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PART 1a

NATIONAL GROUPS IN AMERICA
NATIONAL GROUP POLICY OF IWO

I. Introduction

A. Background of the development of America

America was developed by the people who came from many lands to settle in America - English, Negro, Irish, German, Polish, Italian, Russian, Ukrainians, Yugoslavs, Greeks, Czechs, Slovaks, Spanish and Jewish - to mention just a few. America developed historically from a multi-national background.

(Showing of film - 'One People')

B. Why these immigrants came to America

1. Economic conditions in home country
2. Brought over as slaves
3. To escape political persecution and in search of freedom
4. To escape religious persecution
5. To escape persecution as minority groups in the home country
6. Attracted by stories of freedom and opportunity

C. Contributions to industrial and political development in America

1. Work in the basic industries - mining, steel, auto, railroad, farming, needle trades
Contributions to building of trade unions
2. American Revolution, Civil War, World War II and in the struggle for democracy in America
3. Science and the professions
4. Contributions to the totality of American life.

II. National Group Communities in America

A. Immigrants banded together in given communities since as strangers to the new country, they were pushed into insecure conditions of living. In this way, these immigrants were in a position to express their common traditions, language and cultural heritage and to jointly fight for their common interests.

B. Fraternal Order built in national group communities

One of the basic forms of organizations built by the immigrants in their respective national group communities were fraternal orders. In each national group there are numerous such societies. Some are built along religious lines, but most of them arose out of the desires for mutual aid, and as a medium for promoting the traditions, language and cultural heritage which they want to integrate into American life.

C. Rich cultural contributions of the national groups in America

Brother Milgrom reported to the General Council March, 1947

"The national groups developed lasting and beautiful contributions to the culture of America. They gave us great artists on stage, screen and canvas. They brought music and dance to a new high in our concert halls. Our literature blossomed with their words and their research. Our well being profited by their scientific advances and medical studies. Our life moved along easier and more fully because of their inventions, their mechanical know-how, their sweat and long hours. Let us pause for a moment to consider how much finer and greater this country might have been if their contributions had been allowed to grow and flower without let or hindrance.

"While individuals broke through and rose from the lower strata, due to their skill and ability, to what extent, however, are the millions in the national groups, their modes of living, their share in creating America, really represented in the cultural mirrors of our country? If they are represented at all, it is in the most insulting, shocking and derogatory manner."

A few outstanding contributions made to American life by people of the national groups:

- | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Polish | Arturo Rodzinski |
| Slavic | Zlatko Balakovic |
| Yugoslav | Louis Adamic |
| Italian | Pietro Donato |
| Jewish | Albert Einstein |
| Hungarian | Hugo Gellert |
| Negro | Paul Robeson, George W. Carver |

III. Anglo-Saxon Concept of Superior and Inferior Peoples

A. Special type of oppression

1. We face in America a special type of oppression - a form of national oppression, a vulgarized concept of superior and inferior peoples. There are the so-called Americans, by which is meant the Anglo-Saxons, and there are the inferior peoples; the Negroes, the Slav groups, Italians, Jews, etc.

2. Special targets are Negroes and Jews. The Negro people suffer the greatest discrimination and it is expressed in every aspect of American life, from outright lynchings to jim crow, job discrimination, segregation and a denial to the Negro people of the elementary democratic rights.

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Next in line are the Jewish people, with outright attacks on synagogues and Jewish centers to all forms of anti-Semitism and discrimination.

B. The fallacy of "Superior Group Theories"

1. "The imaginary average American is portrayed as having only one national origin, one color, one religion and one pattern of cultural and psychological forms." - The melting pot theory as reported by Brother Milgrom at the 7th General Convention.

2. Reaction fosters this concept

a. to create division among native and foreign born, and between the national groups so that they can more easily be exploited.

b. this concept fostered through radio, movies, schools literature, etc.

c. the Bilbos and the Rankins propagate such concepts

d. report from Writers War Board in 1945: (Milgrom)

"Consistent repetition was exaggerating and perpetuating the false and mischievous notion that ours is a white, Protestant, Anglo-Saxon country, in which all other national stocks and religious faiths are of lesser dignity."

Milgrom's report continues:

"The Board analyzed 185 short stories published in 1937 and from 1940 to 1943 in 8 magazines whose circulation totals about 20 million. Here is what the survey says:

"Of 889 identified characters, more than 90% were Anglo-Saxon, whereas only a very small percentage were drawn from all other population stocks in the United States. Only 16 Negroes and 10 Jews out of almost 1,000 characters were counted, and where the authors brought in racketeers, thieves, gamblers, shady night club owners, crooked prize fight managers, such characters were seldom Anglo-Saxon.

"Overwhelming attention is given to the Anglo-Saxons. The stage and spotlight belong to them. They were habitually pictured as the salt of the earth. Their superiority, wealth and prestige were usually taken for granted, whereas in the few instances where a non-Anglo-Saxon character was represented as rich or important, the author had to offer a very elaborate explanation...

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"The behavior of these fictional characters could easily be used to prove that the Negroes are lazy, the Jews are wily, the Irish superstitious and the Italians criminals."

e. This is done in face of the fact that over one third of our population are of first, second and third generation non-Anglo-Saxon. One tenth of our population are Negroes and 5 million are Jews.

3. Compulsory Assimilation

The people of the national groups are subject to diverse methods and media of pressure; job discrimination; ridicule through movies, radio and literature, name calling, etc. This is intended to pressure the people of the national groups into a feeling of inferiority, to hide their identity, to change their names, to be timid and to "conform" to the Anglo-Saxon concept of Americanism.

This concept is used to pressure the peoples of the national groups into giving up their rich heritage and cultural traditions and to "conform" to reaction's so-called "Americanism".

Report of the National Resources Committee published in 1938, and signed by such people as Henry Wallace, Harry Hopkins, Harold Ickes, and other Roosevelt supporters:

"The existence of diverse cultural heritages in American society has often been regarded as an evil to be overcome as rapidly as possible. Movements..... developed toward enforced assimilation and regimentation. These movements....tended toward the suppression of initiative, the destruction of traditional morale, artistic values, the fostering of feelings of inferiority and confusion and toward personal and social conflict....."

4. Uniformity and Diversity in American Life

Sam Milgrom: "The truth is that throughout the history of our land, the greatest contribution has been the very diversity of its composition, the diversity of its culture, the diversity of its traditions. This diversity still is one of the healthiest and most democratic features of our country."

Louis Adamic says: ".....diversity itself is the pattern of America - will remain a rather chilly formula until we become aware of the abundant details which give it life, until we know more about the experiences and qualities, hopes and achievements of the many kinds of people who have made America. Not until wave after wave of these facts sweep over us, startle us, rouse our interest....."

5. Does this approach to "diversity" mean separation? The emphasis on diversity and the right of all the people, as people, is not aimed at fostering nationalism and the separation of one group of people from the other. On the contrary, real integration of all the minorities into American life can only express itself by the granting of full rights to all minorities in American life. The struggle, therefore, for equal rights for the Jews, for the Negro people, for the Italians and the Slav national groups economically, politically and culturally in our country, is the greatest unifying force in the movement for full integration of the entire American nation.

IV. National Group Communities Maintain Their Existence

A. In spite of the pressure of reaction in the direction of "compulsory assimilation", the national groups continue to live and develop. What are the basic reasons.

1. Economic reasons - at the bottom rung of the economic ladder
2. Living ties with their people abroad
3. Their community life embraces language, culture, democratic traditions of their people, fraternal and other organizations, churches and other forms of community life
4. Pressure of discrimination and lack of full citizenship

B. Nationalist and Reactionary Leaders in the National Group Community

In practically every national group community there are nationalist and reactionary leaders who support the policies of the worst enemies of the national groups, create division and discord in each group. Slav groups - Jewish - Italian - Hungarian - Greek - etc.

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- C. First, Second and Third Generation of the National Groups
(will be developed further in subsequent sessions)
 - 1. Effect of "compulsory assimilation"
 - 2. Ties with the national group of which they are a part.
 - 3. Discrimination against first, second and third generations.
 - 4. Need for unity

- V. National Group Development of IWO
 - A. Split in Workmen's Circle
 - B. Amalgamation with Russians, Slovaks, and Hungarians
 - C. National group societies built: Ukrainian, Spanish, Italian, Polish, Greek, Finnish, etc.
 - D. Building of English-speaking lodges of national group societies
 - E. Unity movements in national group communities
 - 1. Slav Congress
 - 2. American Jewish Congress, Conference, etc.
 - F. Relief and Rehabilitation activity of societies

- VI. Perspectives for the Building of the Order and Its Societies
 - A. Adult - English-speaking work - Youth - Juniors
 - B. Objectives in 1948 Membership Campaign