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LETTER

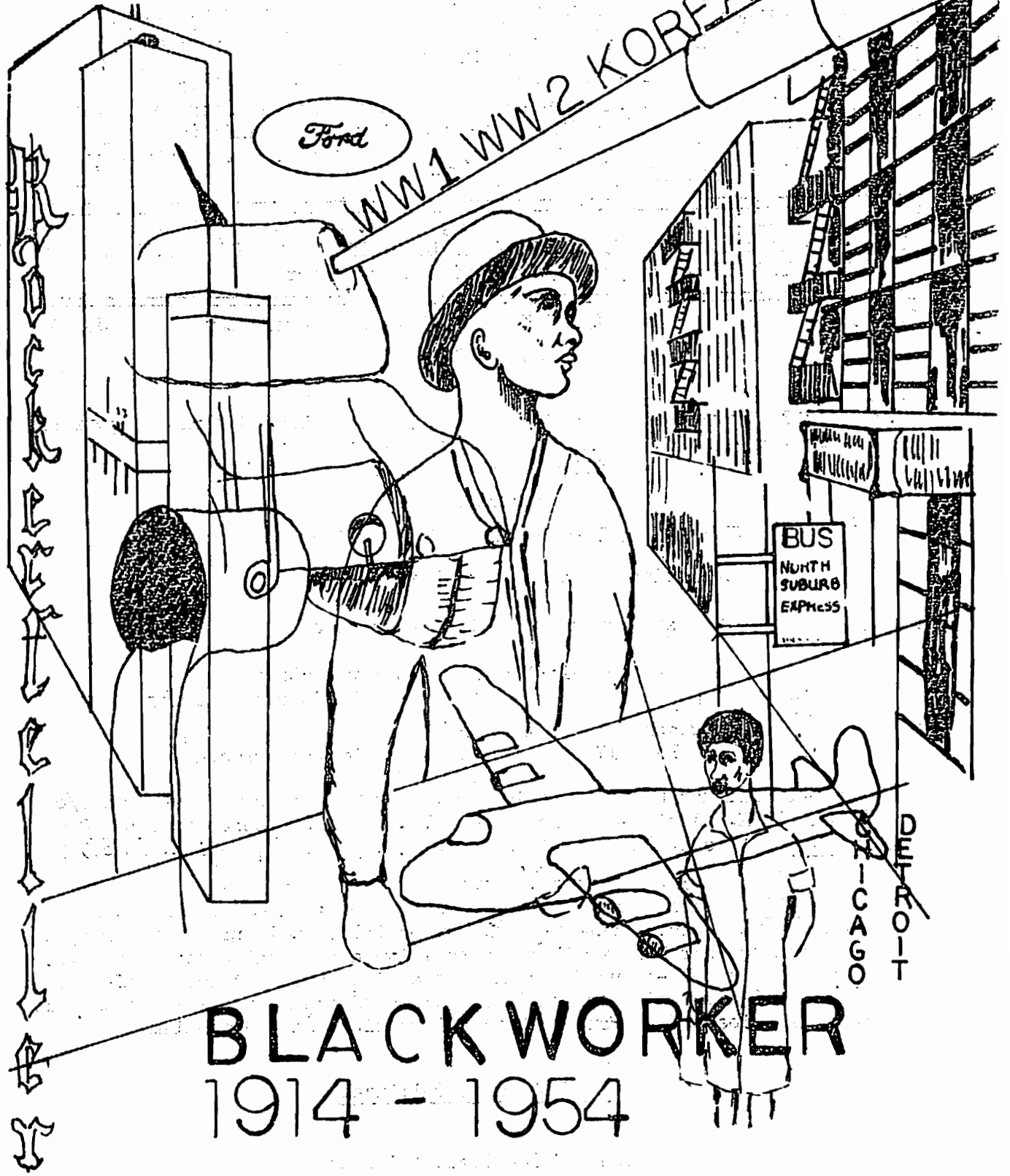
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1914 - 1954



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BLACK PRIDE shall always move to "leave no problem untackled, no mistake unexposed. Truth must always be told. It is proof of strength and even the harshest truth has a positive aspect which can be used... /to/ promote self-induced morality, that is, self-reliance, self-education, self-discipline and self-criticism" /Kwame Nkrumah/ —all towards National Liberation, Pan-Afrikanism & Revolutionary Socialism.

Everything is Political

Year of Ideological Growth

NEWS BRIEFS FROM PANAFRIKAN/3RD WORLD

JACKSON, MISS.— In a historic decision the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals has quietly conceded in New Orleans that Blacks who claim allegiance to the Republic of New Africa are citizens of that nation and that that nation exists. The court, however, emphatically insisted that the Republic of New Africa was not a "foreign" nation; and therefore, subject to U.S. law. The ruling came in the RNA 11 case. Seven members had been tried and convicted in the U.S. District Court at Biloxi, Miss., on Sept. 11, 1973 as a result of a dawn attack on the home of RNA President, Imari Abubakari Obadele, I, in Jackson, Miss., on Sept. 11, 1973 by 40 police and federal agents who claimed they had come to serve a warrant on a man who was never found at Brother Imari's house. As a result, a white police lieutenant was killed, and another police and FBI agent were seriously wounded. Presently, however, the Court of Appeals had confirmed all federal convictions except Tamu Sana's, conceding that she was in Ghana, Afrika at the time. Consequently, the RNA 11 still face a number of appeals at the federal level.

SAN FRANCISCO-- American Indian Movement leader Denis Banks has petitioned California Governor Edmund G. Brown for sanctuary from extradition proceedings by the state of South Dakota. Dakota is seeking to bring Banks to trial on state charges arising from the 11-day occupation of Wounded Knee Indian Reservation in 1973, by AIM members who sought redress against the deplorable living conditions suffered by Native Americans.

MONTGOMERY, ALA -- In a gross miscarriage of justice, murder charges against three Ku Klux Klan members, stemming from the 1957 death of a Black truck driver, were dismissed.

Judge Frank Emby ruled that indictments against the Klan members, who were accused of forcing Willie Edwards, Jr. to jump from a bridge to his death 19 years ago, because he allegedly insulted a white woman, be dismissed because they were improperly drawn up.

WASHINGTON (AP)—Norman A. Carlson, Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, has issued an order repealing censorship rules and declaring that it is now Bureau policy "to encourage inmates to use their leisure time for creative writing." The change was part of a "new trend that inmates should be permitted to keep up his contacts with his family and the community." /Ed. comment: Since hearing of the above change, the B.P. staff has tried thus far to no avail to secure an official copy of Norman Carlson's order; however, based on a previous correspondence all indications are that the Director's liberalization of censorship rules does not extend to prisoner's publications./

ANGOLA -- In a revision of previous U.S. position on Afrika the U.S. State Department is now playing up the situation in Afrika as a struggle between the Soviet Union and China for influence in the struggle which is soon to expand in Namibia and Zimbabwe. This position tends to play down U.S. involvement in both of these struggles, as well as their support of the racist governments of Smith & Vorester, in their efforts to continue the subjugation of the Black masses in Southern Afrika. Therefore, all progressive forces in the U.S. must not be misled by the official rhetoric of the U.S. State Department concerning the struggle for power between China & the Soviet Union, and look to the concrete conditions of the struggles in both Zambia & Namibia for the correct political position.

This issue Black Pride draws together a variety of articles as diverse as are the elements of Bro. Hassan's cover montage. Such weaving well depicts the myriad facets of Black Struggle, a sort of tapestry of our lives on this continent.

Most of our readers are familiar with the Chicago based Peoples Law Office; they've played invaluable roles in many recent prisoner suits. In SIX YEARS LATER we have an opportunity to view them as seen against the background of poor peoples' legal battle. Nancy Banks' article is an excerpt, but the insights she allows into the suit brought by the families of Panther leaders Mark Clark & Fred Hampton clearly reveal the duplicity & conspiratorial nature of Law 'n' Order forces. One can just imagine the incompetence of a Police Board Head unapprised of the meaning of "hit" - yet this is what Marlin W. Johnson would have a jury believe. Absurd, ain't it? But that's America.

Speaking of America, especially interesting in this Bicentennial Year is Brother Charles Beasley's perspective - in the tradition of Fredrick Douglas' historic Fourth of July speech. He peels back the "overlay" & reveals the viscera of the American Dream. In the light of history he spotlights the rapine to which Native Americans were subjected; highlights the "theory" of liberty & the "practice" of slaughter & slavery. On the hypocrisy of the Declaration of Independence he is explicit in his denunciation, & castigates the defeatism (or was it cowardice) of Booker T. Washington for misleading his people in the interest of their oppressors. Underlying it all, he evidences the economic basis of the whole thing. It is a very powerful & passionate piece. We look forward to more contributions from this Brother.

Undoubtedly, those who read the previous issue were appreciative of the information on The Black Worker. This issue, Brother Ben Murdock has come forth with Part Two— covering the period between 1914-54. The extensive reading list almost overwhelms, but actually points up the research necessary for comprehension of our current situation. A fine dialectical presentation, he has clarified such factors as the cause of migrations—previously thought to be southern racism—the Black contribution to labor security (Roosevelt's FEPA), & the extent to which Black workers attempted to organize. The first is even more sharply relevant when viewed in relation to the Black Nation Thesis & the recent RNA court decision. Like an Egyptologist unearthing long hidden secrets, he unveils the part played by the NEWA & NNC in CIO development, & reveals the dynamic contributions of Communist forces on behalf of Black labor. Paralleling the Subversive Activities Control Board & the Palmer Raids with the current trend of coercion by Grand Jury & FBI harassment, we clearly see that nothing much has changed in government methodology. The controversy over Communist ideology also has contemporary significance. One cannot fail to see its reemergence in the recent split among Pan-Afrikan & left forces in general. This & Nationalism are concepts demanding incisive analysis before conclusions are drawn.

Nationalism brings us to a link in our past. Akinshiju is gone—and if ever a Brother embodied the move from nationalism to internationalism, that Brother was our former Editor. We urge him to continue his development as we intend to continue ours. "The task remains one of firm & resolute development."

-Karamoko-

SIX YEARS LATER

by Nancy Banks

(This article is excerpted from The CHICAGO READER, 2-20-76, on the suit that is being tried in relation to the deaths of Fred Hampton & Mark Clark)

Judge Joseph Perry's courtroom, on the 25th floor of the Federal Building, is austere proportioned and opulently furnished. Its 40-foot ceiling is an intricate assemblage of tubes and gridding, a flickering fluorescent sky. The six members of the jury—five women and one man, one of them black, three of them over 60—watch and listen with earnest Good Citizen expressions. When they are absent, the lawyers bicker and lose their tempers. Events are fragmented and analyzed again and again; killings are transformed into "incidents." This isn't a very likely time or place to learn the truth about December 4, 1969, but it's the best chance we'll ever have.

We, the taxpayers of Cook County, will pay John Coghlan at least a quarter of a million dollars for his work on this case. Edward Hanrahan arranged for him to be appointed Special Assistant State's Attorney in 1972, when Bernard Carey told Judge Perry that neither he nor any member of his staff was willing to defend Hanrahan. In 1974 alone, Coghlan received \$93,422 from the Cook County Board, which made him the county's highest paid public official.

Next to Coghlan sits Camillo Volini, a fat and relatively placid man who was also specially appointed to this case. His title is Special Assistant Corporation Counsel, and he represents the Chicago police department defendants. He's being paid, and handsomely, by Chicago taxpayers.

The federal defendants—three FBI agents and the FBI's Panther informant, William O'Neal—are represented by two staff lawyers from the U.S. Attorney's office plus Edward Christianberry, who has been brought in by the Justice Department. They are all young and polite and well-

scrubbed. We're paying them too.

For the plaintiffs, James Montgomery—black, in his mid-thirties, one of Chicago's hottest young trial lawyers. The various and sundry members of the People's Law Office: Jeffrey Haas, a longhaired academic radical in the Leonard Weinglass tradition; Flint Taylor, looking like everybody's kid brother in a suit that's short in the sleeves and baggy at the knees; Holly Hill and Peter Schmiedel, usually occupied with legal research. The P.L.O. operates as a collective. None of its members are being paid for their work on this case, so they feed themselves by pooling their income from whatever miscellaneous legal work they can find time to undertake.

Presiding at the end of the plaintiff's table is Herbert Reid, one of the nation's foremost black lawyers and dean of Howard University's Law School, now forced to take a less active role in the case after a series of heart attacks. Reid's fee is being paid by the NAACP.

Today's witness is a short, balding man named Marlin W. Johnson, who headed the Chicago office of the FBI from 1962 to 1970. Johnson is one of the federal defendants in the suit; he has been called by the plaintiffs as an adverse witness. Montgomery is asking him about the FBI's "Cointelpro" (Counterintelligence Program) operations, the top-secret program under which agents were directed to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of black nationalist, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen, membership, and supporters, and to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder." Johnson has already acknowledged receiving and initialing a memo from J. Edgar Hoover dated

(cont. on 11)

THE BICENTENNIAL: A Prisoner's Perspective

by Charles Beasley

At this, America's 200 Birthday, we, as Black People looking back over those 200 yrs, must never forget that no cruelty is too great, no villainy and no robbery too abhorrent for the exemplifiers of the American Dream to perform. Let us as a people move aggressively into the future. To do this we should have a very objective understanding of where we are as a people in the world, and in the USA in particular.

The first slaves in America were its native people. The British colonists along the northeast coast found good soil, that would grow crops, which could be shipped back to be sold on the European market. The colonists also, realized that whatever crops they chose to grow would have to be products not being produced in Europe, for King Charles had to protect his own market from competition. To get around this problem, the colonists chose as their principal products tobacco and indigo, which at that time required a large work force to produce for commercial purposes. It is at this point in history that those who left Europe seeking freedom from religious persecution and oppression began to persecute and oppress.

Frontier wars were launched to destroy the different tribal nations and to enslave the captured natives to guarantee the colonists the labor force they needed to produce their crops in sufficient quantities for shipment to Europe. This can be considered as one of the fundamental steps by the colonists to lay the foundations of a nation. Thus, one can conclude that one of the major features of the American Dream in its beginning was the accumulation of wealth by brutal exploitation in most instances more barbarous than the European oppression they had just fled.

The American Revolution of 1776 is said to be one of the greatest steps ever taken in the course of social

progress and human freedom. The Declaration of Independence proclaimed the peoples' right to make revolution. As we study, we must ask ourselves, What people had the right to make revolution? Was it the native people, the Negro, or was it the colonial merchants and Planters (slave-owners), the Washingtons, the Jeffersons, the Hamiltons, etc.? the men who constituted the American Bourgeoisie of the times; the men who were the principal architects of the American Constitution; men who impregnated the American legal concept with what has amounted in practice to genocide for its native people and chattel slavery for kidnapped African people.

It was at the Atlanta Cotton Exposition of 1895 that Booker T. Washington deplored what he called the mistake of Negro fighters of the past for seeking seats in Congress and state legislatures. In that speech he declared "the wisest among my race understand that the agitation of the question of racial equality is of the extremist folly." He even went so far as to tell his white audience "in all things purely social we can be as separate as the fingers yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress."

Another Black scholar, Mr. C. Eric Lincoln, author of the book Black Muslims in America, said that "racial segregation in the midsts of free society. Segregation which in many cases was required or at least sanctioned by state laws is a kind of unfreedom which is inconsistent with the principle basic to American political philosophy and the body of ideals and values which are understood as the American way of life or the American Dream." If this was true, why then was Booker T. Washington glorified in American Bourgeoisie circles after his Atlanta speech? The American Dream is
(cont. on 11)

Until World War I, industry outside of the South was manned almost entirely by white workers. The black worker was engaged chiefly in agriculture and personal services. Even in the South, the tradition of racist oppression continued to function long after emancipation and the industrial backwardness of the South itself made more extensive use of black labor in industry virtually unnecessary. In the North on the other hand with the exception of strikes or acute labor shortages black labor was disregarded due to the constant influx of immigrants from abroad. Northern employers as early as the 1850's had used blacks as strikebreakers, but blacks did not begin moving northward until after slavery. This trend continued and reached a high point in the 1880's. Due to economic depression in the middle 80's, however, the migration of blacks slowed down and large numbers of blacks no longer sought employment in the North. According to Spero and Harris, between 1890 and 1910 there was a marked trend by blacks to move into urban areas—and during this same period of time the number of southern-born blacks in the North increased at an average of 67,000 in each ten year period.¹

The outbreak of World War I in Europe gave added impetus to the northward migration of black people and what had been a slow stream became a constant flow. With the cut-off of immigrants into the United States and the voluntary return of many skilled and non-skilled workers to serve in the armed forces of their native lands, the number of blacks moving northward increased to an all-time high. By the time the United States declared war on Germany in 1917 the number of black workers in American industry was well on its way to doubling. The largest

gains occurring in iron, steel automotive, mining, shipbuilding and meat-packing occupations.² In the wake of this migration, for the first time in American history, the United States had a black industrial working class.

Many bourgeoisie labor historians have sought to explain the migration of blacks during World War I in isolated political, social, or economic terms. But, in considering the many political, as well as socio-economic factors involved, it is important to reflect on the fact that all great migrations are basically rooted in economic factors. Therefore, while it may be argued that blacks were being pushed out of the South due to economic peonage, poor educational facilities, intimidation and murder, the push concept does not serve to explain the total picture. Southern landowners were directly opposed to blacks leaving the South and in many cases northern capitalists had to send in labor recruiters to encourage blacks to leave. Hence, had the pull of northern capital been of a lesser degree, the northward migration of blacks would have probably never risen above its previous average of 67,000 every ten years.

The great migration itself brought competition between white and black workers to a degree never before witnessed in America. It was more direct and antagonistic than ever before. During the war itself, while there were problems concerning housing and other antagonisms, blacks still managed to enjoy a certain amount of social and economic opportunity. Once white workers began returning from the war, however, the existing unrest and open hostilities were intensified. Blacks found themselves without jobs and, in some cases, without homes. Housing had always been a problem even

when big northern capitalists first began recruiting southern blacks, but by the end of the war the problem was acute. Middle income blacks were seeking homes in white residential areas; increased rents were affecting both whites and blacks—and in some cases newly-arrived blacks were living six to ten in a room. Consequently, the overcrowding and the incentive of high rents led to such speculative practices as "block busting" and the formation of owners and tenants' leagues in an attempt to force landlords and real estate agents to refrain from the rank exploitation of the housing shortage in the white, as well as black community. In such cities as Washington, D.C., East St. Louis and Chicago competition led to race riots and death.³

The postwar period was a period of intellectual achievement and race consciousness. It was the period of the "New Negro." It was a period of African awakening. A period which gave birth to Marcus Garvey's "Back to Africa" movement, several Pan African conferences,* the Urban League, the inauguration of the MESSENGER by Chandler Owen and A. Philip Randolph, the African Blood Brotherhood, and many such groups. However, to match the militancy of blacks there was working class militancy on both the right and left. This was a period of Bolshevism and mass parades by the KKK, and other paramilitary organizations.

Organized labor, firmly in the hands of the A.F.L., maintained its reactionary craft union approach. But the Industrial Workers of the World, and independent black unions, were growing in influence. Most notable among the black unions was the National Brotherhood Workers of America. The NBWA, at its first convention, had delegates from 12 states and the District of Columbia. At its head was T.J. Free and R.T. Sims.⁴

The new spirit of militancy among blacks was felt at both the 1919

*NOTE: The term conferences includes

and 1920 A.F.L. conventions. However, beyond expressing concern for black/white unity, little of substance came out of either convention. Blacks were still being relegated to Jim Crow federal unions where little or nothing was being done to resolve their grievances. Indeed, the only reason that the question of black/white unity was brought up was due to the growing influence of the I.W.W., and pressure from its own left-wing.

Even before the Great Steel Strike of 1919, where many blacks were used as strikebreakers, the federal government launched an all-out effort to end the progressive influence within the labor movement. Hundreds of IWW members were arrested. Among them was Ben Fletcher, a chief organizer for the IWW. His charge of obstructing the war effort was doubly compounded by the fact that he was black and a Communist. As a result of public pressure, in 1923, President Harding commuted Fletcher's sentence. But, by the time of his release, the IWW was a shell of an organization. As a result of the infamous Palmer Raids, wartime repression, as well as a split in its ranks over support of the Soviet Union or the Second Communist International, the Wobblies were all but destroyed.⁵

Following the decline in influence of the IWW, there was no effective alternative for the black worker but to organize independently. The A.F.L., by its very nature, was opposed to black/white unity. Leading the trend toward independent black unionism, following the NBWA, which dissolved in 1921, were the editors of the MESSENGER, A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen. First, they formed the Friends of Negro Freedom, an interracial group which dedicated itself to the problems of the black worker. Later, they formed the United Negro Trades but, like their two previous efforts—it too failed. Around this time the MESSENGER Group was losing much of its community support because of congresses as well.

its constant denunciation of Marcus Garvey and the U.N.I.A. Also, to compound matters, it developed a group conflict internally over its hostile attitude towards the Soviet Union. By 1924, the MESSENGER had degenerated from a radical journal to a middle-class promotional sheet willing to print anything for a price.* Even in face of the continued decline of the MESSENGER, Randolph did not give up hope. In 1925 he became general organizer for the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters --later, affiliating himself with the racist A.F.L.⁶

With the decline in importance of the MESSENGER, as a radical publication, the struggle against the A.F.L. was continued by a group of white and black left-wing members within the A.F.L. This group was the Trade Union Educational League. The T.U.E.L. was formed, in 1920, by William Z. Foster to unite Communists, non-Communist radicals, and moderates within the A.F.L., and the railroad brotherhoods against its craft union system. The T.U.E.L., for its part, however, did not gain much influence and soon many of its members were expelled from the A.F.L., as alleged Communists. This left the labor situation, within the A.F.L., temporarily barren except for the election of William Green to succeed Samuel Gompers, as president of the the A.F.L. in 1924. This sparked much interest among blacks, due to Green's previous involvement in the U.M.W., but this interest was unfounded. As Abram L. Harris pointed out, in his unpublished master's thesis, the Negro Worker in Pittsburgh, "in many instances blacks within the U.M.W. could not get jobs or earn fair wages owing to the 'Ku Klux Klan spirit' of the union."⁷

Another progressive organization among blacks workers themselves was the American Negro Labor Congress. This organization was sponsored by the Worker's Party (M-L), and its

basic purpose was to unionize blacks and to abolish all forms of discrimination, persecution and exploitation against the black worker. This organization, however, was never able to take firm roots in the black community, and soon died out.⁸ After the demise of the A.N.L.C., except for a few attempts to form independent black unions, the A.F.L. was left virtually unopposed, except for verbal opposition from within by A. Philip Randolph and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters which attended its first A.F.L. convention in 1926.

Besides the Sleeping Car Porters attending the A.F.L. Convention in 1926, there was another significant event at the end of the same year. 1926 marked the beginning of the Great Depression, for the majority of black industrial workers. Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that as early as 1927, blacks began to experience widespread unemployment, and that by the beginning of 1929, at a time when the labor situation was rosey for the rest of the nation, about one-fifth of all blacks employed in industry had been thrown out of work. According to Philip Foner and Charles S. Johnson, by May, 1929, the "numerical increase by blacks in industry had been halted." This led Foner, in particular, to assert, while the rest of the nation was thriving "the overwhelming majority of those who worked in the mines, the fields, and factories, white, as well as black, never knew prosperity during the golden years of the 1920's." He further asserted that it was not 1929 which marked the beginning of the Depression for blacks, but 1926.⁹

Throughout the Depression years the percentage of black unemployment was much higher than that of either native or foreign-born whites. In the South, blacks were still experiencing peonage, while in the North there were no jobs to be found--and to compound the problems of blacks they had to carry

*See "Court Rules Pullman Porters Discriminated Against...", BLACK PRIDE, March 1976

the full weight of depression longer. For most white Americans the Depression began in 1929, and ended in 1934. For Blacks, on the other hand, it began in late 1926 and ended 1936, 10 years after.¹⁰

The Depression years, for all their mass unemployment, were not quiet years—particularly in the South. In Shreveport, Louisiana, and other cities, unemployed blacks and whites fought with police and demanded jobs. In Atlanta, Georgia, 19-year-old Angelo Herndon, a black Communist was arrested for leading an unemployment demonstration and tried under a pre-Civil War insurrection act. In 1931, a sharecropper's union was formed by the Communist Party at Camp Hill, Alabama. Soon after, the Scottsboro Boys' case entered American history as another example of the blatant racism of capitalist America.

In the North, William Z. Foster formed the Trade Union Unity League (T.U.U.L.) to continue the work of the T.U.E.L., which had begun within the A.F.L. The T.U.U.L., however, did not accomplish much in its efforts to unionize black workers; but in its relief work and unemployment councils it did much to aid northern blacks during the Depression.¹¹ As for the A.F.L., at the onset of the economic crisis, it had its lowest membership since the end of World War I. Of the 30 million workers in America, less than one-tenth belonged to the A.F.L.¹²

In October, 1935, after six years of devastating economic crisis for the nation as a whole, and at a time when blacks were still suffering the lingering effects of the Great Depression, William Green did not reflect on any of these conditions in his opening speech at the A.F.L. Convention that year. The issue which assumed major importance was the question of industrial unions. The issue of race was brought up by George Harrison of the railway clerks. Indeed, the only signifi-

cant thing to come out of the A.F.L. Convention that year, for blacks was the split which led to the formation of the Committee for Industrial Organization.

The CIO and the National Negro Congress which held its opening session in 1936 did much to aid the black worker in the years leading up to World War II. Unlike the A.F.L., the leadership of the CIO, from its inception until the Cold War Witch Hunts*, did not give up the struggle for black/white labor unity. They recognized Karl Marx's warning that there must not be racial discrimination in the ranks of labor. The CIO leadership saw that blacks held the balance of power between the union and non-union whites in union elections; but first, they had to overcome the anti-union prejudice of the black community. To solve this problem, John P. Davis and other NNC leaders came to their rescue. Early in its formation the NNC saw that its future was tied to that of the CIO. In the steel and auto industry in particular the CIO would not have been able to organize without the help of the NNC. This was also true in other industries, as well. The job was not an easy one. In the South, as well as the North, the CIO came under increasing opposition. It was even alleged that it was part of a foreign communist conspiracy. The CIO for its part did not solve all of the problems of blacks, but for its time it represented the most significant step forward for the black worker since the Civil War. Frank Chinella of the A.F.L. put it this way: "The A.F.L. for years did not care about taking Negroes in. It was only when the CIO came in that Negroes got into unions."¹⁴

When World War II rolled around there were more than 5 million blacks in the labor force, but unlike the previous World War there was to be no Great Migration. This was in a large measure due to the fact that

*a reference to McCarthyism

even though many northern employers were crying for workers, black workers were considered inferior and were being relegated to janitor positions and other similar capacities. Another factor to consider was the large scale hiring of women to fill industrial positions. Consequently, during World War II while many blacks may have desired to move northward there was no labor incentive to urge them along. This particular point is alluded to in Harry Haywood's classic American Marxist work, NEGRO LIBERATION.¹⁵

A vicious cycle existed in the North and South. In the South black sharecroppers and small farmers were being forced to produce more while they were being paid less in order to help expand the war economy. While in the North black workers in many cases could not find work. Labor unions would not admit blacks and the management of the war industry would not aid them in being hired.

During the first few years of the war the NNC was still functioning, but much of its effectiveness had been lost as a result of a split between A. Philip Randolph's forces and the left-wing which was dominated by the CIO and Communists. In 1940, Randolph resigned as its president due to his strong anti-Communist and pro-AFL beliefs. Later, Randolph began the March on Washington Movement; but, the MOWM differed from the NNC in that it excluded whites, and was anti-Communist, as well as pro-AFL.¹⁶

The purpose of the MOWM was to gain greater opportunity for blacks within the expanding war industry. However, while an actual march on Washington by the MOWM never materialized, the mere threat of such a march led to the signing of an executive order by then-President Roosevelt banning further racial discrimination in defense related industries. In part, Roosevelt's order read: "All contracting agencies of the Government of the United States shall include in all defense

contracts hereafter negotiated by them a provision obligating the contractor not to discriminate against any worker because of race, creed, color or national origin."¹⁷ As a result the wartime Fair Employment Practice Committee was born to oversee and enforce the rights of black workers seeking employment in the defense industry.

The FEPC urged on by the CIO and its affiliate unions such as the NMU, UAW, USW, and UE did much to secure a place for blacks in war related industry. And by the time the war ended, nearly every black organization looked to the CIO as the black workers' greatest hope for social and economic progress. However, this was not to be so. Due to the progressive influence of the CPUSA within the CIO during the war years, the government saw in them a threat to its postwar international policy of imperialist expansion. As noted by most progressive labor historians, the Communists within the CIO were the most progressive advocates of black/white unity within the ranks of organized labor.

On September 2, 1945, when World War II came to a close, any hope of improving the economic status of the black worker had ended even before. As victory for the Allied Powers became more assured, the war industry began to cut back—and as traditionally has been the case, black workers were the first laid off. The decline in the number of job opportunities for blacks right after World War II was evident in the final report by the FEPC in 1946. "Of the seven war centers studied by the FEPC during reconversion, all but Chicago showed a heavier loss of jobs by Negro than by white workers, and a necessity on the part of Negro workers to accept the lowest paying jobs." One major reason contributing to the decline in employment opportunities for blacks was the systematic cut-back of many depression, as well as wartime, reforms initiated by President Roosevelt once Harry S. Truman

assumed office. When the FEPC ended in 1946, the equal employment of black workers was no longer even given lip-service by the Truman Administration.

The years following the Second World War were marked by a sharp widening in income differentials between blacks and the rest of the nation. By 1949, most of the war-time economic gains in the North, as well as the South by black people had been lost or they were no better off than they were before the war. The living standards of blacks in the cities had been reduced about one-fourth compared to a cut of about one-eighth for the white urban population; while the median annual income level for the nation was \$2,481 in 1950, the black median income level was \$1,295 or about half that of whites.¹⁸

By the middle of 1950, when the United States dispatched its armed forces to Korea, under the pretext of saving the world from the totalitarian threat of Communism, it became obvious that black industrial skills were not going to be used to keep the nation's war machine running. Concerning this trend the Urban League observed in its 1952 report: "Discrimination against Negroes follows a uniform pattern in plants located in Northern and Southern industrial centers. As the work force expands, a few Negroes have been added to the maintenance and common labor groups of workers."

Another point to be considered was that the Communist element within the CIO had been under increasing attack. Therefore, unlike during the war itself, the black worker no longer had the active support of the CIO and FEPC. The great "McCarthy Red Scare" was on, and the CIO followed the example of AFL during the Palmer raids and the red scare of 1937-38. The CIO began a pattern of expelling anyone suspected of being a Communist. Many locals were suspended and some union organizers were even jailed. Ray

Ginger, in an article in Labor History, Summer 1973 issue, pointed out: "We do not need any more trash about 'How the Communists Infiltrated the CIO.' Plain truth, is they were the major force in building it." Ginger might also have added that the Communists were the ones responsible to a large degree for black/white unity within the CIO and that once they were expelled, that unity suffered tremendously.

At the same time the Communist purge from the CIO was reaching its high point, the National Negro Labor Conference for Negro Rights appeared on the scene. Paul Robeson and many progressive blacks supported this group and called for black people together with progressive white working men and women to save the American Labor movement from the leaders who were betraying it. During the five years that the NNCC was in existence it fought a progressive struggle, but it was inevitable that, in the Cold War repression, the NNLC would be called before the Subversive Activities Control Board and be accused of being a Communist-front organization. Concerning the NNLC, Foner summed up its importance when he pointed out that the National Negro Labor Council was possibly the most important single organization—led predominantly by black workers—and that it led the struggle for Civil Rights, an end to segregation, jobs for blacks, an end to racism in industry and organized labor, even before the freedom marches. "That was the significance of the NNLC".¹⁹

Notes & References:

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come from pg. 11
 the American way of life, and not
 something that exists among the
 white. Although it is commonly
 placed with the official version of
 the Kingdom of Heaven.

We must always remember that the
 American Union was the vision of the
 first European to arrive in Ameri-
 ca, from the American through its con-
 stituent parts in the way of the
 class struggle in the development
 of the USA in world history. One
 cannot ignore what Mr. Washington
 has written. The American
 Union through the historical devel-
 opment has until this day remained
 rooted to American philosophy.

principles, values and beliefs which
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 15. *THE NEW YORK TIMES*, 1911
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 17. *THE NEW YORK TIMES*, 1911
 18. *THE NEW YORK TIMES*, 1911
 19. *THE NEW YORK TIMES*, 1911
 20. *THE NEW YORK TIMES*, 1911

March 1, 1968, directing him to set
 up such a program in Chicago. He
 had a double representation, though,
 exactly what was the local office
 took as a result of Hoover's mem-
 oir.

Washington reads the July an-
 nouncement letter addressed by J. Edgar
 Hoover, Director of the Department of
 Justice, written by Chicago FBI agents
 and approved by both Johnson and
 Hoover in 1968. "The President said
 to me the (other) President John F.
 Kennedy said that he supported
 to be a part of the '68' the let-
 ter said, '...I think you ought to
 have been in the (also) up to. I know
 that I'm not the only one.'

"Now, Mr. Johnson," Washington
 says, "the fact that you have
 a first one, you, what did you
 mean?"
 "In direct language it could mean
 two forms of attack."
 "What kind of attack?"
 "I do not know."

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