

THE NEGRO AND SOCIALISM

By

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There are no two questions more often discussed than "The Negro" and "Socialism." Especially in the United States the so-called Negro problem is the subject of constant debate and "Socialism" most thoroughly misunderstood. Both these questions are closely related.

• Workers Vs. Owners

Under our present system of society, a wide and irreconcilable difference of interest exists between those who work for a living and the landlords, employers, and bankers--the capitalists--who own the lands, mills, mines, factories and railroads which constitute the means of production and distribution of wealth.

Workers, fundamentally, are sellers of labor power while employers are buyers of labor power. Just as the seller of any commodity wants to get a high price for the goods he sells and the prospective buyer desires to pay a low price, so it is with the workers, he wants to sell his labor power for a high wage and to work short hours, while his employer who is a buyer of labor power desires to pay a low price for long hours of work.

High wages for the worker mean a chance to live better, to educate his children, to provide for old age, sickness and unemployment, while short hours give him leisure and enable him to develop the cultural side of his life. Consequently, when wages are high and the work day short the life of the workers is high, and when wages are low and working hours long the worker's life is low.

Wages Vs. Profits

In distinct contrast to the aim of the worker is the aim of the employer. Like any other buyer the employer wants to purchase labor power cheaply, that is, to pay low wages. For when wages are low and the cost of living high, that is, when the life of the workers is low, the profits of the employer are high. For profits represent the difference between what an employer spends for wages, raw materials, etc., and what he sells his product for.

These conflicting aims between the buyers and sellers of labor power exist in spite of any similarity of race, creed or nationality and compel workers and employers both to organize to protect their respective interest. Workers organize in trade unions and cooperative societies while employers unite in chambers of commerce, manufacturers associations, etc.

In the conflict of interest between workers and owners of industry Democrats and Republicans alike represent the interest of the rich, the owners of industry. This is natural since both parties get their campaign funds from the bankers, landlords and corporations; and, in politics as in everything else "he who pays the piper calls the tune." Therefore, when workers demand higher pay to get a higher living level, Republicans and Democrats side with the owners who pay their campaign funds.

Nothing for the Negro

Neither Democrats nor Republicans really serve the interests of the Negro. The Republicans are weeding the Negro out of their party's council to make themselves acceptable to the white South. Their efforts began with President Harding, who in a speech in Birmingham, Ala., in 1921 said: "There is a fundamental, eternal and inescapable difference between whites and Negroes." This statement of Mr. Harding is in direct contrast to truth and scientific knowledge.

With power resting securely in their hands for the last sixty-five years--with only two short breaches--the Republican Party has faithfully served the interest of the employers of labor, the bankers and industrial magnates, but has not passed in recent years a single measure to give to workers greater security or higher living standards, or to the Negro justice.

The Republicans feel that they do not have to offer anything to Negroes to get our support because we are fish already caught. Lynching, segregation, jim-crowism, disfranchisement, high rents, low wages, unemployment and peonage still haunt each succeeding generation while Republican politicians talk about our "debt of gratitude to Lincoln." A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since the days of Lincoln and Douglass.

The Political Way Out

Over a decade ago they promised us the Dyer anti-lynching bill. It is still a promise, and lynching goes merrily on. They could have passed that bill any time they wished; instead, they voted it down. The Republican Party today has nothing in common with the party of Lincoln except the name. The debt of gratitude--if ever we owed it--has long since been paid. In view of the record of the Republican Party to date, with its avowed determination to become lily-white to win the South, the self-respect of the Negro race and our concern for the future of our children demand that we break with the political past of our fathers.

If the sin of the Republican Party is one of omission, the Democrats have many sins of commission on their conscience. In the South where most lynchings occur the Democrats are in control. The South where disfranchisement, peonage and jim-crowism are at their worst is the stronghold of the Democratic Party. The bleached bones and charred bodies of six thousand Negroes lynched since emancipation, nearly all of them in states where Democrats control the state and local governments, forbid us to entrust to the Democratic Party our fate and the future of our children. Such a course would lead only to an increase of the evils from which we now suffer and brand us as unworthy to be called men, but curs who lick the boots that kick us. Neither as workers nor as Negroes can we conscientiously support either the Democratic or Republican Party.

We must seek a new path to manhood, honor and freedom, by supporting a party which represents our economic interest and which stands for social justice for all men.