

Tsarism. Today, the Finns are under the hard and brutal reactionary dictatorship of the Finnish bourgeoisie, but there will be no doubt that once they have overthrown this bourgeoisie there will be no hesitation to federate with the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Government and the Communist Party recognized the rights of all the nations which had formerly been oppressed by Tsardom. The Soviet Union is composed of more than 100 different nations and national minorities. The oppression of these nations is now impossible because the masses of that nation which formerly oppressed them have overthrown the bourgeoisie and the landlords and are building socialism. These numerous nations live in complete harmony with each other. They have received direct aid from the Great Russians in building their industry, improving their agriculture and achieving complete economic equality with the other peoples of the Soviet Union.

The proletarian revolution first wiped out the basis of national oppression. Then it began rapidly to lay the basis of equality. For many of these formerly oppressed peoples had been retarded and held back by Tsardom. It was necessary to carry through the development of industry and agriculture in the regions where the formerly oppressed nations lived, at even a quicker pace than in Central Russia. We have witnessed here the most rapid development of peoples that all of history can show. Nomadic peoples were lifted out of their backwardness, almost overnight developed into an industrial and modern agricultural people without having to go through the stage of capitalism. Cultural development is equally swift. The basis for inequality is rapidly disappearing even in most backward areas.

The Soviet Union has proved the correctness of the Communist program. If in the former "prison of nations", where the question of national liberation and of national prejudices is very much more complicated than in the United States, such signal success has been achieved, can there be any doubt about the realization of equal and even greater success here?

The Revolutionary Way

We have seen that only a basic change can guarantee to the Negro the possibility for a decent livelihood, the rights of human beings and an equal, honorable and respected status in all public and social life. The ruling class will not permit such a change.

The masses of exploited must therefore organize in order to make use of their right to revolution.

Revolution is not a matter of our own choosing. It is forced upon us by capitalism itself, which degrades us, grinds us down into the dust, makes life unbearable. As long as exploitation and oppression have existed there have been revolutions.

The revolutionary way has always been the way of human progress. Capitalism came into being as the result of a revolution against feudalism and the nobility in Europe. Socialism came into being in Russia as the result of a revolution against capitalism. Revolution has marked the birth and progress of the United States. Now another revolution is necessary to remove a decaying system and make way for further progress. But the proletarian revolution differs from all the other revolutions of history. All previous revolutions resulted in a new exploiting class coming into power and suppressing the majority of the people. The proletarian revolution results in the majority coming into power, suppressing the exploiting minority and removing the basis of all exploitation and oppression. Only then is the possibility created for doing away with all classes. Society, organized in a new social and economic system—the Socialist system—can now provide the necessities of life in abundance.

The revolutionary way has not been strange to the Negro people in the United States. Revolutionary struggles have glorified their history. Have we forgotten the courageous struggles of the African peoples for life and liberty against the slave merchants of Europe and the American colonies? Even the few incidents which have been preserved in written history testify to the determined struggle of the Negroes against enslavement from the very beginning. The Negro people can find inspiration in the revolutionary attempts of Gabriel, Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner and untold thousands of fighters in the numerous slave revolts in the United States, and in the underground railroad. Many Negroes participated in the revolutionary war of the American colonies against the British. The Civil War itself was a revolution in which the Negroes—those who were yesterday chattel slaves!—fought for land and liberty.

That glorious Civil War decade when the embattled Negro fought with gun in hand against the bloodhounds of reaction for the rights of citizenship and of land is today an heroic, revolu-