

majority of the population! For the elimination of Zionist concepts from the workers' movement! For the integration of the Jewish workers into the national-democratic revolutionary movement of the Arab masses!

—For the breaking-away of the Jewish trade unions and working-class organizations from the Jewish Agency, and the publication in full of all the secret proceedings of the Agency.

—For the breaking-away of the Arab trade unions and working-class organizations from the Arab League and the Arab High Committee for Palestine, and the publication in full of all the secret proceedings of these organizations.

All these slogans, which today can be advanced only as general propaganda slogans, will necessarily meet with furious opposition from the Zionists, not only for ideological reasons but also and especially because the *privileged material situation* of the Jews in relation to the Arab masses is thus threatened. But as the bankruptcy of Zionism becomes more and more strikingly revealed to the masses; as immigration slows down and the terrible danger of the Arab explosion comes nearer; as our propaganda helps in getting the masses to realize that it is a *life-or-death* question for them to find a common ground with the Arab masses, even at the price of temporarily giving up certain privileges—under these conditions our slogans will be able to pass from the propaganda stage to the stage of agita-

tion, and will help in bringing about a split between the workers' movement and Zionism. This is the condition *sine qua non* for the realization of *Jewish-Arab unity of action* against imperialism. This alone can prevent the Arab revolution in the Middle East from passing over the corpse of Palestinian Judaism. In Palestine as well as among the Jewish masses in the rest of the world, a firm position today against the current is the only thing which will make it possible to work toward a reversal of the current in the next stage.

This means also that it is necessary for the sections of the Fourth International to carry on preliminary propaganda work within the Zionist organizations of the extreme left. While showing that the slogan of a "bi-national state" is a *nationalist* and anti-democratic slogan, running counter to both the right of self-determination and the immediate needs of the anti-imperialist struggle in Palestine, our members must at the same time constantly put on the order of the day the question of *concrete realization* of the slogan of Jewish-Arab unity. They must confront the centrist leaders with their responsibilities, they must put on the order of the day the adoption of the anti-racial program outlined above, and thus speed the development of the consciousness of the Jewish working-class vanguard beyond the stage of Zionism.

January 1, 1947.

## Industrialization of the Negro

By F. FOREST

The entry of Negro workers into war production industries produced an industrial and social change of first magnitude, the scope of which has not yet been fully grasped. It is true that four out of five Negro workers still remain in the unskilled category, but now they are not on the fringes of industry, but in the midst of the production process. An outstanding authority estimates that there has been more occupational diversification of Negro labor in the four years, 1940 to 1944, than in the preceding seventy-five years. (Robert C. Weaver, *Negro Labor*, p. 78.)

In viewing this development created by World War II, we must bear in mind the dialectical interrelationship between the development of industry initiated by the war boom, and the heightening of the Negro mass struggle which forced the introduction of Negroes into war industries, from which they had practically been excluded until mid-1942. It was the threat contained in the organization of the March-On-Washington movement in January 1941 which first brought the active pressure of the Negro masses to bear upon the Government and forced the incorporation of Negro labor into mass production industries.

Another feature of great importance is that the new migration of the Negro during the second World War encompasses the whole of the United States, including the Pacific Northwest. World War II completed the process begun in World War I of transforming the Negro question from a "Southern" to an all-American problem. The repercussions of this are so explosive that in the wake of the race conflicts during 1943, Attorney General Biddle, in his now infamous secret memorandum to President Roosevelt, had the effrontery to pose the question of containing the Negro migration. An analysis of the latest

data on this question is of utmost importance to Marxists who recognize in the Negro a most-potent force in the making of the third American revolution.

### I. The War-time Migration\*

To the millions of unemployed at the outbreak of World War II, the establishment of mass production centers around war industries held a greater lure than did the Western lands for the old pioneer. Between 1940 to 1944 four million workers—who, with their families, totalled no less than nine million people—moved out of 30 states and into 18 other states and the District of Columbia. A million of these were Negroes. Contrast this with the fact that until mid-1942 Negro migration contributed no more than 5 per cent of total migration. The greatest movement was to the Pacific Northwest.

The United States Census Bureau, in conducting a survey in 1944 of the ten most congested production centers, found that, whereas the total population increased by 1,840,000 (19 per cent), in these centers the Negro population increased by 49 per cent. It is true that the overwhelming majority of Negroes still live in the South—nine million out of thirteen million. But whereas only 5 per cent of Negroes lived in the North in 1940,

\*The reader is referred to the following material: (a) The U. S. Census Bureau reports on the ten congested areas: Charleston, S. C., Detroit-Willow Run, Hampton Road area, Los Angeles, Mobile, Alabama, Muskegon area, San Francisco-Bay area, Portland-Vancouver area, Puget Sound and San Diego; (b) the Urban League Report to the President: "Racial Aspects of Reconversion, 1940-44"; and (c) the special issues of *The Journal of Educational Sociology* edited by L. D. Reddick, the January 1944 issue on "The Negro in the North during Wartime," and the November 1945 issue on "Race Relations on the Pacific Coast."

by 1930 that percentage had grown to 13. What is more remarkable is that even during the depression, when there were no job opportunities in the North, the Negroes kept leaving the South. By 1940, the nearly 13 million Negroes in the United States were thus distributed: 9,904,619, or 77 per cent, lived in the South; 2,790,193, or 21.7 per cent lived in the North, and 170,706, or 1.3 per cent, lived in the West. By 1945 fully 25 per cent lived North and Northwest. More than 90 per cent of these are urbanized!

During the previous great migration North—there were two waves, 1916-1919 and 1921-1924—one and one-half million Negroes left the South. The Negro populations in Northern cities seemed to spring up overnight. Between 1910 and 1930 the Negroes in New York grew from 91,709 to 152,647, an increase of 66.3 per cent. In Chicago the Negro experienced a 148.2 per cent increase. Detroit's growth was the most phenomenal, from a mere 5,741 in 1910 to 40,838 in 1920—an increase of 611.3 per cent. These cities never ceased to grow, and this new migration in 1942-1945 has increased the Negro population of Chicago from 270,000 to 350,000, and that of Detroit from 150,000 to 230,000.

## Recent Negro Migration

The present Negro migration had two outstanding new features: (1) the movement to the Pacific Northwest, hardly touched previously, and (2) the migration *within* the South, from rural to urban areas. In the Portland-Vancouver area the Negro population has increased no less than 437.5 per cent. There were, for instance, only 2,566 Negroes in the whole state of Oregon in 1940, 1,931 of whom lived in Portland. The Kaiser industries moved in, and by 1945 the Negro population leaped from less than 2,000 to 22,000. In Seattle the Negro population was 3,789, and that of near-by Bremerton had only 77. The Bremerton Navy Yard opened its doors to Negro labor, and five years later the Negro population of Bremerton leaped from a mere 77 to 4,617. Next to this "major area of tension on the West Coast," the Fair Employment Practices Commission (FEPC) lists the San Francisco-Bay area. In San Francisco itself there were only 4,846 Negroes in 1940. By 1945 the Negro population increased to 25,000.

Of equal importance with this movement to the Pacific Northwest has been the urbanization of the Negro within the South itself. Between 1942 to 1945, 250,000 Negroes shifted from rural to urban areas within the South. Mobile, Alabama, increased its Negro population by 106 per cent, from 30,554 to 60,000. Of the total population of Charleston, S. C., 70 per cent came from elsewhere in the South. The Negro population in the South is now approximately 50 per cent urbanized. To get the epochal significance of this, we must take a brief view of the South.

## II. The South

In the period 1940-44 non-farm employment in the 13 Southern states had increased by one-third. It was not, however, the mechanization of agriculture which freed the agricultural population for manufacturing employment. There had been a backlog of 2 million unemployed in the South at the outbreak of the war, and it is these who poured into the war industries, which were established in the South alongside the cotton culture. *This is the key to the whole industrialization of the South which, ever since the end of the Civil War, has been built not directly upon the ruins of slavery, but alongside its economic remains.*

## I. "The Boss and Black" Relationship\*

Industrialization in the South, instead of disintegrating the peasantry, i.e., transforming the overwhelming majority into proletarians, and thus creating the traditional home market for bourgeois production, had developed so haltingly that the black peasant, or sharecropper, remained largely untouched. The bourgeoisie was compelled to sacrifice this section of the home market for the sake of maintaining the archaic social structure there. Continuation of the crop lien system, instituted at the end of the Civil War, forced Northern capital to follow what is euphemistically called the Southern "color pattern." The basis for it is the "boss and black relationship" inherent in cotton culture. The labor supply of the plantations was left intact in order not to intrude upon these semi-feudal agrarian relations upon which cotton production is based. These remain "less changed than the soil itself on which this cotton is grown." (*The Deep South*, p. 266.)

The gory reign of "white supremacy" is rooted in cotton culture. The "gentlemen's agreement" between the bourbon South and the Wall Street North which owns it, was that Southern industry develop under the conditions that it leave untouched the black labor supply of the plantation, holds to this day.\*\* One of the main reasons why the Negro was slow to benefit from the industry boom produced by World War II is that the Southern oligarchy insisted that black labor be left "free" for cotton picking. And they were able to have this extraordinary power, although war-time industry in the South was government-financed to the extent of 81 per cent, as against 65 per cent for the rest of the nation!

## 2. Industrialization\*\*\*

Just as cotton labor was at first exclusively a Negro occupation, so textile labor has been exclusively a poor white occupation. As late as 1937 only 20,000 of the 350,000 workers in the textile industry were Negroes. With World War II production of textiles increased tremendously, while the labor force practically doubled, now comprising 650,000 workers. But only 26,000 of these are Negroes and almost all of them are employed not in the direct process of production but around the mill.

The Negro, being at the very bottom of the social structure is pushed by capitalism into the worst said industries. But as capitalist economy develops, these low-paid industries become ever more important. Thus heavy industry did not, like textiles,

\*Cf. Johnson, Embree and Alexander: *The Collapse of Cotton Tenancy*; also *Report on Economic Conditions of the South*, prepared for the President, by the National Emergency Council, 1935. For later data, Chapters 11 and 12 of *An American Dilemma* by Gunnar Myrdal, as well as the special *Business Week Reports to Executives on "Better Farming, Better Markets."*

\*\*The Morgans, Mellons, Fords and Rockefeller control the South. The Tennessee Coal, Iron & Rrd. Co., for ex., is a subsidiary of U. S. Steel; the International Harvester Co. has acquired many thousands of acres of land. To see the extent to which finance capital of the North owns semi-feudal South, cf. *The South in Progress* by Katherine Lumpkin.

\*\*\*For the industrialization and trade unionization of the Negro both North and South, see, for the period to 1930: *Black Worker* by Spero and Harris; for the CIO: *Black Workers and the New Unions* by Cayton and Mitchell; up to 1912: Chapters 13, 18 and 19 and Appendix 6 in *An American Dilemma* by Gunnar Myrdal; and for the war period and reconversion: *Organized Labor and the Negro* by Northrup, and *Negro Labor, A National Problem* by Weaver.

by-pass the Negro. From the very place he occupies in capitalist society, the Negro necessarily becomes one of the principal forces for its overthrow.

The Negro proletariat has been very strategically placed in industry. By 1907 39.1 per cent of Southern steel workers were Negroes. In 1930, out of a total of 19,392 employed in the iron and steel industry, 13,331, or 68.74 per cent were Negroes. The latest movement into Southern urban areas shows how important is the place they occupy even in single enterprises. For example, out of the 25,000 workers of the Alabama Dry Dock and Shipbuilding Co., in Mobile, 20 per cent are Negroes.

Between textiles which employ no Negroes in the direct process of production; and mines and steel mills, in which Negroes are more or less equal in number to whites, there are the so-called "strictly Negro jobs" in the South—saw mills, fertilizer plants, etc. These remain unorganized. They are located rurally so that the Negro worker is isolated. But, on the whole, the Negro has been an integral part of the labor force in heavy industry since the earliest days of Southern industrialization, and he has, moreover, been a militant member of whatever unions were implanted there, and opened their doors to him.

At the height of its power, the IWW claimed one million members, of whom 100,000 were Negroes. The most important of the IWW unions among Negroes were precisely in the prejudice-ridden South, in the lumber industries of Louisiana and Texas, and among the longshoremen and dockworkers in Baltimore, Norfolk and Philadelphia. The Brotherhood of Timber Workers in the lumber camps of Louisiana, Texas and Arkansas had 35,000 members in 1910, of whom 50 per cent were Negroes. The Negro proletariat has from the first been an active militant of the United Mine Workers. It was the UMW militants who were used by the CIO organization drives to organize steel. Whereas the Negro was used in 1919 to break the steel strike, in 1937 the Negro steel worker broke Big Steel's lordly refusal to negotiate with the union.

The Negro proletariat is not the cowed plantation hand. He is literate and has been disciplined by the factory. He knows the might of a cohesive group, organized by the very process of production. He is, and feels himself, a powerful force. No less than two million are now members of the CIO, AFL and independent unions. Yet four out of five Negroes remain in an unskilled category. And when union meetings are over, the white and Negro workers, in the main, go their separate ways.

It is clear that the recent proletarianization and urbanization has far from "solved" the Negro problem. The "boss and black" relationship still pursues him, in the city as well as in the country, North, as we shall see, as well as South. Wage differentials exist in the factory as in the field. Jim Crowism persists. The contradiction between the potency in the process of production and his seeming impotence outside cannot but find a manner of expression.

The explosive power lodged in the struggle of the Negro proletariat in the Southern cities will have significance in repercussions for the contiguous rural Black Belt. It will strike at the heart of the Southern economy and Southern politics and upset as well Northern capitalistic interests which have so readily accepted the South's segregation pattern in order to coin profit from it. But among the millions suffering on the plantations and among the thousands who have won themselves a place in industry, the most insistent problem is and must continue to be for some time the emancipation from the national oppression they feel at every turn.

### III. The North

The basic movement of capital in 1917-1919 and the movement of the industrial reserve army of labor brought the Negroes to the North and sent them into mass industries. With World War I the Negro became an established part of the American labor force. In 1930 they constituted 22.7 per cent of labor in building trades, 16.2 per cent of the unskilled in steel, 25 per cent of the unskilled in meat packing, 31.7 per cent of longshoremen and 89.5 per cent in saw mills. However, so long as the basic industries remained unorganized—and they could not but remain unorganized until the unions let down the color bars along with the craft lines—the Negro could not become an integral part of the trade union movement. That is why the coming of the CIO also witnessed the unionization of the Negro on an unprecedented scale.

Nevertheless, in the North, too, the proletarianization and trade unionization of the Negro did not raise him to the status of the white proletariat and did not dissolve his struggle for elementary democratic rights into the general class struggle of organized labor against the capitalist regime. First, in the trade unions he must fight as a Negro for his place as a worker. Wage differentials, discrimination in seniority, upgrading have by no means been abolished. Then, outside the trade union, he is ghetto-ized.

The creation of comparatively free proletarian and semi-proletarian masses in the large urban centers of the North during World War I first made possible the development of a powerful Negro press. In this respect, Gunnar Myrdal has correctly pointed out: "The foreign language press is doomed to disappear as immigrants become fully assimilated and are not replenished by new immigration. The Negro press, on the contrary, is bound to become ever stronger as the Negroes are increasingly educated and culturally assimilated, but not given entrance to the white world." (*An American Dilemma*, Vol. II, p. 912.)

But, although the national oppression produced the Negro press, and his ghetto-ization the Negro community, that very community has special characteristics precisely because the Negro is so overwhelmingly proletarian. A beautiful example of this dual movement and its economic base was given by the *Pittsburgh Courier* in 1937. This bourgeois newspaper, most intensely race conscious, nevertheless led the swing of the more progressive Negroes in the community towards entry into and acceptance of the CIO.

On the other hand, the more integrated the Negro is in the trade union, the more he resents his ghetto-ization outside. At the very time that he has joined the trade union, he has also joined in large numbers an independent mass Negro organization which fights for his democratic rights. The new migration gave new life to the NAACP, which had been declining because of its do-nothingness. During World War II the NAACP experienced so great an influx of membership that it now has nearly one million members. Its greatest increase was precisely in such centers as Detroit, where the militant UAW has made the Negroes' trade union integration easier than elsewhere.

An over-all picture, North and South, at the outbreak of the recent war showed that unemployment had been as high as 17 per cent of the total Negro labor force. The number of Negroes in manufacturing, which had risen from 6.2 per cent in 1910 to 7.3 per cent in 1930 had sunk to a new low of 5.1 per cent by 1940. The movement back into industry did not gain a real

foothold till mid-1942. The war period, 1940-1945 took a million into the armed forces. Another million swelled the civilian labor force, raising the total Negro employment, from 4.4 million to 5.3 million. The employment of women, which had increased from 1.5 million to 2.1 million has an especial importance because it meant not merely an increase in employment, but so great a movement from domestic service to basic industry as to be comparable in importance to the movement from farm to non-farm employment.

This movement into basic industry also, of course, characterized the Negro male labor force. Negro employment in heavy industry tripled. A break-down of percentage increases in various heavy industries will show how strategically he was placed.

PER CENT OF NON-WHITE WORKERS EMPLOYED IN  
SELECTED WAR INDUSTRIES, 1942-1945

	July 1942	January 1945
Agricultural Machinery & Tractors .....	1.9	6.0
Aircraft .....	2.9	5.8
Aluminum and Magnesium Products .....	7.1	13.5
Blast furnaces, Steel Works & Rolling Mills ....	9.8	11.8
Communication Equipment & Related Products ..	0.7	4.9
Explosives .....	3.3	7.1
Iron and Steel Foundry Products .....	18.6	25.4
Shipbuilding .....	5.7	11.7
Tanks .....	2.2	13.0

A majority of the one and one-half million Negroes in war industries were concentrated in the ten most congested war industrial areas, listed in the section on migration. Another 9 per cent were concentrated in four cities—Pittsburgh, Birmingham, New York and St. Louis.

Two characteristic examples of the horrible housing situation which this produced will illuminate the Negro's feeling of confinement. In Baltimore, where the Negro constitutes 20 per cent of the population, he is segregated in 2 per cent of the residential area. In Chicago 250,000 live in units built for 150,000. In wards 2 and 3 of that city, the density of population is 95,000 per square mile, which is comparable to Calcutta, India! This congestion has served to sharpen the Negro's frustration, which W. E. B. Du Bois so graphically described in 1935: "It is doubtful," he wrote then "if there is another group of 12 million people in the midst of a modern cultured land who are so widely inhibited and mentally confined as the American Negro." (*Black Reconstruction*, p. 703.)

It is precisely in the Northern urban centers\* that the political results inherent in the situation in the South receive their sharpest political expression. Capitalism, in dragging the Negroes to the North, cannot prevent the explosion of revolt against the national oppression which are kept beneath the surface in the South. The ghetto-like existence, the social humiliation not only spring historically from the cotton plantation. The cotton plantation system also exports to the North its workers, imbued with the ideology of the South, to stimulate, encourage and organize the anti-Negro prejudices of the people

\*In his "Growing Up in the Black Belt" Charles S. Johnson points out that the urban Southern Negro is more race conscious than the rural Southern Negro, and that the Negro in the North is more race conscious than the Negro in the South. Only he who understands the dual development of the Negro from a Marxist point of view can grasp the full significance of this fact; the "talented tenth," unfortunately, does not.

of the North which are fortified among the working class by competition in industry.

The double oppression which the bourgeoisie has placed upon the Negro, as a worker and as a nationally oppressed minority, has not only resulted in placing him in strategic industries, but will give his developing class consciousness a hostility to the existing society and a keener determination to destroy it.

The proletarian vanguard must respond by recognizing not only the validity but the inevitability of Negro mass movements against this double oppression and strive to lead this movement and harness its revolutionary potentialities for the struggle against capitalist society. But only that revolutionary party can do this which understands the objectively revolutionary role that these independent mass movements can play in the reconstruction of society on communist beginnings. Trotsky saw this most profoundly and hence spoke with confidence: "We must say to the conscious elements of the Negroes that they are convoked by the historic development to become a vanguard of the working class. What serves as the brake on the higher strata? It is the privileges and comforts that hinder them from becoming revolutionists. It does not exist for the Negroes. What can transform a certain stratum and make it more capable of courage and sacrifice? It is concentrated in the Negroes. If it happens that we are not able to find the road to this stratum, then we are not worthy at all. The permanent revolution and all the rest would be only a lie."

December 1, 1947

## Editorial Corrections

The following editorial corrections of the Draft Thesis adopted by the International Secretariat of the Fourth International on *The Russian Question Today (Stalinism and the Fourth International)* arrived too late for inclusion in the text which appeared in our November-December issue:

At the end of Section 1, "The Russian Question" (page 264, second column) insert the following paragraph:

"This program of struggle within the Soviet Union remains essentially valid for the present period. The Russian Bolshevik-Leninists, on the basis of this program, work out specific slogans corresponding to the concrete unfolding of the situation."

In Section 2 "Stalinism Outside Russia" (page 270, second column, 3rd line from the top), point (d) which reads:

"d) Fight against the GPU by all means"

is deleted, insert in its place the following paragraph:

"d) Against the GPU, the Stalinist murder machine, the Trotskyists wage unceasing warfare by all the means at their disposal. The Stalinists have taken advantage of every social upheaval to kill off numerous Trotskyist and other anti-Stalinist militants in order to eliminate physically all cadres who could give revolutionary leadership to the working class (Spain, Greece, Indo-China). The whole criminal record of the GPU must be constantly exposed. The greatest alertness must be shown to all new GPU crimes in preparation. The broadest sections of public opinion must be mobilized against them. The fullest and most careful measures of self-defense must be undertaken. Against the calculated cold-blooded murder methods of the GPU, we must utilize every means at our command."