



**Smithsonian Institution**

*National Museum of African American History and Culture*

## **Pamphlet: The Jobless Negro**

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rights, where terror against the Negro people is greatest.

The police are most vicious against the Negro jobless. In the South, the vagrancy laws are used to put jobless Negroes on the chain-gangs. In every city, in every rural village, the police ruthlessly frame jobless Negroes and throw them into jail. They even murder them outright. In the last year, hundreds of Negro workers were shot down in cold blood, by police and sheriffs, for picking up a bit of coal along the railroad tracks, for taking a loaf of bread. The nine Scottsboro boys, who were framed on a fake charge of "rape" in Alabama, were jobless boys looking for work on the Mississippi river boats.

Since the Fall of 1929, we heard that "prosperity is just around the corner." But the crisis is still deepening; unemployment increases every day.

How can we help ourselves?

The leaders of various groups have different solutions to propose, especially to the doubly-oppressed Negro workers. Let us examine some of these proposals and see what they are worth.

#### BACK TO THE FARMS

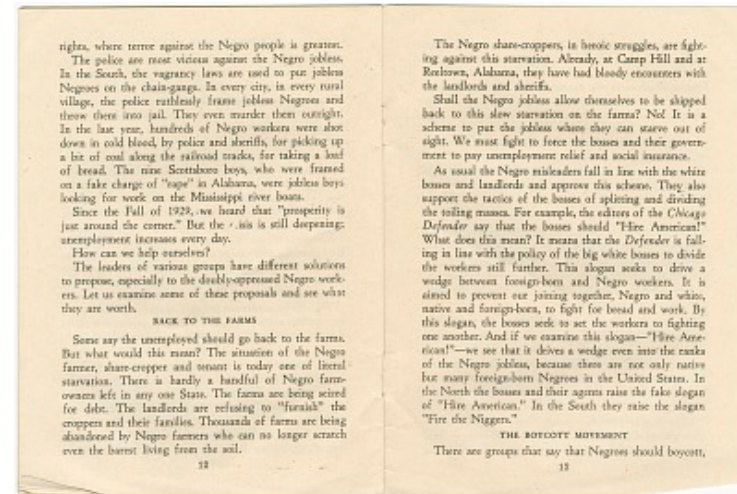
Some say the unemployed should go back to the farms. But what would this mean? The situation of the Negro farmer, share-cropper and tenant is today one of literal starvation. There is hardly a handful of Negro farm-owners left in any one State. The farms are being seized for debt. The landlords are refusing to "furnish" the croppers and their families. Thousands of farms are being abandoned by Negro farmers who can no longer scratch even the barest living from the soil.

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The Negro share-croppers, in heroic struggles, are fighting against this starvation. Already, at Camp Hill and at Reeltown, Alabama, they have had bloody encounters with the landlords and sheriffs.

Shall the Negro jobless allow themselves to be shipped back to this slow starvation on the farms? No! It is a scheme to put the jobless where they can starve out of sight. We must fight to force the bosses and their government to pay unemployment relief and social insurance.

As usual the Negro misleaders fall in line with the white bosses and landlords and approve this scheme. They also support the tactics of the bosses of splitting and dividing the toiling masses. For example, the editors of the Chicago Defender say that the bosses should "Hire American!" What does this mean? It means that the Defender is falling in line with the policy of the big white bosses to divide the workers still further. This slogan seeks to drive a wedge between foreign-born and Negro workers. It is aimed to prevent our joining together, Negro and white, native and foreign-born, to fight for bread and work. By this slogan, the bosses seek to set the workers to fighting one another. And if we examine this slogan—"Hire American!"—we see that it drives a wedge even into the ranks of the Negro jobless, because there are not only



native but many foreign-born Negroes in the United States. In the North the bosses and their agents raise the fake slogan of "Hire American." In the South they raise the slogan "Fire the Niggers."

#### THE BOYCOTT MOVEMENT

There are groups that say that Negroes should boycott,

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