

Forward!

The Negro Freedom Meeting, A Discovery of Strength

By Robert Minor

WHAT was done at Madison Square Garden Monday night will never be forgotten.

What happened was a discovery of strength.

It is not a matter of how many people were present, although as the chairman, Dr. Channing Tobias, said, "it was the biggest meeting for Negro freedom ever held in the world."

Twenty thousand people in the hall and 10,000 standing outside to listen. One out of every 15 adult Negroes living in New York City was present at this meeting.

But the discovery of strength that was made in the minds of everyone in this thing was a peculiar nature. It was a discovery that in this case at the present time, maximum strength can be acquired essentially by unity. The look of elated surprise on the faces of hundreds as the enormous size and character of the meeting became evident, was one of the most impressive and informing sights I have seen.

It was as though each one discovered suddenly that by the simple combination of the strength of each into a unified whole one can generate immediately a power that will move mountains.

Every single wholesome and honest section of the Negro people in this hall and outside the hall were present. Negro leaders of every kind of social movement for liberation are at the meeting. The list of political leaders in any degree homogeneous to a liberation movement includes the Negro professional classes, of the church which pays so large a part in Negro education in which the Negro artist is by far in the largest proportion of his numbers—headed by the great Paul Robeson, the magnificent Duke Mitchell, the most eloquent; Hughes; the dancer, Pearl Primori; the actor, Canada Lee; the civic leader, Channing Tobias; the writer, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.; the Negro trade union leaders, Ferdinand Smith, Charles Collins and the white leader, champion of Negro workers, Michael Quill; and the Baiting Ham of Harlem, the anti-Communist, the anti-union, the poll tax bill, Congressman Vito Marcantonio; and magnificent men sent from the deep South, Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown, the lovable mother of the people of North Carolina.

It was the most representative Negro meeting ever held in the United States.

But at this Negro freedom meet-

ing many thousands looked about them and saw that a quarter of a third of their number were persons of white skin, and it dawned upon all that this fact was one of the significant features of the new unity. As in a chemical combination, this combination performed a certain catalytic action, adding to the strength of the unity. It was a Negro freedom meeting not isolated within the larger community, but already integrated through its own courageous vitality, the strongest elements of the non-Negro community.

A relatively new power was given to the demonstration of unity by the almost unprecedented fusing of the cause of organized labor with the cause of Negro liberation; both the CIO and AFL being represented by significant leaders. In this fact is expressed a large part of the new vitality that has come into the Negro liberation movement—a vitality that will never after to be lost. The iron strength of the labor movement fuses with the Negro liberation movement. The latter is essentially a "national" movement, "national" oppression, i.e., against oppression on a so-called "racial" basis, and the point of union between the liberation movement of the Negro and the general demer-

A feature article on the Negro Freedom Rally by James H. Ford will appear in tomorrow's Daily Worker.

ocratic movement of the country is found in the central of the Negro in Organized Labor, the trade unions, then the fusion is as strong as steel.

There are reasons why this phenomenon did not occur prior to this time. It could not have occurred during a war of any other kind than this. The strength manifested in the character of the speeches, the spirit and unanimous expressions of the audience, and in the resolutions passed—could not have been found under any other condition except that of a great movement in support of a people's war.

"Think of this minute. The unity and consensus of the Negro and the New York Negro liberation movement could not possibly have found any realization if its demands had been made in contrast to and against the present world-wide people's war of national liberation. It is well-known that groups exist that aspire to leadership in the Negro national liberation movement which they attempt to achieve by placing their demands for the supposed liberation of the Negro in the form of demands against the war, demands made in opposition to the war. These demands are expressed in terms of "We oppose the war unless..." or "We will support the

war if..."

But it is a people's war of national liberation for all of the peoples of the entire world. It is an all-decisive war. In every country there is the need to have unity, in every ghetto of Negroes and Jews, the cause of every single form of national liberation flows inevitably with the great all-decisive cause of human freedom that is one and indivisible in this war. As the great Frederick Douglass said in 1851, "The Negro and the white man, who fight for Negro rights must fight with all their fury on the 'Lincoln side.'"

The strength manifested in the Madison Square Garden meeting shows that many things can be done which only yesterday were thought impossible. It shows that within the very next month the greatest feature of the entire Negro system can be removed from the community life of such cities as New York and Chicago.

To avoid exaggeration, one must admit that the roots of exploitation are much deeper than segregation, deeper than the most extreme poverty, insulting and disgusting discriminations that are imposed upon the Negro in our city life; and these deeper roots will take longer to eradicate. But numerous advantages for the general eradication of Negro inequality can be gained by systematic and carefully planned, vigorous action, with full use of the newly found unity, to eradicate the existing forms of Jim Crowism in New York life.

The matter goes beyond New York; but do we not know of the people in other cities who are suffering? The example can give new momentum to the elimination of the vile system of discrimination in the entire country. It is a positive danger to the life of our nation as a whole in this war.

It is not without the Jim Crow system in New York will give a powerful impetus to the enfranchisement of the whole people of the United States and while, which itself has become an imperative necessity of the war, as a means of preventing the total of our country by a fifth column.

Let the people use the great strength that was found Monday night at Madison Square Garden with the conscious at all times that it was found through unity, and can be lost only through disunity.

Let us remember that the decisive stroke lies in the war. That success is achievable only through the wholehearted intelligent spirit of all our people, of all races and religions, faith and shades of patriotic political opinion and party alignment; as several speakers said, "from Communist to Republican."

The Jim Crow system can be eradicated.



This Is the New Negro!

ABRAHAM LINCOLN and Frederick Douglass would have loved it, every moment of it. The great Negro Freedom Rally at Madison Square Garden Monday night, we mean.

For it was in their great tradition that the meeting went off. Great demonstrations there have been before, but none that so finely expressed the pent-up feelings of the Negro people as did this overwhelmingly Negro assemblage of 27,000 in which virtually every current in Negro and progressive white life were joined.

Here was the spirit of famed Negro Americans, of Crispus Attucks, Nat Turner, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth. Here was joined the spirit of the heroic white Abolitionists and emancipators, of John Brown and William Lloyd Garrison, of Abe Lincoln and Thaddeus Stevens.

Here was America, black and white, uniting behind our Commander-in-Chief, President Roosevelt, to defend our nation from Axis domination. Here was America re-dedicating itself in speech and song, in word and act, to the proposition that all men are created equal and that neither fascist nor Georgia poll taxer may successfully challenge it.

FOOLISH, indeed, is the public figure who fails to draw the profound lessons of this rally.

For this was the New Negro speaking, the New Negro conscious of his rightful place in American life, anxious and insistent that he take an equal part in the common struggle against Hitlerism. This was the New Negro speaking, the New Negro who recognizes in progressive white labor his best and firmest ally in the fight for full human rights.

This meeting will shatter among millions of Negroes any Nazi-inspired idea that this is "a white man's war." By its emphasis on the numerous gains made by the Negro people in the war's course, the meeting demonstrated beyond contradiction that the Negro people have a great stake—their all—in this war, that victory means a vista of unfolding freedom and a defeat at the hands of Hitler only utter, abject slavery.

BUT further, this historic rally showed that the New Negro understands that the white Abolitionist is not dead. He lives again in the progressive labor movement, the staunchest ally of the Negro people in the fight for freedom. How else explain the heartfelt ovation that swept the great arena when CIO leader Michael Quill and Laborite Congressman Vito Marcantonio were introduced?

But perhaps nothing emerges from the meeting as clearly as the lesson of UNITY. There was unity on the star-shaped platform and unity in the huge hall. Various trends of Negro life were represented: Dr. Channing Tobias of the YMCA; Lester Granger of the National Urban League; Councilman Adam Clayton Powell; Dr. Max Yergan of the National Negro Congress; the Rev. Thomas S. Harten; Dr. Charlotte Hawkins Brown of North Carolina; Ferdinand Smith of the National Maritime Union and Charles Collins of the AFL. On the platform sat

such important Negro leaders as Benjamin J. Davis, Jr. and James W. Ford, Communist spokesmen. And, as a fitting climax, there was the golden voice of Paul Robeson whose very harmonies were movingly symbolic of the inner unity of the meeting itself.

The eloquent tributes to the meeting from Wendell Willkie and Senator Robert Wagner appropriately indicated that the thoughtful win-the-war leaders in both major parties correctly assayed this momentous gathering. They must have understood what two speakers referred to as the need of the hour if victory is to be won: "Unity—unity of black and white, Jew and Gentile, Protestant and Catholic, worker and employer, unity from Communist to Republican."

It is the scope of this unity that lends such promise to the future. The New Negro is on the march, striding alongside his progressive white brother, sworn to the defeat of Hitlerism and the shame of Jim Crowism.

French Unity Grows

The formation of a Cabinet of 14 members as the "sole central French authority" by the Committee of National Liberation represents the further consolidation of French unity.

In the new Cabinet, in addition to Generals De Gaulle, Giraud and Georges there are six De Gaulle and five Giraudist Commissioners. The government represents the merger of many political sectors and shades of opinion on the basis of the patriotic war against Hitler and Vichy.

But what gives the new French authority its prestige and its great promise, are the atmosphere of unity which surrounds its formation and the solid foundation of the resistance movement within France.

In addition, the official appointment of Gabriel Puaux, a De Gaulle leader, as governor of Morocco, confirms the ousting of the pro-Vichyman Nogues. Following upon the withdrawal of Peyronnet from the key post in Algiers and his replacement by General Catroux, this action shows that the process of clearing out the pro-fascist elements is recognized as a condition for French unity.

One of the first results of the new turn was evident in Algiers on Sunday at the mass meeting under the auspices of a De Gaulle organization where Generals De Gaulle, Giraud and Catroux spoke from a platform on which were present all patriotic elements, including a Communist Deputy. Here, in the first truly popular meeting since the fall of France, the 27 Communist Deputies released from prison after the North African occupation were in the audience and homage was paid the Communists for their contributions to the liberation struggle.

The reappearance of the democratic newspaper *Liberté* and the lifting of the ban on *Liberté*, the Communist weekly, shows that a new wind is blowing in liberated North Africa.

This atmosphere promises well for the further strengthening of French unity and for the joint invasion of Europe which will assure the liberation of the French homeland.

Soviet Trade Unions Issue New Magazine on Int'l Affairs

The Workers' International News-Moscow, June 8. — The first number of a new magazine, *The War and the Working Class*, issued by the Soviet Trade Union Committee, is the first issue of the new publication states that *The War and the Working Class* affords wide Soviet public circles an opportunity to express their opinions on all vital questions of the international life and foreign policy of the Axis engaged in the world and states the magazine will carry information on the course and nature of the development of the national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples against the Italo-German occupation. Its pages will give a critical analysis of the comments of the foreign press on various current problems of an international nature.

The editorial board regards one of its tasks that of reflecting the vital question relating to the activity of trade union organizations under the conditions of the second world war. The first issue of the magazine carries an article by the editor, chairman of the University Teachers Union, on the activity of the Soviet Trade Union Committee, in which the author stresses the role of the trade unions in mobilizing the masses for increasing the output of all types of arms.

Herein lies the prime task of the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee. Only by being active in the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee get the trade unions of other democratic countries, including the trade unions of the United States, to strive to unite with the committee in the name of victory over the enemy, as well as to solve the tasks that will face the trade unions in the post-war period.

The editorial board, "Neutrality in the Present War," Professor of Juris-

Packard's Lesson

and determination not to give in an inch to this mob of fifth columnists. The disclosure that company representatives took part in promoting the anti-Negro walkout was a fine piece of work to back the union's claim that an "anti-fifth column" is behind the war plant strikes.

Because of their uncompromising stand the UAW's leaders convinced the membership, won them and defeated the Klan. Packard holds the lesson for all unions that the fight against race hatred must be waged all the time. Hundreds of plants throughout the country and the respective local unions, as at Packard, have grown several-fold since the war began. Recruits came from Southern states, farms, schools, kitchen or white collar fields. They have no trade union experience or tradition. Unless they are taken to education to the principles of trade unionism, they could be easy victims of the disruptive forces which cunningly seek to exploit prejudices.

Travel notes from Iran by Konyev, chairman of the Union Society of Cultural Relations Abroad; a review of the foreign press—"On the Talk about Peace in the fascist camp"; information about the food conference in Hot Springs; and notes on international events in May supplement the first issue of the new magazine which aims to satisfy the growing needs of Soviet readers on information on international questions.

Progressive groups recall the fight over Meuse-Bois after the last war when private monopolies tried to get hold of this property. They succeeded in backing plans for a public, government-owned plant. But ultimately the property became the nucleus of the Tennessee Valley Authority with its network of government-owned electric power lines. If the Jesse Jones law is carried out there will undoubtedly be a large crop of post-war millionaires created by the passing out of government property at bargain prices to private industrial interests.

Facts on the War Economy

BIG BUSINESS FEARS GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP

By Labor Research Association

The U. S. Government has financed the construction of about \$15,000,000 worth of war plants, the disposition of which promises to be one of the most controversial problems of the immediate post-war period. Big business is already engaged in building up pressure to bear so that the action taken will be in its interest.

The government is obviously in business in a big way. This is not a matter of emergency, the emergency has passed. But the post-war transfer of these properties to private hands, it insists, should be speedy and complete.

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT

Latest figures show that total government-financed war construction amounted to \$7,420 million by April 15. This includes \$1,000 million of machinery and equipment but has reached \$6,940 million, making a total of \$7,289 million, of which \$10,628 million has actually been completed by that date.

The \$14.4 billion government-owned buildings, machinery and equipment compares with only \$4.2 billion of privately initiated expansion of war industry. The government is thus far ahead of private industry by a total of over \$10 billion of expansion facilities the government accounts for roughly 80 per cent.

The Defense Plant Corporation, a subsidiary of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, a government institution, is alone building and equipping some 1,170 plants and other facilities costing approximately \$7 billion. Most of this plant and equipment is owned by the DPC.

More than half of the total aluminum manufacturing capacity of the country will be owned by the government by the time the war is over; almost 40 per cent of the magnesium producing capacity; while the government investment in synthetic rubber will be about \$100 million.

CONFERENCE BOARD SURVEY

A recent survey by National Industrial Conference Board, expert research agency, estimated that roughly \$10 billion of government-owned plants in war production facilities; slightly less than \$3 billion in aircraft plants; and \$2 billion in shipyards; while its investment in other war facilities for the war will reach \$3.5 billion. In machinery and machine tool plants it will have put over \$800 million during this period. The government is thus far ahead of private industry of our government money, derived from U. S. people through taxation of the sale of war bonds. It is keeping the percentage investment in various types of war industry. It was found that government money was used the following percentages in the war expansion of productive facilities of certain industries, as follows:

Explosives and shell-loading	99.8
Shipbuilding	96.9
Aircraft	82.9
Automotive and bus bodies	62.9
Iron and steel	61.9
Machinery and electrical equipment	41.9
Automotive and truck bodies	39.9
Petroleum and coal products	41.3

WHAT TO DO WITH PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Looking ahead above this is a major problem now agitating American business. The "backlog" of Standard and Poor's Corp., for example, in its May 17 issue, observes that the productive capacity of American industry has been increased by 20 per cent since the war began. It adds that business is fearful that the government will hang on to these plants and operate them in some way, thus creating a "backlog" of government-owned plants. However, believes that Congress, if the present predominantly reactionary trends are continued, will serve the capitalists quite satisfactorily. It adds that the big business has "little to fear from competition of government plants. The prospects are that for the most part they will be disposed of to private owners on a cash basis."

Of course many of the plants would not be suitable for the types of products that industry expects to make money from in the post-war period. So the "Wall Street Journal," in one of its columns (4/9), takes comfort in the thought that those plants which industry does not want, because they would be tax liabilities after the war, might be destroyed by capitalist wrecking crews. "It is a 50-50 chance they will be razed, we're told."

FINANCE FIGHTS PLANNING BOARD PROPOSALS

The big financial interests are particularly incensed at the "socialistic" proposals of the National Resources Planning Board. The board has suggested a combination of governmental and private capital to take over some of this idle post-war industry. The board also has suggested that one or two public utility companies (April, 1943) that safeguards be established to prevent the monopoly control of former war plants "in the interest of a single group of industrialists." Similar recommendations were made in a memorandum recently prepared by the program analysis section of the War Production Board.

JESSE JONES VS. THE PEOPLE

Bill pending on the issue but urging government and industry to "get together" to prevent pressure that would have a tendency of "keeping government out of business." The bill is sponsored by the Defense Plant Corp., the RMC and other government lending agencies. He says that after the war the government will have a large opportunity of replacing government financing, and private initiative should take up where government leaves off." (New York Times, 4/4)

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