only Marxism has such a scientific outlook and scientific approach.

Hence, Marxist scholarship in Negro history offers the most reliable sources today for an understanding of the Negro people's position in the fight for peace. Notable among Marxist writers on this subject is Dr. Herbert Aptheker, who has produced several studies of the Negro people's participation in wars involving the United States. His recently published work, *A Documentary History of the Negro People in the United States*, contains among its 450 documents many expressions by the Negro people defining their own attitude to war and peace. From the words of these spokesmen, as well as from the data in Aptheker's other studies



number of generalizations concerning the Negro's position on war and peace can be drawn.

Through their unique historical experience, the Negro people have come to acquire a clearer understanding than most other Americans of the difference between just and unjust wars. Negroes have tended to reject, on the one hand, ideas of abstract pacifism, and on the other hand, the chauvinism of the American Century type of jingoists. The slave-owners and their successors, the imperialists, have themselves inoculated the Negro people against American chauvinism, in which the content of white supremacy bulks large.

Yet, among Negroes there is not now nor has there ever been a strong pacifist current—an indiscriminate opposition to war regardless of origin or aim. Negroes have sympathized with and supported such just wars as Toussaint L'Ouverture's wars for Haitian independence, Kossuth's 1848 rebellion in Hungary, the Polish Republic's war against German-Italian intervention under Pilsudski, and Ethiopia's fight for independence.

In practice, Negroes have reacted to each war involving the United States in accordance with their judgment of its nature. Their test of whether a war was just or unjust has been simple: would it bring more or less freedom to the Negro people?

Thus, the majority of Negroes supported the three great just wars

waged by the United States—the American Revolution and its continuation in 1812, the Civil War and World War II. Negroes supported the Revolutionary War and saw in it the prospect of realizing the principles of the Declaration of Independence for themselves; the war against the slave-power, because it promised them freedom from chattel slavery; the war against fascist aggression, because they hated Hitlerism and because the war held out the hope of full integration into the country's industrial and political life.

In each of these wars, however, the Negro people were compelled to fight for the right to fight. Their struggles for this right, as well as their actual participation in the fighting, deepened and strengthened the democratic character of these wars, thereby expanding the conditions of freedom also for the masses of white workers and farmers.

Moreover, the contributions of Negroes, by hastening victory in these wars, also sped the restoration of peace. History presents truth sometimes in the form of a seeming paradox, a unity of opposites. Herein lies an important truth concerning the objective role of the Negro people in the struggle for peace: by their struggle amidst war to abolish the conditions of class and national oppression which generate war, the Negro people fight to establish the conditions of peace. The struggle for Negro freedom is an indispensable part of the struggle for peace.

There are many other manifestations of this truth besides the Negro people's support of the just wars involving the United States. Delays and limitations on the Negro's right to fight in the three great just wars prolonged those wars, cost many more lives, and postponed the establishment of peace. In fact, such obstacles in the Revolutionary War and the Civil War almost lost these wars. Moreover, the cumulative experience of frustration, of being denied the fruits of victory for which they had fought, increasingly chilled the Negro people's enthusiasm for any war waged by the United States Government.

**F**INALLY, there is the record of Negro opposition to the unjust, predatory wars waged by United States governments.

The predatory war against Mexico, instigated by the slaveowners, was strenuously opposed by Frederick Douglass and other Negro spokesmen. Douglass exposed the hypocritical cry of "Peace" that followed ratification of the unjust treaty with Mexico: "In our judgment, those who have all along been in favor of a vigorous prosecution of the war, and heralding its bloody triumphs with apparent rapture, and glorifying the atrocious deeds of barbarous heroism on the part of wicked men engaged in it, have no sincere love of peace, and are not now rejoicing over peace, but *plunder.*"

The Negro's opposition to unjust wars becomes especially outspoken

during the rise of U.S. imperialism. The concentration of production, development of monopolies and formation of finance capital were accompanied by savage repressions of the working masses, Negro and white. This was the period of practical nullification of the great Civil War amendments to the Constitution and the Civil Rights laws which established the legal foundations for Negro citizenship. This was the period when, in accordance with the laws of capitalist development and following the examples of the slaveholders, U.S. imperialists launched their first big effort to bring other peoples and other countries under their control.

The Negro people understood this basic relation between the imperialists' policy toward them and their policy toward other peoples. Thus in 1899 the Negroes of Massachusetts addressed an open letter to President McKinley, informing him that "scales of illusion" in respect to his aims fell from their eyes when they saw "how you preached patience, industry, moderation to your long suffering black fellow-citizens, and patriotism, jingoism and imperialism to your white ones."

In the unjust war against Spain hesitating support was given by some Negro spokesmen. They were motivated by the hope that by participating they would be able to improve their rapidly worsening conditions. But among the masses there was strong anti-war sentiment which was increased by the Jim Crow treatment



ETER SALEM AT BUNKER HILL: *Woodcut by Stan Levine, (Graphic Arts Workshop).*

f Negro soldiers and their use against the colored peoples of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines.

In 1898, Charles G. Baylor, a rovidence, R. I., attorney, was idely quoted in the Negro press as ying: "the American Negro cannot

become the ally of Imperialism without enslaving his own race. . . ."

And on Nov. 17, 1899, Lewis H. Douglass, the son of Frederick Douglass, declared McKinley's promise of freedom to the Filipinos "is hypocrisy of the most sickening



kind." "It is a sorry, though true, fact," he said, "that whatever this government controls, injustice to dark races prevails. The people of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Hawaii and Manila know it well as do the wronged Indian and outraged black man in the United States. . . ."

Again, in World War I, certain Negro leaders gave hesitating support, this time because the demagoguery of the Wilson Administration and the absorption of Negroes in the war industries of the North disguised the true aims of this imperialist slaughter. They were disarmed by Wilson's hypocritical talk of fighting "to make the world safe for democracy," and to uphold the right of all peoples to self-determination. Moreover, they believed that through participating in this war they would establish their rights to full citizenship.

But again the treatment of Negroes in the armed forces, especially the measures against Negro troops overseas, brought rapid disillusionment and widespread skepticism concerning the aims of the war. The cold and even brutal reception given the majority of these soldiers on their return home deepened these feelings, and go far to explain the coolness of the Negro people during the initial period of World War II.

After each war involving the United States, Negroes have denounced the government's failure to carry through its promises. Thus Henry M. Turner, Negro representative in the Georgia House of Repre-

sentatives, said on Sept. 3, 1868, following the expulsion of Negroes from that body by the resurgent ex-slave-holders and their lackeys:

"You may expell us, gentlemen, but I firmly believe that you will someday repent it. The black man cannot protect a country if the country does not protect him; and if, tomorrow, a war should arise, I would not raise a musket to defend a country where my manhood is denied."

**T**HE historical experiences of Negroes in wars involving the U.S. influences the growth of national feelings, and these in turn deepen the meaning of the lessons of history and turn them to account in the cause of freedom. Thus, several times since 1945 the Negro people through their militant organizations have gone over the head of the government of the United States and petitioned the United Nations for redress of their grievances—and *each time they have linked their fight for freedom to the cause of world peace.*

A petition presented in 1947 through the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People charged that oppression of the Negro people in the U.S.

"spells danger . . . to the nations of the world. The federal government has for these reasons continually cast its influence with imperial aggression throughout the world and withdrawn their sympathy from the colored peoples and from the small nations. . . . It is not Russia that threatens the United States so much as Mississippi; not Stalin and Molotov but Bilbo and Rankin; internal injustice done to one's brothers is far more dangerous

than the aggression of strangers from abroad."

The Civil Rights Congress in its recent petition to the UN, "We Charge Genocide!" declared that UN action in behalf of the Negro people "will contribute to the peace of the world," because genocidal crimes which are increasing against the Negro people today constitute "a threat to the peace of the world."

In these appeals it is important to note the Negro people's consciousness of their own pivotal, strategic position in the world struggle for peace. Hence, it is not accidental that the Negro people's leaders simultaneously act as leaders in the movement for peace, and that in every kind of peace activity and organization Negroes play a prominent and indispensable role.

To the Negro people belong also those two giants in the world struggle for peace, the two peace leaders best known among the peoples of the world as representative of the best and noblest traditions of the American people—Paul Robeson and Dr. W. E. B. Du Bois.

The process by which the national aspirations of the Negro people are fused with the internationalist viewpoint of the working class is an his-

torical process. It is developing as a logical and inevitable consequence of U.S. imperialism's oppression of the Negro people and exploitation of the working people of the United States.

This process is sharply accelerated by the impact of Marxist ideas on American life. For Marxism, while championing the rights of nations to determine their own destiny and to develop their own culture, asserts the primacy of working class internationalism in the struggle for peace and against imperialist oppression. It is no accident that the billionaires and their Washington administration have been especially savage in their attacks on Negro leaders of the Communist Party, a number of whom, such as Benjamin J. Davis, Pettis Perry and Henry Winston, have been subjected under the war-mongering Smith Act to prison, indictment on trumped-up charges, and merciless harassment by the billionaires' political police. For these Negro Communist leaders embody in its highest and most conscious form the Negro people's struggle for freedom and peace, the unity of their national aspirations and the internationalist viewpoint of the workers.

# *The Legacy of Willie Jones*

By **LLOYD L. BROWN**

**H**ERE they are on my desk—37 letters written by my friend Willie Jones, written in pencil, for regulations allowed no pens. It seems a miracle that they have now come into my hands, for only in fiction are such things credible. And strangely enough it was in connection with my novel that I came to get them.

It was early last November, but winter had already come to Western Pennsylvania: the snow was a dirty bandage over the ravaged hills. Down through the murk to the Pittsburgh airport, and then the furnace flare of J&L mill, making steel again for war, and the red glow along the narrow, twisted streets (Jane Street after Jane Mellon, Sarah Street after Sarah Mellon)—the red glow of the neon lights that would spell DUQUESNE PILSENER and IRON CITY LAGER.

Through the Liberty tunnel by car and then, with dramatic suddenness, the city, steel heart of America. Across the Monongahela (the bridge is named Liberty, too) and—stop-light! My eyes lift up slowly, slowly

climbing the granite wall that rises on our left. . . .

*First they built their castles, and then, remembering God, they built Presbyterian churches, and then, remembering their fellow-men, they built the Allegheny County Jail.*

The steel barons built it grandly—for those were the days of their glory—and there it stands, the finest example of Romanesque architecture in all the land.

The walls are not so high, of course, from here on the outside. Not so high and mighty as they seemed ten years ago when Willie Jones and the rest of us in the Yard lifted our eyes to the topmost height, and up to the smoggy sky of freedom. . . .

They are having a reception this night for the author of *Iron City*: nine years have passed since I left for the Army, and this is my first time back. I will see my friends again.

Here's smiling Ben Careathers, Negro leader, just two weeks out of that jail on bond—facing a Smith Act



trial, and he was in there with us in the old days. Jim Dolsen had yet to be released (and he too was one of the old prisoners), but here is hero Steve Nelson and the other brave men singled out for persecution—Bill Albertson, Irv Weissman, Andy Onda. Honor enough to shake their hands!

And look—there in the audience in this Negro Baptist church, his dark face solemn-warm, radiant with his strength and honesty, is . . . "Isaac L. Zachary"! O Shining Day—and I feel like crying. After the speaking his steel grip embraces me, and we look into each other's eyes and laugh . . . a grip and a laugh for all we share in common, for the kind of comradeship for which there are no words. Only recently, he tells me, he was a delegate to the Negro labor convention in Cincinnati. "Oh, that was *fine*," he says, and you know it really was.

The next day, an hour before plane time, I met by chance another old friend. It was a surprise to both of us, for K—(I won't give his name because of the terror in Pittsburgh) had not known of my coming and the last I'd heard of him was that he had moved from the city, no one knew where. But he happened to be back in town this day, and so, by this coincidence, I got these letters of Willie Jones!

K—had been a member of the Willie Jones Defense Committee, the "outside committee" as we called the gallant group in Pittsburgh's Negro ghetto that had responded to our

cry for a movement to save the life of a framed young Negro. The letters from Willie and other material on the case—newspaper clippings, circulars, letters from the Pardon Board, etc.—had been carefully preserved by K—: some day, he told me, he intended to write a book about the case.

He was greatly surprised to hear that a book had already been written, not the case history he had planned but a work of fiction suggested by the real life story. He was happy, too, and he gave me the precious folder.

I glanced at the papers within—the yellow-brittle clippings, the desperate leaflets, the printed appeal: "COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA v. WILLIE JONES, Appellant," . . . and the letters to various persons from Willie.

**D**AYS passed, back in New York, and I did not read the letters. Too busy—that was the self-deception. And even now I cannot explain my strange reluctance. One letter from Willie I already had: I knew it by heart. That one letter and a printed circular was all that was tangible to go with the memory of the man.

How many times over the years had I showed the letter to friends and told them of my dream to some day, somehow, write the story! The letter was dated October 24, 1941, one week after my time was up. "I'm glad you're back in town," he wrote, ". . . because time is growing short

*and I want to live! Keep me posted with the new developments, and galvanize into immediate action—you and all my friends. Answer soon. Hopefully yours . . ."*

So perhaps I felt a jealous resentment against all these other letters. Or was it a fear that somehow they would disturb the deep-etched picture of the man, the settled and cherished memory? And a dread of calling up a terrible grief, now bitter-sweetened by time?

Truly the dead stay young, as Anna Seghers wrote. And Willie was young when they killed him. Ten years dead, but I do not think of him so. He would never admit the thought that we might lose. Together we went through three stays of execution. Three times it was the *last* day, the *last* night, and then at the last minute—always the very last minute!—the saving word, the stay. And again we would meet and plan and hope—and *will* with every fiber and nerve that they not lynch him!

He was young and strong and handsome, this doomed young Negro—laborer in Carnegie Steel, framed by the implacable masters. Young and brave, as brave as a man can be, a laughing bravery that none of the men with the keys could ever hope to understand. Yet even they had to marvel, and marveling, *fear*.

And smart, he was, a keen piercing intelligence. There is proof of that, not only in his letters, but in testimony from those who insisted he must die. Here from K—'s folder is a four-page mimeographed letter

mailed to all protesters by a member of the Board of Pardons:

"Your communication has been one of the many hundreds of telegrams and postal cards addressed to me and other members of the Board. I feel it was prompted by your desire to see justice done and your fear that, because William Jones was a negro, he might not have received every advantage which the protecting arm of the law can throw around a human being accused of unjustified murder. I want to assure you that such fear on your part was groundless. . . ."

The form letter goes on to say that a mental examination "disclosed the prisoner to be sane, responsible, and, in fact, in the superior adult group of intelligence."

*And, in fact . . .* O bitter irony—to kill the lower-case "negro" they must cite his superior intelligence! And "protecting arm of the law"—Willie told us about that. Arms and fists and feet too, and black-jacks—for days and nights and weeks to extract the third-degree "confession" he would repudiate first chance he got.

**F**INALLY, of course, I read the letters. Re-read them as I will many times more. They are the heritage of a hero. You will see that too, even from these brief excerpts. (Unless otherwise specified all are addressed to K—)

May 18, 1941: "Every day across the ocean in Europe men are fighting bloody battles. Why? They are fighting to keep from saying 'Heil Hitler,' or in defense of the code or

thing which they live by. We Americans believe that our greatest heritage and rights as human beings are 'personal liberty,' 'freedom of speech,' 'freedom of assembly,' 'freedom of religion,' and pursuit of happiness. All these are the inalienable rights of man, but the question extended to every one is: What sacrifices would we be willing to make to preserve these rights?

"During the time I was undergoing the cruel, barbaric beatings from the law enforcing officers, I took a vow to God that if I came out of that ordeal alive, the American public was going to know the horrible things I had suffered 15 days. . . . It is my conception that all true Americans should aid in this just cause regardless of race, creed or color . . . not for the purpose of showing sympathy but because it is founded upon the immutable principle of truth."

May 25, 1941: "Accept my compliments for the interest you have stirred and created in my behalf through your fine articles of advertisement. Attorney S— [one of Jones' two court-appointed attorneys] came in to see me Friday morning, acting as if he was scared to death, saying, 'Attorney D— called me up and he's sore about that article in the paper' (referring to both the Pittsburgh Examiner and the Pittsburgh Courier). Attorney S— said, 'You shouldn't have printed that for it did more harm than good.'

"Then I reprimanded him sharply, telling him that you had printed

nothing but the truth which was being kept hidden from the public. Furthermore I stated to him, 'If I had gone to trial without an attorney, the results could not have been any worse, because I would have brought out every minute detail. I thought the Attorney appointed to represent me would do this, but like Judas the betrayer he through his deceit and race prejudice tried also to cover up the truth. To me in all sense of appearance this seems unconstitutional.'"

June 27, 1941—three days before the first scheduled date of execution: "Did Mrs. Johnson give you the book? [a public appeal from Willie] I told her to tell you that Lloyd and I thought they would be the very thing to put on circulars or for mass pressure. . . . Don't give up hope, there's still a chance . . . always remember that the ball game isn't over until the last inning has been played and the third out made!"

The next day—June 28: "Please write and tell me the outcome of the meeting you planned for Tuesday. Give my heartiest thanks to all the ministers, co-workers, and to Mrs. Johnson (my weakness, so she says) (smile). Allow me to thank you for the successful progress which through you has stirred public interest. . . . Don't overwork yourself please, and don't think that I am worried because I am not. I know and feel assured that you and Lloyd can figure out how to take care of everything,



so there isn't nothing for me to do but trust you two brain trusts (smile)."

**J**ULY 8, 1941—after that first victory: "Congratulations for your fine work! Please accept my heartfelt thanks for the way you are now laboring in my behalf and the way you have labored. I guess you'll say there's a lot of colloquialism in the above sentence, but nevertheless I want it clearly understood that I am truly grateful. There is a scripture in the Bible that says, 'There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother' (Prov. 18:24). Believe me when I say that to me you are this type of friend."

July 16, 1941: "I can't get enough exercise because I'm confined to this one cell all the time. The only thing I can do is sit here all day and read. The Supt. brought me a book to read entitled 'The Souls of Black Folk' by W. E. B. Du Bois. This is certainly a fine book. I suggest that you read it for you certainly would enjoy it. I recommend it to be read by all the colored race, for it really is educating. . . . Well, I've got my head up and my dukes high, and in there fighting like a champion. Now, then, what's your story? (smile)."

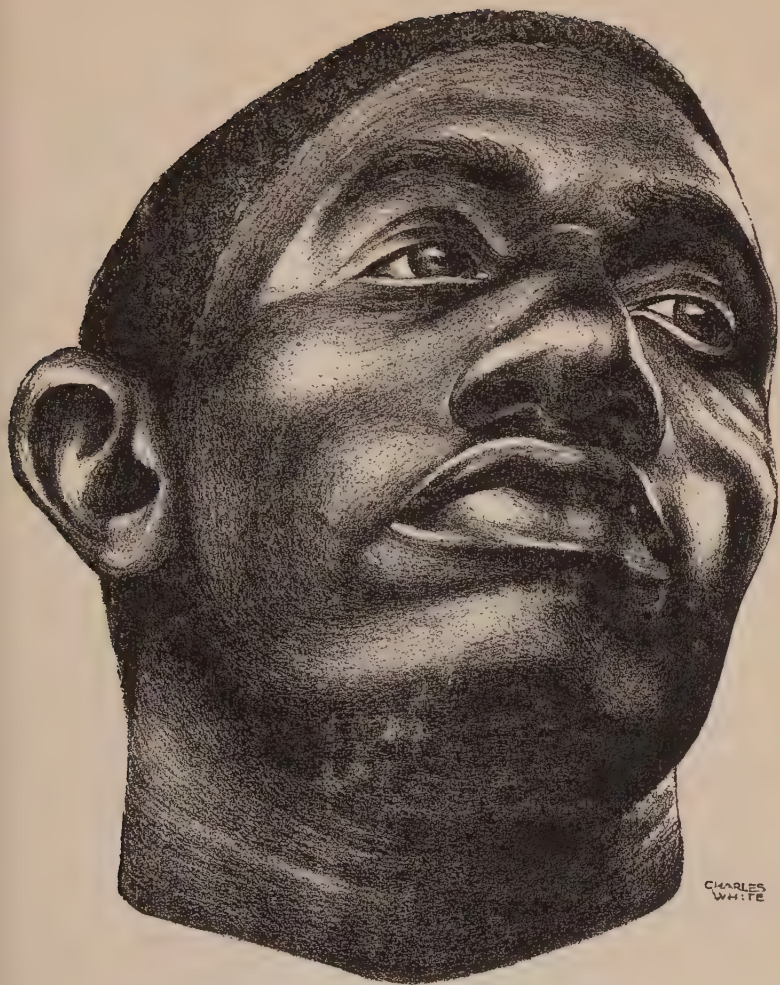
July 19, 1941—discussing K—'s ambition to launch a new Negro weekly: ". . . Then too I understand that the *Courier* is afraid to print certain things because of politics. Does not the Constitution provide for

'Freedom of the Press'? K—, I'm telling you the truth, if you would print the true happenings of events that paper would sell like hot cakes. . . . When I am free (which I hope is soon) we will plan and do a lot of things that will shock the nation, will we not? It's really a brain trust and creative force when you, Mr. Lloyd B. and myself meet in a reunion. God bless you and be with you till we meet again."

August 17, 1941: "I have just started a theme that will stir the entire Negro race. I can't decide on a title that would be most adequate for this theme because I have several in mind, namely: 'The Transformation of the Afro-American Race,' 'Revamping the Negro Race,' 'The New Birth of the Afro-American Race.' All these and others are good titles for this theme which is only in a naive form at present, but I expect to have it finished and forwarded to you for insertion in both editions of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, also the *Afro-American*, by the latter part of this week."

[Later letters indicate that this theme, under the title "New Birth," etc., was mailed out, but it was not in the material given to me by K—.]

August 21, 1941—this was to the head of a very large church congregation who had written to Willie, "Therefore, I say, have Faith. You need no further legal, political or financial assistance. God alone is your Emancipator; all others will hinder,



GIDEON: *by Charles White*

prejudice and pervert the situation."

Willie replied: "A sum of \$1,500 is absolutely necessary for my defense at this time. Of course, I don't have one cent personally, but God hath said in Matthew 7:7, 'Ask and it shall be given.' So at this time I humbly ask you and all the followers to aid in this huge financial need. . . . Often the statement is made 'God is love,' but their love is tested by these Scriptures: 'Whoso hath this world's good and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?' 'Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth' (1 John 3:17,18).—*That's what I'm talking about.*"

August 22, 1941—to John D., another member of the "outside committee": "Of course you know about the tragic death [suicide] of my former attorney. I wrote Mrs. Fannie S—, mother of Attorney S—, a nice letter of condolence. After expressing surprising shock, sympathy and sorrow, I put on the pressure as usual. Quote—I shall be indebted to Mr. S—'s truthfulness in making publicly known how I was railroaded through the court by another court-appointed, prejudiced attorney. Unquote. And I requested her to kindly have the letter published so that all might see the deep feeling I have for Mr. S—. I don't have to tell you for you already know what that letter will do if it gets into the eyes of public sentiment."

SEPTEMBER 8, 1941—another letter to John D., who wanted to know from Willie how frame-ups come about: "Now then, the traditional 'frame' will exist as long as the masses of people blindly follow corrupt politicians. In the event of a 'frame' the political leaders through the newspapers or other communications distribute infamous and misleading information to sway public sentiment to their side. And the unfortunate victim is left unsupported, unbelieved and censured by many as one complaining because he got the punishment his crime calls for. . . . It is vain to get the Court to understand my case. For their duty is to put me here, regardless how."

October 17, 1941—three days before the third scheduled date of execution. This letter was addressed to Reverend Hatcher, chairman, and to the entire Defense Committee: "Gentlemen, the time is very short indeed. You all know as well as I that what is to be done must be done quickly. I learn that Honorable Governor James is honeymooning somewhere in Virginia at the crucial moment. Nevertheless, it is very imperative that he personally be seen in my behalf. . . . Sunday night is not far off and just this moment I learn that two are slated for execution. Now then, you all must not fail me now, nor think that all hope is gone, for I don't think that any red-blooded man in America, colored or white, would tolerate seeing an innocent man electrocuted who was victimized by the



'money justice dealers'. . . . I haven't given up and I never will as long as life is in my body. Wire me of your actions and the next line of attack."

October 20, 1941—the execution date had been postponed to November 24: "Your letter, like that of Miss P—, showed your extreme sorrow at this decision of the Pardon Board. Lack of courage is non-essential at this crucial moment, but immediate action is indispensable. No, K—, don't write me a letter cheering me up, for I don't need that. But please write me full details of what you all are doing now and what is to be done and what can be done."

November 21, 1941—from the last letter, for he died on the 24th: "It was very coincidental that you should mention Harriet Tubman because a few days ago I received two wonderfully printed ballads from Miss Sarah N. Cleghorn, Manchester, Vermont—composer and author of 'The True Ballad of Glorious Harriet Tubman,' and 'The True Ballad of Lionel Lico-rish.' Also through her kindness I receive the monthly issue of The Negro History Bulletin published in Washington, D.C., which gives an enlightening study of Negro history and Negro life. . . .

"Sojourner Truth was a very impressive and touching leader of our race. Harriet Beecher Stowe said, 'I never knew a person who possessed so much of that subtle controlling power called presence as Sojourner Truth.' Wendell Phillips said, 'A few words from her would electrify an

audience and affect it as never he saw persons affected by another.'

"And that is the same type of leadership found in the person of K—, who has one weakness to overcome—that is fear. Why should you fear? Think of the exemplary life of Crispus Attucks, Lemuel Haynes, Paul Cuffee and others, their fearless, bold and daring spirit won many achievements. And that's what youth of today need most. . . . Bye now, William."

**B**LESS you, Sarah Cleghorn—grand old poet of New England, fighter for peace and justice, author of the immortal lines against child labor:

*"The golf links lie so near the mill  
That almost every day  
The laboring children can look out  
And see the men at play."*

Bless you for sending the ballads and bulletins to my friend Willie! And bless you, Reverend Hatcher and K— and Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Brown and Miss P— and John D and all of the Negro and white people who fought so hard to save this man you never saw!

Willie Jones, Willie McGee, the Martinsville Seven, Harry and Harriet Moore, and all the others . . . their blood cries out, all over this poor and wretched land, for an end to this killing. Today in Paris a great Negro patriot stands before the nations of the world accusing — *We Charge Genocide!*

Tell me: is this year, 1952, too soon to end for all time these killings here in the Democratic Republic of the United States of America?

# **THE NEGRO PEOPLE**

## **VS.**

# **THE SMITH ACT**

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*We present here the text of a brief submitted by two eminent Negro attorneys supporting the appeal for a rehearing by the U.S. Supreme Court of its decision upholding the Smith Act. The appeal was rejected, but the fight for the repeal of the thought-control law and for the release of its victims continues and grows. This memorable document, stating the case of the Negro people vs. the Smith Act, provides ammunition for that struggle.*

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### **PETITION**

**WE**, THE undersigned Negro citizens, each a member of the bar of the State of Illinois and also of this Court, respectfully request leave to submit the following memorandum as *Amici Curiae* in support of the pending application for rehearing in this cause.

### **MEMORANDUM**

The decision of this Court (*Dennis, et al. v. United States of America*) rendered on June 4, 1951, with two justices dissenting, sustained the constitutionality of the teaching and advocacy provision of the Smith Act and upheld the conviction of the

petitioners for the offense of agreeing to teach and advocate the violent overthrow of the government in violation of that Act.

This memorandum is not concerned with the factual issue of whether or not petitioners did engage or did agree to engage in such advocacy. We assume that the jury's verdict is conclusive on this point in this Court. The majority of this Court, however, in sustaining the convictions and upholding the constitutionality of the Smith Act, has so narrowed the permissible area of freedom of advocacy as to give cause for justifiable concern to every citizen who cherishes the guarantees of the First Agreement.

Negro citizens, constituting as

they do a specially persecuted minority group in our body politic, see in the opinion of the Court's majority the enunciation of at least two legal concepts which are at variance with the prior decisions of this Court and which, if allowed to stand, are bound to have a disastrous impact upon the century-old struggle of the Negro people for complete emancipation.

#### I. THE LIMITATION ON THE RIGHT TO PROTEST

The most important right which the citizens of a democracy enjoy is the right to political expression, the right to advocate changes with respect to the basic issues of their society. It is in this way that government is made responsive to the will of the people.

Negro citizens are vitally concerned over the Court's decision, both because they regard the right of political expression as a basic democratic right and because history has taught them that liberty is indivisible. The constitutional rights of the Negroes under the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments cannot be divorced from the free enjoyment by all our people of the protections of the Bill of Rights. The decision in weakening a basic liberty places in jeopardy the special rights written into the Constitution to assure democratic protections of Negroes.

Moreover, Negro citizens have a special and vital interest in the right

of free expression. The most precious right which a minority can enjoy under any form of government is the right to protest; the right to voice its complaints and to request, urge, demand and advocate governmental redress. The democratic principle can only work if every minority group is assured and, indeed, guaranteed access to all of the means of protecting itself against discrimination and unfair treatment.

The Negro people are peculiarly dependent upon the exercise of the fundamental rights involved in political expression in order to achieve its legitimate goals in a democracy. Discrimination against the Negro people is deeply embedded in the fabric of government—particularly the governments in the Southern states. Efforts to remove inequalities inevitably involve basic attacks upon governmental attitudes and conduct.

It is inevitable that the decision will inhibit and impair legitimate efforts to extend democratic protections to the Negro people. This is so for two reasons:

In the first place, advocacy of fundamental changes in government so as to extend democratic protections to the Negro might well be equated, under the broad terms of the Court's decision, with advocacy of the violent overthrow of the government. In the second place, as Justice Black's dissenting opinion points out, the decision imposes a prior restraint upon political expression. If the present decision is permitted to stand, few, whether Negro or non-Negro, will



undertake to challenge the "Black Codes" of the South or to condemn the governmental policy of supporting Jimcrow laws or poll-tax restrictions on the right to vote. Only individuals with great courage will vigorously condemn the failure to apprehend and prosecute those who engage in mob violence against Negroes. In short, the decision casts a chilling shadow of fear even over those areas which it does not literally reach.

The inevitable effect of the decision is to undermine, if not destroy, effective protest with respect to government practices and policies inimical to the welfare of Negroes.

## II. CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER

**P**RIOR to the decision in this case, right of protest would have been protected by the First Amendment, notwithstanding the "clear and present danger" formula's limitation upon the otherwise absolute prohibition which the literal terms of that Amendment impose upon governmental action in the realm of speech. For, until this decision, at least two safeguards remained: the first of these was this Court's clear distinction between advocacy and conduct as crystallized in its opinion in *A. C. A. v. Douds*, 339 U.S. 392; and the second was the assurance, based upon *Whitney v. California*, 274 U.S. 357, and *Pierce v. United States*, 252 U.S. 239, that in no event could mere speech, regardless how intemperate, be success-

fully prosecuted unless and until a jury of one's peers should find that it *clearly and presently* threatened an evil within the competency of the government to prevent. The decision of the majority in this case appears to destroy both of these safeguards.

The majority opinion, while seeming to retain the "clear and present danger" formula as interpreted in *Douds*, appears to us to completely negate that formula by regarding as "conduct" what was charged in the indictment and found by the jury to be "advocacy." Thus, the "clear and present danger" formula originally devised by Justices Brandeis and Holmes as a compromise by means of which actionable words which are tantamount to an "attempt" or an "incitement" could be punished while preserving the constitutional protection against the prohibition of speech as such (*Schenck v. United States*, 249 U.S. 47; *Abrams v. United States*, 250 U.S. 616; *Schaefer v. United States*, 251 U.S. 466, and *Whitney v. California*, *supra*) is set at naught; and those of us whose eventual complete emancipation is dependent upon changing the status quo are again in that twilight zone which characterized this Court's First Amendment decisions prior to the *Schenck* case. See Chafee's "Freedom of Speech" (1920).

What speech or writing is or is not actionable in the future will depend not upon the clarity and immediacy of the danger to the public

velfare, but rather upon whether the judiciary believes that what is said or written represents a sane, sober, safe and orthodox view. As Mr. Justice Jackson's concurring opinion shows, henceforth the "clear and present danger" formula is to be reserved for the protection of the speech or writing that does not matter—"the hot-headed speech on a street corner, or circulation of a few incendiary pamphlets . . ."

The abandonment of the "clear and present danger" principle creates special concern for those familiar with the techniques which have historically been employed to retard and to crush the struggle for the achievement of Negro rights. From the very beginning the movement for the liberation of the Negro people was falsely attacked as a movement committed to force and violence. Every attempt to better the lot of the Negro people was attacked and slandered as an effort to incite insurrection. The abandonment of long-established constitutional tests will inevitably invite the revival of these techniques of repression and subjugation.

Deeply disquieting also is the revival in the decision of the conspiracy concept as a means of justifying the abandonment of the traditional constitutional protections. Long ago Negroes, like trade unionists, recognized that only through group action could effective inroads be made upon prejudice and discrimination. Historically, these collective efforts were attacked and slandered

as "conspiracies." Even today efforts of the Negro people through unincorporated associations or groups bound together by consciousness of common interests to achieve democratic liberties are denounced and attacked as sinister "conspiracies."

THE majority opinion in the present case also repudiates the whole history of the Sixth Amendment with its guarantee of a jury trial of the basic issues in all criminal sedition cases. The struggle of the English people to wrest from the province of a crown-appointed judiciary the right to determine in such cases whether alleged seditious utterances tended to cause disrespect or contempt for the authority of the crown was not lost from the minds of those who fashioned our Bill of Rights.

The successful fight of those English barristers like Lord Erskine, which culminated in Fox's Libel Act of 1792, and the courageous defense by the lawyers in the *Peter Zenger* case in this country were fresh in the thoughts of those who wrote the guarantee of the Sixth Amendment into our Constitution. It was the means devised by them to insure that the direct representation of the people—the jury, as distinct from the appointee of the State, the judge—should assess the criminality of every utterance claimed to be seditious.

The Brandeis-Holmes formula of "clear and present danger," as the dissenting opinion of Mr. Justice Douglas makes clear, had the distinction of preserving this modicum of

protection by leaving it to the jury in each jury-trial case to determine the evil tendency of the utterance. For this Court to now hold, as it does in the present case, that the jury's function is limited to ascertaining whether or not the utterance was in fact made and that it then becomes the sole function of the judge to determine whether such an utterance presents a clear and present danger is to reverse not merely *Pierce v. United States, supra*, and *Whitney v. California, supra*, but two centuries of struggle by English-speaking peoples to commit to the ultimate protection of a jury of their peers the issue of the extent to which they might criticize their government with impunity.

Here again the adverse decision of this Court on this issue has peculiar significance for the members of a persecuted minority whose history has been one of continuous struggle for the right to have the guilt or innocence of one of their members in the ordinary criminal case assessed by a democratically selected jury of

their peers. For this Court to hold now, as it does in the present decision, that a Negro accused of seditious utterances against a State or the Federal government is not entitled to a jury but is relegated to the opinion of a single judge whose views on social, economic or political issues is bound to be conditioned by his own background, is in effect to relegate the whole movement of the Negro people toward full equality in American life to a status which differs only in theory from that suffered by Negroes prior to the Civil War.

#### CONCLUSION

For the reasons herein set forth we urge upon this Court a reconsideration and reversal of its present decision in this case.

Dated: September 27, 1951.

Respectfully submitted,

RICHARD E. WESTBROOKS,

EARL B. DICKERSON,

Members of the Bar of the State of Illinois and of the United States Supreme Court.



# Right Face

## Top of the Pile

"You can cure an inferiority complex in a single day, just by doing this: Next time you shop, select a group of products in which you have confidence. Bring them home—spread them on a table, and make a mental note of all the brands you bought. Then say to yourself: 'The companies that make those brands spent millions on research, in testing, in improving their products to be sure that I—yes, me—prefer them. They do everything in their power to please the boss—that's me!'"—*An ad by Brand Names Foundation.*

## Satisfaction

*"I am satisfied the northern part of Korea is so badly destroyed that the Reds lack food, clothing and shelter and the population of North Korea is in a very critical condition."*—Gen. James A. Van Fleet, as reported in the *New York Times*.

## Credentials

"We really enjoyed it very much when Hitler declared war on Russia. Soon we were wearing Russian boots and coats. Oh, yes, we stole them. We had to kill them first. I did not kill, for I am a clergyman, but I gave the command to fire."—*Pastor Hendriksson, Estonian DP in the U.S., explains to the New York Post.*

## Feed-bag

*"My friends of the Congress, less than one-third of the expenditure of the cost of World War II would have created the developments necessary to feed the whole world so we would not have to stomach communism. . . . Planes and tanks and other weapons are now beginning to come off the production lines in volume. Deliveries of hard goods now amount to about \$1,500,000,000 worth a month. A year from now, we expect that rate to be doubled."*—From President Truman's State of the Union Message.

## Congressional Inquiry

"They come in every day. One of them—I won't tell you his home state—wanted to know why Vienna sometimes is called Belgrade, Budapest or Bucharest."—*CBS correspondent Alexander Kendrick comments on visiting U.S. Congressmen.*

We invite readers' contributions to this page. Original clippings are requested.



*Drawing by Ed Strickland*

## books in review

### What Happened in North Carolina

THE NEGRO AND FUSION POLITICS IN NORTH CAROLINA: 1894-1901, by Helen G. Edmonds. *The University of North Carolina Press*. \$5.00.

WHITE supremacist historians have generally dismissed the Fusion Period in North Carolina as a blot of history the sooner forgotten the better. Furthermore, they have facilitated the forgetting process by steering clear of this "epoch of racial antagonism." Their silence has caused this period to become known as an "obscure" period of Southern history. It has been obscured, not only by silence, but also by falsehood. The public has been persuaded that the gigantic agrarian upsurge of the 1890's was "by and large" a Midwestern development, despite the fact that it was only in North Carolina that the movement actually attained both legislative and executive power.

The occasional historian who ventures into this remarkable development in North Carolina finds the situation further obscured by the one-sided character of the materials for historical research. For example, while the libraries of North Carolina's two

universities have extensive files for the white supremacist newspapers of the time, neither has a single copy of *The Progressive Farmer* during this period when it had the largest circulation of any newspaper in the State! Why are the Bourbons so anxious that this episode of history remain buried?

Significantly, it is the work of a Negro scholar that answers this question most completely. To the Bourbon, the cautious, thorough-going study of Dr. Helen G. Edmonds relates a nightmare. It describes the development of a political alliance or "fusion," between the poor whites and the Negroes, by means of the Populist and Republican parties respectively, which, in 1894, gained control of the State government.

This book tells the story of a predominantly white Southern legislature that voted to adjourn in honor of Frederick Douglass who had just died, and of the democratic laws that this legislature brought to fruition. It relates the savagery and terror of the white supremacist counter-offensive, which succeeded in driving a wedge between the Negroes and poor whites. It finally describes the sickly aftermath of the Bourbon Restoration: the Wilmington pogrom, the disfranchisement of the Negro people—and,



repeal of the bulk of Fusion legislation; and the enactment of the Jim Crow laws to strengthen the Bourbons' policy of divide and rule.

While the Marxist is indebted to Dr. Edmonds to the extent that she corrects certain distortions in Southern history, he will not always find himself in agreement with her. For example, she minimizes the role of Negro-white unity by lamenting the fact that the poor whites were here motivated by their own social problems rather than by humanitarian ideals, and consequently showed a certain reluctance in allying themselves with the Negroes. More startling is her conclusion that "the Negroes committed political suicide by supporting one party," since it is difficult to believe that Dr. Edmonds would have had any of the Negroes

support the white-supremacist candidates. A more general criticism may be offered that the emphasis of this study is such that it does not fully convey the message of hope and promise that the story of this democratic upheaval holds for our time and the future.

The positive contributions of Dr. Edmonds' work are so many that it would be a lengthy process to enumerate them. The following are some of the most significant:

Dr. Edmonds brings to light for the first time documentary proof of the sordid deal between the Democrats and certain reactionary clerical leaders by which the clergymen agreed to support white supremacy in exchange for a promise by the Democrats to limit appropriations to the University of North Carolina. She demonstrates



RESISTING THE KLAN: Woodcut by Ellen Raskin, (*Graphic Arts Workshop*).

t, so far as North Carolina is concerned, the "time-honored Southern tradition" of Jim Crow laws is a tradition dating, not from the Ice Age, but from the turn of the century, and that these laws came as a direct product of the struggle of the bankers, mill owners, and planters against social reform.

Perhaps her greatest contribution, however, consists in providing students for the first time with a factually reliable survey of the period; and thus pointing the way to unexploited sources, she has greatly facilitated further research on the Fusion movement.

The value of this work is further enhanced because this seven-year period in North Carolina brings into sharp relief the vital question that confronts the entire South today: the establishment of unity between the Negro people and the exploited white masses. Such unity is the only means to eliminate the terror regime of the urban and build a truly democratic society.

WILMA L. MCKEE

## After the War

*WE FISHED ALL NIGHT*, by Willard Motley. Appleton-Century-Crofts. \$3.75.

IN HIS new novel, *We Fished All Night*, Willard Motley exemplifies the qualities of courage, honesty of perception, and democratic spirit which made Dreiser and Whitman the truest literary spokesmen of our country.

Mr. Motley's theme is the post-war

disillusionment of those who fought for all the freedoms, big and small, personal and national, without which they could not continue to live in dignity and peace. His people represent a wide range—workingmen, union organizers, poets, politicians, members of all parties and of no party, militants, pacifists, cynics.

World War II, the novelist tells us, awakened two currents in the American people. One was an immense striving for a decent life in which exploitation was at least eased to the bearable point, in which art and poetry and theater could flourish, in which equality marked the relations between different national groups, in which there was an assured peace. The other loosed a savageness in which all that was decent was trampled on, in which neither the lives of children nor the dignity of women is sacred and inviolable.

The persons of *We Fished All Night* are driven by either of these two currents, and very often by both, so that their struggles for freedom are not unmarred by the pressure to surrender to debasement, cowardice and betrayal.

The protagonist is Chet Kosinski, a young Polish-American who quickly becomes Don Lockwood to escape the restrictions created by anglo-saxon mania. A messenger boy for the Haines mail-order house, he knows that as Kosinski the way is barred to any substantial upgrading. Similarly, as the star of an amateur theater company, he feels that Lockwood is a "preferable" name. Seeking to "be-

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long," he cannot even permit himself to tell the truth to Sue Carroll, typist at Haines as well as leader of the little-theater group, with whom he is in love.

He is one of a group among whom we find Jim Norris, a union organizer, Aaron Levin, a poet, and a number of others, most of them employed at Haines, most of them searching for the good life they had been promised in their childhood.

Kosinski, Norris, and Levin are drafted for World War II, and they return with their particularly personal wounds. Kosinski has lost a leg; Levin has lost his sanity; in Norris there has awakened a terrible lust and restlessness.

Kosinski, by a chance meeting with a Democratic chieftain, becomes a carefully nurtured candidate for minor political office. His platform is one calculated to satisfy the needs of the majority; decent housing, an end to discrimination, protection of civil rights. Kosinski (Lockwood) professes not to know that this is pure demagoguery. His campaign, with its buying of votes, arrests, beatings, bribery, is carefully delineated. More they say:

"And this was the democratic process. This was the foundation of government. This decided city, state, federal rule. Decided the fate of the poor, the slum dweller, the laborer, the great masses of the middle class, housing, health, the young and the old. This, the democratic process that led from city and town governments to the White House itself. This was the decided national policy. And international policy. War or peace.

"This was the free, democratic process



his was what Don had lost his leg for, Aaron had lost his mind for, Jim had lost his balance for."

*We Fished All Night*, however, is not simply the story of disillusionment. It is simultaneously the story of those who refuse to become cynical or intimidated. In contrast to the corrupt political campaign, is the fight waged by the handful of Progressive Party members.

But the writer is not so much concerned with the external differences as he is with the profound difference in the motives of the two opposing camps. His treatment of Progressives, of honest liberals, and of Communists is the treatment of human beings who feel that they have a great stake in life, that this stake is bound up with peace and the rights of all peoples. They do not permit themselves to become divided. Whether they are going through a strike at Haines or a political campaign, they choose to stand together. At one moment in his struggle for sanity, Aaron Levin sees this:

"There are good people in America working for good causes, working and fighting for those causes. Working in many ways. The new mind, the new heart, was moving. They might cut it down in a hundred places, it would spring back in a thousand. You couldn't stop people. They were meeting, mixing, mingling. . . . He was looking for some link with the people. Some chain of action. Some love of peace."

Few books in our country have so skillfully integrated politics and persons, and avoided so well the tendency to produce either plaster saint or

## Negro History Week Readings

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evil incarnate. A word too must be said of Motley's prose. It is at once gentle and angry, tender and forceful, plainspoken and lyrical.

When one considers the anti-humanist literary harvest of these times, this novel becomes an even more distinguished accomplishment. The author is conscious of the literary wind he is bucking, for in the writings of the insane Levin one finds the tortured ravings of Pound and Eliot.

It is at this point, strangely enough, that Motley also, I believe, shows a

lapse of judgment. While it is true that one may find among the Jewish people fascists and anti-Semites, the fact is that the great majority of Jews abhor both. Unfortunately, the only major Jewish character in the novel is Levin. Whereas the variety and vitality of non-Jews is handled expertly, the lack of such variety and vitality among his few Jewish characters becomes a distortion.

This fault is repeated again with Jim Norris, the ardent unionist, who returns from the war with a crazed lust with which he struggles. It is true, as the author notes, that the war aroused the good and the bad, but it is equally true that soldiers brought into the army a varying stock of values. One would have expected the conscious idealist to have been better prepared to cope with the tendency to brutalize and pervert. Motley recognizes this, but the error, I believe, is in placing the conflict after the damage has been done, and not before.

Such faults tend to muddy the novel, for they provide a linkage with the very anti-humanist, mystic stream which the novel as a whole defies.

These are shortcomings in a work which is on the whole a splendid accomplishment. When one examines the roster of those who, in life and art, are foremost in defending culture and peace, it becomes apparent that the Negro citizens of this country are the most militant and vigorous. It is therefore not an accident that a Negro writer enriches us with this novel of hope and courage.

DAVID ALMAN

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In the twelve issues since our Negro History Week number of 1951, we have published articles, stories, poems, plays, reviews, and drawings by the following Negro contributors: Abner W. Berry, Lloyd L. Brown, Louis E. Burnham, Alice Childress, Edgar Rogie Clark, W. E. B. Du Bois, James W. Ford, Yvonne Gregory, Lorraine Hansberry, Charles P. Howard, John Hudson Jones, William L. Patterson, Pettis Perry, John Pittman, Paul Robeson, Ed Strickland, Roosevelt Ward, Wesley Robert Wells, Charles White, and Doxey Wilkerson.

Among the other writers and artists represented in the fifty-odd contributions we published on the Negro liberation theme since last February were Herbert Aptheker, Richard O. Boyer, Hugo Gellert, Michael Gold, Sidney Finkelstein, Elizabeth Lawson, Elizabeth Moos, Joseph North, Nat Ross and Samuel Sillen.

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