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**NEGROES  
SHOULD  
*oppose*  
THE  
WAR**

**5¢**

by  
**J.R. Johnson**

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## Negroes and the War

In Europe the war is raging. Like Woodrow Wilson, Roosevelt says that he will try to keep America out, but we know that he has been making every preparation to drag America in.

This is the situation that faces the American people and the great masses all over the world. The Negroes, here as elsewhere, know that great decisions are being made which will affect their whole future. What are they to do? What does this war mean to Negroes? What must they think about it?

Negroes, brothers and sisters, comrades and friends, it is no use merely whispering to one another that it is a white man's war. The stand you take today will help to decide the fate of the world and your own fate for many many years to come. Roosevelt's war propaganda has been screaming at you and the other workers and farmers of America for the last two years. Now, as the hour comes nearer—your parsons, your Elk leaders, your Republican and Democratic Negro bosses, the university professors, all are going to turn on their loud speakers, wave their flags, and beat their big drums, to bewilder you and drive you into support of this war. But in your hearts, you, the masses of the Negro people, feel that this war is not your war. You feel that once more you, your relatives and your friends all over the world, in America, in Africa and the West Indies, are going to be used and then flung aside. You are right, but only half-right. For this time you will not only be used, but by the support of this war you will be tying a thousand times tighter, the chains which now bind you as the pack-horse, the servant and the slave of capitalist civilization.



### ***Why They Don't Appeal to the Negro***

In America, in Africa, in the West Indies, over 150 millions of Negroes bear on their bent backs and sweating limbs, a burden greater than that of any people anywhere in the world. If this war is a great war for freedom and a better life, the Negroes should have been addressed before anybody else. They need a better life and freedom more than any other people. But just note how careful everybody has been not to address the Negroes directly on the war question. In all the preparation for the great slaughter, in all the propaganda that pours over us like a flood, there has been a great conspiracy of silence in regard to what part the Negro must play.

Republican Party, Democratic Party, Socialist Party, all carefully avoid making direct references to the Negroes and the war. They will talk and write about Negroes and relief, about Negroes and the WPA, about Negroes and the New Deal, about why the Negroes used to vote for the Republican Party and why they now vote for the Democratic Party. The Republican Party appoints a commission to find ways and means to win back the Negro vote. The Communist Party points out why Negroes must hate Japan and Hitler, why the Negroes must vote for the New Deal, why the Negroes must be anti-fascist, why the Negroes must oppose those who attack Jews. But about Negroes and the war, what Negroes must do when the drums begin to beat and the bugles begin to blow, not a direct word all these months. The war-mongers have been trying to smuggle Negroes into war as a section of the American people. They have not dared openly to explain to you why you, as Negroes, should take part in the war. They do not dare to start the discussion. They know their arguments would stick in their throats. Today, and still more tomorrow, they will seek to sweep you into the war under cover of the general slogan: Our democracy is in danger. One party however, the Socialist Workers Party, has no tricks to play on the Negroes or anybody else on this life or death question of imperialist war. Clearly, simply, and without possibility of being misunderstood, we say that this present

war, like the last one, is a war that is fought by the muscles and blood and lives of the poor for the pockets and bellies of the rich. The poor have nothing to gain and everything to lose by supporting Roosevelt in a war that will be fought exclusively for the benefit of the rich. And above all, the Negroes, the poorest and most oppressed people in every country where they live, would be the greatest fools to allow themselves to be deceived this time, as they were the last time. We are confident that the great majority of the Negroes who consider this question with the seriousness that it deserves, will come inevitably to the conclusion that they must fight against the war to the bitter end.

That is our position. The Socialist Workers Party has nothing to hide from the Negro. It says to him, as it says to the poor everywhere—whites, Negroes in Africa, Indians in India, "Brothers and sisters of whatever color, this war is not our war. We will not support it. We, the workers, the poor farmers in every country, white, black, and brown, are not going to kill one another at the command of Chamberlain, or Hitler—at the orders of Roosevelt or of the Japanese Mikado. We shall fight for a fraternal unity between all the poor in every country against all the rich. That is the war we shall fight. Down with the imperialist war!"

### ***Roosevelt Ready for War***

Before Hitler marched into Poland, a great many people kept hoping against hope that a war would not take place after all. That is merely behaving like the ostrich and pretending that something isn't there, because with our heads dug into the ground, we cannot see it. Now, today, they keep hoping that America will not go in. They trust Roosevelt when he says he will try to keep America out. These people are blind to the signs of the times. Every move that Roosevelt makes is towards dragging America in.

Take the question of armaments. During the last five years, every great country doubled and trebled its armaments. Guns and more guns, battleships, submarines and airplanes; soldiers and more soldiers. Whereas in 1932,

Great Britain spent 426 millions of dollars on armaments. in 1938 she spent 1065 millions. Hitler made Germany into one large armament industry. Both armed for the war they knew was coming. *But the United States did the same.* In 1932 Roosevelt asked Congress for 667 millions of dollars. but in 1938 he asked for and got 1065 millions, nearly twice as much; and in 1939 he got two *billions*. Why? He and Congress, like the other war-mongers in Europe, know that today no country can attack America. But Roosevelt and the American capitalists are not going to keep out when the other imperialist countries are fighting to divide Asia and Africa and the markets in Latin-America. They have to be there to share in the division. So that when we turn a deaf ear to all Roosevelt's spectacular appeals for peace, and pay attention, not to what he is saying but to what he is doing, we can see that like the rest he is hiding his actions for war behind a mass of words for peace. Remember that Wilson played the same trick in 1917.

### **Negroes Wanted for Cannon-Fodder**

Roosevelt is preparing to go in. The dirty bloody work is going to be done, and as usual whenever dirty work has to be done, the Negroes are going to be called upon to do the dirtiest part of it. Whenever blood is to be shed, the rulers of this country see to it that the Negroes shed theirs. That is a privilege and an honor of which they never deprive the Negro. They take away his vote, give him the worst jobs, shove him into the dirtiest slums, kick him out of restaurants, lynch him. But when they want people to die for "democracy," to dig trenches in France, to build roads, to clean latrines, while enemy bombers rain their bombs, then they are sure to come looking for Negroes. There the rulers of this country are perfectly willing to see that Negroes have their full rights.

But 1939 is not 1914. Today hundreds of thousands of Negroes are saying to themselves:

"Why should I shed my blood for Roosevelt's America, for Cotton Ed Smith and Senator Bilbo, for the whole Jim Crow, Negro-hating South, for the low-paid, dirty jobs for which Negroes have to fight, for the few dollars

of relief and the insults, discrimination, police brutality and perpetual poverty to which Negroes are condemned even in the more liberal North?"

When the ordinary working Negro asks this question, what can the war-mongers say to him? Nothing. Nothing but lies and empty promises of better treatment in the future.

Let us take, one by one, the arguments put forward by the war-mongers. A Republican like Landon, a Democrat like Roosevelt or Hull tells everybody (including the Negro of course) that the war now being fought in Europe is a war against aggression, a war for "democracy," for the "preservation of human liberties," and the like. They say this because, although they are talking about peace, they are really preparing the minds of the workers for war.

The average Negro lives the life of an outcast in the North. He has little enough "democracy" there. But go today to Memphis, Houston, Dallas, New Orleans, Jacksonville, Birmingham, Mobile, all the South, where some nine or ten million Negroes live, and tell those Negroes to fight for "democracy." Such is the "democracy" of the South that in many towns the Negroes wouldn't be able to sit in the same room with the whites to hear why they should die for "democracy." There are thousands of hotels in the South where if a Negro dared to show his nose at the front entrance, three janitors would fall on him and throw him out into the gutter, after which the police would beat him up and take him to jail. In many cities, if he went near the polling booth he would risk being beaten up and perhaps shot. He must come out of the rear entrance of a bus in Southern cities, or any white cop nearby might riddle him with bullets.

### **Roosevelt's Party Rules in the South**

And it is the Democratic Party, Franklin Roosevelt's party which controls the state governments in the South. Argue with these Democrats about the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments, which "guarantee" the political



rights of the Negroes. If you insist you will get fourteen or fifteen bullets. That is the only kind of amendment the Southern Democrats have allowed the Negroes for many years. So that the vast majority of Negroes in the South will tell Roosevelt and Hull, "What is this democracy I am to fight for? Where is it? Since when are Cotton Ed Smith and Senator Bilbo and the Democratic Party of Franklin Roosevelt my good friends? Why must I die for them? I am not afraid to fight. Negroes have been some of the greatest fighters in history. But the democracy that I want to fight for, Hitler is not depriving me of. I know the people who have kept me away from it for seventy-five years by rifles and revolvers, by state law and lynch law! You, Franklin Roosevelt, Cordell Hull and Jack Garner, tell us why we must go and shed our blood for something that we have never had."

"We Americans must fight against aggression," say Franklin Roosevelt and Cordell Hull, seeking to drive American workers, white and black, into war. No wonder all of these politicians are so scared of raising the question of war directly to the Negroes. Every word they say turns to ashes in their mouths. Let us agree that Negroes must fight against aggression. But who are the aggressors against the Negroes? Hitler? Nonsense. The Southerners of the Democratic Party are the greatest aggressors against the Negroes in American history, and the North is not far behind them. "Oh! but we mean aggression in foreign countries, aggression by Mussolini, Hitler and Japan," say Roosevelt and Hull. The Negro will immediately reply, "And why if you so hate aggression, didn't you help Ethiopia?"

### ***What these Democrats Did to Ethiopia***

Ethiopia was the last piece of Africa left free. Mussolini decided that he wanted it. The League of Nations had sworn to defend it. Every Negro with a spark of pride knows what happened, and remembers it with justified bitterness. Not only did they *not* protect Ethiopia as they had sworn to do, but instead they prevented arms from going

to her while they bargained with Mussolini. They stabbed Ethiopia in the back—Britain, France, America, these great "democracies." (And Stalin, who claims to be a friend of Negroes, sold oil to Italy all through the Italian campaign.) Now Roosevelt comes running, to tell all good Americans (Negroes included of course) that they must fight against aggression.

And who is going to do the fighting against this aggression? The workers as always. Roosevelt, Hull and Landon are getting ready to push the workers of America into the war. These are the very men who actively collaborated with Mussolini in destroying the last independent African state.

### ***Why Should Negroes Trust These Rulers?***

Or again a Negro will ask, "Why should I trust you? You who have betrayed the last African state. Am I to go fighting for Poland and to settle a quarrel between Britain and Germany? Have I nothing else to fight for? I am not such a fool as not to know that international affairs are important. If Africans in Africa are fighting for freedom as Ethiopians fought, and are still fighting, I'll do all I can to help. The Indians are an oppressed people, and when they fight to drive Britain out, I am with them. Negroes went to fight in Spain against Franco. That was a good thing for people to do who for centuries have suffered from oppression. But all imperialists are oppressors. When Czechoslovakia was cut up into pieces, it was fascist Germany, Hungary, and this same Poland that divided it. Then Germany and Poland began fighting over one bone. Britain and France knew that this was only the beginning of a struggle for world wide power. So they came in at once. But tell me, Franklin Roosevelt, and Cordell Hull, why must I, a Negro, follow you into that?"

### ***The Biggest Lie of All***

Then will come the last argument. "It is not a question of Germany and Poland and Danzig. But freedom, civilization and liberty are in danger against fascist aggression,

and the people of Britain, France, America, Belgium must ally themselves to fight against aggression." Now of all the big lies that are being told to push the people into war, this one about the war for civilization is the biggest.

There are today over 150 million Negroes in the world. There are fifteen million in America. They are the lowest paid, most humiliated, most despised people in the country, and in the South where four-fifths of them live they are treated like the Jews in Germany. We know how this great "democracy" terrorizes Negroes in the South and how it discriminates against them in the North.

When Roosevelt and other so-called lovers of "democracy" protested to Hitler against his treatment of the Jews, Hitler laughed scornfully and replied, "Look at how you treat the Negroes. I learned how to persecute Jews by studying the manner in which you Americans persecute Negroes." Roosevelt has no answer to that. Yet he will call upon Negroes to go to war against Hitler.

### ***The "Democratic" Rule in Africa***

War in defense of "democracy" and civilization? Lies. When we look at Africa we see how shameless is the lie that Belgium, France and America will fight any war for liberty and civilization. For it is in Africa that Negroes have for years suffered and still suffer today the vilest fascist tortures. And at the hands of whom? Not Hitler and German imperialism. Germany hasn't an inch of land in Africa. That is one of the things this war is about, the partition of Africa. Hitler wants some of Africa, but up to now at any rate he has none. Japan has not an inch in Africa and today is much too busy trying to steal half of China. Mussolini controls a small number of Africans. Who is it, then, that has taken Africa from the Africans? Who else but Great Britain with sixty million African slaves, and France with another forty millions, and "democratic" little Belgium, little in Europe, but with a large piece of Africa and twelve million Negroes under her control. These "democracies" are the thieves. And how do they treat the Africans?

All of us know how Negroes suffer in America. But you have to go to Africa to see how brutally the "democracies" treat Negroes. In South Africa, a Negro cannot even buy a stamp in the same place where a white man buys one. There is a special window for him even in the post office. He lives in a part of the town that is assigned to him, and he cannot leave there after nine o'clock without a pass signed by a white man. Any white man, any dirty drunkard of an Englishman or a Boer, can sign a pass for a sober, self-respecting, hard-working Negro. But any Negro who is caught out of the Negro district after nine o'clock without his pass will be locked up by the first policeman who stops him. There are not ten colored doctors in the Union of South Africa where over seven million Negroes live, and the imperialists have been there for 400 years. That is the culture and civilization they give to the Africans in South Africa.

In Kenya more than five people cannot meet without police permission. One day six of them went home after church for a cup of tea. In comes a policeman. "One, two, three, four, five, six. This is sedition. You are under arrest." They were taken to jail and the next day fined. Every working African in Kenya is fingerprinted and must carry the print around with him wherever he goes. Caught without it, he is sent to jail. Wages in Rhodesia and Kenya are sometimes four, sometimes ten cents a day. A Negro is no more than a dog to these people. And this is under the rule of the great "democratic" countries, Britain, France and Belgium. He is a dirty traitor who tells Negroes that they must go to war for the "democracies" for the benefit of civilization. Aren't Negroes part of civilization?

How did the "democratic" imperialist nations get hold of Africa? They got it as Hitler got Austria and Czechoslovakia. Hitler lied, made promises and broke them, bribed and sent armies to massacre all who resisted. In exactly the same way, these great "democracies" robbed the Africans of country after country and hold them in chains. And now Roosevelt and his friends are preparing the workers to fight and shed their blood for the great "democracies."



What will Negroes get? Win back their country? Live as free men? Not at all. They must help Britain and France fight against Hitler and Goering about Danzig and the Polish corridor and who should dominate the Chinese and Latin American markets, and who should dominate Africa.

### **Remember What they Did in 1914**

These imperialist bandits encouraged workers to fight in the last war with the same talk about democracy, freedom and civilization. But after defeating Germany, Britain, France and Belgium simply took over the German colonies *and continued to treat the Negroes as before*. Now they are fighting another war. If the fascists win they will take the colonies back. If the "democracies" win they will keep them. But whether "democracies" win, or fascists win, the Africans remain slaves in their own country.

Now Republicans like Dewey and Democrats like Roosevelt, men like John L. Lewis and William Green, all the war-mongers for "democracy," have never told Negroes anything about the situation of Negroes in Africa. Lewis encouraged Negroes to join the CIO and Negroes were right to join. But when Lewis tells Negroes to fight for democracy, as he most certainly will, they simply have to ask him the same questions that they will ask Franklin Roosevelt, and Lewis will be able to make no better reply.

But James Ford and Browder and the Communist Party are a special group. For many years they posed as the friends of the Negro people, ready to lead them out of their bondage. These people support everything Stalin does so that they are called Stalinists, i.e., Stalin's agents, but in those days they fought hard for Negroes. Listen, for instance, to James Ford, the Negro Stalinist, in an article, "The Negro and the Struggle Against Imperialism":

"The native population has (in South Africa) no electoral rights (with the exception of the Cape Province), the power of the state has been monopolized by the white bourgeoisie which has at its disposal the white armed forces. The white bourgeoisie, chiefly the Boers, defeated by the

arms of British imperialism, at the close of the last century, had for a long time carried on a dispute with British capital. But as much as the process of capitalist development goes on in the country, the interests of the South African bourgeoisie are becoming more and more blended with the interests of British financial and industrial capital, and the white South African bourgeoisie is becoming more and more inclined to compromise with British imperialism, forming together with the latter a united front of whites for the exploitation of the native population."

### **Situation Has Changed for the Worse**

That is what Ford wrote in *The Communist* (January 1930, p. 27). Has the situation changed? Yes it has. The votes that a few Negroes in the Cape had (referred to by Ford) have been taken away from them. So they are worse off than they were before.

We could print scores of such passages from the writings of the Stalinists. Only three years ago, Ben Davis, Jr. had the following to say about Negroes in America.

"The octopus of national oppression reaches out to hound the Negroes wherever they are. September saw a recrudescence of the Klu Klux Klan in Peekskill, New York, with the promises to ride again against Negroes, Catholics and Jews. In Allentown, Pa., where James W. Ford was scheduled to make a campaign speech last August, the Klu Klux Klan issued leaflets stating that the town would 'ooze with nigger blood' if Ford spoke. "Thus this Negro Stalinist was different from Roosevelt. He did not hide the plight of the Negroes in the South.

### **Discrimination in Harlem**

And he knew about the situation in Harlem. "These reactionary practices against the Negro have been accompanied with the most relentless attacks against the already low standard of living of the Negro masses. In Harlem, the largest Negro urban center in the world, job discrimination is rife and unemployment has been estimated by the New York World-Telegram, capitalist daily newspaper, as up-

wards of eighty percent. Similar situations, more or less acute, throughout the country, reaffirm the axiom that reactionary open-shoppers place their heaviest burdens upon the Negro wage earners."

Nevertheless for years the Stalinists told Negroes and everybody else that they must defend this "democracy."

And Ford, Davis, Patterson and other Negro Stalinists, when they said "defend" meant Negroes to go and fight for this "democracy." The Communist Party said that all workers (including Negroes) should support Roosevelt and Roosevelt was preparing to drag America in.

It should now be clear to every Negro that the Communist Party is today as great a deceiver of the Negro people as the Republican and Democratic Parties. There was a time when the Communists and Soviet Russia were the greatest leaders of the poor and oppressed in every country including the Negroes. They used to call upon all the workers and peasants to fight against imperialists and capitalists everywhere, above all in a war. But these days are over and they have been over for many years.

Stalin sold oil to Italy all during the martyrdom of Ethiopia: That is proof enough for any Negro. For five years Stalin and the American Stalinists encouraged Negroes and all workers to fight for the British and French "democracies" against Hitler and Mussolini. And after encouraging workers to support the "democracies," Stalin joined Hitler. In a few days the Stalinists changed. If America joined in it would join the "democracies." This meant Hitler and his new friend, Stalin would have the powerful country of America against them. So the Stalinists now tell Negroes to help keep America out of war. Tomorrow, however, if Stalin changes they will change again. They use the workers as a convenience for Stalin, and to deceive millions of the workers in this way, is the greatest crime of which any working-class leader or party can be guilty. Why do they do it?

### ***Revolutionists No Longer Rule Russia***

They do it because revolutionists like Lenin and Trotsky

no longer rule Russia. Stalin and millions of officials, engineers, trade-union bureaucrats and others, now have the country in their grip. They live easy lives with great power and privileges. They oppress the Russian people, they murder all the old revolutionists like Zinoviev and Kamenev in frame-up trials, they have tried several times and are still trying to murder Trotsky, the last of the great revolutionists. They do not want revolution anywhere. Bureaucrats never do. They want to prevent the revolution, for revolutions will not only overthrow Hitler, Chamberlain and Roosevelt, but will give the Russian workers a chance to overthrow Stalin.

Therefore Stalin and his army of bureaucrats give money to the Communist parties in the various countries, and these parties no longer lead militant struggles as in the old days, but try to fool the workers, white and black, and make them do whatever suits Stalin for the moment. Their policy for five years was to make workers support the "democracies" in a war for civilization. And this, every Negro knows from his own experience, was a damnable treachery and betrayal. Any one, parson or president, black or white, who encourages Negroes to shed their blood for this so-called "democracy" is a damnable traitor and betrayer.

### ***What Happened to Negroes in 1917***

Some people, however, Negro leaders included, state that there is a possibility of Negroes gaining their rights and participating freely in American life, if they show that they are willing to die for "democracy." Let us test this by the last war. They said then that the war was being fought for "democracy," was being fought to make the world a better place than it had been before. Also, and this is what is important, many Negro leaders told the Negroes to support the war whole-heartedly. By showing themselves good citizens, they would win the sympathy of the whites and gain all the things of which they had been deprived. That is what was said. But how did the rulers of their country actually treat the Negro soldiers?



First of all, they took many more Negroes than they should have taken. Out of every hundred persons in the population, ten were Negroes so that, roughly, out of every hundred soldiers, ten should have been Negroes. More than that, the Negroes are the worst paid, live in the worst houses, in the worst localities, get the worst food and the poorest medical attendance. Thus, taking the Negro population as a whole, the number of persons fit for military service should have been proportionately less than the number of whites. This through no fault of the Negroes, but because of the lives and conditions to which they are condemned. So that instead of ten out of every hundred of the soldiers being Negroes, we could reasonably expect that there should have been about seven or eight. But instead of some number like seven or eight per hundred there were more than ten. So that this American "democracy" seized the opportunity to kill off as many Negroes as possible as a means of helping "democracy" solve the Negro problem.

### **Soldiers—But Jim-Crowed**

The war was a war for "democracy," but the Negroes were segregated. There was not a single regiment consisting of white and Negro soldiers mixed. American "democracy" did not want to have even American colored officers, and it took a hard fight to have a few hundred. When they did agree, they trained Negroes as officers in a special Negro camp. And these men were informed by the State Department that when they visited the South, they should not wear their uniforms. "Democracy" was sending the Negro to fight for "democracy," but could not bear the sight of him in the officer's uniform of "democracy."

The old lynch spirit continued. The Negroes were beaten up near the camps, they were stoned and jeered as they marched along the streets. When they were on leave and attempted to enter cafes and restaurants frequented by white people, they were driven out in many places.

When they went to France, the discrimination continued. American "democracy" forced most of the black soldiers to be common laborers. Of the 200,000 Negroes who went to France, some 160,000 were used as servants and in labor

battalions. Even when fighting for "democracy," the Negro was kept in his place. Negroes were made to build roads, wash clothes, cook food, clean up camps and trenches and clean latrines, though they had enlisted as soldiers of the line.

Far from practicing any sort of "democracy" to Negroes, the American commanders did their best to make the French maltreat the Negroes. The French people are not as prejudiced as one would expect from their treatment of natives in Africa, and great numbers of French people in France do not make any differentiation at all between Negroes and whites. But when the American officers saw this and the friendly way in which Negro soldiers were being welcomed both by French men and women, they issued a military order, Order No. 40, instructing Negroes not even to speak to French women. For this offense against "democracy," many Negroes were arrested, though the French people, men and women, had made no complaint.

The American officers, in this war for "democracy," wrote a special document to the French commanding staff, telling them that Negroes were a low and degenerate race, that they could not be trusted in the company of white people, that although some Negroes were officers, the French officers should have nothing to do with them, except in matters relating strictly to fighting. The French, said this American order, should not eat with Negroes, nor even shake hands, and above all, they wanted the French to use their influence to keep the white women who worked in or near the camp from forming any associations with Negroes.

This was the way in which the American ruling class fought side by side with Negroes in the great war for "democracy."

### **Negro Bravery—And the Reward**

The Negroes, believing that by fighting bravely and showing that they were men as good as any other, they would gain freedom from their oppression, performed feats of distinguished bravery. Of all the American soldiers in

France a Negro was the first to win the Croix de Guerre (War Cross), and one Negro regiment, the 8th Illinois, received more decorations than any other regiment in France. Another American Negro regiment stayed a longer spell in the trenches than any other regiment in the Allied forces. No one after that could say that Negroes were inferior. They had stood the stern test of modern war and came out with a great record.

What happened to the Negroes, after this fine showing, should be branded on the forehead of any so-called Negro leader who tries to thrust them again into war. For as soon as the war was over, there was such a desperate series of race riots in America as had not been seen for many years. In Washington, in Chicago, white mobs inspired and encouraged by American employers and American capitalist police, shot down Negroes, many of whom had lost relations in the great war for "democracy." The Southern whites were so anxious to put the Negro back in his place that they lynched Negroes who dared to wear the uniform of a private. The great war for "democracy" and the bravery and the sacrifices for "democracy" of the Negro people ended with thousands of them having to fight desperately, not for "democracy," but for their lives in "democratic" America.

Now let Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt and Cordell Hull and LaGuardia and some so-called Negro leaders, stand up and tell Negroes that the present war is another war for democracy and that they must go again to fight in it.

If Negroes supported the war, Franklin Roosevelt, Jack Garner, Cotton Ed Smith, Senator Bilbo and all that bunch in the Democratic Party would be able to sit back and say. "We give them the nastiest jobs, we pay them the lowest wages, millions of them are unemployed. Even in Washington here, the Federal capital, we kick them out of restaurants and theatres. We lynch them whenever we think that they should be reminded of where they belong. We treated them like dogs in the last war. We lynched them after they came back. And now, when we want them to do some more

dirty work for us, we just snap our fingers and whistle, and look at them! They come running to do anything we want them to do! We have only to make a few promises and they are ready to be fooled again. Truly these Negroes are the most ignorant, backward and slave-like people in the world, and deserving of no more consideration than the scraps we throw to them."

But no, large masses of Negroes have no wish to support this war. Their memories of the last war and the great deception and fraud which were practiced on them are too vivid in their minds.

So bitter was their disappointment after the last war, that millions of Negroes supported Marcus Garvey. They were ready to follow even the fantastic, impossible scheme of going back to Africa rather than to continue to live in the American "democracy" for which so many thousands of them had suffered and died.

### ***What Is the Negro to Do?***

What then is the Negro to do?

Before we can act we must know the forces with us and the forces against us. Many Negroes in America feel that they would be ready to shed their blood and take any steps to break the chains which bind them. Yet they feel also that their numbers are too few. They think that they would be overwhelmed by the number of the whites, their power, their authority, and their control of the means of destruction.

That, however, is a short-sighted view. Today we are dealing with an international war, and the problem is an international one.

Let us look at the last war. That also was an international war. It was fought in Europe, in Asia, and in Africa. The British armed the black man in Africa. The French armed nearly half a million Negro soldiers to fight for them. These fought not only in Africa, but in Europe. There was a regiment of West Indian Negroes. Now today, the millions of Negroes all over the world are more politically conscious, more bitter against oppression and humiliation than they were in 1914. They have not only had the



experience of the last war. They have suffered from the effects of the crisis. They have seen the rape of Ethiopia, and they know that in Africa, for instance, whether they are ruled by Italian Fascists or British "democracy," their situation is the same. Their lands are stolen, their wages are often ten cents a day. They are driven away to live in segregated areas, where at night they are kept jailed as if they had committed a crime by being born with a black skin. They are thinking the same things that the Negroes in America are thinking, only more fiercely because they have more cause. Many of them, particularly in the French and Italian colonies, have arms in their hands which they have learned how to use. Now that the war has begun, many more of them will be armed and trained in order to go and fight for their masters. But despite all the shouting about "democracy" by imperialists, the great millions in Africa only need leadership to use their guns, not for British or French "democracy," but for their own independence, for a free Africa, liberated from all sorts of imperialist domination, liberated not only from Fascist Italy and Germany, but also from those "democratic" bandits, Britain, France, and Belgium. They outnumber by many millions the whites who keep them in subjection today. And these whites, in the course of a war, will have to arm more and more of these despised and oppressed blacks. The Africans are only waiting for the opportunity and for that powerful organization which will give them a policy and leadership. In a war fought on an international scale, the Negroes in America will have the Negroes in Africa as their allies. American Negro soldiers who may be forced by conscription to go to France to fight, will be certain to meet hundreds of thousands of African soldiers there.

### ***An Alliance of the Millions***

Contact and plans can be made for the struggle on an international scale. But there are many other allies as well. For two hundred and fifty years, the British have been squeezing the lives out of the masses of people in India. There are well over three hundred and fifty million people

in India today, and the large majority of them are just awaiting their chance to get arms in their hands, drive the British imperialists into the sea, and make their country their own again. The same in Burma, in Ceylon, and everywhere. So that from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, you have over five hundred million people, oppressed colonials, who are thinking in terms of freedom from the domination of imperialism. Imagine the enormous power which these colonials can exert for their own emancipation in the tremendous crisis which has been loosed upon all peoples in the world.

All this seems very commonplace and obvious.

Why is it, then, that today so few people are saying it in public speeches and writing it? Why is it that a pamphlet of this kind is published only by the Socialist Workers Party? The reason is very important and is fundamental to an understanding of the political situation not only as it is today, but as it will be tomorrow.

Poor as the majority of Negroes are, and despised and humiliated as all of them are, in every community, particularly in America, there is a small number of Negroes who have better jobs than the others, who have managed to climb onto a little ledge, a little higher than the rest of their fellow-Negroes. There are, in America, for instance, some doctors, a few people who do well in business and on the stage, teachers—numbers kings, etc. They are thrown out of the restaurants, excluded from the theatres, Jim-Crowed and discriminated against as all Negroes are. They will complain, and pass resolutions, and sometimes will carry a case to the courts. But because they get something between fifty and eighty dollars a week, they are prepared to do anything that the American ruling class really wants them to do. They are Negroes, and they are forced to live with the large masses of Negroes. But in reality, they are much closer to the American ruling class than they are to the great millions of their own people. It is the same thing in every other community, even in the South. The large majority of Negroes live in dirt, in poverty, are subjected to all sorts of humiliation, but a few are allowed

special privileges, a few dollars more per week, etc. Whenever something serious turns up, these may make a protest and demand a little more for themselves, but they are always prepared to do what the American ruling class wants the American Negroes to do. It is so in America, it is so in Africa, it is so in the West Indies, and you have a similar situation in India, Burma, Ceylon.

### **Uncle Tom Negroes**

Now these traitors are the people who have the best chances, who have the opportunity to get sometimes quite a good education. They run newspapers and magazines. They get subscriptions from rich white men. They are able to borrow from white banks. These lick-spittles, Uncle Tom Negroes, constantly speak in the name of the Negro people or in the name of Africans, when in reality, they are only saying what the imperialists want them to say. If they didn't, they would be thrown out of their jobs, and lose their little privileges and benefits. And so, for the sake of the crumbs and bones that they get from the big table, they are quite prepared to sacrifice the interests of the majority of Negroes. They are the most dangerous people. It is they who deceive the Negroes every time. They, despite their black skin, are no more than agents of the white imperialists. They are not saying much now, but when the time comes, they are going to shout for "democracy" as loudly as the American ruling class. Some of them are going to get jobs in the government service. A few of them are going to be given positions a little higher than the ones they have at present. Some of them will be allowed to train as officers. This one here will be made a major, the other one there will be made a colonel. These appointments and others will fill the pages of the imperialist press and the Negro press. Meetings will be held at which these Negro traitors will speak and agitate and do their best to bluff the Negro people to take part in a war and be deceived and maltreated just as they were in the last war for "democracy." The bait that they will dangle will be promises of a better world. They will say that after the war, things will

be different. We know better than that. So that the first preliminary step for action is to be ready to condemn and drive out of the Negro ranks those traitors who sell their birthright for a mess of pottage. Such people, in America, in Africa, or in India, are treacherous enemies. Whoever tries to drag Negroes into a war for "democracy" is a traitor and a Judas. They will come preaching about unity. But the workers and farmers want no unity with them. What we must struggle for is the unity of the masses.

Nevertheless, if even we are agreed on the necessity of uniting the Negro masses against the war, many American Negroes will say: "I agree with the Socialist Workers Party that the 15,000,000 Negroes in America have as their natural allies the 150 million Negroes in the world and the millions of Indians, Burmese, Ceylonese, etc. If we all join together, that would be an immense force acting on a world scale. It is true also that the imperialists are so hard pressed for men and forces that they are arming and training these millions of colonials. But nevertheless we remain only 15,000,000 out of a population of some 130 million people. The Africans in Africa, the Indians, in India will be concerned with their own struggles. We wish them well. But how can we here struggle against the vast numbers and the great power that are opposed to us?"

It is a very good question, and the answer to it brings us to the very heart of the matter. We shall have to examine this very carefully. Whenever a problem like that faces us we should examine it in all its aspects, then examine similar situations in foreign countries, look back into our own history, see where the circumstances are alike and where they differ, and then attempt a conclusion.

### **Lessons from History**

The best example that we can start with is what happened in America some 75 years ago, when the Negroes gained their freedom. If all American whites had agreed upon the fact that the Negroes should continue to be slaves, then the 4,000,000 Negroes of that time and their descendants would have continued to be slaves until they died, for they



would never have been able to free themselves against the enormous odds that were arrayed against them. But all the whites were not united. There was a great division between the whites themselves, between the merchants, the industrialists, and the bankers of the North on the one hand, and the slave-owners of the South on the other.

It was this terrific quarrel that led to the Civil War. At first Lincoln never intended to free the Negroes. Yet all men who fight a battle and wish to win it seek their allies where they can find them. So he enrolled the Negroes in the Northern army, and finally declared their emancipation from slavery. That is one of the great lessons of the Civil War—the division among the whites, and the necessity for Lincoln to seek assistance from Negroes.

### ***Class Stands Against Class***

Let us now look at what is happening in Europe at the present day and during the last twenty-five years. Everyone knows that a very bitter civil war has just taken place in Spain. The Spanish workers and peasants were on one side. The Spanish capitalists, the bankers, the great landlords, and their followers were on the other side. It is true that some Moors from Africa took part on the side of Franco. But that has nothing to do with the fundamentals of the question. What we must note is that in Spain, where few Negroes live, the workers and the peasants on the one hand, all the poor, fought very fiercely against the rich owners of the country. Unfortunately the workers and peasants lost. Yet we see that in a country where all the population is of the same color the various classes can fight desperately to decide which class shall be master.

Let us take another example. The whole world has heard of how brutally the German fascists treat the German workers. The fascists murder the workers' leaders, throw them into concentration camps, beat up the workers in the streets, cut their wages down, and treat them in the most savage manner. But no Negroes live in Germany. This is a matter between whites and whites. The white capitalist class is in mortal conflict with the white workers. Jews have

nothing to do with this at all. If there was not a single Jew in Germany, the leaders of the German workers would still be in concentration camps, and the working-class movement stamped upon.

The same thing has happened in Italy, where the workers and poor peasants have had their leaders murdered and their organizations destroyed by Mussolini and his fascists.

Let us take one final example: Russia in 1917. There the workers and peasants fought the same civil war against the nobles, the landlords, and the capitalists. Only in this case, the Russian workers and peasants won. The land was divided among the peasants. The workers took over the factories and the workers' government was established.

Here then it is clear that during the last few years, not to mention other great examples in history, there have been developing terrific clashes in country after country where the population is all of one color. The struggle of the classes goes on, always, whatever the color of the people. So that many a white worker in Europe and America is saying to himself, "I am starving. In any case if I have a job, my friend next door has none. These capitalists will crush me by fascism as soon as I begin to fight for my rights. Why should I support their war for 'democracy'? My war is against the capitalists in my country." In other words some whites are saying the same about the war as the Negroes. Here is real help for Negroes.

### ***The Situation in America***

Now let us look closely at America in the light of what we have just discussed. We saw that in America 75 years ago the division between sections of the white population in America resulted in one side calling the Negroes to join and assist them in their struggle. Through this means the Negroes gained their emancipation. Although at the present time it may seem that all the whites, or at least most of them, are against the Negroes, oppress them, and discriminate against them, yet we can take it as certain that the same struggle which we have seen working itself out in the various countries of Europe is taking place in America to-

day. Sooner or later the workers and farmers of America, who are now fighting against the landlords and capitalists in unions, on the WPA, in struggles for better relief, will ultimately be driven to the same civil war that we have seen take place in country after country during the last 25 years. A Negro therefore who is looking at the political situation, not as it appears on the surface, but is seeing into the realities of the struggle between the classes, can have confidence in the future. He will realize that all white America is not solid. There is a tremendous division, a great split opening up. We can already see the signs of it very clearly. And as this struggle approaches and then actually flares out into the inevitable civil war, Negroes can be certain that many white workers and farmers who today are prejudiced will seek Negro assistance in the same way that Lincoln did when he fought the South. Negroes in the last Civil War made one great step forward, and so, in this coming civil war, the workers' war, Negroes have a great chance to complete their long journey to full freedom.

### **How to Fight Against War**

We know now that the millions of colonials in every country, those in Africa, in India, and all the other oppressed peoples, the majority of people now living are allies. And, most important, we have seen that many white workers in all parts of the world, although they do not suffer from the special discriminations imposed upon the Negro, yet see no reason why they must shed their blood for capitalism, whether it is "democratic" or fascist. They believe that the war the workers and farmers must fight is the war of all the oppressed against all the oppressors, the war to put an end to the capitalist system with its continual wars, its crises, and its fascist dictatorships.

The question now is how can the American Negroes best carry on the fight against being driven into the war. It is capitalism that drives us into war. So that the way to fight against war is to fight against capitalism. Who is it that will lead this country into war? None other than Franklin

Roosevelt. True, he says that he will do his best to keep America out of war. But Woodrow Wilson was elected in 1916 on the slogan that he kept America out of war. And the next year he was leading America into war in the name of "democracy." Roosevelt has made every preparation and is just waiting his chance to drag America in. How to stop him? There is only one way. By distrusting every word he says and opposing him in every move that he makes now.

### **No Lifting of Embargo**

When he and Congress cut down relief, it is no use listening to the Workers Alliance when it says that Roosevelt has cut relief less than the reactionary Congress and therefore Roosevelt must be supported. Not at all. Fight against both. If you support Roosevelt you strengthen his hand for his war policy. Note that although Congress and Roosevelt will disagree about relief, they always agree about the amount that should be spent on armaments. On that, they have no disagreement. They may quarrel about when exactly America should go into the war. But as to the preparations for going in, on that they are both agreed.

Roosevelt proposes that you cannot strike against the government. Negroes who are working on government projects will strike for their rights and struggle against this fascist decision. The stronger the opposition of the workers on all fronts, the more the capitalists are impeded in their drive to war. Roosevelt proposes to lift the embargo. What he is doing is trying to link up America more closely with Britain and France. As far as we can, we oppose this move to bring us closer towards the war.

### **All War Funds for Unemployed**

Roosevelt proposes so many billions for armaments. We protest against it. We want no billions or millions for armaments. Not one red cent. In return we demand that all war funds be given to the unemployed. The unemployed want money to live. They do not want to support Congress in voting money to kill people. We show our protest by meetings, demonstrations, and joining with all those who carry



on the same anti-war activities. That is the way to oppose Roosevelt's plan to drag America into war.

But the struggle can be carried on in a more immediate and effective manner. In the factory, in the mine, on the farms, wherever workers struggle for better wages and better conditions, when the danger of war approaches, that is the time to press for your demands with the greatest intensity. Taking them as a whole, all the capitalists will support one another in the war. It is they who stand to gain by it. So that all the workers, by pressing hard on them, and by fighting against them by strikes, can not only win privileges for themselves, but can so threaten the capitalists, that these, fighting their war against the workers at home, are so much the more prevented from fighting against other capitalists abroad.

### ***Let the People Vote Against the War***

Representative Ludlow has his Ludlow amendment which says that the people should have a referendum vote before war is declared. This by itself will never stop war. Only the struggle against capitalism will stop war. But we support the Ludlow bill. It will help. The Socialist Workers Party says: Let the people vote against the war. The Negroes should support this.

### ***Solidarity of White and Black***

But the workers themselves discriminate against their brother Negroes. Must the Negroes cease their struggles against discriminations in unions and other workers' organisations? Not at all. The Negroes and their friends among the white workers must point out to all that the Negroes must have their full rights as workers and as citizens. The Negroes will make no concessions here. In this gigantic task of the workers there must be full solidarity in the fight against war and this means a great struggle for equality among all members of the working class movement and all who are fighting against the capitalist war.

### ***Many Ways to Fight War***

But suppose we enter the war. What do we do then?

**WE CARRY ON THE STRUGGLE AS RELENTLESSLY AS BEFORE.** For capitalism here in America will still be the chief enemy. Naturally we shall not be able to fight in the same open manner as in peace. We shall not be able, for instance, to hold an anti-war meeting. But suppose in a factory some militant workers propose a strike against wage-cuts or oppressive conditions.

There will be traitors who will join the government and capitalists in saying: "Now that there is a war we must sacrifice for victory." But all true fighters against the war will refuse to accept this treacherous advice and will fight as bitterly for the rights of the workers during the war as before it. That is the way to fight against war.

There are many other ways which we cannot discuss in detail here. For instance, the Negroes can form small groups who will discuss the anti-war struggle, distribute leaflets against the war among themselves and their fellow-workers and friends, and cooperate with all others who are doing the same important work. Some cowards will say that this is against the law. Of course it is against the law. But it is the capitalists who make the law. And he is a great fool who obeys the capitalist law when he realizes the necessity of fighting against capitalism.

The result of all this will be, that when the great bulk of the people, black and white, begin to feel the strain of the war and begin to revolt against it, they will have leaders of knowledge and experience. They will have organizations ready to lead the great masses in their assault against the chief enemy, the enemy who is at home.

### ***Workers Stopped the Last War***

The workers and farmers, white and black, must never forget one important fact. The statesmen and the politicians did not stop the last war. It was the workers of Russia who brought Russia out, by the great revolution of October, 1917. And in November, 1918, it was the workers of Germany who chased the Kaiser and his government out of the country and brought the war to an end. That is what we have to aim at. Fighting against the capitalists to pre-

vent their going into war, and if we fail to stop them, carrying on the fight to bring the war to a close as quickly as possible. And not only bring it to a close, but sweep away capitalism altogether if we get the chance, and so prevent this mass slaughter which is inseparable from the cursed capitalist system.

If America is dragged into the war, during the early days the struggle against war will be difficult. It will seem hopeless. But in Germany, in December 1914, only one man, Karl Liebknecht, raised his voice against the war. Four years after, the great masses in Germany were following the advice of Liebknecht and bringing the war to a close by dealing with the enemy at home. At the beginning those who oppose may be few, but the masses will come to us in time as they came to Liebknecht. The mistake that the German workers made in 1918 was to change one capitalist government for another capitalist government, instead of sweeping away capitalism and establishing a real workers' government. If the capitalists patch up a peace, we know they will soon start another war. We continue the struggle against capitalism.

### ***For the Fourth International***

In all this difficult work, the Negroes of America must take the lead. They have most to win. Similar work is going on in every country at the present time, though naturally the capitalist press does not publish it. The Socialist Workers Party has brother parties in England, in France, in Poland, in India, in Africa, in China, all over the world, who are carrying on this work. We recognize that this is an international struggle and, therefore, our organization is international in scope.

Lenin and Trotsky formed the Third International to assist the workers, particularly in crises of this kind.

But today Stalin has the Third International working only to serve him in the bargains that he makes with imperialist governments like Hitler. One day the Stalinists say to fight for "democracy." That is because Stalin wanted an alliance with Britain. When Stalin joins with Hitler, the Stalinists begin to say that the war is not a war for "democ-

racy" any longer, that it is a war between imperialist countries. That may sound all right but if Stalin changes tomorrow, they will change again. They are not leaders of the working class but agents of Stalin. They are particularly dangerous because they use revolutionary words and have a lot of money. They must be avoided like poison.

It is because of the treachery of the Third International that genuinely revolutionary workers everywhere have formed the Fourth International. Negroes who see the situation clearly should join this party. The workers can never succeed without a powerful and clear-thinking revolutionary party. But if a Negro does not feel that he wants to join a revolutionary party today, that does not prevent him from forming or joining an organization of Negroes to fight against war. Such Negro organizations will work side by side with all other groups who are fighting against war in the only way this can be done, by fighting against capitalism.

Some people think that there will be jobs and good pay for Negroes as in the last war. They are wrong. Roosevelt has plans prepared, not to raise wages but to cut them during the war. The capitalists will get all the benefits this time. And after the war will come a depression to which this one will be a joke. No, there is no salvation that way.

### ***Real Enemy Is at Home***

Negro men and women in every country, in America, in the West Indies, in Africa, the Fourth International summons you to fight for your own liberation, for full social, political and economic rights in America, for the independence of Africa and the formation of Negro states in that continent. Do not join with one group of capitalists against another. Fight against both.

Everywhere, workers who do not see this today will see it tomorrow. The united workers and farmers of the world will oppose this bloody imperialist war to the bitter end. We will seek to build the new society, in which all men, irrespective of color or race, will be able to work in security and peace, and with full enjoyment of the good things of life.



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