

## A "NEGRO NATION" IN THE UNITED STATES?

### Introduction

In the classic Marxist-Leninist work on the national question, "Marxism and the National Question", Josef Stalin speaks of

✓ " . . . the American nation"

(J. Stalin: "Marxism and the National Question", in: "Works", Volume 2; Moscow 1953; p. 311),

referring, of course, to the community of people inhabiting the mainland of the United States of America, and not to the American continent.

He says:

✓ "At the end of the 18th. and the beginning of the 19th. centuries . . . the Americans . . . already constituted a nation distinct from England (i.e., from Britain — Ed.)".

(J. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 311).

Following the 6th. Congress of the Communist International in July-September 1928, Stalin was removed from effective influence in the leadership of the CI, this passing to a group of (as yet) concealed revisionists headed by Nikolai Bukharin and Otto Kuusinen.

On October 26th., 1928 the Executive Committee of the Communist International issued a Resolution on the Negro Question which, in effect, repudiated Stalin's concept of "the American nation" in favour of one which implied that the Negro community inhabiting the "Black Belt" — used here in the sense of the ~~area~~ area of the South covered by slave plantations, where for a time after the abolition of slavery Negroes constituted a majority of the population, not in the narrower sense of the portion of this area having black soil — constituted "an oppressed nation" within the United States of America:

✓ "The various forms of oppression of the Negro masses, who are concentrated mainly in the so-called 'Black Belt', provide the necessary conditions for a national revolutionary movement among the Negroes. . .

The Communist Party must come out as the champion of the right of the oppressed Negro race for full emancipation. . .

The Party must come out openly and unreservedly for the right of Negroes to national self-determination in the southern states, where the Negroes form a majority of the population".

(ECCI: Resolution on the Negro Question, in: J. Degras (Ed.): "The Communist International: 1919-1943: Documents", Volume 2; London; 1971; p. 554).

Two years later, on October 26th., 1930, the Political Secretariat of the Executive Committee of the Communist International developed this political line in a Resolution on the Negro Question in the United States, which declared ~~that~~ explicitly that the Negro community in the "Black Belt" constituted

✓ " . . . an oppressed nation"

(PS, ECCI: Resolution on the Negro Question in the United States, in: J. Degras (Ed.): "The Communist International: 1919-1943: Documents", Volume 3; Oxford; 1965; p. 125),

and so called for

✓ " . . . the right of self-determination of the Negroes in the Black Belt".  
(PS, ECCI: ibid.; p. 126).

The concept of a "negro nation" within the USA was, of course, <sup>HENCEFORTH</sup> accepted by the  
Communist Party of the United States of America.

As the CPUSA moved into open revisionism towards the end of, and following, the Second World War, in 1956 it repudiated the concept of "the Negro nation":

✓ "This correct position (i.e., of the ECCI in 1928-30 -- Ed.) was liquidated by the revisionists in 1956, and in its place was put support for . . . equal rights within 'the American nation'. . . The policy of self-determination for the Negro nation was discarded".

(M. Laski: General Secretary of the Communist Party of the United States of America (Marxist-Leninist): Interview in: "Red Front", Volume 2, No. 1; March/April 1968; p. 13).

With the formation of new organisations aiming to base themselves once again on Marxist-Leninist principles -- the Communist Party of the USA (Marxist-Leninist) and its successor, the Marxist-Leninist Organisation of the USA -- <sup>they</sup> took the view that the repudiation of the concept of "the Negro nation" by the CPUSA had been "a manifestation of revisionism" and readopted the position taken by the Communist International in 1928-30:

✓ "Our Party takes the following stand on this matter: that there is in fact a Negro nation in the South and that it has the right of self-determination".  
(M. Laski: ibid.; p. 13).

Without making its own independent analysis of the question, the Marxist-Leninist Organisation of Britain -- the precursor of the Communist League -- accepted the line of the American comrades on the national question in the United States.

The article which follows is an attempt to rectify the omission of the MLOB and to make such an analysis. ~~This analysis is based on the fact that the MLOB and the Communist League of America both accepted the line of the American comrades on the national question in the United States.~~

#### The Formation of Multi-National States

If an "oppressed Negro nation" exists on the mainland of the United States, it follows that the mainland United States is inhabited by two nations: an oppressing <sup>EURO</sup> ~~EURO~~-American nation" and an oppressed "Negro nation", so that the mainland United State is a "multi-national state".

✓ Lenin, however, holds that the "typical, normal" capitalist state is that inhabited by a single nation:

"The formation of national states, under which these requirements of modern capitalism are best satisfied, is therefore the tendency of every national movement. The deepest economic factors urge towards this goal, and for the whole of Western Europe, nay, for the entire civilised world, the typical, normal state for the capitalist period is, therefore, the national state".

(V. I. Lenin: "On the Right of Nations to Self-Determination", in: "Selected Works", Volume 4; 1943; p. 251).

✓ Stalin characterises the formation of multi-national states as a "special method" of the formation of states which takes place in territories:

- 1) where more than one pre-nation (nationality) exists;
- 2) where feudalism has not yet been eliminated; and
- 3) where capitalism is feebly developed, but is more developed in one of the pre-nations (nationalities) concerned than in the other (or others).

"Whereas in the West (of Europe — Ed.) nations developed into states, in the East multi-national states were formed. . . .

✓ This special method of formation of states could take place only where feudalism had not yet been eliminated, where capitalism was feebly developed, where the nationalities which had been forced into the background had not yet been able to consolidate themselves economically into integral nations".

(J. V. Stalin: "Marxism and the National Question", in: "Works", Volume 2; Moscow; 1953; p. 314).

Lenin, citing with approval the words of the then-Marxist Karl Kautsky, concurs that multi-national states are formed in territories where the state structure remains "abnormal or underdeveloped" in relation to the needs of capitalist society:

✓ "Heterogeneous nation states (i.e., multi-national states — Ed.) . . . are 'always states whose internal constitution has for some reason or other remained abnormal or underdeveloped'. Needless to say, Kautsky speaks of abnormality exclusively in the sense of lack of conformity with what is best adapted to the requirements of developing capitalism".

(V. I. Lenin: *ibid.*; p. 252).

In the case of the US state, there could be no question of "feudalism having not yet been eliminated", since the social system of feudalism never existed in the territory which became the United States of America.

Nevertheless, the social system of slavery did exist, more especially in the Southern part of the territory which became the USA, and Lenin pointed out <sup>in 1915</sup> — referring specifically to the USA — that the <sup>economic</sup> survivals of slavery are indistinguishable from those of feudalism:

"The economic survivals of slavery are not in any way distinguishable from those of feudalism, and in the former slave-owning South of the USA these survivals are still very powerful".

(V.I. Lenin: "New Data on the Laws Governing the Development of Capitalism in Agriculture: Part One: Capitalism and Agriculture in the United States of America", in: "On the United States of America"; Moscow; 1967; p. 123).

Perhaps, therefore, slavery played a similar role in the USA to that played by feudalism in Eastern Europe, in bringing into the structure of the US state "abnormal or underdeveloped" features in relation to the needs of capitalist society?

But, in fact, the US state was constructed in the North, where slavery was from the beginning a minor factor (on the eve of the American Revolution slaves constituted, for example, only 1% of the population of New Hampshire) and was abolished early. The Confederate state of the Southern slave-owners was not incorporated in the US state, but was forcibly destroyed during the Civil War of 1861-65, in the course of which slavery was abolished and the authority of the Northern state extended throughout the territory that became the United States.



Clearly, the features which led to the formation of multi-national states in Eastern Europe did not operate in the territory that became the USA. And this must raise serious doubts as to the correctness of analysing the USA as "a multi-national state".

#### The Definition of a Nation

The classic definition of a nation, accepted by all Marxist-Leninists, is that of Stalin:

✓ "A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture. . . ."

It is only when all these characteristics are present together that we have a nation".

(J. V. Stalin: "Marxism and the National Question", in: "Works", Volume 2; Moscow; 1953; p. 307, 308).

The question of whether the Negro community in the "Black Belt" of the USA constitutes a nation or not thus depends upon whether it possesses all the characteristics described in Stalin's definition.

#### A Stable Community?

The proportion of the total Negro population living in the "Black Belt" at the beginning of the 20th. century was 90%.

✓ (M. Ellison: "The Black Experience: American Black since 1865"; London; 1974; p. 58)

By 1970 this figure had fallen, according to US Census figures, as a result of migration to other parts of the United States to 19%, and Negroes constituted a ~~small~~ minority ~~of~~ (38%) of the population of the "Black Belt".

Thus, the Negro community in the "Black Belt" does not constitute a "stable community" such as is characteristic of a nation.



### A Common Language?

The Negro community in the "Black Belt" certainly has a common language, English. But since this language is also the language of the non-Negro people of the USA, this does not establish that this Negro community constitutes a "separate nation" from the non-Negro people of the USA!

### A Common Territory?

Those who present the Negro community in the Southern United States as "a separate nation" generally declare that it has "a common territory" in the "Black Belt":

"At least three-fourths of the entire Negro population of the United States (12 million) live . . . settled in the 'Black Belt' and constituting the majority of the population. . . .

In the South, . . . the main communist slogan must be: The right of self-determination of the Negroes in the Black Belt".

(PS, ECCI: Resolution on the Negro Question in the United States, in: J. Degras (Ed.): "The Communist International: 1919-1943: Documents", Volume 3; Oxford; 1965; p. 125; 126).

The statement made in the first paragraph of the quotation above is far from true today.

The 1970 US Census reveals that the "Black Belt" has a Negro population of 4.3 million against a "Euro-American" (i.e., white) population of 7.0 million. Thus Negroes form a minority (38%) of the population of the "Black Belt".

Further, the Negro population of the "Black Belt" — 4.3 million — represents only a small minority (19%) of the Negro population of the USA of 22.6 million. 5.1 million Negroes (23% of the total Negro population, and more than the entire Negro population of the "Black Belt") live in six Northern cities alone — New York City, Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia, Washington and Los Angeles.

Taking the criterion adopted by the Political Secretariat of the ECCI in 1930, the counties where Negroes form "the majority of the population" are shown in the map below:

# CANDIDATE TERRITORY FOR A BLACK NATION

(Majority Black Counties in the South)



Several points need to be noted with regard to this map:

Firstly, the counties where Negroes form a majority of the population — although lying generally, but not absolutely, within the "Black Belt", form only a portion of it;

Secondly, these counties do not make up a contiguous territory, but are widely scattered and disconnected fragments of territory;

Thirdly, these counties contain a Negro population of 1.1 million (5% of the Negro population of the USA);

Fourthly, even in these counties, more than 40% of the population is "Euro-American", i.e., white;

Fifthly, the number of counties where the Negro people constitute a majority of the population has shrunk rapidly throughout the present century, together with the Negro population residing in them:

| <u>Year</u> | <u>No. of counties</u> | <u>Negro population</u> |
|-------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1900        | 286                    | 4 million               |
| 1950        | 158                    | 2 million               |
| 1970        | 105                    | 1 million               |

Thus, while it took 50 years (from 1900 to 1950) for the Negro population of such counties to drop by 50%, it took only another 20 years (from 1950 to 1970) for it to drop by a further 50%.

Clearly, the "Black Belt" can in no way be regarded as the "common territory" of the Negro community of the United States. There is no contiguous territory in the USA which could be regarded as the "common territory" of the Negro community, which is scattered throughout the territory of the United States.

One may ask, with Stalin:

"What common nationality can there be among people who . . . inhabit different territories?"

(J. V. Stalin: "Marxism and the National Question", in: "Works", Volume 2; Moscow; 1953; p. 309-10).

#### A Common Economic Life?

Those who present the Negro community in the "Black Belt" as "a separate nation" generally claim that it has "a common economic life" in agriculture:

"The bulk of the Negro population (86%) live in the Southern states; of this number 74% live in the rural districts and are dependent almost exclusively upon agriculture for a livelihood".

(ECCI: Resolution on the Negro Question, in: J. Degras (Ed.): "The Communist International: 1919-1943: Documents", Volume 2; London; 1971; p. 553).

"In the Black Belt . . . the majority of the resident Negro population are farmers and agricultural labourers".

(PS, ECCI: Resolution on the Negro Question in the United States, in: J. Degras (Ed.): "The Communist International: 1919-1943: Documents", Volume 3; Oxford; 1965; p. 130).



These statements are far from true today.

The 1970 US Census reveals that less than 3% of occupied Negroes are engaged in agriculture (whether as farmers, farm managers or farm workers). In the South the figure is only 5%.

Perhaps, however, the "Black Belt" constitutes an integral economic unit more or less separate from the economy of the ~~USA~~ REST OF THE USA?

Some of those who claim that this is so do so on the grounds that the economy of the "Black Belt" is of a "semi-colonial" character:

✓ "The 'Black Belt' . . . is not, either economically or politically, such an integral part of the whole United States as any other part of the country. . . The capitalist economic system . . . there . . . still has . . . semi-colonial features".  
(PS, ECCI: *ibid.*; p. ~~129~~ 129, 130).

But, as a result of the uneven development of capitalism, all capitalist countries have regions which are more, and regions which are less, industrially developed, and the regions which are less industrially developed generally have a semi-colonial economic relationship to those regions which are more industrially developed. This does not mean, however, that such a less industrially developed region of a country forms an "integral economic unit more or less separate from the economy of the rest of the country", such as would create one of the bases for separate nationhood. For example, the South of Italy has long been industrially less developed than the North, with which it has had a semi-colonial type of relationship; but this does not mean that the South of Italy forms an "integral economic unit more or less separate from the economy of the rest of the country", such as could create one of the bases for a separate "South Italian" nation.

The PS of the ECCI admits, in fact, that the question of the ~~level~~ level of industrialisation is irrelevant to the national question in the USA:

✓ "Industrialisation in the 'Black Belt' is not, as is generally the case in colonies properly speaking, in contradiction with the ruling interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie, which has in its hands the monopoly of the entire industry, but in so far as industry is developed here, it will in no way bring a solution to the question of living conditions of the oppressed Negro majority".  
(PS, ECCI: *ibid.*; p. 129).

It admits, in fact, that the "Black Belt" does not constitute an "integral economic unit more or less separate from the economy of the rest of the USA":

✓ "The 'Black Belt' is not in itself, either economically or politically, such a united whole as to warrant its being called a special colony of the United States".  
(PS, ECCI: *ibid.*; p. 129),

Some of those who claim that the "Black Belt" constitutes an integral economic unit more or less separate from the economy of the rest of the USA do so on the grounds that the economy of the "Black Belt" contains significant survivals of slavery, manifested in such "semi-feudal" systems of exploitation as share-cropping:

"The Negro . . . oppressed nation . . . is in a peculiar and extraordinarily distressing situation of national oppression . . . above all because of considerable social antagonism (remnants of slavery). . .

At least three-fourths of the entire Negro population of the United States live . . . , most of them being peasants and agricultural labourers in a state of semi-serfdom, settled in the 'Black Belt'. . .

The agrarian question . . . lies at the basis of the national question. . .

In the 'Black Belt' . . . the capitalist economic system . . . still has pre-capitalist . . . features".

(PS, ECCI: *ibid.*; p. 125, 129, 130).

"The remnants of slavery in all their ramifications explain the basic content of the Negro question in the United States. . .

The chief factor which has preserved the area of Negro majority to the present time, in the face of the conflicting forces tending to redistribute the Negro population, is the modern plantation system based upon forms of labour which are survivals of chattel slavery".

(J. S. Allen: "The Negro Question in the United States"; London; 1936; p. 33, 169).

It is true that, in the absence of land reform in the South, the plantation-owners were able to take advantage of the weak economic position of the Negro freedmen to impose on them forms of exploitation which may justly be described as "semi-serfdom", and that out of these forms share-cropping emerged, as a result of trial error, as that best suited to the needs of the plantation-owners:

"It (i.e., share-cropping — Ed.) was the outcome of years of experimentation to find what method would produce the most constant supply of submissive labour at the lowest cost".

(F. A. Shannon: "The Farmer's Last Frontier: Agriculture: 1860-1897"; New York; 1955; p. 87).

But the system of share-cropping is not confined to Negroes, nor to the "Black Belt".

Further, share-cropping, as a form of agricultural tenancy, has been declining in the South since 1930:

"Share-cropping, once typical of the cotton-growing areas of the South, is now history. . .

Share-cropping tenancies . . . are today found only in the Mississippi 'Delta' and on the coastal plains of the Carolinas".

(A. N. Duckham & G. B. Masfield: "Farming Systems of the World"; London; 1971; p. 113, 155).

And, in any case, particular forms of exploitation do not make the region in which they operate "an integral economic unit more or less separate from the economy of the rest of the country", such as would create one of the bases for separate nationhood. In Italy, ~~share-cropping~~ for example, share-cropping remains the predominant form of agricultural exploitation in Lombardy and Emilia, but this does not mean that these regions form "integral economic units more or less separate from the economy of the rest of Italy", such as would create one of the bases for separate Tuscan and Emilian nations.



The "Black Belt" does not, therefore, form "an integral economic unit more or less separate from the economy of the rest of the USA"; its economy is an integral part of the economy of the USA -- as the PS of the ECCI admits when it says:

"The Black Belt" is not in itself, either economically or politically, such a united whole as to warrant its being called a special colony of the United States". (PS, ECCI: ibid.; p. 129).

#### A Common Psychological Make-up Manifested in a Common Culture?

Those who present the Negro community in the Southern United States as "a separate nation" generally declare that it has "a common psychological make-up manifested in a common culture".

The ancestors of the present Negro inhabitants of the United States were brought from Africa to serve as slaves, for the most part on the plantations in the area which now forms the "Black Belt" of the Southern USA. The social formations of the regions of Africa from which they came were the tribe and tribal federation, not the pre-nation (nationality), and they came from many different areas of Africa, having no common culture, or even a common language. It is clear therefore that the Negro community did not constitute a pre-nation (nationality), much less a nation, at the time of the arrival of the Negroes in North America.

Most of those who present the Negro community in the "Black Belt" as "a separate nation" claim that it developed "a common psychological make-up manifested in a common culture" -- indeed, developed separate "nationhood" -- under the moulding influence of its "segregation" under slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction and contemporary capitalism:

"By the time slavery was abolished, the Negroes already had many of the characteristics of nationality. . .

The Civil War and the period of Reconstruction laid the basis for the further development of the Negro people into a nation".

(J. S. Allen: "Negro Liberation"; New York; 1938; p. 6, 7).

"From the different peoples which were at different stages of economic development and had different languages, gods and cultural backgrounds emerged a people with a common Negro nationality forged by centuries of chattel slavery in North America. The lash and the slave pen, the auction block and the breeding farm, were the melting pot from which emerged the Negro people". (Communist Labor Party of the USNA: "The Negro National and Colonial Question"; 1972; p. 43).

"From chattel slavery to wage slavery, the historical development of Black people is a history distinct from whites in the US. It is the welding together of a people, a nation, from common culture, experience of oppression and systematic economic exclusion". (Revolutionary Union (USA): "The Red Papers: V: National Liberation and Proletarian Revolution in the US"; 1972; p. 37).

"It was during this 350-year period of slavery, civil war and reconstruction, as well as capitalist development in the South, that Black people were forged into a nation". (October League (USA): "For Working Class Unity and Black Liberation", 1974; p. 7).



It is, of course, true that slavery in North America was confined to Negroes, so that during the period of slavery Negroes constituted a special social class of slaves. As a result, they necessarily acquired a "common psychological make-up manifested in a common culture" appropriate to such a class.

Those who claim to be "Marxist-Leninists" and who identify the "common psychological outlook manifested in a common culture" possessed by a social class with that possessed by a nation frequently cite a passage from Engels:

"The working class has gradually become a race apart from the English bourgeoisie. . . . The workers speak other dialects, have other thoughts and ideals, other customs and moral principles, a different religion and other politics than those of the bourgeoisie. Thus, they are two radically dissimilar nations".

(F. Engels: "The Condition of the Working Class in England"; London; 1969; p. 154).

But it is clear that, in speaking of the British capitalist class and the British working class as separate "nations", Engels is speaking no more literally and scientifically than when, in the earlier sentence, he refers to them as belonging to separate "races". He is speaking metaphorically, in order to emphasise the differences in the "common psychological make-up manifested in a common culture" possessed by the two antagonistic classes within the British nation.

But, in addition to these radically dissimilar psychological make-ups and cultures which reflect class differences, the British capitalist class and the British working class have in common a certain "common psychological make-up manifested in a common ~~make-up~~ culture" which reflects the fact that both classes belong to the British nation.

Thus, the fact that, during the period of slavery in North America, the Negro people acquired a distinct "common psychological make-up manifested in a common ~~British~~ culture" which reflected their unique social position as a slave class and so was radically dissimilar from the psychological make-up and culture of other social classes, in no way means that they acquired a "common psychological make-up manifested in a common culture" appropriate to a separate nation.

With the abolition of slavery -- by the 13th. Amendment to the US Constitution of December 18th., 1865 -- the Negro people ceased to form a slave social class, and so in time ceased to have the "common psychological make-up manifested in a common culture" appropriate to a slave class.

The process of desegregation of the Negro community in the South began during the Civil War of 1861-65:

✓ "Some 186,000 Negro troops took part in 198 battles and skirmishes and suffered 68,000 casualties. The total number of Negroes, including servants, labourers and spies, amounted to more than 300,000".

(R. W. Logan: "The Negro in the United States", Volume 1; New York; 1970; p. 18).

and was accelerated during the early years of Reconstruction, from 1865 on:

"They (i.e., the Union Leagues — Ed.) represented the militantly patriotic and radical wing of the bourgeoisie, <sup>morally</sup> ~~morally~~ support and supplies for the Northern troops, enlisting Negroes, caring for freedmen in camps in the North and carrying on an agitational campaign among the former slaves and poorer whites in the conquered territories. . . . As early as 1863 the Leagues took root in the South among the white classes opposing the slavocracy and spread as the Union Army occupied Southern territory. . . . Probably one-third of the white population of the upland districts in 1866 was in the Leagues". (J. S. Allen: "Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy: 1865-1876"; New York, 1937; p. 92-3).

"The Reconstruction state governments of the South from 1868 to about 1875 included representatives of . . . the ex-slaves. In the Black Belt countries the local offices were held almost exclusively by Negroes. The lower house of three Southern state legislatures (South Carolina, Mississippi and Louisiana) had a majority of Negro representatives, while a number of Negroes were sent to both the House and Senate of the United States". (J. S. Allen: "The Negro Question in the United States"; London, 1936; p. 182).

In the Address of the National Labor Union of July 1867, William Sylvis declared:

"Shall we make them (i.e., the Negro workers — Ed.) our friends, or shall capital be allowed to turn them as an engine against us? Taking this view of the question, we are of the opinion that the interests of the labour cause demand that all workmen be included within its ranks, without regard to race or nationality".

(W. H. Sylvis: Address of the National Labor Union, July 1867, cited in: J. S. Allen: "Reconstruction: The Battle for Democracy: 1865-1876"; New York, 1937; p. 154-55).

and at the 1869 congress of the National Labor Union nine Negro delegates participated for the time first time in a national trade union assembly.

(J. S. Allen: *ibid.*; p. 156).

Officially, the policy of desegregation was continued into the mid-1870s.

In 1865 the Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees and Abandoned Lands was established by the state with the official aim of assisting Negroes in the South to attain social and economic equality.

In 1866 the Second Freedmen's Bureau Act provided for ownership of land by Negroes, and the Civil Rights Act laid down that Negroes, as citizens of the US, were entitled to "equal treatment before the law".

In 1867 two Reconstruction Acts swept away the reactionary State regimes in the South and placed all the ex-Confederate States except Tennessee under military governors, with instructions to convene Constitutional Conventions, including representatives of the Negro community, in each State, charged with drawing up new State Constitutions which would include Negro suffrage in their provisions. The manoeuvres of President Andrew Johnson to prevent the adoption of this legislation brought about his impeachment by the House of Representatives; he was acquitted by the Senate, by 1 vote, in 1868,



In 1868 the 14th. Amendment to the US Constitution was adopted, providing that:

✓ "No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States".  
(14th. Amendment, US Constitution, cited in: R. W. Logan: *ibid.*; p. 113).

In 1870 the 15th. Amendment was adopted, <sup>720V DING</sup> ~~providing~~ that:

✓ "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged . . on account of race, colour or previous condition of servitude".

(15th. Amendment, US Constitution, cited in: R. W. Logan: *ibid.*; p. 115).

In 1871 the Civil Rights (2nd. Enforcement) Act provided for supervision of elections by federal courts of supervisors in order to enforce the operation of the 15th. Amendment. Later in the same year, 1871, the Civil Rights (3rd. Enforcement) Act restricted the activities of the Ku Klux Klan, which had been founded in 1865 with the aim of terrorising "uppity" Negroes in the South.

● In 1875 the Civil Rights Act provided that all citizens should be entitled to "full and equal enjoyment" of facilities in inns, public transport vehicles and places of amusement, WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION ON GROUNDS OF RACE OR COLOUR.

Thus, the picture in the early years of Reconstruction was not one of segregation of the Negro community in the South. The Northern capitalist class, which dominated the federal state apparatus, was, in this period, concerned to encourage the development of a common front between Negroes and "poor whites" in order to consolidate its victory over the Southern planters. This common front was a reality, not only in the Union Leagues and the trade unions, but also in the Republican Party, the Constitutional Conventions and the People's Militia.



From about 1870, however, a decisive section of the Northern capitalist class began to reverse this policy, fearing that the further development of this common front might become a danger to their own economic and political domination of the country.

The National Labor Union was the first body, in 1869, to introduce separate organs for its Negro members — although this was counteracted to a considerable extent by the formation in the same year of the Knights of Labour, which maintained a stubborn opposition to segregation. The churches in the South quickly followed the "example" of the NLU, together with the school boards.

In 1870 the State of Tennessee began the process of prohibiting racial intermarriage, and this practice spread quickly throughout the South.

In 1873 the Supreme Court, in the so-called "Slaughter-house Cases", ~~that~~ gave a ruling which effectively rendered null and void the key clause in the 14th. Amendment cited above.

In 1876 the Supreme Court's ruling (in US v. Reese) that the key clause in the 15th. Amendment was invalid, was followed by the imposition in the Southern states of poll taxes, literacy qualifications and — where these failed in their aim, outright terrorism — which effectively excluded Negroes from the vote throughout the South.

In 1883 the court declared unconstitutional the provisions of the 1875 Civil Rights Act, leading to the segregation of Negroes in inns, public transport vehicles and places of amusement throughout the South.

And in 1888 the Supreme Court's ruling that all-white juries were "constitutional" was followed by the exclusion in practice of Negroes from juries throughout the South.

By 1877 all the Republican Party regimes in the Southern States based on the common front between Negroes and "poor whites" had, ~~been~~ with the connivance of the Northern capitalist class and its federal government, been eliminated, and the State governments in this region of the USA were in the hands of "Bourbon" Democratic Party politicians representing the interests of the white planters and pursuing a policy of virulent white racism. And by the last years of the century the Negro freedmen throughout the South had been reduced to the position of segregated "second-class" citizens, harshly discriminated against in every field of social life and denied the most elementary civil rights. This state of affairs continued virtually unchanged until after the Second World War.

The discriminatory oppression<sup>ion</sup> suffered by the Negro community in the South caused its members to acquire a "common psychological make-up manifested in a common culture" dissimilar to that of members of other communities. Nevertheless, this Negro community no longer formed a separate and distinct social class, as it had done under slavery; its members were members of the same social classes as "Euro-Americans", i.e., whites — principally of the working class and the petty bourgeoisie.

Thus, the "common psychological make-up manifested in a common culture" which Negroes acquired when they became, despite discrimination, members of these social classes was less dissimilar from that of "Euro-Americans" (i.e., white) members of these classes than that of Negroes had been from "Euro-Americans" when the former constituted a separate social class of slaves.

And since the distinct "common psychological make-up manifested in a common culture" acquired by the Negro community in the South when it constituted a separate social class in no way meant that they acquired a "common psychological make-up manifested in a common culture" appropriate to a separate nation, this was even less so after Negroes became incorporated in the same social classes as ~~the~~ "Euro-Americans" (i.e., whites).

In fact, discriminatory oppression of groups within oppressed classes is a tactic general to all oppressing classes. In societies based on exploitation, women form a more oppressed sex than men, but this does not create in women as a sex a "common psychological make-up manifested in a common culture" which is appropriate to a separate nation.

#### Conclusion

The Negro population of the "Black Belt" of the Southern United States does not possess the characteristics which would make it a separate nation. The population of the ~~the~~ mainland USA constitutes a single American -- or, more accurately, US -- nation.

The Negro population of the USA are distinguished from the rest of the population inhabiting the mainland USA by physical characteristics, such as skin pigmentation, which are of a racial character. To put forward the objective of "self-determination" for a part of this population, which does not constitute a separate nation, is, objectively, divisive racialism which assists United States imperialism to maintain its rule over, and exploitation of, the US working people, ~~Negro and white~~ Negro and white.

The Negro population of the mainland USA form part of the working class and petty bourgeoisie (and to a small extent of the capitalist class) of the US nation. But ~~the~~ the Negro ~~working people~~ working people form a more oppressed, more exploited section of the US working people than their white class counterparts.

The struggle against racial discrimination directed against the Negro population, the struggle for equal rights and conditions for Negro people, is one which is of vital importance for all working people, Negro and white. It needs to be developed as a common struggle, closely linked with the working class movement.