

THE NEGRO PAPERS IN CLASS WAR

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Editor Negro Champion.

Of several hundred Negro newspapers and magazines in the United States most are controlled by the rising Negro bourgeoisie. Most of



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them aspire to be general newspapers, some few are church and fraternal organs. The majority of the newspapers are published weekly, a few monthly. Of the magazines most are monthlies, two or three appear weekly. There is as yet no Negro daily newspaper, although several attempts have been made along this line, the most notable being an attempt a few

years ago by Marcus Garvey.

Just prior to the "War to Make the World Safe for Democracy" a marked change began to manifest itself in the Negro press. Radical publications like The Crusader, The Emancipator, blazed the trail for a more militant economic policy, while The Voice and The Negro World gave expression to a growing racial radicalism, the latter paper also serving as the organ of a futile Zionism.

During the world war a note of bitterness crept into the Negro press to be followed upon the conclusion of the war by a general tone of militancy, which was evident in all but the most servile and reactionary publications. While the war was yet on, radical publications like The Crusader were analyzing and attacking the brand of democracy for which the Allies were seeking to make the world safe. These publications openly encouraged resisting with force all efforts at humiliation and terrorism, with the result that several white mobs met armed resistance to their marauding expeditions into Negro sections. Especially did this happen after the return home of the colored soldiers.

Go Treacherous Road.

Their naive hope in the universality of Wilson's democracy shattered by events, Negro editors became more and more militant in voicing their racial demands. Few of them, however, saw the class implications in the racial struggle. Others, like Du Bois of The Crisis, saw quite clearly the class implications but were unwilling to come out openly against those responsible for the theories of higher and lower races and the exploitation and degradation of their race, with these theories as justification, since it was upon the "philanthropy" of this very group that their own status as "leaders" was based. A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Ownes, editors of The Messenger, maintained a militant struggle for a while, but with the general betrayal of the working class by the socialist party these two socialists went the treacherous road of their colleagues.

With the steady rise of the Negro bourgeoisie the tendency is toward conservatism on the part of papers such as The Amsterdam News, The Pittsburgh Courier, the Chicago Defender. The Atlanta Independent, The Baltimore Afro-American, etc. It is no accident that these papers are the first to give expression to the growing power of the Negro bourgeoisie. They are all published in the big industrial centers where the bourgeoisie is concentrated. They are among the best edited and most powerful of the Negro press. While tending toward economic conservatism these papers still retain, however, a large measure of militancy on racial demands. Of this group The Atlanta Independent is the most reactionary, the Baltimore Afro-American the least reactionary. In a class by itself is The Negro Champion, the only Negro labor paper in the United States and a

Soviet Union Seam



Athletics are popular among the ready to start. The men are health the First Workers Republic against

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One of the functions of a Communist paper in America is to convince the American workers that they need a class party. In Europe, even in Asia or Africa, workers are in general up to this theoretical level, at least. They know, and act on the principle, that they need and must have a political party of their own. There the fight is to prove to them that the social-democratic parties are agents of the employers and are run by the misleaders of labor who also dominate thru machine methods the reformish trade unions. The social-democratic parties are needed there by the capitalist rulers to fool the workers, and they are useful to the ruling class insofar as they can capture the feeling of the masses for a workers' party and turn it aside into channels harmless to the present social system.

In America this situation has never generally existed. The American working class, due to the presence until a few years ago of an expanding frontier, with free land to allow any worker to become an "independent farmer" and thus take the pressure off the rest of the workers in the labor market, has had an individualistic outlook politically; has acted on the theory that everybody had a chance to be president if he was capable of it; has therefore followed with rare and not important exceptions, until recently, the class parties of the capitalists.

Class Political Action

Recently, to be sure, the beginnings of a class movement have appeared, and a philosophy of class political action has begun to penetrate the working and farmer masses. To the extent that this is so, we can say that the Daily Worker is responsible. For during these last five years, it is the only daily paper in the United States, published in English, that has advocated this theory.

It has had to fight the official doctrine and all the propaganda agen-

tireless, militant fighter in all struggles of the workers.

Closer to Struggle.

Less important than the first group is the numerically larger group of small town and village papers. This group carries on a precarious existence and its editors are closer to the economic struggle of the masses. While not clearly realizing the class implications of the Negro emancipation struggle, the editors of this group are much more open to revolutionary ideas than are those of the first group. They also reach a larger mass of readers. However, it is the first group that reaches and influences the Negro proletariat, and therein lies its importance. Its columns have been penetrated in the past, but in far smaller measure than is the case with the second group. Both groups are served by four or five news agencies, including the radical Crusader News Service, which occupies a paramount position in the columns of the second group.