J.R. Johnson

Negro and White Workers Must Stand Together

(12 August 1940)

At the present time America, like the rest of the world, is in a grave crisis. A Negro watches the billions being poured into armaments, the draft bill for conscription in peace-time, the violent attacks against aliens and Fifth Columnists. The world as we know it is going. That is clear. What is taking its place and how will it affect the Negroes?

What is taking place is an international reorganization of society to meet the world wide economic crisis. The crisis caused the war. Hit—that they are no more than slaves. Fascism has assumed full power over all production and has created a mighty armament by which it hopes to conquer Europe and reduce the whole continent to a colony of German imperialism.

Wars – and More Wars

Negroes understand this well. They know-how European imperialism trampled over Africa and reduced the Africans to slavery in order to exploit them. Today the colonies are not sufficient and the great imperialisms devour the smaller and weaker countries nearer home. And in the same way that imperialism in Africa created theories about the superiority of the white race in order to justify its attack on the Negroes, so Hitlerism creates theories about the superiority of the German race in order to justify the enslavement of European peoples.

Imperialism today, however, is a great mouth which swallows everything within reach and is never satisfied. British imperialism is fighting in defense of its own slave colonies in
India and Africa. At the same time Britain, Italy, Japan, America and Germany are fighting a fierce trade battle for control of Latin America. That is why Hull went to Havana; to try to win over the Latin American countries to his support. In East Asia, Japan tries to swallow China and runs ahead of America and Britain for domination of the trade and resources of the Far East.

There is a life and death struggle going on all around and the Fascist state has a great advantage. Once it has defeated the workers it makes them work 12 hours a day for dog’s wages, it produces arms instead of food and clothes, and it can produce goods so cheaply that it undersells other countries in foreign markets. The American capitalist sees all this, and. he is preparing to do exactly the same if he can, to batter down the workers organizations, to institute control and fight trade wars and then military wars. But the last war did not stop the crisis and the crisis was already so bad before this one began that the world faces years of continual wars, chaos and disaster until these imperialists are overthrown.

**Workers Must Stand Together!**

This affects the Negro in a very intimate way. Wherever the capitalist class has to batter down the workers it tries to demoralize them by dividing them, and setting them quarreling with each other. In Germany, Hitler used the Jews. In America, they will not only use the Jews but the Negroes. The capitalists have long practice in setting Negro workers against whites. As the battle between them and the workers becomes more acute they will seek to take away jobs from the Negroes to satisfy a section of the whites; they will intensify anti-Negro propaganda; they will try to turn the hostility of the white workers against the capitalist class against the workers instead. The Negroes must understand therefore, that the developing crisis will not only hit the American workers hard, but will hit them, as a weak section of the workers, harder than before?

What is the remedy? The remedy is to fight not tomorrow not next week, but now! Fight first and foremost for jobs in industry. The Negro suffers most and therefore he must fight most. He must fight under the general slogan of “Democracy for Negroes here and now!” He must join the local workers organizations, like the trade unions. he must criticize them mercilessly if they try to keep him out. He must form local Negro organizations, and cooperate with political organizations that will battle for Negro rights. The Workers Party is today in the very .front of that battle.

The Negro must show the white workers that he means to have his rights, that he must have his share of the jobs, that he is a fighter, that he fights always for his rights in the working class as a member of the working class. By this means the Negro can compel
recognition and respect from the great masses of white workers, and prepare the way for the joint battle both have to fight against the gathering hordes of American fascism.

Along with this battle for his rights, the Negro must fight for the defense of civil liberties, against the persecution of revolutionaries as Fifth Columnists, against the enemies of democratic rights wherever they show themselves. **For wherever the working class or the revolutionary movement sustains a defeat, there the Negro is defeated also, if even one Negro lives in that community.** That is the lesson of today. The Negroes must learn it and learn it well, and must fight for their place in the working class movement, as the surest way of defending the little that they have and gaining full equality.