

munist Party to assume the hegemony of the Negro liberation movement, strengthens immensely the fighting possibilities for the emancipation of the Negro race and increases the importance of the Negro question for the revolutionary struggle of the American proletariat.

American imperialism oppresses in the most terrific way the nearly 11 million Negroes who constitute not less than one-tenth of the country's total population. White capitalist prejudice considers the Negro race a "lower race," the born servants of the lofty white masters. *The racial caste system is a fundamental feature of the social, industrial and political organization of the United States.*

The Workers (Communist) Party of America, in its fight against imperialism, must recognize clearly the tremendous revolutionary possibilities of the liberation movement of the Negro people. Today the "solid south," the millions of Negro farmers of the "black belt," living under the most oppressive conditions, "half-feudal, half-slave" (Lenin) constitute one of the props of American imperialism. It is the basic duty of the Communist Party to develop all revolutionary possibilities of the Negro race, to transform the "solid south" and the "black belt" from "reserves of forces for the bourgeoisie into reserves of forces for the proletariat" (Stalin). *The Communist Party must consider itself not only the Party of the working class generally, but also the champion of the Negroes as an oppressed race and especially the organizer of the Negro working-class elements.* The Communist Party cannot be a real Bolshevik Party without being also the Party of the liberation of the Negro race from all white oppression.

THE SOLID SOUTH—AN AMERICAN COLONY

The Negro tenant farmers, share-croppers, and agricultural workers of the south are still, despite all the pompous phrases of "freeing the slaves," in the status of virtual slavery. They have not the slightest prospect of ever acquiring possession of the land on which they work. By means of a usurious credit system they are chained to the plantation owners as firmly as plantation slaves. Peonage and contract labor are the fate of the Negro cotton farmers. The bankers of the east and the south are increasingly becoming the landowners. The *landowners*, who are at the same time the *merchants*, having a monopoly of marketing the crops of the Negro

tenant farmers, and of the *government* in the south, rule over the Negroes with a merciless dictatorship.

The most backward half-feudal, half-slave methods of exploitation by the plantation owners, are merged in the south with the most modern forms of capitalist exploitation by the huge trusts and banks of financial capital. No other section of the American toiling masses feels the ruthless capitalist dictatorship of the much-vaunted American bourgeois democracy more than the oppressed Negro masses. The Negroes of the south are disfranchised politically. Sheer force prevents the Negroes from exercising their so-called political rights. Lynch law is the law over the Negroes. The terror of the Ku Klux Klan is the constitution for the Negroes. Most infamous segregation policies prevail everywhere against them. The white masters try to reduce the Negroes to illiteracy.

The "black belt" of the south, with its starving and pauperized Negro farmers, and Negro agricultural working masses; with its Jim-Crowism, its semi-feudal status and its political system still bearing the earmarks of the period of slavery, *constitutes virtually a colony within the body of the United States of America.* The super-profits extracted from this Negro "colony" are one of the most important sources of the growth of American imperialism; the oppression of the Negro race is one of the most important bases of the government apparatus of American capitalism. The prejudices created in the minds of large sections of the white workers against the Negroes are the most dangerous obstacles to the unity of the American working class.

CLASS DIFFERENTIATION OF THE NEGROES

A sharp class differentiation has taken place in the Negro population in recent years. Formerly the Negro was in the main the cotton farmer in the south and the domestic help in the north. The peasantry (the Negro farm owners, the share-croppers, the Negro tenant farmers) and the agricultural workers are still the largest stratum of the Negro race. Out of eight million Negroes in the south, there are six million still on the land. In the big cities and industrial centres of the north there is concentrated to a growing degree a Negro working-class population. There are already one and one-half to two million Negroes in industry in the north. At the same time there is a rapid development of a Negro petit-bour-