

# LENIN AND NEGRO QUESTION IN THE UNITED STATES

By HARRY HAYWOOD

AS on all other phases of the class struggle, Leninism on the national question represents a consistent development of revolutionary Marxism in the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution.

Leninism broadens out the national question, linking it up with the colonial question, making it a general international question of the liberation of the oppressed and subject nations from the yoke of imperialism — a struggle for the right of self determination. Therefore the national-colonial question is "part of the proletarian revolution, a part of the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat." (Leninism, by Stalin). The proletarian revolution as well as the liberation of the oppressed nations can only be accomplished through the formation of a revolutionary alliance of the proletariat of the advanced nations and the peoples of the subject nations and colonies.

This consistent revolutionary position on the national question was developed only on the basis of the sharpest struggle against the social-chauvinist leaders of the Second International. These leaders denied the right of self-determination to the oppressed peoples, thus acting in support of the plunder policy of the imperialist robbers in regard to the subject nations and colonies.

The direct application of this Marxist-Leninist conception of the national question is contained in the line of the Communist Party and Communist International on the Negro question in the United States.

## LENIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO NEGRO QUESTION IN U. S.

Already in his brochure, "Capitalism and Agriculture in America," written in 1913, Lenin, in defending the Marxist position on the agrarian question against the theorists of the Narodniki and Socialist-Revolutionaries, laid bare the Agrarian essence of the Negro question and also indicated its national-revolutionary character. In reply to the petty-bourgeois economist Himmer, who contended that "the United States is a country which never knew feudalism and is foreign to economic survivals of the latter," Lenin stated: "This statement is in direct opposition to the truth, for the survivals of slavery do not differ in any respect from those of feudalism, and the survivals of slavery are very strongly felt up to the present time in the slave-owning south." In this same pamphlet, Lenin compared the position of the Negroes to the position of the former serfs in Russia, stating that "the similarity in the economic position of the Negroes in America with that of the former serfs in the agrarian centers in Russia is remarkable.

Lenin continued: "The South is a hemmed-in prison with absence of fresh air for the 'liberated' Negroes."

Precisely on the basis of this analysis, the thesis of the Second Congress of the Communist International on the National and Colonial Question, which was devel-

## "Marxist-Leninist Application of National Question Is Line of C. I. and C. P."

oped under the leadership of Lenin, placed the Negro question as a question of an oppressed nation. In this thesis, the Communist Parties are committed "to support the revolutionary movement among the subject nations (for example, Ireland, American Negroes) and in the colonies." (Emphasis mine—H. H.)

THIS line was further developed and elaborated in the resolutions of the C. I. of 1928 and 1930 on the Negro question. The resolution of 1930 states that the Negro question is "the question of an oppressed nation, which is in a peculiar and extraordinarily distressing situation of national oppression, not only in view of prominent racial distinctions (marked

difference in color of skin, etc.), but above all because of considerable social antagonisms (remnants of slavery)."

On the basis of this analysis, we are confronted with a national-revolutionary movement of the Negro peoples against national oppression, for equal rights and self-determination of the Black Belt, as an important ally of the American workingclass in its struggle for the overthrow of capitalism. From this position flows the line of the Party, which is uncompromising support for the struggles of the Negro people for national liberation, the development of the workingclass and leadership of the Communist Party in this movement, cementing the solidarity of Negro and white workers on

## Liebknecht and Luxemburg—Foes of Imperialist War

By IRVING HERMAN

JANUARY 15th, marks the anniversary of the murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Their names will forever be cherished by the proletariat, particularly the militant youth. They stood out in the struggle against the imperialist war of 1914, in the fight to establish a Soviet Germany. They met death at the hands of the treacherous leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party, who throttled the German Revolution and paved the way for the counter-revolution.

Today the masses everywhere are moving to the left. The masses are more and more beginning to follow the leadership of the Communist Party. In Germany the small Spartacus Bund of Liebknecht has grown into a mighty Communist Party, with millions of followers. The German Social-Democracy today is one of the arch-supporters of crumbling German capitalism. The tide of revolution in Germany is reaching higher levels and is repulsing the onslaughts of fascism and social-fascism. The last written statements of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, a day before their murder, on the occasion of the defeat of the Spartacus Uprising, are being realized. Defiantly, Liebknecht wrote:

"Today, only the underground mutterings of the volcano. Tomorrow it will burst and bury them all in a torrent of glowing ashes and streams of lava."

Luxemburg wrote on that memorable occasion as follows:

"Order is established in Berlin! You fools—Your 'order' is built on sand! Tomorrow the revolution will arise again majestic and to your terror announce with a voice of thunder: 'I was,

in the struggle against war. Though this conference represented one of the outstanding actions against the war, nevertheless it revealed very serious weaknesses: inadequate exposure of the social-chauvinists, no attempt to split from the chauvinist Social-Democracy, or to expose the attempts to "reconstruct" the Second International.

Liebknecht and Luxemburg were the leaders of the Spartacus uprising in January of 1919. This revolt was brutally crushed by the German Social-Democratic government, and Liebknecht and Luxemburg were foully murdered.

### ACHIEVEMENTS AND MISTAKES

While we cherish the memories of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, we must seriously study their mistakes and shortcomings. This was greatly emphasized by Comrade Stalin in his famous letter on the History of Bolshevism. Though Liebknecht was very outspoken against the war and fought the chauvinist position of the German Social-Democratic Party leaders, nevertheless he did not vote against the war credits when it was first raised in the Reichstag. This he failed to do in the name of "discipline" of the Social-Democratic Party—the discipline that basically meant giving aid to the war makers. Liebknecht soon corrected this mistake, since he recognized that the struggle against war must be advanced, that these chauvinists had completely gone over to the camp of the bourgeoisie.

As for Rosa Luxemburg, she committed some very serious errors in her position on the national question (on the question of national independence for Poland); in her position on the struggle between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks (she called for "unity" between them; in her reliance on the theory of

the basis of a relentless struggle against white chauvinism in the ranks of the white working-class as the main danger, while at the same time combatting bourgeois-nationalist sentiments among the Negro toilers.

This line is fully confirmed in the successes of the Communist Party in the leadership of the struggles of the Negro masses, and in the development of workingclass solidarity between Negro and white workers. Following this correct line, our Party initiated immediate struggles for Negro rights, as in the Scottsboro case; Negro masses have been drawn into struggles for economic demands, as in the miners' strike, the movement of the unemployed, and the share-croppers' struggles. The whole question of the fight for Negro rights has been raised to a higher political plane, as in the election campaign, and in the struggle against the Negro reformists. In this way, the hegemony of the workingclass and the leadership of the Communist Party in the Negro liberation movement has been strengthened.

IN the situation of the end of capitalist stabilization — transition period to wars and revolutions as characterized in the 12th Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International, the national liberation struggle of the Negroes assumes tremendous importance in the sharpening of the crisis of American imperialism. The Negro question has become a real "Achilles' heel" of American imperialism, a point where revolutionary explosions are most imminent. This was clearly shown in the events of Dec. 19 in Tallapoosa County, where the attempted seizure of the livestock of the Negro farmer, Cliff James, led to armed resistance on the part of the Negro poor farmers.

From this situation flows the urgent need of an all-around strengthening of our work among the Negroes — improving the fight against white chauvinism, eradicating the still existing unclarity in the Party and among the revolutionary workers in regard to the national-revolutionary character of the Negro question, orientation of the Party and revolutionary mass organizations to the development of the Negro liberation movement in the South as the center of gravity in our work among the Negroes.

"...even some relatively insignificant acts of the Ku Klux Klan bandits in the Black Belt can become the occasion of important political movements, provided the Communists are able to organize the resistance of the indignant Negro masses. In such cases, mass movements of this kind can easily develop into real rebellion. This rests on the fact that—as Lenin said — "Every act of national oppression calls forth resistance on the part of the masses of the population, and the tendency of every act of resistance on the part of oppressed peoples is the national uprising." (Resolution of the Communist International, 1930.)