



**Smithsonian Institution**

*National Museum of African American History and Culture*

## **Pamphlet: The Road to Negro Liberation**

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## II. THE GROWTH OF PETTY-BOURGEOIS NATIONALISM

In the present situation, we have to deal not only with the open clear-cut bourgeois reformist movements of the type of the N.A.A.C.P., National Urban League, Ministers' Alliances, etc. In the present period, these organizations, with their openly declared policy of collaboration with the white rulers, are not sufficient to corral the Negro masses. The leaders of these organizations are finding it increasingly difficult to halt the Leftward drift of the masses, to keep them chained to their leadership and hence to imperialist reaction. Under the sharpening blows of the Jim-Crow lynch offensive of the white ruling classes, and as a result of the increasing activities of our Party and revolutionary organizations, Negroes are becoming disillusioned with the reformist panaceas and are increasingly taking up the path of revolutionary struggle under our leadership. The reformist leadership over the toilers is being sharply threatened. For example: already in the N.A.A.C.P., there is developing a strong undercurrent of oppositional sentiment to the treacherous policies of the leadership. A rank-and-file Left Wing is striving to crystallize itself.

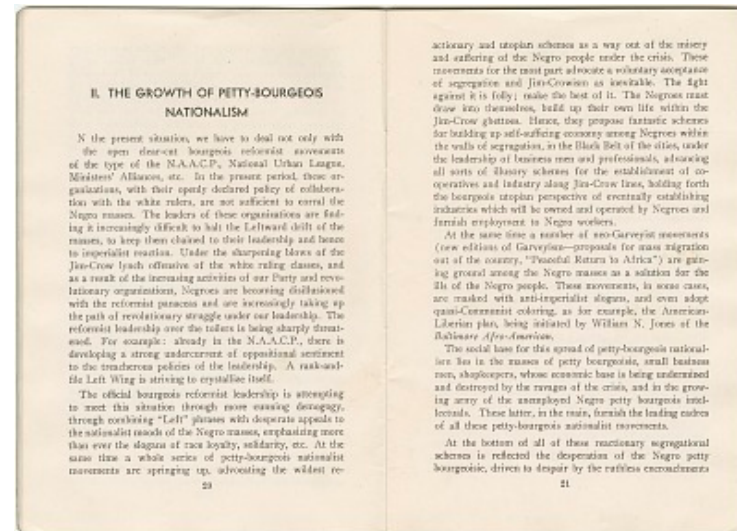
The official bourgeois reformist leadership is attempting to meet this situation through more cunning demagoguery, through combining "Left" phrases with desperate appeals to the nationalist moods of the Negro masses, emphasizing more than ever the slogan of race loyalty, solidarity, etc. At the same time a whole series of petty-bourgeois nationalist movements are springing up, advocating the wildest re-

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actionary and utopian schemes as a way out of the misery and suffering of the Negro people under the crisis. These movements for the most part advocate a voluntary acceptance of segregation and Jim-Crowism as inevitable. The fight against it is folly; make the best of it. The Negroes must draw into themselves, build up their own life within the Jim-Crow ghettos. Hence, they propose fantastic schemes for building up self-sufficing economy among Negroes within the walls of segregation, in the Black Belt of the cities, under the leadership of business men and professionals, advancing all sorts of illusory schemes for the establishment of cooperatives and industry along Jim-Crow lines, holding forth the bourgeois utopian perspective of eventually establishing industries which will be owned and operated by Negroes and furnish employment to Negro workers.

At the same time a number of neo-Garveyist movements (new editions of Garveyism—proposals for mass migration out of the country, "Peaceful Return to Africa") are gaining ground among the Negro masses as a solution for the ills of the Negro people. These movements, in some cases, are masked with anti-imperialist slogans, and even adopt quasi-Communist coloring, as for example, the American-Liberian plan, being initiated by William N. Jones of the Baltimore Afro-American.

The social base for this spread of petty-bourgeois nationalism lies in the masses of petty bourgeoisie, small business men, shopkeepers, whose economic base is being undermined and destroyed by the ravages of the crisis, and in the growing army of the unemployed Negro petty bourgeois intellectuals. These latter, in the main, furnish the leading



cadres of all these petty-bourgeois nationalist movements.

At the bottom of all of these reactionary segregational schemes is reflected the desperation of the Negro petty bourgeoisie, driven to despair by the ruthless encroachments

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