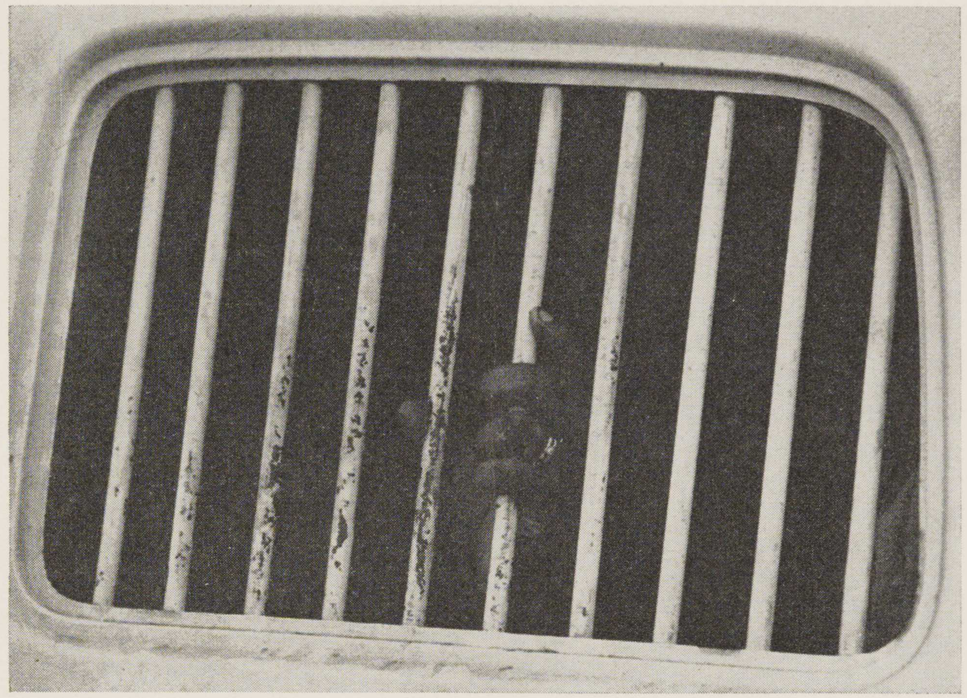
sequently they were easily victimized by the commissary system set up by the plantation owners. By this system, the freedmen obtained supplies on credit, to be paid for when the crops were harvested. But, knowing little arithmetic and denied access to the planters' books, the freedmen soon found themselves deeply in debt. Moreover, whenever a freedman was seen on the street, he was adjudged a vagrant, and as a vagrant he was put into prison. Then the plantation master would come along and pay the fine with the provision that the freedman would work out the cost of the fine on his plantation. As late as 1925 there were instances of peonage in various states of the South.

AND so, a counter-revolution to the Civil War revolution had emerged in the form of a Confederate counter-revolution. Since then a new revolution has emerged to overthrow the Confederate counter-revolution. That revolution is now underway—the civil rights revolution.

In 1909 W.E.B. DuBois, one of the great intellects of the Western world, a Negro, founded the Niagara Movement. Then, in 1910, he helped set up the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. This organization went to the courts for the purpose of establishing the illegality of racial discrimination and segregation. It has scored tremendous successes. It was able to knock down some of the poll taxes in various states through legal action. And so, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People became the voice and spearhead of this new revolution. Of course, the NAACP won that monumental and momentous decision from the United States Supreme Court in 1954 for the desegregation and integration of public schools.

Simultaneously however, there appeared new voices calling upon the people to make haste, to move with greater rapidity. In Montgomery Alabama, a massive bus boycott was led by Dr. Martin Luther King in the philosophy of nonviolent resistance. In 1960, from Greensboro, North Carolina, came the sit-in movement of courageous young Negro students. And then there were the Freedom Rides, and demonstrations began to spread throughout the nation, demonstrations for human dignity, for equality, for freedom, for social justice and racial justice. These demonstrations will continue.

It is important, my brothers and sisters, to realize that it has been over a hundred years since the Negro was supposedly freed. No one can blame these people for the demonstrations they are conducting throughout the nation. And we must understand that these demonstra-



"How long, O Lord, how long?"

tions will not fit any preconceived pattern of human behavior. These demonstrations will be adjusted to the social changes they face from day to day.

In every revolution there are phases of irrationality, phases of irresponsibility. This has been true of every revolution in the history of the world. Therefore, we must not expect that the civil rights revolution is going to be meticulously beautiful and worked out according to certain niceties. Negroes have suffered too long, too much, and too sharply to look at this question in terms of niceties. An issue is either right or wrong. Negroes don't have time to make the fine distinctions that come with exposition and logical analysis. They are working towards one end, the abolition of racial bias, the abolition of racial discrimination. They are working for the abolition of racism in every area of American life, and they are pointing to where it lies.

This, my dear brothers and sisters, is the manner in which this great struggle, one of the greatest events in the history of this country, is now surging forth. And the labor movement has a tremendous stake in this event, this civil rights revolution.